

Sociology of Education

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Unit 1

The Concept of Education

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Learning Objectives

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- distinguish between literacy and education;
- discuss the multiple dimensions of education; and
- explain the interrelationship between education and value system.

1.1 Introduction

You must have heard your parents and teachers telling you how important education is for securing a job, receiving honour and respect in society, and above all making you a 'refined' person. Have you ever wondered what the concept of education is? Is education merely a means of securing a livelihood or prestige in society? What is it in education that people think brings about refinement in personality? Is education confined to teaching and learning activities in schools and universities? Often the term education is used synonymously with literacy. We begin this unit by highlighting the difference between education and literacy. We will also explore the meaning and different dimensions of education as also the interrelationship between education and value system in general and in the context of India in particular.

1.2 Education and Literacy

The term 'education' is derived from the Latin word, *educare* which means, 'to bring up', 'to lead out', and 'to develop'. In the simplest sense, therefore, education refers to the process of bringing up, leading out, and developing individuals as mature, adult members of society. There is no denying that the meaning and usage of the word were excessively pervasive and generalized till industrialism gained ground. Peters (1977) explains that the coming of industrialism was accompanied with greater demand for knowledge, skill and training which called for formal means of imparting these in specialized institutions that came to be referred to as 'schools'. Consequently, education, in its earliest conception as training or the handing down of knowledge and skills, got associated with schools. Over time, the scope of education got delimited to the development of knowledge or understanding.

In its widest possible sense, education is characterized by the moral, intellectual, and spiritual development of a person. It may be noted that the conception of education as the all-round development of an individual, as

distinct from training, emerged in the nineteenth century. The process of education comprises cultivation of distinct qualities and traits through explicit instructions or through implicit inhibition as part of growing up amidst family members, kin and peer groups. Surely then, the domain of education enfolds both, what children learn in schools as also in families and peer-groups as part of the process of socialization. More specifically, Peters writes (1977:11), "In other words, though previous to the nineteenth century there had been the ideal of the cultivated person who was the product of elaborate training and instruction, the term 'an educated man' was not the usual one for drawing attention to this ideal. They had the concept but they did not use the word 'educated' quite with these overtones. Education, therefore, was not thought of explicitly as a family of processes which have as their outcome the development of an education man in the way it is now".

The Renaissance humanists emphasized learning Latin as also other classical languages. An educated person was described as one who had mastered Latin and classical languages and had studied classical literature. The Renaissance educators believed that the endeavour would instill humanistic, human-centered knowledge in the minds of children. These educators were largely literary figures — writers, poets, translators, and teachers. They encouraged the learners to develop their faculties in a way that they would be able to challenge existing customs and mediocrity in literature and in their own lives. Such education was reserved for the elite (Ornstein and Levine 1993).

The invention of the printing press in the year 1423 was a milestone in the history of education. Books and print material now became readily available. One consequence of this was the spread of literacy. The Protestant Reformers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries extended literacy among the masses. Vernacular schools brought the curriculum essentially consisting of reading, writing, arithmetic and religion among the masses in the community's own language.

In common parlance, a term that is often used synonymously with education is literacy. Much in contrast to education, the scope of the concept of literacy is delimited to the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic — the so-called three R's. The literacy campaigns of the government bodies, non-governmental organizations, as also international organizations seek to initiate people into the skills of reading and writing with the expectation that literate individuals are better able to secure a livelihood, raise productivity, and safeguard their own and their nation's interests more competently than their non-literate counterparts.

At the time of its founding, UNESCO sought to enable as many people in as many nations as possible to read and write. Mass education campaigns were launched. Over a period of time, however, it came to be realized that literacy programmes did not match the needs of adults. In the 1960s UNESCO adopted a functional view of literacy following which the focus shifted to fostering reading or writing skills that would raise productivity in agriculture, manufacturing and other jobs. The functional approach to literacy was evident in the Experimental World Literacy Programme (EWLP) in which UNESCO was an important participant. It was found that the focus narrowed too sharply on needs of national economic development. Consequently, the socio-cultural and linguistic context in which learners acquired and applied their literacy skills as also the needs of learners in their local context remained largely ignored.

In the 1970s the concept of literacy got widened, particularly after the intervention of Paulo Freire who emphasized literacy as an educational process. The chief concern was with encouraging the people to question why things were the way they were and striving to change them if need be. While earlier

literacy programmes treated the learners as beneficiaries, Freire treated them as 'actors' and 'subjects'. The major fallout of the change in approach was that literacy, which had hitherto been confined to classroom learning found place in the socio-political domain of society. The socio-cultural and linguistic contexts assumed significance. UNESCO bestowed one of its literacy prizes on Paulo Freire in 1975 as recognition of the contribution to what was termed as 'critical literacy'. The term critical literacy was used to refer to the capacity of an individual to participate as an active citizen given to critiquing national and international practices, claiming rights, and challenging power structures. We can now appreciate better the broadening of the concept of literacy and its rising affinity with that of education. In the 1980s, UNESCO recognized the clear-cut distinction between 'autonomous literacy' (referring to a skill acquired with no reference to values and context) and 'ideological literacy' (referring to mediation of literacy by social or political ideologies). Modes of schooling and ways of transmission of knowledge acquired greater importance in the larger framework of consolidation of and expression of power particularly so because it was recognized that literacy was a major means through which power is both, acquired and exercised in society.

Box 1.1: Literacy as an evolving concept

"The concept and practice of literacy are in constant and dynamic evolution, with new perspectives reflecting societal change, globalising influences on language, culture and identity, and the growth of electronic communication. In this development, two fundamental notions are clear. First, literacy is ambiguous, neither positive or negative in itself, its value depending on the way it is acquired or delivered and the manner in which it is used. It can be liberating, or to use Freire's term, domesticating. In this, literacy matches the role and purpose of education more broadly. Second, literacy links with the broad spectrum of communication practices in society and can only be addressed alongside other media, such as radio, TV, computers, mobile phone texting, visual images, etc. The massive development of electronic communication has not replaced paper-based literacy, but provides a new context for it; graphics have an increasing place alongside text; computer-based learning and play occupy both children and adults and displace the reading of books — all these phenomena are changing the way we view literacy" (UNESCO 2003).

1.3 Education as Preparation for Social Role in Ideal State

Some of the earliest ideas on the concept and meaning of education have treated it as a process by which children acquire moral values that are essential for harmonious existence in society. Both Socrates and Plato upheld that it was morality alone that ensured happiness and a sense of fulfillment in life. Moral existence, they said, was derived from rational understanding of the virtues of human nature as also truth. Cultivation of philosophical reason, therefore, was imperative to 'good life'. Moral reason enveloped all aspects of existence. Plato explained that since the source of intelligibility, nature and the very being of everything is the supreme form, a philosopher aspires to attain knowledge of it as the ultimate objective of life. Plato was convinced of a pre-bodily life in the course of which the soul gets originally acquainted with the supreme form, and by implication, the all-pervasive moral reason.

The task of the teacher in a classroom was limited to reminding the children and enabling them to recollect all that they innately know or are aware of. Cultivation of moral reason comes from the study of mathematics since it fosters abstract, disciplined thinking. When abstract, disciplined thinking develops, an individual is able to transcend mundane, empirical reality. Plato vehemently guarded the idea that education is essentially the training of

character. He was sure that culture (including music, architecture, literature) provided an appropriate learning environment to the child and created an indelible impact on their minds. His concern was with the effect on characters of literature, dramas, and other forms of representation that lay at the core of Athenian education and formed the basic medium for transmission of information and ideas. He was critical of works of literature (including Homer) that failed to display respect and honour for gods, heroes, and great people who would otherwise serve as role models that children could emulate. Furthermore, he did not approve of the idea of young people enacting mean-spirited or otherwise contemptible characters in plays and dramas. He felt that such people would somehow acquire the nature and character of the character they were portraying. Plato was severely criticized for his protective attitude towards cultural education in which the autonomy of children was laid down in favour of totalitarian ideology.

In his widely read, oft-quoted work, *Republic*, Plato divided people in society into different categories based on their intellectual development and acumen. The major classes were: the intellectual rulers or philosopher-kings; the auxiliaries and military defenders; and the workers who produced goods and services. Individuals received education appropriate to the category to they belonged which determined the tasks they were required to perform in the course of their lives. He devised the curriculum in that the educational needs of people in the ideal state were met appropriately.

1.4 Education as Cultivation of Reasoning Ability

In contrast to Plato's belief that all knowledge lies innate within the individual, Aristotle upheld that knowledge was derived from sense perceptions. A child observes the objects and phenomena through the five senses. This observation forms the basis of developing a principle or a set of principles for understanding and explaining them. The process of arriving at general conclusions from specific, or particular observations is known as 'inductive reasoning'. One example of what inductive reasoning means is that of a child who sees the buds turning into flowers over a period of few days and concludes that the rose bud in his/her garden will also turn into a flower over a period of time.

Like Plato, Aristotle believed that the control of education should lie with the state. This would enable the state to employ education as a means for preparing the desired kind of citizens. He felt that the major aim of education was the cultivation of moral values and virtues. His model for moral education centered on the notion that children acquire the traits they practice. In Aristotle's own words (trans 1976: 91-92), "We become just by performing just acts, temperate by performing temperate ones, brave by performing brave ones". Evidently, the guidance that a child receives from parents, elders and teachers is crucial. He said that till the age of 7 years, the focus of a child's education should be on physical training and character building. Between the age of 7 years and 21 years, the education imparted to the child should be state-controlled. In this period gymnastics, reading, drawing, and music are the basic subjects that should be taught. Training in these subjects would prepare the children for the final period of education which would last for their lifetime extending beyond the walls of the school. Unlike Plato, Aristotle did not speak of higher stages of education for women. He referred to the last period of education as one of liberal education that, "frees the mind from ignorance and is also the education appropriate for free men. The subjects to be studied in this period are similar to those that we believe were taught at Aristotle's Lyceum, chiefly mathematics, logic, metaphysics, ethics, politics, aesthetics, music, poetry, rhetoric, physics and biology" (Hobson 2001:18).

1.5 Education as Learning What Children Want to Know

Education is commonly understood as confined to information essential for an individual to live intelligently as a useful member of society. This implies the perpetuation of basic information in schools that tends to get monolithic and uniformised. In corollary, educational curriculum needs to be revised regularly in order to cope with social change and all that it needs to enable an individual to be of use to society. It is only natural then that children compete with others and seek to establish their own credentials and potential for learning more rigorously than others. There is much talk about how to universalise education and make it more effective and efficient. Holt attacked the system of compulsory and competitive education entailing the system of compulsory and competitive education which brought with it the system of rewards and punishments. According to him, the conventional practice of education was, “the most authoritarian and dangerous of all the social inventions of mankind. It is the deepest foundation of the modern and the worldwide slave state, in which most people feel themselves to be nothing but producers, consumers, spectators, and ‘fans’ driven more and more, in all parts of their lives, by greed, envy and fear” (Holt 1976: 8). What needs to be done then? Well, following him, the education system in its present form needs to be done away with more so because it constraints an individual to an extent that his/her innate potential and capabilities get curtailed. This means that the basic right to take decisions about oneself, to control the mind and thought, to explore and experience the world and make meaning of one’s life are conveniently handed over to the external agency — the educational system. Such an educational system that exercises complete control over a child prepares the groundwork for raising slaves (rather than vibrant, socially and mentally independent, intelligent adults) driven by greed, envy and fear.

Does this imply that one person should not interact with another or seek to influence another person’s thought and behaviour? Is it possible to live in complete social insulation? Certainly not, because in the course of our daily life we meet and interact with several people and often touch and change them, sometimes marginally and at other times substantially. Alternatively we are also shaped and influenced by others. What is important is the conviction that we should not put others in a situation in which they feel compelled to be influenced by us. In essence, we need to allow an individual to accept or reject our viewpoint and make sure that his/her freedom to choose is not curtailed. In the context of education, the argument is in favour of encouraging the children to learn what they most want to know rather than cram their minds with bits and pieces of essential knowledge that we think would be of relevance to them. Holt refers to this as ‘real learning’ or ‘true education’.

True education is acquired, by way of ‘doing things’ rather than by ‘learning things’ which then cannot be imparted fully in schools which are identified as places of learning. The fact of the matter is that true education comes from experience. We tend to learn i.e., imbibe from what we actually do and experience. We are influenced by the quality of our experiences, the satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) as also the excitement and joy (or unhappiness) that we derive from them. Children who experience humiliation, threat, and unhappiness in school will not be able to learn what the teacher tries to teach. In case such children do manage to learn something, but they tend to forget it in a short span of one or two days. Learning is greatly enhanced when the children are filled with confidence, boldness and the eagerness to learn.

Reflection and Action 1.1

Visit a nearby school and find out from at least 20 children of classes X and XII what they think the process of education should consist of. Discuss your findings with those of your co-learners at the study centre.

1.6 Built-in Value in Education

Some of the earliest ideas on the concept and meaning of education were those of R S Peters for whom the very term education enfolds normative implications. He explains the concept of education in terms of initiation into activities that are worthwhile to pursue for their own sake. These include, among others, the pursuit of sciences, history, literature and philosophy. An educated person is one who has been able to understand the broad perspectives characteristic of these disciplines and their influences on other domains as also on human life. The prominent argument is centered on the imbibing of values and ideas that are worthwhile. Peters (1966:25) maintains that education has the criterion built into it that “something worthwhile is being or has been intentionally transmitted in a normally acceptable manner”. By implication, a person who has undergone the process of education has been essentially transformed for the better.

The critical issue at this juncture is the determination of what constitutes ‘worthwhile’ or what is worth cultivating and pursuing. Peters clarifies that those activities and pursuits are worthwhile which are thought to be valuable. Education, therefore, can be said to have ‘built-in value’. This is a positive view of education which takes a position that if any teaching-learning enterprise is treated as education, then it must necessarily be valuable failing which it cannot be treated as education.

Box 1.2: Criteria of Education

According to Peters (1966: 45) the basic criteria of education are:

- i) “that ‘education’ implies the transmission of what is worth-while to those who become committed to it;
- ii) that ‘education’ must involve knowledge and understanding and some kind of cognitive perspective, which are not inert;
- iii) that ‘education’ at least rules out some procedures of transmission, on the grounds that they lack willingness and voluntariness”.

More importantly, education is not a monolithic concept applicable to chalk-and-blackboard teaching within the four walls of a classroom. Getting children to make things, showing them how to do things, making them find out and explore are educative processes. A person may not be called educated simply by virtue of the fact that he/she has mastered a particular skill. A person who is educated in the real sense should have acquired understanding of principles for organization of facts. This understanding affects his/her outlook. More explicitly stated, a person who has specialized in a particular discipline may be said to be knowledgeable but not educated till his/her specialization influences his/her perspective on other dimensions of life. When the knowledge a person has acquired affects the way in which he/she looks at, understands, and explains different aspects of life, the person may be said to be educated. This is what Peters meant when he said that education has a transformative effect on an individual. An educated person (i) places an issue in a larger framework of reality; and (ii) is committed to the standards imminent in his/her field of interest. It is believed that all forms of thought and awareness are characterized by distinctive standards for appraisal. This boils down to the conception of education as all-round development of an individual for which Peters used the expression, ‘Education is for whole man’.

1.7 Nature and Scope of Education: Cross-cultural Perspective

We have already read in the previous pages that the concept of education is not monolithic or uniform across cultures and periods of history. Educational

ideas are known to have developed out of the human struggle for survival and enlightenment. The educational heritage of the western civilization has greatly influenced American education. World educational history has, however, also benefited greatly from Mero-American, Africa, and Asian civilization. The Mayans in Mexico's Yucatan peninsula and Guatemala developed expertise in the fields of architecture and astronomy. Equally specialized was a type of writing based on word signs or logographs which the Mayan priests taught their apprentices in religious schools. Similarly, the Chinese developed an elaborate educational system which was based on Confucian philosophy. Civil servants who administered the Chinese empire were those who passed the formal examinations (Ornstein and Levine 1987). Education is, however, not confined to developing expertise in word signs or architecture and/or astronomy (as the Mayans did); or preparing people to rule the state as civil servants through an examination system (as the Chinese did). The indigenous people or tribal communities also develop skills for survival and a way of transmitting the language, skills, knowledge, beliefs and values to their children which prepares them for adult roles. Those who subsist by hunting and gathering teach their boys to make weapons and their girls to collect food from forests. Similarly, those who subsist by cultivating teach their children to prepare the earth, sow, transplant and harvest the grain. These are not isolated activities rather they are interrelated with the entire way of life — knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals and customs of the community. In the absence of written texts and formal schooling the transmission of information and cultural wisdom takes place through oral tradition. It is through songs, legends and stories, proverbs and riddles narrated by the elders that the children learn about the group's history, wars, victories and defeats and heroes. These were the non-formal ways of preparation for adulthood (as a useful member of society) among indigenous people who were not exposed to the formal system of education in schools. Many sociologists believe that they were in no way 'less refined' or inferior to those who pass through the formal education system.

a) Education in Ancient Greece

Ancient Greece is treated as the epicenter of western culture. It is important to understand how and what kind of knowledge was transmitted there. As we know, Homer's poems provided Greeks a means of defining their cultural identity since they explain Greeks' origin, portray their struggles and provide a model for the future. Children who study the behaviour of the epic heroes learn (i) the characteristics and qualities that make life worth living; (ii) the behaviours expected of warrior-knights, and (iii) the flaws or weaknesses in human character that brought harm to oneself and one's friends (Ornstein and Levine 1987: 84). Greeks laid greater emphasis on participation of children in culture than on formal schooling. Athenians believed that liberal education was needed by an individual to discharge duties towards the state and for self-development. Since slaves were required to serve the masters, they were kept away from liberal education. Instead, they were trained in skills for specific trades. In Athens women had no legal or economic rights. The vast majority of them were excluded from formal education. Girls in Sparta were, however, more exposed to schooling. Here the thrust was on athletic training that would prepare them for healthy motherhood to future spectrum soldiers.

In the middle of the fifth century BC, the commercial class began to take over the landed as aristocrats. Consequently traditional ideas about education came to be diluted. This led to the rise of a group of professional educators who came to be known as sophists. The sophists were wandering teachers who specialized in teaching grammar, logic and rhetoric. They instructed all those who could afford to pay them. Education no longer remained confined to select groups of people but was made available to a much larger number of people, leading to socio-economic mobility.

Box 1.3: The Greek Contribution to Western Education

“Western culture and education inherited a rich legacy from ancient Greece. It included the following:

- 1) A profound conviction of the possibility of achieving human excellence;
- 2) The idea that education had civic purposes related to the political well-being of the community;
- 3) A distinction between liberal education and vocational training, which has led to curricular controversies throughout Western educational history;
- 4) The legacy of the Socratic Method, by which skilled teachers might use dialectical processes to ask universal questions relating to truth, goodness, and beauty” (Ornstein and Levine 1987:93).

b) Education in ancient Rome

In ancient Rome education was aimed at raising politicians and able administrators. It was reserved for those who could afford to pay for it and had the time to attend school. Children belonging to poor families could not attend school, rather they were taken as workers. Most of the children of slaves were trained to perform certain tasks. They were denied education. Girls of upper classes learnt to read and write at home while the boys attended primary schools, later secondary schools in which they learnt Latin and Greek Grammar.

The educational ideal in Rome was the orator. An orator was a well-educated man in public life. He could be a senator, lawyer, teacher, civil servant or politician. A good orator was one who won debates and arguments in a forum. Cicero (106-143 BC) was a distinguished Roman senator who was well versed in Greek and Latin grammar, literature, history and rhetoric. He believed that the educational ideal (i.e., the Orator) should have command over astronomy, ethics, geography, history, law, medicine, military science, natural science, philosophy and psychology. Knowledge of these disciplines helped him in many ways e.g., developing and presenting an argument, engaging with the emotions of the audience, and influencing public affairs.

c) Education in Middle Ages

In the middle ages or the medieval period, European education was imparted in institutions associated with the church — the elementary parish, chantry, and monastic schools. The knights received training in military affairs and in chivalric code of behaviour in palaces. Monastic and cathedral schools, however, followed the general studies curriculum at the secondary level. There were some schools that provided basic education along with training for a trade. These were maintained not by the church but by merchants and craft guilds. Most of the learners in schools were those who planned to embark on religious life as priests, monks or clerics. The serfs confined their activities to the estate of feudal lords as agricultural workers.

By the eleventh century, the scholastic tradition emphasizing the spirit of inquiry, scholarship and teaching set in. Faith and reason were identified as complementary sources of truth. In effect, the teaching clerics, better known as scholastics, believed that God’s words were revealed in the sacred scriptures and in the writings of church fathers. They also accepted the importance of human reason. In scholastic schools, the disciplines of logic, mathematics, natural and moral philosophy, metaphysics and theology were taught as part of higher education. The education encouraged inculcation of deductive reasoning among learners.

Over a period of time the number of students enrolled in cathedral schools far exceeded their capacity. As a result, universities were established to impart higher education. Since the basic constituent of knowledge was believed to be the authority of the scriptures, medieval universities emerged as centers of theology. A high level of scholarship, however, developed in secular disciplines too. The universities set up professional schools of law, medicine along with theology. These were in addition to the liberal arts. There is no denying that education in the middle ages was formal, organized and institutionalized to a large extent.

d) Education in the Renaissance period

In the Renaissance period, the scholastic model was challenged. The cleric who was trained in scholastic logic was no longer regarded as representing an educated person. Instead, the courtier who was liberally educated in classical literature, a capable diplomat, a man of style and elegance was treated as a model to be emulated by children. Education now basically consisted of learning classical Greek and Latin literature. The aim was not merely to teach the nuances of logic but to develop the all-round personality of an individual. It was in Italy that the effect of the Renaissance was most clearly marked because here the revival of commerce generated a financial surplus that was directed towards extending support to the arts, literature, and architecture. The elite of the country established their identity as custodians of knowledge, while the rulers set up court schools that would impart 'new learning'.

The Renaissance humanists identified the study of Latin as the marker of an educated person. An educated person was one who had studied classical languages and classical literature closely. The emphasis was on a human-centered conception of knowledge in which human beings were not studied as objects for scientific inquiry but indirectly through classical literature. It was later that undue emphasis on the study of literature at the cost of experience was questioned by Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Dewey and others.

e) Education in the age of Enlightenment

In the age of Enlightenment, the reason governed education as also all other major institutions. Scientists used objective methods to formulate 'natural laws' that established the idea that all the natural processes follow an order. The Enlightenment period encouraged rationality among people particularly for improving their lives and solving their problems. Against this backdrop, school education was designed to develop reasoning ability in students. The major challenge before teachers in schools was to cultivate the spirit to raise questions among students and the willingness to apply scientific and empirical methods of inquiry in understanding social reality. Enlightenment marked the creation of an education system based on equality, individualism and intellectual reasoning.

1.8 Cultural Dimension of Education in India

In the traditional sense, education in India was based largely on respect, concern, and sharing. In rural areas, the people would contribute in whatever way they could towards the construction of the school building and meeting the needs of the teacher. It was only later that the government officials exercised control over these institutions to an extent that the people felt alienated. While the villagers were asked to make contributions and take care of the infrastructure, the school belonged to the government. It was the government which would recruit teachers, decide the admissions policy, and frame the curriculum.

Joseph Di Bona wrote *One teacher One School* which dealt with basic education in pre-British India. Now, in this village school there was only one teacher who

was a local person and highly respected by everyone. The villagers provided for all his requirements. The teacher was the custodian of the financial resources of the school. A sum of money would get collected by way of nominal fees or donations. The teacher would keep a token amount for himself and use the remaining amount for providing writing material and playthings to the children. When some amount of money got accumulated, he gave scholarships to children. He was guided by the tenets of *gyan* i.e., knowledge, *seva* i.e., service, and *tyag*, i.e., sacrifice. One can appreciate the one-teacher-one school approach which appears to be governed by concern, commitment and accountability. This may be contrasted with the governmental approach of appointing several teachers in one school and the rising concern about teacher absenteeism, particularly in rural and far-flung areas (see Naik 1998).

According to Coomaraswamy (1983) a meaningful educational system pursues the following ideals: (i) universal philosophical attitude; (ii) recognition of sacredness of all things, which is the antithesis of the Western division of life into the sacred and the profane; (iii) religious toleration based on the awareness that all dogmas are formulae imposed upon the Infinite by limitations of the finite human intellect; (iv) etiquette — civilization conceived as the product of civil people; (v) relationship between teacher and pupil implied by the terms *guru* and *chela*, respectively, in memorizing great literature — the epics as embodying the ideals of character, learning as a privilege never to be used merely as a means to economic prosperity; (vi) altruism and recognition of the unity of all life; and (vii) control not merely of action but also of thought. In the traditional sense, the essence of education lay in realizing one's potential and developing it as an integrated aspect of growing up. It is for this reason that socialization as education assumes greater relevance in the East. This is education for life.

In India several Education Commissions have been set up since Independence with the chief purpose of initiating reforms in the present educational system — the foundations of which were laid by the British. Why were these reforms thought to be important? Well, one of the major reasons has been the discontent with the present system of education. The so well established educational system lays excessive emphasis on literacy, reason and rationality, success, achievement, material progress and competition and all that makes for prosperity, richness and affluence. The content of education is designed in a way that the child acquires the basic information and skill-set that would enable him/her to do well in the global market. What happens in the process is that the child gets alienated from his/her own, local environment and concerns. In this sense, education becomes a process of uprooting and alienating children from the culture(s) to which they belong. Individual creativity, initiative and spontaneity get clipped to a large extent.

Increasing attention is, therefore, being paid to the need to take the cultural dimension of education into cognizance. It is being felt that meaningful education (one that integrates education with cultural values) has to be developed so that the values, ideals and goals of education imparted in schools do not conflict with those imparted to a child at home as part of socialization. Much earlier, Gandhi had advocated a system of education better known as basic education or 'nai talim'. He advocated a kind of education that would develop among children self-reliance, commitment to non-violence, awareness about others' and their own rights, responsibilities, and obligations in society. An important aspect of 'nai talim' was the inculcation of appreciation for manual labour. To this end, he incorporated activities that involved working with the hands or manual labour as a major component of basic education. Gandhi's ideas on education seem relevant as an alternative way of a total development of the body, mind, and soul through self-restraint, self-reliance, self-sacrifice, self-fulfillment, and community participation. Its relevance is greatly enhanced in the present day fraught with tension, conflict, violence

and intolerance. At this juncture two questions assume significance (i) how can education be webbed with ecological concerns; and (ii) how can education ensure peaceful coexistence of people. These are fundamental issues that touch upon the basic philosophy of life in India and in many eastern countries. Of course, we will learn about Gandhi's idea of 'nai talim' as also of other Indian thinkers in the third Unit of this Block.

Reflection and Action 1.2

Do you think the traditional system of education in India provides a valid alternative to the Western system with emphasis on competition? Discuss.

1.9 Sociological Perspective on Education

The sociological perspective on education focuses on both, the process of education and the interrelationship between education and different aspects of society. The chief concern is with understanding how education influences social processes and gets influenced by them. The seeds of sociology of education were laid in the writings of Plato and others (about some of whom we have read in earlier sections) who focused on the role of education in laying the foundation of social order and supporting the state. Sociology of education was, however, carved as a specialized domain of enquiry much later. Emile Durkheim, the French Sociologist, stresses the need for a sociological approach to the study of education.

Jayaram (1990) explains that what was earlier called 'educational sociology' was born out of the need of educators in the United States of America and Canada to integrate the large number of immigrants (around the turn of the twentieth century) with the school and the community at large. The complexity of demands imposed by industrialization confounded the problem. The major questions before them were regarding (i) effective means by which immigrants could be blended with the community; (ii) nature, scope and design of education for rural children who were being initiated into the formal means of education for the first time; and (iii) influence of languages, ethnic identities and religious affiliations on patterns of learning behaviour. In order to address these issues, it was necessary to gauge the social problems of education, to understand the linkage between social factors and education. The result was the coming together of sociologists and educationists and the consequent emergence of 'educational sociology'. The scope of educational sociology was defined in terms of providing the basis for determining the, objectives of education; place of education in society; and interplay between school and the community. Over the years educational sociology failed to keep the interests of both educationists and sociologists alive and gave way to what is now referred to as 'sociology of education'.

Sociology of education surfaced as a legitimate field of enquiry due to the interest of sociologists in the process of education. More and more sociologists endorse the contribution of education in society. In the words of Mannheim (1940: 271), "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 and for what social position the pupils are being educated".

The sociological perspective on education establishes the importance of social and cultural context of education. While Durkheim focuses on the role of education in the preservation of society and culture (which happens though the transmission of values, knowledge, beliefs and skills of culture through the family, kinship group and school), Dewey distinguishes between the growth of the individual in accordance with the goals of a specific society and the

natural growth of an individual. We need to understand that the goals, values and skills identified as critical by the social order are transmitted through the process of education. Now, these undergo change as social order itself transforms. It is for this reason that education is spoken of as a dynamic process (see Shukla and Kumar 1985).

From the vantage point of the aims of education, the dynamic character of education may be explained from a historical perspective. The education system in Greece and Rome was designed in a way that children learnt to subordinate themselves to the collectivity. Durkheim (orig.1956, 1985:11) explains this aspect more clearly in the following words, "In Athens, they sought to form cultivated souls, informed, subtle, full of measure and harmony, capable of enjoying beauty and the joys of speculation; in Rome, they wanted above all for children to become men of action, devoted to military glory, indifferent to letters and the arts. In the Middle Ages, education was above all Christian; in the Renaissance, it assumes a more literary and lay character; today science tends to assume the place in education formerly occupied by the arts". The individual identity was merged with the society. Over a period of time there was transformation in the aims of education noticeable in the shift of emphasis from individual's subordination to autonomy. In the present day, the education system seeks to develop autonomy and self-identity in an individual's personality.

Sociologically, the dimensions of education that have a particular salience in society are, the role education plays in the maintenance (or throwing a challenge to) of social order, social control and power structures on the one hand, and its contribution towards effecting social change on the other. A large part of these are determined by the schooling which includes the pattern of interaction between and among teachers and students, nature and content of teaching, extent of learning and other aspects. Another aspect is the school-community matrix.

Box 1.4: Areas of Research appropriate for sociologists

"In order to better explain the social phenomena of education Durkheim identified four areas of research appropriate for sociologists. They are:

- 1) Identification of the current social facts of education and their sociological function.
- 2) Identification of the relationship between education and social and cultural change.
- 3) Cross-cultural and comparative research in various types of educational systems.
- 4) Investigation of the classroom and school as an on-going social system" (Jayaram 1990:2).

According to Carnoy (1974), in the United States and the countries in Latin America which were gripped by industrialization, schooling was geared towards the development of the factory system in the sense that children were prepared to serve the factory system in different capacities. The economic and social change due to the spread of capitalism in the metropole favoured mass schooling which would raise children of the working class in a way that the class structure was maintained. After World War II when the United States emerged as the leader of the capitalist world, its models for controlling social change and assigning economic roles to different groups came to be adopted by the Third World countries. Schooling played an exceptionally important role in the postwar international scenario. It has been employed as an agency of promoting the interests of powerful economic and social groups. The present day debates in the area of society and education are those that relate with

the role of schooling, nature and extent of the role of education in society and human development. In current years, the politics of educational curriculum, medium of instruction, and the role of the school in society are the crucial issues before sociologists. Interestingly, the role of the school in society is being re-examined by sociologists. In fact, the sociologists are questioning the basic premise that education is the sole factor that leads to social and human development. Alternatively, does it lead to social and human development at all?

1.10 Conclusion

In this Unit we have explored the concept of education from different perspectives. We began by distinguishing between the concepts of education and literacy. We found that in the real sense, literacy is confined to the skills of reading, writing and doing arithmetic while education is a broader concept enveloping the all round development of an individual. Taking off at this point we discussed the concept of education as, preparation for social roles in the ideal state, cultivation of reasoning ability, and learning what children actually want to know (rather than what they ought to know). Thereafter we explored the value component in education. Here we discussed the premise that education has built-in value following which we looked into the values that the traditional education system in India affords. We realized that the education system in India laid emphasis on discipline, honesty, truth, kindness and integrity.

1.11 Further Reading

Hobson, P. 2001. "Aristotle". In S.A. Palmer (ed.) *Fifty Major Thinkers on Education from Confucius to Dewey*. Routledge: London

Naik, Chitra. 1998. "Prologue". In B. N. Saraswati (ed.) *The Cultural Dimension of Education*. IGNSA and DK Printworld: New Delhi

Unit 2

Theoretical Approaches

Contents

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Functionalism
- 2.3 Conflict Theory
- 2.4 Interactionism
- 2.5 Postmodernism
- 2.6 Conclusion
- 2.7 Further Reading

Learning Objectives

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- explain the role of education in society; and
- discuss the major theoretical approaches towards the understanding of education.

2.1 Introduction

In any society, there is an in-built mechanism to socialize the individual and to transmit its culture to the young. As a simple society transforms itself into an industrialized and a modernized state, instruction for the young becomes increasingly differentiated, complex and closely connected with other features of the society (Clark 1968). The resulting demands of the learning process are fulfilled by establishing a formal educational system. This system prepares the young for the transition from the confined and concentrated relationships of the family to the impersonal and diversified relationships of the larger society (Anderson 1968).

With the rise in importance of the educational system and related institutions in society, various scholars initiated their investigations on education as a legitimate field of study. The scholars are not from the discipline of sociology alone, but from different disciplines. As a result of the extensive input of scholarship and expertise from diverse disciplines, the boundaries between sociology of education and other participating disciplines are greatly blurred (Bidwell 1982).

In this Unit we will discuss the major theoretical approaches towards the understanding of the sociology of education. The Unit deals with education as a field of study and provides a broad overview of research and methods used by sociologists. It explains four major theoretical approaches used in the sociology of education: functionalism, conflict theory, interactionism, and postmodernism. The unit concludes with an analytical comment on theoretical developments.

2.2 Functionalism

Functionalism treats society as a self-regulating system of interrelated elements with structured social relationships and observed regularities. Functionalists perceive society as similar to a biological organism which is composed of many distinct but interdependent parts with each part contributing to the functioning or survival of the whole system. All the parts are not only interdependent but also coordinated and complementary to each other. A change in one part is believed to affect other parts; the malfunctioning of one part is dealt with by

other parts in a coordinated way so as to maintain the equilibrium of the whole system.

Functionalists do not give weightage to abrupt changes in the whole system. They lay emphasis on the absence of disruptive internal factors that disturb the overall stability of the system. Various components or units of the society operate in consonance with common perceptions, sentiments, values and beliefs of the system. This agreement or consensus is achieved through the socialization of individuals by guided principles of the society (Abraham 1982). In simple or folk societies, the family is the primary agent of socialization. In modern or industrialized societies, socialization is often mediated by educational institutions apart from families. Against this basic understanding, we will explore the approaches of two functionalists, Durkheim and Parsons.

According to Durkheim (1956) the major function of education is to transmit society's norms and values. The survival of society or collective life is possible only with a sufficient degree of homogeneity among various members of the society. Homogeneity among members is reached by adhering to rules and regulations laid down by the society. Education preserves and reinforces these homogenising principles of society in a child from the beginning. Durkheim (1956:17) writes, "Education is the influence exercised by the adult generation on those that are not yet ready for social life. Its object is to arouse and to develop in the child a certain number of physical, intellectual and moral states which are demanded of him by both political society as a whole and the social milieu for which he is specifically destined." He highlights the role played by education in instituting 'social being' in the 'individual being.' The individual being is made up of mental states that apply only to himself/herself and to the events in his/her personal life. The social being embodies a system of ideas, sentiments and practices of the group of which he/she is a part. The process of socialization of a newborn differentiates human beings from animals. In his own words, "Of what an animal has been able to learn in the course of his individual existence, almost nothing can survive him. By contrast, the results of human experience are preserved almost entirely and in detail, thanks to books, sculptures, tools, instruments of every kind that are transmitted from generation to generation, oral tradition etc." (Durkheim 1956:22). The role of the educational system becomes important in complex societies in which families or other primary groups are not fully equipped to prepare the young for adulthood in a way that is expected by the larger society. School operates as a model of micro social system in which a child learns to cooperate with other children who are not part of their primary group. The training acquired by children in school forms the basis of their behaviour outside the school.

Box 2.1: Nature and Role of Education in Society: Emile Durkheim

"In fact, however, each society, considered at a given stage of development, has a system of education which exercises an irresistible influence on individuals. It is idle to think that we can rear our children as we wish. There are customs to which we are bound to conform; if we flout them too severely, they take vengeance on our children. The children, when they are adults, are unable to live with their peers, with whom they are not in accord. Whether they had been raised in accordance with ideas that were either obsolete or premature does not matter; in one case as in the other, they are not of their time and, therefore, they are outside the conditions of normal life. There is, then, in each period, a prevailing type of education from which we cannot deviate without encountering that lively resistance which restrains the fancies of dissent" (Durkheim orig. 1956, rpt. 1985: 12-13):

According to Durkheim, specific skills imparted in the educational institutions are necessary to maintain the division of labour in society. As society shifts from simple to complex form there is a corresponding increase in the complexity of division of labour and the emergence of more specialized occupations. In simple societies, division of labour demands generic skill sets that can be passed on easily through families. In complex industrial societies, however, families find themselves at a loss to impart complex and specialized skill sets. Maintaining equilibrium among various layers of occupational structure or divisions of labour is important in maintaining social order. Educational institutions give the required specific skills to their members according to the demands of the society and prepare them to play role sets offered by the society. Durkheim explains that the state holds the responsibility of governing the educational system and it decides the nature of moral principles taught to the members. Teachers at the schools are representative of the state. There is an underlying assumption that nature of norms, values, and skills imparted by the educational systems are decided without any bias or discrimination to any unit of society aiming at social solidarity.

Parsons's views (1959) on educational system are similar to those of Durkheim. According to Parsons, two critical issues are paramount in the context of education in society. The first is that of the internalization of commitments and capacities among children in classrooms for adult roles. Here, the school class may be treated as an agency of socialization through which children are motivated and trained to perform adult roles. The second is the allocation of human resources within the role-structure of the adult society. He recognizes the role played by various socialization agencies like family, informal peer groups and others in moulding the young by the society. He lays importance on school class as a focal agency of socialization that begins with entry of children to first grade (standard) and lasts till their entry into the labour market or marriage. According to Parsons (1959:51), the school develops commitments and capacities in individuals that are required for future role-performance of individuals. Commitments include "commitment to the implementation of the broad values of society and commitment to the performance of a specific type of role within the structure of society". Capacities include "competence or the skill to perform the tasks involved in the individual's roles", and "role-responsibility or the capacity to live up to other people's expectations of the interpersonal behaviour appropriate to these roles."

Parsons maintains that the school also serves as an allocation agency that prepares human resources and allocates them within role-structure of the society. He observes that completion of high school is increasingly becoming a norm of minimum satisfactory educational attainment by any individual in society. Also, the performance or achievement of a child in elementary school determines the nature of college courses. Thus the educational system works as the 'first socializing agency in the child's experience which institutionalizes a differentiation of status on non-biological bases' (Parsons 1959:51). In early stages of schooling, the achievement of a child is measured through assessment of two components: cognitive and moral. Cognitive component is related to the intellectual ability of the child in terms of written language and mathematical skills. Moral component is related to responsible citizenship behaviour within the school community. This includes respect for the teacher, cooperative behaviour with classmates, and good work habits etc.

During early days at the school, children do not understand that achieved rather than ascribed characteristics are the proper bases for most societal rewards. School convinces them that they would be evaluated on the basis of achievement, and makes them understand that there is basic consensus on what constitutes achievement in the larger society. In early years of schooling, children often deal with a single teacher who takes the place of mother or parental figure for them in school. The teacher often remains affectively neutral,

treats all children as equal and follows the rules and regulations of the school. Parallel to the socialization process experienced at the school, students tend to develop relationships among their own peer group. The socialization process among peers is different from the family and the school and offers "a field for the exercise of independence from adult control" (Parsons 1959:59), and also provides alternative sources of reward.

Functionalists are criticized for their perception that the educational systems operate as an integrative mechanism of the society and treat children equal. These criticisms arise from critical theorists who argue that the educational system is a medium of the ruling elite and not representative of entire society. According to Collins (1972), the functional role played by education in fulfilling the needs of division of labour is criticized as an exaggeration. There is no evidence to prove that education supplies knowledge and skills necessary for occupations. Only a minor part of the expansion of the education in advanced industrialized countries directly serves the demands of industry in terms of skills, training and knowledge. Most of the occupations involve training in the job itself and employing organizations provide their own training. Further discussion along similar lines by conflict theorists is presented in the next section.

Reflection and Action 2.1

Compare and contrast the ideas of Durkheim and Parsons on education.

2.3 Conflict Theory

Conflict theorists stand out in sharp contrast to the functionalists in terms of the basic approach. According to conflict theorists, society is in a state of perpetual disequilibrium, yet it is maintained as a body by powerful social groups that coerce cooperation from the less powerful. They treat society as divided into dominant and subordinate groups that are characterized by a constant power struggle between themselves. It is not necessary that different units would operate in a way that solidarity of the whole society is maintained. There is an impending possibility of social instability. Society and its units are continuously changing. This dynamism needs to be accepted as a normal characteristic of any society. An interaction between two units involves some form of conflict which is essential for the continuity of society. Factors of conflict are both internal and external and range from individual to national levels. The impact of conflict on society could be varied: positive and negative; latent and manifest; and gradual and violent. Conflict theorists tend to be more specific and limit their analysis to the interrelationship between two or more units within society (Abraham 1982).

Haralambos and Heald (1980) discuss the contributions made by Louis Althusser, Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, and Ivan Illich from a conflict perspective. According to Althusser whose ideas are derived from Marxism, society is divided into the capitalist class (which owns the modes of production and exercises control) and the labour class (which renders service in the production systems and remains subordinate to the former). The capitalist class requires continuous supply of labour power the exploitation of which generates profits. Educational systems are used by the capitalist class to produce the required labour power. Workers are socialized to accept the ideology of the ruling class which legitimizes the capitalist system and submits to the exploitation of the capitalists. Bowles and Gintis (1976) explain that the capitalist system requires surplus amount of labour power to enhance its bargaining potential while employing the workers. The educational system raises surplus of workers whose skill set is suited to cater to lesser-paid menial jobs. Unemployment and availability of replaceable labour brings control over the workers and keeps the wages to minimum. The governing structure and curricula of the educational

systems are determined by the capitalist class. Social relationships in the school replicate the hierarchical division of labor in work place. Students' lack of control over work of importance (e.g. decision and policy making) in school, for example, is similar to the situation they encounter at work place when they grow up.

The proposition that the dominant class determines the nature of educational system is presented by Apple and King (1979). According to them schools pursue a hidden agenda (through the curriculum) that seems uniquely suited to maintain the ideological hegemony of the most powerful classes in the society. They write, "Schools seem to contribute to inequality in that they are tacitly organized to differentially distribute specific kinds of knowledge. This is in larger part related both to the role of the school in maximizing the production of technical cultural 'commodities' and to the sorting or selecting function of schools in allocating people to the positions 'required' by the economic sector of society" (Apple and King 1979: 295). They also argue that educational knowledge is a form of the larger distribution of goods and services in a society. Social meanings that constitute educational knowledge imparted to the children do not relate with the vision and meanings of all groups of the society. Apple and King suggest that the historical process involved in curriculum designing has legitimized the social meanings of the dominant class in schools. Curriculum specialists were predominantly drawn from the school of scientific management that supports the capitalist class. Their concern for social meanings in schools was invariably linked to the notions of social control. Using the case of kindergarten, they demonstrated that teachers thrust social meanings on the minds of the children. The children often are not in a position to bring about any change in the course of daily events in the classroom. Children are made to undergo the process of socialization which consists of learning norms of social interactions. The socialization process includes segregation of activities into work and play by the children. Work activities are mandatory, teacher-directed, and time-specific. These activities may include drawing an object as specified by the teacher, waiting in the line etc. whereas play activities are performed only during free time. They are not necessarily directed by the teacher.

Though not exclusively included under the conflict school, theories particularly of Bourdieu's cultural reproduction (see Majoribanks 1985) strengthen the views of the conflict theorists. In the words of Giddens (1993: 438), "Cultural reproduction refers to the ways in which schools, in conjunction with other social institutions, help perpetuate social and economic inequalities across the generations. The concept directs our attention to the means whereby, via the hidden curriculum, schools influence the learning of values, attitudes and habits. Schools reinforce variations in cultural values and outlooks picked up early in life; when children leave school, these have the effect of limiting the opportunities of some, while facilitating those of others." According to Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) the major role of the educational system is the reproduction of culture of dominant classes. Dominant classes are able to impose their own meanings as legitimate the basis of the educational system. They maintain that educational systems tend to hide their objective function, by which is meant masking the objective truth or its relationship to the structure of the class relations. Children from dominant culture who already possess the cultural capital tend to achieve higher grades and perform well, more so because the educational system transmits social meanings that are familiar to them. Children from non-dominant cultures encounter an in-built barrier in the educational system as they are made to learn social meanings that are alien to them. They are predominantly from a working class background and often get eliminated from the educational system as they fail to understand the dominant culture. This educational failure in turn reinforces their underprivileged position in the society. In this way the reproduction of the relationship of power and privilege is perpetuated among social classes. The educational system, however,

continues to project itself as a neutral body based on meritocratic principles providing equal opportunities to all.

Kumar's discussion (2004) on what is worth teaching provides a critical analysis of the educational system. Though his discussion is rooted in the Indian context, it provides ample insights for a critical look at the world educational system. He agrees that the nature of knowledge available in schools for distribution of knowledge represents overall classification of knowledge and power in the society. Education in early India, for instance, resisted science teaching due to its struggle against colonialism. School curriculum remained confined to knowledge associated with the dominant castes. He points out that participation of children in curriculum development is nearly impossible as they lack the capability to articulate their ideas. Furthermore, their preferences change as they grow up. He highlights the need for deliberations while designing the curriculum providing space for non-dominant castes to voice their opinions.

2.4 Interactionism

Interactionism emerged as an alternative perspective to understand the relationship between individual and society. In its unit of analysis, interactionism shifts importance from the larger society to the individual. Drawn largely from a social psychological perspective, interactionism starts by examining the nature of interaction itself and thenceforth explores the nature of interaction between members of the society. Opposing the role of external conditions to explain an individual's action in relation with the larger society, interactionism tries to understand how an individual constructs meaning in the process of interaction (Abraham 1982). An individual in his/her interaction with others interprets and defines situations, develops meanings which direct his/her action and so constructs his/her own social world (Haralambos and Heald 1980: 208).

Interactionists focus on easily observable face-to-face interactions rather than on macro-level structural relationships involving various social units. They study social interaction through qualitative methods like participant observation, rather than surveys and interviews. Interactionists insist that close contact and immersion in the everyday lives of the research subjects is important for understanding the meaning of actions, and the process by which individuals construct the situation through their interaction. They are, however, criticized for being overly impressionistic in their research methods and possible bias in their observations. Developments in interactionism led to the birth of various sub-theories or perspectives like phenomenology, symbolic interactionism, and ethnomethodology. Some of the significant contributors to this perspective are Cooley, Mead, Blumer, Schutz, Garfinkel, and Berger and Luckmann. Cooley's concept of the looking-glass self shows how an individual develops the meaning of self by reflecting others' perception of who he is. This process of one mind responding to other minds involves how we imagine our appearance to others; how we imagine others' judgment of that appearance; and our personal feeling about that judgment (Haralambos and Heald 1980). According to Mead, individuals construct the self through the process of role-taking. Role taking involves the individual imaginatively taking the role of the other person with whom he is interacting. Goffman equates social world with theatrical drama in which actors present their self in everyday life through impression management.

Employing the interactionistic perspective, sociologists of education seek to explore the ways in which teachers and students interpret and assign meaning to their interactions. Interactionism suggests that the status of the students in an educational system is decided by the nature of interactions with teachers where meanings are constructed beyond academic parameters. A study by Howard Becker (1971) delineated meanings by which teachers evaluated the

students. The study demonstrated that teachers constructed the image of an 'ideal student' as one who came from non-working class and of 'problematic student' as one who came from working class. Another study by Cicourel and Kitsuse (1971) confirms that students were classified based on their class background rather than academic performances and other non-academic factors like their appearance, and manners etc.

Apart from evaluation, teachers' perception about students also affects the nature of knowledge imparted. Keddie (1971) finds that the social class is an important factor in defining and classifying students. Though students were supposedly divided in terms of ability, students within each group exhibited similar socio-economic background. In other words, in classification of students into various groups, students who belong to upper socio economic background formed the higher level, and lower level was occupied by students from lower socio-economic background. Though teachers were expected to impart similar knowledge, they modified their methods and nature of information imparted to different categories of students. Students who belonged to different groups also responded differently to the nature of the knowledge imparted to them. For instance, what is an 'ideal family' as told by the teacher was accepted by higher-class students, not by lower-class students. Keddie reasons that lower class students' non-acceptance was due to their different construction of meaning for family based on their own socio-economic background.

Reflection and Action 2.2

Visit a government school and a public school in your area. Discuss the nature and content of education with at least two teachers of primary classes in each school. Do you find a difference between the two schools in this context?

2.5 Postmodernism

Postmodernism is emerging as an alternative theoretical framework to modernism in understanding the real world, but has not yet developed as a single coherent thought or theoretical perspective. Practitioners have appropriated, transformed and transcended ideas from various theories and there is lack of consensus on the nature of ideas that can be covered (Ruttan 1993). In sociology, ideas of postmodernism are related to the emergence of the post-industrial society. Postmodernism rejects grand theories in understanding society and lays importance on local identities. A postmodern society is dominated by the market-oriented world of consumption with decentralized production systems. Society itself is a fragmented and pluralistic community of heterogeneous groups with diverse cultures and lifestyles, where nation-state is shrunk by privatization, globalization and new forms of citizen and civil rights. The traditional ruling class is rejected in favor of micro-political activities or social movements (Thomas and Walsh 1998).

Echoing postmodern concerns, Illich (1973) questions the notion of compulsory education followed almost all over the world mentioning that in the process traditional skills of self-sufficient people were being discarded. Schools work as repressive systems that induce students to passively consume whatever is taught to them. They are not allowed to think critically. They are made to conform to the rules laid down by the ruling class. Students are expected to follow whatever is taught of education. They by have no control over what they learn or how they learn it. Illich proposes the idea of de-schooling society (which is also the title of his widely acclaimed book) that rejects the existing educational system. He suggests that mechanisms should be built in a such way that allows direct and free involvement of the students in any part of the learning process. In other words, young in the society will retain control over what they want to learn and how they want to learn. Illich's idea of de-

schooling society appears as a utopian one. It may seem to be realistic when a student's performance in the educational system loses link with its status attainment in the larger society. In other words, decline of paid employment is a central concern of society (see Giddens 1993).

A similar argument is evident in the work of Freire (1970) who suggests replacement of curriculum based education with dialogue based informal education. He criticizes the existing educational system in being akin to the banking process in which the student is viewed as an empty account waiting to be filled by the teacher. He seeks to abandon the teacher-student dichotomy and favours introduction of reciprocity in the minds of teacher and student.

Box 2.2: Dialogue based education: Freire

"Only dialogue, which requires critical thinking, is also capable of generating critical thinking. Without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education. Education which is able to resolve the contradiction between teacher and student takes place in a situation in which both address their act of cognition to the object by which they are mediated. Thus the dialogical character of education as the practice of freedom does not begin when the teacher-student meets the student-teacher in a pedagogical situation, but rather when the former first asks himself *what* he will dialogue with the latter *about*. And preoccupation with the content of dialogue is really preoccupation with the program content of education" (Freire 1970:153).

2.6 Conclusion

In discussions related to theoretical developments in sociology of education, there is disagreement among scholars with broader theoretical schemes under which various contributions fall. For instance work of Bourdieu, and Bowles and Gintis can be discussed under conflict school as well as under a separate scheme of theories of reproduction. Lewis (1977) reviews the nature of research studies conducted by sociologists of higher education that can be generalized for sociology of education. According to him, there are three levels of analysis, macro, micro and middle. At the macro level, relationship between systems of higher education and wider social structure is considered. One example of this could be a study of how curriculum is modified or changed according to the changes in the occupational structure. There is also a cluster of studies that focus on education from a social stratification point of view. Here, attempts were made to understand sources and consequences of inequality within educational system and how they are related to the class position one holds in the society and other variables like race, religion, ethnicity and gender.

At the micro level, social relations within the education process are examined to understand learning outcomes of different teaching styles and strategies; the difference between formal instruction as against informal settings with faculty members or peers; mode of instruction; characteristics of the instructor; and system demands on the student. In between these two ends, there is middle level analysis that looks at the structure and function of institutions of educational institutions as organizations. Some of the issues focused by this analysis are: distribution of power and status, value system, disparity and tension between the formal and informal systems and organization of social roles and norms in the institutions.

Brookover (1982) identifies three areas of research undertaken in the field of sociology of education: (i) education and society – which deals with purposes and functions of education in the society, education in the process of social change, education and stratification of the society, and relationship between education and other units of society; (ii) education as a social system – which

analyzes organization and structure of the educational system from school district to classroom, and informal structure and culture of these units; and (iii) outcomes of education for students that examines the impact of education on various aspects of students from aspirations, career, further education and social status. Brookover further comments that methods followed are also varied and different. Broadly, both quantitative and qualitative methods are used including cross-sectional surveys, longitudinal studies, case studies, ethnographies, and experimental studies. However, there is a preponderance of research studies that investigate activities related to learning within the context of schools in comparison with colleges and universities (Feinberg 1996). Studies that compare out-of-school and in-school subjects in understanding of the impact of schooling vis-à-vis other social factors are inadequate.

Rubinson and Ralph (1986) suggest that there are three widely researched topics in the study of educational change: contribution of education to economic output; technological change and the expansion of schooling, and educational expansion as individual utility. They highlight the methodological problems related to inferences across levels of analysis in studies irrespective of nature of theoretical approach followed. There is also criticism that existing theoretical models in sociology are inadequate to bring about a scientific understanding of education (Carr 1990; Lewis 1977). Theories of sociology of education are reflective of times. Different theoretical approaches dominate different periods of time. There is a need for the development of a theoretical perspective to integrate the macro and micro analysis of education sociologically.

2.7 Further Reading

Freire, Paulo 1997. "Pedagogy of the Oppressed." In David J Flinders and Stephen J Thornton (ed.) *The Curriculum Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge

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Unit 3

Thinkers on Education - I

Contents

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)
- 3.3 Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948)
- 3.4 Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950)
- 3.5 Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-1986)
- 3.6 Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888-1975)
- 3.7 Conclusion
- 3.8 Further Reading

Learning Objectives

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the perception of Indian thinkers on education;
- compare and contrast their viewpoints; and
- articulate your own point of view on education.

3.1 Introduction

In this unit we will explore the viewpoints of Indian thinkers on education. Against the backdrop of the growing discontent with western education in India, there is an impending need to understand how Indian thinkers have conceptualized the education system particularly in terms of its nature, extent, and scope. They represent indigenous thought with which both students and educators are able to relate. The purpose here is to look for viable alternatives that would play a transformative role in society and create a just and humane social order.

3.2 Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)

Rabindranath Tagore was born in Kolkata to a deeply religious family of landowners. His father Debendranath was a man of integrity, spiritual acumen, and strength of character. He cast a deep impact on Rabindranath in the formative years of life. Like many other children of aristocratic families of that time, the major part of Rabindranath's childhood was spent in servants' quarters under the care and authority of those who served his family. His first lessons were from the Bengali primer, *Varna Parichaya*. Later, he joined the Oriental Seminary, then the Normal School (which followed the teaching-learning pattern of English schools). He sought admission to the Bengali Academy in order to gain a grounding in English. He remained far from happy in school. The rooms were dismal, in fact, the entire building was unsuitable for human habitation. There were no pictures, not a stroke of colour, nothing that would motivate the students to attend school. Naturally, many of them played truant; those who did attend school regularly would remain filled with depression (Tagore 1966). The grim, monotonous, unhappy experience in school compelled him to consolidate his ideas on meaningful education and revolutionize the whole process of education.

Tagore was opposed to the western system of education that emphasized learning from books with the sole objective of developing the intellectual potential of the child. He believed that education should be aimed not merely to develop the intellect but the complete personality of the child. An education

system should cultivate and nurture among children the ability to learn directly from nature and life as such. Students should lead a simple, self-disciplined life based on the virtues of sociability, compassion, and the spirit of brotherhood. According to him, moral and spiritual values constituted the most important aspect of education. He criticized western education for treating the child as a receiver of packaged information in a way that did not awaken his/her own creativity and innate abilities. The children, in turn, pick up bits and pieces out of the information thrust upon them and present themselves for examination of their ability to retain the information. According to Tagore it was not enough to pass on information. What was important was the ability to put to use what one has learnt and to develop curiosity and alertness of mind. The child should be able to appreciate a sense of freedom acquired by free movements of the body in the midst of the natural environment. It may be understood at this stage itself that for Tagore, education stood for freedom from ignorance and from passion and prejudice.

He upheld that the child learns the first lessons on freedom from nature which is the basic source of knowledge. According to Tagore, the ideal school should be established in the midst of fields, trees, and plants, under the open sky and far removed from human settlements. This would keep the children away from the turmoils of daily life. More importantly living in the forest was associated with austere pursuits and renunciation. Firm on his ideas, Tagore set out to develop an appropriate system of national education for India. He founded the Ashram school at Santiniketan in 1901 with emphasis on non-duality (*advaita*) in the domain of knowledge, friendship for all, fulfilment of one's duties without concern for the outcome(s). Here education was combined with disciplining of the senses and one's own life. In talking about education for life, Tagore did not ignore the significance of science teaching. He did value inventions and discoveries in so far as they made life less burdensome. What he condemned, however, was the race for material prosperity at the cost of creative genius and dignity. He expressed the view that the current education system was not geared to inculcate the ability to think independently. According to Tagore, teaching through a foreign language was both difficult and unrealistic. He was opposed to borrowed knowledge that distanced pupils from their own social and cultural fabric. He said that education which imparts knowledge but bears no relevance to life situations is of no avail. He said that the curriculum should be developed by teachers and students together. It should be based on their needs and requirements. He laid stress on discussion as a mode of delivery of knowledge. The books should serve as mere supplements to knowledge acquired through life situations and independent thinking. Learning should proceed from familiar situations to unfamiliar situations. This meant that children should be made familiar with their own environment before exposing them to alien ones. They should be encouraged to learn from and about the natural phenomena that they encounter in their daily lives.

Salkar (1990) wrote that Tagore was aware that children store in their brains the images of all that they observe. This was more marked in the early period of childhood when curiosity is sharp. He favoured teaching of history and geography through field exposure by way of educational tours to specific places for learning and widening of horizons. He wanted to set up a school based on his ideals for which he travelled far and wide. Tagore settled at Santiniketan where he founded the Brahmacharya Ashram with only five students. The emphasis here was on a personalized relationship between teachers and pupils. Tagore himself taught English in the Ashram School. He would narrate stories from Indian history in the evening to the children. Having prepared the ground for school education, he diverted attention to higher education and established the Visva Bharati.

Box 3.1: Tagore on Visva Bharati

“In every nation, education is intimately associated with the life of the people. For us, modern education is relevant only to turning out clerks, lawyers, doctors, magistrates and policemen.... This education has not reached the farmer, the oil grinder, or the potter. No other educated society has been struck with such disaster.... If ever a truly Indian university is established it must from the very beginning implement India’s own knowledge of economics, agriculture, health, medicine and of all other everyday knowledge from the surrounding villages. Then alone can the school or university become the centre of the country’s of living. This school must practice agriculture, dairying and weaving using the best modern methods.... I have proposed to call this school Visva Bharati” (Tagore 1963, cited here from Jha 1997: 610).

He believed that the basic task of education was to produce, gather develop, and disseminate knowledge to the younger generation. In the Visva Bharati, two autonomous institutions survive: the Kala Bhawan (the school of fine arts) and Sangeet Bhawan (the school of music and dance). Tagore is no more but the ideals of education he laid down and the institutions he established keep him alive in the minds of the people.

Box 3.2: Major Works of Rabindranath Tagore

My Reminiscences. 1917. London: Macmillan

Nationalism. 1917. London: Macmillan

Ashramar Roop O Vikas [The Form of the Ashrama School]. 1941. Santiniketan: Visva Bharati

Siksha [A Collection of Essays on Education]. 1990. Santiniketan: Visva Bharati

3.3 Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948)

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in Porbandar situated in Kathiawar, Gujarat. His father and grandfather were chief ministers in Kathiawar. After completing school education he went to London to study law. He came back to the country and practised law in Mumbai and Rajkot. He did not get much success in the profession and went to South Africa on an unexpected offer. His experiments in education started when he returned to South Africa in 1897 with his two sons and a nephew for whom he searched for an appropriate school. He could have sent them to the school for European children but did not think that English as a medium of instruction employed in those schools was worthwhile. He used to run the ‘Tolstoy Farm’ which could not afford to pay the wages that qualified teachers would demand. So, he took upon himself the task of teaching the children. He decided to live among the children and lay the foundation of character-building and self-dependence in them. Gandhi encouraged the children to undertake all the chores ranging from cooking to scavenging themselves. Certainly, a teacher would cooperate and guide them throughout the endeavour. Apart from physical training he engaged in spiritual training of students (Prasad 2001). He returned to India in 1914 where he was destined to play a major role in the freedom struggle and importantly, in the educational reconstruction of the country. There is no denying that colonial rule had eroded the traditions and values of the education system as people were imparted western education that prepared them for minor positions in the government machinery of the British. This class of people educated in the western system easily gave in to the lucrative offers of the colonialists at the expense of their own dignity. He tried hard to overthrow colonial education and present an alternative that people could relate with and find useful.

Gandhi was concerned with the rising trend of people giving up their vocation after acquiring western education. Cobblers, carpenters, blacksmiths, masons, tailors tended to surrender their vocations treating them as inferior. They would take pride in joining the position of clerk in offices.

Box 3.3: Gandhi on alternative pedagogy

“As against this, take the case of a child in whom the education of the heart is attended to from the very beginning. Supposing he is set to some useful occupation like spinning, carpentry, agriculture, etc., for his education and in that connection is given a thorough and comprehensive knowledge relating to the theory of the various operations that he is to perform and the use and construction of the tools that he would be wielding. He would not only develop a fine, healthy body but also a sound, vigorous intellect that is not merely academic but is firmly rooted in and is tested from day to day by experience. His intellectual education would include knowledge of mathematics and the various sciences that are useful for an intelligent and efficient exercise of his avocation. If to this is added literature by way of recreation, it would give him a perfect well-balanced, all-round education in which the intellect, the body and the spirit have all full and develop together into a natural, harmonious whole” (cited here from Fagg 2002:9).

Gandhi proposed ‘nai talim’ or basic education which emphasized the introduction of productive handicrafts in the school curriculum and in doing so bestowed honour and dignity to those who are adept at them. In the words of Kumar (1997: 508), “It implied a radical restructuring of the sociology of school knowledge in India, where productive handicrafts had been associated with the lowest groups in the hierarchy of castes. Knowledge of the production processes involved in crafts, such as spinning, weaving, leather work, pottery, metal-work, basket-making and bookbinding had been the monopoly of specific caste groups in the lowest stratum of the traditional social hierarchy. Many of them belonged to the category of ‘untouchables’. India’s indigenous tradition of education as well as the colonial education system had emphasized the skills (such as literacy) and knowledge of which the upper castes had a monopoly. In terms of its epistemology, Gandhi’s proposal intended to stand the education system on its head.” The basic education, hence, favoured the children belonging the lowest rungs in society. This facilitated the process of social transformation. According to Gandhi, schools should be self-sufficient so that the poorest of the poor could educate themselves. This could happen only if the schools could generate enough resources for themselves. Further, schools that are self-sufficient do not fall prey to the whims and interference of the state. Teachers should not be made to give in to the dictates of bureaucracy and teach out of the curriculum laid down by it. Learning was not confined to memorizing contents in the textbooks. Gandhi believed that in India where more than 80 per cent of the population subsists by agriculture and about 10 per cent by industries, delimiting the scope of education to literacy was not appropriate. Boys and girls should be encouraged to value manual labour. In fact, carpentry, spinning and other crafts may be used as a means of stimulating the intellect. This can be made possible by explaining the underlying mechanism. When a child interested in spinning, for instance, is explained the mechanism of the working of the wheel, the history of cotton, the method of determining the strength of the yarn, his/her intellect gets sharpened. This was true education. He was in favour of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction, for English creates a divide between those who are ‘highly educated’ and the many uneducated people. Moreover, comprehension is faster and better when children are taught in their mother tongue. Gandhi clearly stated that if English were removed from the curriculum of primary and secondary or high school education then it would be possible to make the children go through the whole course in seven years instead of eleven years.

Reflection and Action 3.1

Compare and contrast Gandhi's and Tagore's ideas on education

Gandhi stayed with Rabindranath Tagore at Santiniketan for about a month. In the course of close interaction between the two thinkers emerged consolidated ideas on the future of education in India. Gandhi set up his ashrama in Sabarmati in which he also established a school for children. He proposed the following scheme for education: (i) adult education of the whole community, including the parents of newborn babies; (ii) pre-basic schooling from 2 to 7 years; (iii) basic schooling from 7 to 14 years; (iv) post-basic education from 14 to 18 years; and (v) university and teacher training institute education. The schedule consisted of rendering morning prayers, cleaning of the campus including lavatories, engaging in productive work (e.g., spinning, weaving, cultivation and others), preparing meals, and studies (that related to the day's work and its scientific, mathematical and other aspects). Students were taught to think before doing and think after doing. All of them were imparted training in music and art. Stagecraft and management were an important part of education. In the afternoon, before dinner, they played games. The evening prayer was ecumenical. In the scheme of nai talim, there was no place for textbooks, but the students were encouraged to use the library to enhance their knowledge. Over a period of time nai talim schools were set up throughout the country (Prasad 2001). Nai talim schools did not succeed as institutions. They were thought to be meant for villagers so the political elite did not support them. Gandhi's ideas on education, however, continue to inspire many intellectuals and humanists.

Box 3.4: Major Works of Gandhi

An Autobiography or The Story of my Experiments with Truth. 1963. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House

Basic Education. 1951. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House

Education for life. 1937. Rajamundry: Hindustan Publishing Co.

3.4 Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950)

Sri Aurobindo was born in Kolkata. His father, Dr. K. D. Ghose, acquired a medical degree from the West and had developed deep appreciation of its lifestyle. In fact, his values of life and lifestyle were largely westernized. Sri Aurobindo's mother was Swarnlata Devi – the daughter of Rajnarayan Bose who was often referred to as 'rishi' which means ascetic and as the 'Grandfather of Indian Nationalism'. Rajnarayan Bose could not exercise much influence on Sri Aurobindo because he was sent to Darjeeling for schooling at the age of five. The school was known for imparting western-style education. It was meant for European children. Two years later his parents sent him to England. He, along with his brother, stayed in Manchester in the care of a Latin scholar. In 1890, he was admitted to the Indian Civil Services as a probationer but was later disqualified due to certain reasons. Anyway, he came back to India and joined as Professor of English and French in Maharaja College, Vadodara. This marked the beginning of his deep insight into the ancient lore, mastering Sanskrit and Bengali languages (see Das 2000). In 1910 he went to Pondicherry with the objective of devoting his entire time to the practice of yoga and spirituality. In the course of forty years there, he evolved a method of spiritual practice that came to be known as Integral Yoga. In 1926 he founded the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in collaboration with his wife who is better known as the Mother.

According to Sri Aurobindo, any system of education should be founded on the study of the human mind. The reason is simple: while the material with which artists deal is inert, that of educators and educationists is highly sensitive. The major defect in the European system of education is precisely its insufficient knowledge of psychology. The means through which education could be made meaningful was to acquire an understanding of the instruments of knowledge and develop a system of teaching which was natural, easy, and effective. The teachers need to accept their role as that of a helper and guide not as an instructor who imparts knowledge, trains the mind of the children, and makes impositions on them. At best, the teacher can make suggestions and encourage the children to acquire knowledge for themselves. Admittedly, children of younger age need greater help and guidance than older children. The children should be given the freedom to choose their own qualities, virtues, capacities, capabilities, and career. It is improper to impose one's ideas on them. Education needs to be geared to drawing out the innate abilities in children and perfecting them for noble use. Furthermore, the children should be made familiar and aware of all that surrounds them and which meets them on a day-to-day basis, e.g., natural-physical environment, sounds, habits and customs, nationality. The purpose here is to foster free and natural growth, for these are the prerequisites of genuine development.

Sri Aurobindo proposed complete education of a subject(s) encompassing teaching/learning about its/their different aspects and dimensions. This stood out in contrast to the modern teaching system wherein children are taught portions of several subjects. Consequently, they are not able to master any subject. The older system was to teach fewer subjects but delve deep into each one. Sri Aurobindo felt that the practice of teaching lesser number of subjects with great thoroughness was more appropriate in so far as it built 'real culture'. He believed that the mother-tongue served as the appropriate medium of instruction. Children should acquire competence in the medium first not by making them spell words, read books but by familiarizing them with interesting parts of literature. A large part of their study should be devoted to the development of mental faculties and moral character. The foundation for the study and appreciation of art history, philosophy and science could be laid at this stage itself. Often, the idea of universal education is pursued as a mission with complete disregard of what education is or what it should ideally be. The problem gets confounded when there is demand for enforcing a national type of education in the Indian subcontinent which has witnessed clash of the Asiatic and European consciousness political subjugation that placed the control of education in the hands of foreigners. In such a situation the call for national education is likely to raise disconcerting confusion till the ideas on the basic concept of education are made clear. It is also not appropriate to decry the education imparted in schools and universities in that they are denationalizing, degrading, and impoverishing to the national mind and character only because it is governed and controlled by the British. It is important to determine by ourselves the alternative, the principle or practice we propose to replace it with. Just taking over from the foreigners the control over education and resting it with an indigenous agency that at best changes the medium of instruction and curriculum is not adequate for meeting the demands of the present much less of the future. What is called for is development an education system proper to the need, culture, and temperament of the people themselves. Does this mean return to the astronomy and mathematics of Bhaskara or return to the ancient chariot and bullock cart in the name of Swadeshi? Sri Aurobindo (1920-21, cited here from 2000: 208-209), stated "It is the spirit, the living and vital issue that we have to do with, and there the question is not between modernism and antiquity, but between an imported civilization and the greater possibility of the Indian mind and nature, not between the present and the past, but between the present and the future. It is not a return to the fifth century but an initiation of the centuries to come, not reversion but a break forward away from a

present artificial falsity to her own greater innate potentialities that is demanded by the soul, by the shakti of India.” The central aim of national education is to strengthen the powers of the human mind and evoke the will and the ability to use knowledge, character, and culture. Sri Aurobindo explains this through the simple example of learning science. It is not enough to acquire competence in the discipline and to have the entire knowledge at one’s fingertips. The major issue is not what is learnt but what one does with that learning, the use that the knowledge is put to and the way in which it is put to use.

Sri Aurobindo upheld that one way to get to the very core to culture in India is by acquiring knowledge of Sanskrit or any other indigenous language by whatever means is natural and stimulating to the mind. When this happens, it would be possible to establish continuity between the still living power of our past and the yet uncreated power of our future, and how we are to learn and use English or any other foreign language so as to know helpfully the life, ideas and culture of other countries and establish own right relations with the world around us” (ibid, pp. 209). This is the aim of national education.

Box 3.5: Major Works of Sri Aurobindo

The Life Divine. 1939. Calcutta: Arya Publishing House

The Synthesis of Yoga. 1955. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo

The Human Cycle. 1949. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram

3.5 Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-1986)

Jiddu Krishnamurti was born in the small town of Madanapalli in Andhra Pradesh to middle-class Telugu-Brahmin parents. His father joined the Theosophical Society in 1881 and in 1901 the family came to stay in the Society’s headquarters at Adyar. When he was still fourteen years old, Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater recognized in him the potential to be the world teacher and proclaimed him to be the vehicle for Christ in the West and of Buddha in the East who would bring salvation to humankind. Mrs. Besant adopted Krishnamurti and took him to England where she educated him and in the process prepared him for a bigger role in world society. In 1911 she proclaimed him the head of her religious organization, The Order of the Star in the East. Between the years 1911 and 1929, he questioned himself on the need for operating through an organization in order to coerce people to follow a particular path. In the year 1929, Krishnamurti dissolved The Order of the Star in the East. He felt convinced that Truth cannot be approached through a laid out path. Humanity had to free itself from the shackles of caste, religion, sect and all that through which people feel bound. His concern was to set human beings absolutely and unconditionally free. He travelled all over the world delivering talks and discourses on the nature of truth, sorrow, and freedom. One of the themes on which he deliberated extensively was education. In fact, he established the Rishi Valley Education Centre in 1928 in Andhra Pradesh.

Krishnamurti believed that the scope of education did not consist solely of reading and learning from books, clearing examination and using the academic qualification to secure a job. In the present day, education has been used to develop conformity to society and culture by being sucked into the social, economic and political streams. It is widely believed that the only way to solve the problems of the people is to provide them education, make them read and write. More important than filling one’s mind with information was developing a perspective, going beyond the words in the book in order to comprehend and appreciate what is contained in them as also to determine whether what the books say is true or false. He wrote (1963: 163) “When you go on the street you see the poor man and the rich man; and when you look around you,

you see all the so called educated people throughout the world. They have titles, degrees, caps and gowns, they are doctors and scientists; and yet they have not created a world in which man can live happily. So modern education has failed, has it not? And if you are satisfied to be educated in the same old way, you will make another howling mess of life.” Krishnamurti agreed that it is necessary to be able to read and write, and learn engineering or some other profession but mere competence in these cannot build the capacity of life. One who has undergone the process of real education could excel in mathematics, geography, history and other disciplines but would never be drawn into the stream of society primarily because it is corrupt, immoral, violent and greedy. The basic concern then is with working out the right kind of education that would develop the capacity in the mind to resist all negative influences and bestiality of the civilization. There is a need to create a new culture not based on consumerism and industrialization but on real quality of religion on the one hand and an education system that would prepare minds not given to greed or envy on the other. Right education, therefore, is one that brings about inner transformation, and awakens intelligence.

Krishnamurti (1974:20) clearly stated that intelligence is the “capacity to think clearly, objectively, sanely, and healthily.” Intelligence is a state bereft of personal emotions, opinions, prejudice, or inclination. Now, it is possible to think clearly only if one is sensitive. Intelligence implies that one is able to appreciate the beauty of the earth, the trees, sky, sunset, stars and all that envelops him/her. When that happens, the development of a child is total which means that he/she acquires not only inward understanding, the capacity to explore and examine his/her inward self and inner state, but is good at whatever he/she does outwardly. The two aspects, i.e., of inward development and outward excellence need to go hand-in-hand. Krishnamurti was opposed to the idea of competition and competitive spirit. The basis of competition is making comparison, judging and evaluating their performance. This leads to conflict, fear, and feeling of helplessness among them. In fact, he believed that one could live happily in this competitive world only if one is not competitive. More importantly, when a mind has understood the futility and absurdity of drawing comparisons and does not engage in it can a foundation from which it can start to learn in the true sense of the word be established. Then, there is no frustration, and no hankering after success. In place of competition, confidence (without the element of self-importance) should be instilled in children (Thapan 2001).

Krishnamurti was deeply interested to keep in touch with the schools in India, Brookwood Park in England, the Oak Grove School at Ojai, California. He proposed to write a letter to them every fortnight explaining what an ideal school should be, to convey that schools are not the centres for academic excellence but much more in that they are to remain engaged in cultivation of the total human beings. They are to encourage the students and educators to flower naturally, bring out their innate abilities in an environment not plagued with fear, pressure of authority, or competition. After Krishnamurti's death, a few more schools were established, like the Sahyadri School near Pune. It is a boarding school which caters to children belonging to upper class families. Two other schools are the Bal Anand in Mumbai and the Bhagirathi Valley School in Uttar Pradesh which is attended by children belonging to lower-middle class families. Krishnamurti's ideas on education found manifestation in the Rishi Valley Education Centre in Andhra Pradesh set up under the auspices of Krishnamurti Foundation India. The Rishi Valley Education Centre was set up with the mission to usher in a different kind of education that would provide the children with knowledge and at the same time make them understand that acquisition of knowledge was not the ultimate objective of life and that it was equally necessary to be sensitive to trees, birds, to know what it is to love, and to be generous. This is possible when the educators are themselves able to reach out to realms beyond words in the

books and are able to draw out the best in children. Certainly, authority is destructive. Care has to be taken that children learn from themselves. It is a fruitful process in the sense that it leads to wisdom. Children learn to depend on themselves more than on anybody else. When a person depends on certain people for safety, for money, for pleasure, there is a strong possibility that one feels frightened, irritated, angry, jealous and frustrated when they do something that upsets him/her.

Reflection and Action 3.2

Do you think Krishnamurti's ideas on education are practical in the present day? Discuss with your co-learners at the study centre.

In the Rishi Valley Education Centre and other schools established by the Krishnamurti Foundation India, learning takes place through exploration and discovery, and interaction between teachers and students. Despite the fact that they follow a clearly laid out curriculum (because they are affiliated with a centrally or state-level administered education board that conducts examinations at the class X and XII stages), there are co-curricular activities that apart from the focus on arts, are intended to creatively engage the students in their immediate environment. The students are guided to understand their inner self, psychology process, emotions thoughts, and problems. The Krishnamurti Foundation India school in Chennai has developed a well-drafted curriculum for Environmental Studies which has been adopted by the Indian Council for Secondary Education (ICSE) Board for schools affiliated with it (Thapan 2001). There is no denying that Krishnamurti continues to survive through his ideas, writings and institution to inspire both students and educators alive. What awards greater significance to his works is the integration of education with individual and society.

Box 3.6: Major Works of Jiddu Krishnamurti

You are the Word. 1972. Madras: Krishnamurti Foundation India

The Wholeness of Life. 1978. London: Gollancz & Harper Row

Letters to the Schools. 1981 madras: Krishnamurti Foundation India

3.6 Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888-1975)

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was born in Tiruttani near Chennai. He specialized in the understanding of the ethics of Vedanta. In fact, he wrote a dissertation on the ethics of the Vedanta and its metaphysical presuppositions. His interest and study of Indian philosophy developed a great deal after he was offered a position in the Department of Philosophy at the Madras Presidency College following which he joined as Professor of Philosophy at the University of Mysore. Radhakrishnan was subsequently appointed to the King George V Chair of Mental and Moral Science in the University of Calcutta. Later, representing India, he addressed the Philosophical Congress at Harvard University. He was invited to join the Manchester College, Oxford. He severed as Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at Oxford University and Fellow of the British Academy. Back in India, he remained Vice Chancellor (between 1939 and 1948) of the Banaras Hindu University, Leader Of Indian delegation to UNESCO (between 1946 and 1952), Ambassador of India to the USSR (between 1949 and 1952), Vice President of Indian (between 1952 and 1962), President, General Conference of UNESCO (between 1952 and 1954), Chancellor, University of Delhi (between 1953 and 1962), and President of India (between 1962 and 1967). Radhakrishnan believed that an education system should be geared to both train the intellect as also instill grace in the heart and in doing so bring about balanced growth of an individual. The students should not only be intellectually competent and technically skilled but also

civilized in their emotions and refined in their purpose because their worth as members of society desires not solely for intellectual ability or technical skill but devotion to a great cause. This was crucial in the present age marked with greed anxiety, defeatism, and severe constrain on independent thinking. People in the modern age are given to accepting whatever the society and its channels of expression (e.g. the film, radio, television, newspaper) put into circulation. Intellectual integrity remains at stake. A significant way to free oneself from the debilitating effects and strain of modern life was the study of literature, philosophy, and religion that interpret higher laws of the universe and provide a philosophy and an attitude to life. Hence, one must learn to read the classics that deal with life and destiny of humankind. Quiet study of classics develops independent reflection. Individuals master philosophy, acquire more knowledge in universities – places of higher learning.

In an address at Moscow University on June 18, 1956 Radhakrishnan (cited here from print version 1992 : 10), “ But buildings do not make a university. It is the teachers and the pupils and their pursuit of knowledge, these make the soul of a university. The university is the sanctuary of the intellectual life of a country. The healthy roots of national life are to be found in the people. They are the wellsprings of national awakening. They are the spirit behind revolutionary movements of society. When we give education, we start a ferment of debate and discussion of first principles. The educated youth will voice their thoughts and find fault with things as they are. We train in this university not only doctors and engineers but also men and women who think for themselves. They will not judge everything by the party line. If we destroy the initiative, the freedom of the people we do so at our peril. If men lose intellectual vigour, the future of civilization is bleak indeed.” The students of a university need to be trained to fight ignorance, injustice, oppression, and fear. Indiscipline among students rises when they are not trained to deal with the problems of life with fortitude, self-control and sense of balance. Those serving in universities are in a position to prepare mindset that would accept the idea of establishment of a world community with a common consciousness and common conscience. An important function of the university was the advancement of international understanding and international peace. Radhakrishnan reiterated the role of the university in establishing and affirming peace in several speeches. In an address at the Calcutta University, he said that universities of the world form a great fraternity binding together their members all over the world. Again, in another context he stated that the university fraternity transcends caste, class, creed, and nationality. It honours achievements and scholarship in art and literature, and science.

According to Radhakrishnan, an attempt should be made to draw the best minds into the teaching profession. What often happens is that the teachers are paid low salaries. They do not fully appreciate the intellectual value of their service and take to writing textbooks and seeking examinerships. In order to avoid such tendencies, the teaching profession has to be made more lucrative. Apart from disinterested teachers, the higher education system is fraught with the problem of inadequate opportunities for conversation and debate. Radhakrishnan believed that true education calls for free and fearless exchange of opinions, thoughts, and ideas between and among students. Occasions and situations in which this would be possible are hardly made available to students. Furthermore, there is no adequate provision for games and other activities in which a large member of students may engage together. He favoured the idea of students joining the National Cadet Corps in large numbers because its membership posts discipline, teamwork sprit, and sense of dignity of labour. He drew attention to the fact that education of the youth does not find a place of significance in the schemes of development adopted by the centre and the states. He cautioned that the experiment in democracy would suffer if education was not accorded high priority and that future leadership would be imperiled if the level of university education was allowed to deteriorate.

On November 4, 1948, the Government of India appointed the University Education Commission under the chairmanship of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. This commission, therefore, came to be referred to as the Radhakrishnan commission. The major task before this commission was to suggest improvements in higher education. The Commission clearly stated that the teachers occupy a crucial place in the education system. It is their responsibility to inculcate right values and truth in students along with generating interest in the field of study. Apart from others the Commission recommended that vocational institutions should be established in order that students could choose to pursue vocational courses after schooling of 10-12 years.

It is widely accepted that Radhakrishnan's vision of higher education in general and in the context of India in particular was grounded in the conviction that it should provide leadership in politics, administration, industry, and commerce at one level while at the other it should lead to self development, fearlessness, and integrity.

Box 3.6: Major works of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan

The Essentials of Psychology. 1912. Oxford: The University Press

The Hindu View of Life. 1927. London: George Allen and Unwin

Indian Philosophy. 1923. London: Allen and Unwin

3.7 Conclusion

We have come to realize that Indian thinkers on education weave strands from philosophy and pragmatism together as warp and woof. According to them, the scope of education extends beyond letters and words to encompass the totality of being. Meaningful education, they laid down, is preparation for life, for meeting challenges squarely, and for self-enrichment. Education is freedom from fear and ignorance leading to liberation. In this sense it is both the means as also the ultimate objective of life.

3.8 Further Reading

Jha, Narmadeshwar. 1997. "Rabindranath Tagore." In Zaghoul Morsy (ed.) *Thinkers on Education*. Vol. 4. New Delhi: UNESCO/Oxford & IBH Publishing

Kumar, Krishna. 1997. "Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi." In Zaghoul Morsy (ed.) *Thinkers on Education*. Vol. 4. New Delhi: UNESCO/Oxford & IBH Publishing

Unit 4

Thinkers on Education-II

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Learning Objectives

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- discuss the contribution of major thinkers on education; and
- critically assess the influence and impact of the thinkers on the basic understanding of education on the one hand and policies on education on the other.

4.1 Introduction

After careful reading of the first two Units of this Block, you are familiar with the concept of education, the major sociological theories as also the broad perspective on sociology of education. Against this background, we will now explore the views and intellectual contribution of thinkers on education. The chief purpose here is to understand the development of educational thought from the earliest times to the present day. The critical thinking that marks the intellectual contribution has a profound impact on policy and the practice of education in society. In this Unit, we will study the contribution and influence of prominent thinkers on education in a chronological sequence. We have already familiarized ourselves with the ideas of some thinkers such as Durkheim, Parsons as also a few others in earlier Units hence we will not repeat them in this one.

4.2 Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910)

Leo Tolstoy was born at Yasnaya Polyana in the region of Tula, Russia. His parents died when he was still very young. Tolstoy pursued the study of law and Oriental languages at Kazan University. He was not an outstanding student. Most of the teachers found him unable and unwilling to learn. He returned to Yasnaya Polyana without completing studies. Here, he indulged in gambling and incurred a heavy debt. Later, he joined the Russian army. Over a period of time, he developed interest in literature and took to writing himself. He became the doyen of Russian literature in the 19th century. Some of his more widely acclaimed works are, *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina*, *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, *What Then Must We Do* and several others.

Apart from his contribution to the field of literature, Tolstoy is remembered for his dynamic ideas on education. His concern with education found expression, apart from others, in his first book, *The Four Periods of Development* in which he sought to explain the development of human character from the early phase of childhood. He established a child-centered

approach to education wherein children's spiritual growth, feelings, process of learning find a place of significance. This formed the substratum on which his later thought on education was embedded. Tolstoy established a school on his ancestral estate for peasant children in the year 1849 when he was barely 21 years of age. He firmly believed that it was important to do well to those whom one encounters and among whom one leads one's life. He was sure that one's own well-being was not possible till the peasants, and the majority of the people in one's nation, remained poor and unhappy. It was with the sole intention of being able to provide respite to the poor peasants from poverty, ignorance, and superstition through education that he set up a school for them. Over a period of time, he gave up school teaching and joined the armed forces. After the Crimean war between 1853 and 1856, he retired from the army and pursued his passion of teaching peasant children once again. With the objective of drawing from the experience and practice of education in other countries, Tolstoy visited Germany, France, and Switzerland. One identifiable impact of his visit to these countries was a significant rise in his educational activity back in Russia between the years 1859 and 1862. It was in this period that educational reforms were being planned in Russia. Tolstoy was convinced that education in the hands of civil servants could not be used to serve the interests of the country. He suggested that national education should be entrusted to an association that would ably educate the people, establish schools, develop the content of education, train teachers, provide the equipment and infrastructure to schools and contribute to the democratic management of education. He planned an association that would fulfill the above-mentioned objectives.

According to Tolstoy, unequal access to education in Russian society was the root cause of antagonism between the privileged class constituting only a small group and the remaining population. The solution to the rising antagonism and the other social problems (such as despotism, violence, superstition and injustice) lay in providing equal education to all sections of society. More importantly, he expressed that the fruitfulness of education should be measured in terms of its success in serving the needs of the people. His ideas acquired greater social importance in the light of the fact that they were put forth at a time when capitalist development was all set to preside over scientific and technical knowledge that would jeopardize the interests of the masses and generate hostility and antagonism between classes. Tolstoy demanded democratization of education which in effect meant liberating it from the clutches of those who controlled power and harnessing it in favour of the society at large.

Tolstoy argued for freedom in school and in education. He believed that children are inherently innocent and perfect. It was not proper to interfere with the natural development of children in the name of education. But, does this mean that children should be left completely to themselves? How can education be imparted to them? Tolstoy explained that the role of the teacher had to be minimal, limited to guiding them gently and certainly not by force coercion. Freedom in education needed to be treated as a counter practice of authoritarian teaching through which children would develop independent cognitive abilities. Unless this happened, knowledge loaded on children would not bear fruit. He perceived distinct opposition between community activity in the field of national education on the one hand and red tapism and bureaucracy on the other. According to Tolstoy, freedom in education was opposed to authoritarianism in teaching. It was of utmost importance in developing a humane attitude in children and inculcating self-esteem and respect for their dignity as human beings. He believed that since the main concern of education was with children, the study of the child was crucial to formulating strategies for educating them. He experimented with different methods of teaching, reading and writing in terms of their efficacy. Tolstoy, as mentioned earlier, treated the child as the subject of education. He established

that a teacher deals with the entire personality of a child, hence the need of a holistic perspective integrating sociological and psychological aspects. Yegorov (1997:652) expresses this clearly, "Reading Tolstoy's educational writings, one has almost physical perception of a living child, presented not in a frozen photographic pose but in the manifestation and development of its individual characteristics, the unfolding of its personality and in mental states which fluctuate in accordance with the many and varied influences to which he or she is subject".

The other aspect that Tolstoy emphasized in his doctrine of education was the empowerment and freedom of the people to set up schools for their children that were based on the wishes of the parents and community. This would lead to the development of genuine culture among the people. The agencies for deciding the content and method of education would be the parents and the community at large. Here, children are regarded as the subject of education which calls for developing their individual characteristics, personalities, and mental states (that are known to vary according to situations). Education, therefore, cannot remain divorced from a child's cognitive capacities in different stages of growth. He demonstrated that in the first stage of education, children's thinking and comprehension are guided by pictures, colours, and sound rather than logical thought. Information conveyed through pictures rather than through logical conclusions is better understood and retained by children (see Yegorov 1997). He believed that elementary education laid the foundation for a child's intellectual and moral growth and state of happiness or unhappiness throughout life. Elementary education determined whether a child would enjoy studying or would regard it as a burden, whether he/she would lay more emphasis on spiritual values or on material well-being. Spirituality could be impressed upon the child only in school. The *Primer of Count of Tolstoy* published in 1872, "consisted of a set of teaching materials in four volumes: a) the alphabets proper; b) texts for elementary study; c) Slavonic texts; and d) material for learning arithmetic" (cited from Yegorov 1997: 656-657). It comprised basic concepts of physics, chemistry, botany, and zoology in a way that would be comprehensible to children. Tolstoy's ideas as also his publications triggered debates and controversies when they were first launched. Later, however, his perspective on education was accepted and adopted not only in Russia but in many parts of the world.

Box 4.1: Major works of Leo Tolstoy

The Kingdom of God and the Peace Essays. 1951. London: Oxford University Press

Educational Writings. 1951. Moscow

4.3 John Dewey (1859-1952)

John Dewey was born in 1859 in Burlington, Vermont. He completed graduation from the University of Vermont in the year 1879 and took to teaching Latin, algebra and sciences in a school located in Pennsylvania. Thereafter, he joined a rural school near Burlington in which he was the only teacher. He pursued research for the award of a doctoral degree. In 1884, the University of Michigan appointed him as instructor in philosophy and psychology. Later, he led the combined department of philosophy, psychology, and pedagogy at the University of Chicago as its Chairman. It was around this time (i.e., in the late nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century) that the economy in the United States was in a phase of transition from agriculture-based to industry-based. Evidently, the shift in the economic situation was accompanied by significant changes in society. Widespread turbulence marked the transition from the

simple agricultural type to the complex urban-industrial type. The Pullman strike, the impact of President Cleveland's decision to send federal troops to support corporate interests, and his association with social activists and educators consolidated Dewey's ideas on progressive reforms. His principal concern was with maintenance and expansion of democracy in all spheres of life (see Apple and Teitelbaum 2001). It is commonly believed that the democratic form of government is successful only when those who elect and those who obey the governors are educated. Since a democratic society repudiates the principle of external authority, it must find a substitute in voluntary disposition and interest that can be created only by education.

He sought to enhance the relevance of democracy in society which, he felt, had not to do just with governance but also with the percolation of democratic ideals in the processes of daily life. There is no denying that Dewey's approach was pragmatic and based on real life situations. He upheld that the practical circumstances provided the bases from which ideals, values and social institutions develop and receive legitimation. The worth of an ideal, value, and institution lies in its potential to serve public and personal interests. He accepted that change in societal elements was inevitable; hence it was not appropriate to attach immutable validity or worth to any ideal, value or institution. There could be no absolute criteria for evaluating these. A particular social ideal constitutes a criterion for educational criticism and construction. The worth of a form of social life could be measured in terms of the extent to which the interests of a group were shared by all its members and the fullness and freedom with which it interacts with other groups. A society which encourages participation of all its members on equal terms for their betterment and allows readjustment of its institutions through interaction of different forms of associated life is, to that extent, democratic. Such a society would develop an education system that makes provision for nurturing individuals' interest in social relationships and control as also dealing with social change in a way that situations of disorder do not occur. It was, however, possible to accept the significance of social experimentation based on objective criteria and rational criticism intended to create a humane and just social order.

One of the means through which these ideas could be instilled in the minds of children was education. He believed that education focused on the improvement of the quality of experience and provided the succor to social life. As societies became more and more complex in terms of structure and resources the need of formal teaching increased. When teaching becomes intentional and formalized, a possibility of split between experience gained by children through direct association as part of daily life and that acquired in schools develops. This is often caused by the rise in knowledge and technical mode of skills. Schooling, therefore, emerges as basic to social progress and democracy. According to Dewey, the ultimate objective of a school and the process of schooling were to foster the growth and expansion of democracy. This objective was particularly important because in the emerging industrial society in which Dewey consolidated his ideas on education, democracy was largely jeopardized. The schools were given to raising children who would follow the dictates of the teachers, undergo repetitious methods of teaching unquestioningly. The understanding was that as adults, they would be able to join the industry as an asset. Dewey opposed both the prevalent perspective and the method of teaching-learning in favour of student's alertness, focusing on their experiences and the ability to determine the course of life themselves. According to Dewey, schools would do well to develop a curriculum that was integrated with social experiences. He strongly criticized public schools for their learning ability that led to disjunction between knowledge and lived experiences.

In his widely known book, *Democracy* (1916) Dewey wrote that the measure of the worth of the administration, curriculum, and methods of instruction of the schools is the extent to which these are animated by a social spirit. In the first place, “the school must itself be a community life in all which that implies” (pp.358). He believed that social perceptions and interests could be developed only when there is give and take in the building up of a common experience. Education becomes effective through constructive activities that integrate study, growth, and shared experience. The perception of connections and social adherence is nurtured in playgrounds, schools, workrooms and laboratories. Here, natural, active tendencies of youth find full expression. Dewey maintained that learning in school should not be separated from that outside the school. The continuity in learning within and outside school can be maintained when there are numerous points of contact between their social interests. A school should safeguard and perpetuate the spirit of companionship and shared activity. Now, while a school may take upon itself the responsibility of developing social concern and understanding among children, it cannot be said with certainty that these would be available outside it. Yet, it may be accepted that till such time as learning which accrues in the regular course of study affects character, it is not appropriate to posit moral end as the unifying and culminating point of education. An educational scheme in which learning is accompanied with activities or occupations that have a social aim is worthwhile. When this happens, the school becomes a form of miniature community which remains in close interaction with other modes of associated experience beyond its four walls. Education which develops the ability to share in social life makes for continuous readjustment which is essential for growth.

Box 4.2: Major Works of John Dewey

The School and Society. 1899. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

The Child and The Curriculum 1902. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

How We Think. 1910. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Democracy and Education. 1916. New York: Macmillan

The Public and Its Problems. 1927. New York: Henry Holt

Experience and Education. 1938. New York: Macmillan

4.4 Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937)

Antonio Gramsci was born in the region of Sardinia, Italy. He joined the university for higher studies in Turin (from which he had to withdraw later because of severe health problems and want of money). Turin was the hub of growth and development of industries, hence also of the Italian working class. For this reason, Gramsci witnessed the first industrial and economic development of Italy from close quarters early in life. His political and educational career began with the position of journalist and theatre reporter during the First World War. After the war, he launched two journals, *Ordine Nuovo* and *Uinta* with the sole purpose of educating the new working class that had emerged as fallout of industrialization and the war. Under the new fascist government, the Italian school system was re-framed in the year 1923. This time the emphasis was on perceived dichotomy between preparation for work (entailing technical and vocational training) and preparation for spiritual development and political leadership (entailing inculcation of cultural and scientific temper). Gramsci did not agree with this kind of dualism nor did he commit himself to accepting that science and technology afforded a solution to human problems or that intellectual and cultural affairs were independent of economic and political concerns. He proposed the idea of ‘professional culture’ to refer to “the new technical and vocational preparation needed by manpower (from the skilled worker to the manager) to control and to lead industrial development, as well

When the fascist regime gripped Italy between 1922 and 1943, and Mussolini dissolved the Italian Parliament, Gramsci (who was a member of the Parliament and Secretary of the Italian communist Party) was jailed. It is interesting to note that in the period of confinement, Gramsci planned to explore the relationship between education and politics under the broader framework of hegemony. His writings, *Letters from Prison* and *Prison Notebooks* remain the major source from which several ideas on education and state have been developed by later thinkers. The core idea in Gramsci's writing was the role of intellectuals in society viz., providing technical and political leadership to a group which is in a dominant position or is near it. According to him each person is an intellectual but not all the people perform the role of an intellectual in society. He identified different kinds of intellectuals. The first kind referred to as 'organic intellectuals' comprise capitalist entrepreneurs equipped with managerial and technical skills under whose leadership industrial technicians, specialists in political economy, in a new legal system develop. Organic intellectuals combine technical and political leadership. They are known to develop from the dominant social political group. Organic intellectuals serve the interests of the ruling class and in doing so reinforce their hegemony over the masses. The second kind are the 'intellectuals of the traditional type' who comprise administrators, scholars, scientists, theorists, and others who represent historical continuity that is unfazed even by radical political and social changes. They regard themselves and are regarded by a vast majority of population as autonomous and independent of the dominant social group. Gramsci maintained that the role of informal educators was comparable with that of an intellectual in society for the simple reason that both strive for inculcation of awareness on critical issues and human well-being in totality. The educators in local communities have an advantage in that often they have much in common with the people, are able to develop relationships with them easily, and are regarded as part of the community. This facilitates acceptance of what they seek to educate and develop in the people.

The question that assumes significance at this stage is, what distinguishes intellectual work from manual work? In fact, this distinction is crucial to Gramsci's ideas on education. He maintained that the distinction between intellectual work and manual work is largely ideological. Classical education catering to the pursuits of the dominant classes raised individuals given to undertaking intellectual work while vocational, technical education for the working classes raised individuals given to performing manual labour. Gramsci rejected the dichotomy outright. He advocated that there was no human activity from which intellectual activity would be pulled out completely. This is to say that intellectual activity pervades all the actions of human beings. He, however, added that new intellectuals belonging to the working class needed to participate in practical life actively and develop socialist consciousness that could effectively counter hegemony. In his words (cited here from Monasta 1997: 602), "The mode of being the new intellectual can no longer consist of eloquence... but in active participation in practical life, as constructor, organizer, 'permanent persuader' and not just a simple orator...; from technique-as-science and to the humanistic conception in history, without which one remains 'specialized' and does not become 'directive' (specialized and political)." The social division between intellectual and manual work seems to be reflected in classical and technical education respectively. The real division is, however, between 'directive' and 'subaltern' rules in society notwithstanding the nature of the job i.e., whether it is intellectual or manual. In a strict sense, the basis of the new type of intellectual should be technical education that was closely bound to industrial labour even of the most unskilled kind. One implication of this assertion is the understanding of close links between school and work, and between technical and humanistic education.

The new type of intellectuals may easily be identified among administrators and managers of industry and services; in upper rungs of state administration, central and local bureaucracy; within teaching profession and the growing sector of vocational and occupational training. Traditional 'academic' intellectuals still seem to be opinion leaders through whom political and cultural operations are effected (see Monasta 1997).

He believed that the school system prevalent in Italy at that time was given to reinforcing the ideological foundations of hegemony and in this way perpetuating the current social and political domination of the ruling class. He critiqued the increasing specialization afforded in the Italian school system and proposed a more comprehensive form of education. Gramsci felt that it would be appropriate to develop a school system that would be committed to imparting common basic education, balancing the inculcation of capacity for working manually and the capacity for intellectual work. This would prepare the students adequately to engage in productive work or pursue education in specialized schools. He explained that modernizing education should chiefly consist of creating a simple type of formative school (primary-secondary) which would take the children up to the threshold of their choice of job, forming them during this time as a persons equipped with the faculty capable of thinking, studying and ruling or controlling those who rule. In order that this type of school achieves its objectives, it was important that it related with the daily lives of the people so that more and more students participate in it with vigour. The student had to be an active participant and not a passive recipient in the teaching - learning process. Gramsci challenged the notion of spontaneous development of the child. He maintained that right from birth, the child is 'educated' to conform to the environment; the school represents only a small part of life. Education, in effect, is the struggle against the basic instincts (i.e., those related with biological functions); and against nature, to dominate it and create the 'actual' human being. He used the term 'conformity' to refer to the instrument for interpretation of those processes through which the people follow tradition and adhere to the rules. Education, therefore, consists of a struggle for one or the other type of conformity (e.g., socialization) proposed or imposed within a society. Monasta (1997:609) sums up Gramsci's basic approach to education in the following words, "Finally, as far as the visible education system is concerned, Gramsci's approach does not mean that school and university education are irrelevant within the strategy of educating for critical thought. It suggests that innovations in methods, content and organization of study which should be consistent with the following main points tighten links between school and work, as well as between theory and practice; a growing attention to the history of the organization of work and of the organization of culture, and therefore, more interest towards the study of 'fortune' namely, the different interpretations, of classics and theories; and, last but not least, an open debate on the aims of education and the values on which educational action is based in a given society." Education has to be set free from the clutches of both conformity and hegemony so that children who undergo it are able to achieve personal independence.

Box 4.3: Major Works of Antonio Gramsci

Lettere dal carcere [*Letters from Prison*] edited by S. Caprioglio and E. Fubini. 1965. Turin: Einaudi

Quaderni dalcarcere [*Prison Notebooks*] edited by Valentino Gerratana 1975. Turin: Einaudi

4.5 Paulo Freire (1921-1997)

Paulo Reglus Neves Freire was born to a Catholic middle class family in Recife (the capital of north-eastern province in Brazil). His father was a military officer who brought up his children with both authority and understanding. Freire first received education in the traditional Catholic way from his mother.

The family lived in one of the most impoverished regions of the nation and often encountered difficulty in making both ends meet. His parents did, however, try hard to maintain the standard of living that characterized the middle class families of that time. Paulo Freire studied law following which he taught Portuguese language in a secondary school in Brazil. He also served as a trade-union lawyer. He would inform trade-union members on legal matters. Freire was engaged in a wide variety of activities that included teaching a language course, and lecturing on legal matters to trade union workers. The experience of dealing and with illiteracy among Brazilian poor peasants and workers moved him. He came to realize that educational policies and practices had far-reaching implications.

In 1989, Freire was appointed Secretary of Education. He took this opportunity to initiate several programmes for educating the adults, and re-casting the curriculum. According to Freire, as society becomes excessively technology oriented with emphasis on specialization, people become increasingly passive, dehumanized, and fearful. While mass production of commodities does call for extensive participation of people, it reduces their capacity for critical assessment. The way out, then, is not to reject the use of machine but to humanize people, to bring them out of the alienation of routine, of repeating things bureaucratically and taking lives into their own hands, at their own risk and responsibility, and exercising control. Freire was once asked how he thought it was possible to talk about the cultural appropriation of the dominant culture by the dominated people. He replied that those who dominate seek to lull the self-consciousness of those they dominate and instill in them a sense of inferiority about their own culture. When the dominated people come to realize the strategy of the dominators, they mobilize themselves with tremendous rigour. They unite, grow, struggle to overthrow the indoctrination, and liberate themselves (see Freire 1985). Those who champion the cause of liberation are, unfortunately, gripped by the banking concept of education because of which they are not able to understand its dehumanizing influence. You may read Box 5.2 in Unit 5 to understand Freire's banking concept of education. The seekers of liberation need to adopt the concept of people as conscious beings. This consists of devising learning situations based on dialogical relations in which the duality between the teacher (as the repository of knowledge) and the student (as completely ignorant and bereft of knowledge) is snapped. Teaching and learning then becomes a two-way process in which teachers and students engage on equal terms.

Box 4.4: Freire's Method of Literary Training

Freire's method of literacy training chiefly consisted of the following steps (cited here from Gerhardt 1997:445).

"The educators observe the participants in order to 'line in' to the universe of their vocabulary.

An arduous search for generative words and themes takes place at two levels: Syllabic richness and high degree of experiential involvement.

A first codification of these words into visual images, which stimulated people 'submerged' in the culture of silence to 'emerge' as conscious markers of their own culture. Introduction of the 'anthropological concept of culture' with its differentiation between man and animal.

The decodification of the generative words and themes by a 'culture circle' under the self-effacing stimuli of a coordinator who is not a 'teacher' in the conventional sense, but who has become an educator-educatee in dialogue with educatees- educators.

A creative new codification, which is explicitly critical and aimed at action, wherein those who were formally illiterate now began to reject their role as mere 'objects' in nature and social history. They undertake to become 'subjects' of their own destiny."

More importantly, he invited participation of the community in educational programmes that led to decentralization of control and democratization of schools. What came out clearly was the thrust on praxis in education that refers to developing a sense of critical reflexive action and critical reflection based on action.

This assumes greater relevance in the light of the fact that Freire believed that capitalist societies might be identified with oppression that pervades all social relations and social processes including education. More specifically, Brazil was plagued with intense political, social, and economic inequalities. The stark opposition between the affluent and the impoverished, the oppressor and the oppressed, deeply influenced Freire's thought. The oppressed or the dispossessed were deliberately kept 'submerged' in ignorance and in situations that would curtail their critical awareness and active response to their condition of social, economic, and political domination by the oppressors. Freire described this as the 'culture of silence.' He believed that those who are oppressed, dispossessed, and marginalized tend to remain ignorant and lethargic because of the overpowering social, economic, and political domination. The educational system supports and maintains the domination.

He came to realize that the then current system of education would continue to perpetuate the divide. The alternative before him was to present a conception of education in which the culture, knowledge, and social, economic, and political conditions of the oppressed were in the forefront. His book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was born out of the urge to empower the oppressed through education. He believed that often the process of education gets reduced to deposition of knowledge by the teachers in the students who patiently receive, memorize, and repeat from the deposits. This is the banking concept of education proposed by Freire. In the banking concept of education, teachers treat themselves as knowledgeable and bestow the gift of knowledge to the students whom they treat as completely ignorant. Evidently, such students are given to adapting to the social situation in whatever form it appears before them. The solution lies in humanizing pedagogy in which a permanent dialogue between revolutionary leadership and the oppressed is established. Here the critical consciousness and the awareness of the students are ignited. The oppressed are encouraged to transform their destiny by way of struggle for their liberation. Freire's basic assumption was "that man's ontological vocation (as he calls it) is to be a subject who acts upon and transforms his world, and in so doing moves towards ever new possibilities of fuller and richer life individually and collectively" (Shaul 1972:12). Here, 'world' may be understood as consisting of dynamic and ever-changing social order. It is, hence, possible to look at the world critically with the ambition to overthrow the oppression. What is required, however, is appropriate outlook and training which education can impart. When an illiterate peasant or oppressed sections of society are initiated into critical thinking and the process of transformation, it takes upon itself the task of changing the oppressive structures of society. Freire believed that education either serves as an instrument that integrates the younger generation into the existing social system and makes them conform to it or else it serves as an instrument through which freedom is achieved. He accepted that those who profess the notion of freedom through education are often influenced by the banking concept and give in to its dehumanizing power. Unfortunately, they use this very instrument of alienation in an effort to liberate the masses. They tend to brand those who challenge them on this count as innocent, dreamer or reactionary. The truly committed have to reject the banking concept of education in its entirety. Instead of furthering the goal of deposit-making in education, they have to pursue problem-posing education (i.e., posing of the problems of people in their relations with the world) that would put teacher and student contradiction to rest so that teacher-of-the student and student-of-the-teacher cease to exist. New terminology viz., teacher-student and students-teachers emerges in which

authority is on the side of freedom, not against it. People teach each other. The process is mediated by the world, by cognizable objects.

Box 4.5: Major Works of Paulo Freire

Pedagogy of the Oppressed. 1970. [trans. M.B. Ramos, 1982]. New York: Seabury Press

Cultural Action for Freedom. 1970. Cambridge, M.A: The Harvard Educational Review Monograph Series, no. 1.

Education for Critical Consciousness. 1973. New York: Seabury Press

Pedagogy in Process: The Letters to Guinea-Bissau [trans. C. St. John Hurter]. 1978. New York: Seabury Press

The Politics of Education. [trans. H. A. Giroux] 1985. Massachusetts: Bergin and Garvey

Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed. 1994. [trans R.R. Barr]. New York: Continuum

Teachers as Cultural Workers: Letters to Those who Dare Teach. 1998. Boulder, Co: Westview Press

4.6 Basil Bernstein (1925-2000)

Basil Bernstein was the son of a Jewish immigrant family in London's East End. He served as an underage bombardier in Africa in the Second World War following which he worked in the Stepey settlement boys' club for underprivileged Jewish children. As a child, Bernstein's mind was occupied with simple, basic questions the answers to which were not part of the curriculum. The questions that filled his mind related to issues that were talked about at home. In his own words, "Why did my father work so hard? Why did I not see him in the mornings, or until late in the evening? Why did my mother go to work 'to support me'? Why were all the fields I played in being developed by more and larger council estates? Why did we have to walk (or later, ride) more than three miles to school? Why were the children from my village treated differently from the children from the immediate school locality" (1995, cited here from Goodson 2001: 162). After completing 11+ Bernstein joined the grammar school in which he felt completely alienated because he could not relate with the structure of content. He found the content dull and the form of its transmission as excessively bewildering. His own experience of learning in school laid the foundation for his ideas on education. Bernstein studied sociology at the London School of Economics which at that time encouraged students to explore the influence of social inequality on education, health, and welfare. He chose to focus on education. For a period of about six years, he taught in the City Day College. His students were people who had remained unsuccessful in the formal school system. Later, he developed interest in the use of language and its relationship to social class. He explored this domain in the course of a two-year stay in the Department of Phonetics, University College, London. He was appointed Senior Lecturer in the Sociology of Education some time in 1963 and spent the rest of his life conducting research, and supervising doctoral and post-doctoral research (see Goodson 2001).

Bernstein is widely acclaimed for his contribution to the theory of education. He distinguished between two forms of speech patterns: the restricted code; and the elaborated code. Restricted codes, as the term itself suggests are a kind of shortened speech characterized by short, grammatically simple, often unfinished sentences. One may wonder how communication is possible through restricted codes. Despite the fact that, apart from others, one of the features of restricted codes is unfinished sentences. Communication is made possible because the conversing parties have shared-experiences which make detailed

explication of meanings and intentions redundant. Meaning and intention, however, are conveyed through gestures, voice intonation, and context in which the communication takes place. There is no denying that communication through restricted codes is (i) limited to those who are largely familiar with each other; (ii) confined to a specific social group and specific social context.

An elaborated code, is based on verbalization of meanings and details (many of which are taken for granted in the restricted code). Here, meanings are not delimited to a specific social content, rather, they are universalistic and available to all. This is possible because the principles and operations are, in large part, made explicit. Bernstein explained the relationship between speech codes and social class with an example of stories told by two five-year-old children one belonging to the working class whom we will refer to here as A and the other belonging to the middle class whom we will refer to here as B. Both A and B were given four pictures based on which they were asked to develop a story. Out of these, the first picture depicted several boys playing football; the second picture depicted the ball breaking a window; the third picture depicted a woman looking out of the window and a man making a threatening gesture to the boys; and the fourth picture depicted boys retreating from the scene. It was found that A used restricted code to narrate the story. The children left many meanings unspoken so that the story was tied to a particular context shown in the picture. In fact, the story could not be understood without the help of the picture. Bernstein explained that this was so because in the working class families (to which A belonged) position of members was clearly defined in terms of age, gender, and relationships within the family. There was no need for verbal elaboration. By virtue of their authority in the family, the fathers would give a command such as 'shut up' which others would obey. B, on the other hand, used elaborated code to describe and analyze the relationship between events in an integrated way. The story was comprehensible without the aid of the pictures. Bernstein explained that in contrast to the working class, in middle class families (to which B belonged) decisions are negotiable and less rigid. Consequently, it was crucial that meaning and intentions were made explicit. He contrasted the working class and middle class in terms of skill set and participation in decision making. According to Bernstein the use of restricted code by people of working class is also because most of them are engaged in occupations that demand precision in manual rather than verbal skills. They are often not engaged in making decision. The manual worker is discouraged from developing an elaborated code. This contrasts sharply with the position of the middle class people many of whom are involved in white-collar jobs that entail decision making, expertise in verbal skills. Hence, they are able to develop elaborated speech code.

Reflection and Action 4.2

What are the major differences between restricted code and elaborate code?

It is pertinent to understand that formal education is conducted through an elaborated code in which universalistic orders of meaning are transmitted to many students at the same time. This works out to the disadvantage of children belonging to working class families who are given to communicating through restricted code. Bernstein did accept that the restricted code has 'warmth and vitality' and 'simplicity and directness', but it is not compatible with the formal education system. According to Bernstein (1973), the way in which a society classifies, distributes, transmits, and evaluates educational knowledge that it considers to be public, i.e., available to the masses reflects the distribution of power as also the principles of social control. Formal educational knowledge may be considered to be passed on through curriculum (which defines what knowledge is considered valid and appropriate for transmission), pedagogy (which defines what counts as a valid transmission of

knowledge), and evaluation (which counts as a valid realization of this knowledge code' to refer to the principles that shape curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluation).

Goodson (2001) explained Bernstein's coding theory stating that strong classification (i.e. rigid boundaries between curriculum categories) denotes a curriculum that is differentiated and separated into traditional knowledge subject to whereas weak classification denotes an integrated curriculum with weak boundaries. These two types of curriculum are characterized as collection code and integrated code. Framing is the transmission of what is identified as valid school knowledge through pedagogic practices. Frame, in effect, is employed to refer to the specific pedagogical relationship of the teacher and the pupil. It refers to the strength of the boundary that separates what may be transmitted from what may not be transmitted in the pedagogical relationship. Strong framing implies the presence of sharp boundary; weak framing implies the presence of blurred boundary. Bernstein analysed the interrelationship between educational codes and the structure of power and principles of social control.

Bernstein (1973, rpt. 1985: 279) maintained "The stronger the classification and the framing, the more the educational relationship tends to be hierarchical and ritualized, the educant seem as ignorant, with little status and few rights. These are things that one earns, rather like spurs and are used for the purpose of encouraging and sustaining the motivation of pupils. Depending upon the strength of frames, knowledge is transmitted in a context in which the teacher has maximal control or surveillance, as in hierarchical secondary school relationships". Further, in early childhood, the frames of the collection code socialize children into knowledge frames that overlook connection with everyday realities. What happens as a consequence is that educational knowledge comes to be treated as esoteric, away from the mundane and the ordinary. Those who possess it, therefore, are accorded special significance. It is only when this frame is relaxed to incorporate the everyday realities will educational knowledge cease to be a signifier of power and prestige.

Box 4.7: Major Works of Bernstein

Class, Codes and Control: Theoretical Studies towards a Sociology of Language. 1971, Vol. 1. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul

Class, Codes and Control: Applied Studies towards a Sociology of Language. 1973, Vol. 2. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul

Class, Codes and Control: Towards a Theory of Education Transmission. 1975, vol. 3. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul

Class, Codes and Control: The structuring of Pedagogic Discourse. 1990, vol. 4. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul

Pedagogy, Symbolic Control, and Identity: Theory, Research, and Critique. 1996. London and Washington: Taylor & Francis

4.7 Ivan Illich (1926-2002)

Ivan Illich was born in Vienna, Austria, in the year 1926. In the early years of life Illich was served by different governesses from whom he learnt many languages. He read extensively from his grandmother's library and got the opportunity to interact with intellectuals many of whom were friends of his parents. This kind of exposure in the formative years sharpened his intellectual skills. He studied theology and philosophy at the Gregorian University, Rome. Later, he pursued doctoral research in the philosophy of history at the University of Salzburg. He served as a parish priest (to a New York church with an Irish and Puerto Rican congregation), administrator and professor at Fordham University. Illich founded the Centre for Intercultural Documentation (CIDOC)

in Cuernavaca, Mexico which provided a platform for American and Latin American intellectuals to discuss and debate on issues of education and culture. He is known for radical ideas (apart from those on Church and its reform, medicine, and transport in modern societies) on education that ignited several controversies. He condemned the school as a system for not being able to keep pace with social change and for reinforcing the *status quo* and protecting the structure of society from which they are born and within which it functions.

His book, *Deschooling Society* is perhaps one of the most widely read works in the disciplines of education in general and sociology of education in particular. He explained that universal education cannot be imparted through the process of schooling. He believed that often the people's right to learn is curtailed by the obligation to attend school. Illich saw an opposition between schooling and education. He denounced institutionalized education as also the institution of school on the ground that it raised people as, "producers of merchandise with a specific exchange value in a society where those who already possess a certain cultural capital derive the most benefit" (Gajardo 1997:714). He maintained that the prestige of a school rested on the myth of (i) institutionalized values which is rooted in the conviction that schooling produces learning which is of value. According to Illich meaningful learning is not dependent on manipulation by others or on instruction but derives from participation of learners in meaningful settings that are least provided in schools; (ii) measurement of values based on the understanding that the values imparted in schools are quantifiable. Illich, however, upheld that personal growth cannot be measured in terms of schooling. Those who employ personal growth tend to constrain themselves a great deal in order to match those standards; (iii) packaging values emphasizing the clear-cut curriculum produced as a modern staple product. This finished product is presented to the students by the teachers and modified subsequently on the basis of their reactions and responses. The entire process simulates the production and delivery of an object; and (iv) self-perpetuating progress assessed in terms of the degrees, diplomas, and certificates. Larger number of these generates larger confidence of the possibility of securing a good job. Pupils (who are treated like consumers) are taught to conform their aspirations and desires in accordance with marketable values. It may be appreciated that people's perception of reality is not determined solely by the schools but also by the family, media, informal, socialization networks and society at large.

Reflection and Action 4.1

In your opinion what is the role of school in society? Discuss with your co-learners at the study centre.

It was possible to undertake the mission of universal education successfully through alternative institutions that could be developed on the style of the present schools. Further, the need was to (i) expand and enlarge the responsibility of the teacher in a way that it extended beyond the teaching-learning engagement in institutions to enwrap the lifetimes of pupils; (ii) enhance opportunities for learning, sharing, and caring in the course of education; and (iii) deschool the ethos as also the institutions. Illich argued vehemently against institutionalised education as also the institution of the school for privileging those who already possess some measure of cultural capital. He explained that schooling, in essence, is the production and marketing of knowledge. The people are made to believe that knowledge that is taught in schools is respectable and worthwhile. This implies that those who are self taught but do not or have not been able to attend school are discriminated against. The fact of the matter, however, is that the institutionalised values instilled in schools constitute the yardstick for measuring personal growth. People try hard to follow the standards laid down before them in schools. For Illich, personal growth could not be measured by the yardstick of schooling.

It may be understood that Illich did not argue for elimination of schools. Rather, he asked for their disestablishment. The difference between the two situations is that while the former calls for closing down of the school system as such, the latter calls for plugging the use of public funds to support schools. He believed that schooling should be treated as an auxiliary item. Schools should be made to pay taxes. When that happened, those who had not undergone schooling would not be discriminated against or despised. Schools and state need to get de-linked much like the Church and the state under the U.S. Constitution. A crucial outcome would be that schooling would no longer be compulsory. In such a situation, teachers would impart education with more passion and students would pursue it without any ulterior motive (Gabbard and Stuchul 2001).

Ivan Illich has been criticized for his radical ideas on schooling. It has often been said that his ideas and assertion were based on intuition and remained far from socio-educational or learning research. Illich has debated with Freire on education, schooling, and awareness. He has also discussed basic issues with other thinkers engaged in search for ways and means of transforming life into a learning experience outside the school system. Notwithstanding the criticism, Illich will be remembered for initiating a debate on education and schooling in which several thinkers participated with tremendous sense of commitment. There is no denying that his ideas do exhibit universal validity and have influenced a large number of educators.

Box 4.6: Major Works of Ivan Illich

Deschooling Society. 1970. New York: Harper & Row

Tools for conviviality. 1973. New York: Harper and Row

In the Vineyard of the Text. 1993. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

4.8 Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002)

Pierre Bourdieu was born in Denguin, France. His father was a sharecropper. Later, he joined the position of postman. He studied philosophy in Paris and later worked as a teacher for about a year. Bourdieu served in the French army during the Algerian War of Independence between 1958 and 1962 in the course of which he undertook ethnographic research. From the year 1964 he held the position of Director of Studies at the E'cole des Hautes E'tudes en Sciences Sociales; in 1968 he founded the research center, Centre de Sociologie Europeenne; in 1975 he launched an interdisciplinary journal through which he revisited the well established canons of sociology; in 1981 he held the Chair of Sociology at the College de France. It is evident that Bourdieu sought to integrate theoretical ideas with empirical research grounded in everyday life. Bourdieu is known for his theoretical and empirical contributions in the fields of anthropology and cultural studies, education, politics, and sociology. The core idea in his writings revolves around the means by which the educated social groups employ cultural capital as a social strategy to distinguish themselves in society by acquiring status and respect. He explained the concept of social strategy in terms of conscious rational choices that people make in order that their own beliefs come true. Social strategies may be consciously or unconsciously adopted. Bourdieu's ideas are rooted in empirical research that he carried out in France for about four decades. He also used the concept of social strategy in order to explain the way in which individuals engage themselves in the struggle over symbolic capital. He explored the relationship between the relative autonomy of the educational system and its dependence on the structure of class relations. Much like Marx, Bourdieu accepted that the relationship between the ruling class and the subordinate working class is one of conflict and hostility. He agreed that the gap or the difference between the two classes derives from inequities in the possession of capital. For

Bourdieu, capital lies in the group's or an individual's potential to fit into society through shared knowledge, beliefs, values, and virtues. The role of education assumes significance in that it serves as a source from which the privileged and the elite draw not only academic credentials but also propagate an ideology that constitutes the rules of society most of which are to their own advantage. He maintained that intellectuals spread their knowledge judiciously and allow the people to compete for cultural capital within the framework of rules in society. There is no denying that this competition for cultural capital perpetuates class distinctions (Brimi 2005).

According to Bourdieu, education serves to perpetuate the culture of the dominant classes— a phenomenon often referred to as 'cultural reproduction'. The dominant classes tend to project their own culture as superior and worthwhile to an extent that they establish it as the basis of knowledge in the educational system. Bourdieu referred to 'cultural capital' in the framework of culture of the dominant classes more so because through the agency of the educational system it can be translated into wealth and power (meaning that those who pass through the educational system which derives largely from the culture of the dominant classes are able to acquire both wealth and power in society). What is interesting to note is the fact that diversity in educational achievements of students belonging to different classes emanates from uneven distribution of cultural capital in the class structure. This means that students who belong to the upper classes find themselves in a familiar educational environment (because they are socialized into the culture and have internalized the skills and knowledge from which the educational system is derived) while students belonging to lower classes find themselves alienated from the educational environment. Students belonging to the middle class are able to perform better than those of lower classes because their culture is close to the culture of the dominant class.

The performance of the students, therefore, depends on their access to cultural capital. Bourdieu explained that in operational terms, children of the upper classes are able to comprehend the content of knowledge better than their counterparts belonging to lower classes for the simple reason that the range of meanings, the grammar, tone, and delivery of the content is more comprehensible to them. Furthermore, they are able to articulate and present the knowledge in a way that is appreciated and rewarded by the teacher-evaluator. The students of lower classes fall short on this count. Often, they are penalized when their style of presentation does not conform to that of the dominant culture. Now, while the former are inherently in an advantageous situation, the latter are at a loss right from the beginning. One consequence of this practice is the systematic elimination of people of the working class from the area of education. Elimination of those belonging to the working class takes place because of the failure in the educational system and an understanding of their own position vis-à-vis those belonging to the ruling class. This, in turn, leads to social reproduction— perpetuation of the power of the ruling class.

Box 4.8: Major Works of Pierre Bourdieu

Outline of Theory of Practice. 1977. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Distinction: A social Critique of the Judgment of Taste. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul

Homo Academicus. 1988. Cambridge: Polity Press

The State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power. 1966. Cambridge: Polity Press

4.9 Conclusion

In this unit we have familiarized ourselves with the basic viewpoints of seven major thinkers on education. It is interesting to note that despite the fact that they were born and brought up at different places at different times, they seem to converge on the fundamental understanding that meaningful education was not one that was based on transmission of information in schools but one that led to personal growth and development. Several of them believed that the scope of education needs to be broadened to address issues of social and political hegemony. They argued for setting education free from the state and dominant sections of society. They envisaged the purpose of education as self-enrichment and, more importantly, liberation from the clutches of domination and hegemony. What comes out clearly from their writings is the vast potential of education to usher in and sustain social transformation.

4.10 Further Reading

Freire, P. 1972. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. England: Penguin Books

Illich, I. 1970. *Deschooling Society*. New York: Harper and Row

Morsy, Z. (ed). 1997. *Thinkers on Education*. Vol. 1-4. New Delhi: UNESCO Publishing/Oxford & IBH Publishing

Unit 5

Education, Knowledge and Power

Contents

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Content of Education: What is Worth Knowing?
- 5.3 Perpetuation of Inequality through Education
- 5.4 Cultural and Economic Reproduction
- 5.5 Conclusion
- 5.6 Further Reading

Learning Objectives

After going through this unit, you will be able to discuss the:

- relationship existing between knowledge and power;
- political, economic and cultural influences on education; and
- cultural and economic reproduction of inequality.

5.1 Introduction

The concept of an educated person is socially and historically determined. The characteristics of an educated individual may vary from one time period and from one social milieu to another. A person considered educated in one time period and in a particular society will be different from the other one. There is a possibility that the most learned person in one society may be counted among the ignorant persons in some other society. For Mannheim (see Kumar 1992), not just the characteristics and attributes of an educated man, but even the aims of education can also be grasped historically. This is despite the fact that common sense suggests that the aims of education would be unchanging. Mannheim points out that the educational aims are shaped by history and that they are known to change from one society to another and from one period to another. John Eggleston (see Kumar 1992) draws an important distinction between the 'received' and the 'dynamic' perspective on curriculum. The 'received' perspective has an *a priori* view of knowledge, and does not question the legitimacy and the authenticity of knowledge while the 'dynamic' perspective negates the commonsensical unchallenging understanding of education in favouring all forms of knowledge.

This unit is based on the premise that categories like education, knowledge and truth cannot be treated as unchanging. Rather, they depend on the social context. In the course of the unit, you will come to appreciate how the delineation of these categories changes according to the power structure prevalent in society. The important question here is not what should be taught to children so that they qualify to be called educated. Studies that do not consider curricular knowledge to be neutral fall under the purview of the sociology of knowledge. In the sociology of knowledge, to understand why a particular kind of knowledge is considered relevant in the syllabus as compared to the other one, social scientists look at the interests that are served by its inclusion. They also see the social group deriving benefit from the inclusion of a particular form of knowledge. Here we seek to unravel the economic, political and cultural reasons to provide sociological understanding of knowledge. This unit provides a sociological understanding of 'knowledge' and 'power'. Some of the crucial questions at this juncture are why in a particular society a specific kind of knowledge is considered worth acquiring? Why certain kinds of knowledge are selected while other kinds of knowledge are eliminated? What are the principles of this selection and elimination, and who decides

which knowledge deserves more representation in the texts? To develop a fuller understanding of the issue, we will look at the political nature of education, and how educational institutions play an active role in perpetuating inequality in society.

5.2 Content of Education: What is Worth Knowing?

Sociology of education does not deal with the idea of 'truth' or 'true knowledge' as there is nothing like true, absolute, eternal knowledge which remains the same in all time periods and in all the societies. It deals with what is perceived as knowledge in a given social milieu. At the outset, Krishna Kumar (1992) raises the basic question of what counts as knowledge. What is the knowledge that is considered to be worthwhile, enough to be imparted through educational curriculum? For him, the knowledge that is imparted through school texts is not naturally sacrosanct, for it acquires importance because of prevailing power structures. It is pertinent to note that whatever counts as knowledge in a particular social milieu is through an act of deliberation. The process of treating one kind of knowledge as valid and worth acquiring at the expense of some other kind of knowledge is not a natural or rational one, neither is it determined by the intrinsic worth of that knowledge. The process of selection of one kind of knowledge and the elimination of another kind is consciously done in order to favour one section of the society at the expense of other. As Kumar (1992:8) puts, "What counts as knowledge is a reconstruction, based on the selection made under given social circumstances". The process of selection does not happen in a vacuum, but takes place in a social context, for the benefit of one group. The knowledge and the education which constitute the curriculum in schools are constructed by a few educated elites.

The two important processes through which a particular kind of knowledge is assigned importance are selection and representation. Out of the total body of knowledge only a part is selected for dissemination. The selection of this portion of knowledge is contingent on social processes and social relations. It is largely guided by the power structure of society. The knowledge that we finally get cannot be seen as irrespective of the social, political and economic facets of society. When we study knowledge in the context of these social, political and economic realms, only then can we understand the intricate relationship between power and knowledge.

The knowledge that is identified as 'valid' depends on the power dynamics. Economic opportunities play a determining role in defining knowledge and skills. The production of certain knowledge is not an inadvertent educational process. It is a part of the process of gaining wider control exercised on the masses. The Indian Civil Service in the twentieth century, for instance, was a product of a colonial project. Similarly, the emphasis on English and science served as a means for colonizing India. The British used education to colonize Indians under the pretext of civilizing them. This project of civilizing and controlling the masses continued even after Independence. For Kumar, before Independence, 'enlightened outsiders' were controlling natives, while after Independence 'educated Indians' were controlling their own masses. The system of education is known to operate under the influence of the economy, politics and culture and then determines which knowledge is worth disseminating out of all.

We have already made the point that in our educational curriculum the selection of any particular knowledge is not based on its intrinsic worth. Educational institutions cannot be seen as a neutral, secluded enterprise of society. There are various economic, political, and cultural reasons because of which particular forms of knowledge are selected. Economic factors determine the utility of knowledge in the present day. Knowledge itself plays an important role in the

economy of society. It stands between the family and the job market. It prepares and equips students to secure economic rewards. As the economic rewards that come in life are largely dependent on these educational institutions, social meanings, cultural capital and technical knowledge are differentially distributed by the educational institutions regardless of their ostensible democratic mission. The knowledge which is likely to provide well-paying jobs is always in high demand. Such technical knowledge is often highly inaccessible also. It becomes difficult for common people to be in command of the specialized knowledge and skill set. The privileged and the inaccessible nature of these jobs is maintained deliberately by the dominant segments of society. This legitimates, authenticates, and naturalizes the power of a few over the large mass. People having these skills and command over such knowledge finally get higher jobs that further increases their power. It is through this knowledge that they maintain their power in society. On this basis it can be established that the nature and distribution of knowledge indicates the availability of opportunities in society. The knowledge as well as the linguistic and cultural competencies of the elite are associated with highly paid and inaccessible jobs. It is important to study what knowledge is being accorded high status in our society and its cultural and economic implications. Certain knowledge is inaccessible and, because of this, schooling becomes effective in generating and perpetuating inequality.

5.3 Perpetuation of Inequality through Education

Education seems to promise a bright future, widen horizons and ensure mobility. The common sense understanding of schools perceives them as democratic, liberal institutions, committed to make social progress. It would be fallacious to assume that the school curriculum imparts neutral knowledge. Education enhances the inequalities existing in an already unequal and stratified society. Education as we have mentioned earlier is entrenched in the wider web of social and political relations that guide it. The sociology of education looks at the relationship of education with the economic, political and cultural power. It unravels the power politics and various contestations that occur in the field of education. Apple (2004) argues that close relationship exists among those who have economic, political and cultural power in the society and the ways and means in which education is thought about, organized and evaluated.

Apple (2004) and others challenge the following basic assumptions of education processes: (i) the selection processes are neutral; (ii) schools actually focus on the 'ability'; and (iii) schools teach technical curricular skills and impart information to all students unequivocally so that they all stand an equal chance to compete for economic rewards. They uphold that the wider aim of schooling is not the dissemination of the same kinds of skills to everyone. Educational processes lead to the perpetuation of the unequal social order existing in society. Apple (2004:60) remarks, "Schools have a history and that they are linked through their everyday practices to other powerful institutions in ways that are often hidden and complex." Schools, therefore, cannot be taken in isolation, having their own existence, working for the upliftment of people. Schools are situated in the larger context and are influenced by other powerful institutions in society. The educational institutions are caught up in a nexus of other institutions, that are political, economic, and cultural, and the nature of these institutions is unequal. Schools are related to these powerful institutions because of which "they generate structural inequalities of power and access to resources" (Apple 2004:61). Inequalities are reinforced and reproduced through the educational curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluative activities. The dispositions and the attitudes that are developed among students are not neutral. Rather, they are selected, represented, and organized in accordance with the powerful institutions of that historical time period. These are the effective mechanisms of social control.

The distribution of power in society between various social groups determines the distribution of knowledge. Apple (2004) raises an important question, 'Whose knowledge is of most worth?' For him the question, 'what knowledge is of most worth?' is related with 'whose knowledge?' and 'whose culture?' Radical thinkers like Apple assert that the knowledge and the skills associated with the dominant groups acquire greater significance than those of the subordinate groups. The representation of knowledge in the educational curriculum is clearly biased.

Education is used as a means through which power is exercised. Dominant groups of society use education to exercise their control. The biased selection of knowledge followed by the deliberate representation favours the powerful sections of society which ensures the subtle control of masses through the educational curriculum. Such control happens in the area of education that makes the power of the dominant groups legitimate and extremely difficult to challenge. Kumar (1992:2) refers this as 'quiet, civilized dynamic dominance.' Education becomes the agency for maintaining social hierarchies in society. The dominant social groups of society sustain and further perpetuate their power by making their knowledge and skills highly exclusive. It becomes the prerogative of only a few elite people to possess such highly privileged knowledge. This becomes the major means for dominant groups of society to maintain their power.

Apple (2004) suggests that certain knowledge, especially the most prestigious one in schools, can have some linkages with economic reproduction. These linkages are unraveled when we go back to our original questions of what is worth knowing and whose knowledge does our educational institutions disseminate? The 'policing' actions of the powerful decide which knowledge and which academic enquiry could be considered legitimate. They control or sift knowledge before it is made available to the masses. The knowledge which is finally disseminated and received by the people gets the approval of the dominant and serves their interests. The dominant sections of the society decide what is taken as knowledge and determine its accessibility to the masses. Apple (2004:34) quotes Fischer in mentioning that high status knowledge 'is by definition scarce, and its scarcity is inextricably linked to its instrumentality.' It is the command of the powerful minority over this knowledge which then works to further entrench its high status, and its association with the high paying jobs. We can say that the educational institutions 'process' knowledge.

Schools give the impression that the mastery over technical knowledge and certain skills are imparted to everyone. In reality, however, educational institutions only guarantee that a specified number of students are selected for higher levels of education, and in doing so contribute to the optimization of technical knowledge needed by the economy. The people belonging to lower socio-economic strata of society are poor, and politically and culturally disenfranchised. The kind of education children of this section of society receive is completely different from the kind of education that the children of the elite section receive. The schools and the curriculum subordinate the interests of the exploited in favour of the interests of dominant classes Apple's observations suggest that schools teach different dispositions and values to different school populations. If the particular student population is from a professional and managerial class of people then the schools and their curriculum revolves around flexibility, choice, inquiry, etc. On the other hand if they belong to semi-skilled or unskilled working population then the education revolves around punctuality, neatness, habit formation, and so on. The present economic arrangements are formulated in the manner that they require some people to remain unskilled and poor. Schools make this easy by way of imparting cultural and economic values and dispositions in a differentiated manner.

Box 5.1: Education as Cultural Imperialism

"In the mercantile period of European imperialism (1500 to about 1780), formal schooling both at home and abroad was restricted almost entirely to children of the wealthy. It was consumed by an aristocracy whose children did not need it to maintain positions of power and wealth, and it was invested in by a merchant class to enable its children to become professionals and bureaucrats. Schooling for the poor - When it existed at all - was usually religious training for conversion or moral maintenance. But even in this period, formal schooling in some places helped the European to colonize the native. In Brazil, the Jesuits formed communities with schools to turn nomadic Indians into plantation labour; in Peru another group of Jesuits helped Inca nobility become intermediaries between the Spanish Vice royalty and the former Inca subjects; the schooled nobility were made responsible for assigning Indian labor to the Spanish mines and plantations and for collecting taxes. Similarly, in India, the British East India Company created Moslem colleges to elicit the cooperation of the Moslem elite. These colleges were then used to develop an elite loyal to European Values and norms.

Aside from these important exceptions, however, formal schooling was not used to incorporate people into the economic structure until capitalism began to dominate the economy. As the capitalist organization of work created a need for a new kind of society in Europe (particularly England) - a society organized around factories, shifts, wage structures, and work organized by others - schooling served to preserve the moral fabric of this society and to socialize children into it. Thus, as feudal organization broke down in Europe and later, Latin America, an institution was needed to hold things together under new and disruptive conditions Missionaries and the Catholic Church first provided schooling for the poor, and later were aided by the state" (Carnoy 1985: 210).

In India, the capitalist period witnessed a pattern of schooling which prepared the people to fit into British bureaucratic structures and in so doing gear the economy and trade in order to promote the interests of the British. Interestingly, when the British and the French occupied West Africa, the pattern of schooling prepared Africans for roles that were determined by economic relations between the two metropolises. The metropolis industrialists discouraged industrialization yet schooling (i) served as a means of controlling societal change; and (ii) provided the moral and social guideline to the people who aspired to emulate the administrators. Historical evidence suggests that on the one hand schooling in the colonies was directed to maintain colonial structures while on the other; schooling was used as an agency for colonizing people in the United States. What is more important is to note that these methods and experiences were returned to the now independent Third World (see Carnoy 1985).

In India we can see the differences in the quality of education. All the children do not get the privilege of getting quality education. The schools can be divided into two major categories— state managed schools, and privately managed schools. The former seem to be meant for the masses, while the latter for the privileged class who can afford to pay for the good education. The co-existence of the two parallel streams of schools ensures that the masses operate in a different world than the elites. From the beginning, the children of the better off live separately from the children of the poor. This ensures that the privileged, exclusive education should be the right of a few while the masses are rendered to make their own destiny. The educated elite class maintains a comfortable paradox. On the one hand, it avows the equality-oriented ideology of our education system, while on the other it tends to protect its dominant position in society. Education plays a key role in helping

them perpetuate the current inequalities in society while maintaining the liberal facade. The apt ideology of 'equality of opportunity' is used in the Indian context for perpetuating the silent, subtle suppression.

It may be stated that the distribution, selection and transmission of knowledge are always guided by power structures. Bernstein (1979) stresses that the way a society selects, classifies, distributes, transmits and evaluates educational knowledge it considers to be public, reflects both the distribution of power and the principles of social control. The parameters for measuring performance, and how performance is understood in a society, also confirm that education favours the dominant sections of society. Bernstein and Young explain that 'structuring of knowledge and symbol in our educational institutions is intimately related to the principles of social and cultural control in a society' (see Apple 2004:2). The competition based on meritocracy seems to be impartial and fair. We measure persons by their ability to generate wealth. Those who fail to do generate and accrue wealth are naturally and easily condemned to be of lower worth. Through various agencies, especially education, this has become part of our mundane thought. This common sense knowledge mystifies and naturalizes the exploitative relationship between the dominant and the subjugated groups of society. Educational institutions go hand in hand with the other economic, political and cultural forces, and provide mechanisms through which power is maintained.

Reflection and Action 5.1

Discuss the role of education in social control of the masses.

5.4 Cultural and Economic Reproduction

Education becomes the site for the reproduction and production of power relations in society. Education becomes a tool to dominate, to impose ideas, meanings and practices on people in a civilized, democratic way. This kind of oppression is subtle and is not undemocratic. Through education the dominant sections of society hegemonize the common sense making exploitation appear natural. Apple asserts that education and differential cultural, economic, and political power should be seen as closely connected with each other. The educational policies and practices are the result of struggles by powerful groups to legitimize their knowledge and their viewpoint. This authenticates the pattern of social mobility and increases their power in society.

Based on a study of the schooling in American society, Bowles and Gintis (see Apple 2004) stress the economic role of educational institutions. They mention that educational institutions play a paramount role in reproducing the division of labour in society, sustaining class divisions. For this reason Apple (2004) explores the relationship between economic and cultural domination because of which inequality in society is reproduced. He mentions that one of the important ways through which dominant groups are able to exert their power is through the control of the governmental mechanisms that grant official legitimacy to particular groups' knowledge. One such way is through the process of state textbook adoption. Textbooks are an important medium for exercising control as they embody dominant ideologies. In textbooks knowledge continues to be inherently ideological as it reproduces the culture of dominant class and perpetuates the established patterns of social order and social inequality. These biased textbooks allow the hegemony of dominant groups to continue, and the hierarchical social order is preserved. Timothy Scrase in his examination of the textbooks of West Bengal finds that the texts and the images are ideologically biased. He places the characters and the stories on the dimensions of time and space, and finds that while upper caste occupations are identified more with the present, those of the lower castes are related with the past. This reinforces the notion of lower castes' closeness with technological

backwardness and social irrelevance. The children of the lower castes are disadvantaged as their own cultural experiences are denied the legitimation of being real and valued knowledge. Texts either do not represent the experiences of lower caste people and if they do represent, then it is in a distorted form. Whenever the lower castes have attempted to challenge the established hierarchical order, they have been demeaned and ridiculed on ideological and cultural grounds. Dominant groups use knowledge in a way that no voices other than their own are represented. If they get represented, then only in a feeble, inadequate or distorted way, which gives them a negative appeal. This is a civilized, dynamic form of assertion through which the dominant ideology continues to perpetuate its domination.

Box 5.2: Banking Concept of Education

“Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiques and ‘makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the ‘banking’ concept of education in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filling, and storing the deposits... pp. 45-46.

The more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result in their intervention in the world as transformers of that world. The more completely they accept the passive role imposed on them, the more they tend simply to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them.

The capacity of banking education to minimize or annul the students’ creative power and to stimulate their credulity serves the interests of the oppressors, who care neither to have the world revealed nor to see it transformed. The oppressors use their ‘humanitarianism’ to preserve a profitable situation. Thus they react almost instinctively against any experiment in education which stimulates the critical faculties and is not content with a partial view of reality but is always seeking out the ties which link one point to another and one problem to another” pp 47 (Freire 1972).

The schools disseminate certain forms of knowledge through which people can be controlled. They not just control people, but they also control meaning. Both of them influence each other. Schools disseminate ‘legitimate knowledge’, the knowledge of specific groups, under the illusion of belonging to everyone. Just the fact that the particular knowledge is provided and distributed by the school gives legitimacy to that knowledge and to that particular group also which feels close to that knowledge. In this way it becomes easy to control people by controlling meaning. The group getting substantial representation in the curriculum should have the political and economic power to make their knowledge, their life-world, and their world-view into ‘knowledge for all’. Culture and cultural capital are also used for this and cannot be seen as apolitical entities. Therefore, power and culture are interwoven and mutually influence each other so that both economic power and cultural power give better agencies for social control.

Foucault provides an analysis of knowledge and finds the complex relationship existing between forms of knowledge and relations of power. He finds a circular relationship between the systems of power and regimes of knowledge. Through knowledge, control is exercised and order is imposed. This is the dialectic of knowledge and control. John Fiske also shares the same critical Foucauldian thought. For him, “Knowledge is never neutral, it never exists in an empiricist, objective relationship to the real. Knowledge is power, and the circulation of knowledge is part of the social distribution of power” (from Apple 2000:143).

The education and power linkage becomes vivid when the deliberate selection and organization of knowledge is studied critically. Selective tradition, ideology and hegemony are three critical terms used by Apple (2004) for his analysis. Let us understand these terms here. The deliberate selection of knowledge in any text allows social control and social inequality to continue. Williams calls this selection as 'selective tradition', and defines it as, 'someone's selection, someone's vision of legitimate knowledge and culture, one that in the process of enfranchising one group's cultural capital disenfranchises another's.' Through the process of 'selective tradition,' educational curriculum acts as agents of both cultural and ideological control. It legitimates, naturalizes and authenticates the culture and knowledge of the dominant groups.

Ideology refers to the system of ideas, beliefs, or values about the social reality. But this is a simplistic way of understanding it. Marx explains ideology as a form of false consciousness which distorts one's picture of social reality and serves the interests of the dominant classes in a society. It provides a justification of their vested interests and gives them a liberal ostensible appearance. To understand what ideology is, one has to investigate what is considered to be legitimate knowledge in specific institutions at specific historical moments. For Apple (2004:43) "The overt and covert knowledge found within school settings, and the principles of selection, organization, and evaluation of this knowledge, are value governed selections from a much larger universe of possible knowledge and selection principles". Hence whatever schools teach as accurate knowledge and as representing collective tradition is, in effect, the life world of only a few. Through the overt and the hidden curricula it is the meanings and the life worlds of the dominant in society which are being collected and distributed. Not all groups' visions and meanings are represented, and this becomes possible through ideology.

Hegemony saturates our consciousness so that the educational, economic and social reality we see and interact with seems to be the only one. It refers to those organized assemblage of meanings, values and actions that are adhered to in the course of life. It is through hegemony that the control over people, resources becomes smooth. For Williams (from Apple 2004:4), schools become agents of cultural and ideological hegemony. Education may be viewed as a hegemonic form, because its ideological saturation permeates our lived experience, and enables them to believe they are neutral participants in the neutral instrumentation of schooling. On the contrary they serve the economic and ideological interests of the popular and elite culture.

Young (see Apple 2004) mentions that schools not only 'process people' they 'process knowledge' as well. The educational institutions, among others, play the most important role in disseminating the dominant culture and in legitimizing, and naturalizing power. They shape people's attitudes and ideas and prepare them in a way that they see no alternative to the meanings, cultures and interpretations provided by the educational institutions. Schools disseminate both, formal knowledge as well as the linguistic and social competencies, differentially to different students based on their power in society. These competencies are equally required today to get higher salaried and higher status jobs. The knowledge which gets selected and organized in the curriculum pertains to both economic property and symbolic property, i.e. cultural capital. Schools play an active role in preserving and distributing both of them. Bourdieu treats cultural capital as economic capital. Just as the people who are endowed with economic capital do better, those who hold cultural capital are at an advantage. Cultural capital is unequally distributed and is dependent on the division of labour in society. The selection process occurring in society largely depends on the cultural capital. He argues that it is through the seemingly neutral process of selection and instruction that filtering and the divisions of students begin from their early years. Schools take the cultural capital, the

habitus of the middle class, as natural and employ it on all the children. However, "by taking all children as equal, while implicitly favouring those who have already acquired the linguistic and social competencies to handle middle-class culture, schools take as natural what is essentially a social gift, i.e. cultural capital" (Apple 2004:31). Cultural capital then becomes an effective filtering device in the reproduction of a hierarchical society. Apple (2004:48) writes, "Just as there is a social distribution of cultural capital in society, so too is there a social distribution of knowledge within classrooms."

Educational institutions contribute to inequality by differentially distributing specific kinds of knowledge to different social groups. They 'process' people in accordance with their economic and cultural capital and increase societal inequality. Hidden curriculum is 'the tacit teaching to students of norms, values, and dispositions that goes on simply by their living in and coping with the institutional expectations and routines of schools day in and day out for a number of years' (Apple 2004:13). It maintains the ideological hegemony of the dominant classes in society. During the socialization process the child internalizes the rules required to govern the social order. This ideological saturation starts very early in one's life. Apple makes the point that the economically rooted norms and dispositions are actually taught in institutions of cultural preservation and distribution like schools.

Young explains that there is 'a dialectical relationship between access to power and the opportunity to legitimize certain dominant categories, and processes by which the availability of such categories to some groups enables them to assert power and control over others' (from Apple 2004:30). Inequality in society is sustained and propagated by the 'transmission' of a particular kind of culture. Educational institutions play an important role in cultural and economic reproduction. Educational institutions play a pertinent role as they have a major role in legitimizing and accepting inequalities, and in maintaining hegemony. The way economic capital is unequally distributed holds true for cultural capital also. Schools distribute this cultural capital, and become an important agent in providing legitimacy to categories and forms of knowledge. It is fallacious to assume school curriculum imparts neutral knowledge. Legitimate knowledge is the result of complex power relations and struggles among class, caste, gender and religious groups. Apple (2000:144) writes 'Thus, education and power are terms of an indissoluble couplet.' Texts cannot be treated as a simple conglomeration of facts that are presented in a systematically printed form. The controversy over 'legitimate knowledge' or 'official knowledge' in the school texts center around what is to be included or excluded in the text.

In the educational curriculum, the knowledge being counted as valid gets that status through a conscious process of selection. The processes that make any knowledge valid are selection, representation, distribution and reception and are influenced by the economy, politics and culture. It is through these processes only that inequality is perpetuated in society. A complex relationship exists between educational policy and practice and the relations of domination and exploitation of the larger society. It is important to understand the contradictory power relationships that exist at the site of education to assert and to reassert dominant groups' meanings, their representations and their voices.

Williams finds educational institutions making incorporation possible that plays a significant role in maintaining and perpetuating inequality in society. He explains, "The educational institutions are usually the main agencies of transmission of an effective dominant culture, and this is now a major economic and cultural activity...the selective tradition: that which, within the terms of an effective dominant culture, is always passed off as 'the tradition,' the

significant past. But always the selectivity is the point; the way in which from a whole possible area of past and present, certain meanings and practices are neglected and excluded. The more crucial point is here that some of these meanings are reinterpreted, diluted, or put into forms which support or at least do not contradict other elements within the effective dominant culture” (see Apple 2004:5). This ensures total incorporation in the unequal social order. He rightly depicts the role of hegemony, because of which the role of educational institutions in reproducing the inequalities goes unchallenged. The reaction is neutral or it supports the mainstream tradition as the ruling ideology is not imposed. If only the dominant culture has been represented then overcoming it, challenging it must have been easy. Williams points out that meanings and forms are reinterpreted to suit the dominant culture, thereby leaving no room for resistance to spring up. The resistance is this process if co-opted.

We need to understand that the processes through which perspectives and ideas of one group are given more value than the other(s) make the former group more powerful than the latter. This politics of knowledge, Apple (2000) avers, is the politics of compromises. Dominant sections of society do not use physical force, or direct impositions to make their world view legitimate. They assert their power by co-opting the different and the divergent views in the educational curriculum, though subsequently it favours their section of the society only. For instance the educational curriculum does not omit the knowledge of the dominated sections, as that can make the exploitation clear. The curriculum reflects them also but in a feeble way, disenfranchising them or positioning them under the patronage of the powerful sections. Education, for this reason, is a powerful medium as it legitimizes and naturalizes the power. These compromises give it a democratic façade, thereby increasing its authenticity, and they occur at the level of political and ideological discourse. The knowledge that is taught in schools, the pedagogic practices that teachers adopt, the teaching-learning processes that happen in class, the curriculum are a few sites of struggle. Constant struggle for voices, representations happen over curriculum, teaching and policy. They are the result of various political, cultural and economic activities, struggles and compromises. The textbooks, when studied critically, reflect the priorities of various groups. They signify the selection and organization of knowledge. These educational processes are always the results of such compromises where dominant groups in order to maintain their dominance take the concerns of the less powerful. This becomes an effective strategy of co-opting the dissident voices so that the cultural and economic reproduction of inequality continues.

Reflection and Action 5.2

‘Education is subservient to the political system.’ Discuss.

5.5 Conclusion

In this Unit we have made the point that what happens inside the educational institutions is intricately linked to economic, social, and ideological structures outside it. The educational institutions, their policies and the processes are connected to specific economic and political structures. By serving the interests of the dominant sections of society they contribute to the societal inequality and also help these sections in maintaining the social order in their favour. They are able to do that through formal knowledge as well as the dispositions (i.e. cultural capital) that are learned in such institutions. This ‘formal corpus of school knowledge’ becomes a form of social and economic control. Through the overt and the hidden curricula, schools play an important role in selecting, preserving, and fostering the conceptions of competence, ideological norms, dos and don’ts, status of knowledge and values. Control over knowledge

increases the ideological dominance of one group over another. We have made the point that knowledge is constructed and it reproduces the status quo. The knowledge is used to legitimize the operation of power in society.

5.6 Further Reading

Apple, Michael W. 2004. *Ideology and Curriculum*. Routledge

Fieire, P. 1972. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. England: Penguin Books

Kumar, Krishna. 1992. *What is Worth Teaching?* New Delhi: Orient Longman

Unit 6

Education, Nation-building, State and Ideology

Contents

- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Education and Nation-building
- 6.3 Nation-building in India
- 6.4 Nation-building in other Countries
- 6.5 Conclusion
- 6.6 Further Reading

Learning Objectives

After going through this unit, you will be able to understand the:

- process of education as a means for ideological indoctrination;
- role of education in the nation building agenda and how the latter is used as an ideology to control the masses; and
- ideological use of education in India and in other countries.

6.1 Introduction

Education plays an important role in legitimizing control of the dominant sections of society. In the earlier unit we looked at certain theoretical concepts in the context of ideological domination. In this unit we will see how education is used by the state or by the dominant sections of society to assert their power. Education takes care of secondary socialization, and for this reason it seems to provide a platform for the fulfilment of important tasks like character building, value education, citizenship training, patriotism and so on. These tasks help the state to perpetuate unequal social order through the ideology of nation building. This unit explores how nation-building ideology is fostered by the state to cater to the vested interests of the dominant sections. Any claim that the education system as an apolitical category is fallacious. Education is used to serve political ends. We will discuss this aspect here and place it in a wider perspective in the next unit. In this unit we will explore how the freedom struggle narrative is interpreted to construe the categories of the 'other' and the 'self'.

6.2 Education and Nation-building

Apple (2000) suggests that the role of history is extremely important in developing ideological control. The control over history helps the dominant sections to control the masses by using the ideology of nation building. The state attempts to use education as a tool to exercise its control over people. The dominant sections are involved in the process of defining official, legitimate knowledge. From the events in the past that constitute history, certain sections are eliminated, while others are selected to suit the vested interests of the dominant sections. This ideological control over education decides the way the younger generation is made to perceive the present. The teaching of history particularly in the present day when there is increasing awareness of the role of education in imposing control over the masses is a matter of controversies and many political debates. The curriculum and teaching of the discipline of history is often a matter of concern. How history is taught, and what are the topics included in the curriculum, are crucial issues. Modern

nation states place a heavy responsibility on the historian who is assigned the task of writing for the young. Political leaders and the elites perceive education as a means of imparting a strong sense of national identity to the young. Education plays a pertinent role not just during nation making, but also in sustaining this concept. This control decides and defines the category of the 'other' and the relationships with the 'other.'

The role of education assumes significance in the broader framework of building national identity and citizenship. Its role becomes more paramount in the post-colonial period of nation building and in carving out 'good citizens'. The national education policies, curriculum, textbooks, pedagogy construct the 'nation', inculcate the feelings of patriotism, delineate the characteristics of 'good citizen', and inculcate the spirit of character building. The official knowledge imparted in the schools is in accordance to the wider national goals. For these wider national aims, education becomes important. One of the most important tasks of the education system is to develop in the students a strong sense of national pride, and to make them feel a part of the larger national community. According to Thapan (2003), 'school is a primary institution through which values and norms are constituted as well as reproduced. The schooling processes are related to power and social control. In the national discourses, there are normative definitions of 'right' values and morals, and the forms of ideal citizenship. Education plays a critical role in making these meaningful to the students and drawing up a plan for their incorporation in their lives. These 'right' values, norms, and ideal citizenship are embedded in national cultures and they are reproduced through state and other institutions in society. The school is one such institution of the state that defines this national discourse. In schools the notions of citizenship are constituted in the normative definitions of citizenship.

Box 6.1: Colonialism, Imperialism, Indigenism

"In the postwar world, Western nations embarked on a program of assistance and influence in the rest of the world while independent national elites proceeded to build their nations and develop education for this goal. The mission of modernization and economic growth was reflected, in Western intellectual institutions, particularly in the area or comparative studies program as well in the comparative study of education. Thus, comparative education, international education and development education developed associations and connections with a mission of identifying educational practices that would promote development in accordance with the strategy and goals that the developed modernizing nations considered appropriate and that the leadership of the ex-colonies also appears to adopt. Even scholars from these nations were not free from this stance. In fact, the entire theory of modernization has supported this attitude of externally sponsored change. The study of the relationship of formal education to economic growth in historical and comparative of the relation of education to indexes of modernization and development are examples"(Shukla 1985: 253-254).

This takes place through the print material in the form of textbooks as well as through everyday practices within schools. In school the 'self' is constructed in relation to the nation in terms of the components of citizenship and nation building. Schools do that in highly demarcated and strictly maintained boundaries, with an 'abhorrence of mixed categories, blurred identities and intolerance of ambiguity' (Saigol, 2003, quoted in Thapan). This results in the construction of pure and unambiguous social categories. It is through such categories that the nation-building endeavour is carried out. Ali (2002) presents this perspective in the context of the Pakistani history primarily because the history of Pakistan seeks to homogenize the culture, traditions, social and religious life of the people in favour of the ruling class and the political attempts

towards centralization. This affects the non-Muslim religious minorities since they get excluded from the mainstream of history. Moreover, any attempt to assert the historical identity of a region is disparaged. Thapan explains that this takes the place through 'habitus' (to use the term Bourdieu proposed) and through the processes of social reproduction in society. Historically, the same national project could also be seen in the colonialist discourse on educating natives as well as in nationalist interventions in educational practice. The 'citizen' is one who valorizes national honor. The emphasis of the educational discourse remains on the honour, integrity, purity, and above all on the dignity of the nation.

Ali (2002) upholds that in order to rule over the present, it is important to have control over the past, as that legitimizes the domination. History serves as an important medium to authenticate, and to naturalize the ruling power. Most of the oppressive regimes have moulded history to serve their vested interests to justify their inhuman acts. The dominant powers can be states, churches, and political parties, private interests, which own media, schools or other such institutions. The dominant powers of society exercise their control through these mediums. They all use history to authenticate their regime. Rulers, in the past glorified their achievements by manipulating history. Similarly, in the modern nation states, rulers reconstruct history to assert their authority and domination. Ali (2000) quotes the following words of Eric Hobsbawn, 'History as inspiration and ideology has a built-in tendency to become a self-justifying myth. Nothing is a more dangerous blindfold than this, as the history of modern nations and nationalism demonstrates'. In the newly developed nation states like India and Pakistan, colonial history is invoked to rule the country, and to sustain the ideology of the nation state. Political leaders struggle to assume the status of freedom fighters and assert and reassert their role in helping India achieve independence. They eulogize their own role in the freedom struggle and then use it to legitimise their power and domination after independence. For this reason the concepts of 'freedom struggle' and 'war of liberation' are commonly made use of. Their sacrifices have been the dominant theme in the history writing of both the nations. In both the nations, the role of these freedom fighters is highly eulogized in order to give them the right to rule the newly formed nations.

Reflection and Action 6.1

Do you think education has a significant role to play in nation-building?
Discuss with other learners at the study centre.

6.3 Nation-building in India

In post-colonial societies like India, the nation, national identity, and nationhood are constructed around colonial history. The period of colonialism and the colonial exploitation accompanying it become the mega narratives to define our national identity. During the colonial as well as the post-colonial time there were institutions and policies to transform the 'natives' into 'citizens'. During the freedom struggle this 'citizenship building' exercise became necessary for attaining freedom.

For Kumar (2001) nation-building assumes a dominant position among the aims of children's education. History is central to the maintenance as well as the creation of a modern nation state. Its role is pertinent in the process of nation-building. The pedagogic and learner centered perspectives take a subservient position to the nation building project. History faces more strain of teaching about nation-building than other subjects. The process and prospects of inculcation of national consciousness becomes paramount in history. In the Indian case, knowledge of the freedom struggle plays a key role in socializing the younger generation into attitudes and beliefs that are upheld

nationally. In the schools, their mindset is prepared in a pre-defined way. Kumar examined the rival ideologies of nationalism into which schools attempt to socialize the young, and in doing so he depicted the ways in which history is used for indoctrination of specific ideologies. Kumar emphasizes the processes of selection and representation to understand the nation building project of the state. For Kumar, it is important to see how things are represented to design the young mind. Our education system serves the wider national objective of nation building, and for this reason from a very early age, children are socialized into national legacies. Education from the early stages is deliberately used to pursue the nation-building agenda. Knowledge of the past is an important medium that ensures acculturation, socialization and framing the national identity of the future generation. It is for this reason that schools take on the ideological role. The knowledge of the past becomes pertinent for a construction like nation-states. The anti-colonial movement as well as the freedom struggle play a key role in socializing younger generations into loyal citizens. The socialization through the formal learning at school plays a pertinent role as the latter 'leads to the formation of socially articulated knowledge' (Kumar 2001:15). The past plays an important role in shaping people's attitudes and behaviours. It can, therefore, be said with confidence that the 'representations of the past serve as mental maps in shaping their responses to present-day situations' (Kumar 2001:15). Kumar explains the way the freedom struggle is used for consolidating the nation-states of India and Pakistan. Though the narratives of both the countries were the same, yet they have been projected differently.

The systems of education deliberately cultivates the characteristics of loyal citizens in children. The curriculum, pedagogy and the entire education system are geared towards socializing the young into an approved national past. The national past, taken as the main discourse by the education system, is approved by the state. The state is the guiding force first for nation building and then for its sustenance. The school uses the officially approved knowledge of the nation's past to inspire children to fulfill their roles as obedient citizens. History plays a major role in fashioning young minds into the roles of the citizens. Kumar (2001) explains how both the nations understand the same event of partition in different light because of their nation-building project.

Both India and Pakistan faced 1947 independence, followed by the partition, yet their perception of it varies. India looks at 1947 as a great achievement which followed arduous struggle (though, because of partition it was also accompanied by a terrible sense of loss and sadness) while Pakistan treats 1947 as the formal beginning of its nation-state. The same event of partition is understood in a different light. Indian texts treat 1919 to 1947 as 'Gandhian era' of the Indian nationalist struggle as Gandhi transformed the nature of this movement. Gandhi's personality, activities, and ideology are highlighted in this part. Indian textbooks represent his personality and ideas. Children are informed about his principles of non-violence and truth.

Kumar deduces that the way knowledge about the past is selected, reconstructed and represented in the textbooks for school children depicts how a common past acquires distinct versions under two systems of education. The process and perception of nation-building in India and Pakistan differs considerably. These issues depict the relationship between national ideology and textbooks. The pursuit of nation-building is turned into an ideology and education is seen as the primary instrument for propagating it. The ideology of nation building became the most important goal of the education system. As Kumar puts it, after independence the heuristic methods of teaching, emphasizing the child's freedom to negotiate meaning were not given any weight. All education commissions underscored nation-building as an important objective that even downplayed the ideology of manual work proposed by Gandhi. The wider aim was supposed to be of nation-building, and all the

other cultural, educational or economic facets were sidelined to fulfill it. The 'nation-building' symbolized national development. In history textbooks, the decision to mention a name or an event or to overlook it is guided by this paramount national ideology. In Kumar's words, it reflects the 'politics of memory'. The difference between the Indian and the Pakistani understanding of the freedom struggle is essentially in the choice of the events they mention. Certain details and certain events are given more space and time in one story, while the same ones can be ignored in the other. This tendency, which Kumar refers to as 'politics of mention', increases in the coverage of events that took place in the last seventeen years (1930-47) of the struggle. The ideology of nation-building in the last decades becomes more compelling in both the Indian and the Pakistani textbooks. Though the attainment of freedom is common to both the nations, yet its understanding varies. As Kumar puts it, in the Indian case the story would explain *why* India was divided, while the Pakistani story would explain *how* the division was made to happen. It is because of their nation-building ideology that the same bodies of facts are presented differently in the two nations. Both the nation states want to foster nationalism with the help of education. Education carries the heavy burden of nation-building project on its shoulders. Their task is to celebrate the struggle and the eventual triumph of secularism. Partition was a trouble for them as it signified religious separatism too. For this reason they marginalize this period of nationalist struggle. In the Indian case, the narrative of the freedom struggle as well as the history itself comes to an end in 1947. It only talks of some events associated with the Independence, which includes the making of the constitution, the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, integration of the princely states and the beginning of Five-Year plans. For Pakistan, partition signifies the birth or creation of the new state. The 'freedom' implied not just freedom from the British, but also the creation of Pakistan. It symbolizes the genesis of Pakistan.

History is seen as a means for ideological indoctrination. Through the study of the past the earlier animosities are kept alive and are fostered. In India, the narrative of freedom basically revolves around the tension between 'secular' and 'communal' forces. This tension becomes relevant to define India's national identity and its secular nature. History cannot be simply understood as the memory of the past as the politics of mention always operates and guides it. 'Memory of the past is not about reality; rather it represents a reconstruction of past reality in ways that nourish the self' (Kumar 2001:241). In India, the debate on history textbooks focused on the distinction between secular and communal perspectives. This politics of history allows ideological indoctrination to become the purpose of discussing the past.

The idea of the nation state, national language, and national culture favours the dominant culture and does not represent minority cultures. They remain suppressed in this national politics. Surely, the citizenship status is also given importance by the nation state, and becomes important for the sustenance of nation-building project. The feeling of patriotism is important in citizens for the concept of nation-state to exist. This nation state exists on the idea of the homogenous citizenship. This homogenization, however, subjugates the minority culture and their rights. The minority culture and the minority rights are sacrificed for the national honor and integrity. For Mahajan (1999), the nation state enfolds the culture of the dominant sections and devalues and marginalizes minority cultures. The minority cultures exist on the fringes of national political life, which largely believe in the liberal ideal of homogenous citizenship. The minority community is culturally marginalized within the liberal nation states. The homogenizing tendencies of the state do not favour all the cultures, and are in consonance only with the powerful sections of the society. Mahajan makes the point that the minorities are disadvantaged in the context of the nation state, and the nation-building project. The educational policies, educational structure, educational curriculum and pedagogy play an active role

in this ideological control over people. The state attempts to unite the diverse groups within its territory to evolve a national culture. This national culture is manifested in various forms. The nation state adopts a national language, interprets its history, specifies certain kinds of academic curricula, identifies the medium of instruction, declares public holidays, selects national heroes, and adopts certain rituals for ceremonial occasions as symbols of its national identity. In all these processes certain kinds of selection, representation and sustenance of the national symbols happen. This national culture, which the state tries to inculcate in all its citizens, is not entirely neutral. It tends to express the culture of the dominant community. The minority culture is not expressed in the national ethos. More than that it marginalizes them in the public arena and devalues their cultural practices. Therefore, the policies and the practices of the nation- building project result in the gradual erosion and disintegration of minorities' culture, and only favours the dominant culture. The equal rights of political participation (or the citizenship status) have not dismantled the structure of dominance and subordination in society. 'Assimilation' into the national mainstream distances them from the culture of their own community. It devalues their culture. To secure a job, for instance, one has to master the national language. In our country, in certain instances, communities are marginalized, as a small but dominant minority controls national resources. It is the new minority of modern and modernizing elites which exercises hegemony over national life, which disadvantages large sections of the population, not by devaluing their culture, but by denying them equal opportunity and access to the available resources. It is not just the cultural identity which is at stake, but more than that it is the social and economic disadvantage which they face. The project of nation- building never wants minority identities to go against the prevalent idea of national identity. The 'national identity' expresses itself in the political-cultural ethos of the majority, which remains shrouded in the nation-state's macro-ideology of modernization and development.

Reflection and Action 6.2

Discuss how the state intervenes in the process of nation-building in India.

6.4 Nation-building in other Countries

When education is directed to a definite and preconceived end, it is amenable to indoctrination. Education can be too purposeful in such cases. The curriculum reflects the order of interests in any given society. In a theocratic society, for instance, first priority is accorded to religious studies; in a democratic state, the focus is on consolidating ideas about citizenship. Nazism and communism have also used education to mould the minds of the youth to cater to political interests. Nazism employed education to implant in the German youth the cult of racial superiority, of military discipline, of unquestioning obedience, and of devotion to Hitler. To achieve this objective, it controlled all the cultural and educational forces, like science, philosophy, religion, press, literature, music, art, and all other means through which youth is moulded. In the same vein, the cultural and educational development which requires independent thought and imagination was discouraged. It muffled all those forces that did not reiterate the theme of the class struggle and the proletarian revolution (Scheffler 1958: 23). That's why for him 'one will say that geography and mathematics are by nature non-political'. Such may be the case, but also the contrary. Their teaching can do good or harm. From the elevation of his chair, certain words, an interaction, an allusion, a judgement, a bit of statistics, coming from the professor suffice to produce a political effect. That is why a professor of mathematics could play a political role and could be a fascist.

Napoleon (see Kilpatrick 1963) explicitly states his educational aims, 'My principal aim in the establishment of a teaching body is to have means for directing political and moral opinions.' Out of all the political questions he considered education to be of the highest importance. Certain attitudes were built in these Napoleonic schools' unquestioning acceptance of Napoleon as emperor, honour to him and the complete willingness to serve him. Everything was authoritative in these schools and regulated by the central government. 'From childhood on' they would be told what to think. Napoleon recognized the role of education in controlling the masses. Education can be effectively used to silence the resistance and in naturalizing the control.

Education plays a pertinent role in the growth of modern nationalism, which then is instrumentally used by revolutionary totalitarian regimes. The Nazi regime in Germany used the ideology of nationalism to authenticate its oppressive and totalitarian regime. Here, we can understand the processes through which Soviet citizens acquired their political values, attitudes, perceptions and sentiments. The Soviet man who emerged after the Bolshevik revolution was a different man and the national values and the project of nation-building was given supreme importance during that time. The one major process through which the political socialization of Soviet people happened was through the educational system. Soviet educational system took deliberate steps to create a 'new man.' The 'new Soviet man' whom the Soviet Educational System was supposed to produce was not merely a 'civic man' and an 'industrial man' but also a 'totalitarian man.' This led to political cohesiveness and consolidated the political system, which then made sure that the total power is concentrated in the hands of the Communist party. The Soviet rulers' unswerving support and blind adherence lies with the 'all embracing, action oriented ideology - 'Marxism-Leninism.' This ideology legitimated the steps of the Communist party. The party attempted to establish a totalitarian political culture - an all-inclusive, monolithic, and homogenous political culture characterized by values, beliefs, attitudes, and sentiments which foster absolute devotion to the Communist party. The educational processes also encouraged undeviating adherence to the principles of the party line, and absolute obedience and devotion to the directives of the party leadership.

The common curriculum, the single pattern of school organization as well as the uniform curriculum existed in the USSR. This guaranteed that all the students were exposed to the same educational experiences. The common curriculum led to the politicization of the entire curriculum. Social science was responsible for the major indoctrination. The supreme task of the curriculum was to inculcate 'Soviet patriotism.' According to Soviet educators of this time, children progress most easily to the feeling of love for their motherland, their fatherland, and their state through a feeling of love for the leaders of the Soviet people-Lenin and Stalin. This makes them associate with the concrete images of Lenin and Stalin, the party of communists. The history textbooks and the primary school song books were designed to convince students that everywhere, in all spheres of science and art, industry and agriculture, in the works of peace and the battlefields, the Soviet people march in the forefront of other nations and have created values which are unequalled anywhere in the world. Primary school readers were replete with the tales of the careers of political leaders, brave soldiers and famous scientists. The way these "biographies" have been written, it exemplifies right conduct and inspires reverence. The Nazi regime in Germany and the communist regime in the USSR depicted the role of education in socializing the young in the political ideology of the ruling community. The ideology of nation, nation building and nationalism was used to control the masses and to legitimize the control.

Box 6.2: Education and the New International Order

“The question also arises whether a world order of parity and equity among nations is not also crucially dependent on internal equity and equality within nations or nation-states, as it is among classes and regional and ethnic units for example, castes and tribes. The educational correlates of the strengthening of national identities in the context of domination by international elites, by national elites, and by the masses of people themselves and the struggles and conflicts of social classes, regions, and nations deserve examination in as much as these are reflected in or related to questions of educational structure, process, content and distribution” (Shukla 1985: 249).

6.5 Conclusion

This unit has explained that education cannot be seen as an apolitical category. It should be seen as a highly charged category. The dominant groups of society use education as a tool for indoctrinating masses, and this indoctrination makes their rule possible. Education is an important institution in the hands of the state, and state uses it to legitimize its control. The state uses the ideology of nation building or the development agenda to control the masses. This makes the civilized control of people possible as ideology blinds them. This unit depicted this by throwing light on various nation-states and their nation building projects. The ideology of nation building and nationalism acts as an active force in controlling minorities in a civilized democratic way. This nation-building agenda favours the dominant groups, and homogenizes masses.

6.6 Further Reading

Apple, Michael W. 2000. *Official Knowledge*. Routledge and Kegan Paul

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Unit 7

Politics of Educational Curriculum

Contents

- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Concept and Perspectives on Curriculum Planning
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Learning Objectives

After going through this unit, you will be able to discuss the:

- inextricable link between educational curriculum and politics;
- play of politics and power in colonial education; and
- critical issues in women's education as a means of empowerment.

7.1 Introduction

In the previous units we have read that education and ideology are interrelated with each other. The educational curriculum is not designed just by keeping the child in mind. Several societal, cultural, economic, and political reasons play active roles in shaping the curriculum. Since knowledge defines the identity of a nation to a large extent, education comes to constitute an important part of the political agenda. It is used as an effective tool of indoctrinating people with all that helps political regimes to fulfill their specific political ends.

We begin this unit with a broad overview of major theoretical approaches to the understanding of curriculum from a sociological perspective, then go on to explore how colonialists used education as a means to consolidate their power and exercise control over people. Thereafter, we will delve into the politics of language and medium of instruction on the one hand and the interrelationship between education and politics in a comparative framework on the other.

7.2 Concept and Perspectives on Curriculum Planning

In its original sense, 'curriculum' refers to, 'running' or 'race course'. The term 'course' is derived from the Latin verb *currere*, which means 'to run'. Curriculum, therefore, provides a structure to students and guides them in the process of instruction. "The etymological metaphor can be extended to designate not only a race course but also a journey, expedition, or even privilege" (*Encyclopedia of Educational Research* 1982). The term curriculum should be distinguished from syllabus. Curriculum denotes not just the mere content of a particular subject or area of a study, but the total programme of an educational institution. The curriculum delineates the overall rationale of the educational programme of an institution (Kelly 1982). The concept of the curriculum is present though implicitly in the earliest educational programmes of civilized societies, but curriculum as a field of systematic enquiry emerged only during the early 1920s. Kliebard (1982) identifies the year 1918 as the junction when "curriculum emerged as a self conscious field of study."

Stenhouse (1975:5) defines curriculum as “the means by which the experience of attempting to put an educational proposal into practice is made publicly available. It involves both content and method, and in its widest application takes account of the problem of implementation in the institutions of the educational system.” He suggests that a curriculum should provide a basis for planning a course, studying it empirically and justifying its very basis. According to Rohit Dhankar (2000), a good curriculum framework should be a system of most basic principles and assumptions, capable of providing a rational basis for curricular choices. Curricular choices are not limited to just what should be taught, but indicate choices regarding how to teach, under what conditions, by whom, with what teaching aids, how the evaluation should be carried out, and so on. In other words, the spectrum of choices define what schools should be doing and how. Often, curricular decisions have to do with the choice of knowledge, values, and/or skills to be included or excluded from the programme of education. Alternatively, they relate with the method of developing these abilities in children.

It is important to understand that there are two necessary and complementary ways of looking at the curriculum framework which Posner terms as curriculum development technique and a curriculum conscience. The curriculum development technique is also known as the Technical Production Perspective which refers to the expertise in developing a curriculum, and getting to know its technical and procedural aspects. Curriculum Conscience or the Critical Perspective refers to the ability to identify the assumptions underlying the curriculum, i.e., what is being taken for granted, and its critical understanding comes under curriculum conscience (Posner 1998).

a) Technical Production Perspective

The technical production perspective provides a view of rationality in curriculum planning and outlines the techniques which the curriculum planner should keep in mind while formulating the curriculum. Ralph Tyler uses the technical production perspective. Its prevailing influence on the entire curriculum understanding cannot be sidelined. It is important to note that till date most of the theoretical work on the curriculum revolves around the framework that he developed. Tyler’s work addresses the steps which one should follow while making a curriculum. The four steps suggested by him deal with (i) the selection of the educational purposes; (ii) the determination of experiences; (iii) the organization of experiences; and (iv) the provision for evaluation. Hilda Taba (1962) refines the Tylerian approach, and further subdivides Tyler’s four planning steps. Taba accepts the basic assumption that curriculum planning is a technical or scientific process rather than being a political matter. She favours a systematic, objective, scientific, and research-oriented approach to curriculum development. She too lays stress on objectivity and considers it pertinent for curriculum development. Curriculum designs are to be in accordance with the verifiable consequence on learning or to their contribution to educational objectives. Like Tyler, Taba accepts the assumption that learning is the ultimate purpose of schooling. She focuses on the selection and organization of learning experiences, with emphasis on the learning outcomes and learning objectives in her evaluation approach. Her approach is more prescriptive than Tyler’s procedure of curriculum planning.

Posner (1998) critically looks at the Tylerian framework and finds that schooling is assumed to be a process the main purpose of which is to promote or produce learning. Tyler speaks of students as learners. He treats objectives as desirable learning outcomes. The evaluation of the school’s process is solely measured by the achievement test scores. Tyler also distinguishes between educational goals and non-educational goals by determining if they could be attributed to learning. The framework also defines curriculum in terms of intended learning outcome. Schooling is, therefore, reduced to a production system in which individual learning outcomes are the primary product.

Tyler's framework evinces a scientific approach towards curriculum planning. It is seen as an enterprise in which the planner objectively and scientifically develops the means necessary to produce the desired learning outcomes. He gives no space to personal biases and prejudices and looks at it in a neutral way. He adheres to means-end reasoning and sees the entire process of curriculum planning as embodying rational decisions that are devoid of the personal reflection of the planners. The entire process is seen in a mechanical mode and the scientific inclination of his work is evident in his rationale and in the questions that are posited.

This perspective of curriculum development is found unacceptable on several counts, more so because it negates the complex forms of personal and mental development. Educational objectives are more than the behavioral objectives of intended learning outcomes. This instrumental approach to knowledge and education is largely debunked as it espouses the passive model of the man. In the words of Stenhouse (1975:4) the behavioral, instrumental perception defines the curriculum as, "all of the planned experiences provided by the school to assist the pupils in attaining the designated learning outcomes to the best of their abilities". He found this behavioral objective definition of the curriculum extremely problematic, and suggested that meaningful curriculum seeks to communicate the essential principles and features of an educational proposal in such a form that it is open to critical scrutiny and is capable of effective translation into practice.

b) Critical Perspective

The dominant technical production perspective was put into question by the critical perspective. This perspective takes a more critical approach and questions the authority of experts in curriculum planning. The idea of the value-free curriculum decision is given up in this approach. Hence, it also undermines the technical production assumption that curriculum development involves a purely technical, scientific and rational process. Rather, curriculum development is seen as a political and ideological matter. Underlying this framework is the view that "power, knowledge, ideology, and schooling are linked in ever changing patterns of complexity" (see Beyer and Apple 1998: 194).

7.3 Educational Curriculum and the Politics of Domination

The whole issue of politics of educational curriculum is rooted in the critical appropriation of the culture of those who dominate the people who are dominated. The former seek to deplore and treat as inferior the culture and knowledge system of the latter. One of the means through which the people who are dominated begin to treat their own culture as inferior is the educational curriculum. When this happens, it becomes easy to dominate them completely and strengthen one's own position. This aspect of education may be better understood in the light of the fact that dominant groups often use the educational curriculum as a channel through which the nature and extent of their dominance is communicated while the representation of others is largely enfeebled. Many of us are aware that the charge of designing and executing the curriculum is often in the hands the bureaucracy of education which itself is controlled by the state and political groups. It is, therefore, only natural that the educational curriculum serves the interests of the section of influential group of people.

From a traditional standpoint, schools were treated as places where instructions were imparted by the teachers to the students. They were sites for transmission of knowledge of importance to the existing society. What clearly escaped attention was the viewpoint that schools were also sites of

contestation among different cultural and economic groups. This somewhat simplistic conception of school education in general and educational curriculum in particular was challenged by new sociology of education which emerged forcefully in England and the United States some time in the 1970s. Radical critics argued that knowledge imparted in schools could be best understood as representing dominant culture. This is made possible through processes of selective emphases and exclusions. We know that there are different kinds of schools serving different sections of people in society. Some cater to the elite and the privileged, others cater to the middle class, while yet others cater to the poor and the disempowered. There are also some schools (eg., Delhi Tamil Education Association i.e. DTEA schools) that are established with the purpose of integrating cultural knowledge with school curriculum. It is commonly felt that children from schools for the elite, and the influential, develop cognitive skills and perspective that equips them better and privileged to succeed in life.

Box 7.1: The New Sociology of Education

“Against the claim that schools were only instructional sites, radical critics pointed to the transmission and reproduction of a dominant culture in schools, with its selective ordering and privileging of specific forms of languages, modes of reasoning, social relations, and cultural forms and experiences. In this view, culture was linked to power and to the imposition of a specific set of ruling class codes and experiences. Moreover, school culture functioned not only to confirm and privilege students from the dominant classes but also through exclusion and insult to discredit the histories, experiences, and dreams of subordinate groups. Finally, against the assertion made by traditional educators that schools were relatively neutral instructions, radical critics illuminated the way in which the state, through its selective grants, certification policies, and legal powers, shaped school practice in the interest of capitalist rationality” (Giroux 1985: XV).

The dominant culture gets repeatedly reproduced through specific social practices and texts in which the voices of the oppressed are silenced. Those who hold power are the ones who decide what kind of knowledge is worthwhile enough to be passed on to future generation. Naturally, this entails giving importance to knowledge of certain groups at the cost of others. As students of the sociology of education we need to look into the content of curriculum, social relations between and among teachers and students rigorously. Also, we need to understand how specific ideologies are perpetuated through the curriculum (see Freire 1985, Apple 1990). Is there no hope for the dominated and oppressed? Will their voices never be heard? The working class, research communities, women’s groups and others do possess the potential to develop a critical perspective and to identify the oppression and domination of a group of people. This would lead to the production and dissemination of knowledge that has a bearing on the needs of the people and in doing so resist and counteract cultural manipulation in favour of decentralization of control.

a) Colonial Education in India

All kinds of knowledge cannot be considered worth imparting. Political and economic considerations determine the validity or appropriateness of any knowledge. It is this validity of knowledge that decides its inclusion or omission from the curriculum framework. Educational aims have a historical character, and they change over time. Kumar (2005) effectively points out the ideological roots of colonial education. Education helped the British in dominating Indians ideologically, which strengthened colonial rule. He explains that by the beginning of the nineteenth century, the British Empire had almost won this part of the continent. The main objective then became empire building. The colony was

to be maintained so that it could generate profits for long. In this light the reformist and the educationist attempts came into light. The colony was won with force and coercion, but the long-term sustenance required social order and peace. Education was supposed to replace coercion with socialization since education was an important socializing agent that would turn natives into loyal citizens of the British state.

In colonial India, education provided the great moral agenda of colonialism. The colonial state saw itself as the protector of the 'ignorant masses' given to emotional and irrational behaviour. The colonialists felt that the only effective way of controlling the passions and irrationality among Indians was rationality and scientific reasoning which could be imparted through education. In doing so, the colonialists were able to entrench their position and exercise greater control over the masses.

Box 7.2 : Bombay Report of 1844

"One of the main duties of Government in modern times is to protect one class of its subjects, the weak, the unwary, the helpless, in one word the large majority, from the unprincipled few, and the remedy, acknowledged to be the most available one, is to inspire the bulk of the population with the desire, and to afford them the means, of acquiring as much exact knowledge as possible on the various subjects and idea..." (Kumar 2005 :34).

English administrators of the mid-nineteenth century answered the question of what is worth teaching in terms of their limited understanding of and interest in Indian culture and the local knowledge. Macaulay in his Minutes of 1835 states this ethnocentric attitude in the following words, "a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia" (cited from Young 1935). Macaulay's Minutes also pronounced that any kind of spending on Sanskrit and Arabic learning would be a dead loss. The Minutes stated, "What we spend on the Arabic and Sanskrit colleges is not merely a dead loss to the cause of truth; it is bounty-money paid to raise up champions of error. It goes to form a nest, not merely of helpless place-hunters, but of bigots prompted alike by passion and by interest to raise a cry against every useful scheme of education". On the above grounds we can say that the colonial education strengthened its hold by systematic rejection of indigenous knowledge and replacing it with knowledge as well as the culture of the colonialists themselves. In 1835, the Governor-General William Bentinck, agreed with Macaulay's Minutes and wrote, "the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India," thus promoting and establishing a permanent position for the use of the English language in Indian educational institutions (Young 1935).

During the early nineteenth century, the East India Company took steps to establish an education system in India. Some of the major decisions taken were the following:

- 1) the new system would be governed by a bureaucracy at every stage from primary schooling onwards, and in all aspects including the structure of syllabi, the content of textbooks, and teacher training;
- 2) the new system would aim at acculturating Indian children and youth in European attitudes and perceptions, and at imparting to them the skills required for working in the colonial administration, particularly at its middle and lower rungs;
- 3) the teaching of English and its use as medium of instruction would be a means of this acculturation and training;

- 4) indigenous schools would have to conform to the syllabus and textbooks prescribed by the colonial government if they wanted to seek government aid;
- 5) impersonal, centralized examinations would be used to assess students' eligibility for promotion and to select candidates for scholarships (Kumar 2004: 25 -26).

This kind of colonial set up ensured that the people at large consumed the knowledge provided by the ruler that would thwart their initiative and confidence to generate knowledge.

Kumar (2004, 2005) presents the argument that the text-book centered character of education in India is related to the historical circumstances under which India's present education system developed. The completely bureaucratized, mechanistic education system that they introduced reinforced culturally what colonial policies were aiming to achieve economically. Education involved training in unproductive skills and socialization in colonial perceptions. Furthermore, the colonial pedagogy, and education continued even after colonial rule. After independence, the education system continues to be based on the colonial policies of examinations and the prescriptions of textbooks. Colonial rule still plays a significant role in deciding what should be considered valid in school knowledge. Kumar asserts that a link exists between the selection of school knowledge that was made under colonial rule and present day pedagogy and curricula. In colonial India the job of deciding, selecting and shaping school knowledge was performed by the 'enlightened outsiders'. In independent India this role is taken up by educated Indians. They have become the 'enlightened outsiders' to the masses. Our educational curriculum is delinked from the people's knowledge and skills primarily because these were considered deficient and worthless by colonialists. The colonialists felt that the introduction of education based on colonial culture and value system was of little use to the people of India. What happened in the process was the widening of the gap between school curriculum and the ethos and home environment of the learner. In the present day too, education continues to play an ameliorative role and remains widely separated from the lived lives of people.

Reflection and Action 7.1

Discuss the role of education in colonial times.

b) Politics of Language

Language is more than a means of communication. The issue of language is highly charged and political. This section will elaborate on the politics that was involved in the Hindi-Urdu divide and the reasons for their adoption in the educational curriculum. The reason for the adoption of Hindi as the language of the future nation was a political question and has been a controversial one. This question has been surrounded by the politics of the freedom struggle, and this gradually was also associated with the idea of nation making. By the mid-nineteenth century two 'distinct' languages had begun to be associated with two 'communities', namely, Hindus and Muslims. By the twentieth century both the communities identified themselves with their own language. They created and used Hindi/Urdu divide to maintain their distinctive nature.

Kumar (2005) makes the point that it was not until the end of the nineteenth century that any writer of Hindi wrote in a style entirely devoid of Urdu. Both the languages were inextricably linked. The differentiation between Hindi and Urdu got deepened as the two languages got increasingly associated with Hinduism and Islam, and were largely used for political ends. It was in the

twentieth century that both the writers had prejudices against each other. Organizations like Arya Samaj took steps to develop the self-perception of the Hindu community with the Hindi language. In the 1920s this Hindi-Hindu association was gaining strength. Formal Hindi, which was developing in this time devoid of Urdu, was the vehicle of upper caste intellectuals. This language was also being used for educational purposes. The use of Hindustani (a mixture of Hindi and Urdu), was referred to as the language of the 'bazaar' or of the common masses, which could not fulfill the requirements of a national language. Though the works of Premchand and Gandhi favoured Hindustani over Sanskritized Hindi works, their arguments were rejected on the grounds that a language like Hindustani would not be able to carry out the important task of nation-building.

Language was getting associated with the politics of nation making. This movement for Sanskritized Hindi was against the use of Hindustani which was spoken by ordinary people. This Sanskritized Hindi was considered as a medium of serious discourse, as it was not amenable to the common people. It was the language of the educated elite people. For the ideology of nation-building they used their own language and suppressed the minority cultures and their dialects. The earlier unit explained how the language of the dominant group is given higher importance by shrouding the control exercised by language under the ideology of nation-building. Urdu, as distinct from the Sanskritized Hindi, became a symbol for Muslims and for the Pakistan also (Kumar 2005).

The politics of the freedom struggle can be seen in the politics of language that got perpetuated through school education. Kumar points out that this divide between Sanskritized Hindi and Urdu strengthened the reproductive role of education. We are aware of the role of education in maintaining and in further perpetuating inequality in society. The politics of the freedom struggle was also assuring this reproductive function of education through language. All children cannot learn and cannot feel comfortable in the school environment and in the school curriculum that relies heavily on Sanskritized Hindi. Only the children of the upper castes would be able to reap the benefits of this kind of education system because in their homes too they speak the same language. This preference for formal Hindi subsided the importance of other regional languages like Awadhi, Bundelkhandi, Chhatisgarhi, Bhojpuri and several others. It is important to note that the 'new' Hindi did not just alienate the Urdu speaking community but also those who communicated in other dialects of the Hindi language. It restricted the fruits of education to a few and so facilitated political control over the masses. The language to be used in the educational curriculum has not much to do with the learner-centered approach. The decisions on educational questions like what to teach, and in which language to teach is devoid of the learner. It is the politics that decides on such educational issues and not a learner (Kumar 2005).

Reflection and Action 7.2

Do you think education should be imparted in regional languages? Discuss with your co-learners at the study centre.

c) Women's Education

We are aware of the socializing role of education. Education works as a deep socializing agent and has indelible effects on young minds and personality. This section asserts how girls' education became an instrument in the hands of awakened men and served their ideology. Women's education, its relevance,

and its curriculum reflect the inextricable link with politics. Women's education is always considered instrumental in serving certain political objectives. In the Indian context, women's education found specific relevance during colonial period, and one witnessed the setting up of institutions of learning for women and girls by the social reformers and the British government. In this section we will critically look at women's education in colonial times and discuss the perspective of the NCF on women's education.

Kumar (2004, 2005) asserts that the nature and content of female education was a matter of grave concern in the late nineteenth century. Modern education that was getting prevalent at that time was causing anxiety among the Indians. On the contrary, the modern education for men was not the cause of concern. Modern education aspired to weaken the forces of oppressive institutions like patriarchy. National leaders as well as social reformers felt that modern education to girls would be a great threat to the fabric of Indian society. The other widespread fear was that the educated, modern women would not be devoted towards their family responsibilities, and would try to be equal to men. Instead of being able to question, women's education was designed to suit the patriarchal ideology. He points that special provision was being made for subjects and items of knowledge appropriate in view of a girl's future role as wife and mother. The curriculum was decided on the logic of appropriateness of knowledge for girls. This reflected the image of home as the primary space for a woman and the family as the essential arena for the exercise of her talent. The knowledge and skills that seemed to be relevant were cooking, music, painting, needlework and first aid.

Kumar (2005) mentions that the 'awakened' men of the late nineteenth century were remarkably conservative in their attitudes towards modern education for women. Girls' education designed by them ensured that patriarchy and the hierarchy in gender relations continue. The curriculum imparted to women was designed in accordance with the interests of males and the patriarchal institutions. The selection of the knowledge and skills like the introduction of cooking and sewing in schools for girls served the patriarchal ideology and restricted the arena of women to the home only. Education, instead of emancipating women, became the tool of maintaining the hierarchy of gender relations. Education was used to socialize girls to become diligent wives and devoted mothers when they grew up.

Chatterjee (1989) looks at the issue of women's education more critically. For him, in colonial India, culture was conceptualized in two realms – the material and the spiritual. Western civilization was powerful in the material sphere, which includes science, technology, and modern methods of statecraft. Through these tools European countries subjugated non-European people and imposed their domination. The nationalist ideology believed that to overcome this domination, the colonized people must learn superior techniques of organizing material life. But this did not imply the imitation of the West in every aspect of life as that would blur the distinction between the West and the East. The Eastern identity in that situation would be completely dissolved and the national culture would be threatened. The Indian nationalist believed that the spiritual domain of the East was superior to the West and the former needed to emulate the latter only in the material sphere. The nationalist ideology identified the need to develop the material techniques of modern civilization and at the same time retain and strengthen the distinctive spiritual vigour of the national culture. He superimposes the material/spiritual dichotomy on gender roles. On that basis, the outside material world was perceived to be the domain of men, while women represented home and the spiritual self. The nationalist ideology felt that though the European people challenged and dominated the non-Europeans because of their (former) superior material power, it failed to colonize

the inner identity of the East, which is the superior, distinctive, spiritual culture of the East. The national struggle felt the crucial need of protecting, preserving and strengthening the spiritual essence. The education of women was selected and modified to suit the nationalist ideology, as the latter believed that women symbolize this spiritual self of the nation.

There was no denial of the fact that India had to catch up with the West, and to achieve that the women of the nation were to be urgently educated. But this education should seethe with traditional and national values, and should not be left to the alien colonial state or the missionaries. Women's education was considered very pertinent for the freedom struggle. Hence it can be said that the nature and content of women's education were highly regulated against modernized education. It was felt that by imparting modern education to women, India would loose its 'distinctiveness' as a nation, which had to be 'created' in the first place, and then had to be 'sustained' through women's education. Men were imparted the role of being contenders for modernity and modernization, and so to take hold of the public domain to fight the white, modern, technocratic counterpart, while women were supposed to be the savior of the tradition and of Indian values. Therefore, national leaders and social reformers conceded on the relevance of education for women, but completely sanctioned the unregulated, western education for them (Bhog 2002).

Tracing women's education, Bhattacharya (2001) writes that there would be a time when natives would realize the benefit of female education as a means to rise in civilization and to advance social happiness and progress. They would understand that women had as much right to exercise and enjoy all the rights, privileges, and duties of this world as men. It is clear that women's education was not so much an end as it was a means to an end - the betterment of the family and the nation. Women's role was reduced the raising sons for the nation. Kumar (2005) points out that the reformers viewed education as the 'means of women's upliftment.' Very few awakened people saw the relevance of education in providing new avenues and a new place to women. Ramabai, for example, was a scholar of high repute, who worked towards women's emancipation, and was against the conservative, patriarchal structure of India. Her conceptualization of education was different from the majority of social reformers and nationalists of that time. She advocated modern education to all the women, as only that could ensure women's liberation from the clutches of patriarchy. The major task that education was supposed to perform was to give women a new self-identity, rather than uplifting her status. It is important for us to note that what needed to be taught to women was not decided by keeping the woman, her aspirations, and her needs in mind. Rather they were decided by having the broader and larger category of nation at the center. It may be concluded that women's education in colonial times suited the nationalist and the patriarchal ideology.

7.4 National Curriculum Framework

Till the year 1976 the Indian Constitution allowed the State Governments to take decisions on all matters pertaining to school education, including the design and development of the curriculum. All the educational matters were within the jurisdiction of the State. The Centre could only provide guidance to the States on policy issues. In 1976 the Constitution was amended to include education in the Concurrent List. For the first time in 1986 the country as a whole had a uniform National Policy on Education. The National Policy on Education (1986) entrusted NCERT with the responsibility of developing the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) and review the framework at frequent intervals. Since then, NCERT has taken the initiatives of designing the NCF at intermitent intervals.

The framers of NCF 2000 operated under the assumption that Indians do not recognize the greatness of their glorious past. They pin responsibility for this on those who ruled the country, and made it bereft of its own culture. The NCF laments that though Indian children know about Newton, most of them are ignorant about the contribution of Aryabhata. They do know about computer, but are not aware of the advent of the concept of zero (*shunya*) or the decimal system. The alien rulers did not allow knowledge which related to the country's own ethos, reality, culture and people to be imparted through educational curriculum because they thought that the indigenous knowledge and practices were deficient. Here, reference is made to alien rulers and not to the British specifically. Therefore, it refers to the primordial past which was dominated by the Mughals and then by the British. The NCF 2000 can be questioned on its stand on vocational education. It gives importance to vocational education, but does not make it uniform for the entire society. The NCF 2005 accepts that, work education and vocational education are an integral component of our school education system and that work experience can develop an understanding of facts and principles involved in various forms of work and inculcate a positive attitude towards work. Work experience is treated as purposive and meaningful work organized as an integral part of the learning process. Therefore, we can say that it also aims to work towards merging the gap between mental and manual labor. But the paradox in the above objectives comes when the NCF 2000 segregates vocational education from the mainstream academic stream. The framework widens the gap between the two by introducing separate vocational and academic streams after class X.

The NCF mentions that the vocational stream is designed for the socially disadvantaged groups such as women, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and physically challenged people. Instead of providing equality of opportunity through a uniform pattern of education, NCF 2000 further introduced class divisions into education and further rigidified division of labor. Vocational education was used to widen the gap between the haves and the have nots. The NCF 2000 worked on the assumption that for the majority of students, the higher secondary stage may be the end of their formal education. They could be trained to be part of the world of work, and so should be imparted vocational education. This section of society was not compliant with the education system, and so witnessed higher dropout rate. The NCF provide a solution to this problem by restricting them to vocational education to become efficient workers. There was an equally explicit assumption that the future leadership would emerge from the academic stream, from those who went to the tertiary stage of education (Rajesh 2002). The following two excerpts from the NCF 2000 explain this clearly:

- i) "For the majority of students the higher secondary stage may prove terminal. For them, it would serve as a doorway to life and, more importantly, to the world of work" (pp. 63).
- ii) While the top leadership would be provided by a small minority, to be groomed at the tertiary level, in every department of life. The second or intermediate level of leadership on a much wider scale would have to be provided by the products of the higher secondary stage. They are expected to make a meaningful contribution to our developmental efforts in agriculture, industry, business and various other social services" (pp. 64).

This division in the academic and vocational streams perpetuates the divisions in society, as one section of society is prepared to take up a vocation and make an earning to support oneself and the family while the other section would plan and participate in the development process of the nation. This division, in essence, trains the dominant section of society to rule the rest, and be the future leaders. It envisages different education for the two streams, and instead of putting in steps to narrow the gap between the vocational and

the academic stream, it turns them into two watertight compartments. Rajesh (2002) questions the intention of the NCF in promoting the dual and unequal system. The objectives and the expectations from both the streams are completely different. The academic and vocational distinction crops up from the already existing social divisions in society, and further perpetuates future job divisions. Those who are destined to get vocational education will fit the blue-collar work force, while those who will be endowed with academic training will do white-collar job. The NCF 2004 was intended to build a cohesive society based on pillars of relevance, equity and excellence with thrust on inculcating sense of patriotism and nationalism. This could be achieved by integrating indigenous knowledge and recognizing the contribution of India toward world civilizations and meeting the challenges of information and communication technology (ICT) and globalization squarely. This called for (i) decentralizing the process of curriculum development; ii) providing knowledge about all religions and values at all stages of school education; iii) ensuring the inclusion of learners with various challenges in the mainstream, and mobilizing the resources for achieving the educational goals of the country; iv) confirming the availability of pre-school education to all children in the country and prohibiting formal teaching and testing of different subjects at this end; and v) integrating art-education, health and physical education, and work education into the module of 'art of healthy and productive living' at the primary stage itself. More importantly it recommends available strong vocational stream for enhancing employment opportunities and entrepreneurship at the higher secondary stage. The education system can be made more effective when suitable implementation strategies for the orientation, participation and accountability of teachers, parents, community and managers of the system are adopted.

The National Curriculum Framework 2005 seeks to provide a framework within which teachers and schools can choose and plan experiences that they think children should have. In order to realise educational objectives, the curriculum be conceptualised as a structure which articulates required experiences. For this it addresses some basic questions: (a) What educational purposes should the schools seek to achieve? (b) What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to achieve these purposes? (c) How can these educational experiences be meaningfully organised? and (d) How do we ensure that these educational purposes are indeed being accomplished? NCF 2005 reviewed the NCF 2004, and on that basis proposed five guiding principles for curriculum development: connecting knowledge to life outside the school; ensuring that learning shifts away from rote methods; enriching the curriculum so that it goes beyond textbooks; making examinations more flexible and integrating them with classroom life; nurturing an overriding identity informed by caring concerns within the democratic polity of the country.

Box 7.3: Salient Features of National Curriculum Framework, 2005

- strengthening a national system of education in a pluralistic society
- reducing the curriculum load based on insights provided in 'Learning Without Burden'. It ensures that, quality education is provided to all children which calls for reorientation in our perception of learners and learning
- this sites is on learner engagement for construction of knowledge and fostering creativity
- connecting knowledge across disciplinary boundaries to provide a broader frame for insightful construction of knowledge
- the activities for developing critical perspectives on socio-cultural realities need to find space in curricular practices

- wherein, local knowledge and children's experiences are essential components of textbooks and pedagogic practices
- a renewed effort needs be made to implement the three-language formula
- ability to think logically, formulate and handle abstractions rather than 'knowledge' of mathematics (formals and mechanical procedures)
- science teaching should engage the learner in acquiring methods and processes that will nurture their curiosity and creativity, particularly in relation to the environment
- social science content needs to focus on conceptual understanding
- interdisciplinary approaches, promoting key national concerns such as gender equality, justice, human rights and sensitivity to marginalized groups and minorities
- civics should be recast as political science, and significance of history as a shaping influence on the child's conception of the past and civic identity should be recognized
- school curricula from the pre-primary to senior secondary stages needs to be reconstructed to realize the pedagogic potential of work as a pedagogic medium in knowledge acquisition, developing values and multiple-skill formation
- peace-oriented values should be promoted in all subjects
- it is desirable to evolve a common school system to ensure comparable quality in different regions of the country and also ensure that when children of different background study together, it improves the overall quality of learning and enrich the school ethos
- *panchayat raj* system should be strengthened by evolving a mechanism to regulate the functioning of parallel bodies at the village level so that democratic participation in development can be realized
- reducing stress and enhancing success in examination necessitate a shift from content-based testing to problem-solving and understanding
- development of syllabi, textbooks and teaching-learning resources could be carried out in a decentralized and participatory manner involving teachers, experts from universities, NGOs and teachers' organizations.

7.5 Education and Politics: Comparative Perspective

The influence of politics on education is not just restricted to the Indian context, but can be seen in other countries also. Now we will reflect on the comparative perspective by taking up the Communist Regime of the USSR, and the Nazi regime of Germany. The Soviet Union that emerged after Russian Revolution of 1917 had the communist agenda, and it relied heavily on education to solve its political, economic, and moral problems. All their policies had the aim of Communism, and the educational institutions were to play a leading role in this. Soviet education was riddled with the problem of ideological and moral training. The Soviet system generated deep political loyalty, particularly among the young people, and this can be ascribed to the operation of the schools. The political training given in the schools and universities was designed to foster these virtues among the young people. Great emphasis was placed on raising a new Soviet citizen, and various elements in the character of this new man were supposed to be honesty, courtesy, sexual morality, vigorous intellectual and physical activity. The education system was geared towards these goals (Noah 1965). The Communist regimes needed to facilitate the

ideological indoctrination of the masses, and to establish the supremacy of Russian culture as the only true socialist culture. Communists felt that education could solve their political, economic and moral problems. Shimoniak observes that the Communists realized that the only way to stay in power was to educate their own intelligentsia, their own leaders and their own children. It is for this reason that in the communist regimes, China or (earlier) USSR, the number of schools was increased (Shimoniak 1970).

The Nazis, in Germany, also gave particular attention to education. They completely controlled the German educational system, and private schools were taken over. They were thus determined to mould the new generation to accept Nazi principles. When the Nazis seized power in 1933, they applied their totalitarian principles to all aspects of the German education system. The Nazi authorities had a definitive approach to education. They treated the student as an object and education was not seen as leading to personal and intellectual development, but rather as preparing children to serve the new National Socialist state. Education was not to inspire intellectual thought or cause children to question and seek answers to complicated issues. The schools were designed to mould children and get them to unquestioningly accept the Nazi doctrine. The goal under the Nazis was to consciously shape pupils on National Socialist principles.

The curriculum laid great emphasis on racial science, often termed "racial hygiene". Racial education became an important part of the curriculum. It was presented formally as well as worked into many other curricula materials. Pseudo-scientific works were taught as scientific fact. Racial science was not only introduced as part of biology courses, but was presented to children in one form or another at virtually every grade level. Children learned in school that not only were Aryans superior, but they alone produced civilizations of any cultural importance. Other races were seen as inferior. Jews were depicted as an actual threat to Aryans because they were believed to carry genetic diseases that could be transmitted to Aryans. The Nazi ideology and physical-military training became other important aspects of the school program. A new Nazi curriculum was introduced to promote a new German consciousness. Only teaching material that promoted the spirit of the new Germany was encouraged while material that contradicted German feelings or paralyzed energies necessary for self-assertion was rejected. Teachers were encouraged to teach "right" attitudes or "character". Unlike knowledge which involved intellectual thought, their education involved "feeling" which the Nazis cultivated. The emotional acceptance of the racist, xenophobic nationalist outlook was seen as a prerequisite to character building. The Nazi Party sought to create a religious cult with the various pledges and prayers that they developed for children. Songs and pledges were developed to reinforce the idea of commitment to and sacrifice, even death for the German nation and its Fuhrer-Adolf Hitler. Every lesson had to begin with the "Hail Hitler" salute. Songs were written to the tune of church hymns with words praising Hitler and the German nation.

The Nazis organized mass burnings of books written by Jews or expressing objectionable ideas. Almost all books by Jewish authors were destroyed, and this included both school textbooks and children's literature. This censorship extended to newspapers, magazines, and books. The Nazis used schoolbooks for propaganda purposes, and they also introduced major chauvinist, racist themes in children's books. Children's literature in the Third Reich was geared towards teaching them the evils of the Jewish race. The Nazis also sought to instill the need for physical activity to strengthen and harden the children for life—the boys for the military and the girls for motherhood. Because of this predilection towards ideological indoctrination, academic standards declined. History was one of the subjects most significantly revised after the control of the Nazis over German schools became complete. History books were written describing the degeneration of the world by the mixing of blood.

The foregoing account depicts the attention educational processes have gained. Schools are seen as the chosen instrument to nullify any kind of undesirable legacies of the past. In the Communist regimes schools are seen as a major instrument for building the New Communist Man. Though the same function is attached in other nations also, but in a communist or a fascist regime this function becomes highly significant (Noah 1986).

7.6 Conclusion

The educational curriculum cannot be seen as operating in isolation, as a neutral category. It would be fallacious to assume that the processes involved in curriculum planning are rational. They are influenced by the wider political, cultural and economic domains. Education can be an effective tool to perpetuate and further entrench their power in the society. Education has served different ideologies. This unit and the earlier unit have depicted how education can be used for nation building and to serve the political interests of the ruling regime. This unit has only taken instances from the school curriculum to depict the politics involved in the educational curriculum. Therefore we can say that schools teach what counts as knowledge, and for Kumar (2004:8) “what counts as knowledge is a reconstruction, based on the selection made under given social conditions. Out of the total body of available knowledge, only a part of it can be treated as worthy of being passed on to the next generation”. The process (of curriculum planning) involves creation, codification, distribution and reception, and it takes place under the shaping influence of the economy, politics and culture. The knowledge that is available in schools for distribution is related to the overall classification of knowledge and power in society.

7.7 Further Reading

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Unit 8

Education and Socialization

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Learning Objectives

After going through this unit, you will be able to comprehend the:

- meaning and process of socialization;
- manner in which family as an agent of socialization influences children's response to school experiences;
- implications of peer group socialization on school processes; and
- relationship between caste, socialization and education.

8.1 Introduction

Children in society differ from each other in terms of their gender, family, social environment, class, caste and racial backgrounds. They are exposed to different child rearing practices that are known to have an indelible impact on their personality and cognitive abilities. These differences among children influence and are themselves influenced by classroom processes in a manner which reinforces differences among them facilitating learning among students from a favourable background and at the same time, inhibiting learning among those from a relatively disadvantaged background. Here we discuss the processes of education and socialization in traditional families. In this unit we seek to understand the manner in which differential socialization practices and patterns in a society shape people's self-concept and personality, thereby leading to differential educational experiences in schools. The differences which the students carry from their homes to the classrooms have an important bearing on their performance and achievement levels in education. In the next Unit we will explore how education brings about social change and how social change influences education.

8.2 Understanding Socialization

Socialization is a term which one often comes across in the writings on sociology of education. What exactly does it mean? Socialization is a process, whereby people acquire the attitudes, values and actions appropriate to individuals as members of a particular culture. Eskimo children, for example, learn to enjoy eating the raw intestines of birds and fish, while Chinese children learn to relish the stomach tissue of pigs. Just reading about these things may make us a little uncomfortable because unlike these people, we have not been

socialized to appreciate such food. Again, girls in India are socialized to walk, eat, talk and behave in a specific manner. They are encouraged to be quiet, docile, gentle and submissive. Boys on the other hand, are rewarded for their independent and assertive behaviour. So socialization is all about being in tune with what society expects from us depending on our age, gender, and social background.

Socialization occurs through human interaction. We learn a great deal from our family members, best friends, teachers and all those for whom we nurture affection and respect other. We also learn, though to a limited extent, from the people on the street, characters, portrayals, and depictions of characters in films and magazines and other sources. By interacting with people, as well as through our own observations, we learn how to behave 'properly' and what to expect from others if we follow (or challenge) society's norms and values. Socialization affects the overall cultural practices of a society, and also shapes the perception that we develop of ourselves. In other words, socialization refers to the process whereby the 'biological child' acquires a specific 'cultural identity', and learns to respond to such an identity. The basic agencies of socialization in contemporary societies are the family, peer group and the school. It is through these agencies and in particular through their relationship with each other, that the various orderings of society are made manifest.

Just as we learn a game by playing it, so we learn life by engaging in it; we are socialized in the course of participating in social processes ourselves. If we are not tutored in manners, for example we learn 'appropriate' manners through the mistakes that we make and the disapproval that others display. Education (here referring to instruction) is only one part of the socialization process; it is not, and can never be, the whole of that process. Socialization has wide ranging implications. People may be socialized into groups of which they already are members or into groups to which they wish to become attached. It is not a process, which takes place merely in early childhood, it takes place throughout life. In short, socialization refers to the social learning process in all its complexity. The specific knowledge, skills and dispositions required to make a child, 'a more or less able member of the society' may be defined somewhat differently by different analysts. There would be little disagreement, however, that cognitive skills and the skill to build and maintain social relations are central to this process. Families contribute to the motivation and cognitive skills exhibited by their children not only when they enter the educational system but throughout their school experience. It is equally apparent that the kinds of experience a child has with the peer group significantly affect cognitive and social skills, and academic motivation.

8.3 Socialization and Formal Education

Both socialization and education involve selective learning, which implies systematic reinforcement of certain behaviour patterns and roles as also the inhibition of others. Socialization consists of progressive learning of a series of roles. Distinctions between the process of socialization and education can be hypothesized on a general basis. Socialization is mostly an unconscious, subjective process, rooted in the primary or basic institutions of society, while education is a conscious endeavour which is purposive in nature and connected with secondary institutions of socialization. The contrast between industrial and pre-industrial societies serves to bring out the changing place of education within the socialization process. In the pre-industrial societies, the vast bulk of learning was done through socialization and not through formal education. The individual learnt largely by participation in work, the family, religion and so on although some instructions were imparted during such an activity. In some cases, education was also imparted in the form of apprenticeship, i.e., the individual learnt by the side of the practitioner.

In an highly industrialized society the situation is different. Not only do individuals receive a deliberate and definite set of instruction for a long period of time continuously and consistently, not only do they receive specialized instruction in a particular task or occupation, they also receive a broad and general education in several of basic skills (reading, writing and counting) and they are instructed on matters not directly relevant to any occupation. Such instruction is not given by a practitioner, but by a person, whose occupation is a specialized one: a person whose occupation is to educate.

In an industrial society education is differentiated from other aspects of socialization to a greater extent than in a non-industrialized society. In a sociological sense, the term differentiation refers to the extent to which one activity, role, institution, or organization is separated from others. Education prepares people for increasingly specialized roles. The higher the level of education a person receives, the more specialized that education becomes. A child's education is geared to providing basic familiarity with literacy skills. In each subsequent year, the focus of education in schools narrows down to particular themes and subject areas. In secondary school, a child specializes in two or three subjects, sometimes only in specific domains within these subjects. At the University, level this specialization increases to an extent that the most educated person receives a doctorate (considered the highest degree) for knowing more about an even smaller portion of a subject.

In the informal process of socialization, the social skills and values learnt through interaction with family members, peer and other social groups are those that are largely useful in mundane life. They enable an individual to deal with a range of people and situations, which he/she is likely to encounter in his/her life. Though we have spoken of formal education as being differentiated from other forms of socialization, there is considerable overlap in the influence of the various aspects of socialization. Since learning in all its forms is primarily a social phenomenon (where interaction with others is the main method of transmitting information), it is not surprising that the learning of technical skills also involves the learning of values and social skills. The fact that children learn values and social skills from teachers and the peer group at school as well as from family member and friends implies that these agents of socialization could be competing with each other in exercising influence over the child. If family members and friends emphasize values that are different from those that the child learns at school, then the child may face special problems in adapting to both school and home. Throughout our lives, we are exposed to conflicting and complementary influences. If we put education within the broader perspective of socialization, it would be possible to understand the problems that often emerge in the course of schooling. Education cannot be isolated from its social context primarily because it is only one among the many influences that determine what a child learns even at school.

In most contemporary societies, education is imparted through a large and highly complex formal organization. This organization is a formal one because it has a set of clearly established goals, a definite structure and procedures for reaching specific goals. Education is thus not only deliberate instruction, but organized instruction as well. A student does not merely respond to the formal knowledge presented by the teacher, lecturer and textbook. He/She also responds to the informal patterns of relations and expectations that develop within the student body and between a teacher and a student. It is this interaction between formal and informal aspects of education that distinguishes education (which is organized) from other aspects of socialization.

Reflection and Action 8.1

Bring out the major differences between the processes of socialization and formal education.

8.4 Education as a Social System

In the context of education, 'social system' refers to the internal organization and processes of education analyzed as a coherent unit which is distinguishable from other aspects of society. Education cannot be divorced from its social setting because those engaged in education are also the ones who carry with them the symbols and orientations that identify them as members belonging to distinct sections of society. Children bring with them a certain culture. They have learnt certain patterns of speech, certain habits and certain orientations to life from their family and neighborhood. Children do not drop their accent or style of dress soon after entering a school. These are often subtle yet deeply ingrained. Social background is relevant to the analysis of the relationship between education and socialization because it orients a child to enter into certain patterns of association, or to have certain responses to the school. Social background, however, is not the only factor. Peer relationships are equally important.

Children develop a set of relations among themselves and their teachers in school. Factors that contribute to the manner in which these relations develop are, the division of school into classes, extra-curricular activities in school, grading of pupils between and within classes, the attitudes of teachers, the values emphasized by headmasters and teachers, and the social background of pupils. These factors place a pupil in a set of social relations that establish him/her in a particular position in the school. It may encourage a child to succeed in accordance with the set goals of the school. This position may also contribute to a child's failure. Any educational organization that ranks and differentiates students is likely to raise 'self-fulfilling prophecy'. Irrespective of their intelligence in comparison with children in other classes or other schools, those who do not rise high are likely to be treated by other pupils and teachers as slow or stupid. Unfortunately, over a period of time the pupils come to believe this leading to considerable decline in self-esteem.

Let us now discuss those factors outside the school which significantly affect a child's performance in school.

8.5 Family, Socialization and Education

The family is an institution most closely associated with the process of socialization. Obviously, one of its primary functions is the care and rearing of children. We undergo the process of socialization first as infants living in families and later as we grow up, attend school, and office. It is here that we develop a sense of 'self' and personal identity.

In this section, we focus on the process by which failures (during both pre-school and school years) influence a child's responses to school experiences. In an extensive body of literature on family relations, it has been reported that particular types of parent child-interaction patterns (in particular, inductive control) appear to be most conducive to the development of socially competent behaviour in children.

Box 8.1: Family in relation to the School Class

"The school age child, of course, continues to live in the parental household and to be highly dependent emotionally as well as instrumentally, on his parents. But he is now spending several hours a day away from home subject to a discipline and a reward system which are essentially independent of that administered by the parents. Moreover, the range of this independence gradually increases. As he grows older, he is permitted to range further territorially with neither parental nor school supervision, and to do an increasing range of things. He often gets an allowance for

personal spending and begins to earn some money of his own. Generally, however, the emotional problem of dependence - independence continues to be a very salient one through this period, frequently with manifestations by the child of compulsive independence" (Parsons [orig. 1959] 1985:59).

Socially competent behaviour encompasses a range of socially valued behaviours and characteristics, including cognitive development, internal locus of control, instrumental competence and conformity to parental standards. The confluence model of intellectual development (Zajonc and Markus 1975) adds a contextual dimension to the basic socialization theory. It is argued that intelligence in children is increased to the extent that they are able to interact with persons more mature than themselves. Thus, the younger siblings a child has, the more the child interacts with less mature persons. Consequently, less intellectual development may be expected. The reverse of this is also true. The child's intellect is seen as a function of the average of the intellect of his/her family members. Since this view emphasizes the importance of verbal interaction it would be expected that verbal intelligence would be affected more than non-verbal intelligence.

Another factor which influences the child's experience in school is more direct, involving parents' visits to the school, explanations of the child's experience at school, help in completing child's homework and so on. Epstein (1983) followed older children from VIII to IX grade in order to assess the effect(s) of the nature of social relations they encounter at home and in the school. Both home and school experiences were assessed on the basis of the degree of the child's participation in decision-making. Those in which there is greater participation by the child were viewed as more democratic. It was reported that democratic patterns in both family and school increase the degree of independence shown by students; are associated with greater positive attitude towards school; and are associated with higher school grades. It is clear that families influence the educational process in two ways, (i) they provide the kind of interpersonal stimulation that leads to development in the child of characteristics that are functional in a school setting; and (ii) they guide, coach, explain, encourage and intercede on behalf of their children in reference to the school experience. They clearly help children to 'acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that make them more or less able members of their (schools) society'.

8.6 Social Class, Socialization and Education

There is no denying that it is very difficult to separate social class from family as a factor in influencing socialization. All the factors discussed in this Unit—family, peer group, gender, class, race and caste — are interrelated and interact with each one other in a number of ways. The social class to which a student belongs has an important bearing on the patterns of child rearing, language and socialization, and in turn, education in school and beyond it. Hence, the issue of social class and its relationship with family socialization and its implications on the schooling process needs to be understood in detail. One writer who has persistently pointed out the importance of social class in understanding educational opportunity, educational attainment and patterns of inequality is A.H. Halsey (1961). He has argued that liberal policy makers "failed to notice that the major determinants of educational attainment were not schoolmasters but social situations, not curriculum but motivation, not formal access to the school but support in the family and the community".

In this context, an understanding of the terms, 'material disadvantage' and 'cultural disadvantage' becomes extremely significant. In a classic longitudinal study, Douglas (1964) made reference to the importance of the material conditions of the home from which children came, particularly the importance

of housing, which included the size and number of rooms, the degree of overcrowding, the sharing of beds and position of other household amenities, which, it was explained, were associated with lower ability and attainment. It was also argued that the impact of family size on attainment was such that there was a decline in measured ability with each increase in family size. Indeed, it was found that this was related more to manual working class homes than to middle class homes. Among the middle class children, boys from a family of four or more were considered to be disadvantaged. Several other material factors such as health, conditions of work and unemployment have been pointed out by researchers as having a definite impact on educational attainment.

A concept introduced in the 1960s was that of 'cultural deprivation' which was used to explain failure of pupils in schools (Reissman 1962). Children, who were culturally deprived came from homes where there were not only material disadvantages but also cultural disadvantages in terms of the attitudes and values that were transmitted to them. Douglas (1964) found that parental encouragement was the most important single factor that accounted for the improvement of a child's test scores between the ages 8-11 years. This was confirmed by the Plowden Committee (Central Advisory Council for Education, London, 1967), when it found associations between social classes and the initiative, interest, support and encouragement given by parents to children's schoolwork. In addition, they confirmed that a more favourable attitude was likely to be associated with higher social class.

John and Elizabeth Newson's work (1963) on studies of child rearing established that social class was the most important variable in understanding the way in which mothers behaved towards their babies. In subsequent studies, they followed children from the pre-school to the primary school. They found that the parental interest could be examined through the home and school links and through the general cultural interests of the parents. In particular, a contest between trends in the professional groups and the semi-skilled and the unskilled manual workers was revealed. Children belonging to lower class groups were less likely to be helped with reading and were less likely to have their knowledge extended. They also discussed the role of cultural interests such as visits to the cinema, theatre and to museums as well as the importance of parents using books, and newspapers with their children. Such an explanation bears definite links with the work of Bernstein (1971) and Bourdieu (1973), Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) have examined the way in which culture is transmitted from parents to children in different social class groups. On the basis of research concerning cinema, theatre and music attendance and the use of books, Bourdieu discusses the processes of 'cultural reproduction'. He argues that education demands a linguistic and cultural competence that is not automatically provided by schools. Accordingly, children whose families are able to transmit elements of 'high' culture through family upbringing and schools are at an advantage. For Bourdieu, those families that control economic capital also manage to acquire control over cultural capital, which ensures that their children obtain the necessary qualifications through schools.

Bernstein has discussed two types of family role structures the 'positional family' and the 'person-centered family'. In the positional family there is a clear separation of roles and a 'closed' communication, while in the latter, the importance of the child in relation to other members of the family is perceived and there is an 'open' system of communication. Clearly in the person-oriented family, importance is attached to communication and language, which has also been used to explain the relative advantages of different social class groups in education. He suggests that the exercise of authority within the working class family does not give rise to the well-ordered universe of the middle class. The exercise of authority is not related to a stable system of rewards and punishments but is often arbitrary. At the same time, authority rests with

individuals who use discretion and not reason in exercising it. A child who challenges authority and refuses to perform a task is told, "Do it because I am telling you". In the middle class family, the relationship with authority figure (i.e. the person(s) who exercises authority) is often mediated by the use of reasoned principles.

Often at school, the middle class child is clearly at an advantage as his/her level of curiosity is high. Since he/she is trained to think about and plan for the future, he/she is able to make the most in school where the focus is on linking the present to a distant future. The social structure of the school creates a framework that he/she is able to accept, respond to, and exploit. The child belonging to the working class is bewildered and defenseless in such a situation and is not able to make the methods and goals of the school personally meaningful.

Box 8.2: The Impact of Education on Poverty: The U.S. Experience

"Schools tailor their academic and social atmospheres to encourage and develop self-concepts and aspiration levels suited to the youngsters they serve and the jobs they will hold. In this manner they maintain the hierarchical economic structure based on social class.

Predominantly working class schools, for instance, emphasize the importance of following rules, offer curricula which train students for blue collar and grey collar jobs, and usually have the least academically oriented faculties. Schools in the well-to-do suburbs, on the other hand, use relatively open teaching systems in which teachers are less authoritarian, less rule-bound. Students take "harder" course, are offered more electives, participate more in school planning, and are prepared for positions where they will have less direct supervision and will have to be motivated by a more corporate form of "team spirit" and more subtle authority relationships"(Bowles, Gintis, and Simmons 1985 : 109).

8.7 Linguistic Development, Social Class and Education

Language affects a child's experiences in school in many ways. What are the sociological factors which affect linguistic performance within the family? Bernstein's theory of linguistic development is based on the idea that for the speaker, certain forms involve a loss or an acquisition of both cognitive and social skills which are strategic for educational and occupational success. These forms of language are culturally and not individually determined. He suggests that the two main social classes occurring at the two extremes are characterized by two different modes of speech which arise from their grossly different environment. The lower working classes are more or less restricted to what Bernstein at first called a 'public language'. There is a tendency to select from a number of traditional phrases and stereotyped responses.

The middle class children, on the other hand, are brought up in an environment which places great value on verbalization and conceptualization. This is reflected in their mode of speech which is 'formal language'. Later Bernstein used the terms 'restricted code' and 'elaborated code' in place of public language and formal language. A person belonging to the working class is not able to express his/her own response to situations adequately because he/she draws upon the standardized sayings of his/her community (e.g. proverbs) quite heavily. Neither is he/she able to express fine and nuanced distinction between feelings, relationships and so on (because he/she has a restricted vocabulary). In contrast, the middle class person is able to make explicit the details and variations of his/her own personal experience. You may recall Bernstein's explanation of restricted code and elaborated code provided in Unit 4.

Box 8.3: Speech differences between classes: an example

Consider the two following stories which Peter Hawkins, Assistant Research Officer in the Sociological Research unit, University of London, constructed as a result of his analysis of the speech of five-year old children of the middle class and working class. The children were presented a series of four pictures. The first picture showed some boys playing football, in the second one, the ball was shown going out through the window of a house; in the third looking out of the window a man making an ominous gesture; the fourth picture showed the children moving away. Here are the two stories.

- 1) Three boys are playing football, one boy kicks the ball and it goes through the window, the ball breaks the window and the boys look at it. A man comes out and shouts at them because they have run away and then a lady looks out of her window and she tells the boys off.
- 2) They are playing football and he kicks it and it breaks the window. They are looking at it and he comes out and shouts at them because they have broken it so they run away and then she looks out and she tells them off.

With the first story, the reader does not need to have the four pictures, which were used as the basis of the story, in the second story the reader would require the pictures in order to make sense of the story. The first story is free of the context, which generated it, whereas the second story is much more closely tied to the context. As a result, the meanings of the second story are explicit.

The speech of the first child generates universalistic meanings in the sense that the meanings are freed from the social context so are understandable by all, whereas the speech of the second child generates particular meanings in the sense, that the meanings are closely tied to the context and would be fully understood by others only if they had access to the context which originally generated the speech.

In middle class families, communication between mother and child is often primarily verbal. The child must learn to recognize that small changes in word position and sentence structure signal important changes in the meaning and content of what is being said. The necessity to verbalize, which is then forced upon the child exposes him/her to a whole range of potential learning which is denied to the lower middle class child precisely because of the linguistic mode in use within the middle class family. The different functions performed by languages for each social class lead to difference perception of the world around them. For the working class and especially the lower working class child, the emphasis is on the 'here' and 'now' and on descriptions of objects in the environment rather than on their relationships.

Most teachers belong to middle class families, hence communicate with their pupils through formal language using elaborated speech forms. The child from the working class is usually unfamiliar with such language. He/she understands and communicates in patterns of speech in school that are unsuited to the educational process. His/her own speech patterns are likely to be received critically by teachers. Irrespective of his/her alertness or creativity, he/she starts school with the handicap of having to learn new speech patterns. Though intending no disrespect, they may appear disrespectful to the teacher who is used to the fineness of the formal language. "Give us this....." for example, is the expression of working class children equivalent to "Please, may I have....." A teacher who does not understand is likely to reprimand the child for being disrespectful.

8.8 Peer Group, Socialization and Education

As a child grows older, the family becomes somewhat less important in his/her social development. Indeed the peer group increasingly assumes the role of, what George Herbert Mead referred to as "significant others". Within the peer group, young people associate with others who are approximately their own age and who often enjoy a similar social status. In a study of sixth, seventh and eighth grade girls, Donna Eder (1985) observed that, at any time, most girls interact primarily with members of a single peer group. In the school, the child deals with teachers and classmates on a regular basis. The organization of schools ensures that a child spends a large part of his/her waking hours in close association with a group of children approximately of similar age and intellectual development. There are two kinds of investigations into the importance of peers in the educational process, those focusing on the interpersonal processes, and those concerned with social relationships within the classroom. The focus is on choice of friends, and sociometric position as factors associated with academic performance and attitudes toward school. Rather than viewing the peer group as a whole, these studies examine differentiation and patterns of interpersonal relations within it.

A consistent finding is that friends tend to be more similar on attitudes towards school, educational ambitions and even academic performance than are random pairs within the classroom. Most friendship choices are made within one's own classroom rather than among children of different classrooms. If students move from one classroom to another for different lessons on different subjects, they are likely to be together. Often, limited sets of students spend most of their school hours together. The fact that peer relations of adolescents are so heavily concerned with non-academic issues could lead to skepticism about the educational relevance of the peer group itself during the period of children's development. The interrelatedness of adolescents' activities and the probable effects of non-academic activities on the educational process also need to be considered. Certainly, extracurricular engagements (both in school and outside it) often affect the individual's interest in and ability to perform adequately in school.

Coleman (1966) studied the effect of individuals attending a school with a particular kind of student body on performance. His study demonstrated that black students who attended schools in which most students were white had higher levels of academic performance than those who attended schools in which most students were black. McDill (1969) has shown that variations in 'educational climate' (defined in terms of the degree of emphasis on intellectual matters) in high schools influence both academic performance and educational plans of students. They also show that the degree of parental involvement and commitment to the school is the single best explanation of school climate. Such analysis seems to link family and peer influences, as well as school structural factors in ways which maybe difficult to disentangle but which also testify to the significance of all three.

8.9 Gender, Socialization and Education

Girls and boys have different socialization experiences. By the time they enter nursery school, most of them have a fair understanding of their gender identity which is largely acquired from parents, siblings, television and other socialization agents. The term, 'gender role' refers to expectations regarding proper behaviour, attitudes, and activities of males and females. 'Toughness' for example has been traditionally identified as a trait of men while 'tenderness' has been viewed as a trait of women. As the primary agents of socialization, parents play a critical role in guiding children into gender roles that deem them appropriate in a society. Other adults, older siblings, the mass media and religious and educational institutions also have a noticeable impact on a child's socialization into gender identity.

Students spend more than six hours a day in classes and school related activities. Therefore, teachers and schools become important sources of information on appropriate behaviour for boys and girls. Children learn by observing and imitating adult roles including the roles of teachers and administrators. They observe the ratio of males to females and the authority structure in the educational hierarchy and learn appropriate behaviour for main gender through positive and negative sanctions. Social learning theory explains that gender images are transmitted through books, television programmes and children's toys. Of these three areas, it is the sexism in books that has received most attention. In particular, Lobban (1975) has examined the extent to which reading schemes in the infant and junior school transmit sexist images through the characters used, the illustrations and the portraits of males and females and the use of stereotypes.

Children's toys play a major role in gender socialization. Boys' toys — chemistry sets, doctor kits, telescopes and microscopes etc. — encourage manipulation of the environment and are generally more career oriented and more expensive than girls' toys. Parents are generally very conscious of buying toys that are appropriate for the gender of their children. By the time young children reach nursery school they have learnt to play with the appropriate toys for their sexes. Delamont (1980) has provided an analysis of toy catalogues that illustrates how the girls' toys emphasize passive domestic roles, while the boys' toys emphasize action, adventure and career growth. In turn, the images of girls presented through television and other media lay emphasis on subordination and passivity. McRobbie (1978) confirmed this in an analysis of the schools girls' magazine, *Jackie* in which stories reinforce the idea of a girl being subordinate to a boy. Sexism in textbooks too has received a great deal of attention. Books are a major source of messages about sex roles. Content analysis of texts is based on a study of illustrations, positive and negative images of men and women, stereotypes, and many other factors related to the portrayal of sex roles in the societal systems. While classrooms may be co-educational, many activities within the classroom are gender-linked. It has been found that girls do not receive the same attention as boys do. Boys are encouraged to solve problems while girls are provided the answers readily. Girls are often asked to water the plants while boys are asked to clean the blackboards. Children line up for activities by gender. Even imposition of discipline and quantity of time a teacher spent with children have a bearing on gender differences. Studies establish that boys are disciplined more harshly than girls, but they also receive more time and praise from the teachers. Interestingly, teachers' expectations are based on students' gender, class, and race.

Why do boys perform better than girls in mathematics most of the time? Most researchers explain that the difference in mathematical ability results from differential socialization and differential experiences of boys and girls. These commence in the primary school itself. Boys are encouraged to be independent thinkers and develop creative ways of dealing with mathematics rather than following rigid norms of mathematics formulae. Though much has been made of the difference in mathematics score between girls and boys on standard tests, these differences are not significant and need to be considered in the light of social and cultural factors that ban girls from participation in achievement in mathematics and science. Cross cultural studies of differences in parental support, teacher expectations, study habits and values, beliefs that affect achievement indicate that girls in some countries do excel in mathematics.

Davin (1979) found that schools imposed the family form of the bourgeoisie with a male breadwinner and a dependent wife and children - a view that influenced the pattern of girls' schooling. Purvis and Hales (1983) identified two models of femininity that were used in schools, the 'perfect wife and mother' for children belonging the middle class, and the 'good woman' for children belonging to the working class. In the school curriculum, a set of

assumptions about women and marriage were included with the result that they were able to perpetuate an education system that does not open up new opportunities for most girls. In a similar vein, Miriam David (1985) has illustrated how courses on family life and parent education within the youth training scheme and other post-school programmes emphasize education for motherhood. Such evidence from the 19th and 20th centuries has been used to illustrate the way in which education maintains relationships, particularly gender relationships in society.

Box 8.4: Gender differences in educational opportunities

The following account is based on data from Kenya, Ghana, Egypt, the Philippines, Mexico and Pakistan.

“Many educational systems are characterized by pervasive sex-linked streaming, with the result that girls are not offered the same curriculum, standards and program option as boys. The nature of this streaming rarely derives from traditional sex roles but, instead, reflects modern trends and practices. Prevocational and vocational programs usually track females into homemaking or domestic science courses, whereas males are taught skills that may lead to remunerative employment. When females are offered career training courses, as in Mexico, they are usually encouraged to choose terminal vocational programs that prepare them for a limited range of sex-stereotyped jobs such as secretarial and clerical work. The typical over presentation of families in humanities and arts at the secondary and tertiary educational levels and their concomitant under-representation in sciences, engineering and related fields often effects the distribution of science faculties and teachers and/or the admissions policies of the relevant institutions” (Smock 1985:192-93).

The Puritans in the United States discouraged literacy for women, except reading the Bible that would ensure their salvation. After the American Revolution, it became a responsibility of women to teach young children and pass on moral standards. Limited education came to be acceptable, perhaps even encouraged in the male dominated society. Societies are dependent on schools to pass along crucial beliefs and values, models sex role behaviour and expectations among boys and girls. In particular, this occurs formally through courses and texts used in the curriculum or through the structure that assigns privileges and tasks by sex. In many societies, however, expectations are passed on through the informal or ‘hidden curriculum’ and counseling. Sex roles in schools mirror those in society. Our behaviour and expectations from each sex are greatly affected by sexual stereotypes. Stereotypes about male and female characteristics are consistently held by members of a society. Girls are docile, gentle, cooperative, affectionate and nurturing while boys are aggressive, curious, and competitive and ambitious. Evidence of these stereotypes is apparent around the world. Statistics on literacy rates for men and women exemplify the different societal expectations. Without education women cannot participate fully in the economic and political spheres of society, yet access to literacy and education remains a major problem for them.

There are more women teachers at the elementary/ primary school level but fewer heads of schools. The pattern of the ‘the higher the fewer’ (i.e., the higher the position bringing with it power and responsibility, the fewer are women who hold such positions). continues at the university level. Socialization has influenced women not to compete for administrative responsibility. Organizational and institutional barriers during recruitment, selection, placement, evaluation and other processes confront women who aspire for enviable positions in organizations. At several levels, women face obstacles in achieving higher positions in male dominated institutions. Girls are systematically discouraged to pursue studies that would enhance their prospects for well

paying jobs. Often girls achieve higher grades throughout their school education, yet they are coerced to prepare themselves for undertaking stereotyped jobs (e.g., teaching in schools) many of which do not fetch returns that come with positions high as in the fields of science and technology and engineering.

It has been found that girls often surpass boys in elementary school in terms of performance and achievement. Girls' performance generally declines by middle school. The twin reasons that seem apparent are (i) the bodily changes that accompany adolescence which diverts their attention greatly; and (ii) rising expectations from them that pertain to being nurturant and adept in performing household chores rather than performing well in school. By the time girls are seniors, their plans and values for future participation in the work force closely parallel the actual sex differences in occupations. Women encounter challenges in adult life as well, and are often not adequately rewarded for their intellectual achievements.

Reflection and Action 8.2

Visit a secondary school near your home and find out the aspirations of boys and girls in terms of their careers.

8.10 Caste, Socialization and Education

Much of the literature on caste and race, like gender, in education focuses in various ways on under achievement or the under-representation of particular group(s) in critical areas of school curriculum. It is important to examine the main trends in the educational performance of ethnic minority pupils (especially black pupils) compared with indigenous pupils in both primary and secondary schools and in turn, their access to higher education. Much of the evidence on primary education comes from surveys conducted by Alan Little and his associates (1981) in the Inner London Education Authority in the 1960s. These studies compare the performance of white and black children at the end of their primary schooling. Little found that the children of new commonwealth immigrants had a reading age that was one year higher than their counterparts in domestic land.

Caste as ascriptive criteria of social stratification is a feature which is predominant in the Indian society. Although some parallels can be drawn with race, with regard to the overall process of discrimination and deprivation, no one-to-one correspondence can be sought between the two. The relationship between caste and education is complex. In the Indian society during the ancient times, there were organized institutions of formal education both in the fields of esoteric-sacred knowledge and exoteric-secular knowledge (Singh 1967). Education was elite-based and revolved around the canons of philosophy and religious thought that were easily accessible to the people of upper castes. Knowledge was treated to be perennial, sacred and charismatic and education was considered to be a process of self-purification and self-fulfillment. Some forms of knowledge were highly practical (e.g. the sciences of medicine, architecture, erotics, dramatics etc). Yet the process of education was intimately integrated with the hierarchical concept of caste, *varna* and of human nature. In a general sense knowledge was considered to be the prerogative of the twice-born. Thus in the Hindu elite tradition, education as a process was selective and closed to most of the sections of society. The teacher had complete autonomy over the pupil. His authority emanated from religious principles of life rather than the secular.

According to Singh, religion, caste and the extended family in India had been the chief socio-cultural institutions which kept the traditional process of socialization and education going. Here, the literati served as the ideals of the highest learning, social status and honour. They were also the traditional

power elite but the possibilities of attaining membership of this group were not only empirically closed (due to the wide gap in socio-economic status etc.) but also closed by the norms of culture and religion. Hierarchy, hereditary specialization, and inter-caste relations of affinity and distance were the chief characteristics of caste. The socialization of the Hindu child in the peasant society right from the beginning was a process of internalization of the lores, legends, and stereotyped norms of culture supporting the hierarchical social structure and the institutionalized inequality of the caste system.

Within this pattern of culture, each caste perhaps developed separate cultural themes, which entered into the process of socialization and formal education. These themes were, however, linked with the hereditary occupation of the caste. In the socialization of a Rajput child, for instance, emphasis was laid on 'personal dignity', a high sense of honour, courage and aggression. At the same time, among high caste Hindus, an extremely authoritarian and reserved attitude towards children leading to high dependency characteristics has been found by psychologists. Although similar studies about child rearing practices and dominant psycho-cultural themes for the lower and the intermediate castes are not available, it is legitimate to hypothesize that the differential background of social status and power and occupational values prevailing among these caste groups had developed corresponding dominant orientations towards self-image and values of authority in each hierarchy of caste. These differences emanated entirely from the cultural, occupational and economic background in which these caste groups existed and saved their children.

Among the twice-born castes, tradition laid down a period for adolescents to study with the guru, which in practice had a ritualistic significance, or may be it was operative in the hoary past. For the lower intermediate castes in India, the family was the chief seat not only of socialization but also of formal education. Learning of roles was hereditary and the household being also the place of work, all arts, skills and crafts were learnt under the patronage of the elder kinsmen. Age and ascribed status, thus, had a tremendous structural significance in the process of socialization as under formal education. In contemporary times, significant changes have taken place as far as access to educational institutions, or aspirations for different occupations, is concerned but there are studies which reveal how students from a particular depressed caste or tribal background suffer in schools as there are hidden or latent biases in the way the teachers teach and interact with them. Textbooks are written either avoiding or distorting their experiences and world-view and the way the school is organized.

8.11 Conclusion

After reading this Unit, you would have come to realize that education is permeated by influences from family and community. It is highly susceptible to pressures from the dominant social groups in society. Education thus preserves, and often increases, social biases present in society. Different socialization experiences of students have significant implications on the kind of personalities or self which children develop, the attitudes, skills and knowledge, they acquire, which in turn affects their achievement level in school. There are certain factors in their socialization, which are conducive to learning in school, whereas there are others, which place the students at a disadvantage *vis-a-vis* school and inhibit learning. To belong to a particular type of family, social class, caste or gender group and be exposed to certain types of child rearing practices have specific implications for the kind of persons we develop into and subsequent development of skills, attitudes, knowledge and linguistic forms, which in turn affects our performance in school. It would be naive, therefore, to assume that school functions in isolation of one's family background. Home and school both constantly interact with each other, to determine a student's overall personality, knowledge level, attitude and educational performance.

So, even though the school may appear to be a fair and neutral institution, it works in consonance with the existing differences among people, not just maintaining but at times enhancing these differences to the disadvantage of the marginalized groups.

8.12 Further Reading

Ballantine, J.H. 1993. *The Sociology of Education: A Systematic Analysis*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall

Burgess, R.G.1986. *Sociology, Education and Schools*. London: Batsford

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Unit 9

Education and Social Change

Contents

- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Concept of Social Change
- 9.3 Goals, Objectives and Structural Patterns of Education
- 9.4 Education and Change in Society
- 9.5 Education and Social Change in India
- 9.6 Conclusion
- 9.7 Further Reading

Learning Objectives

After reading this unit, you should be able to understand the:

- meaning and process of social change;
- interplay between education and social and economic development;
- relationship between education, the underprivileged and democracy; and
- relationship between education and social change in Indian society.

9.1 Introduction

The relationship of education with social change is not a simple, unilateral one, as perhaps many would like to believe, for education is not only instrumental in bringing about social change, it is also quite interestingly instrumental in maintaining the status quo. In other words, education plays both a 'conservative' and 'radical' role, i.e., it helps both in 'maintaining' and 'changing' different aspects of the social system.

Social scientists have held diverse positions on the relationship between education and social change. There are some (Althusser 1972) who treat education as the most important 'ideological state apparatus' appropriated by the ruling classes to pursue their own ideas and interests. They maintain that education is an instrument forged by the ruling classes to serve and preserve their own interests and largely to maintain the status quo in the existing economic and political power structure. At the other end, are many social scientists, politicians, educationists and educational planners who consider education as an important instrument of social change, particularly in the context of third world countries. Here, education is treated as effecting economic development and social change. In post-revolutionary Russia, for example schools were assigned the task of destroying old bourgeoisie values and creating new values appropriate to a socialist society. We have seen that the educational system is responsible for encouraging innovation in the material and technological spheres. This may involve training the labour force in these skills, challenging traditional attitudes, or promoting social mobility and allowing new elites to threaten and replace those before them. Some of these expectations are, to a large extent, contradictory. The radical and innovation functions of education are hard to reconcile with its role in the transmission of culture. Also, schools and universities are themselves a part of society subject to pressures from other parts of the social system. In a highly stratified society, for example, it is unrealistic to expect schools to inculcate strongly egalitarian principles. They are likely to function in these societies as important agencies within the stratification system training the young for adult roles. Only where egalitarianism is accepted as part of the dominant value system of a society is it likely either to influence the organization of education or to be part of the moral and social training imparted at school. Developments in the

education system are largely also influenced considerably by economic and technological factors. Education in turn may also influence social and economic change as a consequence of the role it plays in the processes of discovery and dissemination of newly acquired knowledge.

In this Unit we will focus on an analysis of education in the context of social change, but before doing that we will examine the concept and meaning of social change and factors that are instrumental in causing it. We will also discuss the goals and structural pattern of the formal education system.

9.2 Concept of Social Change

Social change has been defined by sociologist Wilbert Moore (1963) as a significant alteration over time in behaviour patterns and culture, including norms and values. It is important to understand how the rate and nature of change brings about alteration in society. In simpler societies, change is unusually slow: tradition, ritual, rites of passage, and social hierarchies—these are some of the basic elements that have held such societies together. These elements weaken in the event of culture contact, and disasters such as wars, disease and famine.

Terms such as 'progress', 'evolution', 'process' and so forth are often used, when understanding the concept of social change. R. M. Maclver and C. H. Page (1950) have discussed and distinguished between these terms. The word, 'process' implies the idea of continuity; 'all that is meant by process is the definite step-by-step manner through which one state or stage merges into another'. Nothing is said here about the quality, of the process. It is simply a way of describing how things happen in society; and also the way in which people adapt to certain elements in their society, or are assimilated to certain forms of activity, or adjust themselves to specific modes of behaviour.

The term evolution implies a scientific concept of development and change, an unrolling or unfolding, a movement in some particular direction. Maclver and Page (1950) consider that societies may be classified as more or less evolved according to the complexity of their differentiation. More evolved simply implies a greater complexity and differentiation within the society; but again, evolution is not merely a quantitative process. For Maclver and Page, 'wherever in the history of society we find an increasing specialization of organs or units within the system or serving the life of the whole, we can speak of social evolution.' The words progress and process are frequently used in popular discussion as interchangeable words, but in the context of social change, at least, progress involves judgment whereas process is simply descriptive of continuity. Value—judgments are relative, and what may constitute social progress for one may represent retrogression, decay or stagnation for another. It all depends on the sort of ideal one has of society itself and the goal at which one is aiming.

W. J. H. Sprott (1967) presents a clear and simplified scheme of social change within a very narrow spectrum. According to him there is, firstly exogenous change which is caused by agencies external to society itself. Such factors as invasion, colonization, settlement, culture contact and disease are highly unpredictable and capable of effecting social disequilibrium and change. Secondly, there is endogenous change, which occurs from within the society. Sprott divides endogenous change into two main types according to their degree of predictability. There is 'episodic change' which is brought about within a society by some event, which could not have been predicted from one's personal knowledge of the state of our society. This applies particularly within the realm of inventions, which may have devastating effects upon the whole fabric and lifestyle of society. In fact the invention in itself (e.g. radar, atomic energy, laser beams) is neutral. It is the use to which one puts an

invention that decides whether society will progress or retrogress; but it will certainly change. There is, however, also 'patterned change' within the society, which permits a more precise prediction. Such prediction is of short-term nature and it depends upon the increase in a society of mutual concern, planning, rationality and an organized programme of social welfare, as well as political and economic consensus.

Most of what has been said here can be reduced to a consideration of change under three main types of factors or conditions: physical and biological; technological; and cultural. A consideration of physical and biological factors involves such problems as the changing size and average age of a population, the varying balance between deaths and births, and the variations in the race, colour and culture in the differing elements of population. Geographical factors, environment, habitats and ecological modifications may also affect society in terms of the occupations people pursue. Technological factors may mean the vast improvement in mechanical devices, in fertilizers and seeds, and in the acceptance of the importance of management, economics, accountancy, and genetics - not as extras or sidelines, but as intrinsic dimensions of agriculture itself. Other technological advances have included the development of physical transportation by means of rail, aeroplane and automobile, and discovery and harnessing of atomic energy.

Reflection and action 9.1

What is social change?

9.3 Goals, Objectives and Structural Patterns of Education

It is true that some of the so-called 'universal' or 'society - oriented' goals of education in a society articulate the thinking of the philosophers and social reformers of the times many of whom project a future in terms of ideal society. This can be illustrated by examples of many western and eastern educational philosophers. At this juncture, you may refer to units 1, 3 and 4. In actual operation it has been shown that, in most countries, the system works (both in its form and content) with a decisive social bias, heavily in favour of the upper or dominant strata of society. At the same time, it provides occupational and social mobility to a small number from the social strata. The educational system is largely conditioned by the prevalent socio-economic and political power structure. Its expansion, growth and development are tuned to the requirements of this social structure; the changes in it are directed by the changes in this structure and particularly by the changes in the economic, social and political distribution of power. An education system which is a social product and part of the entire social system, acquires a collateral relationship with it. This relationship, however, cannot be of one to one correspondence.

Imbalances and incongruities do occur giving rise at times to dissatisfaction and dissent, disharmony, dissonance and even revolt. In other words, along with correspondence and collaterality there are contradictions too. First, the social situation, together with its underlying socio-economic structure and the political power structure are never static. These have their repercussions on the education systems as well. In the course of its development, the education system acquires certain autonomy and its own dynamics of development. It can generate conflict in the over values of different components of a system or over values of one or more components. Finally, education has a dual character. Although the process of education socializes individuals to conform to the norms and values of society, it also has the capacity to generate a spirit of enquiry and question the accepted norms. It

has the potential to encourage people to question the dominant values and norms in society, and to make them rebel against the existent societal constraints.

9.4 Education and Change in Society

It is with reference to the cultural factors of social change that one talks of education from a conventional perspective. Education mediates and maintains the cultural heritage of the society. But, whilst seeking to conserve, education must also ensure that culture lag in society is minimized. This means that there must be some attempt to adjust the old culture to new conditions in order that individuals within a society may keep up with technological change. Patterns of culture and of institutions change rapidly, even though the average member of society may be virtually unaware of the transformations taking place around her.

Schools exist not merely to reflect and mediate the cultural inheritance of a society and current change; they exist also to assist in the promotion of social change and reform. One need only look at such countries as Germany, Russia, India and Pakistan, and the evolving societies of the continents of Africa and South America, to see that education has been, and is being, used as an agent of social change. A great deal, of course, depends here upon the nature of the political system of any particular society.

Durkheim (1956) argued that there was not just one form of education, ideal or actual, but many forms. There were, in fact, many different forms of education. So, society as a whole, and each particular context would determine the type of education that was realized or could be realized. Durkheim explained that education was crucial in terms of preserving a certain degree of homogeneity, and ingraining the essential elements of collective life. He, however, felt that it was also very important to ensure that there was a certain amount of diversity in society, without which any form of co-operation would be impossible.

There is, and must be, an interaction between education and society. It is not just a one-way process in which education is wholly determined by the state or by the demands of society. The institution and structure of education can, in turn, change and modify the social structure. Society at large may dictate the change, through the free election of political parties to power. In turn the programme, form and schedule of education which, to a large extent are directed and controlled by the political and social aims of society at any particular time, may contribute to the change. A study of comparative education will adequately reveal the fact that the ideologies, the political ideals, and the social aims of countries like China, the USA and the USSR, France, Germany and England, are reflected in their educational systems. Education, however, does not merely reflect society, it serves to bring change in it too.

Karl Mannheim (1960) also explored the problem of social change and social progress in relation to education. He explained that there was a lack of awareness in social affairs as well as a lack of comprehensive sociological orientation. The leaders of the nation, including teachers, should be educated in a way which would enable them to understand the meaning of change. Mannheim argued that in the present situation no teaching was sound unless it trained people to be conscious of the social situation in which they find themselves, and to be able after careful deliberation to make their choices and take decisions. Education, some philosophers believe, must therefore be for mobility, for flexibility of thought and action, for producing individuals with a high general level of culture so that they adapt to changing economic and social conditions

According to Kamat (1985) there are four positions regarding education and social change (i) Education is for itself and has nothing to do with social change; (ii) Education is determined completely by social factors and can therefore, play no role in changing society. It follows social change; (iii) Education is an autonomous or relatively autonomous factor and therefore can and does induce social change; (iv) Educational change and social change must take place simultaneously (Kamat 1985: 172). There are a few who maintain that either education and social change bear the no link with each other or that education has no role to perform in changing society.

If social change refers to fundamental structural changes in society, it is clear that the socio-economic factor and the political factor rather than education have primary importance in the process of social change. Education can facilitate the process of social change as a necessary and a vital collateral factor. It often contributes to igniting, accelerating and sustaining the process by disseminating and cultivating knowledge, information, skills and values appropriate to the changing socio-economic and political structure. Moreover in a rapidly changing situation, for example in a post revolutionary period, when fundamental structural changes are taking place rapidly, education can undoubtedly operate as a powerful means to demolish the cultural and ideological superstructure and to build in its place an altogether new structure appropriate to the situation which would be in harmony with the newborn society. In some countries, a whole new system of education evolved replacing the old system after revolutionary socio-economic and political structural changes. For example, after the British conquest of India a system of modern education was introduced under the aegis of the British rulers.

The liberating and renovating characteristics of education get enhanced by counter-posing an alternative ideology which is in accordance with the emerging social situation. This entails challenging the existing ideology. It would be a hyperbole to say that education is the main instrument or the single most important factor of social change. Statements such as this are made for rhetorical purposes, sometimes even to confuse the common people, particularly when they are delivered by politicians. Often, they reflect (i) an incorrect understanding of the role of education; (ii) an incorrect assumption that a far-reaching structural transformation is already taking place and that education therefore should come forward to play its crucial role in consummating the transformation; and (iii) an essentially social reformist and welfare perspective with no bid for a far reaching structural transformation. Education is expected to play its role in the furtherance of economic growth and social change within the present socio-economic structural framework.

The role of education as a factor of social development is defined by the twin facts that education is permeated by the social biases of society and that those who seek education are social actors who retain the orientations of their specific position in a society. It is for these reasons that education is controlled by the dominant groups of society who lay down the priorities in a society. Education is an independent factor in society only to the extent that its organizational forms provide buffer from direct control from the outside and to some extent that the effect of education cannot be planned or anticipated. In essence, education has a bearing on social concerns; educational change follows social change. More importantly, education conditions development, but is itself a product of prior social and economic changes in society. It is an independent factor in social and economic development generating intended and unintended consequences and conflicts of values and goals. Naturally the relations between education and developments are not mutually exclusive.

Education can be planned to produce social change. We know, for example, that literacy does stimulate economic and social development. Large-scale

literacy programmes are important tools in the development of many countries. Yet, education is permeated by the existing social structure, which limits the extent of planned change and often produces consequences unintended by the educational planners. Educational innovation is more likely to produce a desired change if innovation in education is co-coordinated with changing other parts of the social structure. This is to say that effective planning cannot be piecemeal. An illustration of what this implies is given by current attempts to improve elementary education, which are carried out by increasing facilities, the numbers of teachers and offering financial incentives to families. The intention is to effect a planned change in educational standards, which has positive consequences for social and economic development. The planned educational change is usually not coordinated with changing the social context that has depressed educational standards. In most developing countries, there is an enormous unsatisfied demand for education because it is perceived as the gateway to an improved social position. The outcome is the rise in the number of literate people in society for whom few jobs available. In its turn, the fact that there are few opportunities in many of these societies for occupational and social mobility through education discourages the poor people from obtaining education. Because the poor people have for so long been outside the decision making process in their countries they do not feel part of the society. They are not likely to value the goals of development that have never brought them benefits. Consequently, parents are not motivated enough to encourage their children to seek basic education or undertake higher studies. Children do not see any real material benefits that education brings. Educational change in such societies cannot proceed effectively without changing other aspects of their social structure.

Where education is a condition of social and economic change, it is more likely to produce intended consequences. This happens because educational change follows other changes in society; the social context is thus favourable to social change. We must remember that even when the above warnings are taken into account the best laid plans of people are likely to go astray. Unintended consequences always emerge because we cannot estimate the precise relationship between the many components of change. The study of unintended consequences is thus an important and continuing part of the sociologist's contribution to understanding and planning social change. This is not to say that unintended consequences essentially challenge social and economic development.

The contribution of education to development is thus dynamic and multifaceted. Partly because they are organized, educational systems are able to secure some of their intended aims even when they come into conflict with the aims of those who control society. Given the length and complexity of the educational process, it is impossible for outside authorities to exercise a sufficiently detailed control to plug the infusion of undesirable ideas or information. Further, the length of an individual's exposure to education and the centrality of educational qualifications for jobs in modern society make education a crucial sector for bringing about planned social change. Also, the unintended consequences and conflicts that arise in the educational process are important and unplanned sources of change in all societies. At the most basic level, they allow a large numbers of people the time to think and to read with relative freedom from the constraints of job, family or government and ensure a constant critical re-examination of society.

Reflection and Action 9.2

Speak to at least five elderly people and find out how, in their opinion, education brings about social change.

Let us now look at the relationship between education and a few other indicators of social change.

a) Education and Economic Development

There has long been a widespread understanding in academic and government circles that education is the main determinant of economic growth. Especially, in the post-World War II period, the relationship of education to economic development received serious attention in national and international forums. Education was conceived as one of the more important factors in economic growth. This belief also provided a justification for the massive expansion of education and allocation of large funds for the education sector. It was soon discovered that education only strengthened old inequalities and created new ones, on the one hand, and perpetuated the existing outdated internal politico-economic power structures on the other. This means that the causes of underdevelopment lie in structural factors and not so much in educational backwardness.

Education was thought to be the main instrument of social change, especially cultural rather than structural change in the social sphere. Education, it was realized, by and large works to maintain the existent social situation and support the ideas and values of the privileged social classes and their economic, social and political interests. To reiterate, it seems that however imperative it is for the educational process to keep pace with the demands made by economic and technical development on the labour force, there is a very real sense in which educational expansion is a consequence rather than a cause of economic development. It may also be argued that to concentrate upon the relationships between education and occupation is to overlook the significance of changes in attitudes and values. From this point of view, education is seen as introducing the developing society to new needs and expectations. In short, education helps to wean the developing society away from the old and lead towards the new social order, it inspires a belief in progress, in efficiency, in achievement and in rationality. At the same time, education may be seen as creating the conditions for political as well as economic development by laying the foundations of a democratic form of government.

b) Education and Democracy

It is believed that the higher the education level of a country, the more likely is it to be a democracy. Within countries, moreover, there is an even stronger relationship between education and democratic attitudes. Lipset's (1960) studies show that the higher one's education, the more likely one is to believe in democratic values and support democratic practices. At the same time there is evidence to suggest that there is no necessary connection between education and democracy. World War II Germany and Japan were examples of nations, which combined a high level of literacy with a totalitarian form of government. China is still another example, with a high literacy rate but a communist form of government. The content of education is a significant factor in this context. Most totalitarian regimes attempt to use their schools to inculcate conformity and submissiveness and uncritical loyalty to the state. In the Soviet Union, for example, the emphasis in schools had been on the indoctrination of conformity and obedience as also in love for the Soviet system. The atmosphere was pervaded with a spirit of discipline and hierarchy. Teachers were warned not to coax students but to demand obedience, for only in this way would students develop the desired moral qualities. The influence of education upon political attitudes is much more complex than has sometimes been supposed, and although it maybe correct to argue that a high level of education is necessary for effective participation in democratic government, there is no guarantee that education and democratic attitudes are necessarily related.

Box 9.1: Democratic Ideal of Education

“It is not enough to see to it that education is not actively used as an instrument to make easier the exploitation of one class by another. School facilities must be secured of such amplitude and efficiency as will in fact and not simply in name discount the effects of economic inequalities, and secure to all the wards of the nation equality of equipment for their future careers. Accomplishment of this end demands not only adequate administrative provision of school facilities, and such supplementation of family resources as will enable youth to take advantage of them, but also such modification of traditional ideals of culture, traditional subjects of study and traditional methods of teaching and discipline as will retain all the youth under educational influences until they are equipped to be masters of their own economic and social careers. The ideal may seem remote of execution, but the democratic ideal of education is a farcical yet tragic delusion except as the ideal more and more dominates our public system of education” (Dewey 1976:98).

9.5 Education and Social Change in India

One of the dominant themes in educational reforms in both the 19th and 20th centuries has been the extension of educational opportunities to wider sections of the community. In general, this has taken the form of free schooling, scholarships and maintenance of grants for needy students, with the objective of providing equal education opportunity for all classes in the community. However, the provision of formal equality does little to eliminate educational privilege. Whatever changes we make in our selection mechanisms, or in the scope of our educational provision, many children because of their family background are unable to take advantage of the opportunities. Accordingly, attention is now being turned not simply to the removal of formal barriers to equality, but to the provision of special privileges for those who would otherwise be handicapped in terms of educational achievement.

Such provision is not new. The fact that a hungry child cannot learn was officially recognized at the beginning of the last century. The provision of school milk and meals and school health facilities became the established features of the British education scene. Yet it has taken a long time to see beyond the purely physical needs and to grasp the concept of what has come to be understood as, ‘cultural deprivation.’ Moreover, although the idea of equal educational provision for all classes in the community is now accepted, it has by no means been translated into everyday practice. Even today children from slum homes are all too often educated in slum schools that are quite untypical of schools elsewhere. Yet increasingly, it is being believed that for these children, even equality is not enough. Therefore, the need for positive discrimination was emphasized in favour of slum schools. It is argued that schools in deprived areas should be given priority in many respects — raise the standard of schooling and infrastructural facilities. The justification is that the homes and neighbourhood from which many of the children come provide little scope and stimulus for learning. The schools must provide an environment that compensates for the deprivation. Some people argue that compensatory education cannot in itself solve problems of health, housing and discrimination and that these must be tackled by agencies outside school. None of these arguments attack compensatory education. While acknowledging that formal equality of opportunity is an inadequate basis for an egalitarian policy, underline the interdependence of education with other aspects of the social structure.

Box 9.2: Education and the Disprivileged

“To the extent the previously disprivileged are brought within the ambit of institutionalized education there are three modalities of articulation between the system of privileges and the education system: (a) education reproduces and perpetuates inequalities between the privileged and the disprivileged, or (b) education enables a part of the disprivileged to attain upward social mobility without affecting privileges as a system, or (c) education plays an adversarial and even subversive role, challenging privileges or inequality as a system. The first mode preserves homeostasis, the second subverses homeostasis through co-optation of the upward mobile, the third proposes metastasis or a subversion of the regime of privileges” (Bhattacharya 2002: 19).

Kamat (1985) conceptualized the relationship between education and social change in India in three stages. In the first stage, he talks about the early British period to the end of the 19th century. In this period, the colonial socio-economic and political structure was established in India. However it also played a kind of liberating role in breaking down traditional norms and values, which were in consonance with the older feudal, socio-economic politic and were a hindrance to itself. It also sowed the seeds of new norms and values — of a bourgeoisie society and modern nationalism. This liberating influence was internalized and worked in two directions:

- i) Towards a close scrutiny of the indigenous social systems and culture leading to powerful movements of social and religious reform and protests movements like Satya Shodak Samaj
- ii) Towards the process of self-discovery, self-assessment in the context of the new situation, leading to the creation of an alternative center of social cohesion, the anti-imperialist movement for national liberation.

In the period between the two world wars, education assumed a mass character. Occupational and social mobility occurred among segments of population that were hitherto unnoticed. So far education had spread mainly to the upper caste and urban upper strata in society. Now it began to percolate to sections lower in the social hierarchy, the middle castes and middle strata. This carried the process of nationalism and social awakening still further, to the working class in the towns and to the peasantry in the countryside. The process considerably strengthened the movement for national liberation as well as the movement for social change. Meanwhile, the growth of the colonial system of education was developing serious contradictions within itself and also *vis-à-vis* the colonial socio-economic structure. This provided added edge to the principal contradiction between the British imperialism and the Indian people. This contradiction was reflected in large-scale unemployment among the educated on the one hand and the liberating influence in the strength and militancy of the powerful student and youth movement on the other.

In the third stage, i.e. from post-Independence period up to the mid-sixties, the process of social and political awakening has taken further strides. Its two aspects, conformity and liberation, are also operating. At the same time, the contradiction within the education system i.e., in relation to the development, socio-economic structure have also sharpened.

9.6 Conclusion

According to Olive Banks (1968), the precise relationship of the education system to social and economic change is extremely complex and it is almost impossible to draw conclusions that are not misleading. The concept of education as producing or impeding social change is enormously complicated

by the fact that the education system is a part of the society, which is itself changing. Consequently the real issue is that of the inter-relationship between educational institutions and other aspects of the society. Moreover, it is this inter-relationship which makes it so difficult to use the educational system to produce conscious or planned social change. The education system cannot be seen in isolation from its social context. The realization that educational reform is not a universal panacea should not, however, lead us to minimize the importance of knowledge about the educational institutions in society. This simply means that the relationship between education and social change is very complex and no simple generalizations can be drawn regarding them.

9.7 Further Reading

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Unit 10

Education and Social Mobility

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- 10.1 Introduction
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Learning objectives

After reading this unit you will be able to comprehend the:

- relationship between education, social mobility and nature of stratified society;
- concept of equality of educational opportunity and its evolution; and
- theoretical perspectives regarding the relationship between education and social mobility.

10.1 Introduction

Education, it is widely assumed, plays a positive role in enhancing a person's chances of social mobility. Why would one study otherwise? There is no doubt that education shares an important relationship with social mobility. It would not only be overly simplistic but also fallacious, however, to assume that education ignores social differences among individuals and gives everyone an equal chance to climb the ladder of social stratification. As students of sociology of education we need to understand the dynamics involved in the relationship between education and social mobility. In this Unit we begin with social mobility and strategies of educational selection. Having done that we will delve into the theoretical perspective. Towards the end we will look into the relationship between education and social mobility in the Indian context.

10.2 Concept of Social Mobility

As you are aware from the reading of Unit 26 (Block 7) of the core course on Sociological Theories and Concepts (MSO-001), the term social mobility refers to the movement of individuals or groups from one position of a society's stratification system to another. Sociologists use the terms open class system and closed class system to distinguish between two ideal types of class societies in terms of social mobility. An open system implies that the position of each individual is influenced by the person's achieved status. Achieved status is a social position attained by a person largely through his or her own effort. In an open class system, competition among members of society is encouraged. At the other extreme of the social mobility system is the closed system, in which there is little or no possibility of individual mobility. Slavery and the

caste system of stratification are examples of closed systems. In such societies, social placement is based on ascribed characteristics, such as race and family background, which cannot be easily changed. Ascribed status is a social position assigned to a person by society without regard for the person's unique characteristics and talents.

As with other ideal types, the extremes of open and closed systems do not actually exist as pure forms, for example, in caste societies, mobility is occasionally possible through hypergamy — a woman's marriage to a man of a higher caste. In the relatively open class system of the United States, children from affluent families retain many privileges and advantages. Hence, any class system should properly be regarded as being open or closed in varying degrees.

Here the key questions concern the way in which achieved status is obtained and the degree of movement that can take place across generations. It is in these circumstances that social mobility becomes important, as sociologists examine the way in which individuals compete for unequal positions. In studying social mobility, sociologists compare the actual degree of social mobility with the ideal of free movement through equal opportunity. As a consequence, the social position that an individual achieves may bear no relationship to the positions he acquired at birth. Movement up or down the social scale is based on merit.

Contemporary sociologists distinguish between horizontal and vertical social mobility. Horizontal mobility refers to the movement of a person from one social position to another of the same rank, for example, a lecturer from Gargi College leaves Gargi to join as a lecturer in Kamla Nehru College. Most sociological analysis, however, focuses on vertical mobility. Vertical mobility refers to the movement of a person from one social position to another of a different rank. It involves either upward (teacher to Principal) or downward (chief manager to clerk) mobility in a society's stratification system.

One way of examining vertical social mobility is to contrast inter-generational and intra-generational mobility. Inter-generational mobility involves changes in the social position of children relative to their parents. Thus, a plumber whose father was a physician provides an example of downward inter-generational mobility. A film star whose parents were both factory workers illustrates upward inter-generational mobility. Intra-generational mobility involves changes in a person's social position within his or her adult life. A nurse who studies to become a doctor has experienced upward intra-generational mobility. A man who becomes a taxi driver after his firm becomes bankrupt has undergone downward intra-generational mobility. Another type of vertical mobility is stratum or structural mobility. These terms refer to the movement of a specific group, class, or occupation relative to others in the stratification system. For example, historical circumstances or labour market changes may lead to the rise or decline of an occupational group within the social hierarchy. Military officers and strategists are likely to be regarded highly in times of war or foreign policy crises. Some time back, the demand for persons with a professional degree in business administration greatly shot up in India and a whole lot of management institutes mushroomed all over the country. As a result, we can say that management graduates as a group experienced structural mobility.

10.3 Social Mobility and Strategies of Educational Selection

Turner (1961) distinguishes between two modes of social ascent: sponsored mobility and context mobility. His analysis of modes of social ascent with their accompanying strategies of educational selection is a careful framework for

studying education as a process of selection. Sponsored mobility refers to an education system in which elite recruits are chosen by the established elite or their agents. Elite status is assigned on the basis of some criterion of supposed merit and cannot be acquired by any degree of effort or strategy. Upward mobility is like entry into a private club where each candidate must be sponsored by one or more of the members. Sponsored mobility is characterized by early selection, followed by a clear differentiation of those singled out from the rest, usually in separate institutions. The process that follows has the nature of a special preparation for elite status including inculcation of special skills as also indoctrination the code of behaviour and the value system of the elite group. This is typical of cases where the system of elementary education for children of the poor is distinct from the system of education for the middle class.

Contest mobility refers to a system in which elite status is a reward in an open contest and is achieved by the aspirants' own efforts. In these circumstances, there would be open access to all institutions that are of equivalent status. Here, there is no sharp separation between students taking particular courses and where there is relatively open access to institutions of higher education. Control over selection relies upon assessment, examination and testing procedures. Contest mobility is like a race or other sporting event, in which all compete on equal terms for a limited number of prizes. Its chief characteristic is a fear of premature judgment and not only is early selection avoided, but any open selection is as far as possible avoided altogether. Although in theory, all those who complete the school — leaving diploma are eligible for higher education, in practice the competition is so keen that the entire spectrum of higher education can be highly selective. The institutions themselves have their own entrance examinations and there are variations in standards, despite theoretical equality of status. These modes of social ascent are based on ideal types using examples drawn from Britain and America respectively over almost 30 years. Their application therefore, rests on the kind of changes that have occurred within specific education systems.

Another model that has attracted some attention is the one outlined by Boudon (1974:79) who explored the relationship between intelligence, scholastic attainment, social background and aspirations. On the basis of his analysis, he proposes a two - tier theory of attainment based on 'primary' effects of social background which are similar to intelligence and school achievement and 'secondary' effects which apply when children of equal intelligence and achievement have to choose between different kinds of curricula. Black, upper class students choose courses that lead to the same social status as their parents. Indeed, he maintains that a large degree of mobility takes place despite the bias of the education system in favour of the middle class and the fact that the hiring process gives the advantage to those who are more qualified. Given the competition that exists for places in the education system and the occupation system, however, there is no guarantee that the children from more privileged groups would be favoured. Indeed, he shows how children of high status are demoted and low status children promoted. As a consequence, Boudon's theory helps to explain why there is a degree of randomness in occupational attainment, why education does not seem to affect mobility and why patterns of social ascent appear to remain stable across generations.

Reflection and Action 10.1

Discuss the relationship between social mobility and strategies of educational selection.

10.4 Equality of Educational Opportunity

In connection with his large-scale project on equality of educational opportunity, James Coleman (1968) considered five different positions in this regard. Broadly speaking, there were those positions that were concerned with 'inputs' into schools and those that focused on the 'effects' of schooling. As indicated by Coleman, a key problem concerns whether equality implies equality of input or equality of output. He suggested, however, that neither inputs nor outputs are viable. He concludes that equality of educational opportunity is not a meaningful term. In the USA, the expression 'equality of educational opportunity' has, first meant the provision of free education up to the entry into the labour market; second, it has referred to the provision of a common curriculum for all children regardless of their social background; third, it has referred to the provision of education for children from diverse social backgrounds in the same school; fourth, it means providing for equality within a locality.

On this basis, equality of educational opportunity demands that all pupils be exposed to the same curriculum in similar schools through equal inputs. The evidence in the Coleman report showed that there was relative equality of education inputs but inequality of results. Accordingly, it is argued, if equality of educational opportunity is to be realized in the USA, it is not sufficient to remove legal disabilities on blacks, women and other disadvantaged groups instead provision has to be made to give them the same effective chance as given to white male members of the population.

The term 'equality of educational opportunity' was also considered problematic in Britain. In particular, two problems were highlighted. The first concerns the way in which educational opportunities are achieved, while the second concerns what is meant by equal educational opportunity. After Halsey (1972), a great deal of sociological research and writing in Britain has been concerned with different aspects of equality of educational opportunity, some of which has had direct implications for social and educational policy. In particular, Halsey identifies three trends in this work. First, a period in which research was concerned with access, lasting from about the turn of the century until the end of the 1950s when discussion was in terms of equality of access to education to all the children regardless of their gender, social class, religion, ethnic group or region of origin. The second phase occurred throughout the 1960s when its scope chiefly consisted of equality of achievement. On this basis, equality of educational opportunity comes about if the proportion of people from different social, economic and ethnic categories at all levels of education is more or less the same as the proportion of these people in the population. Hence, positive discrimination in the form of compensatory education was suggested the main aim of which was to reduce education disadvantage and reduce the gap in educational achievement. This problem was tackled in the USA through Project Head Start programme, which was established to break the cycle of poverty by assisting pre-school children. In Britain, the Plowden Committee recommended the establishment of education priority areas where schools would be given greater resources and where attempts would be made to initiate change. Bernstein (1970) however, argued that compensatory education carried with it the implication that something was lacking in the family and the child. Halsey argued that equality of educational opportunity is essentially a discussion about education for whom (access) and to do what (outcomes). The third phase was concerned with the reappraisal of the function of education in contemporary societies.

The concept of equality of educational opportunity has undergone significant change over the decades. The core of the idea, however, remains that all the children should have an equal chance to succeed (or fail) in a common school system. What has undergone a change, however, is the understanding of the concept of equal chance itself. Over time this concept has become more

inclusive in terms of its implications. The scope of 'who is included' has widened to encompass blacks, women and other minorities, as well as white men. The emphasis has shifted from the provision of formal or legal equal educational opportunities to the requirement that educational institutions take active or affirmative steps to ensure equal treatment of different groups. Underlying this shift of emphasis as Coleman has argued, is the emergence of a conception of equality of educational opportunity, as 'equality of results', where educational institutions begin to be held partly accountable for gross differences in the attendance or success rates of different groups and are expected to take measures to reduce those differences.

Until about 1950, equality of educational opportunity had a relatively simple and restricted meaning. It referred to the right then enjoyed by all except the black Americans to attend the same publicly supported comprehensive schools and to compete on formally equal terms with all other students, regardless of their class or ethnic background. Such rights, American educators pointed out, were not enjoyed by European students to anywhere near the same degree. In much of Europe, separate schools for the academically able were the rule, and in practice this meant a higher concentration of upper middle class students in the college preparatory schools.

The twenty years following the Supreme Court's *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision in 1954 saw a steadily broadening of equality of educational opportunity. The court ruled that the maintenance of separate school system for black and white students was unconstitutional because such segregated schools were inherently unequal. Not only the meaning of equality of educational opportunity but the criteria on which it was based also broke new ground. Testimony established that segregated schools attended by blacks were inferior in their facilities and resources to schools attended by white students. In the ruling that segregated schools were unequal because they were inferior schools the Court opened the way to a much broader conception of equality of educational opportunity, one that stressed the communities' or the school's response to provide some rough equivalence of effective opportunity for all students and not merely the responsibility to make some opportunities available. Scholarships and financial aid programmes were implemented, enabling a larger number of poor and working class students to attend college. The courts also moved to a more activist conception of equality of educational opportunity during the 1960s. It meant that black and other minority students should have real rather than merely formal opportunities to attend the same schools as white students.

It was during the seventies rather than the sixties that the most radical changes occurred in the concept of equality of educational opportunity. First, the term became still more inclusive in the groups to which it was thought to apply – attention was now paid to the handicapped and women. Separate colleges for male students also came under attack. Toward the end of the decade, a majority of previously all male or all female colleges had opened their doors to at least some members of the opposite sex. There was also controversy about the denial of equal opportunity implicit in the greater subsidies given to boys' school sports rather than to girls' sports.

At the same time, a radical shift occurred in the criteria that were used to assess whether equality of educational opportunity existed. During the mid 1970s, an increasing number of liberal and radical critics defined it as the existence of roughly proportional education outcomes for all groups, or as Coleman put it, as 'equality of results'. In this position, schools were held responsible for ensuring that blacks, women or other minority groups moved towards parity with white males across a whole range of educational outcomes. Differences in these outcomes from under-representation of whites in the

physical sciences to the over-representation of blacks among high school drop-outs tended to be taken as evidence of inequality of education opportunity.

There is no simple answer to the question: do schools provide equality of educational opportunity? If we were to use as a criterion the activist definitions of the 1970s, then the answer would be an unequivocal no. Large differences still exist between the relative successes of different groups in education. For example, lower class black students in particular are much more likely to drop out of high school and to fail simple tests of literacy than white students. Adopting the pre-1960s criteria, however will yield positive results. There is no doubt that there are far more formal opportunities available to disadvantaged students now than existed a few years ago. However, sociologists are interested in the degree to which changes in schooling have changed the relative chances of different social classes and ethnic groups. The general issue is whether schools continue to reinforce or reproduce existing patterns of inequality among groups or whether schools have helped create a society that is open to individual talent and effort regardless of social background. As education opportunities have expanded, has the relationship between education success and social class declined, as the functional paradigm would predict, or has it remained strong as conflict theorists assert?

10.5 Equality of Social Access: Myth or Reality

To what extent does schooling provide equal access to social groups from varying social, economic, linguistic, regional and religious backgrounds? The question here is not simply regarding access to educational institutions but the experiences that one undergoes in school, which determines the educational performance of such students. Theoretically speaking, even though, private schools maybe open to children from various ethnic backgrounds, the very fact that they have a high fee structure restricts the entry of a large number of students to such schools. The hierarchy of educational institutions ensures the maintenance of socio-economic differences between groups in society.

Blacks, women, lower caste or class groups, even after they enter the same school, have experiences which place them at a disadvantage *vis-à-vis* their more advantaged counterparts. When secondary education is of different types, working class children can be shown to be less likely to enter the more academic schools and once there, to be more likely to leave early. There are also considerable social class differences in access to the universities. In the US, the pattern of class differences is much the same as in Europe, in spite of differences in the organization of secondary education. Dropping out of school before high school graduation is more characteristic of low-status families, measured in terms of income level and of the father's occupation. In Poland too, the children of the intelligentsia have a much greater chance of entering higher education than the children of workers and peasants' in spite of a system which allows extra points for social background. There is also considerable differentiation by choice of subjects. Thus the children of peasants are likely to enter a college of agriculture and the children of industrial workers a technical university. The teacher training colleges and academies of theology also recruit heavily from the children of working class and the peasantry.

Apart from these differences between social classes which seem to persist in different societies, there are also widespread variations between regions, particularly between urban and rural areas. There are also regional differences between countries, ethnic minorities and between sexes. Women's enrollment in schools and colleges is lower as compared to men. In Europe, universities are still largely a male preserve. There are however large variations between countries, dependent partly on the position of women in the employment market, partly, as in comparison between Britain and the United States. In the

USSR, for example, men and women enter higher education in roughly equal numbers. There is some evidence that women tend to predominate in certain kinds of higher education rather than others. They are, for example, less likely to pursue post-graduate education and less likely to study science. They also join teaching and nursing professions in large numbers. Socio-economic background and gender interrelate with each other. Studies reveal that the disparity between the sexes widens, as one goes down the social scale, until at the extreme of the scale, an unskilled manual worker's daughter has a chance of only one in 500 or 600 of entering a university — a chance a 100 times lower than if she had been into a professional family.

Some theorists suggest that the solution for such problems lies in the reservation system, in which the proportion of children from various social backgrounds — women, blacks (for example, reservation of seats in educational institutions for lower caste children in India) — is fixed. But this does not, in itself solve the problems of the student who is not adequately prepared for higher education or is poorly motivated so that unless the institutions involved are involved to accept a double standard they must provide remedial teaching or face a high wastage rate.

According to Boudon (1973), inequality of educational opportunity is showing a slow but consistent decline. However, the value of higher education in terms of social mobility is depressed by the very process, which brings working class and other disadvantaged students into it in large numbers. At the same time, such students tend to be concentrated in shorter courses, or less prestigious institutions. As many observers have pointed out, a society based on strictly meritocratic principles would not necessarily be a more equal society. A rigid class structure is not compatible with a considerable measure of individual mobility and both Jencks and Boudon have argued, although in different ways that the way to equality of economic opportunity is through a more equal society rather than through equality of education opportunity.

10.6 Schooling and Equality of Educational Opportunity

One of the more important controversies in sociology of education is one regarding the consequence of the schooling revolution and its effects on equality of opportunity. In the United States, school has been long seen as a great equalizer, as perhaps the single most important institution that works to erase the handicaps of birth and create a society truly open to the talented. More educational opportunities, it has long been argued, are the key to create a meritocratic society, a society where talent and effort rather than privilege and social origins would determine an individual's status. Such arguments, stated in more formal and precise terms are part of the functional paradigm, and they continue to enjoy wide support, despite mounting evidence that the expansion of educational opportunities in recent decades has not had the dramatically meritocratic effects envisaged by the theory.

Much of this work and writing has been concerned with two linked concepts: meritocracy and equality of opportunity. In a meritocracy, individuals are rewarded on the basis of merit, as it is argued that the educational system allocates them to positions on the basis of ability. In a meritocracy, economic, social and political rewards are distributed according to performance in intellectual accomplishments. Those who do best in the educational system are allotted the most powerful, prestigious and best-paid positions in the occupational structure.

This means, that selection takes place through the educational system, which provides an avenue of social and economic mobility. Here, individuals are selected for positions in the economic and social hierarchies according to

educational criteria. On this basis, social origins do not determine educational success, so that those born into a wealthy family are not automatically destined for a high status.

10.7 Meritocracy and the Functional Paradigm

A central argument of the functional paradigm is that the development of mass education helps create a more meritocratic society, a society where effort and talent rather than birth or privilege determine status. There are two reasons why this should be so. First, as modern societies have become more complex and more dependent on a highly trained and skilled labour force, educational achievement would have increasingly powerful effects on an individual's adult status. Second, because success in school depends on universalistic criteria such as performance in tests and examinations, the ability of privileged parents to pass on their status to their children should be reduced when schooling becomes the principal criterion for allocating adult status.

From the functional paradigm, therefore, we can deduce three propositions.

- 1) The co-relation between educational and occupational status will increase over time.
- 2) The co-relation between parents' social status and the social status of their children will diminish over time.
- 3) The co-relation between parents' social status and the educational achievements of their children will diminish over time.

The apparent failure of the expansion of education to reduce the advantages enjoyed by children of privileged parents has led to two simple but very different explanations. Both are seriously misleading, but because of their simplicity and popularity, they warrant treatment before more complex and satisfactory theories are examined.

Box 10.2: Concept of Meritocracy: Critical assessment

The concept of meritocracy is not without problems.

- i) It tends to assume that social inequality is inevitable.
- ii) It focuses on placement in the occupational structure; it overlooks the significance of elites and the role of the propertied class.
- iii) A meritocracy is a society with structured social inequality in which individuals have an equal opportunity to obtain unequal power and reward. On this basis, privilege and disadvantage are not eradicated as the educational system provides a different set of criteria to allocate people to social positions.

10.8 Neo-Marxist Paradigm

The second straightforward explanation came from the neo-Marxist sociologists. The functional paradigm received a significant challenge during the late sixties and seventies from more radical and conflict-oriented theories. Their argument claims that the rhetoric of equality of opportunity has concealed a great deal of systematic discrimination by schools and employers against disadvantaged youth. The picture that these theorists present is one of a society where inheritance status is very high indeed and of schools that routinely assign low caste status to slow tracks and discourage them from pursuing educational careers that might lead to upward mobility.

According to the neo-Marxist critique, schools have betrayed the promise of equality of educational opportunity. They also believe that schools within the

confines of capitalist society at least can have no other consequence than the maintenance of existing differences in life chances between privileged and disadvantaged groups. The rhetoric of equal opportunity from this perspective serves to conceal a process by which schools today, as in the past, reproduce class divisions and persuade large parts of the population that they lack the skills and aptitudes needed for high status populations. In all modern societies, conflict theorists point out, there is a struggle for a limited number of scarce and desirable high-status positions, a contrast in which the children of those who already have such status have great advantages. And since schooling has now largely replaced other more traditional avenues of mobility in modern society, it is naïve, conflict theorists suggest, to believe that high-status groups will not use their greater resources to reserve the lion's share of the most valued educational qualifications for their own children. The problem with this theory is that the data on social mobility indicates that rates of upward and downward movement were quite high throughout this century and perhaps the twentieth century as well.

10.9 Status Competition Theory

The status competition theory places great stress on how the process of competition between groups leads to a rapid expansion of educational credentials that maybe only tangentially related to the real skills to do a particular job. The expansion of schooling increases the available educational attainment of low-status groups and it provides skills and qualifications that in the past would have entitled them to claim desirable jobs. But such expansion also increases everyone's educational achievement and high and middle status groups have more of opportunities than low status groups. What matters in determining the chances of any particular group to obtain desirable jobs therefore is not the absolute level of its qualifications which may the theory suggests, be more than adequately satisfactory to perform the jobs in question, but its relative educational qualifications in comparison with other groups.

Increasingly educational opportunities may create the illusion of progress towards more general opportunities for disadvantaged groups but because high-status groups have always had greater resources to obtain more schooling to restore their competitive position, the relative chances of low-status students will remain virtually constant despite constantly increasing level of education. The implication of this theory is that educational opportunities will lead to increasing general opportunities only if there are deliberate and conscious strategies that increase the relative position of a particular group in its possession of education credentials that are currently most significant for desirable occupations. Only through affirmative action, the theory seems to imply, will low-status students be able to catch up with more privileged students.

Thus, working class groups are in a no more favourable position than they were in the past. Such groups may have the illusion of relative progress in that the current generation has far more schooling than past generations but their position in the competition for desirable high-status occupations remains no better than it was before the expansion of higher education. The growth of education opportunities in the last several decades has not been significant or trivial, but these increasing education opportunities have not yet been translated into clear improvements in the relative chances of low-status youth to obtain high-status jobs. Part of the reason for this is that education credentials alone are not the whole story. Working class youth and college degrees are not as likely to get good jobs as middle or upper class youth. But there is little question that a major reason for the continuing difficulties that working class youth face is also that on the average they do less well in school than other students.

10.10 Case Studies on Social Mobility

There have been several studies in Britain on social mobility, but out of all these studies, two have attracted most interest. The major one is the Glass study of 1949. The Glass team looked at a sample of 10,000 men who were 18 and over and lived in England, Scotland or Wales in 1949. Among the data collected were the respondents' age, marital status, schools attended, qualifications obtained and details of their own and their father's occupation. Such data were used to address two major questions. First, how open was British society? Second, was there equality of opportunity for those of equal talents? In addressing these questions, Glass looked at inter-generational mobility by comparing the occupational status of fathers and sons to examine the extent to which sons follow the occupation of their fathers. On the basis of this study, Glass (1954) found that there was a high degree of self-recruitment at the two ends of the social scale. Secondly, most mobility was short range as individuals moved mainly between lower white collar and skilled manual positions in both directions. Finally, that the middle of the occupational hierarchy was a buffer zone so that movement between manual and non-manual occupations was short range. Regarding inter-generational mobility, Glass found that less than a third of the men were in the same job as their fathers. Glass's data shows that inequality is not fixed at birth and there is a fair degree of fluidity of circulation. Although children from high status may be downwardly mobile compared, with their fathers, they may still have a better chance than their working class peers of getting to higher level jobs.

The second is the Oxford mobility study and was conducted by Goldthorpe and his associates (Goldthorpe with Llewellyn and Payne 1980). It consisted of a small sample of 10,000 adult men aged 20-64 who were residents in England and Wales in 1972. Here, the respondents were required to provide data on their own occupational and educational biographies as well as those of their fathers, mothers, wives, brothers and friends. This study involved an examination of the impact of the post war reform and economic change on the degree of openness in British society. Furthermore, the team also wished to examine the impact of post-reform education policy and the degree of movement between generations of individuals from the same family. The focus was therefore on patterns of intergenerational mobility. The Glass team used a status classification based on the occupational prestige to categorize respondents, while the Oxford team used a seven-fold classification based on social class. These seven classes were grouped into three broader categories as follows:

- 1) Classes I and II of professionals, administrators and managers are a service class.
- 2) Classes III, IV and V of clerical, self-employed artisans and supervisors are an intermediate class.
- 3) Classes VI, VII of manual workers and vice versa.

The main trends that can be derived from this evidence concern patterns of social mobility among men. First, there has been a considerable pattern of self-recruitment (follow in father's footsteps). Second, there has been upward mobility as the upper socio-economic groups have recruited individuals from those of manual origins. This has been a consequence of a growth in professional, administrative, managerial occupations as shown by the census data from 1951 onwards. The fact that these positions have been filled by the sons of manual and non-manual workers undermines the ideas that there is a buffer zone or that there is any closure of the upper status groups. Women have been excluded from studies of social mobility and no comparable studies to those that have been reviewed have been conducted among women.

10.11 Relationship between Education and Social Mobility in Indian Society

M. S. A. Rao (1967) systematically charted out the course of the relationship between education and social mobility in India from pre-British days till the introduction of the modern system of education. According to him, in pre-British India and during the earlier phases of British rule, education was generally the monopoly of upper castes, although in some regions like Kerala, middle and low castes also had access to it. Vedic learning was confined to *savarnas*, and even among Brahmins, only a section of the people had the right to study the Vedas and practice priesthood. The study of the Quran was open to all Muslims although Maulvis had the right to interpret and expound it in their own way. Similarly, among the Buddhists, education was open to all the followers of the religion. Certain literary professions such as medicine (Ayurveda) and astrology were also open to castes other than Brahmins. Members of castes that engaged in trade learnt accounting and book - keeping. In the courts of kings there were scribes who specialized in the art of writing and keeping records; in villages there were accountants who maintained land registers and revenue records. Other skills necessary to pursue occupations such as smithy, house building, chariot building, manufacture of weapons and fireworks, weaving, embroidery, leather work, pottery, barbering, laundering were passed on in the line of father or mother. Such a mode of acquiring skills restricted the choice of occupation. But certain occupations such as cultivation, trade and commerce were open to many castes.

According to Rao (*ibid*), in most cases, a caste frequently followed more than one occupation. The incidence of occupational mobility was more evident in cities than in villages. Just as formal education leading to certain professions such as medicine and astrology raised the status of some castes (in a limited way), mobility of castes to higher status positions entitled them to literary education. Ahirs, a caste of small peasants and milk sellers, for example, rose to political power in Rewari and claimed the status of Yadavas (Kshatriyas). They were then entitled to literary education, as it was an aspect of high caste status. Since these two processes were not common, literary education was not a significant factor in following an occupation of one's own choice. Oral communication and hereditary status played a far greater role in preparing an individual for earning a livelihood and these were determined to a greater extent by birth in a caste. Further, literary education was more open to males than to females.

With the introduction of the modern system of education, both the meaning and content of education underwent significant changes. It became less religious and many new branches of learning were introduced. The printing press revolutionized the education system in that the emphasis shifted from personal, oral communication to impersonal communication of ideas through books, journals and other media. It brought the sacred scriptures within the reach of many castes that were not allowed by custom to read them. English education was also the medium for the spread of modern science and ideas of equality and liberty.

The western system of education was gradually thrown open to all castes, religious groups and to women. Formal education became the basis of exploiting new economic opportunities which were, to a large extent, caste-free. Education opportunities helped one to acquire the necessary skills outside caste. Occupation thus became a relatively independent element of social status. The development of professions along with the salaried occupations led to the growth of the middle caste. This newly educated middle class in India could cut across different castes but frequently the advantages of English education accrued to upper castes because of the initial advantage of their high status.

The British adopted a policy of reservation of low paid administrative posts for members of low castes. The awareness of economic and other advantages of English education gradually spread to the lower rungs of the caste hierarchy, and there was a widespread effort on their part to seek new education. In independent India also, the policy of reservation was continued for backward castes, scheduled caste and scheduled tribe by the government to give educational and other privileges to them. One of the major changes that the new system of education introduced was a gradual dissociation of occupation from caste. While occupations in the traditional caste system were rated in terms of ritual purity and pollution, they are today rated, to some extent, in terms of the incomes they produce.

The western type of education has also made possible the upward mobility of individuals and groups in the framework of westernization, where membership of caste is not a decisive factor. Individuals get their children educated in public schools and convents, follow modern occupations, which are more remunerative and adopt a westernized style of life. Both the mechanisms of social mobility — sanskritization and westernization — are not mutually exclusive. People participate in both these and try to make the best of both the worlds. To reiterate, sanskritization is the process by which a 'low' Hindu caste, or tribal or other group, changes its customs, rituals, ideology and way of life in the direction of a high, and frequently 'twice born' caste. Generally, such changes are followed by a claim to a higher position in the caste hierarchy than that traditionally conceded to the claimant caste by the local community. Westernization, on the other hand, refers to changes brought about in the Indian society and culture as a result of over 150 years of British rule, the term subsuming changes occurring at different levels — technology, institutions, ideology and values. The western system of education was also responsible for the spread of egalitarian ideas and modern, scientific rationality. These ideas became the guiding spirit behind the national movement in the fight for equality of opportunities, a source of inspiration for social reforms, and a challenge to traditional values, which supported the caste system.

Box 10.2: Are opportunities for education in contemporary India open to all?

There exists a hierarchy of educational institutions with respect to the standard and quality of education imparted by them to the students. At the one end there are public schools equipped with the most modern facilities and a highly qualified staff, and at the other, there are ill-equipped schools. On one hand, we have schools like G. D. Goenka in New Delhi with air conditioned classrooms and buses and skin sensor taps, with the best and state of the art infrastructure, which caters to the rich sections of society. On the other hand, we have several local, municipal schools with not just poor infrastructure and basic aids like blackboard and chalk, but even insufficient teachers. A similar disparity of standards exists between certain colleges and university departments and between one university and another. Not to speak of the differences between metropolitan, urban schools and village schools.

There is a rough correlation between the hierarchy of educational institutions and the social background of students and the teachers. Students from upper strata tend to join public schools and convents and those from lower ones are to be found in greater numbers in the Municipal District Board and government schools. There is a marked contrast in the quality of education imparted by these schools. The former provide a social environment for the children, which is to some extent congruent with the western style of life that obtains in their homes. *Education here is expensive and only students belonging to upper classes and higher income groups are able to exploit it. They are also*

in an advantageous position to seek admission to engineering and medical colleges, which sell seats in the name of donations. Also these rich students can also engage private tutors at the school, college and university levels. Occasionally, teachers employed in schools and colleges run tutorial classes and maintain high standards of teaching in the latter to attract students to their private colleges. However, educational opportunities are open to all those who seek to take advantage of them, without being bound by limitations of caste or religion.

It must be noted that caste associations have their educational institutions but they give preferential treatment in the matter of admission to students of the same caste. Members of the same caste are recruited as teachers. Caste enterprise and preferential state policies affect the system of education in their own way. Some schools started by sectarian associations promote high standards in education while others contribute to a general deterioration of standards. Such teachers are largely responsible for the maintenance of these; their recruitment on the basis of caste and religious considerations at the expense of merit and objective criteria is bound to adversely affect the education system and the development of human values.

When students from lower strata get highly educated, they not only qualify themselves to get more remunerative jobs, thereby raising the economic level of the family, but also contribute to the heightening of its prestige seeking alliance from castes which either have a higher ritual status or reputed ancestry, also helps untouchable castes shed the stigma of belonging to a low caste. Education has become a source of prestige and a symbol of higher social status. It has also brought about significant change(s) in the traditional social status of women.

Social mobility in the larger framework of students supported by themselves, i.e., self-help students concern more significantly the situation of intra-generational mobility. Those who are already employed to educate themselves further greatly benefit from the establishment of morning and evening colleges, correspondence courses and the professional and certificate courses leading to a degree or diploma, and the provision by some universities of admitting external students. These avenues of formal adult education act as an independent channel of social mobility. The pattern of mobility here is characterized by greater spontaneity and purposive motivation than those in the case of students supported by their parents. Individuals are able to work their way through higher education and move up the ladder of stratification during the span of their careers.

Reflection and Action 10.2

Collect at least five case studies of individuals who have enhanced their social and economic position in society by improving their educational attainment. Discuss with other learners at the study centre.

10.12 Conclusion

The relationship between education and social mobility is complex and dynamic. After reading this unit, you would have realized that it is extremely difficult to draw generalizations that would be of universal relevance. While there is no doubt about the fact that education makes an important contribution towards social mobility of individuals and groups, there are several factors that sometimes significantly alter the direction and fate of such a relationship. In a society which is rigidly stratified, it becomes very difficult for the formal institution of education to remain unaffected or unbiased. Under those circumstances, it ends up maintaining the status quo and reinforcing the socio-economic or

cultural divide between people. In many cases, the stigma of belonging to lower castes, for example dalits, may remain even after attaining the highest educational status. At the same time, however, there have been occasions, when schools have been able to rise above those prejudices and give a fair chance to people, especially from disadvantaged backgrounds, to overcome their handicaps and move up the social ladder.

10.13 Further Reading

Boudon, R., 1997. "Education and mobility: A structural model". In J. Karabel, J & A. H. Halsey (eds.). *Power and Ideology in Education*. New York: OUP

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Unit 11

Role of Education in Social and Human Development: Emerging Perspectives

Contents

- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Social and Human Development Indicators
- 11.3 Education for capacity Building of the Poor and the Marginalized
- 11.4 Education for Acceleration of Social and Human Development: International and National Initiatives
- 11.5 Innovations in Education at the Grass-roots
- 11.6 Conclusion
- 11.7 Further Reading

Learning Objectives

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- explain the concepts of social and human development;
- discuss the initiatives at international and national levels that are geared to integrating education with social and human development; and
- describe experiments in education at the grass-roots that cross-link education with social and human development.

11.1 Introduction

For long education has been identified with progress and prosperity. In fact, the spread of education is treated as an effective solution to the problems of economic decline, hunger, and human poverty. Education appears as a core area of concern in public policies in national as also international circles. We find governments in different countries pursuing the goal of widening the spread of education at one level and international agencies such as the United Nations pursuing the target of universalizing primary education as part of millennium development goals which, in effect, means ensuring that by 2015, children (boys and girls alike) in all parts of the world are able to complete a full course of primary schooling. What is/are the major objectives of education? Apart from bringing in prosperity and material affluence, does education have any other role to play in ameliorating human suffering? Does it have a bearing on social and human development? You have studied the multiple dimensions of the concept of education and the viewpoints of major thinkers on education in Block 1. You have already learnt about the articulation of the ideas of some of them in specific settings as the Rishi Valley School which is founded on the principles and perspective of J. Krishnamurti. In addition, you are aware (from reading units 9 and 10) of the role of education in bringing about social change and social mobility. You would have realized that the scope of education is not confined to the 3Rs (reading, writing, and arithmetic). Education has a distinct role to play in society. In this unit we will explore the basic issue of education in the context of social and human development. We begin with acquiring an understanding of the twin concepts of social and human development. Then we will delve into the role of education within this framework. In the next unit you will learn about the role of education in the empowerment of the marginalized people which is a significant component of social and human development.

11.2 Social and Human Development Indicators

You have already read in detail about the twin concepts of social and human development in Block 1 of MSO-003 Course (Sociology of Development). The World Bank (2005) defines social development as the process of increasing the (i) assets and capabilities of individuals to improve their well-being, (ii) capacity of social groups to transform their relationships with other groups, and participate in development processes, and (iii) ability of society to reconcile the interests of its constituent elements, govern itself and manage change. As early as the 1990s, it was accepted that in its widest connotation, the concept of development had more to do with the general sense of human well-being than with the growth of material output. The annual human development reports have forcefully initiated the shift in focus from expanding incomes to non-income dimensions of well-being in understating human development.

Box 11.1: Human Development Index

The UN Human Development Index (HDI) is a measure of poverty, literacy, education, life expectancy, childbirth, and the fact others. It was developed by the Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq in 1990 and has been used by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) since 1993 to measure the average achievements in a country in three basic dimensions of human development. These are (i) long and healthy life expectancy at birth; (ii) knowledge as measured by adult literacy and combined primary, secondary and tertiary groups' enrolment ratio; and (iii) standard of living as measured by gross domestic product (GDP) per capita at purchasing parity (PPP) in USD. Every year, the UNDP ranks UN member states in accordance with the HDI.

The Human Development Report 2005 clearly states that human development is about freedom and about building human capabilities which encompasses the range of things that people can do and what they can be. This range gets narrowed when conditions of poverty, illness, illiteracy, social and economic discrimination, and unrest prevail. The basic capabilities for human development are, leading a long and healthy life, being educated, having adequate resources for a decent standard of living, and social and political participation in society.

11.3 Education for Capacity Building of the Poor and the Marginalized

For long, it has been said that education seems to protect the poor and the marginalized from exploitation by generating awareness of their rights, capacities and capabilities. The role of education hence seems to be confined to awareness generation and at best opening opportunities for employment and in this sense providing security of income. Certainly, this is a limited and highly restricted view of the scope of education in society. What often remains unattended is the role of education in the empowerment of the poor and the marginalized for several reasons — the chief among them being the ease of governing the disempowered people. When people become empowered to make choices, take decisions for themselves, and challenge the decisions of administrators, governance becomes difficult. It is for this reason that despite the fact that plan documents do contain expressions such as, 'community participation', 'people's movements' that convey a sense of decentralization, they are prepared and implemented by the bureaucracy and those who have no understanding of the social reality of those for whom they plan and make policies. The participation of local communities is often for namesake. According to Dreze and Sen (1995), the education system has served to safeguard the interests of the privileged and powerful groups of people leaving behind the

socially and economically disadvantaged. Rampal (2000: 2524) writes, “If education is really to be a means of reducing social inequities and redressing the skewed course of development followed in the last few decades, it shall have to be reckoned as a site of struggle for power. The classroom shall have to relocate the power to critique and change — the power also to decide what shall count as legitimate content for curricula, to choose enabling pedagogies, negotiated when, where and ultimately for what purposes. The educational discourse would need to consciously give voice to the silenced majority and redefine its objectives by valuing their lives on their terms. Strong and visible affirmative action in favour of the disadvantaged and disempowered will have to redefine the educational priorities of the countries in this [South Asian] region.”

Equally important is to address the issue of the content of teaching. It is live that the curriculum is rooted in the urban middle class background of those who design the curriculum. There has been widespread acceptance of the need to develop curriculum based on the social context and life experience of the disadvantaged section of society. It is said that when this happens learning would be both joyful and meaningful to the children. What happens, however, is that the children belonging to the disempowered and disadvantaged families are treated as ‘backward’ and ‘inferior’. They have, therefore, to be made to ‘catch up’ with their counterparts belonging to the empowered and privileged families. Furthermore, they need to be ‘told how to conduct their lives, what to do, what not to do. All this is through the process of education in the course of which they are fed on bits end pieces of information. There are fragments of information may not be completely comprehensible to the children, for they do not relate with their life situation, neither are they able to make use of it. A natural consequence of bias in the education system itself and lack of interest of students is a rise in the number of dropouts.

Contrary to the understanding that children of marginalized families are deficient in basic capacities and capabilities of learning is the fact that they are more sensitive to, aware and conscious of the conflicts and complexities of life. It is unfair to judge them on the basis of their performance in standardized formats and centralized criteria of assessment of their capacities to learn and articulate information that is by no means close to their own lives. Consider, for example, tribal children who grew up learning indigenous ways of measuring rice. Now, when they are introduced to the modern counting system in elementary classes, there is a great likelihood that they would not be able to understand and perform well in examinations. If, however, their indigenous system of counting is integrated with the teaching process, it is expected that they would learn with ease and with greater comprehension. The need, therefore, is to (i) establish pedagogy of emancipation in place of the pedagogy of the oppressed and articulate Freire’s ideas on education, and (ii) develop faith among the people in their own rationale, and wisdom as worthwhile for perusal. In fact, traditional knowledge, for example, about water harvesting, local food processing, fish farming, metal casting, have significant potential for inclusion in the school curriculum. This would empower the people at the grass-roots and provide opportunity for enriching their living conditions.

Box 11.2: World Declaration on Education for All (EFA)

Human Development is clearly reflected in the World Declaration on Education for All which states:

“Every person — child, youth and adult — shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs. These needs comprise both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy, and problem solving) and basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values and attitudes) required by human beings

to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and to continue learning. Moreover, whether or not expanded educational opportunities will translate into meaningful development - for an individual or for society - depends ultimately on whether people actually learn as a result of these opportunities, i.e., whether they incorporate useful knowledge, reasoning ability, skills and values. The focus of basic education must, therefore, be on actual learning acquisition and outcome, rather than exclusively upon enrolment and completion of certification requirements. Active and participatory approaches are particularly valuable in allowing learners to reach their fullest potential" (cited here from Rampal 2000:2525).

Incorporation of human rights into education prepares the children to accompany and produce desired societal changes, increase their capacity to participate in decision-making processes leading to social, cultural, and economic policies. The endeavour of making human rights a component of education brings in profound reform in the entire education system, more so because it has a bearing on curriculum framework, methods of teaching, classroom management, and assessment procedures. In its full sense, human rights education implies that rights are not only communicated as part of teaching but also implemented as part of the teaching-learning practice leading to decentralization, democratization of education as also respect for human dignity.

11.4 Education for Acceleration of Social and Human Development: International and National Initiatives

In September 2000, the UN Millennium Summit provided the forum for world leaders to commit their nations to strengthening global efforts for peace, human rights, democracy, strong governance, environmental sustainability and poverty eradication, and to promoting principles of human dignity, equality and equity. The result was the Millennium Declaration which was adopted by 189 countries. It was felt that the commitments in the Declaration could be made possible stating the goals, targets and indicators. Consequently, 8 goals, 18 targets, and 48 indicators were identified. Out of these one of the goals was: to achieve universal primary education, and the corresponding target was to ensure that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. The other goal that is of significance in this context was: promote gender equality and empower women, and the corresponding target was to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and in all levels of education not later than 2015. It was realized that the cost of education hits the poor people hard, constituting as it does a large share of limited economic resources. School dropouts, hence, can be considerably lowered by bringing down the direct and indirect costs of education (Human Development Report 2003).

Box 11.3: Ending Discrimination against girls

Gender differences in enrolments and dropouts are acute in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Countries that have eliminated gender disparities offer the following lessons:

- "Getting and keeping girls in school requires that schools be close to their homes. School mapping can identify least-served locations, aiding the establishment of multigrade schools in remote areas.

- Lowering out-of-pocket costs prevents parents from discriminating between boys and girls when deciding whether to send children to school—and in times of declining household income, to keep children from dropping out.
- Scheduling lessons flexibly enables girls to help with household chores and care for siblings.
- Having female teachers provides girls with role models—and gives parents a sense of security about their daughters” (Human Development Report 2003:95).

Governments in most countries do tend to finance public services— basic health care, primary education, water and sanitation – in order that they become accessible to all. The spread of basic education, for instance, benefits not only the individual or group of individuals who acquire it but has a bearing on the well being of all the members of society. When poor people are coerced to pay for primary education of their children, many of them prefer or are forced by circumstances to stay away. In developing nations particularly several families cannot afford to send their children to school. It was found that where school fees have been removed in Africa, attendance in schools has risen considerably. Despite the planning, gaps in opportunities for education remain large. About 115 million children have no access to basic primary education. A large number of them belong to sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Gradstein (2003) notes that political pressure results in bias in favour of the rich and powerful. Bias in political influence resulting from extreme income inequalities generates social exclusion of the marginalized. This is often followed by a deepening of inequality as public spending on education is severely hit.

In India, the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan represents the effort of the government to universalize elementary education based on community ownership of the school. Panchayati Raj institution, school management committees, village slum level education committees, Parents-Teachers Associations, Mother-Teacher Associations, Tribal Councils and other local institutions are assigned the task of elementary school management. The objective is to impart useful and relevant elementary education to children between 6 and 14 years of age. Children are encouraged to learn about the natural environment that envelops them, work for each other's well being and develop both spiritually and materially. It is expected that (i) all children in the relevant age group will complete 5 years of primary schooling by 2007 and 8 years of elementary education by 2010; (ii) the stage of universal retention of children in school would be achieved by 2010; and (iii) gender and social gaps at primary education level will be plugged by 2007 and at elementary education level will be plugged by 2010. Surely, a large number of educational reforms will be planned and executed. There would be community ownership of school-based intervention through decentralization.

The Tenth Five Year Plan has identified education as a critical factor in human resource development as also in the economic growth of the nation. Literacy rate was recognized as the major determinant of other indicators of socio-economic growth. The enrollment drive launched in the second year of the Tenth Five Year Plan with the mission to get all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years to attend school has resulted in considerable reduction in the number of out of school children from 42 million at the beginning of the Plan period to 8.1 million in September 2004. It is found that the gender gap in literacy has narrowed during the last decade. The government has, in addition to several schemes for spread of formal education, initiated schemes in the non-formal education stream.

Alternative schooling efforts under Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS), Alternative Innovative Education (AIE), Lok Jumbish, Shiksha Karmi, residential and non-residential courses bridge courses under District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA). These are particularly of use in groups that are very difficult to reach. Often, non-formed education is regarded as an interim arrangement in the phase of transition from out-of-school situation to that of attendance in mainstream school, The provision of vocationalization of secondary education ensures diversification of educational opportunities leading to enhancement of the individual's employment opportunities, and reduction of imbalance between demand and availability of skilled manpower (Mid-term Appraisal of 10th Five Year Plan 2005).

With a view to empower women in rural areas particularly those belonging to socially and economically depressed groups, the Mahila Sankhya was initiated in 1998. It is implemented in 33 districts of seven states. The target in the Tenth Five Year Plan is, however, to enroll 240 districts in 17 states. The Mahila Shiksha Kendras offer residential bridge courses with components of vocational training including life skills for out-of-school children. Another recent endeavour to ensure access and quality education to girls belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, and minorities in low female literacy districts is the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) launched in 2004-05. It operates through 750 residential schools with boarding facilities at the elementary level. There are also several programmes for adult education that combine formal education with vocational programmes.

Reflection and Action 11.1

Discuss the initiatives of the international agencies for employing education for social and human development.

11.5 Innovations in Education at the Grass-roots

Consider the rising trend in our own country to acquire competence in reading, writing, and speaking in English. A class of people that speaks English but thinks partially in English and partially in one of the Indian languages is emerging. These are culturally split personalities. This split seems to be the major handicap of Third World Countries which had been under colonial rule. This surely does not mean that one should not study, appreciate or assimilate other cultures. What is important is to study one's own culture too with rigour so that one may remain steadfast and not be swayed. It would also help to see one own culture in a broader perspective and promote indigenous scholarship (Naik 1998).

Indigenous vision of education in a general sense consists of expanding the spheres of existence by generating social awareness, initiating self-transformation, and developing creativity. This stands out in sharp contrast to modern education that envisages a way of life focused on consumerism, competition, and specialization often at the expense of integrity, peace and strength of character. In order to explore the possibility of promoting these elements and integrating traditional forms of education with the modern system, several experiments have been undertaken in different parts of the world. We will discuss some of them here.

a) Barefoot College in Tilonia

Tilonia is a small village in Rajasthan. Way back in 1972 a group of students from some of the better-known Indian universities established The Social Work and Research Centre (SWRC) under the leadership of Bunker Roy. This group was greatly inspired by Gandhian principles. They set up the Barefoot College in Tilonia with the mission of tapping local wisdom and initiative in order to

empower the villagers themselves. The Barefoot College does not draw on the expertise or experience of professionals from the formal education system, rather the villagers are encouraged to identify and use their own skills, knowledge and practical experience to make provision for drinking water, health, education, employment, fuel and other basic needs. The Barefoot College is committed to the idea that hands-on-approach and not educational degrees are effective in developing the means to meet people's needs and empower them. The Barefoot College prepares the illiterate rural poor to gain control of and manage technologies without input from outside experts. It challenges the need for formal education to develop and maintain technologies. The issue of availability of drinking water is a case in point. While the engineers and other technologists believe that the problem of drinkable water shortage is acute and requires bigger and deeper wells which is an expensive endeavour, the Barefoot College experts ask for simple, cost-effective ways of harnessing rain water and processing it for use. It is cheaper to construct a tank (using low cost, readily available resources) in a school located in brackish water areas than to exploit the ground water or pump water from a permanent water source through pipes.

The Barefoot College Campus is the only fully solar electrified one in the country. Interestingly, the Barefoot technologists have solar electrified several thousand houses in at least eight Indian states, installed hand pumps in the Himalayas (a task which could not be accomplished by urban engineers), and planned and implemented piped drinking water. Apart from the technologists, the Barefoot educators serve as trained pre-primary and night school teachers. About 3000 boys and girls attend more than 150 night schools run by the Barefoot educators. The schools are supervised by a children's parliament. The Barefoot communicators employ puppets to generate awareness about practices such as child marriage, rights and wages of women, child literacy and several others. Barefoot architects and masons have constructed the college out of low cost and locally available material resources. What comes out clearly is the understanding that the single conviction that local people are bestowed with insurmountable capacity to resolve their own problems that is articulated in the multiple tasks undertaken by the Barefoot College workers. The College operates on a decentralized and non-hierarchical basis wherein community issues are discussed in the village council. The Tilonia case challenges the need for formal education and managerial skills to operate as for example, health-care workers, solar engineers, hand-pump mechanics and teachers in local communities. The approach of empowering the people at the grass-roots by reposing faith in their wisdom and decentralizing power and control (i) brings together people belonging to different castes and classes (ii) provides engagement to rural youth who are labeled as 'unemployable'; and (iii) provides viable, simple, cost-effective alternatives to use sophisticated technology to improve the quality of life.

Against this backdrop, can the illiterate people working in the Barefoot College be treated as uneducated and backward? Perhaps there is a need to enlarge the concept of education itself to accommodate creative learning that ameliorates human suffering.

b) Hoshangabad Science Teaching Programme

Anil Sadgopal (currently on faculty of the Central Institute of Education, University of Delhi) along with some like-minded scientists set up the Kishore Bharati Centre for Rural Development and Education at Hosangabad in Madhya Pradesh. They approached the Madhya Pradesh government with the proposal to develop alternative materials for teaching science (now better known as Hoshangabad Science Teaching Programme) in government run schools. This was spearheaded by Sadgopal's firm belief that the curriculum needs to be decentralized, drawn from local physical environment and experience of the community. They invited the scientists from the Tata Institute of Fundamental

Research in Mumbai and the Indian Institute of Technology to visit Madhya Pradesh along with experts from the Regional Colleges of Education, the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and government middle school teachers of the state to deliberate on new ways of teaching experimental science. They succeeded in decentralizing the curriculum and motivating the teachers to make use of locally available resources and experience in teaching. The inspiration came from Gandhi's idea of integrating work with knowledge in the educational system. What started as the science teaching programme expanded to include social science teaching and language teaching through increasingly creative ways. Work experience was woven with scientific theories. Students and teachers would experiment and participate in the teaching-learning process as partners. More importantly, the team sought to improve agriculture and cattle breeding, and to bring migration of distressed agricultural labour under control. Ringwell fabrication emerged as a small-scale industry; forest cover was restored; and environmental degradation was checked. The Hoshangabad Science Training Programme provided the model on which some statewide programmes were developed in Madhya Pradesh and Ekalavya — a centre for educational research and training, was established.

The Hoshangabad experiment demonstrates the possibility of democratization of education wherein meaningful education becomes accessible to all children irrespective of their caste, class, language, gender, or community. In fact, Sadgopal raises a basic issue of why government schools have not been able to evolve a common school system for all children in his oft quoted book, *Shiksha mein Badlaav ka Savaal* (2000). The concept of common school system mentioned here refers to 'Lokshala' or people's school which is founded by the state. Here each local community runs its own complex of elementary schools and high schools with provision of equal rights for all children. Sadgopal constituted the Bharatiya Gyan Vigyan Jatha (BGVJ) in 1991 which provided the forum for articulating the demand for 'lokshala' in collaboration with local communities. The endeavour brought together those working in the fields of education, health and technology. Anil Sadgopal was the convener. This was closely connected with the All India People's Science Jatha which involved 50,000 villages and several towns. The conference was held in 1994 in which more than 1000 delegates participated. One of the outcomes of this conference was the initiation of the 'lokshala' process in 1995. Lokshala combined academics and activism geared towards institutional transformation as part of social change. With support from the University Grants Commission, the BGVJ set up Advance Field Laboratories in at least 10 states out of which 4 lay in the north-eastern part of the country. The Advance Field Laboratories were engaged in preparing the ground for the development of 'lokshalas'. Here, people's perception was taken note of in determining priorities which provided the basis for intervention.

'Lokshalas' emerge as one of the viable resolution of the private-government schools dichotomy. Often government schools suffer from lack of funds, and red tapism. They are treated as places where children who are too young to work with their parents are deposited. These children are pulled out of the schools soon after they are able to contribute to family income. Those who are better off prefer to send their children to private schools. The dropout rate is high, expenditure on them is considered to be uneconomical and wasteful. Not surprising then, several of them are on the verge of closing down. In fact, government schools seem to have failed in both Madhya Pradesh and Kerala. The lokshalas acquire an edge over both government and private schools in that they involve not only scholars but also local people. Further, they are not governed by a singular, uniform pattern, rather, each one is specific to the social and geographical environment in which it is situated. It is hoped that 'Lokshalas' would attract more and more students to acquire knowledge that they will be able to put to use to enrich their lives.

Box 11.4: Lokshala experience in Jahanabad, Bihar

“The group worked on the premise that no effective intervention would be possible without understanding the political and socioeconomic context. They also underscored the need to win the support of the community and to build an interface between ground realities and educational ‘experts.’ Jahanabad is a district particularly prone to violence because of radical peasant movements. There was police presence in most schools, which was hardly conducive to their functioning. One initiative taken by the group led to the removal of policemen from schools. Local young men were encouraged to work on a project documenting local history. Some initiatives were also taken to raise questions on the appointment of part-teachers. This had some impact on policy makers.

Perhaps more important were the long-term changes in attitudes and ideas that had been generated by these activities. Education is now recognized as a political issue in the area and has generated a lot of debate within the community. People now understand the difference between education and mere literacy, and can raise these issues with their political representatives, like Members of Parliament, and Members of Legislative Assembly. Social activists have developed a deeper understanding of the political context and have created a space of critical analysis of the existing situation. This process has opened up avenues to search for alternative educational strategies in a region which is undergoing violent eruption” (Louis, www.hurights.or.jp).

C) Poverty and Education: The Samanwaya Vidyapith

Dwarko Sundrani established the Samanwaya Ashram in 1954 at Bodhgaya. Here, apart from helping Musahar and Bhokta communities to fight illness, poverty, and violence, he undertook the task of educating the children belonging to these communities in a residential school. Here, development work is carried out for the benefit of families. Their children are educated in the Samanwaya Vidyapith following which they are established on the land that is given to their families. The purpose is to hold back the educated people in villages. This is important because there is widespread migration of educated villagers to urban areas. Now, it is not possible for each one of them to secure a job in cities. This leads to depression and frustration. Education in Samanwaya Vidyapith is entwined with activities such as cultivation, dairy farming, repair work, motor winding, and jeep driving. No certificates, degrees are awarded, rather, the thrust is on learning and developing the potential to earn. Children are taught language, arithmetic, and science in a way that ties up with growing vegetables and fruits, making compost and maintaining health and hygiene.

The approach of Samanwaya Vidyapith is two fold. It seeks to engage the students and teachers in village development work e.g. growing vegetables, disinfecting drinking water, and making compost manure from waste in villages. At the same time it takes complete responsibility of the social, and financial condition of the children as they grow up. No wonder then, children admitted at the age of 5 years grow up to be self-reliant and fully prepared to undertake manual work with a sense of pride. The Vidyapith takes upon itself the task of marrying these children after completion of education and of setting them up in villages. Equally important to note is the fact that religious harmony and cooperation prevails and are instilled in children of the Vidyapith. In the words of Sundrani (1998:38), “Samanwaya means harmony. The objective of this institution is to bring harmony. At present we are passing through a period of transition which is unprecedented in the annals of human history....There is a necessity to give education in harmony. Harmony can be established only through mutual understanding. Mutual understanding can be

created through service to one another. The Samanwaya Vidyapith is working on these lines. The poor children are being educated without any caste, colour, creed or religious considerations. They work together, and they serve together and they live together. The haves are sharing with the have-nots.... The Samanwaya Vidyapith stands for the education of the masses and not of the classes. It is through education that we can establish a classless and casteless society, which is the need of the hour.”

d) Rural Context of Primary Education

The Indian Institute of Education developed an action-research project, “Promoting Primary and Elementary Education’ for which the acronym PROPEL was adopted. The scope of this project extended to 137 villages. The basic assumption upon which PROPEL was founded was that a successful education system needs to relate itself to the needs and convenience of local communities basing itself on their lifestyle. Failure to establish the belongingness of children to the community in the educational system is a major reason for discontent with the system of schooling. PROPEL has been selected by UNESCO as a mobilizing showcase project which demonstrates a repeatable alternative which makes primary education accessible to all the children. Its importance is enhanced by the fact that it gives due regard to people’s lifestyle and their expectations.

Box 11.5: Significant aspects of PROPEL

“The culture-specific aspects of the PROPEL project are: (a) curriculum, which emphasizes (i) free scope to recite folk tales, sing traditional songs, and hold conversations about daily experiences, (ii) language and mathematics, beginning with local language and ways of calculation, leading to progressive assimilation of expected levels of learning of ‘standard’ language and mathematics, (iii) understanding of nature through exploration, analytical discussion, and reasoned argument, (iv) developing aesthetic sensitivity through observation, appreciation and use of colour, shape, sound, rhythm, with a view to fashioning of plastic and graphic art works in an untutored manner related to the learner’s natural surroundings, (v) health and hygiene in daily life, (vi) physical and mental relaxation through simple yogasanas, and (vii) explorations, with the help of the family and community elders, in local history and geography for discovering their relevance to local conditions and to the needs of local development; (b) class-climate for collaborative learning through verbal and non-verbal communication by means of (i) a circular, face-to-face seating arrangement in which the instructor too is included, (ii) shared learning materials which reflect the cultural ethos of non-acquisitiveness and unselfishness, (iii) songs and skits based on the community’s environmental and cultural contexts, (iv) learning to make speeches on local subjects, and (v) group work for participatory ‘peer-group’ learning along with regeneration of the individualized but non-competitive, stress-free pedagogy of pre-British indigenous character” Bapat and Karandikar (1998: 44-45).

Teachers in PROPEL are those, who belonging to the community, remain accountable to it. They tend the children with much affection and concern. It is ensured that a Village Education Committee is set up by each Gram Panchayat. This committee makes sure that the culture-friendly learning system is maintained without lapses. Pupils from several learning centres (referred to by them as *Apla Varg* meaning, ‘our class’) meet once in about 165 days to participate in Children’s Fair in which they not only sing, play games, present dramas, and tell stories but also engage in taking tests in language and mathematics which greatly demystifies the examination process even as confidentiality of performance gets exploded. The fair provides a relaxed environment for examination. It is found that girls perform better in curricular

studies, social skills, and understanding of environment than boys. They particularly enjoy reasoning exercises and simple experiments in science.

PROPEL has provided a means to bridge the gap between knowledge acquired by children as members of the community and that imparted in state-run schools. The expectations of the users of primary education in state run schools are seldom enfolded in the curriculum and pedagogy which creates a situation in which the full potential of the child is not tapped. The parents are not able to understand either the content or the relevance of what is taught to the children. The result is that many of them withdraw their children from such schools. The children are only too happy to return to the familiar familial environment. PROPEL obviated this problem by attending to cultural parameters in rural primary education, more so in the case of dropouts and of those who were never enrolled in the formal system of education. It is believed that this kind of education would preserve the culture and value system of the people.

Reflection and Action 11.2

Do you think innovations in education at the grass-roots are worthwhile?
Discuss with your co-learners at the study centre.

11.6 Conclusion

It is evident that the scope of education is no longer confined to the teaching-learning process in schools. In fact, the role of school in society is subject of discussion as much as the social context and content of education. It is being realized that meaningful education is not one that ensures economic security rather one that leads to the flowering of the complete potential of children and prepares them to lead a life of fulfillment. The foundations of this aspect of education were laid by several thinkers — Paulo Freire, Gandhi and others about whom you have read in earlier units. Here we have seen how traditional vision of education can be integrated with the modern system of education.

11.7 Further Reading

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Unit 12

Role of Education for Empowerment of the Marginalized

Contents

- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 Educational Deprivation of the Marginalized
- 12.3 Mainstream Education and the Marginalized
- 12.4 Perspective on Education for Empowerment
- 12.5 Conclusion
- 12.6 Further Reading

Learning Objectives

After going through this unit you will be able to discuss the:

- present educational status of the marginalized in India;
- chief concerns of education for the marginalized; and
- major theoretical perspectives on education for empowerment.

12.1 Introduction

People/groups located in the mainstream are equipped with better resources and have better access to power and privilege, as opposed to the marginalized. The latter are vulnerable and have remained exploited, degraded and deprived of access to the existing socio-economic resources. Women, for instance, form a universal category of the marginalized. For centuries all over the world, they have been exploited and deprived of equal status with men. Their disempowerment is evident in the lack of the basic right to choose the way they want to live. In the face of prevailing patriarchal traditions, they lack the real power to decide whether to work, what to work as, whether or not to marry, whom to marry, whether to bear children and a number of other issues that have a direct bearing on their lives. Thus, they do not get to participate in the socio-economic structure as equals and get socially excluded from the place of power and privilege. Moreover, due to their peripheral position in society, they suffer from numerous disadvantages and atrocities which range from sexual harassment to female infanticide. Poverty and hunger too have a greater impact on the lives of women who are affected by these in greater degree and numbers as compared to men. Thus, the marginalization of women is evident in lack of education, malnutrition, poor health, mistreatment, and powerlessness that they suffer from on a daily basis. In other words they come to occupy a place of inferior social status and marginal location.

In this Unit, we will begin with the present educational status of the marginalized sections in society in India and then discuss how education is biased in favour of the cultures and social existence of mainstream groups. Having acquired a basic understanding of educational deprivation of the marginalized and the position of the marginalized in mainstream education, we will explore the major theoretical perspectives in education for their empowerment.

12.2 Educational Deprivation of the Marginalized

While discussion of the philosophical principle of equality dates back to Aristotle, 'equality of educational opportunity' grew only with the public education systems of the 19th century. Prior to the introduction and growth of these

publicly funded systems for learning, education had been a matter for private enterprise and was restricted to the elite. Indian education system has been, by its very nature, elitist and exclusionary from traditional times.

Box 12.1: Process of Marginalization

The process of marginalization can thus be understood as having two aspects. The first aspect of the process of marginalization is that of the inferior location of these groups. They are located on the margins or the periphery. They don't form a part of mainstream society, as the privileged groups do. Such individuals are practically located 'outside' the strata of which they happen to be a part of either by ascription of achievement (Ram 1997). Owing to the 'outside' or the 'peripheral' location they don't enjoy the same benefits as the ones located in the mainstream do. The marginalized are in fact characterized by the least or minimal access to the socio-economic resources available.

The second aspect is the process of social exclusion. In an unequal and hierarchically organized society, not all groups enjoy equal amounts of power and prestige. Some groups or strata enjoy more power and influence at the expense of others. They are placed higher in the hierarchical social order which makes it easier for them to access the desirable goods and position in society. Consequently they are not able to fully participate in economic, social and civic life, and their inadequate access to material and non-material resources, exclude them from enjoying a quality of life and standard of living that is regarded as acceptable in society they live in. This puts them in a position of a major social disadvantage. In this way, the existential location of certain groups is less favorable in the social structural system as compared to other groups. In this sense, they are excluded from the sphere of power, prestige and influence through social, cultural and economic mechanisms.

Under the Vedic system, education was linked exclusively to caste and gender. True learning was the prerogative of male Brahmins. The Sanskrit texts and verses were conveniently deemed sacred matters reserved for them as "ritually pure" agents. While lower castes were under certain circumstances permitted limited instruction of a "non-sacred" nature, under no circumstances was education available to the lower castes and women. It was a categorically exclusive system. By the time the British East India Co. first ventured into the subcontinent in 1757, education there generally consisted of merely a small formal sector servicing the caste elite and male members and a larger non-formal sector for some others. Hindu women were largely denied access to any opportunity to receive formal education. Muslim women happened to be slightly more importunate as they went to religious schools which were generally located in the mosques. But it should be noticed that women were not granted entry to formal secular schooling.

The British devoted attention to education in India from 1813 to 1921. Unfortunately, interest in primary education was greatly diminished after 1835 when Macaulay's (in)famous "Minute" directed policy towards higher education premised on the "downward filtration theory." This postulated that, just as in Britain, the formally educated elite would, at least theoretically, disseminate kernels of knowledge to the masses. It was believed that the technique would work in India as well. Hence, the Vedic system of enclosure was only partially broken by the British. The pre-eminent Indian educator J. P. Naik has observed that the principal achievement of the British was in their making of non-discriminatory educational institutions, which theoretically overcame the monopoly of education held by the upper castes. However, their principal disservice was in differentiated education, which offset the advances made by permitting the upper castes to consolidate and, in fact, further formalise

their power through new social arrangements. Gandhi proposed a nationwide programme of vocation oriented primary education that was open to all children irrespective of class, caste and gender differences. He stressed the need to educate and empower women and make them politically active citizens of the country. He too failed to liberalize the educational system and rid it of its inability to overcome the distinctions and exclusionary policies based on class, caste and gender.

Constitution makers of free and Independent India understood the significance of education in terms of enhancing equality and social mobility. Thus, several constitutional provisions to enable free and fair access to the formal education system, to all the groups which had been earlier deprived of it, came into force.

Box 12.2: Education in Independent India

“Education in Independent India has in recent years received some attention from the planners and the public. The Constitution guarantees equality of educational opportunities to all, and favours some weaker section of society with a view to uplifting them. The Plans not only provide for the growth of literacy and education but also for compulsory free primary education. Further, education has come to be regarded as a form of investment to develop human resources, a necessary prerequisite of economic development. The idea of perspective planning envisages a dynamic relation between educational and economic development. All this is in consonance with the cherished goal of achieving the basic values of liberty, equality and social justice through democratic means” (Rao 1985: 148).

Article 15 forms the foundation of the quest for an egalitarian social order by announcing the prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. Article 46 of the Constitution reaffirms that “the State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and, in particular, of the scheduled castes.” Article 45 also includes universal elementary education as a directive principle, making it explicit that the State shall endeavor to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years. Unfortunately this remains an unfulfilled dream. One needs to examine how far the constitutional and state endeavours to bring education within the reach of all socio-economic groups have been realized and what are the problems and hurdles in achieving it.

Literacy is generally understood as the ability to read and write. In the modern context the term refers to reading and writing at a level adequate to enable one to successfully function at basic levels of the society. The literacy rate is considered one of the chief indicators of the educational status of any community or population, as it reflects on the actual number or percentage of individuals in a group who can read and write at a functional level. Literacy, an important tool for communication, learning, and information, is a virtual precondition for an individual's evolution and national development. Eradication of illiteracy has been one of the major concerns of the government of India since independence.

Another important aspect is that of accessibility of schools. As the term indicates, this concerns the actual availability of schools, and whether we have enough number of schools to educate all our children. Accessibility can be understood as having two dimensions. First is the availability of schools in terms of physical existence or geographical location. It is important to have a school in the physical vicinity of a habitation to enable children to enroll and attend classes on a regular basis. The crucial significance of the distance of

the school from the habitation was recognized by the state as it came out with the 1km (at least one primary school within the distance of 1 km from a rural habitation of a population of 300 and above) and 3 km scheme (at least one upper primary school within the distance of 3 km from a habitation of a population of 300 and above).

A second and equally important dimension is the social accessibility of the school. The groups which were traditionally excluded from the realm of formal education still find it difficult to gain acceptance in schools due to persisting social hierarchies. Hence, research throws light on the incidences of indecent behaviour towards children belonging to the marginalized sections by students and teachers. It thus becomes important to ensure that these children gain social acceptance and equal respect and treatment in the school by all the concerned parties (students, teachers, administrators)

Accessibility is connected with enrolment rates that usually reflect on the number of students who are formally enrolled in the schools, and attend classes on a regular basis. Measures to improve access and enrolment have to be coupled with the effort to retain children in the school long enough for them to complete the full cycle of school education. The general trend observed is that children, especially of the marginalized sections of the population, drop out of the school before completing the education, which forces one to examine the socio-economic factors as well as learning experiences of the students. Lastly, achievement or performance is another indicator which reflects on the actual result of the process of schooling. To be able to effectively use education as a tool of mobility by securing jobs and prestige, it is significant to perform well. Often the traditionally excluded groups show a trend of poor performance as compared to the other advantaged sections of society. This again leads one to ponder over the educational experience of these groups and the shortcomings of the present educational system.

a) Educational status of the Dalits

In India, Dalits form one of the most educationally deprived sections of the society. A survey conducted by the National Council of Applied Economic Research reveals that in the mid-1990s, only 41.5 per cent of Dalits in rural India were literate and 62.5 per cent of children in the 6-14 age group had been enrolled in schools at a certain point of time. Compared to the general population, the progress of schooling among Dalit children (5-14 years) has also been slow. Educational concerns of the dalits are, thus, of critical importance. Furthermore, their present educational status should be contextualized in the historical deprivation and denial of learning opportunities. Drawing on the data given in the fifth and sixth all India educational survey, Nambissan and Sedwal (2001) show how physical accessibility is always a problem for Dalit children. The number of schools available in a predominantly Dalit habitation is much less when compared to a general rural habitation. As a result, Dalit children have to go to upper caste habitations to be able to attend schools, which may not be accepting and welcoming them. Norms of purity and pollution still exist, and Dalit children may find themselves in hostile conditions. Research has pointed to cases where they are systematically discouraged or even forced to leave schools by other sections of the village community. In other words, social accessibility becomes an issue for these children. This is reflected in the poor attendance rates of Dalit children compared to that of general population. The poor performance of the state to be able to ensure the right to education becomes further clear, when the empirical data of the enrollment, retention and performance is compared with that of the other sections of the society. According to National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO 1999) sources, the school attendance rate in rural areas in 1973-74 was 64.3 per cent for Dalit boys compared to 74.9 per cent among boys from other (other than Dalit and tribal) social groups. In urban areas, however, the percentage was 77.5 for Dalit boys. Dalit girls had even lower attendance rates.

The high dropout rates remind us that caste dynamics still continue to affect the educational experience of these children. These children still find it difficult to be accepted and treated as equals in the classroom. According to the NCERT 1999 figures, Dalits constitute only around 11 per cent of teachers at the primary stage, nine per cent at the upper-primary stage and five to six per cent at the secondary and higher secondary stages. The social hiatus between teachers and Dalits has also had a telling effect on the student-teacher relationship. Chitins (1981) explains that the biases and stereotypical notions against the Dalits have refused to die. The poor performance is often attributed to the lack of ability and will of the students themselves, rather than the lack of structural and pedagogical support that these students face. The continuing economic vulnerability makes it all the more difficult for them to be able to invest time and resources in the educational enterprise. Poverty often forces the children to go out and work to be able to feed themselves rather than attending school.

b) Educational status of women

Education as a means to promote development in social, political, and economic spheres has been gender-blind, but in the late 1970s this perspective changed. Research concluded the existence of a high correlation between an increase in women's schooling level and a decline in infant mortality and fertility rates. Women who had completed basic education were able to make use of health facilities and service for their children and had a higher interest in sending their children to school. The year 1990 was proclaimed to be the International Literacy Year by the UN. The focus on education for women continued during the 1990 and resulted in the recognition of the significance of female education, not only as a basic human right, but also as a crucial factor towards national development.

The benefit that women have received from the initiatives of the state is evident from the constantly improving literacy rates of women over the past few years. According to Census of India 2001, the female literacy rate has increased from 39.29 per cent in 1991 to 54.16 in 2001 (i.e. by 14.87 percentage points); whereas in case of males it has increased from 64.13 per cent to 75.85 per cent (i.e. by 11.69 percentage points) during the same period. It means female literacy in the last 10 years has grown at a faster rate than the male literacy rate. This has resulted in narrowing the gender gap in literacy rate from 24.84 in 1991 to 21.69 percentage points in 2001. However, a common feature across all the districts of the country is the reduction of gender disparity in literacy rate with the overall increase in literacy rates of both males and females. But the decrease in the gender gap still remains far below the desirable levels.

It may be mentioned that improvement in literacy rate from 1991 to 2001 has not been uniform in all the states. There was variation from one state to another and within a state from one district to another. Chanana (2000) explains that this gap is wider in educationally backward states like Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan, which also happen to be highly patriarchal regions. Furthermore, SC and ST women seem to be the worst victims, for they show lowest literacy rates. Female literacy among the SCs is 23.76 per cent as compared to 49.91 per cent among the males. The corresponding percentage among the ST females is 18.19 as compared to 40.65 among the males (NCW 1994).

Data reveals poor literacy rates for rural women, as compared to their urban counterparts. Not only does it confirm the high disparity among women but also reveals that a large number of women have reached adulthood without access to basic literacy and innumeracy skills. This makes one ponder over the educational status of young women and the girl child. Usha Nayyar (2001) draws on data from the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) to

conclude that a fairly strong gender focus has resulted in a gradual improvement of enrolment figures for women at both primary and middle levels of schooling. There is a reduction in the enrolment figures for females, as one moves from primary to middle to higher stages of schooling. While the percentage of girls in school enrolment in primary stages in the year 1997-98 is 43.6, the corresponding figure for middle stage is only 40.1. One can, thus, conclude that women retention is low, and they find it more difficult to complete schooling or reach for higher levels of education. This certainly is a major handicap, as it limits their occupational opportunity, and hence avenues for upward social mobility. The same is the case with dropout rates which go on increasing from primary to middle to higher stages of schooling much more rapidly for girls as compared to boys. There are many obstacles to girls' enrolment and further participation in the educational system.

Economic factors too have a bearing on poor retention rates. Parents with low income have to make priorities whether it is economically viable enough to send girls to school. Boys are prioritized because they are the future providers of economic security for their parents, while girls' future role is to be married away. Traditional practices, also, discourage parents to let girls complete education. It is believed that this might interfere with their marriage prospects in a negative way. The low presence of women teachers too works negatively towards the parents' willingness to send their daughters to school. This is especially the case in the upper primary levels of education. Even if parents don't object to co-education they feel that presence of female teaching and working staff in schools ensures their child's safety and well-being. Thus, one can safely say that although significant progress has been made in provision of education for the girl child, the task of ensuring equality of condition and opportunity is far from complete.

c) Educational experience of the Scheduled Tribes

One of the distinguishing features of the Scheduled Tribes is that the majority of them live in scattered habitations located in the interior, remote and inaccessible hilly and forest areas of the country. This also accounts for the fact that STs are highly heterogeneous, and diversity in terms of language, culture, location, customs, beliefs, traditions and socio-economic conditions is enormous. Latest data in fact make the disturbing revelation that STs lag behind all the other marginalized groups (and way behind the national average) in terms of educational progress. Given the diverse locations of tribal population the disparity among the states in terms of tribal literacy does not come as a surprise. A disparity to the extent that is witnessed in state wise figures, however, leaves much to be desired. While most of the north-eastern states and some educationally advanced states like, Kerala and Himachal Pradesh have achieved satisfactory levels of tribal literacy rates, educationally backward states like Rajasthan, Bihar, and Andhra Pradesh make the overall picture highly discouraging.

As already explained, tribal habitations are generally characterized by a secluded and interior physical location. This makes physical accessibility to schools a problem. Drawing on the data of the fifth and sixth All India Educational Survey, Sujatha (2001) insists that in almost all tribal populated areas, the number of schools within 1 km of habitation have increased. But difficult terrain and hilly regions make the distance of even 1km hard to cover considering the fact that children are expected to go to school and come back home on a daily basis. It further becomes impossible if the distance is more than 1km. Considering the fact that at least 10 per cent of tribal habitations have primary schools beyond a distance of 2 kms it shows how schools remains inaccessible to these children. Though, access still is far below satisfactory position, the enrolment rates among tribal population make a positive picture. Not only have the overall figures showed a significant improvement from 36.5 per cent in 1989-90 to 43 per cent in 1997-98, the gender gap too is seemingly reducing.

Sujatha further shows, a similar trend in the upper primary and secondary levels of schooling. Due to high dropout rates among the tribal children, schools fail to retain them. The chief reasons for this are high levels of absenteeism and large-scale failure of students in the year-end assessment. The problem is further compounded by poor achievement rates in the tribal population, as compared to non-tribals.

Box 12.3: Qualitative concerns

The discussion on the quantitative aspects of the educational status of the marginalized groups clearly shows that the gap between the constitutional commitment to provide education to all children below the age of 14 years, and the actual status of SC, ST and girl children, remains very large. This shows in the poor literacy and enrolment rates of the children of these sections. The educational status of these groups is further characterized by high dropout rates.

12.3 Mainstream Education and the Marginalized

This disturbing trend of dropouts after initial enrolment forces one to ponder over qualitative aspects of schooling and the real classroom experiences of the children coming from the marginalized sections of society. In other words, one needs to adopt a framework of social justice which looks beyond the aggregate concerns and towards the factors of social justice, identity issues and pedagogical concerns. The learning environment provided to these children is often characterized by poor infrastructure, lack of basic amenities and less than adequate number of teachers. Data on the state of schools in rural areas, backward villages and adivasi areas confirm this observation. Such schools account for a poor learning environment and have a negative impact on the motivational and aspirational levels of the students as well as the parents.

Centralized curriculum represents yet another issue. Krishna Kumar (1989) maintains that centralized curriculum reflects the culture and social existence of the mainstream groups. It fails to draw upon the factors, objects, experiences and issues, which the children of marginalized minorities live with. It, therefore, doesn't talk about the socio-cultural lives of these children. On the one hand such a curriculum fails to relate to the knowledge base of the students who find it irrelevant and meaningless, and on the other it also affects their self-identity and feeling of self-worth in a negative way. This leads to a conflict in the young minds, and an overall sense of disillusionment which is often large enough to force children to drop out of the formal scheme of education.

The curriculum is further characterized by the creation, and reinforcement of stereotypes of the marginalized sections that are often presented as negative. Hence, as Krishna Kumar (1989) suggests, the SCs and STs are often depicted as 'culturally backward'. Nambissan (2000) mentions that these communities are largely portrayed in subservient roles in accordance with what is perceived as their traditionally low position in the social hierarchy. This further feeds the discriminatory practices and adverse peer and teacher attitude in the schools, which contributes to a feeling of demotivation and discouragement in the students, besides damaging their self-identity.

Similar issues emerge due to gender stereotypes in the formal curriculum. Textbooks have been criticized for depicting women in traditional roles and stereotypical fashion, which leads to a setting of negative role models for the girl child. This also, strengthens the patriarchal state of mind and encourages the girl child to conform to the standards without questioning them or looking for better alternatives. It is in fact full of gender stereotypes and fails to construct new ways of viewing and establishing social relations between men

and women. The effect of the biased textbooks further shows up in discriminatory practices adopted by teachers and peers. SCs and STs are often ridiculed, avoided and discriminated against due to the traditional low socio-economic status. overt act of discrimination such as segregation in seating arrangements, refusal to let them use the common pitcher for drinking water, or to touch them and their notebooks and so on are not unheard of . Low expectations and lack of encouragement, also, show up in the poor performance of SC, ST and girl children. Furthermore, the formal curriculum is based on a model of direct instruction by the teacher, who holds authority and power. He is often supposed to discipline children's body and minds by encouraging a culture of rote learning. Such a classroom culture is often based on direct instruction from the teacher, where students are expected to take down notes, memorize and reproduce it in the exams without questioning either the process or the content. The teacher therefore, fails to provide any special assistance or creative support to these children, who often are first generation learners. With a knowledge base that is completely alien and a classroom environment that remains non-supportive, these children lose motivation to do well and complete schooling.

Box 12.4: Education and the Disprivileged: Pedagogical Considerations

The basic egalitarian premise in this matter has been that a uniform common curriculum, if not also a common school, leads to equality or lack of disprivilege in education. The light that psychology and educational theory throws on this matter tends to suggest, however, some modifications. First, human capacities and capabilities are not uniformly distributed. Thus with in a common school or a common curriculum, different pupils have to be helped to proceed at their own pace. To the extent that schools can provide for this through their own media or methods, etc., it might be desirable to present even the same curriculum through different media and methods. A more extreme view, which would have some justification, would be that a specialized curriculum, particularly after a common period of elementary or secondary schooling, would be farier to individuals with different manual, aesthetic, linguistic , numerical or social potentials.

Too rigid an insistence on uniform schooling can, in fact handicap children from less privileged backgrounds, while if it is too differentiated it could perpetuate these distinctions. The development of multipurpose, multilateral or multifaceted secondary educational higher education for different fields might be seen as a measure of equity, minimizing disprevelige. On the other hand, too specific a secondary or elementary education, without adequate emphases on linguistic and numerical skills, might provide a dead-end education which would handicap the individuals undergoing it. If the allocation of individuals to those specific courses appears related to or based on the caste or class origin of the pupils, the school would be perpetuating social inequalities already in existence, or even accentuating them" (Shukla 2002 : 320-21).

Furthermore, schools often fail to use their mother tongue as the medium of instruction. A number of policy documents have stressed on the pedagogical and cultural importance of the use of the mother tongue in schools, especially at the primary levels , but adivasis languages and local dialects find no place in the classroom. In fact they are discouraged and even ridiculed. This not only further alienates the child from the classroom, but also raises serious problems in comprehension and understanding, evident in the large number of failures and poor performance.

The exclusion of the child's language and culture from the medium and the content of school knowledge as well as the messages of inferiority and confirmation that are conveyed to the children are likely to affect the

motivation and aspiration of the children in a negative way. This accounts for the loss of interest and lack of effort to continue and gets reflected in the poor retention rates. Thus, what is required is a change in the formal curriculum to be able to accommodate the wider social reality and serious effort in order to give a place of rightful respect and dignity to these sections of society and their socio-cultural and economic environment. The formal curriculum should be able to voice the experiential reality of the Dalits, adivasis and the girl children to enable them to relate and derive meaning and relevance out of it. From the point of view of the girl child, it makes sense to give place in the curriculum to, an examination of women's subordination throughout history, women's contribution and participation in history-making, the value of work commonly performed by women — such as domestic work, the importance of women in the processes of decision-making, participation and organisation, and the incorporation of women's way of knowing and focus on women's experiences. This in effect means giving a more critical approach to the curriculum. Change in curriculum would, however, remain useless and ineffective unless a corresponding change in the pedagogical culture and teacher attitude is initiated which is more sensitive to, and shows a greater understanding of the social and pedagogical issues of the marginalized.

Reflection and Action 12.1

Visit two schools one which caters to students belonging to lowest socio-economic sections of society and the other which caters to students belonging to upper socio-economic sections of society. Find out the difference in the learning environment.

12.4 Perspective on Education for Empowerment

The subject of education for empowerment may be understood from two vantage positions. The first incorporates social privileges, power, prestige and influence while the second incorporates issues of economic growth, economic quality and educational opportunity. There is no denying that these are not mutually exclusive and independent, rather they are inextricably entwined with each other. Education is seen as a means of socialization whereby young members of society are trained into the accepted values and belief system of the society. It breeds similarity of thought and action between the individuals and thus leads to a feeling of oneness and similarity of goals and values. This leads to unity among members, hence social solidarity and cohesiveness.

In the present day non-egalitarian and unequal society complex power relations and hierarchization exist. Not all social groups enjoy equal access to the educational resources and hence 'equality of condition' that functionalists assume does not exist in the first place. In the name of preserving order and social cohesiveness, what is done is the promotion of the interests of the dominant sections of society. The poor and the marginalized are unable to perform as well as the rich and the privileged due to several material, social and cultural handicaps, and are forced to accept themselves as inefficient and unable. In other words, the marginalized and the deprived keep suffering from the cumulative deficiencies, in the name of the lack of ability or performance, and socio-economic inequalities get reproduced.

Schools promote the technocratic-meritocratic ideology, which uphold that economic success essentially depends on appropriate skills, knowledge, talents and abilities. In reality, economic success is often linked to a person's class, sex, race, etc and more so in a hierarchical, stratified and unequal society. Schools provide knowledge to fulfill a particular professional role. But more importantly they foster the attitudes and behaviors consonant with the fulfillment of these particular roles. By encouraging certain personality traits and discouraging certain other ones, schools shape the personalities of pupils

in accordance with the role capitalist society needs them to perform. They thus select some to play the role of active decision makers while others are required to obey passively. By rejecting the functionalist claim that education will create a more open and equal society, Bowles and Gintis in fact put the overall role of formal education as further contributing to the plight of the already disadvantaged.

This line of argument has been carried forth by Louis Althusser, a French philosopher, whose work forms the basis of the 'hegemonic-state reproductive model'. This argument lays stress on the overall role of the state in reproducing social inequalities. Althusser presents a general framework for the analysis of education from a Marxian perspective. He views, education as a part of superstructure, and argues that education provides ideological support to the rulers. You have read about this aspect in Blocks 1 and 2.

The issue of power and culture is critical to the functioning of schools. Being a part of society, education finds itself embedded in the political and social conditions, and cannot possibly bring about any radical change as an 'independent' variable. Does that mean that schools and education have absolutely no role to play in the empowerment of the disadvantaged? Can education not intervene in the existing unequal socio-economic order? Is it just another instrument to perpetuate inequality? Human agency is always at work, and one can always find innovative teachers, sympathetic administrators, and aware and creative students who refuse to take instructions and assignments at face value and without questions. In fact, education is seen as a major agency for bringing about a modern ethos of equality and freedom. It is thought that children trained in modern scientific-technological knowledge would find avenues of social mobility and in fact move towards equality.

Amartya Sen and Jean Dreze (2002) brought out the significance of education in terms of functioning and capability. Functioning refers to what a person does and achieves. Capability on the other hand refers to the range of choices and options which a person has in deciding the kind of life he/she wants to lead. Capability therefore is the real state of freedom that a person enjoys in choosing from the alternative combinations of functioning. For example a young child may be forced out of school due to several constraints like poverty, social prohibitions, family problems etc. Such a condition may severely limit the range of activities and life goals that he/she can choose from leading to an overall state of disadvantage and his/her functioning is reduced to that of a child labourer.

Sen and Dreze refer to such a case as 'capability deprivation' which may be understood as a severe limitation of freedom and an overall state of incapacitation to live and perform dignified labor. The expansion of human capabilities can be enhanced by important social opportunities like education and health care. These are significant ends in themselves. Education is understood to be a crucial factor in at least five distinct ways (i) Intrinsic importance: education seen as an act of learning leads to personal growth and self-development, which has an intrinsic value of its own. (ii) Instrumental personal roles: education enables one to get an appropriate set of skills and knowledge that enables him to make use of economic opportunities and get into a profession of his own choice. It also enables one to participate in a number of other valuable activities like playing sports, reading, participating in local forums of discussions etc. (iii) Instrumental social roles: education makes one more socially aware and politically assertive. An educated person is more aware of his/her social needs and political rights and asserts for them both on an individual level and at the collective level, which strengthens the democratic practice. (iv) Instrumental social processes: education makes a lasting impact on social processes and enables one to reject and fight against oppressive socio-cultural practices. It is a powerful means of getting rid of

social evils like neglect of girl child, child labor and so on. This would reduce the number and extent of deprived and deprivation. (v) Empowerment and distributive roles: greater literacy and educational empowerment enables emancipation of the marginalized sections of society by accommodating them in the mainstream. It also has a socially redistributive effect. It would lead to a fairer deal for the marginalized, not only at the level of a population or a group but also at the level of the family and the individual.

Thus, education is a tool for the empowerment of the marginalized, as it leads to an expansion of choices, freedom and real opportunity. In other words it leads to a greater capability to enable the individual to lead a valued and valuable life.

Reflection and Action 12.2

Do you think education perpetuates social and economic inequalities? Discuss your point of view with other learners at the study centre.

Thus, Freire (1970) demonstrates how education can actually bring about a positive change and play a significant role in bringing about an egalitarian social order. But to enable it to bring about any positive change, we must look beyond the traditional practice of education and attack the oppressive systems inbuilt in this kind of education system. It is only by respecting the sense of inquiry and questioning present in the young minds, can we empower them to look beyond the existential reality and bring about a positive transformation, on the lines of egalitarianism, which still remains a distant dream. You may recall Freire's perspective on education which you have read in unit 3.

American economists Bowles Gintis and Simmons (1976), came up with an interesting piece of work titled 'Schooling in Capitalist America', which led to the growth of a perspective, which is now generally known as the 'Economic Reproductive Model'. They argue that in an unequal society based on a capitalist economic order, the role of education is to reproduce the required labor force. The nature of the labor force should be as per the requirement of the capitalist system of production. A capitalist society works on an arrangement where the majority of the proletariat works for a small number of rich capitalists. This in effect means that a minority are in the decision making place (the capitalists), while the majority play a minimal role in the process of decision making and stick to carrying out the orders of the decision makers (the workers). Schools seeks reproduce this very socio-economic order by placing a minority in the place of rich capitalists and a majority as poor proletariat.

12.5 Conclusion

The World Bank defines empowerment in terms of freedom of choice and action. It is understood that, the process of empowering people actually entails throwing open a range of options that she can choose from, and, thus, feel a sense of control and power over her life. It refers to a process by which the deprived individuals and groups gain power to control their lives and the ability to make strategic life choices. Education is one of the most powerful resources in bringing about empowerment. In the context of the marginalized groups, it functions to facilitate occupational diversity and mobility. It makes them more aware, of their rights and issues and enables them to assert for them both at an individual and collective level, in their rightful quest for power, prestige and an equality of condition.

The era of Enlightenment and modern ethos brought with itself a commitment to the cardinal principles of equality, liberty and fraternity. In the present day acceptable social order based on democratic ideas and participatory social system, it is necessary to strive towards an equal, just and fair social order.

where all individuals and socio-cultural groups enjoy equal access to the available resources of society. The challenge is to identify the socially disadvantaged, economically backward, and educationally deprived sections of society and accommodate them in the mainstream, so that they can enjoy equal access to power and prestige. To meet this challenge and promote a condition of equal participation and equal access to rights, the role of education, has been recognized as of crucial significance.

The school has emerged as a modern institution, which provides a forum for the spread of democratic ideas and participatory ethos. Its role in promoting the interests of the marginalized, however, has been a subject of major disagreements and heated debate among sociologists. A section of them look at school with a positive attitude, others question and reject the very ability of formal education to bring emancipation to the deprived. In the context of the social and educational deprivation that the marginalized have faced in the past, as well as the crucial role that education can play to empower them, one should examine the issue of the present educational status of these communities. The Indian state now recognizes the potential of education, but policy documents clearly reveal that the stress continues to be on the issues of quantity and provisioning. While access to schools still remain far below the satisfactory levels, social accessibility as an issue is yet to be recognized and given due attention. Discriminatory practices and oppressive social norms still persist. Hence the issue of equity in education becomes crucial. The quality of education that they receive too needs to be examined. It is time that we address the issues of importance of instruction through mother tongue for effective teaching and encouragement and incorporation of locally relevant content and curriculum, besides emphasizing the localized production of textbooks in local dialects.

Economic vulnerability has a negative impact on the overall educational status. Hence, poverty needs to be tackled not only as a consequence of illiteracy but also as a reason for it. Thus, to be able to give the marginalized sections, their rightful place in the social order, the issues of quantity, equity and quality need to be examined in conjunction with each other rather than independent of each other.

12.6 Further Reading

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Unit 13

Education and the Policy of Positive Discrimination and Affirmative Action

Contents

- 13.1 Introduction
- 13.2 Social Inequalities in Indian Society
- 13.3 Evolution of the Policy of Positive Discrimination and Affirmative Action in India
- 13.4 Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Higher Education
- 13.5 Issues of Access, Retention, and Poor Performance
- 13.6 Conclusion
- 13.7 Further Reading

Learning Objectives

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- describe the social and historical context in which policies of positive discrimination acquire relevance;
- explain the concepts of positive discrimination and affirmative action in the context of education; and
- critically discuss the issues of access, retention, and performance of students who avail the policies of positive discrimination.

13.1 Introduction

Several societies have inherited inequalities of one kind or the other from their past, be it in terms of race, caste, ethnic group identity, gender, social class, etc. This has led some of the modern democratic states to redress these inequalities through a policy initiative which is aimed at ameliorating the deficiencies of the past. John Rawls (1999) refers to this as a 'principle of redress', which attempts to eliminate undeserved inequalities. The principle holds that in order to treat all persons equally, to provide them equal opportunities, society should give more attention to those who are marginalized and to those born into less favorable social positions. In this context the practice of positive discrimination is imperative to promote equality in favour of the disadvantaged.

The term 'positive discrimination' is defined as the practice of preferential selection of members of under-represented groups to widely esteemed positions. According to Thomas Weisskopf (2004), what makes discrimination 'positive' is that it is intended to elevate members of groups that are under-represented in esteemed positions and thus under-represented in the upper strata of society. However, as Weisskopf argues, it may also be kept in mind that 'negative' discrimination denotes a policy of exclusion of such members. The term 'affirmative action' is usually used in the American context to connote the preference given to the deprived group, other things being equal. These policies are also called the policies of 'reverse' or 'compensatory' discrimination. In India, it is used to connote the special privileges, concessions or treatment better known as the 'reservation' policy or the policy of 'positive discrimination' in the Indian context.

In a wider spectrum, the policy of positive discrimination and affirmative action describes those practices that attempt to correct past or present discrimination and prevent future occurrences of discrimination. Different

societies have different historical distortions, which have prevented certain groups from entering the mainstream of social development. Particularly, the disparities between the educational levels of different social groups have been the cause and consequence of the differentials between their levels of socio-economic development. The concern for inequalities in education arises from a commitment to the socially and economically deprived groups. From the point of view of nation-building also, there can be no proper development of human resources unless all segments of the population receive evenhanded attention and support. The social cohesion of a society is threatened if the resources and opportunities are unevenly distributed among individuals and groups. It is the belief in shared values and purposes that contributes to cohesion in a civil society. In this context, education systems across the world now encounter the problem of redefining their role in a new situation arising out of the increasing individual and group differences. Moreover, education is endowed with the responsibility of turning diversity into a positive and constructive contributory factor in enhancing the understanding of various social groups. Especially, higher education is viewed as a mechanism through which individuals or groups are to be equipped to obtain occupational and economic mobility in order to attain a social status.

In this Unit we will discuss the context in which the policies of affirmative action and positive discrimination emerged in various societies. The focus here is on social inequalities in the Indian society and the history of the evolution of policies of positive discrimination. We will also examine the impact of policy of affirmative action on higher education in particular and explain the issues of access, retention, and poor performance of students from disadvantaged sections.

13.2 Social Inequalities in Indian Society

Caste is the most pervasive dimension of social stratification in India. It is a hereditary, endogamous, usually localized group, having a traditional association with an occupation, and a particular position in the local hierarchy of castes. Relations between the castes are governed, among others, by the concepts of 'purity-pollution', 'division of labour', 'segregation', etc. The hierarchic divide between the castes is governed by the degrees of 'purity and pollution'. Those at the top (i.e. Brahmins) are said to be the most clean and pure and those at the bottom of the hierarchy (i.e. Sudras) are most impure or unclean. This particular group of ex-untouchables are deprived of any relationship with other members of the social hierarchy and had to live a life of social seclusion and isolation imposed through the practice of untouchability.

The practice of untouchability is reported even today in certain parts of the country and it evokes a national level uproar and condemnation every now and then. Sometimes it results in conflict between the 'upper castes' and the 'untouchables'. It is unthinkable in the present age of egalitarianism, civil democracy and post-modernism that some people would consider themselves to be polluted merely by the touch of one section of people. Therefore, the section of people whose touch have been condemned to live, over generations, a life of complete seclusion, deprivation and humiliation. The social group which experienced in the past an era of deprivation, now, being termed as 'Scheduled Castes' (SCs) or 'ex-untouchables' or 'depressed castes'. Mahatma Gandhi named them 'Harijans' or the 'children of the god'. The position of SCs has a bearing on the social structure of the caste Hindu society. They constitute a large and important segment whose problems differ from region to region, from urban to village settings, and in different occupations.

Another social group which remained outside the fold of education is Scheduled Tribes (STs). However, the problems of STs are different from those of SCs. STs have been traditionally separated in terms of territorial communities. Though

some of the tribes are still pursuing shifting cultivation, most of them have taken to agriculture as settled communities. These STs are not part of the settled Hindu society in villages and towns. Mostly they live in isolated areas such as mountains and forests. Therefore, the STs are geographically, economically and culturally isolated from other sections of population. Besides SCs and STs, there are certain castes which are slightly above the SCs and below some of the intermediary peasant castes within the fold of sudras. There are the artisan castes such as blacksmiths, barbers, cow herders, washermen, etc. These artisan castes are also educationally and socially backward and are referred to as Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in India. Their deprivation may also be explained in terms of the 'purity-pollution' concept. OBCs in certain parts of contemporary India are better off than the upper castes in terms of their hold over land, economy, and polity. It is interesting to note that these castes undertake the same practices of oppression as their upper caste counterparts to enforce their dominance in the social hierarchy.

Box 13.1: Backward Classes

Backward Classes include all depressed and weaker sections such as SCs, STs and other backward artisan castes, minorities, etc. But, the Constitution of India specifies the categories such as SCs, STs, and mentions a few provisions for a category called other socially and educationally backward classes. This category was extensively referred to as Other Backward Classes (OBCs) by the Mandal Commission Report(1978) to include social groups such as artisan castes. The term 'Class' is used because, in the Indian context, the measure of inequalities and stratification is caste or group but not the individual. Therefore, backward classes are nothing but the backward castes. Further, the term 'depressed classes' was replaced by 'Scheduled Castes' to denote the untouchables in 1936 and lists of these castes were notified in a Schedule. Simultaneously, the term 'primitive tribes' was replaced by the term 'backward tribes'. The term 'Scheduled Tribes' was used only after independence in 1947 (Chanana 1993:122).

13.3 Evolution of the Policy of Positive Discrimination and Affirmative Action in India

Concern for the welfare of disadvantaged sections in India is not a post-independence phenomenon. It has a long history of advocacy and implementation even before Independence in 1947. There were contestations to the rigid Hindu caste structure and hierarchy even in the ancient Indian society exemplified by the emergence and spread of religions like Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, and movements like the Bhakti Movement that deceived the caste system. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, their cause was taken up by some of the nationalist leaders and enlightened social reformers like Vidya Sagar, Ram Mohan Roy, Gandhiji, Jyotiba Phule, Ambedkar, and others. who voiced concern for them much before the colonial rulers' legislative action for the amelioration of the living conditions of these sections of population, was planned.

As a result, British rule in India formally introduced the principle of equality of all citizens before law. The Caste Disabilities Act of 1850 is the earliest. As far back as in 1885, the provincial Madras Government made a provision for education of children from disadvantaged sections. Later, as a consequence of the non-Brahmin movement, the Madras Government reserved positions for the non-Brahmins in government services. Another significant development in the early part of this century was the appointment of a Committee (1918) by the Maharaja of Mysore for the upliftment of the non-Brahmin sections of society under the Chairmanship of Sir Leslie Miller. The Committee recommended that within a period of seven years, not less than half of the higher and two

thirds of the lower appointments in each grade of the service and so far as possible in each office, are to be held by members of the communities other than the Brahmins, preference being given to duly qualified candidates of the depressed classes, when such are available (Miller Committee Report 1918, cited in the Report of the Karnataka Third Backward Classes Commission, vol.1, 1990:12).

At the all India level, the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms (1919) envisaged representation of deprived sections in several local self-governments and public bodies. Further, the Government of India Act (1935) provides for reservation to the depressed castes in the legislative assemblies of different provinces. The reservations for SCs were made for the first time in 1943 when 8.33 per cent vacancies in government services were reserved for them through a Government Order. In June 1946, this was raised to 12.5 per cent to correspond with their proportion in the population (Chanana 1993: 122). Special support to the backward classes was offered in education along with a scheme of the award of post-metric scholarships which was introduced in the year 1945 initially for the SCs and later extended to STs in 1948-49 (Government of India 1984: 55).

The commitment of the Indian Constitution to social justice and equality emerges out of the conviction that education is a basic instrument of social mobility. Article 46 of the Constitution states, 'the state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular of the SCs and STs and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of social exploitation'. Various commissions and policies on education in the post-independent India explicitly stated the commitment envisioned by the Constitution. Radhakrishnan Commission (1948-49) on university education states, "Education is the great instrument of social emancipation by which a democracy establishes, maintains and protects the spirit of equality among its members" (Government of India 1950: 49).

The Education Commission (1964-66) in its Report provides the vision for Indian education as a contributory mechanism to achieve the civil society. The Commission notes, "One of the important social objectives of education is to equalize opportunity, enabling the backward or underprivileged classes and individuals to use education as a leveler for the improvement of their condition. Every society that values social justice and is anxious to improve the lot of the common man and cultivate all available talent, must ensure progressive equality of opportunity to all sections of the population. This is the only guarantee for building up of an egalitarian and human society in which the exploitation of the weak will be minimized."

Education is also viewed as an instrument of social change and social equality for all groups through social justice and integration (Government of India 1986). This concern was also shared by the two Commissions which were appointed by the Government of India in 1953 and 1978 on the backward classes. The first was headed by Kaka Kalelkar and the other by B.P. Mandal. Kalelkar Commission's recommendations were rejected by the then Government as because of differences of opinion among the members on the issue of identifying the backward classes. Mandal Commission Report was implemented only in the year 1990 after widespread public debate and resentment.

Box 13.2: Mandal Commission

Mandal Commission identified the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) on the basis of caste and evolved certain criterion for judging whether a particular caste is backward or not. It also noted, based on the 1931 census that they constitute 52 per cent of the total population and reserved 27 per cent of government jobs for these sections. It was shelved for a decade

till the Government under V. P. Singh decided to implement. It may be noted that this decision by the then government evoked violent demonstrations from students belonging to the so-called 'upper castes'. This percentage of reservations is in addition to the reservations provided to the Scheduled Castes (15 per cent) and Scheduled Tribes (7.5 per cent).

After Independence, in response to the special obligation placed on the Government of India by Article 15 (4) of the Constitution to make special provisions, the then Ministry of Education, for the first time addressed a letter on 23.11.1954 to the Chief Secretaries of all state governments suggested that 20 per cent of seats be reserved for the SCs and STs in educational institutions with a provision of 5 per cent relaxation in minimum qualifying marks for admission. This was slightly modified in April 1964, when a distinct percentage of 15 for SCs and 5 for STs was laid down and was also made interchangeable. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare also came forward and separately issued letters to the Vice-Chancellors of the universities having medical faculties to reserve 15 per cent seats for SCs and 5 per cent for STs with 5 per cent relaxation in minimum qualifying marks for admission to all medical and dental colleges. The University Grants Commission (UGC) also issued guidelines to the universities and colleges under their respective control to ensure that SC/ ST students were allowed due concession in all undergraduate and graduate courses in various streams. The percentage of reservation for STs was revised upwards from 5 per cent to 7.5 per cent in 1982. At present, 15 per cent and 7.5 per cent of seats are reserved for students from SC and ST categories respectively in all educational institutions.

Besides reservations, the Government of India took a number of steps to strengthen the educational base of the SCs and STs. Provision of educational institutions on a priority basis in the areas predominantly inhabited by these communities, provision of incentives like scholarships, provision of coaching classes for competitive examinations, remedial coaching and provision of hostels are some of the steps which have contributed a great deal in raising the educational levels of Scheduled Castes and Tribes. The scheme of remedial coaching for SC/ST students aims at improving the academic skills and linguistic proficiency of the students in various subjects and raising their level of comprehension in such subjects where qualitative techniques and laboratory work are involved. Yet another important step taken by the UGC in recent years is to appoint a monitoring committee to oversee the implementation of reservation policy in central universities. For state universities, the UGC has set up regional committees for the effective working of the affirmative action policy in higher education. In a recent directive to the universities, UGC has given warning to those universities which are not implementing the policy on admissions as well as appointments in their institutions. If a university does not implement the quota of reservations, their funding may be stopped or reduced as per the new initiatives.

As of today, the policy of positive discrimination or reservations does not envisage reservations for OBCs in the higher educational institutions at an all-India level, though such reservation is envisaged in the near future. However, different states have varying percentages of reservation for OBCs in their respective states. For instance, Tamil Nadu reserves 50 per cent and Andhra Pradesh reserves 25 per cent of seats for OBCs in higher education. It may be noted that the total percentage of reservations in Tamil Nadu is 69 per cent which is the highest in the entire country - 18 per cent for SCs, 1 per cent for STs, 50 per cent for Backward Classes (BCs) and Most Backward Classes (MBCs). Tamil Nadu has the unique distinction that it differentiates the BCs from the MBCs. Karnataka also reserves seats for OBCs in the educational institutions besides reservations in jobs.

13.4 Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Higher Education

There is no doubt that a considerable improvement has been made in terms of the enrollment of SC and ST students in higher education after the commencement of the policy of positive discrimination. However, this may not be adequate keeping in view the proportion of SC/ST population still outside the fold of higher education or even the minimum levels of literacy. This section reviews the progress made over many years of implementation of affirmative action policy in the country. It is found (UGC 1990) that the enrollment of SCs in higher education is very low (7.77 per cent in 1996-97). Though the actual enrollment increased from 180,058 in 1978-79 to 512,291 in 1996-97, the percentage share in total enrollment did not show much improvement. On the other hand, the enrollment of STs marked a growth of little over one per cent during the period 1978-79 to 1996-97. Their share in total enrollment was 1.6 per cent in 1978-79 and 2.73 per cent in 1996-97. That means, the coverage of ST students in higher education is only one-fourth. While the period 1978-79 to 1988-89 noted only a marginal increase in the percentage share of SCs and STs to the total enrollment, the period 1988-89 to 1995-96 showed a sudden increase in both the categories. The actual enrollment of SC and ST students in higher education is far below the stipulated quota of reservations, namely, 15 per cent for SCs and 7.5 per cent for STs. Inter-state differences are also quite significant. In 1979-80, Uttar Pradesh had the highest percentage (11.62) of SC students enrolled at the undergraduate level, followed by Tamil Nadu (8.97 per cent), West Bengal (8.36 per cent), and Punjab (8.29 per cent). Jammu & Kashmir recorded the lowest percentage of SC students in the undergraduate courses (UGC 1990). The reason for this could be low percentage of SCs in the state. As regards the STs in 1979-80, the state of Meghalaya in north-east India where STs are the predominant population, had the highest percentage (66.88 per cent), followed by Bihar (6.86 per cent) and Assam (6.72 per cent).

There has been a far lower participation of SC/ STs in prestigious faculties which are in demand for high salaried jobs. In 1978-79 and even in 1996-97, a majority of the SC and ST students enrolled at the undergraduate and graduate levels are in the arts faculty. It is followed by science and commerce. Both arts and commerce taken together account for more than 7 out of every 10 SC students and with the enrollment in science, the three cover nearly 89 per cent of all SC students at the under-graduate level in 1996-97. Their participation in professional courses such as medicine, engineering, and education is very low and far from satisfactory. Significantly, there was a considerable decrease in the percentage of SC students enrolled for the medicine course in 1996-97 from that of 1978-79.

The enrollment of SC students at the graduate level is similar to that at the undergraduate level. Around 95 per cent of SC students are enrolled in science and commerce faculties in 1978-79. The proportion of SC students in the professional stream at the graduate level is very low. For instance, only 0.8 per cent, 0.5 per cent and 1.6 per cent of SC students have enrolled in graduate courses in education, engineering and medicine respectively. This is indicative not only of their low share in enrollment but also of the higher rate of attrition as they move up the educational ladder. As regards the enrollment of STs at the undergraduate level, the situation is the same as that of the SCs. About 90 per cent of the ST students are enrolled in arts, commerce, and science faculties, i.e. for every 10 ST students, 9 are enrolled in these streams. In 1996-97, the proportion of ST students in undergraduate courses in medicine, engineering and technology, and education was very low.

Therefore, the share of SC and ST students in the total is higher in the case of arts, commerce and other general courses, wherein the reserved category students are admitted to meet the constitutional obligations. The enrollment in the professional courses for which the job market is attractive is extremely low. The proportion of SC/ST students in the emerging areas of information technology, biotechnology, etc., is either negligible or even none.

Thus, inequality has a particularly pronounced characteristic in higher education. Inequalities exist between SCs/STs and non- SCs/STs and men and women. If one considers the case of a woman belonging to Scheduled Caste or a Tribe from a village in a backward region, the chances of her finding a place in higher education are extremely remote (Chanana 1993). What holds true of women is equally true for other disadvantaged population. The lower the position of a person in the social hierarchy, the greater is the chance of her/his being deprived of higher education. Further, these structural imbalances not only distort the expansion of educational facilities but also reflect on the issue of excellence in education.

Reflection and Action 13.1

Find out from at least four SC/ST students the extent to which they have benefitted (if at all) from the policy of positive discrimination and affirmative action.

13.5 Issues of Access, Retention, and Poor Performance

It is evident from the foregoing discussion that the marginal representation of students from SC/ST is, even today, a reality and it is an indicator of unequal educational opportunities. In other words, the reach of the higher education system is not commensurate with the national goal of equality. The analysis of the reasons for poor access and retention and the resultant educational backwardness among the SC/STs mainly relate to their school education (Chanana 1993: 144). For instance, the single most important factor at the school level is the absence of schools in areas which are accessible to SCs and STs. However, in recent years, there has been a thrust on more effective coverage of areas where there is a concentration of SCs and STs and those areas which create more problems for women (such as hilly and remote areas) in the primary and secondary education programs in order to provide equal opportunity and access.

It may also be noted that higher education in India is urban based. Those who spent most of their life in urban areas, namely, towns and cities, are the overwhelming majority in higher education. The major portion of SC/ST students in the general higher educational institutions are from the rural background and are first generation learners or beneficiaries of higher education. Their parental occupations and education is generally low and are often engaged in wage earning agricultural labor or artisanship. Therefore, poverty and lack of economic resources in the family and the utility of extra hands to eke out a living, to some extent, affect the educational chances of the SC/ST.

The quality of feeder streams of education is also an important factor so far as the access of SCs and STs to higher educational institutions is concerned. The quality of schooling that most SC and ST students get is vastly inferior to the schooling available to the class of children who find their way into the prestigious courses and institutions (Chitnis 1988: 161). In recent times, efforts have been made to upgrade the merit of SC and ST students by setting up residential schools. Those students who are selected under this scheme are provided extra coaching both remedial and special with a view to remove their social and educational deficiencies. Remedial coaching is provided in subjects

such as language, mathematics and science whereas the special coaching is provided as per the requirement of the competence to be attained by the student for passing the entrance examinations conducted by various higher educational institutions.

SC/ST students in the professional colleges and institutions are found to be from families with middle or higher occupational status. This gives rise to the argument that the professional educational institutions are socially exclusive and that they are accessible to the social groups occupying top positions in the social class hierarchy. The reasons for poor access and retention of SC/ST students in higher education are also the cause of their poor performance level. The differences in the performance levels of SC/ST and non-SC/ST students may be observed right from their entry into the institution either through an examination or through percentage of marks in the previous courses of study. The case of central universities and Indian Institutes of Technology is a very good illustration. About two-thirds of the marks obtained by the last candidate in general category is judged as a cut-off for SC/ST candidates to get selected to the IIT system. The performance differential between SC/ST and non-SC/ST candidates in the case of IITs is sometimes 40 percent at the time of entry. Such a large divergence in entry performance has brought into the institutions a significant number of academically deficient students who have considerable difficulty in coping with the system in spite of remedial measures (Indiresan and Nigam 1993, 357-58). The reason for poor performance, however, need not necessarily be entry level differential. It could also be due to certain institutional factors such as exclusion and discrimination within the institutions as well (Rao, 2006). Further, of those admitted, almost 25 per cent are asked to leave the institutes due to their poor academic performance. The Twenty Sixth Report of the Commissioner for SC/ST (1978:39) brings out this drawback in the system: "It is reported from various studies that the performance of these (SC/ST) students after admission was not very satisfactory. Even after the special coaching, several students left the courses and a number of them could not withstand the strain of a five year course".

One of the major considerations for the weaker sections is the preparation of a separate All India Merit List for the SC/STs, so as to ensure that adequate number of students from these sections get admission. A further concession being made is a preparatory course for academically weak students from these groups who do not even make the grade even with the reduced cut-off level. Once the students SC/ST take admission to these institutions, the differential is narrowed with various institutional strategies such as faculty advisor, remedial coaching, seniors as counselors, summer-term programs, etc. In some cases, however, the performance levels are not bridged to the extent that the reserved category student can acquire the required credits to get promoted to the next class. In spite of the facilities of extra semesters to the reserved category students, there are instances of students either leaving the institutions without completing a course or dropping out of the course.

Kirpal and Gupta(1999) in the course research on the issue of academic performance of SC/ST students and its linkages with socio-economic background, educational background, deficiencies in English, noted that SC and ST students feel segregated and delinked from the mainstream on account of their lacking upper class and upper caste characteristics and because they do not feel financially on par with the others. On the other hand, they also are not able to develop academically to the standards expected in the institutions. They feel helpless and demotivated and that contributes to the divide on the academic front. It is the social divide that seems to affect them deeply.

The discussion on quantitative expansion and access reveals that the higher education is still not accessible to a large proportion of socially disadvantaged sections such as SC/STs. The actual enrollment of SCs varies from faculty to

faculty and even department to department in the same institution. It may also be noted that the policy of reservation is implemented more effectively in some courses/subjects of study and in some other it is not. This dichotomy is clear in recruitment of faculty in the disciplines of arts/commerce as against engineering/medicine. It is often explained in terms of the lack of students applying for professional courses compared to general courses, enabling colleges/institutions to evade their social responsibility. This may not be acceptable since reservations are determined according to the population of SCs and STs in the region or state, and the task is to cover these sections as early as possible to help them to achieve upward mobility. It would also be imperative on a nation which is committed to the ideals of social justice and equality.

The problems of access, retention and performance have, therefore, to do with their socialization into the general pattern of an education system. Sometimes, the caste prejudices also affect their decision to enter and stay on in the institutions of higher education (Chitnis 1988: 163). Several Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes students are not adequately equipped to cope with the academic pressure and competitive climate of the institutions. Further, these students are the ones who would not, but for the policy of reservations, have found their way in.

Reflection and Action 13.2

In your opinion, should the government continue with the policy of positive discrimination and affirmative action in education? Debate with your co-learners at the study centre.

13.6 Conclusion

In this context, where do we place the educational advancement of the SCs and STs in India? As discussed earlier, the participation of SCs and STs in the sectors contributing to the emergence of a 'knowledge society', namely, electronics, information technology, software development, etc., is likely to be very low or even negligible because these courses are offered either in self-financing private institutions or in the elite institutions of technology and management which are out of reach for these students. The bulk of the courses and employment in these fields is not covered under the Constitutional scheme of reservations and lie mostly in the private sector. The job scenario is also shifting to the private sector as a result of the reduction in the number of jobs now available in the government. Therefore the large number of SC/ST students graduating in liberal arts, commerce and sciences without a basic understanding of information technology will prove redundant to the job market. Today the question is not the question of exploitation of some segments by others. The problem today is one of exclusion because these sections become invisible as they cannot participate in a 'knowledge society'. The priority of the affirmative action policy is, therefore, how to include the SCs and STs, who have fallen out of the system of 'knowledge society', where key assets are information and know-how.

Yet another dimension which is crucial in the context of an emerging society is what will happen to the social stigma that is attached to these castes despite their advancement in terms of social class, wealth and power. It has been the experience in this country that increasing levels of education have not really changed much the attitudes of hatred and discrimination in the minds of the so-called 'upper castes'. An SC officer is not simply referred to as an officer by his position or by his name, but by his ascriptive status, no matter how brilliant he is at his job! Even at the village level, their being educated is seen not as a positive sign of the development of the marginal groups, but seen as a negation of the traditional authority of the upper castes.

Some manifestations of the conflict do occur in contemporary India in the form of agitations, protests, struggles and sometimes violent incidents. Some of the massacres of disadvantaged groups by the upper castes and instances of retaliation by the disadvantaged groups against the upper castes reflect the growing caste consciousness, identity and hatred towards each other rather than understanding the diversity in a positive manner with a concern for the deprived groups. Vindictive attitude on the part of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, taking recourse to the law for every act of omission and commission, also sometimes vitiates the trust among each other. Will the emerging 'knowledge society' contribute to the emergence of a more 'just' and 'civil' society or will it further widen the 'gap' between both the groups, the oppressors and the oppressed, is a question to be debated and answered by the policy-makers in twenty-first century India.

One of the factors which the policy has not addressed so far and which needs to be addressed before we embark upon a new direction and future of affirmative action policy is the levels of social, economic and educational deprivations within the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The deprivations differ across region, sub-caste, tribe, and gender. It may not be feasible to have a uniform policy across the country because of the varied conditions, diversity and attitudes prevalent in different regions/states. There is, therefore, a need for evolving indicators so that the facilities reserved for these communities are not utilized by a particular stratum among these communities denying benefit to several others who are not so articulate and knowledgeable. There is an urgent need to identify these neglected groups among the SC/STs and educational supports may be extended comprehensively right from the lowest levels of the educational ladder, i.e., primary and secondary schools, and also particularly given to the first generation learners among the SC/ST and women. Even in the context of bringing them into the fold of 'knowledge society', the feeder streams to higher education need to be strengthened and given impetus.

Another important policy issue is that of developing mechanisms for socio-psychological integration of the SC/ST students in order to enhance their self-confidence and self-esteem to take on the challenges of adjusting to the climates of higher educational institutions so that the problems of dropping and non-performance could be tackled. Therefore, greater emphasis can be placed on the basic structural changes in the economy and society through the formulation of an affirmative action policy suiting the requirements of the future. If attempts are not made to arrest inequality that continues to increase in the country, maximum damage will occur only to the members of these castes/tribes because their condition is already bad. These attempts may pave the way for at least the 21st century India emerging as an egalitarian civil democracy in which each one has a role to play in the development process and social cohesion.

The material in this unit is heavily drawn from the author's article, 'Equality in Higher Education: Impact of affirmative Action Policies in India'. In Edgar F. Beckham (ed.). 2002, *Global Collaborations: The Role of Higher Education in Diverse Democracies*, Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC & U), Washington D.C.

13.7 Further Reading

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Unit 14

Education: Pluralism and Multiculturalism

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- 14.1 Introduction
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Learning Objectives

This unit introduces you to the emerging facets of multicultural education. After reading this unit you should be able to:

- explain the various dimensions of multicultural education;
- discuss the features of a multicultural society and its interface with the multicultural education; and
- analyse the goals and strategies of education in multicultural societies

14.1 Introduction

In this changing world multiculturalism has emerged as a contemporary social reality. To address the educational need of these societies educationist have developed a distinctive perspective known as multiculturalism in education. Multicultural societies like those of America, Britain, Australia and many others have introduced these perspectives in their education system.

In this unit, we have discussed the meaning and dimensions of a multicultural society. The essential approaches to multiculturalism, namely the process of assimilation; cultural pluralism, melting pot, the ideology of cultural choice, etc., are widely discussed. A multicultural society needs different educational approaches. To know the specific educational needs of these societies and to cater to them, we have discussed in this unit the goal and strategies of multicultural education. We have also presented a case study of multicultural education from Australia. This unit altogether will help you to understand the emerging dimensions, goals, strategies and practices of multicultural education.

14.2 Culture, Society and Multiculturalism

Before we proceed further in discussing multicultural education, it is imperative that we must clarify the concept of culture sociologically.

Understanding Culture and Society

You must have studied at the graduate level (ESO-01/11 of BDP) in detail the concepts and various elements of culture. Let us briefly discuss culture again. In the layman's sense culture is perceived in relative term. Some individuals or groups are considered more cultured than the rest. It wrongly conceptualizes culture as it locates social groups or categories in a hierarchical order and does not take into consideration several properties of culture as available from within. In a sociological sense, understanding each one of us both as an individual and as a member of a group belonging to a culture is important.

Cultures may be different from each other, not superior or inferior to each other. We possess culture as members of a group. To us culture is those shared values, norms, behaviour patterns, customs, traditions, art, music, artifacts, etc., which we inherit as members of society and transmit to the next generation. It is not to be understood that these shared values, traditions, norms, customs, art, music, artifacts, behaviour, etc., are static. Rather, all these undergo several changes in the process of interaction with other cultures, and in the processes of transmission and inheritance.

Box 14.1: What is culture?

It is a way of life or a cherished worldview of a group in society. To E.B. Tylor "Culture in its ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Tylor 1889).

To the UNESCO.... "Culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, life styles, ways of living together, value systems traditions and beliefs" (<http://portal.unesco.org>)

It is essential that all members of a group for its survival and functioning accept culturally patterned ways of behaviour. Thus culture conditions, forecasts and attach subjective meaning to the behaviour of the members of a group. Human beings have to satisfy various psychological and biological needs. These needs are satisfied mostly by culturally determined ways. Thus culture makes the behaviour patterns of one group very specific and different from those of others. However, the specificity and differences are not to be understood at all as contradictory or oppositional to the rest. Rather, in a fast changing communicative society these can widely be regarded as plural manifestation of cultural richness. In many societies there are groups who are distinct from each other in terms of their cultural practices. These groups are indeed the subcultures of large societies and are distinctive by their racial, caste, ethnic, linguistic, class, occupational, gender and religious orientations.

In many large societies while there is coexistence of significant number of sub-cultures because of geographical vastness, new subcultures are added to these with arrival of immigrant groups in these societies. In societies with ancient historical tradition social fabrics are interwoven with plural traditions taken from various subculture. Now let us understand multicultural societies,

Box 14.2

In dealing with immigrant groups and their cultures, there are several approaches taken by the nation-states:

Monoculturalism: In Europe, culture is very closely linked to nationalism, thus government policy is to assimilate immigrants.

Melting Pot: In the United States, the traditional view has been one of a melting pot where all the immigrant cultures are mixed and amalgamated without state intervention.

Multiculturalism: The policy that facilitates immigrants and others to preserve their cultures with the different cultures interacting peacefully within one nation.

The way nation states treat immigrant cultures rarely falls neatly into one or another of the above approaches. The degree of difference with the host culture (i.e., "foreignness"), the number of immigrants, attitudes of

the resident population, the type of government policies that are enacted and the effectiveness of those policies all make it difficult to generalize about the effects. Similarly with other subcultures within a society, attitudes of mainstream population and communications between various cultural groups play a major role in determining outcomes. The study of cultures within a society is complex and research must take into account a myriad of variables (<http://en.wikipedia.org>)

Multicultural Societies

The post-Second World War period has been conspicuously marked by the triumph of liberal democracies and multiculturalism. While on the one hand there has been a resurgence of people's movements against the totalitarian, theocratic and colonial regions, there have also been the articulation of multiple identities within these societies. The proliferation of Black Civil Rights, students, women's, religious, minority rights, indigenous people, etc. movements across the globe have paved the way for the emergence of multiculturalism in the following forms:

- The mosaic of a multicultural society is formed with a long historical process of immigration of a sizeable number of people in these societies in reference and thereafter developing a process of sharing of cultural values, norms, and traditions among all the members of society. The sense of tolerance and respect for each other's culture form the basis of a multicultural society.
- As in every society, in multicultural societies too there are certain groups of people who are relegated to the margin of the society - socially, economically, culturally and politically. These marginalized groups are deprived of several choices and avenues for upward mobility. At times they form an oppositional sub-culture. Since long the marginalized groups have been struggling for their cultural identity and equal rights in a multicultural society; for example ethnic and religious minorities may assert their cultural rights.
- Multicultural societies provide the social, political and economic space for the articulation of views of all ethnic and religious groups and for the assertion of their cultural rights.
- It is important that many of these cultural identities are inclusive and are constructed criss-crossing the boundaries of many of the pre-existing cultural identities. For example, the migrant groups have members from all racial, ethnic, religious, occupational, etc., groups.

Even though these multi-cultural identities are locally manifested and contextualised they have wider and at times global connectivity. For example the Black women of America are globally linked through the network of international women's movement.

Reflection and Action 14.1

What do you understand by culture? Discuss a few elements of culture, which can be used from the viewpoint of multiculturalism in education.

14.3 Cultural Diversities in Multicultural Education

Multicultural education views cultural diversities from a distinctive perspective. Let us examine how cultural diversities are being viewed in this approach to education:

- a) Multiculturalism in education recognizes that every learner belongs to a culture, which produces a distinctive pattern of behaviour, life-style, identity, feeling and thinking.

- b) No culture is inferior or superior to other cultures. However, as culture shapes the worldview, people tend to evaluate and judge the rest of the world through their nurtured worldview. It may at times solicit feelings of superiority over any other cultures and produce inability to view other cultures as equally viable alternatives for organizing reality. Ultimately it may contribute to ethno-centrism. However by over-coming one's ethnocentric view of the world one can begin to respect other cultures and even learn to function comfortably in more than one cultural group (Gollnick, and Chinn 1990: 10). Here education plays a big role in overcoming these limitations in a multicultural society.
- c) Many elements of one culture are shared by members of other culture.
- d) Culture is learned and shared. Here enculturation and socialization are important processes to learn how to act in society. Multicultural education facilitates these processes of learning and sharing.
- e) Culture is an adaptation and has been developed to accommodate several environmental and technological conditions. This process of adaptation has been integrated in multicultural education.
- f) Culture and several cultural practices undergo changes along with the changes in the technological and communicative arrangements in society.
- g) Over the centuries human societies have become interdependent. There have been the needs to understand other cultures in their own terms and not in terms of one's own cultural belief. In a plural society no one can relegate others to an inferior status in cultural term. Thus there have been the inter-cultural processes of learning and experiencing another culture so that one would know what it is like to be a member of another culture and to view the world from that point of view.
- h) Human beings have the capacity to be multicultural, to feel comfortable and to communicate effectively with the people of diverse cultural backgrounds. Scholars are of the view that a multicultural educational programme can help students to expand their cultural competencies to include those required to function effectively in other cultures in which they are not members (ibid).

As we have already discussed the significances of cultural diversities in multicultural education, let us underline the important dimensions of multicultural education in the following section.

14.4 Dimensions of Multicultural Education

In general, educational institutions are the meeting points of people from diverse economic, social and cultural backgrounds. In a rapidly changing society these diversities, which are manifested precisely in the form of race, religion and ethnicity, are both challenges and opportunities for the educators to initiate curriculum to integrate the micro-perspective of local communities with broad educational orientation of the state and society. This educational orientation in essence helps to make the students realize that (a) in spite of cultural differences, individuals across cultures have many similarities, (b) everyone has the desire and capacity to learn from each others culture, (c) we have the desire to share values, moves, norms and traditions, and (d) through interaction with various cultures we become respectful and tolerant to plural existence in the society. In this context multicultural education is viewed as "an educational strategy in which students from diverse cultural backgrounds are viewed as positive and essential in developing classroom instruction and school environment. It is designed to support and extend the concepts of culture, cultural pluralism and equity into the formal school setting (ibid). In multi-cultural education cultural diversities are valued resources.

Democratic value is another aspect of multicultural education. According to Christine Bennett (1990) "multicultural education is an approach to teaching and learning that is based upon democratic values and beliefs and seeks to foster cultural pluralism within culturally diverse societies and in an interdependent world". To him cultural pluralism is an ideal state of societal conditions characterized by equity and mutual respect among existing cultural groups. In contrast to the cultural assimilation or the melting pot images where ethnic minorities are expected to give up their traditions and to blend in or be absorbed by the host society or dominant culture, in a pluralistic society members of ethnic groups are permitted to retain their cultural ways, as long as they conform to those practices deemed necessary for harmonious coexistence with the society as a whole (1990:11). To him there are four distinctive, at times overlapping, aspects of multicultural education. It is a movement, a curriculum, a process and a commitment. Let us elaborate these further.

- a) It is a movement to achieve equality of educational opportunity and equity among all groups irrespective of ethnic, social, gender, class, etc., backgrounds. It therefore aims to transform the total learning environment.
- b) The system of education develops a curriculum which is integrated and multicultural in essence. This curriculum approach of multicultural education develops knowledge and understanding about cultural differences, the history and contribution of all the ethnic groups in the nations as well as in various civilizations in the past. It also aims to integrate multi-ethnic and global perspectives with the monoethnic ones.
- c) It is a continuous process whereby people become multicultural in perceiving, evaluating, believing and doing without rejecting their own cultural values and identities.
- d) It is a commitment to combat racism and other form of discrimination through the development of appropriate knowledge and skill.

The concept of multicultural society has always been valued in democracy. It is now realized that in the globalized world multicultural education is essential for academic excellence and equity, existence of multiethnic society, existence of interdependent world and for the promotion of equity and democratic values (Bennett 1990:11-17).

Reflection and Action 14.2

Examine the main features of multicultural education. Do you think it is significant to promote multicultural education in the contemporary society? Why?

14.5 Why is Multicultural Education Essential?

There are several reasons why multicultural education is a necessity in a the contemporary globalised world. Educationists like Bennett (1990) are of the view that multicultural education is essential for academic excellence and equity, and for the existence of a multiethnic society, the existence of an interdependent world and for the promotion of democratic values in the contemporary world. Let us elaborate some of arguments:

- a) The principle of equity in education endeavours to ensure equal educational opportunities for the entire student community to express the fullest potential. Students can achieve excellence in an educational system, which is impartial in nature. The ideal of achieving educational excellence "involves concerns about ethnic groups that have been consistently cut off from equal access to a good education". This approach recognizes that the potential for excellence is available across ethnic groups and it builds knowledge about various ethnic groups and integrates them into the curriculum.

- b) Plural societies have distinctive complexities in terms of varied cultural practices which are reflected in the patterns of socialization, food habits, behaviour patterns, dress, adherence to particular values, norms, etc. Multicultural education is very sensitive to these needs and is equipped accordingly. By recognizing these pluralities, multicultural education strikes a balance between cultural assimilation and cultural separatism or segregation.
- c) Human societies have been facing some common concerns like destruction of the ozone layer, environmental pollution, poverty, overpopulation, nuclear arms, famine and hunger, AIDS, etc. The globalization process has accentuated these concerns. A cross-cultural understanding is essential for finding solutions to these problems. Multicultural education provides a platform for the articulation of common concerns.
- d) A nation's commitment to the values of equity and democracy is widely reflected in its commitment to human rights, social justice and respect for alternative life choices. Multicultural education provides the space and platform to inculcate these values and helps to overcome the barriers in achieving the democratic values of equity (Bennett, 1990: 15-16).

Reflection and Action 14.3

Is terrorism a common concern in the contemporary society? How can a common concern against terrorism be articulated through multicultural education?

Hence the goals of multicultural education, according to Gollnich and Chinn (1990) are to:

- promote the strength and value of cultural diversity,
- promote human rights and respect for those who are different from others,
- acquire knowledge of the historical and social realities of the society in order to understand racism, sexism, poverty etc.,
- support alternative life choices for people,
- promote social justice and equality for all people, and
- promote equity in the distribution of power and income among groups

14.6 Approaches to Multiculturalism

This is an age of multiculturalism. Here cultural pluralism is a reality now. Several approaches have emerged over the years to address this issue. In the following section we shall be highlighting a few of them.

a) Assimilation

Cultural assimilation is an important process of integration of the sub-cultures in the cultural mosaic of the multicultural society. In a multicultural society, according to Gordon (1964), the process of assimilation would go through the stages whereby the new cultural group/migrant cultural group would (i) change its cultural patterns to those of the dominant groups, (ii) develop large scale primary group relationships with the dominant group; (iii) intermarry fully with the dominant groups, (iv) lose its sense of peoplehood as separate from the dominant group; (v) encounter no discrimination; (vi) encounter no prejudiced attitudes; and (vii) not raise any issues that would involve values and power conflict with the dominant group. Herein he also talks of acculturation i.e. cultural assimilation in which the dominated groups have adopted the cultural patterns of the dominant group. In the American context the following two perspectives of assimilation are frequently suggested: Anglo conformity and the melting pot. The Anglo-conformity theory demanded the complete

renunciation of the immigrant's ancestral culture in favour of the behaviour and values of the Anglo-Saxon core group (cf Gollnik and Chinn 1990). In melting pot perspective, ethnic minorities are expected to give up their traditions and to blend in or be absorbed by the host society or dominant culture.

b) Cultural Pluralism

Cultural Pluralism is also a distinctive perspective designed in the context of America. According to Gordon (1964) cultural pluralism often calls for the maintenance of enough sub-societal separation to guarantee the continuance of the ethnic cultural tradition and the existence of the group, without at the same time interfering with the carrying out of standard responsibilities to the general American civil life. However disagreement remains on this issue as to whether an individual should be allowed to choose freely whether to remain within the confines of his birthright community enclave (Pratte 1979 cf: Gollnick and Chinn 1990).

c) Ideology of Voluntary Cultural Choice

Many scholars have pointed out that cultural pluralism has seen an individual in terms of a parochial identity related to ethnicity etc. rather than an autonomous identity. Here Newman (1973) emphasized the need to create a social environment in which groups and individuals may choose voluntarily the identity they wish to play out. As individual choice and mobility across cultural groups increases, the social and cultural barriers are likely to decrease. He has the belief that increasingly we will move towards an open society in which cultural background may influence who an individual is; but become irrelevant in public interaction (Gollmick and Chinn 1990).

Reflection and Action 14.4

In your opinion what should an ideal approach to deal with multiculturalism in a plural society?

14.7 Multicultural Education: Goals and Strategies

In a multicultural set up it is essential that the educators should be aware of the cultural background of the students for positively using the cultural diversities in the educational processes. In multicultural education cultural diversities are recognized as varied resources rather than problems. As strategy to serve the above mentioned goals the following steps are very often discussed:

i) Sensitivity and criticality for multicultural content in the text book:

Both the text book writers and the teachers are required to be sensitive to multiculturalism and to develop logical criticality on the text to identify and thereafter eliminate bias and stereotypes which are projected about a community/group either unconsciously or deliberately. There are several forms of biases available in the text which can be depicted in some of the following forms:

- Invisibility of a group in the illustration and example in a majority dominated society is always taken as the national expression of a text. Thus illustrations are quite often derived from the majority groups. Thus the minorities remain unprojected or under- projected.
- Stereotyping some groups by way of assigning them specific ascribed roles and status.
- Selectivity and imbalances in interpreting the status of marginalized groups from the perspective of the dominant ones. "Such biases prevent all students, both from the dominant and the subordinate groups, male and female – from realizing the complexity of historical and contemporary situations and developments".

- Very often text book depicts unrealistic social reality in order to take the status quo as its position. Controversial topics are glossed over and discussion on social movements, dissent, sex-education, divorce etc. are avoided. Issues and realities of the lives of the subordinate and marginalized are avoided in the text book.
- Though the aspects of lives of the subordinate groups are seldom integrated in the text, there is a tendency to present these aspects as fragmented and isolated topics in text. This approach suggests that the experiences of these segments of population are interesting ones: and are the integral parts of the contemporary and historical experiences. These contemporary and historical experiences of the subordinate groups are to be integrated in the text.
- Linguistic bias though minimized but yet to be eradicated from the text. Till now gender bias continues in most of the text books. All these biases, which are prevalent in one form or the other, are required to be eliminated from the text.

Box.14.3: Practice of Multicultural Education: An Illustration

Most of the liberal democracies of the world like the USA, the UK, Canada, Australia have accepted the policy of multicultural education in view of the prevalent cultural diversities in these countries. The provincial governments of these countries have formulated a distinctive policy of multicultural education. In this context the Multicultural Education policy of New South Wales (NSW) of Australia can be cited as an illustration.

- Multicultural education supports a vision of NSW as a community which values and benefits from its cultural and linguistic diversity to fully realise its social, cultural and economic potential. NSW has evolved a distinctive Cultural Diversity and Community Relations Policy for multicultural education in schools. Its policy statements delineate the following:
- Community harmony is promoted through school policies and practices, which counter racism and intolerance and develop understanding of cultural, linguistic and religious differences.
- Schools will provide teaching and learning programs that enable students from all cultures and communities to identify themselves as Australians within a democratic multicultural society and to develop the knowledge, skills and values for participation as active citizens.
- Schools will ensure inclusive teaching practices, which recognise and value the backgrounds and cultures of all students and promote an open and tolerant attitude towards different cultures, religions and worldviews.
- Students who are learning English as a second language are provided with appropriate support to develop their English language and literacy skills so that they are able to fully participate in schooling and achieve equitable educational outcomes.
- Schools will provide specific teaching and learning programs to support the particular learning needs of targeted students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Schools will promote positive community relations through effective communication with parents and community members from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and by encouraging their participation in the life of the school.

The Principles of Multiculturalism provide the framework for the implementation of the Cultural Diversity and Community Relations Policy:

- All individuals in New South Wales should have the greatest possible opportunity to contribute to, and participate in all aspects of public life in which they may legally participate.
- All individuals and institutions should respect and make provision for the culture, language and religion of others within an Australian legal and institutional framework where English is the common language.
- All individuals should have the greatest possible opportunity to make use of and participate in relevant activities and programs provided or administered by the Government of New South Wales.
- All institutions of New South Wales should recognise the linguistic and cultural assets in the population of New South Wales as a valuable resource and promote this resource to maximise the development of the State.

- ii) **Development of Multicultural Curriculum:** It is important that the educators must be aware of these biases in order to develop multi cultural curriculum. They are also required to integrate the following in the multicultural texts
- a) **Achievement:** It is often suggested that in a multicultural context the educator must carefully select illustrations, analogies, and allegories from the experience of different ethnic and cultural groups to demonstrate or extricate the meaning of academic concepts and principles (Gay c.f Gollnick and Chinn 1990). It is also suggested that teachers who are sensitive to the experiences of students from different cultural background can make those students feel as much a part of the class as those from the dominant culture (Ibid). It is important that achievements made by the members of various subcultures in music, arts, sports, academics, politics etc. be adequately projected in the text.
 - b) **Student's voice:** Examples from student's life experiences are essential components of multi-cultural education. Here teachers develop regular dialogue with the students and their voice can be understood as the voice of their community. Their life experiences can help all students and the teacher to consider alternative ways of thinking and doing.
 - c) **Communication:** In order to increase the involvement of the students in the learning process of multicultural education teachers are to use oral and non-verbal communication patterns. To overcome the problem of differences between the cultural background of the teacher and the learner, "the teachers are to redirect the interaction to primarily use the kind of interaction that work most effectively with the students. The teachers are to be sensitive to these situations and needs of the students and can "begin to teach students how to interact effectively with which they are most uncomfortable".
 - d) **Learning and Teaching Style:** Socialization process plays an important role in inculcating individual differences in teaching and learning styles. However, they are not the indicators of general learning ability. In multicultural education, to serve the students effectively the teacher must develop instructional strategies, which are compatible both to the teacher and the learner.
 - e) **Formal Curriculum:** In multicultural education the educators take affirmative steps to ensure that cultural diversity is integrated throughout the curriculum. It promotes student's exposure to the richness of multicultural history and contemporary cultural fabric built with the contribution of all the cultures. It makes a critical examination

of contemporary and historical issues from the multicultural point of view and an extra planning to make curriculum and instruction multicultural. It is important that when micro-cultures are introduced in the curriculum, they are included not in subordinate, but in positive roles and status. Readings are selected by the authors from various cultural background to allow the students to understand the perspective of other cultural groups and how those perspectives differ from their own because of different experiences. In this pedagogy teachers also help students understand “the relationship of power and knowledge by comparing classical and contemporary writings in the subject being taught”.

- f) **Hidden Curriculum:** One must understand that hidden curriculum is not taught formally. There are rather parts of values and norms which underground the formal curriculum. These have deep impact both on the teacher and the students. These are located in the way students are being raised in the school and colleges, they are praised and evaluated, being socialized and in the power relationship within the educational institutions. The hidden curriculum prepares the students in view of the prevailing power relations in society. In multicultural education “a first step is to recognize that it exists and provides lessons that are probably more important than the academic curriculum. Developing a more democratic classroom would help in overcoming the power inequities that exist. Multicultural education values students’ curiosity and encourages it. It evaluates teacher’s interactions with students to ensure that teachers are actually supporting learning than preventing it” (Ibid).
- g) **Critical Thinking:** Being able to think critically and to teach students to think criticality is essential for a democratic society. Multi-cultural education, as it deals with social cultural reality, would widen the space to develop critically on the structured causes of oppression and inequality based on caste, class, race, gender, ethnicity, age, etc., in society.
- h) **Lived Realities:** In multicultural education the educator must know the communities, their cultural values and identities in order to develop the curriculum and instruction for the students. It does suggest that the teacher must know the sentiments of the community before introducing concepts, which may be foreign and unacceptable. Thus the teachers in the plural realities of the society.
- i) **Community Resource:** The community is a repository of knowledge and this knowledge is to be extensively used with all sensitivity for learning and teaching purposes. In the classroom, resources of all the communities are included may it be the start story, poems, technology being used, speakers, leaders, etc.

Reflection and Action 14.5

What do you understand by multicultural curriculum? What are the things that need to be taken care of while developing a multicultural curriculum?

14.8 Conclusion

It has long been realized that notwithstanding differences, there are several similarities among cultures and that through interaction members of various cultures become respectful and tolerant to each other. These realizations have altogether formed the foundation stone of multicultural societies. In this unit, we have discussed some of the essential features of multicultural society and thereafter the need for the formulation of alternative strategies for the educational well being of the members of multi-cultural societies. Why is a

multicultural education necessary? What are the approaches to multiculturalism? What should be the goals and strategies of multicultural education? Answers to all these questions are discussed in this unit. It is pointed out that in a multicultural curriculum student voices from diverse cultural background, their communication skills, their diverse learning style, critical thinking are considered to be essential. It has been widely highlighted in this unit that cultural diversities are not liabilities but national resources.

14.9 Further Reading

Gollnick, D.M. and Chinn, P.C. 1990. *Multicultural Education in a Pluralistic Society*. Mernil Publishing Company: London

Bennett, C. 1990. *Comprehensive Multicultural Education: Theory and Practice*. Ellyn and Bacon: London

UNIT 15

Education in SAARC Countries:

Case Studies-I

Contents

- 15.1 Introduction
- 15.2 Education Scenario in SAARC Countries
- 15.3 State of Education in Different SAARC Countries
- 15.4 Education in SAARC Countries: An Overview
- 15.5 Conclusion
- 15.7 Further Reading

Learning Objectives

This unit aims to:

- appraise the education scenario in SAARC countries;
- explain economic and educational development in SAARC countries;
- discuss country wise educational development in these countries; and
- explain educational reforms and strategies adopted by the government of SAARC countries.

15.1 Introduction

In the previous Unit 14, you have already studied the issues of pluralism, and multiculturalism in education. The geo-political region of SAARC represents a varied context of pluralism and multiculturalism. In this unit, we shall apprise you with the economic and social scenario of SAARC region and discuss strategies adopted by the governments of the SAARC countries for education as well as educational reforms in their respective countries.

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established when its Charter was formally adopted on December 8, 1985 by the heads of Government of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka – the seven South Asian countries. It aims to accelerate the process of economic and social development in these countries.

These countries have many common historical, geographical, climatic and socio-economic features and also common disadvantages of educational backwardness. In recent years there has been a considerable expansion of educational opportunities and significant scientific and technological advance in the region. However, there are disparities between and within SAARC countries in terms of urban and rural, gender, class and ethnic consideration.

The South Asian economies have grown at an average growth rate of more than 5 per cent over the last 20 years. However, about 40 per cent of the people of this region still live below the poverty line. It also represents 40 per cent of the world's non-literate population. Only two-thirds of the total number school-age children enrol in schools, and more than 40 per cent of them drop out before reaching the fifth grade. Thus, the fraction of children who are able to continue up to fifth grade (completing primary education) is rather low. Sri Lanka and Bhutan however, are able to maintain their enrolment at about 90% - pretty close to China's numbers, Nepal's is above 75%, Bangladesh's is at 65% while India's is at less than 60%. This is a reflection, in India at least, inefficiency of literacy programs (where children are superficially exposed to

some form of reading and writing rather than a sustained effort at providing these basic skills to children). (<http://www.thesouthasian.org/archives>). Hence, these countries, which comprise one-sixth of the world's population face many challenges of economic development in general and educational development in particular. The challenge is enormous, where the world's lowest per capita income of \$ 309 exist in this regions (Rampal, A. 2000).

15.2 Education Scenario in SARRC Countries

The educational programme has been provided through government, non-government agencies, i.e., NGO communities, and the private sector of the SAARC countries. For instance, in Nepal schools are being transferred by the government to communities for day-to-day management. In Bangladesh NGOs play an important role in providing primary education, and the government subsidizes an almost fully privately managed secondary education system. Three million children do not have access to primary education in Bangladesh, while in Pakistan the number is probably closer to eight million. India accounts for one fourth of the world's 104 million out of school children. It leads to social debt accumulated in a low adult literacy rate with a large number of children out of school and high incidence of school dropouts.

Of the total population in the SAARC region, 75.18 per cent is in India followed by Pakistan (11.04%), and Bangladesh (10.46%) respectively. The Rest of the countries have less than 2 per cent of the population each as shown in Table 1. Enrolment rates at primary level in all these countries have risen rapidly between 1990-2000. Enrolment rate at the secondary level was significantly lower, but has shown a substantial increase recently. For example, in Bangladesh net enrolment rates at the secondary level have risen from 16 to 32 per cent between 1999-2000. In India, gross secondary enrolment rates have risen from 40 to 50 per cent over the same period. In Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives gender parity has also been improved at the secondary level. At the tertiary level, enrolment rates in the region have increased by 10 per cent. These countries are having high dropout and repetition rates and lowest rates of completion of education at the primary level in the world. Of all the students who start the primary education, less than 10 % complete it and go to the secondary education. Moreover, those who complete their education perform poorly in their respective examination. For instance, in Bangladesh and India only less than 40 per cent of students pass 10th and 12th standard examination.

Table 15.1: Population, Literacy and Public Expenditure on Education in SAARC Countries

Countries	Population ¹ In 2005 in thousands	Per centage to total South Asian Countries	Per centage of adult illiterate (age +15 years) population (2000)	Public expenditure on Education as % of GNP (2000)
Bangladesh	152592	10.46	59.2	2.5
Bhutan	2392	0.16	40.0	5.2
India	1096917	75.18	44.2	4.1
Maldives	337	0.02	56.0	3.7
Nepal	26289	1.80	58.6	3.4
Pakistan	161151	11.04	56.7	1.8
Sri Lanka	19367	1.33	8.4	3.1

¹ <http://esa.un.org/unup>; <http://devdata.worldbank.org/edstats/summary>

15.3 State of Education in Different SAARC Countries

SAARC countries are focusing on attaining the targets specified in the Millennium Development Goal by 2015. These goals provide tangible benchmarks for measuring progress in eight areas, with a target date for most of them of 2015. These goals are presented in the following box:

Millennium Development Goals	
Goal 1	Eradicate extreme number of poverty. Lowering the proportion of people living on less than \$ 1 a day and having malnutrition.
Goal 2	Achieve universal primary education. Ensuring that all children are able to complete primary education.
Goal 3	Promote gender equality and empower women. Eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary schooling, preferably by 2005 and no later than 2015.
Goal 4	Reduce child mortality. Cutting the under-five death rate by two thirds.
Goal 5	Improve maternal health. Reducing the maternal mortality rate by three-quarters.
Goal 6	Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. Halting and beginning to reverse HIV/AIDS and other diseases.
Goal 7	Ensure environmental stability. Cutting by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation.
Goal 8	Develop a global partnership for development. Reforming aid and trade with special treatment for the poorest countries.

Source: *Human Development Report 2005* (<http://www.undp.org>).

In the forthcoming discussion, we shall apprise you with the current economic and education scenario of each of the countries of SAARC and government strategies to achieve its target related to education.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh ranks as one of the poorest nations of the world. The economy of Bangladesh is underdeveloped and depends almost entirely on agriculture. About half of its GDP is generated through service sector despite the fact that two-thirds of its people are employed in the agriculture sector. About 82 per cent of the people of Bangladesh live in rural areas. The per capita gross national income was US \$ 440 in 2004. The annual growth rate in Bangladesh has 6 per cent in 2005.

For decades Bangladesh has remained educationally backward even though a section of the population is highly educated. Education was mainly reserved for the rich people under British rule. The language of transaction was English as schools were run by religious nuns and British people. After British rule, Bangladesh came under Pakistani regime as the state of East Pakistan. During the Pakistani era along with Bengali, Urdu also became the medium of instruction. Bangladesh became an independent nation in 1971.

In Bangladesh, the literacy rate is low and there is a significant disparity between female and male literacy rates. Only about 30 per cent of all Bangladeshis can read and write. However, with the government and NGOs' intervention in recent years, literacy rate has been going up. The education system is divided into 4 levels— Primary (from grades 1 to 5), Secondary (from grades 6 to 10), Higher Secondary (grades 11 and 12) and tertiary. Alongside

national educating system, English medium education is also provided by some private enterprises. There is also Madrasa system which emphasizes Arabic medium Islam-based education. This system is supervised by the Madrasa Board of the country

The Government spent 2.4 per cent of GDP on education during 2003. The adult literacy rate was 41.1 per cent in 2003 in the country. The gross enrolment ratio was 95.9 per cent at the primary level, 47.5 per cent at the secondary level and 6.2 per cent at the tertiary level in 2003. On the other hand, the net enrolment ratio was 84 per cent at the primary level and 44.5 per cent at the secondary level. The completion rate was 73.3 per cent at the primary level in 2003. The ratio of students to teachers was 55.7 per cent at the primary level during the same year. Bangladesh has about 31,700 elementary and high schools and about 300 colleges and technical schools. The University of Dhaka is the nation's largest university. Dhaka is also the home of the Jahangirnagar University and Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology. Other universities are in Chittagong, Mymensing (Agricultural University), Khulna (Shahjalal Science and Technology University), Rajshahi and Sylhat. There is an Open University in Dhaka.

Reflection and Action 15.1

On the basis of experience gained from this unit, what according to you, may be the right approach to consider for achieving education for all (EFA) in your country?

Bhutan

Bhutan is one of the smallest and least developed economies. The primary sector (agriculture and forestry), provides the main source of livelihood for more than 90% of the population. The secondary (industrial) sector is technologically backward. However, the natural beauty of Bhutan attracts the attention of a large number of tourists there. Very recently modern education, social development, and environment programs are underway with support from multilateral development organizations. The per capita gross national income was US \$ 590, 720 and 760 during 2002, 2003 and 2004 respectively. The annual growth rate was 7 per cent in 2002 and 2003, and 5 per cent in 2004.

Bhutan adopts a 7 years primary followed by 4 years of secondary education leading to tertiary education. At present, about 87% of students, reaching the end of primary (grade VI) continue to the next level of education, while others repeat and a few drop out. Students have to appear at the National Examination at the end of the class VIII, X and XII. At the end the higher secondary education students enroll at the only undergraduate college in the country and go to other countries for high studies. Bhutan has a national curriculum. A major policy shift in recent times is to make secondary education more relevant by introducing a basic skills training programme in the form of clubs and introducing career counseling or orient youth to the world of work. Before the introduction of modern education, the only form of education provided in Bhutan was monastic education. At present, Bhutan has 433 schools, with enrolment 135,987. Girl students' enrolment at the primary level is 48.4%. The emerging trends indicate that the girls are outnumbering the boys in some of the urban schools. One of the main policy objectives is to enhance the quality of education in order to achieve competency in language, communication skills and mathematics comparable to international standards. Information and communication technology has been incorporated into the school curriculum (<http://www.lbe.unesco.org>).

The country spent 5.2 per cent of GDP on education in 2000. The completion rate was 45.6 per cent at the primary level in 2003 and students reaching at grade 5 were 91 per cent in 2000. The ratio of students to teachers was

37.9 per cent at primary level and 33.6 per cent at the secondary level in 2003. The country has shown improvement in the last couple of years.

India

The Indian economy encompasses rural people, modern agriculture, handicrafts and a wide range of modern industries and services. The service sector has shown phenomenal growth in recent years, even though more than 52% of the workforce is engaged in agriculture. The per capita gross national income was US \$ 620 during 2004. The annual growth rate was 7 per cent during 2004-05 (www.finmin.nic.in).

India has achieved phenomenal educational development since independence. India's expenditure on education as a per centage of GDP increased from 0.64 per cent in 1951 to 4.11 per cent in 2000-01. However, the national goals of universal elementary education and total eradication of illiteracy have still remained a distant dream. India spent 4.1 per cent of GDP on education during 2002 but about 40 per cent of its adult population still remains to be made literate.

The adult literacy rate (age 15+) was 61.3% in 2003. Gross enrolment ratio (GER) has increased from 32.1 per cent in 1950-51 to 82.5 per cent in 2002-03. The rate of increase in GER for girls has been higher than that of boys as presented in Table 2. The rates of drop out have decreased from 64.9 per cent in 1960-61 to 40.7 per cent 2000-01 in primary classes. Similarly, the rate of dropouts, which was 78.3 per cent in 1960-61, has come down to 53.7 per cent in 2000-01 in the upper primary classes.

Table 15.2 : Gross Enrolment Ratio during 1950-51 and 2002-03

Level	1950-51			2002-03		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Primary (I-V)	60.6	24.8	42.6	97.5	93.1	95.4
Secondary (VI-VIII)	20.6	4.6	12.7	65.3	56.6	61.0
Elementary (I-VIII)	46.4	17.7	32.1	85.4	79.3	82.5

Source: Annual Report 2005, MHRD

In India, the literacy rate has increased in 2001 to 64.8 per cent from 52.21 per cent in 1991. Significantly the growth rate of literacy was more in rural areas than in urban areas. Again the female literacy rate increased (14.41%) more than male literacy rate (11.17%) during the same period. Moreover, the number of non-literate population declined from 328.88 million in 1991 to 304 million in 2001. There has been considerable increase in the growth of educational institutions also. During the last 5 decades the number of primary schools increased by three times, while the upper primary schools and higher secondary schools increased by 15 and 17 times respectively. The number of colleges for general education and professional education increased by about 21 and 11 times respectively, while the number of universities increased by 9 times during the same period.

In the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07), the Government of India initiated various steps towards achieving education for all. During this period along with *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)*, other schemes have been introduced, which include:

- National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL),
- Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education (EGS & AIE),

- District Primary Education Programme (DPEP),
- National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE), known as the Mid-Day Meal Scheme
- Strengthening of Teacher Education,
- *Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)*, and
- *Mahila Samakhya*.

SSA is a time-bound mission, with the objectives of ensuring Universalisation of Elementary Education and bridging gender and social gaps by the year 2010. The Government of India recently opened 66,147 elementary schools, constructed 17,454 new elementary school buildings and 33,777 additional classrooms and appointed 310,506 additional teachers under SSA scheme in 2004-05. NPEGEL is an important component of SSA and it provides additional support for girls' education in educationally backward blocks by way of girl-child friendly schools, stationery, uniforms etc., for elementary education of under privileged/disadvantage girls. EGS and AIE is another important component of SSA, which is specially designed to provide access to elementary education to children in school-less habitations and out of school children. Elementary education has been provided to 856.7 thousands children under this scheme during 2004-05. DPEP was launched in 1994 in 42 districts of seven states with the aim of providing access to primary education for all children, reducing primary dropouts rates to less than 10 per cent, increasing learning achievements of primary school students by at least 25 per cent and reducing gender and social gaps to less than 5 per cent. The programme is now implemented in 272 districts of 18 states and it is now continuing in 129 districts of 9 States. KGBV scheme was launched in August 2004 with the aim of setting up 750 residential schools at elementary level for girls belonging predominately Backward Blocks (EBBs), where female literacy was below the national average and gender gap in literacy was more than the national average. Government has approved 662 KGBVs during 2004-05. Value of EFA Developed Index (EDI), developed by UNESCO, has improved in the case of India from 0.658 in 2003 to 0.696 in 2004 (www.education.nic.in). The educational policies of India will be dealt in detail in Unit No. 18 of this Block.

Maldives

Tourism industry is the backbone of Maldives' economy. It accounts for 20 per cent of GDP and more than 60 per cent of the Maldives' foreign exchange receipts. 90 per cent of government tax revenue comes from import duties and tourism-related taxes. Fishing is the second leading sector. Agriculture and manufacturing continue to play a lesser role in the economy, constrained by the limited availability of cultivable land and the shortage of domestic labor. Industry, which consists mainly of garment production, boat building, and handicrafts, accounts for about 18% of GDP. The per capita gross national income was US \$ 2350 in 2003.

The country spent 3.7 per cent of GDP on education in 2000. The adult literacy rate (age 15 +) was 97.2 per cent in 2003. The duration of education consists of 7 years for primary level and 5 years for secondary level. The gross enrolment ratio was 101.3 per cent at the primary level, 48.5 per cent at the secondary level and 10.0 per cent at the tertiary level in 2003. The net enrolment ratio was 92.4 per cent at the primary level and 51.4 per cent at the secondary level during the same year. The ratio of students to teachers was 20.0 per cent at the primary level and 15.0 per cent at the secondary level.

Higher education in Maldives is provided by the Maldives College of Higher Education (MCHHE), College of Islamic Studies (CIS) and Centre for Continuing Education (CCE). Many students pursue higher education and training overseas. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), is the government

agency responsible for facilitating the growth of higher education and training and to provide policy and logistical guidance to the sector in Maldives. At present, 2600 students are enrolled in certificate, diploma and degree programmes in these institutions. Private sector participation in higher and continuing education is growing. Presently, eighty-six private institutions are registered with the Government. It is estimated that about 3000 students would be enrolled with these institutions in the near future.

The Maldives Accreditation Board (MAB) of the DHET manages the Maldives National Qualifications Framework (MNQF). This Framework consists of 11 levels of qualifications including Certificate I, Certificate II, Certificate III, Advanced Certificate, Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree and Doctoral Degree. MNQF sets out minimum entry requirements, credit hours and credit points for each of the 11 qualifications. All qualifications issued by MCHE and private institutions must fit into the requirements of one of the 11 qualifications of MNQF. MNQF provides a coherent framework that facilitates quality improvement, quality assurance, and private sector participation in post-secondary education. (<http://www.aparnet.org>)

Nepal

The economy of Nepal is one of the poorest and least developed in the world. About 40 per cent of its population lives below the poverty line. Agriculture is the mainstay of the economy, providing a livelihood to over 80% of the population and accounting for 40% of GDP. Industrial activity mainly involves the processing of agriculture production including jute, sugarcane, tobacco and grain. The small size of the economy, technological backwardness, remoteness, its landlocked geographical location, civil strife, and vulnerability to natural disasters are the characteristics of economy of the Nepal. The per capita income was US \$ 230, 240 and 260 during 2002, 2003 and 2004. The annual growth rate was -1 per cent, 3 per cent and 4 per cent during the same period.

The country spent 3.4 per cent of its GDP on education in 2000. The adult literacy rate (Age 15+) was 44 per cent in 2003. The duration of education was 5 years for completing primary level, and 7 years for secondary level. The gross enrolment ratio was 119.3 per cent at the primary level, 45 per cent at the secondary level and 5.3 per cent at the tertiary level in 2003. The completion rate was 78.1 per cent at the primary level and 64.9 per cent at the secondary level during the same year. The ratio of students to teachers was 35.7 per cent at the primary level and 34.7 per cent at the secondary level (www.moe.gov.np). Nepal has also formulated its priorities towards achievement of its target i.e. 'education for all'. Some of them are:

- to eradicate illiteracy by the end of the 12th five year plan;
- to expand National Literacy Campaign gradually in all the 75 districts. Priority to low literacy rate geographical locations;
- to reduce gap between male and female literacy rate. Priority to women, girls and other disadvantaged groups in promotion of literacy. Undertake appropriate advocacy and motivational measures;
- to strengthen mechanisms for co-ordination among GOs/NGOs/INGOs at different levels (grassroots level to national level). Mobilize more NGOs/INGOs to launch national literacy;
- to provide basic education; equivalency programmes;
- special literacy classes for prisoners in the jails;
- to emphasize on gender sensitivity in literacy classes (<http://www.aacu.or.jp>)

Pakistan

Pakistan is an underdeveloped country and has low levels of foreign investment. The Government of Pakistan has made macro economic reforms during the last couple of years. The country has raised development spending from 2 per cent of GDP in the 1990s to 4 per cent in 2003, which was essential for reversing the broad underdevelopment of its social sector. The per capita income was US \$ 600 in 2004. The annual growth rate was 6 per cent during the same period.

Since independence, attempts have been made by the governments to relate the education system to the needs and aspirations of the country. The 1973 Constitution made it mandatory for the state to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of backward areas, remove illiteracy and provide free and compulsory secondary education within minimum possible period, make technical and professional education generally available and higher education equally accessible to all. The country spent 1.8 per cent of GDP on education in 2000. The adult literacy rate (age 15+) was 41.5% in 2000. The duration of education was 5 years for primary level, 7 years for secondary level and 5 years for compulsory schooling. The gross enrolment ratio was 68.5 per cent at the primary level, 22.5 per cent at the secondary level and 2.8 per cent at the tertiary level in 2003. The net enrolment ratio was 59.1 per cent at the primary level in 2000. The ratio of students to teachers was 40.4 per cent at the primary level in 2003.

Presently country is facing major challenges due to low literacy rate particularly for rural females, inadequate access, high dropout rate, teacher absenteeism, shortage of trained and qualified teachers, poor management and infrastructure, lack of physical facilities, low operating budget, outdated and irrelevant curricula, and political interference. The government has designed Education Sector Reforms (ESRs) on the long-term perspective of National Education Policy, 1998-2010 and ten-year Perspective Development Plan, 2001-2011. The targeted groups for EFA goals include disadvantaged communities emphasizing the needs of out-of-school children particularly girls and illiterate girls and women.

The prime objectives of Education Sector Reforms are (a) universalization of primary education and adult literacy; (b) mainstreaming Madarasas to diversify employment opportunities for the graduates; (c) strengthening the quality of education through better teachers, upgraded training options, curriculum and textbook reforms, and competency based examination system; (d) improving the relevance of education – introducing a third stream of gender and area specific technical and vocational education at secondary level with innovative approaches for students' counselling; and setting up mono-technic/polytechnics at District and Tehsil levels.

Some of the major achievements of ESRs program up to 30th June 2002 are: 10,000 schools rehabilitated and 2000 NFBE schools opened and 6000 Adult Literacy Centers established, Technical Stream introduced in 50 secondary schools during 2001-02, 385 science labs constructed, First women's polytechnic established at Quetta, revised/updated National Curriculum & Textbooks for Class I to XII and National Educational Assessment System (NEAS) launched (www.moe.gov.pk).

Sri Lanka

Sri Lankan economy revolves on food processing, textiles, food and beverages, tele-communications, and insurance and banking sector. GDP grew at an average annual growth rate of 5.5 per cent in the early 1990s. The economy rebounded in 1997-2000 with average growth of 5.3 per cent, but saw the first contraction in the country's history, – 1.4 per cent in 2001, due to combination of power

shortages, then several budgetary problems etc. Growth recovered to 4 per cent in 2002 and 6 per cent in 2003 and 2004. The per capita income was US \$, 1010 in 2004.

The present educational system in Sri Lanka derived from the British educational system, which was introduced by the British colonial masters in the 19th century. The British colonial government established colleges for boys and girls separately. These colleges consisted of primary schools, lower secondary schools and higher secondary schools. In 1938, education in Government schools was made free of charge as a consequence of the Universal Franchise granted in 1931. Many Government schools called *Maha Vidyalayas* were started in all parts of the country. The medium of education of these institutions was either Sinhala or Tamil.

The Government of Sri Lanka spent 3.1 per cent of GDP on education in 2000. The adult literacy rate (age 15 +) was 92.1 per cent in 2003. The duration of education consists of 5 years for primary level, 8 years for secondary level. The gross enrolment ratio was 110.5 per cent at the primary level, 86.5 per cent at the secondary level in 2003. The primary completion rate was 98.1 per cent in 2000. The ratio of students to teachers was 23.4 per cent at the primary level in 2003. At present, some of the priorities of Government of Sri Lanka are:

- to provide compulsory education to all children between the ages of 5-14 years;
- to provide educational opportunities for those who have failed to enter the formal education system or those who have dropped out;
- to prepare alternative structures through non-formal education for continuing education.

Reflection and Action 15.2

What have been the major concerns of educational reforms in SAARC countries?

15.4 Education in SARRC Countries: An Overview

The above case studies have given an idea of the educational development and governments efforts for educational reforms in SAARC countries. Despite their efforts, issues like poverty, women's education, dropouts and scarcity of funds for providing education for all still exist in this region. The *Human Development Report in South Asia, 2003* underlines the issue of employment which raises concern about the current patterns of economic growth and trade, the systems of education and training, the protection of the rights of all workers including women and children, and the global trading rules as they impact on food and livelihood security of the poor people.

The SAARC countries face the common problem of women's education. In developing countries as a whole, there has been an appreciable increase in female literacy in the past two decades. In the Arab States female literacy increased by more than two-thirds. In East Asia female literacy is 83%, and in Latin America and the Caribbean it is 87%. In South Asia it is only 55 per cent. This is the only region in the world where women are far outnumbered by men (94 women for 100 men in South Asia as compared to global ratio of 106 women to 100 men (Rampal, A, 2000). The Governments of these countries initiated different project to achieve its target to some extent. For example, BRAC project in Bangladesh, Lok Jumbish and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in India and Bunyad in Pakistan. These programmes have successfully achieved their targets especially in girls' education.

In addition to women's education, child education is another problem in this region. Despite of fact that child labor has been legally banned in all South Asian countries, child labor problems still exist and the region has the largest number of working children in the world. Several efforts are now being made to make education accessible to children in all these countries.

All countries in the region are committed to providing education for all. The formal system alone cannot meet the growing demand for education in this region. On the other hand, countries in this region share a common heritage, background and also a common set of problems. There is a great deal of commonality in the curriculum, educational organisation, learning material, examination, and certification at school level. There is also the possibility of duplication of efforts diverting considerable amounts of money which could otherwise be saved to support the rather poorly financed educational system in this region. In order to realize education for all, we must find a mechanism of dispensing education to such a large number. The formal system alone cannot meet this growing demand for education. Therefore, Open and Distance Learning System has been initiated in this region, which is providing education through Open Universities, Dual Mode of teaching institutions and Open Schools. Distance education is now an essential feature of the national education systems of these countries in South Asia. Open universities are already established in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

Maldives will be going to setting up a new virtual university for small states of the Commonwealth. The proposed university would be based on collaboration through a consortium of existing education providers. Developed and piloted by a Commonwealth of Learning (COL)-led consortium of South Asian open universities, the Commonwealth executive master of business administration/ master of public administration programme began enrolling students in Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka in January 2002 and in Pakistan in 2003. The Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC) assisted with funding the course development (www.col.org).

Another problem is the need for a highly skilled and qualified workforce in SAARC countries for high growth rates and to compete in today's globalizing world markets. Hence, the need of the hour is also to improve and expand secondary and tertiary education in addition to primary level education. India is in the process of developing strategies and interventions aimed at enhancing the effectiveness and quality of tertiary education in this region. Recently, India's Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, proposed to set up a South Asian University in his speech at Dhaka (Bangladesh) on November 12, 2005 during 13th SAARC Summit. His argument was that South Asia was "at the progressive of scientific and technological research and in the front ranks of the knowledge society across the world". With the right facilities and environment, South Asian scholars could combine to create "a centre of excellence" with world-class facilities and faculty and produce research "in the service of human advancement". India, he said, would be willing to make "a major contribution" towards the setting up of the university and indeed would be willing to host it. The Indian Prime Minister's vision has two crucial parts to it. The first is the idea that the university should concentrate on the progressive areas of science and technology. The second is that it would primarily be an institution devoted to research, which suggests that it would be a post-graduate university. It has two purposes. On the one hand, it could, given the right mix of subjects and people, truly contribute to the advancement of knowledge. In this sense it would be a contribution to the welfare of the region and indeed to the world. On the other hand, a South Asian university could play a role in bringing the peoples of the region closer together and softening their suspicions and fears of each other. In doing so, it would give life to the notion of peace and conflict management that are at the heart of SAARC. However, there are a great many political, procedural, hiring, funding, legal, and academic matters that need to be thought about in the setting up of a South Asian university (MIT 2005).

15.5 Conclusion

In this unit, we have discussed the education scenario and issues related to literacy rate, gross enrolment ratio, dropout, women education, child labor and demand for skilled labor in SAARC countries. We have also discussed the initiative of the government of each country and of international agencies like World Bank, UNESCO and COL for education reforms in these countries and perspective plans towards providing education for all.

15.6 Further Reading

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Unit 16

Education in Europe: Case Studies-II

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Learning Objectives

This unit aims to analyse:

- educational development in Europe in historical vis a vis present context;
- educational reforms by European Union;
- case study of selected countries in historical context; and
- present educational scenario in South-eastern Europe

16.1 Introduction

In the previous Unit 15, you have studied education in SAARC countries. In this unit, we shall apprise you of the educational system of European countries. An attempt has been made to give case studies of a few European countries in a brief historical as well as present educational development context. The last part of this unit shall apprise you of the present educational scenario of South- Eastern Europe.

16.2 Demographic Profile of Europe

Europe is the 6th largest continent and has 46 countries and assorted dependencies and territories. In exacting geographic definition, Europe is really not a continent, but part of the peninsula of Eurasia which includes all of Europe and Asia. Turkey and the Russian Federation (*Russia*) are considered a part of both Asia and Europe. In the year 2000, the total population of Europe was 729.3 million, of whom 306.6 million were in Eastern Europe, 93.7 million in North Europe. 144.8 million in Southern Europe, and 184 million in Western Europe. The annual rate of population growth in Europe declined from 0.44% to 0.16% between 1985-1990 and 1990-1995 and is projected to reduce to 0.03% during 1995-2000. The population decline trend is parallel to the increase in the average age of the population. The proportion of population in 65+ age group is increasing from 11.9% in 1985 to 19.8% in 2025 (projected), but the proportion of population in 0-14 age group is decreasing from 21.3% to 16.3% during the same period. Rural population is remarkably decreasing in Europe from 207.3 million in 1985 and 192.8 million in 1995 to 128.4 million in 2025 (projected) (<http://www.unhabitat.org>).

16.3 Education in Europe

Primary and Secondary Education

Education in Europe has both deep roots and great diversity. In 1976, education ministers first decided to set up an information network, as the basis for better understanding of educational policies and structures in the then nine-

nation European Community. This reflected the principle that the particular character of education systems in the Member States should be fully respected, while coordinated interaction between education training and employment systems should be improved. Eurydice, the information network on education in Europe, was formally launched in 1980.

All countries emphasise the crucial importance of developing the skills needed for the knowledge based economy and society, and for economic competitiveness. In relation to social inclusion, all countries indicate that access and the employability of target groups are defining components of their policy. Many countries and in particular those where levels of spending on education and training are comparatively low, emphasise that financial constraints limit their capacity to implement all necessary policies. Most of the countries highlight that in their education and training policies economic and social objectives are mutually supportive. On the other hand, other countries argued that if the economic and employment agenda is successful, the social goals can be addressed more readily. These issues are particularly relevant to the discussion on the European social model.

About 10% of adults in Europe, aged 25-64 takes part in lifelong learning, representing some progress since 2000, with significant variations between countries. The need to increase participation rates in further learning remains a major challenge for Europe, particularly in the southern European countries and the new Member States of the European Union. Low rates are an obstacle to increasing labour force participation, and are therefore, costly to the economy and society as a whole. About 16% of the young people (age group 18-24 years) leaves school early in 25 European Union countries. There was continuous improvement in recent years in reducing the share.

Nearly 20% of 15 year-olds continue to have serious difficulty with reading literacy, reflecting no progress since 2000 against the EU benchmark of reducing the share by one fifth. 77% of 18-24 year-olds complete upper-secondary education, still far from the Europe Union benchmark of 85%, despite good progress in some countries. The high number of young people leaving school without a basic level of qualifications and competences are a worrying signal that initial education systems are not always providing the necessary foundations for lifelong learning. This concern is also reflected in the new Lisbon integrated guidelines and in the European Youth Pact.

In some countries vocational education and training (VET) has a positive image, for example, Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark and Finland owing to such factors as having a dual system i.e. alternative training, double qualifications and recent measures in favour of access to higher education. It is still too often the case, however, that vocational pathways are less attractive than academic ones. On the other hand, a large majority of countries express concern about the needs of low skilled people, currently numbering almost 80 million in the Union, highlighting the importance of labour force participation and the role of VET systems as a key means of ensuring social inclusion.

The share of young population (aged 20-24 years) who has completed upper-secondary education has improved in 2004. The highest per centage (91%) of people who completed upper secondary education was from the Czech Republic and the lowest (48%) were from Malta (48%) and Portugal (49%). Public spending on education as a per centage of GDP is increasing in nearly all EU countries (EU average: 4.9% in 2000, 5.2% in 2002). This rising trend is a promising sign that Governments consider public expenditure in education to be a priority. Nonetheless there are large variations between countries, ranging from 4% to 8% of GDP. Many countries are stimulating private investment from individual and households, particularly in areas where there are high private rates of return. On the other hand, there is little evidence of an overall increase in

employer investment in continuing training. The available data show, differences in spending levels between countries. Denmark and Sweden spend over 7.5% of GDP on education, while some countries spend less than 4% of GDP.

Tertiary Education

Tertiary education plays a central role in the development of both human beings and modern societies as it enhances social, cultural and economic development, active citizenship and ethical values. At European level, education in general and higher education in particular are not subjects of a common European policy.

However, according to Article 149 of the Treaty of Amsterdam, the Community shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States, through a wide range of actions, such as promoting the mobility of citizens, designing joint study programmes, establishing networks, exchanging information or teaching languages of the European Union. The Treaty also contains a commitment to promote life-long learning for all citizens of the Union. Therefore, the Community has a complementary role to play: to add a European dimension to education, to help to develop quality education and to encourage life-long learning. All the recent European summits (from Lisbon 2000 on) underlined the contribution of education in setting up the European knowledge society.

The main tool for putting this ambition into practice is the SOCRATES programmes which contains an action specifically focused on Higher Education. It supports and encourages exchange of students and teachers, the launching of joint study programmes or intensive courses, pan-European thematic networks and other measures aiming at the development of a European dimension in higher education. The second phase of the Socrates Programme will end in 2006 and Socrates will be replaced by new educational programmes. In terms of quality assurance in higher education, a European network was set up in 1999 following a pilot-project and a recommendation adopted in 1999. In 2003, the Commission adopted two major communications on the future of Higher Education in Europe:

- Investing efficiently in education and training – an imperative for Europe, and
- The role of the universities in the Europe of knowledge.

At the same time, the higher education sector and institutions are fully involved in the European initiatives presently on-going in the field of e-learning in the area of Lifelong Learning as well as in the European Year of Languages (2001). Moreover, in 1999, Ministries from 29 European countries signed the Bologna Declaration, which aims at the establishment of a European area of higher education by the end of this decade. This area should facilitate mobility of people, transparency and recognition of qualification, quality and European dimension in higher education, attractiveness of European institutions for third country students.

The total public and private investment in higher education in European Union in 2001 was 1.28% of GDP, compared to 2.5% in Canada and 3.25% in the USA. The three highest spending European Union countries were Denmark (2.8%), Sweden (2.3%) and Finland (2.1%).

In the above section, you have studied about the European educational system which consists of 25 European countries. In the forthcoming section, we shall give a brief history and current educational development of selected countries in Europe. If you are interested in details of the historical educational development of these countries then you may visit web site i.e. www.eurydice.org

16.4 Educational Scenario in Some European Countries

Belgium

The Education in Belgium was being offered for three different communities i.e. French, German and Dutch speaking communities. After the social movements at the end of the nineteen sixties, there was an innovation in Belgium. This innovation was presented as being mainly a means of achieving real democratisation of education with the aim to make access to higher and even general academic education easier for the less-favoured children too. Within the scope of the first innovation it was possible to create an inter-age group (5-8) with the aim to smoothen up the transition between pre-school education and primary school. The law of July 19, 1971 established a new type of secondary education: reformed secondary education system. In the first two years of secondary education the splitting-up in different courses or sections was replaced by a two years. The law passed on May 19, 1914 prescribed compulsory school attendance for all children between the ages of 6 and 12 and decided that the utmost age of compulsory attendance had to be increased gradually to 13 and then to 14. However this law was only implemented after the First World War. In 1970 pupils ended their school-career at an average age of 15 years 8 months. The law of June 29, 1983 fixed the end of compulsory (full-time and part-time) school attendance at the age of 18 (12 years in school). This reform aimed at a guarantee for better qualification of young people to enable them as a result to have an easier access to professional life. As this law delayed the beginning of professional life, it helped as it were to reduce the constantly increasing number of unemployed young people.

In 1830, when Belgium became independent, there were three state universities Ghent, Leuven, and Liege. The law of 1835 on higher education acknowledged two free universities and two state universities. In the 19th century, all universities and colleges of higher education with an academic level were French speaking as was the public for which these schools were meant, i.e., the upper classes. Since the 1960s, higher education outside university has grown much more than university education. At present a reform of higher education is taking place. This reforms has to be seen in the light of the Bologna declaration, signed in 1999 by the Ministers of Education of 29 European countries. The declaration intends to create a European educational area in to order to bring more unity in European education. On April 4, 2003 the Flemish government approved the Decree on these structuring of higher education.

Bulgaria

The Bulgarian educational system has rich history. The Bulgarian people have established and preserved deep-seated and intransient educational traditions throughout their 13-century existence as a state; they have maintained and developed the Cyrillic alphabet, created by the Cyril and Metodius brothers as early as the 9th century, and reached the "golden age of Bulgarian literature and culture" in the 10th century, when Kliment Ohridski established the first Bulgarian school. Bulgarian people have preserved their love of learning and education through the years of the Ottoman rule. Cell schools were established in the 18th - 19th century, which were either monastery schools or public schools where the nature of the former was predominantly religious and public schools provided pupils with secular knowledge.

Public schools were established on a larger scale at the end of the 18th century, and especially in the 30s and 40s of the 19th century, known as "new Bulgarian" schools, which were described in detail in the records of the schools in Samokov, Koprivshitzta, etc. The state educational system was established after 1978.

which was also the time when the first school laws were dated. The first educational law, "Provisional Bylaws of Public Community Centers", was adopted in August 1978 and the Elementary School Act in Eastern Roumelia was adopted in December 1880 and promulgated in February 1881. The above laws recognized the democratic principles applied to school establishment and running. At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the educational system underwent rapid development.

During the period 1990-2004, a number of democratic changes have been brought about both in society as a whole and in the educational system in particular. A new Education Act was adopted (1991), which is still in force in the educational system, and Bulgarian legislation underwent serious changes. School education in the Republic of Bulgaria is compulsory up to the age of 16. It begins at the age of seven, when children are enrolled as first-grade pupils. Children at the age of six can also be enrolled as first-grade pupils, if their physical and mental behaviour, in the judgment of their parents or trustees, allows it. Since the 2003/2004 school year, children's training in preparatory groups with kindergartens or preparatory classes to schools has become compulsory as their parents or trustees are exempt from payment of fees. The compulsory education up to the age of 16 may be completed in a private school, which has been established pursuant to the National Education Act and is authorized to issue valid certificates for completed class or acquired professional qualification as well as diplomas for completed secondary education. The student has the right to complete his education in a state, municipal or private school chosen by him. By the age of 16 he is obliged to study in any of the various types of schools, private included.

Higher education in Bulgaria originated in the late 19th century after the liberation of Bulgaria from Ottoman yoke in order to satisfy the cultural, economic and political necessities of the young state. The first Bulgarian university was opened in Sofia with priorities in applying the legal system, the state administration and the schools with qualified specialists. The oldest university in Bulgaria started its activities with three faculties: Faculty of Law, Physical and Mathematical Faculty, and Historical and Philological Faculty. The deep social and economic transformations in the country inevitably had their impact on education as a whole, and, in particular, on higher education. This transition is related to creation of private higher education; introduction of new subjects and areas of knowledge taking into account the necessities of society; "opening" of higher schools to international partnership and cooperation with European universities and institutions; reinstatement of university autonomy; limited financial independence and high responsibility for the quality of educational services offered. By signing the Bologna declaration (1999), Bulgaria takes the challenge to participate actively in the building of a European Higher Education Area and a common European market of labour and research. At present this network includes 51 public higher schools, of them 42 universities and specialised higher schools, 41 colleges within the structure of the higher schools, and 9 independent colleges.

Czech Republic

Czechoslovakia was established in 1918. Since then one major issue to tackle was the creation of a uniform education system, bringing into line the cultural standards in the three different parts of the country: the Czech lands, Slovakia and Transcarpathian Ukraine. A large number of laws were passed between 1919 and 1923, the most important being the so-called "Small School Act" of June 1922. This Act left the structure of Czech education unchanged and imposed this structure on Slovakia but not on Transcarpathian Ukraine. The post-war orientation of education was determined by the cataclysmic events of 1948. The School Act of April 1948 stipulating the basic principles of comprehensive education nationalised the education system as a whole and

eliminated the influence of the Church. Basic education lasting nine years was compulsory, uniform and free of charge. The law also provided for support hours for socially disadvantaged children and non-compulsory education in the form of leisure time activities, which at the same time performed a social function. Basic education was preceded by a non-compulsory *matežská škola*. After basic education, which was divided into a 1st and a 2nd stage, there were schools of the "third stage" - *gymnázia* (upper secondary general schools) and *odborné školy* (vocational and technical schools) - and then higher education institutions.

In 2000 an amendment to the School Act was passed that relaxed admission requirements for upper secondary schools. Other changes of the School Act are related to the state administration reform in 2000. The Concept of the State Information Policy in Education was approved by the government in April 2000 and was implemented progressively over the next 5 years. In developing it the Ministry of Education took into account the European documents, *Learning in the Information Society* (1996) and *e-Learning -Designing Tomorrow's Education* (2000).

Czech higher education dates back six hundred years. In 1348 Emperor Charles IV founded a university in Prague which is the oldest academic institution in Central Europe. It is now called Charles University. In 1573 a university was established in Olomouc (Moravia). The beginnings of technical education go back to 1717 when the Czech Corporative Engineer School was set up in Prague (later on the Czech Technical University). After several years of experience it was realised that some matters needed new legal regulations. After a large debate the Higher Education Act was passed in April 1998 and it came into force on 1 July 1998. However, most of its provisions came into effect on 1 January 1999. This new law changed the status of existing state higher education institutions (with the exception of military and police ones) into public ones, all property used so far was transferred into their possession. The law further distinguished the higher education institutions of university and non-university types, enabled the establishment of private higher education institutions and strengthened the responsibilities of the Accreditation Commission. By 2004 it was amended eight times. The amendments specified the responsibilities of higher education institutions in relation to their assets, with the aim of facilitating multi-source funding. It changed the duration of Master's study following on from Bachelor's study (previously 2-3 years and now 1-3 years), it made it possible to study for a Master's degree at non-university higher education institutions and it allowed the cross-crediting of lifelong education courses after entry to regular higher education study.

Germany

Even in the early post-war years, conflicting decisions were taken in the three western occupation zones in Germany and in the Soviet zone regarding the political foundations of the education system. The *Länder* formed in 1946 in the west built on the federalism of the German Empire (1871-1918) and the Weimar Republic (1919-1933) in constitutional terms. The *Grundgesetz* of 1949 (Basic Law) stipulates that the traditional federal order be continued in the areas of education, science and culture.

With the foundation of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in 1949, the German Central Administration for National Education was transformed into the Ministry of National Education, which was responsible for schools and institutions of higher education. The 1965 law on the standard socialist education system then formed the conclusion to a process of development which had commenced in the 1950s and which continued to determine the GDR education system until the end of the 1980s without being reformed to any significant extent.

The development of German unity in the education system since 1990 shows different picture. Since the unification of the two states in Germany, a central task of educational policy has been the reorganisation of the school system on the basis of relevant agreements of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs, as well as the reform of higher education in the Länder in eastern Germany. In the German education system, fundamental changes have been initiated under which special importance is attached to the various efforts for quality assurance and quality development.

In the 1960s, there was a lively public debate in the Federal Republic of Germany on pre-school education and children's transition into primary education. There were detailed discussions of the extent to which, through compensatory measures, educational opportunities for children from disadvantaged socio-cultural backgrounds could be improved on their entrance into primary education, and whether it would be useful to bring forward the start of compulsory schooling from 5 to 6 years of age. The Federation and the Länder then carried out an extensive programme of pilot projects, which was backed up by scientific support. In the end, however, the start of compulsory schooling was not brought forward. Yet the lively public debate served to heighten awareness of the importance of pre-school education, and from the 1960s onwards the pace of Kindergarten expansion was stepped up. In 1960, Kindergarten places were available for only one third of 3 to 6 year-olds in Germany. This had increased to around 90% in 1998.

In 1959 these compulsory eight-year schools were transformed into polytechnical high schools. As at the beginning of the 1991/92 school year, the Polytechnische Oberschulen were abolished and the differentiated system of secondary education was introduced in the Länder of eastern Germany. Based on the Education Acts, School Administration Acts and Compulsory Schooling Acts of the German Länder the school regulations known as Schulordnungen for schools providing general and vocational education contain detailed regulations covering the content of the courses as well as the leaving certificates and entitlements obtainable on completion of lower and upper secondary education.

Higher education in the GDR evolved under completely different conditions. It was based on a unitary and centrally controlled concept in the service of Marxist-Leninist party ideology and committed to serving the ends of a planned economy (supplying cadres). Higher education there did not see unchecked expansion: the enrolment figures peaked in 1972 after the universities had been opened expressly for the sons and daughters of workers and peasants in the first years after the war and distance learning courses had been introduced to reach many working people.

In 1989, following the peaceful revolution in the GDR, a number of reforms in higher education were launched there even before its unification with West Germany, viz. higher education came within the remit of the newly established Länder, the autonomy of institutions of higher education was restored along with freedom of research and teaching, ideologically encumbered faculties were overhauled, and wider access to the Science Council was given a mandate to examine the state of non-university research and draw up recommendations for a reorganisation of higher education. As part of this reorganisation, some institutions of higher education were closed or integrated into universities, new faculties were set up in the fields of law, economics and business and social sciences.

Hungary

The present educational system of Hungary crystallised in the 17th and 18th centuries. Hungarian public education has been undergoing continuous reforms, some of which sometimes worked against the previous one. Reforms concentrated mainly on the content of education, but the issue of

decentralising and democratising the entire public education system always lingered in the background. The process was triggered by Act I of 1985 on public education that set out to implement a structure built on the professional independence of institutions of teaching and education to replace the previous, rigidly centralised education system. That move firstly opened the door on alternative pedagogical views in school practice, and, secondly, it invited the elaboration of schooling/education concepts more in line with local needs.

In harmony with the government programme, and the tasks arising from accession to EU, the Minister of Education decided to embark on a comprehensive modernisation, and development programme. Preparatory efforts to create a new Act on Tertiary education, were elaborated, then implementing the various elements of the Hungarian Universities Programme were undertaken. The Campus Hungary Association was founded with the participation of 40 institutions in February 2004, enjoying the support of the Hungarian Ministry of Education. The commissioned Hungarian Scholarship Board created the database for the use of Hungarian Higher Education Institutions and foreign HE students and organized the framework of the Association. The most important aim of this organization was to create publicity of Hungarian Higher Education abroad and to motivate Hungarian institutions to launch more courses in foreign languages.

Portugal

In 1996, the Ministry of Education, Portugal in partnership with the then Ministry of Labour and Social Security and the Ministry of Equipment, Planning and Territorial Administration, introduced the Programme for the Expansion and Development of Pre-school Education, with the aim of consolidating what were previously uncoordinated efforts and to making proposals for the effective enlargement and expansion of the network, in a partnership between public and private initiative, developing pedagogic intervention proposals at syllabus and teacher training level, as well as promoting and monitoring the launch of innovation, training and research programmes. In March 2005 the XVII Constitutional Government came into office, whose programme makes changes in order to provide quality education for all, progressively making pre-school education available to all children of the appropriate age.

The first Portuguese university was founded by royal decree in 1920, issued by King Dinis, although there had been two large mediaeval-style religious schools in Coimbra and Alcobaca since the twelfth century. At the close of 1979, what until then had been known as short duration higher education, became known as ensino superior politécnico, and polytechnic colleges were set up to co-exist with the universities. Between the second half of the eighties and the beginning of the nineties, this growth exceeded 50% in both state and private and co-operative teaching. By the early nineties there were 152 state and 81 private schools of higher education.

The new Education Act, approved by parliament, contained Lisbon Strategy guidelines and the underlying principles of the Bologna Declaration, those worth being highlighting are:

- The alteration to the access system for higher education;
- The strengthening of the principle of equality among the various sub-systems of higher education in accordance with the value of educational, scientific and cultural projects;
- Growth of quality in education, research and experimentation;
- Demand for quality for the attribution of degrees regarding the merit of the institution;
- The reorganisation of the higher education system via the achievement of the objectives of the Bologna Declaration; and
- The alterations to the Finance Act.

The reformulation of the School Social Action policy in higher education is being prepared. The following structural questions regarding higher education are also being debated:

- Restructuring the academic degree system in three stages, in the implementation of Bologna Process;
- Administration of higher education institutions;
- Improving the access system to higher education and the subsequent passage to higher education institutions;
- Autonomy and regulation with the implications for the different stakeholders;
- Reformulation and growth of scientific research;
- Revision of the higher level assessment and accreditation system of competencies; and
- Conjugation of formal qualifications with non-formal ones, from a lifelong learning perspective.

United Kingdom

In Northern Ireland there was no statutory requirement for the provision of nursery education. However, government initiatives in the late 1990s set targets to provide additional government funded part-time pre-school places in a range of settings. During the 2003/04 school year, free (part-time) places were available for all children in their immediate pre-school year whose parents wanted them.

In England and Wales, the main aims of these strategies were to raise the quality of care, and to make childcare more affordable and more accessible by increasing places and improving information. The childcare strategy in Northern Ireland focused on the principles of inclusion, social justice, quality, affordability, flexibility, accessibility and partnership. Early years development and childcare partnerships in England and Wales and pre-school education development plans in Northern Ireland were subsequently set up to implement the strategies.

In September 2000, the foundation stage of education, which is based on six key areas of learning known as the early learning goals, was introduced in England. This is a distinct stage of education for children from the age of three until the end of the primary school reception class (usually aged five) and has now become a statutory part of the National Curriculum under the Education Act 2002. During the foundation stage, the overwhelming majority of children attend some form of pre-school or nursery education, either full- or part-time. Only a few children remain at home during the foundation stage, first attending school at the beginning of Year 1 (aged five+).

Elementary education provided by voluntary bodies became increasingly widespread throughout the nineteenth century. The Elementary Education Act, 1870 provided for the creation of School Boards, which could set up new 'board schools' in areas where existing voluntary provision was insufficient. This marked a significant turning-point in state participation in education. The Education Act (Northern Ireland), 1947 introduced legislation similar to the 1944 Education Act in England and Wales. Important reforms were introduced by the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986, the Education (NI) Order 1987, the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989, the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1993, the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996, the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 and the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998.

There has recently been widespread consultation on the future of education for 14- to 19-year-olds in England and Wales, and for post-primary education in Northern Ireland. In England, a new government strategy document of the Department of Education and Skills (DfES 2003) proposes changes to the current system.

The Government's White Paper, 'The Future of Higher Education', published in January 2003, set out the Government's strategy for the reform of higher education in England, as well as a number of measures which affect the rest of the United Kingdom. In July 2004 the Higher Education Act, 2004 was passed which legislated for the proposals in the White Paper. The Act introduces a new graduate contribution scheme under which universities in England will be allowed to seek a contribution of between £0 and £3,000 per year for each course. Students will be able to defer their contribution until after graduation, when payments will be through the tax system, linked to ability to pay. These changes will be implemented from 2005.

Recent Changes

The Leadership Foundation for Higher Education was launched in March 2004 to identify and meet key management and leadership needs across the higher education sector, build an elite group of professional leaders and managers, and develop good practice in leadership and management. An Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), or student ombudsman, was set up in January 2005 to consider student complaints in England and Wales. In 2003 a new Research Forum was set up, designed to strengthen the dialogue between government ministers and the higher education sector on research. This forum will enable the Government Ministerial group promoting research reform to exchange ideas on the key issues of the link between teaching and research, and developing greater research collaboration (<http://www.eurydice.org>).

Box 16.1: Multi Cultural Education in Britain

In 1981 a Committee chaired by Lord Swan was constituted to enquire into the education of the ethnic minority pupils. The committee in its report stressed need for the re-education of the majority society so as to lay the foundations for a genuinely pluralist society. The report pointed out that the majority society is not even considering the need for a multi-cultural education as they think that their society is one of mono-cultural. In order to provide "Education for All" the Committee made certain recommendations, such as:

- Britain is a multiracial and multicultural society and all pupils must be enabled to understand what this means.
- This challenge cannot be left to the separate independent initiatives of the Local Education Authorities and schools. Only those with experience of substantial numbers of ethnic minority pupils have attempted to tackle it, though the issues affect all schools and pupils.
- Education has to be about something more than the reinforcement of the beliefs, values and identity, which each child brings to the school.
- It is necessary to combat racism, to attack inherited myths and stereotypes and the ways they are embodied in institutional practice.
- Multicultural understanding has to permeate all aspects of a school's work. It is not a separate topic that can be welded on to existing practices.
- Only in this way can schools begin to offer anything approaching equality of opportunity for all pupils, which it must be the aspirations of the education system to provide.

Source: Abraham 1989

16.5 Recent Trends of Funding of Education in Europe

The funding of education is always a debateable issue all over the world. At present, the financing and management of school resources are debateable

issue on the future of compulsory education in Europe. In some countries, decentralisation policy is adopted. For instance, in the five Nordic countries, plus U.K., Bulgaria, Lithuania and Poland decentralisation of financing to the local authorities is very extensive, since they are in charge of funding school staff, operational and capital resources. The same applies to Hungary and Slovenia but in these two countries schools are also provided with funds for these resources from other public bodies. The financing of resources is almost entirely, the responsibility of the Community in the French Community of Belgium, in the case of schools administered by the Community authorities, and grant-aided private education, and in the Flemish Community in the case of all schools.

For many countries funding remains a key challenge and an obstacle to implementing the modern agenda. Several new Member States are aiming to tackle this issue by establishing partnerships with universities abroad for the provision of joint degrees. Many European countries made efforts to provide higher education to learners who belong to lower socio-economic backgrounds. This has been initiated for increasing the participation levels in higher education. Recently Open Universities are getting popularity for continuing professional development by using distance and blended learning and ICT-based learning approaches.

16.6 Education in South Eastern Europe

Although the countries of Southeastern Europe— Romania, Bulgaria, and Moldova— have been independent democracies since the 1991 fall of the Soviet Union, each has had problems transitioning from a centrally-planned economic system to a market-based economy. Both Bulgaria and Romania were significantly affected by the economic embargo placed on Yugoslavia in the 1990s, suffering billions of dollars in losses due to disrupted trade, transport, and investment. (<http://www.eia.doe.gov>)

At present, South-Eastern Europe (SEE) shows commonality in the challenges and problems in education. There is low GDP for education, low teacher salaries, child poverty and overloaded curricula. The regional diversity is too great. Like in other regions, the education system can be evaluated in terms of four main characteristics: availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability. (<http://devdata.worldbank.org>)

The Balkan peninsula in South East Europe is one of the world's most complex areas in terms of ethnicity, language and religion. Nation states mean less, generally speaking, than ethnic allegiances that cross borders: there are Albanians in Macedonia, Macedonians in Bulgaria, Croats in Bosnia, and Serbs in Croatia – the mix is often uneasy, and in recent times has been explosive (e.g. Kosovo, Bosnia). This regional diversity does not apply only to languages, religion and ethnicity – it permeates the entire geo-political history of SEE, preceding even the division of the Eastern and the Western Roman Empire.

Various studies conducted on “The Right to Education” show that some problems are common across the region i.e. low share of GDP for education; low teacher salaries; child poverty; overloaded curricula; deteriorating material base etc., but that there are no common solutions to these problems. After World War II, all SEE countries changed their education systems, mostly due to Soviet influence. The most common aims were the elimination of illiteracy and the extension of basic education from 4 to 8 years. Undeniably, the new systems were highly ideological. At least three distinctive types emerged: the Albanian, the Soviet and the Yugoslavian. Four year technical schools became common, while vocational education and training 13 were linked to the socialist industrial complex, organised differently in each of the three types.

All SEE countries have reached a level where access to basic education is not the main issue, but quality elementary education for all - including rural children, children of minorities, children with special needs, and children who are socially or emotionally at-risk - is the real task.

General upper secondary education today seems to occupy a better position than vocational education and training, in most SEE countries. The term "tertiary education" deserves more attention and debate. Mostly, a traditional model of university education is still in force. Unfortunately, this only sharpens questions of access, equity, and quality. Adult education and life-long learning seem to be under-valued. High unemployment and a completely altered structure of industry demand the development of a labour force that has different, broader work skills. *Teachers' education and development* need radical modernisation, both in its pre-service and in-service forms. The entire region needs modern institutions in this area. Education to be delivered through Open and Distance learning is the answer to all problems.

16.7 Conclusion

The analysis of the education system of Europe shows that education has a similar role to play in all countries. Educational systems are not traditional unchangeable structures. They need flexible changes in economic and social conditions. That is why educational system cannot be analysed without taking these conditions into account. In all the case studies of each country mentioned in this unit the educational systems have passed through fundamental changes during reforms. The aims of the reforms achieved were same i.e.,

- to make the relationship between educational and employment systems closer and more consistent;
- to make the preparation of the young graduates correspond to changing social requirements;
- to develop personal skills among youth;
- to contribute to increasing personal opportunity for social mobility.

The relationship between social requirements and the abilities of the educational system to satisfy them, naturally leads to the permanent outdistance of the requirements. At the same time, substantial differences among the educational system of the various countries could be found.

We have made an effort in this unit to provide you with a broad-brush treatment of the development of education in Europe. It is not possible to apprise you with the educational system of each country in a single unit because of their differences in cultural and sociological nature. Since, the unit is on 'Education in Europe', we have focussed our attention on the issues of managing the transformation of a dysfunctional education system into dynamic and vibrant of social change for development.

16.8 Further Reading

Masahiro Tanaka, 2005. *The Cross-Cultural Transfer of Educational Concepts and Practices: A Comparative Study*. Oxford:

Unit 17

Education: Expansion and Growth

Contents

- 17.1 Introduction
- 17.2 Growth of Education: A Historical Overview
- 17.3 Growth of Education in the Post Independence Period
- 17.4 Expansion of Education
- 17.5 Diversification of Educational Streams
- 17.6 Conclusion
- 17.7 Further Reading

Learning Objectives

Following the study of this unit, you should be able to:

- know about the growth of education through different ages;
- understand the limitations and strengths of the past systems of education;
- appreciate the growth of education in terms of its ability to reach the masses; and
- develop awareness about the recent trends that have led to the expansion of the educational scenario.

17.1 Introduction

In this unit we shall trace the growth of education in India and also study its expansion. As we know, growth refers to vertical increase while expansion usually connotes lateral enhancement with increased scope for accommodation as well as diversification into various forms and types. However, at the very beginning we would like to tell you that growth and expansion of an abstraction like education are closely interrelated processes and it is difficult to separate one from the other in a clear cut manner. In the first part of the unit we shall concentrate on the growth of education. Starting from the Vedic period, we shall trace the growth of education through the Buddhist, Mughal, and British period and thereafter we shall reach the post independence period. Thus we shall study under growth of education, the inception of formal education and the major changes it underwent to reach the present form. Our study of expansion of education will mainly deal with the enhancements in the ability of our educational system to include millions of aspirants, the expansion of physical facilities for imparting education and the emergence of diverse forms and types of education that has been taking place due to the rapidly expanding knowledge base resulting in new specialised areas of knowledge. Thus, expansion of education has been taking place mainly in response to the rapidly changing socio-economic changes in modern India, and it is all the more true for the post independent period.

17.2 Growth of Education: A Historical Overview

As a process, education is as old as the progression of human race. Right from the time of evolution of human beings, education began in one form or the other. Knowledge and skills related to processes of fulfilling basic human needs, such as gathering food, hunting, covering the body, preparing tools, protecting oneself, etc. These were passed on from one generation to the next. Education during the early period was totally informal in nature; nevertheless it was bound by certain well-defined objectives. These objectives were to fulfill the immediate needs pertaining to bodily wants such as hunger, thirst, protection, etc. and enhance the level of comfort. Thereafter with the growth of civilization,

the need of formal education for the development of the individual as well as the society was realised and gradually education got institutionalized.

Education has not remained stagnant but with the passing of time, it has undergone great changes. We could say that education has grown considerably since the form in which it existed as testified to by the earliest records. Indian history dates back to the times of the Indus valley civilization. Following that there was the Vedic age and thereafter the Buddhist period. Then India passed through the medieval age and traveling through the Mughal period, it went under colonial rule for about two hundred years. After independence, growth as well as expansion of education has been by leaps and bounds unlike the slow progress made in the past and this has been a matter that concerns us the most. Therefore, the growth of education has been taken up beginning from historical to pre-independence to post independence periods.

The post independence period, which has witnessed the rapid growth of education, merely spans a period of fifty eight years. But the period before independence stretches back to thousands of years. The growth of education since the historical past shall be studied through its different periods, namely Vedic period, Buddhist period, Mughal period and finally the British period.

Vedic Period

Let us first study the educational system during the Vedic period. Differences in opinion exist as to the exact date of this period. According to some, it could have extended between 1500 and 500 BC. The contribution of this era towards the generation of knowledge and emphasis on learning is immense. It is claimed that during the early part of Vedic period, education was not restricted for the male members of society and women too got equal opportunities regarding education. Women scholars of this period like Vishvarava, Atreyi, Maitreyi, Gargi, Lopamudra and many others are a testimony to this. However, later on during this period education for women lost its popularity.

Education had started acquiring a formal nature during this period. Education was imparted at centers of learning called gurukuls, ashrams, parishads, etc. Young students were sent from home to the residential schools where they stayed with the guru (teacher) and his family. Education was imparted for years together. Teaching- learning started following an initiation process into the world of education called *upanayan*. Education during this period mainly aimed at achieving salvation. It aimed at balanced development of the pupils and their physical, moral, intellectual, social and cultural developments were taken care of (Singh, 1992) Taxila, Patliputra, Varanasi became some of the renowned seats of learning.

The teacher used to be an expert in both theory as well as practice. The teacher was highly revered for his knowledge and integrity. He was supposed to be the epitome of erudition, character, morality, righteousness and nobility. He was therefore considered to be the representative of God. He was wholly responsible for the education and general welfare of his students. Although the concept of *gurudakshina* (fees) was there but gurus or teachers taught not for the sake of money but because it was their sacred duty. Teaching was thus not an occupation in the strict sense but rather a duty discharged toward, society.

The students were supposed to be hard working and refrain from a life of luxury. They were also supposed to lead a life of chastity, be humble and be fully obedient to their teacher. The concept of working at the teacher's place, while learning prevailed in this period. This made the pupils not only educated but also adept in the skills required in day-to-day life. Education was individualised and each learner was well cared for by the teacher. They spent

their time in gaining knowledge and skills but also had to cultivate the teacher's land, tend his cattle, beg for alms and perform the tasks assigned to him by the teacher (Sharma 1992).

The curriculum was rich and diversified with components such as mathematics, languages, grammar, literature, warfare for the kshatriyas (warriors), administration, scriptures, astrology, astronomy, etc. Stress was laid on character development. Thus as underlined by Singh, (1992) education aimed at moral development, spiritual consciousness, and was also humanitarian with salvation as the ultimate destination. There were rigid rules to regulate the conduct of pupils. These rules pertained to hygiene, morality, religious performances, etc. The students following the initiation ceremony would put on the sacred thread and spend fourteen years away from their home in the seclusion of an ashram or gurukul (James and Mayhew 1988). Teaching - learning were mainly through oral activities. Listening, contemplating, internalizing, reciting were emphasised over reading and writing (Sharma 1992). Even the literature of the then popular language, Sanskrit has its origin in an oral tradition and gave rise to the holy texts of the Vedic era. Panini developed Sanskrit grammar and since then a lot of literary contributions were made such as the shastras, epics, lyric poetry, stylized drama, etc. (*Academic American Encyclopedia* 1983).

Education during this period was not for the masses but only for the elites of society. Only the members of the upper castes namely Kshatriyas and Brahmins were allowed to avail the opportunities regarding education. Women's education too did not receive its due share. The entire system of education was entrusted to the Brahmins. Education for the other classes was informal, unorganized and neglected. This was a drawback of the educational system prevailing then. However, the scholarly contributions made during this period are so rich that they have acquired the status of classics. Another important feature is that the students were like the members of the teacher's family and although the concept of *gurudakshina* i.e. fees happened to be there but knowledge was held to be too sacred to be commodified for sale and profit making.

Reflection and Action 17.1

Collect information about the curriculum and teaching methods of a *gurukul* of ancient India and compare it with that of modern times. According to you what are the strengths and weaknesses of the former over the latter.

Buddhist Period

About the sixth century BC, rigidities of Vedic rituals and sacrifices along with the overwhelming dominance of the Brahmins over the lower castes became responsible for the disenchantment of the masses with the prevailing system (*Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*). Gautam Buddha, the great religious leader as well as social reformer preached non-violence and social equity. He vouched for a casteless society. As a result the social discrimination in the field of education that was prevalent in the Vedic period was challenged during this period and it was the first attempt towards providing education to the masses. During the Buddhist period education was institutionalized. Educational institutions enjoying great repute, as Takshashila, Nalanda and other flourished during this period. These institutions attracted students from several countries. Young children were admitted to these institutions and education was imparted for a fixed period of time as in modern times.

During this period *sanghs* came up that were the centers of all religious instructions and activities. Later on these *sanghs* emerged as the centers that were also involved in educational activities. The *gurukuls* and *ashrams* of the Vedic age were thus substituted during this period by institutionalized *sanghs* or monasteries. These institutions were akin to the universities of the modern world. During this period entrance tests were common in educational

institutions. Only those successful at these tests were allowed to avail of the educational services provided at these institutions. The number of students in educational institutions was quite high. There were thousands of students and teachers at these institutions. Therefore, Buddhist educational institutions had a wide perspective. This was a step forward from the individualised and exclusive functioning of the *gurukuls* of the Vedic period. The educational institutions of this period being open to all sections of society were more inclusive in nature and had a collective participation.

In order that the common man did not have to grapple with the complexities of Sanskrit, which was the medium of educational and literary activities earlier, the languages commonly used, Pali and Prakrit, were resorted to. In spite of marked differences between the educational systems of the Vedic and Buddhist periods, the curriculum followed in the latter period still reflected a continuation of that of the Vedic period. Dharma or religion was the main curricular component at the monasteries. The curriculum included components such as theology, philosophy, literature, astronomy, administration, etc. Professional studies like medicine, surgery, etc. were also carried out in these institutions (Sharma 1992).

Education was imparted following the payment of fees by the students. This was the beginning of education becoming a paid service. As in the Vedic period the students were supposed to observe celibacy and be fully obedient and respectful towards their teachers. Just as the Brahmins were in charge of imparting education in the Vedic period, during this period, the monks at the monasteries were in charge of it. The monks were celibates and spent their time in prayer, meditation, and studies (*Academic American Encyclopedia* 1983). Huen Tsang, (quoted by Sharma 1992) had recorded that thousands of priests who were men of highest abilities and talent, with great distinctions and whose conduct was pure, sincerely followed the moral law. They spent their time in discourses. Thus the teachers of this period as in the Vedic period were revered in society because they were persons of character and erudition.

We thus see that during the Buddhist period the first attempts were made to impart education to the masses. There was greater social equity in imparting education. However, the education of women did not receive its due importance and the educational scenario continued to be dominated by men. The Buddhist period did not last in India and became popular abroad. For 500 years from the 4th century AD to the close of the 8th century, during the reign of the Gupta dynasty and its successors, there was a remarkable advancement in several areas. The rulers patronized scholars and remarkable contributions were made in different areas such as science, mathematics, astronomy, art, literature, etc. (*Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*).

Reflection and Action 17.2

State some educational contributions that had been made during the Vedic times. What are the similarities in the educational system of the Buddhists and the Vedic period?

Medieval period

This period can be traced back to about the twelfth century AD. Muslim invaders repeatedly invaded during this period and it resulted in Islam taking firm roots in India. Political instability due to repeated invasions and aggressions adversely affected the existing educational system. During this period the education system underwent far-reaching changes. Madrasas and *makhtabs* were opened to impart education. The madrasas, which in Arabic mean 'schools', were the institutions of higher learning. They function even today as theological seminaries and Islamic law schools. The curriculum would be centered on the study of the Quran, hadith, Arabian grammar, logic, languages,

etc. The study of Islamic jurisprudence was stressed. The *makhtabs* were Muslim elementary schools that made the students competent to read the religious texts. Elementary knowledge of writing, grammar, etc. was also imparted to the young children (Srivastava 1989). Instructions were imparted mainly orally in *makhtabs* and madrasas. Memorisation of Islamic texts was emphasised. The wealthy people of the society would fund these educational institutions.

Theological considerations dominated educational institutions like madrasas and *makhtabs*. Education during this period is said to have had an excessive theological bias. This was probably due to the bias of the rulers who patronized education during this period and the ulema, who controlled the educational scenario, towards theological aspects. The emphasis was thus on religious issues although the main goal was to do away with illiteracy and advance knowledge. This trend resulted in nurturing madrasas that were essentially schools of theology with auxiliary linguistic studies. These institutions provided a steady supply of quazis, muftis, and other experts in jurisprudence and administration for the state (Srivastava, 1989).

During medieval India too poets, scholars and philosophers were greatly respected and patronized by the rulers and some from abroad visited India. During the times of Firozshah Tughlaq and Sikandar Lodi special interest was taken in education and renowned madrasas as seats of higher learning were opened. Thereafter the Mughal period started in India with Babar as the first Mughal emperor. The Mughal period extended from the early part of the 16th century and extended till the middle of the nineteenth century. The Mughal emperors too were interested in providing education to their subjects. They patronized learned men and institutions of learning.

During the Mughal period the credit for organising education on a systematic basis goes to Akbar. He opened a large number of schools and institutions of higher learning for both Hindus and Muslims (Encyclopaedia Britannica Online). He even introduced certain curricular reforms. The curriculum emphasised, besides theological aspects, also the study of science, history, geometry, mathematics, etc. He also opened educational institutions for his Hindu subjects where Sanskrit, its grammar, Vedant, literature, etc., were taught. The need for moral education was also emphasised. During this period, many Hindus joined Islamic educational centers and learnt Persian since it was the language used for judicial purposes. Aurangzeb opened many madrasas and *makhtabs* and scholarships were paid in his time to the poor but deserving students (Singh 1992).

Box 17.1 : Expansion of Education during Mughal period

Art and architecture flourished during this phase and calligraphy was an important component of the curriculum during this period. Education was provided free of cost so that people from all classes of society could avail of it. Obedience towards teachers and respect for learned people still continued in this period as in the earlier periods. Institutions for imparting education to the Hindus continued to exist if not flourished and Sanskrit, literature, mathematics, etc. were taught in these institutions. Varanasi, Mithila and Mathura were some of the centers for higher learning for Hindus. Women's education continued to be neglected and was confined only to the women from the higher classes of society. Women from well to do Hindu and Muslim families were provided with educational facilities at their homes by tutors appointed by their families.

During the Moghal period even when it flourished and reached its peak, education was still not recognized as a tool for national development and the collapse of the Mughal empire brought with it the ruin of the educational system. Developments in science and literature both among Hindus and Muslims

had taken a back seat. There was almost moral anarchy as testified to by the acquisition of power by the British in Bengal and the subsequent conversion of India into a colony. It was more a phase of treason, treachery and open rivalry for power. This had started with the death of Aurangzeb and education as a system started losing its vigour towards the close of the eighteenth century (James and Mayhew 1988). What remained was an indigenous system of education with tols and madrasas imparting Hindu and Arabic education respectively. The infrastructure of the educational institutions that were usually single teacher schools was often poor and learning was mostly in the open. The notable change was that the role of teacher was no longer the monopoly of Brahmins all over India. In Bengal, for instance, members of other upper castes too taught in schools for hindu children. But in the institutions of higher learning Brahmins still continued as teachers. Education in this period mainly comprised the study of texts. Investigative studies, experimentation, scientific studies were not given importance. Since Persian remained the court language, many Hindu boys too learnt it. Mainly mathematics, grammar, literature, religious texts, languages, were taught. Illiteracy was widespread among the people belonging to the lower castes (Basu 1982).

Reflection and Action 17.3

Explain some of the educational achievements during the Mughal period.

British Period

The British period started with the decline of the Mughal empire in the middle of the eighteenth century. The missionaries from Europe had already started arriving in India to propagate Christianity and along with the British regime, they had an active role in shaping the educational system of this period. Warren Hastings was the first Governor General of India who recognised the duty of the government to provide education to its subjects. He founded and also endowed the Calcutta Madrasa, which happened to be the earliest educational institution to be set up by the British rulers. Soon after a Sanskrit College was established in Benaras by Jonathan Duncan, the then Resident in Benaras and it was also provided with substantial funds. A college for Hindu learning was also opened at Poona by Mountstuart Elphinstone. The newfound interest in the Oriental, especially Indian literature, sacred texts and other sources of knowledge, her history and culture, led to the revival and even encouragement of a learning system that had existed prior to the arrival of the British in India. As a result Hindu educational institutions and also institutions where Arabic learning was there were encouraged by the then British regime (James and Mayhew 1988).

This trend continued till the early part of the 19th century. The evangelicals, the liberals and the utilitarians questioned this early policy of encouraging Oriental education. They were all agreed that Indian society had to be reformed (Basu, 1982). The Christian missionaries had by then started taking an active interest in the education of the natives. English education was felt to be necessary by some of the evangelists to propagate Christianity and regenerate Indian society. Although their aim was to use education as a tool for achieving the evangelisation of the natives, the cause of education too was served. Schools and colleges were opened in the early part of the 19th century by Christian missionaries at Kolkata, Serampore, Chennai, Mumbai and other places. The continuing craze for admission to Christian convent schools and the desire for western education can be traced back to this period. The people from the upper classes and even the middle classes of Bengal and other places had started realizing that western education provided in these institutions was more useful as well as liberating than that provided at the pathshalas, tols, and madrasas. Social reformers and educationists had realized the need for taking the best from the west for the progress of the Indians. Even the social reformer,

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was in favour of imparting western education, especially its science education so as to liberate the minds of Indians and modernize them. Along with indophiles like David Hare and Sir Edward Hyde East, he opened the Hindu College at Calcutta in 1817 to impart modern education. In 1823, when the first Committee on Public Instructions was set up, he pleaded against the setting up of a Sanskrit school, which he felt would teach things that were 2000 years old. He requested that a liberal system of instruction that included mathematics, science, philosophy and other subjects that were more suitable in that period be started.

Macaulay's minutes of 1835 that laid the foundation of the modern education system along the patterns of the British model is often blamed for superimposing a western model of education on the structure of education that had evolved for thousands of years. His motives are also questioned and he is still accused that the education system that has been established on account of his minutes was intended to prepare clerks for the British rulers. He is also blamed for vouching for English and disregarding Indian science, literature and other knowledge existing in other disciplines and for deriding the prevailing knowledge as antiquated. But as mentioned earlier, before Macaulay's minutes, the missionaries had already established schools and colleges imparting modern education and even the Hindu College was opened in Kolkata. Indians had started desiring western education. Macaulay had argued that advancements in the field of education made by the west should not be withheld from the natives who are craving for it. Indians like Raja Ram Mohan Roy too had expressed such views (James and Mayhew 1988).

Box 17.2 : Attempts for Equitable Distribution of Education in Modern India

Wood's dispatch of 1854 is looked upon as a charter of educational privileges. It considered it as a sacred duty of the government to provide education to the Indians. It was felt the masses could be taught in their mother tongue but nevertheless the knowledge of English was required. The despatch also recommended a grants-in-aid system for educational institutions. It also made several recommendations to strengthen the system of education and make its access more equitable (Singh, 1992). After a long gap since the period of Nalanda, Taxila and other such institutions, following Wood's despatch, the first universities of modern India were opened in present day Kolkata, Chennai and Mumbai. Hunter's Commission presented its report in 1882. It had recommended the careful withdrawal of the government from the field of higher education, and its being taken over by private enterprise while the state paid more attention to primary education. It also emphasised the moral side of education with strict discipline being maintained in educational institutions (James and Mayhew 1988).

In 1910 Gopal Krishna Gokhale mooted the idea of free and compulsory primary education for children all over the country. The plan was shelved at that point of time but its popularity and utility remain till today. During this period the need for teacher training and adult education were also expressed. One of the recommendations made by the Sadler Commission in 1917 stressed the need for substantial increase in the output of trained teachers. In 1920 the Central advisory Board of Education (CABE) was set up to advise the government on issues related to education. It was subsequently dissolved and set up again in 1935. The need for adult education was realized by the proponents of mass education. However till the early part of the last century not much attention had been paid to it. During 1937-39 the CABE committee stressed the need for adult education to be taken up on a wider scale and also suggested that voluntary organisations may also be involved in this cause. The Sargent Commission (1944) spelt out that the responsibility for providing adult education should be shouldered by the state. During this period Indians like Vivekananda,

Mahatma Gandhi, Gijubhai Bedeheka, Rabindra Nath Tagore were actively involved in the educational process. Not only did they start educational institutions but also based them upon philosophies that were more suited to the needs and culture of India. At the same time the curriculum could also respond to the needs of modern India.

Education in the colonial period was thus markedly different from which that prevailed in the past. In spite of two hundred years of British rule, the literacy rate was abysmally low. This was especially true for the socially and economically backward sections of the society. The dropout rate was high. The transition rates from one level of education to the next higher level were also very low. The social progression was not to the extent that people would feel the indispensability of formal education. Education was also removed from the socio-cultural requirements and was considered more suited to fulfill the demands of a regime that belonged to an alien culture. It has been stated by Raza (1991) that in the colonial period education, especially at the higher levels was concentrated in and around the cities of Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai where the British had constructed ports. Thus there was enclavisation of higher education. In comparison, the other areas were neglected. It is also alleged that spreading English education was not an act of selfless magnanimity but rather a ploy to further the interests of the British government by preparing a work force that was well versed in English and make the Indians feel that the British were not aliens. It is also alleged that education was too literal in approach and areas such as vocational education and technical education were neglected. Mass education was also neglected (Basu 1982).

However, there were also certain positive aspects. For the first time the goals of education and the curriculum reflected a pragmatic approach which was more in sync with modern times. Changes in the school curriculum, diversification of education, concepts like teacher education, mass education, free and compulsory education, adult education, etc. also came up. Above all the foundations of modern education were laid during this period. The education system, when it was being established did not make any attempt to withhold the advancements made in different fields in the west from the natives but rather encouraged them towards such learning.

Reflection and Action 17.4

What were the strengths of the education system prevailing during the British rule in India?

17.3 Growth of Education in the Post Independence Period

The educational system inherited from the British was fraught with serious problems such as extremely low literacy level, poor retention, abysmally low educational opportunities for the backward sections of society and women and so on. These problems needed to be addressed and the educational system needed to be transformed in a major way so that it could be the means for the transformation of a nation enslaved for centuries to a modern and developed nation. The first task was to expand the educational system so that it reached the millions, especially to those at the fringes of society. There was the need to initiate the eradication of illiteracy, vocationalise education and bring about other necessary reforms in the curriculum.

In order to facilitate the growth of education, experts had to be involved. Therefore several commissions and committees were set up. In 1948 the first Education Commission of free India namely, University Education Commission, was set up to suggest reformative measures in the field of higher education.

Thereafter the Secondary Education Commission was set up in 1952 to strengthen the secondary education system. In 1966, the Indian Education Commission under the chairmanship of D.S. Kothari submitted a report that covered all aspects and level of education. It was rather a blueprint of reformative action for the entire educational system of India. It came up with a unique and integrated national system of education. (Singh 1992). Discussions and deliberations on these recommendations led to the National Policy on Education (NPE) in 1968. As a result a uniform pattern of education, 10+2+3 system was initiated all over the country by 1975. In 1977 under the chairmanship of Dr. M.S. Adisheshia, the National Review Committee reviewed the curriculum of the +2 Stage of school education and emphasised the need for vocationalisation of education. Thereafter NPE, 1986, was formulated and to implement it, the Programme of Action was also developed by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). Meanwhile Operation Black Board was launched in 1985 to equip primary schools with the basic infrastructural facilities. In 1990, to further review the recommendations and implement NPE, 1986, Acharya Ramamurthy Committee submitted its report (Aggarwal 1992). Apart from all these, since independence there have been other commissions and committees too to strengthen the educational system and usher in effective reforms.

Growth of Education Facilitated by Constitutional Provisions

The Indian Constitution came into force in 1950, when India became a republic. The constitution has several provisions regarding education. Education was initially a state subject but following an amendment (42nd) to the Constitution in 1976, it became a concurrent subject. As a result both the center and the state can legislate on it. The center however mainly coordinates and monitors the functioning of the states in educational matters. At the center the MHRD, is entrusted with educational matters.

Among the fundamental rights enshrined in the constitution, right to education too has now been included The Directive Principle of State Policy, which earlier required the state to impart free and compulsory elementary education now requires the state to provide early childhood care and education. The Constitution has provisions that require the state to care for the educational interests of the backward sections of society and also promote with special care the educational interest of women. There are also provisions to uphold the educational rights of the linguistic and religious minorities. Besides, there is a provision that requires the medium of instruction to be the mother tongue at the primary level.

In order to fulfill the constitutional obligation regarding universal elementary education (UEE), programmes like the District Primary Education Programme had been launched. The latest attempt in this direction is through the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan launched in 2000. Besides, there are several other programmes like *Janshala*, *Shiksha apke dwar*, etc. initiated by the local governments as well as non government organisations for achieving the target of UEE.

Growth of Literacy Rates

Ability to read, write and comprehend empowers people and also leads to gainful employment. Illiteracy is the greatest block in the path of socio-economic development. In the British period the need for the education of the masses was realised but not much was achieved. Soon after independence, in 1951 the literacy rate was a mere 18.33% with only 8.86% literacy among women. It was realised that literacy leads to awareness about rights and duties. Enhancing literacy was also felt to be the most effective tool for arresting the population explosion. Therefore, a campaign was started to provide education to the masses and especially to the deprived sections of society. Eradicating illiteracy from a vast country like India with over a billion people,

geographically remote places, and years of neglect and backwardness has not been very easy. Hence the National Literacy Mission was set up in 1988 to take up earnestly the cause of adult education. The results have been, if not very encouraging at least better than that made on this front in the colonial period. In 1991 the literacy rate was a little over 52% but in 2001 the literacy rate stood at 65.38%. Thus about 13% gain had been made in the literacy rate during the last decade and the goal of achieving 75% threshold literacy rate appears to be achievable. Another achievement has been in the field of female literacy. Even in 1991 female literacy was only 39.42% but in 2001 it was 53.7%. Also as per the 2001 census report the rural-urban gap in literacy has come down from 31% in 1991 to 21.7%.

Reflection and Action 17.5

Explain the education scenario immediately preceding the British period. Elaborate the gains in terms of the literacy rates of the Indian population since independence.

Thus we see that since independence in the last five decades there has been significant growth in education in comparison to the British period. However, literacy merely refers to the ability to read, write and comprehend and is only a small achievement when a comprehensive term like education is considered but nevertheless attainment of literacy is the first step in all future educational attainments. Therefore, eradication of illiteracy is the prime necessity for any sort of educational growth.

In spite of great efforts being made to achieve UEE, we are still far from achieving it. Deadlines had been fixed for achieving it but they have been missed. The greatest impediment to educational growth has been the poor retention rate in primary schools. There has been a sustained campaign for UEE and as a result there have been great achievements in terms of enrolment. But the number of children dropping out is enormous. Therefore, the high enrolment ratio is unable to take us anywhere near the achievement of UEE. In spite of the enrolment ratio being as high as about 97%, the dropout rate is 36.3% in grades I-V, which means one third of the children enrolled drop out. It is still higher at 53% in grades V- VIII. Thus we see that poor retention is impeding the achievement of UEE. Enrolment as well as retention are all the more in a dismal state when it comes to the weaker sections of society namely the backward communities and female members. These are some of the factors that are slowing down educational growth.

17.4 Expansion of Education

We have already discussed that growth and expansion of education are closely interrelated terms. The ability of the education system to expand or reach out to all sections of society is increasing. Earlier education was the privilege enjoyed by the elite. But after independence it was realised that human resource development cannot ignore large sections of society and the education system has to be such that it can accommodate the masses. Hence efforts are being made to reach out and raise enrolment at different levels of education. For this educational facilities are being increased. Special attention is also being paid to the education of women and backward sections of society. Alternative means of providing education are also being explored. At the same time there is an ongoing diversification of educational streams due to changing social needs and expansion of knowledge base. Let us study some of the aspects leading to expansion of education.

Expansion of Education in Terms of Enrolment

In 1951 the population was just 36 crores. The literacy rate of 18% indicates the restricted access to educational opportunities. *Today the population has*

more than tripled but that the literacy rate having crossed 65% indicates that the scope of the educational system has widened. In 1951 only 27% of males and 8.86 % of females were literate but today 75% of males and about 53% of females are literate. Enrolment at the lower primary level is about 109 million and in the upper primary level it is about 40 million. There are about 1.705 million and 1.082 million teachers respectively at these levels (Gopalan, 1998). The enrolment at the primary level in 1951 was about 19.2 million. It has enhanced by about 5.75 times. For girls, enrolment since then has enhanced by about nine times in 1996-97. At upper primary level the net increase since 1951 has been about 13 times, while for girls the increase has been by about 32 times. At the secondary and senior secondary levels the net increase has been by 21 times since 1951 and for girls it has been by 49 times. The gross enrolment ratio in 1950-51 at the primary level was 42.6% while in 2002-03 it rose to 95.4%. Elementary education today in our country with 149.4 million children in the age group of 6-14 years and 2.9 million teachers is the second largest in the world. These figures as indicated by Table 17.1 reflect the inclusiveness of education and its expansion

Table 17.1: Enrolment by stages from 1950-51 to 2001-2002 (in million)

Year	Primary (I -V)			Middle/Upper Primary (VI-VIII)			High/Hr. Sec./Inter/Pre-Degree (IX-XII)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1950-51	13.8	5.4	19.2	2.6	0.5	3.1	1.3	0.2	1.5
1955-56	17.1	7.5	24.6	3.8	1.0	4.8	2.2	0.4	2.6
1960-61	23.6	11.4	35.0	5.1	1.6	6.7	2.7	0.7	3.4
1965-66	32.2	18.3	50.5	7.7	2.8	10.5	4.4	1.3	5.7
1970-71	35.7	21.3	57.0	9.4	3.9	13.3	5.7	1.9	7.6
1975-76	40.6	25.0	65.6	11.0	5.0	16.0	6.5	2.4	8.9
1980-81	45.3	28.5	73.8	13.9	6.8	20.7	7.6	3.4	11.0
1985-86	52.2	35.2	87.4	17.7	9.6	27.1	11.5	5.0	16.5
1990-91	57.0	40.4	97.4	21.5	12.5	34.0	12.8	6.3	19.1
1991-92	58.6	42.3	100.9	22.0	13.6	35.6	13.5	6.9	20.4
1992-93	57.9	41.7	99.6	21.2	12.9	34.1	13.6	6.9	20.5
1993-94	55.1	41.9	97.0	20.6	13.5	34.1	13.2	7.5	20.7
1994-95	60.0	45.1	105.1	22.1	14.3	36.4	14.2	7.9	22.1
1995-96	60.9	46.2	107.1	22.7	14.8	37.5	14.6	8.3	22.9
1996-97	61.4	46.8	108.2	22.9	15.2	38.1	15.3	8.7	24.0
1997-98	62.3	48.0	110.3	23.6	15.9	39.5	16.1	9.3	25.4
1998-99*	62.7	48.2	110.9	24.0	16.3	40.3	17.3	10.5	27.8
1999-00*	64.1	49.5	113.6	25.1	17.0	42.1	17.2	11.0	28.2
2000-01*	64.0	49.8	113.8	25.3	17.5	42.8	16.9	10.7	27.6
2001-02*	63.6	50.3	113.9	26.1	18.7	44.8	18.4	12.1	30.5

*-Provisional data

Source: <http://www.education.nic.in>

Expansion Of Educational Facilities

In the last five decades the number of education institutions has grown manifold. From 1950-51 to 2001-02 the number of schools of different levels have grown by many times. Table 17.2 indicates the growing trend in educational facilities.

Table 17.2: Growth of recognised educational institutions from 1950-51 to 2001-2002

Years	Primary	Upper Primary	High/Hr.Sec/ Inter/Pre. Jr. Colleges	Colleges for General Education	Colleges for Professional Education (Engg., Tech) Arch., Medical and Education colleges)	Universities/ Deemed Univ./ Instt. of National Importance
1950-51	209671	13596	7416	370	208	27
1955-56	278135	21730	10838	466	218	31
1960-61	330399	49663	17329	967	852	45
1965-66	391064	75798	27614	1536	770	64
1970-71	408378	90621	37051	2285	992	82
1975-76	454270	106571	43054	3667	** 3276	101
1980-81	494503	118555	51573	3421	** 3542	110
1985-86	528872	134846	65837	4067	** 1533	126
1990-91	560935	151456	79796	4862	886	184
1991-92	566744	155926	82576	5058	950	196
1992-93	571248	158498	84608	5334	989	207
1993-94	570455	162804	89226	5639	1125	213
1994-95	586810	168772	94946	6089	1230	219
1995-96	593410	174145	99274	6569	1354	226
1996-97	603646	180293	103241	6759	1770	228
1997-98	619222	185961	107140	7199	2075	229
1998-99*	626737	190166	112438	7494	2113	237
1999-2000*	641695	198004	116820	7782	2124	244
2000-2001*	638738	206269	126047	7929	2223	254
2001-2002*	664041	219626	133492	8737	2409	272

* - provisional data

Source: <http://www.education.nic.in>

Today due to the efforts made during the last several decades since independence, about 94% of the population has access to a primary school within a radius of one kilometer. We thus see that apart from the growing number of learners leading to the expansion of the educational system another major indicator of its expansion is the development in the number of educational institutions that are today catering to millions of learners.

There are several new dimensions related to the expansion of education. Let us examine a few.

a) Development of Women's Education

As mentioned earlier even during the colonial period women's education was greatly neglected. Since independence greater attention has been paid to this and enrolment of women at all stages of education has been increasing steadily through the years. Since 1950-51 enrolment of girls has increased many fold in Primary, Middle, Sec./Hr.Sec stages and Hr. Education levels from 28.1% to 44.1%, from 16.1% to 41.8%, from 13.30% to 39.5%, and from 10.0% to 39.9% respectively.

Table 17.3: Per centage of girls' Enrolment to total enrolment by stages

Year	Primary I-V	Middle VI-VIII	Sec./Hr.Sec./Intermediate (IX-XII)	Hr. Education (Degree & above) level)
1950-51	28.1	16.1	13.3	10.0
1955-56	30.5	20.8	15.4	14.6
1960-61	32.6	23.9	20.5	16.0
1965-66	36.2	26.7	22.0	20.4
1970-71	37.4	29.3	25.0	20.0
1975-76	38.1	31.3	26.9	23.2
1980-81	38.6	32.9	29.6	26.7
1985-86	40.3	35.6	30.3	33.0
1990-91	41.5	36.7	32.9	33.3
1991-92	41.9	38.2	33.8	32.3
1992-93	42.6	38.8	33.9	33.2
1993-94	42.7	39.1	34.3	33.5
1994-95	42.9	39.3	35.9	34.0
1995-96	43.1	39.5	36.1	36.0
1996-97	43.2	39.9	36.4	36.7
1997-98	43.5	40.3	36.6	37.5
1998-99*	43.5	40.5	37.8	38.1
1999-2000*	43.6	40.4	38.9	38.7
2000-2001*	43.7	40.9	38.6	39.4
2001-2002*	44.1	41.8	39.5	39.9

* Provisional

Source: <http://www.education.nic.in>

Expansion of education cannot be holistic and inclusive if women's education is neglected. Today there are several hundred women's college and quite a few universities only for women. The number of women enrolled per 100 men in institutions of higher education in 1950-51 was just 14 but during the last decade it was about 46. However, women's participation is still below fifty per cent at all stages of education. The literacy rate of 53% is also less than 75% for men. The average number of years spent by girls in schools is also much less than that spent by boys. The situation continues to remain grim in case of women belonging to the backward sections of society and rural areas.

Besides lower enrolment of women at different levels of education, another trend that is being noticed is the relatively much lower enrolment of girls at the higher secondary level and above in the science stream and in technological courses. Most of the women learners enroll in the humanities stream. Hence, growth of women's education is yet to catch up with that of men. From female literacy of 14% in 1951 to reach a literacy rate of 53%, it has taken about 50 years. It can be expected that with sustained efforts like the *Mahila Samakhya* Project in rural areas that emphasises the centrality of education to achieve equality and the efforts of the government and non-government agencies to enroll and retain girls, 100% literacy will be attained for women in a much shorter time.

b) Development of Alternative Forms of Educational institutions

We have already discussed the growth of institutions offering education at different levels. But today even such an expanded system of education fails

to accommodate every aspirant. There are still many who have been left behind. Therefore, alternative modes of offering education have been developing in addition to the conventional educational system. Education imparted through the distance mode and the non-formal education systems are forces to be reckoned with. These alternatives are greatly aiding the expansion of education and are parallel to the conventional system.

Reflection and Action 17.6

Collect information on the rising enrolment of people belonging to the backward sections of society and compare it with that of the period when India became independent.

c) Distance education

Since the first correspondence courses offered by Delhi University in 1962, distance and open learning system has covered a long way. In 1982, the first Open University was opened in Andhra Pradesh. In 1985, a Central Open University, Indira Gandhi National Open University, was opened and today we have about a dozen state open universities. Apart from the institutions that are offering education exclusively through the distance mode, there are several universities and academic institutions that are offering education in a dual mode, i.e., through face-to-face mode and also through the distance mode. The National Open School provides education at the school level. Together these institutions are catering to the educational needs of millions of students.

Open learning centers have been contributing a lot towards the expansion of education as they are capable of taking education to the doorsteps of those aspiring for education but cannot join conventional systems due to various reasons. The distance education system on account of its greater flexibility regarding time of learning, pace of learning and even educational background of the learner, coupled with its ability to accommodate a much larger student population, is gaining popularity rapidly. Development of distance education system has been greatly contributing towards the expansion of education, especially in the field of higher education. Through their regional / study centers they are actively providing education that includes even professional courses. There are facilities to take care of the practical component too and hence, courses in science, engineering, medicine, nursing, teacher training, etc, offered through the distance mode are quite common today.

d) Non-Formal Education

Non-Formal Education (NFE) comprises systematic and organized educational activities that are carried out outside the framework of the formal system of education. It mainly intends to serve those who cannot or could not attend educational systems and especially the dropouts. It also intends to provide education to those pursuing an occupation so that they may function in a better manner. Its aim is at generating awareness of contemporary social issues that concern us like AIDS. It thus provides need-based education to a particular section of society. Different media are used to provide non-formal education. The sixth five-year plan emphasised its need and from rural areas it has reached urban slums, hilly areas, deserts, tribal areas, etc. Assistance is provided to the state governments for running NFE centers by the central government (Aggarwal, 1992). The National Policy on Education, 1986, stressed the need for non-formal education for school dropouts, girl children who could not attend school and other such people deprived of regular educational facilities.

Apart from the print medium, electronic media like radio, television, audio and video cassettes, toll-free telephonic helplines, etc. are used to impart non-formal education. The educational programmes offered through the non-formal mode thus commonly aim to generate awareness, develop literacy, and enhance competence in those who are pursuing an occupation. It is provided by government organisations as well as by non-government ones. Even formal

educational institutions may be the providers of non- formal education, for instance that provided to farmers, teachers, etc. through the extension services of universities and colleges.

17.5 Diversification of Educational Streams

The educational system of our country has undergone expansion due to the inclusion of a higher per centage of student population in comparison to the pre independence era at every level of education. There has also been expansion in terms of increase in terms of educational facilities. Besides these, expansion of education has another connotation, namely diversification of educational streams or in other words, we can say the branching out of general education into new specialized areas. Education today thus has a much wider scope than in the past.

As we have been discussing, in ancient times the curriculum included only a few areas of study such as religious texts, literature, grammar, mathematics, etc. Much later, during Muslim rule, components of the curriculum changed according to the prevailing philosophy and needs. During this period the study of Persian language began to be studied by both Hindu and Muslim students because of its utility as the court language. Later on, with British rule, the western system of education was started. Systematic study of science and social sciences became parts of the curriculum. Various branches of science such as chemistry, physics, etc., were studied. With the use of English as the court language and also with the influence of the British rulers, English was studied by the Indians from different communities.

Following independence, the study of the freedom struggle became an integral part of the curriculum of schools. Vocationalisation of education led to the addition of new areas of study. During the last few decades, due to the changing socio-economic needs and changing outlook, several new areas of study have been introduced. New disciplines have come up in response to new demands. For instance, in response to industrialization, studies related to technology as well as management of industrial organisations started. Later on the study of management further branched out with the development of new types of organisations and their growing complexities. Today we have management studies related to educational institutions, hospitals, hotels, etc. Similarly, with the invention of computers and their growing utility in all sectors, studies related to the computer sciences are very much in demand. Studies related to Information Technology are common today. Exploration of the space, the oceans, underground mines, deep forests etc, has given rise to new dimensions in these areas. Genetic engineering, biotechnology, nanotechnology, etc. are some of the upcoming areas. Population education, environmental education; peace education, etc. have come up due to the present day requirements.

Apart from the socio economic needs, the other equally important factor is the rapidly expanding knowledge base in every sphere. This is leading to specialized knowledge in different areas. Along with the emergence of new technology, there is also the ongoing phenomenon of technology getting obsolete due to rapid advancements in knowledge. Therefore, the scope of education today holds many more disciplines and in this sense education can be said to have expanded.

Reflection and Action 17.7

What is the role played by distance education in educational development in India?

17.6 Conclusion

Education is a dynamic concept that has changed with changing times. It has grown in response to the socio-economic demands of the day as well as the philosophy prevailing during a particular period. In Vedic times education was mainly for the elite of society. It was imparted in ashrams, gurukuls, etc. Study of religious texts, literature, grammar, mathematics, etc. were considered to be important. Students stayed with their teachers and were like members of his family. There was thus a close relationship between the teacher and the taught. Disciplined life was expected from them. In the Buddhist period the expansion of education started, reaching out to include students from different sections of society. Education was also institutionalized during this period and was imparted at monasteries. However, the curriculum reflected the continuation of the components of the Vedic period. In the medieval period the form of education changed and madrasas and *makhtabs* were opened as centers of learning. Learning of religious texts, jurisprudence, Persian, etc. started. In the British period western education with emphasis on the learning of science and English began. Women's education, which had so far been neglected, also started picking up.

After independence special efforts were made to strengthen the education system. The rate of enrolment was dismal. The rate of dropout was very high and much needed to be done for women's education and for the people of the backward communities. Several commissions and committees have been set up to review educational issues and policies have been framed. The Constitution also includes provisions to strengthen the educational system. The conditions regarding the education of the marginalised sections like women, backward communities and people from rural areas have today improved considerably. Expansion of education although closely related to its growth has taken place in the true sense since independence. It has been in terms of student enrolment at different levels of education, enrolment of women and other marginalized sections at different levels, increase in the number of educational facilities and also due to the diversification of general education in response to the dynamic socio-economic conditions and rapid expansion of the knowledge base.

17.7 Further Reading

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UNIT 18

Constitutional Provisions and Educational Policies in India

Contents

- 18.1 Introduction
- 18.2 Constitutional Provisions Regarding Education
- 18.3 Educational Policies
- 18.4 Conclusion
- 18.5 Further Reading

Learning Objectives

In this unit we shall discuss the various constitutional provisions regarding education and some of the major educational policies. Hence, following the study of this unit you should be able to:

- know about the constitutional provisions regarding education;
- deliberate upon the policies on education; and
- reflect upon the linkages between educational policies with the educational provisions enshrined in the Constitution.

18.1 Introduction

In the previous unit we have discussed the expansion and growth of education in India and seen that education, over the years, has continuously evolved to become more inclusive and that it has also diversified into various streams. Such growth and expansion has not been an undirected movement. It has been directed, through certain guidelines on various issues in education. But from where do we get such guidelines? In this unit we shall take up this discussion it would include deliberations upon the constitutional provisions regarding education that happen to be the fountainhead of all policies, rules and regulations enacted for educational administration. Thereafter we shall bring forth some of the legislations that have been enacted to regulate certain aspects of education in India. Finally we shall introduce you to some of the major policies that have been framed to regulate matters pertaining to education in India. These policies, besides regulating education, also serve as points of reference for educational issues and ensure uniformity in approach. Discussing all the provisions, legislations and policies on education in detail would not be feasible in this unit. Hence, we shall restrict our study to a brief deliberation on these aspects.

18.2 Constitutional Provisions Regarding Education

A society has several aspirations that are formulated as its goals. These aspirations are generally related to social development and security, which are to be achieved through tasks like ensuring the general well being of the people, economic growth, preservation and transmission of culture, etc. To fulfill these aspirations and reach its goals, societies have acknowledged the potential of education as the means to attain these ends. This has led to the inception of the formal educational system and education gradually becoming a social responsibility. But in the past such privileges were enjoyed by a miniscule part of the population. Later on it was realized that education has become more inclusive and encompass larger sections of the population in order that development is widespread and sustainable. As has been the United Nations, equitable social development is a development and it is also necessary for eradicating

poverty. Hence, there is the need to improve and enhance well being and the quality of life of all people and through social integration create "a society for all", where every individual has an active role to play. Education is the key to attaining all these objectives. Besides, it is also the means of promoting cohesiveness in a multicultural society like India. Therefore, to fulfill these needs of society, the founders of our Constitution included certain provisions to serve as beacons for the process of development of education. In this section we shall discuss these provisions briefly.

In the beginning, education was primarily a State subject and was exclusively the responsibility of the States, the Central Government being concerned directly with certain areas like coordination, determination of standards in technical and higher education etc. In 1976, following a Constitutional amendment (42nd), education became the joint responsibility of the Central and State Government, i.e. a concurrent subject. However, the Constitution still places certain educational matters within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Union. These are: maintenance of Central Universities and institutions of national importance, declared as such by Parliament by law; all Union agencies and institutions for professional, vocational or technical training or for promotion of special studies or research; and the coordination and determination of standards in institutions of higher education or research and scientific and technical institutions (Entries 63,64,65 and 66 of List I). As per Article 239, the Government of India, being responsible for the administration of the Union Territories, has the executive and legislative authority for all subjects including education.

We shall now discuss the constitutional provisions regarding education briefly. There are several fundamental rights in Part III of the Constitution provided to the citizens of India and some of them have a bearing on education too. In keeping with these rights there are several provisions with a bearing on education, about which we shall discuss now.

As per **Article 28** there is the freedom to attend religious instructions or worship in certain types of educational institutions. However, as per Clause 1, of this article no religious instruction shall be provided in any educational institution wholly maintained out of State funds. But as per Clause 2, nothing in Clause 1 shall be applicable to an educational institution, which is administered by the state but has been established under any endowment or trust, which requires that religious instruction shall be imparted in such an institution. The third Clause states that a person attending an educational institution recognized by the state or receiving aid out of state funds shall take part in any religious instruction that may be imparted in such institution or attend any religious worship that may be conducted in such institution or in its premises only if such person consents to it or if s/he is a minor, his/her guardian consents to it.

Article 29 pertains to the Cultural and Educational Rights of the citizens. Clause 1 of this Article states that any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part of it, having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same. Clause 2 states that no citizen shall be denied admission to any educational institution maintained by the state or receiving aid out of state funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of these.

Article 30 is regarding the right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions. Its Clause 1 states that all minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. The second clause states that the state shall not, in granting aid to educational institutions, discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language.

Article 21A is regarding the proposed Right to Education. It has been inserted by the 86th Amendment of the Constitution in December 2002, but is yet to be brought into force. It states that the state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine.

Directive Principles of State Policy on Education: This has been included in the part IV of the Constitution and some of these principles have a bearing on education. Article 41 pertains to right to work, to education and to public assistance in certain cases. This Article urges the State to make effective provisions for securing the right to work, to education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement, and in other cases of undeserved want.

Article 45 deals with the provision for free and compulsory education for children. This Article states that the state shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of the Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years. But now, following an amendment as discussed above, this has been converted into the right to education (yet to be implemented), while this Article now pertains to early childhood care and education. It provides for early childhood care and education for children below the age of six years.

Article 46 deals with promotion of educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections. This Article states that the State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

We thus see that while certain educational provisions flow from the fundamental rights provided to the citizens, there are certain Directive Principles of state policy that urge upon the state to develop an egalitarian society by equalizing educational opportunities.

The Constitution of India also includes certain **Fundamental Duties** of the citizens, which are prescribed Article 51 A. It states, among other things, that it shall be the duty of every citizen of India:

- to strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievement.
- who is a parent or guardian to provide opportunities for education to his child or, as the case may be, ward between the age of six and fourteen years. Added by 86th Amendment of December 2002, but yet to be brought into force.

The educational implications of the fundamental duties are immense. They are reflected in the curricular and co-curricular activities, in the teaching-learning process, administration of educational institutions, i.e., in all efforts to make the children and the youth aware of them. For instance, the curriculum has to take care of the development of scientific temper in children, respect for cultural heritage, etc. Similarly value education, environmental education, being imparted in schools, etc., are also in keeping with these duties.

Reflection and Action 18.1

There are constitutional provisions that seek the advancement of the weaker sections of society. In your view what has been their impact on the educational attainment of these sections?

Part XI of the Constitution deals with the relationship of the Center with the states. In the seventh schedule (Article 246) there are three Lists, List I, Union List; List II, State List, and List III, Concurrent List.

List I (Union List)

Entry 63: Institutions known at the commencement of the Constitution as Benares Hindu University, Aligarh Muslim University and Delhi University; the Universities established in pursuance of Article 371E; any other institution declared by Parliament by law to be an institution of national importance are included in this list. Later on other institutions too have been included in this List.

Entry 64: Institutions for scientific or technical education financed by the Government of India wholly or in part and declared by Parliament by law to be institutions of national importance.

Entry 65: Union agencies and institutions for professional, vocational or technical training, including the training of police officers; or the promotion of special studies or research; or scientific or technical assistance in the investigation or detection of crime.

Entry 66: Co-ordination and determination of standards in institutions for higher education or research and scientific and technical institutions.

List II (State List)

This list includes educational issues of the state including universities (subject to the provisions of List I and Entry 25 of List III)

Entry 12: Libraries, museums, and other such institutions controlled and financed by the states; ancient and historical monuments and records, other than those declared to be of national importance.

List III (Concurrent List)

Entry 20: This provision has an indirect but significant bearing on education and is concerned with "Economic and Social Planning". Education Planning being an essential element of economic and social planning, the Government of India and the State Governments are to work together in preparing and implementing the national plans for the reconstruction of education.

Entry 25 - Vocational and technical training of labour:

Article 350A facilities for instruction in mother tongue at primary stage. This Article requires the Government to safeguard the interests of the children belonging to linguistic minority groups and to ensure adequate facilities for them to receive at least primary education through their mother tongue.

Article 351: places a special responsibility on the Government of India for promoting the spread of Hindi language and its development so that it may serve as a medium of expression for all in the composite culture of India.

Article 343 deals with the Official language of the Union. This Article states that:

- a) The official language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devnagari script. The form of numerals to be used for the official purposes of the Union shall be the international form of Indian numerals.
- b) Notwithstanding anything in clause (1), for a period of fifteen years from the commencement of this Constitution, English language shall continue to be used for all the official purposes of the Union.

At present Hindi is the Official Language of the Union of India and English is the associate official language. Thus the Constitution has provisions to regulate the language policies to be implemented in schools.

Article 15 prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. The third clause of this Article empowers the state to make special provisions for women and children and this includes education too.

Reflection and Action 18.2

You have read about the constitutional provisions regarding education. How would you summarize the social reasons for including such provisions?

18.3 Educational Policies

Now that we are aware of the constitutional provisions regarding education, let us discuss some of the major National Policies on education. The Government of India through its various agencies formulates policies on education and also revises them. We know that the Republic of India is governed on the basis of the Constitution of India, which came into force on 26th January 1950. Educational policies are framed by various agencies of the central as well as state governments in the perspective of the provisions in the Constitution. The policies framed by the agencies of the central government have a national jurisdiction and prevail over the policies framed by the states in case of conflict between them. These policies have a direct role in shaping the educational scenario and assist educational administration by ruling out doubts and ambiguities.

The constitutional provisions were framed way back but since then with the changing socio-economic milieu, there has been new thinking on social issues including education. Therefore, to comply with the demands of a changed socio-economic order the country and also to cope with those put forth by a changing global situation, policies on education have been changing. To accommodate these changes the constitutional provisions regarding education too have been amended from time to time. Therefore, the policies on education are dynamic in nature and are framed to respond to the existing political, social, economical and cultural needs of society. Policy decisions on individual issues can also be taken by the government or its agencies as and when felt necessary - in the form of Resolutions, Schemes, Guidelines, Orders, etc. The policies framed are a reflection of the existing philosophy of education and strongly display the outlook of society, and especially of the government, regarding educational issues.

Reflection and Action 18.3

Do you think we have succeeded in fulfilling the constitutional obligation regarding universalisation of elementary education? Justify your answer.

Apart from the Constitution that has provisions on education, educational policies are also articulated through legislations. Some of the important Central legislations having a bearing on the subjects allotted to the Department of Secondary and Higher Education are:

The University Grants Commission Act, 1956: The University Grants Commission (UGC) was established through this Act to regulate important issues pertaining to the functioning of the universities.

The All India Council for Technical Education Act, 1987: It led to the establishment of an All India Council for Technical Education basically for the proper planning and coordinated development of the technical education system in India.

The National Council of Teacher Education Act, 1993: It led to the establishment of a National Council for Teacher Education for achieving planned and coordinated development of the teacher education system, the regulation and proper maintenance of norms and standards in the teacher education system and for other related matters.

The National Council for Minority Educational Institutions Act, 2004: This Act regulates the educational institutions of the minorities of India.

The Copyright Act, 1957: This Act is regarding the various aspects related to copyright of literary, artistic, and architectural and other such aspects.

The Apprentices Act, 1961: This Act is regarding apprentices and their training.

The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995: This Act is an important step in ensuring equal opportunities for people with disabilities and their full participation in nation building.

We thus see that policies on education emerge mainly from the constitution and also from the legislations/agencies of the government. Now let us discuss some of the major policies on education.

National Policies on Education

In India since independence, there have mainly two comprehensive statements regarding the National Policy on Education, viz. those of 1968 and 1986. The former contained decisions of the Central Government mainly based on the recommendations of the National Commission on Education, 1964-66. The latter was a result of the renewed priority assigned to Education by the government then. The 1986 policy was thereafter reviewed by a Committee constituted in 1990 under the chairmanship of Acharya Ramamurti. On the basis of the recommendations of this Committee, certain provisions of the 1986 policy were modified in 1992.

National Policy on Education, 1968 (NPE 1968): Several policies were formulated on various aspects of education. For instance a policy was made that the state should put in strenuous efforts to implement Article 45 and provide free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of 6-14 years. There were also policies regarding status, education of teachers, development of languages, equalization of educational opportunities, etc. But one of the most significant policies was that regarding the uniform educational structure with 10+2+3 pattern to be followed in all the schools of the country. We shall not discuss NPE, 1968 in detail, as there has been another national policy after it in 1986.

National Policy on Education, 1986: The adoption of the educational policies formulated in 1968 led to considerable expansion in educational facilities all over the country and schools came up even in many parts of the rural areas within a radius of one kilometer of habitations. There was sizeable augmentation of facilities at other stages of education also. However, problems of access, quality, etc. that had accumulated over the years had assumed such massive proportions that they had to be dealt with utmost urgency. Apart from these reasons, a variety of new challenges and social needs made it imperative for the Government to formulate and implement a New Education Policy for the country.

It has been rightly mentioned in NPE (1986) that every country develops its system of education to express and promote its unique socio-cultural identity and also to meet the challenges of the times. During this period India reached a stage in its economic and technical development when a major effort had

to be made to derive the maximum benefit from the assets already created and to ensure that the benefits of such development reach all sections and it was also felt that education is the highway to reach this goal. So as to fulfill these aims, the Government of India initiated the formulation of a New Education Policy for the country and this is how the National Policy on Education (NPE, 1986) came about.

Programme of Action (POA, 1992): In order to implement the provisions of NPE, 1986, a Programme of Action was developed. The POA 1992 was circulated in 1993 to all the States and Union Territories to draw their own State Programme of Action (SPOA) by 31 December 1993 as per the decision taken in the 49th Meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) held on 15 October 1993.

Now that we are aware of the backdrop of NPE 1986, let us discuss the policies that emerged following the formulation of NPE (1986) and the POA, 1992. We shall bring to you the various sections of the entire policy so that your idea about the policies on various aspects of education is comprehensive.

- **The Essence and Role of Education**

Education has been considered by the NPE, 1986 to be essential for all as it is fundamental to all-round development - material and spiritual. It has also been expressed that education has an acculturating role and that it refines sensitivities and perceptions that contribute to national cohesion, scientific temper and independence of mind and spirit, which in turn further the goals of socialism, secularism and democracy as enshrined in our constitution. Education is thus considered as a unique investment in the present as well as the future and this cardinal principle is the key to the National Policy on Education.

- **The National System of Education**

NPE, 1986 vouched for a National System of Education, which would imply that up to a given level, all students, irrespective of caste, creed, location or sex, have access to education of a comparable quality and to achieve this, the Government will initiate appropriately funded programmes.

- **Education for Equality**

NPE, 1986 accords great importance to removing disparities and equalizing educational opportunity by attending to the specific needs of those who have been denied equality. There would be efforts to uplift weaker and neglected sections of society like women, Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). The policy aspires to use education as an agent of basic change in the status of woman. Special educational facilities for students of weaker sections of society like SCs and STs and recruitment of teachers from these sections were also envisaged. Similarly educational facilities would also be provided to other groups like those from other educationally backward sections and areas, physically handicapped people and the minorities as certain minority groups are yet to advance educationally Hence, greater attention will be paid to the education of these groups in the interests of equality and social justice. For the handicapped the objective is to integrate the physically and mentally handicapped with the general community as equal partners, to prepare them for normal growth and to enable them to face life with courage and confidence. Policies regarding adult education have been formulated to strengthen the cause of adult education through various and systematic programmes of adult and continuing education.

Reflection and Action 18.4

There are constitutional provisions that seek the advancement of the weaker sections of the society. In your view what has been their impact on the educational attainment of these sections?

- **Reorganization of Education at Different Stages**

Policies have been made for the reorganization of education at different stages:

Early childhood care & education (ECCE): The National Policy on Children emphasizes investment for the welfare of young children, particularly those who are from those sections of the populations, where most of the children happen to be the first generation learners. Further, the programmes for (ECCE) would cater to the holistic nature of child development, viz., nutrition, health and social, mental, physical, moral and emotional development. ECCE will receive high priority and be suitably integrated with the Integrated Child Development Services programme, wherever possible.

Elementary education: Regarding Elementary education the policy places thrust on two aspects: (i) universal enrolment and universal retention of children up to 14 years of age, and (ii) a substantial improvement in the quality of education. Also there would be a child centered approach that would be warm, welcoming and encouraging so that children are attracted to school and motivated to learn.

Primary schools would be provided with essential facilities. The scope of Operation Blackboard will be enlarged to develop and upgrade the infrastructure and it would be extended even to the upper primary level. The number of teachers would also be increased.

Non-formal education: The Non-formal Education Programme, would be strengthened and expanded to provide education to school dropouts, children from habitations without the facilities of schools like border or remote areas, working children and girls who cannot attend whole-day schools.

A Resolve: The New Education Policy accords highest priority to the problem of dropout and resolves to arrest the high rate of dropout of children from schools by adopting strategies based on micro-planning, applied at the grassroots level all over the country so as to ensure retention of the children enrolled in schools.

Secondary education: This policy envisaged widening of access to secondary education with an emphasis on enrolment of girls, SCs and STs, particularly in science, commerce and vocational streams. It also desired that Boards of Secondary Education be reorganized and vested with autonomy so that they can improve the quality of secondary education. Providing computer literacy in secondary level institutions so that children are equipped with necessary computer skills and are prepared for the emerging technological world was also considered.

Pace setting schools: To provide quality education to children with special talent or aptitude and offer them opportunities to utilize their potential, pace setting schools would be set up for them, and, if required, free education, would be provided to them.

Vocationalisation: The introduction of systematic, well-planned and rigorously implemented programmes of vocational education was envisioned as it is crucial for educational reorganisation and to enhance employability, bridge the gap between the demand and supply of skilled manpower and to provide an alternative for those not interested in pursuing higher education.

Higher education: Higher education contributes to national development through dissemination of specialized knowledge and skills and being at the apex of the educational pyramid, it has a key role in producing teachers for the education system. In the context of the unprecedented explosion of knowledge, higher education has to become dynamic. It was also decided that

urgent steps would be taken to protect the system from degradation.

Open university and distance learning: As per the NPE, 1986, open learning system has been initiated to augment opportunities for higher education, as an instrument of democratising education and to make it a lifelong process. The flexibility and innovativeness of the open learning system are particularly suited to the diverse requirements of the citizens of our country, including those who had joined the vocational stream. It was decided that Indira Gandhi National Open University, established in 1985 to fulfill these objectives, will be strengthened and establishment of open universities in the states would be supported. The National Open School will be strengthened and open learning facilities extended in a phased manner at the secondary level in all parts of the country.

Delinking degrees from jobs: A beginning will be made in de-linking degrees from jobs in selected areas. However, this cannot be applied to occupation-specific courses like Engineering, Medicine, Law, and Teaching etc. Similarly, it would not be applicable to services requiring specialists with academic qualifications in humanities, social sciences, sciences, etc.

Rural university: The new pattern of the rural university will be consolidated and developed on the lines of Mahatma Gandhi's ideas on education so as to take up the challenges of micro planning at grassroots levels for the transformation of rural areas.

- **Technical and Management Education:** It was decided that although the two streams of technical and management education are functioning separately, it is essential to view them together, because of their close relationship and complementary concerns. It was also decided that the reorganisation of Technical and Management Education should take into account the anticipated scenario by the turn of the century, with reference to the likely changes in the economy, social environment, production and management processes, the rapid expansion of knowledge and the advances in science and technology.
- **Making the System Work:** It was envisioned that all these tasks related to education could not be performed in a state of disorder. Hence, education needs to be managed in an atmosphere of intellectual rigour, seriousness of purpose and, at the same time, with freedom essential for innovation and creativity. While far-reaching changes will have to be incorporated in the quality and range of education, the process of introducing discipline into the system will have to be started.

Reflection and Action 18.5

In your view what should be the considerations leading to policy formulation on an educational issue?

- **Reorienting the Content and Process of Education**

This involved the following:

The cultural perspective: The existing schism between the formal system of education and the country's rich and varied cultural traditions need to be bridged. The preoccupation with modern technologies cannot be allowed to sever our new generations from the roots in India's history and culture. Education can and must bring about the fine synthesis between change-oriented technologies and the country's continuity of cultural tradition.

Value Education: The growing concern over the erosion of values is necessitating readjustments in the curriculum in order to make education a forceful tool for the cultivation of social and moral values.

The Evaluation Process and Examination Reform: Assessment of performance is an Integral part of any process of learning and teaching and hence, NPE, 1986 considered the following as necessary:

The objective will be to re-cast the examination system so as to ensure a method of assessment that is a valid and reliable measure of student development and a powerful instrument for improving teaching and learning; in functional terms, this would mean:

- a) The elimination of excessive element of chance and subjectivity;
- b) The de-emphasis of memorization;
- c) Continuous and comprehensive evaluation that incorporates both scholastic and non-scholastic aspects of education, spread over the total span of instructional time;
- d) Effective use of the evaluation process by teachers, students and parents;
- e) Improvement in the conduct of examination;
- f) The introduction of concomitant changes in instructional materials and methodology;
- g) tradition of the semester system from the secondary stage in a phased manner;
- h) The use of grades in place of marks.

Policies were also developed on many other issues like books and library, languages, media and educational technology, environmental education, population education, yoga, physical education, role of the youth, mathematics and science teaching.

- **The Teacher**

As per the NPE 1986, the status of the teacher reflects the socio-cultural ethos of a society and it is said that no people can rise above the level of its teachers. The Government and the community should endeavour to create conditions, which will help motivate and inspire teachers on constructive and creative lines. It was also expressed that teachers should have the freedom to innovate, to devise appropriate methods of communication and activities relevant to the needs and capabilities of learners and the community.

- **Teacher education**

Teacher education is a continuous process, and its pre-service and in-service components are inseparable. As the first step, the system of teacher education will be overhauled. The new programmes of teacher-education will emphasize continuing education and the need for teachers to meet the thrusts envisaged in this Policy.

- **The management of education**

An overhaul of the system of planning and the management of education will receive high priority. The guiding considerations will be steps such as evolving a long-term planning and management perspective of education and its integration with the country's developmental and manpower needs; decentralization and the creation of a spirit of autonomy for educational institutions; giving pre-eminence to people's involvement, including association of non-governmental agencies and voluntary effort, etc.

- **Resources**

NPE 1986 stated that resources, to the extent possible, will be raised by mobilizing funds from the community, involving them to maintain school buildings and supplies of some consumables, raising fees at the higher levels of education and saving resources through the efficient use of facilities

- **Review**

NPE, 1986 expressed that the implementation of the various parameters of the New Policy must be reviewed every five years. Appraisals at short intervals will also be made to ascertain the progress of implementation and the trends emerging from time to time.

- **The future**

According to NPE, 1986, the future shape of education in India is too complex to envision with precision. Yet, given our tradition, which has almost always put a high premium on intellectual and spiritual attainment, we are bound to succeed in achieving our objectives. The main task is to strengthen the base of the pyramid, with about a billion people. Equally, it is important to ensure that those at the top of the pyramid are among the best in the world. It has further been expressed that further intensifying the nation-wide effort in Human Resource Development, with education playing its multifaceted role, is now possible.

We have not discussed the policies in details here, nevertheless you would find that NPE, 1986 covers all the major aspects related to education and the process of implementing these policies all over the country has started.

Reflection and Action 18.6

You have read that policies on educational matters are formulated on the basis of the constitutional provisions and the legislations. There has been a directive from the Supreme Court of India to teach environmental science in schools and similarly with the funds from UNICEF, some teacher education programmes are now preparing to impart education related to AIDS. How would you relate them to the fundamental duties and other constitutional provisions on education?

18.4 Conclusion

Since independence, there has been considerable growth and expansion of education in India. The goal of a modern secular and democratic society like India is to strive for egalitarianism through equalization of educational opportunities and also to enable itself to meet the challenges of the modern world. Therefore, education has to be more inclusive and reach the vast majority of our population and at the same time equip the learners with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for ensuring the development of the nation. To fulfill these demands the growth of education has to be well directed and along certain guidelines. These guidelines are the educational policies framed by the government and its agencies from time to time. These policies are formulated in the perspective of the constitutional provisions regarding education, which, following an amendment of the Constitution is a concurrent subject and is the joint responsibility of the center and the states. However, certain educational matters are still within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Union.

Our Constitution provides us with certain fundamental rights. In keeping with these rights there are several provisions with a bearing on education, for instance, freedom to attend religious instructions or worship in certain types of educational institutions in certain cases; in keeping with the cultural and educational rights of minorities, the right to set up educational institutions and administer them, etc. Similarly some of the Directive Principles of State Policy too have a bearing on education, as for instance Article 41 urges the state to ensure the right to work, to education and to public assistance in certain cases. Article 46 is for the promotion of educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections. The Constitution of India also includes certain Fundamental Duties of the

citizens and through education learners are to internalize them. Besides the Constitution has provisions regarding the use of mother tongue for providing instructions, promotion of Hindi, etc.

From these provisions and the different legislations made by the government, policies on education have emerged. In 1968 we had the first national policy on education and thereafter in 1986 we had the new national policy on education. In 1992, Programme of Action was developed to implement the NPE, 1986. NPE, 1986 has accorded great importance to the role of education for the development of the nation and has reiterated the importance of national system of education. It envisages education to bring about equality among the different sections of the population. It also aspires to reorganize education at different stages right from early childhood to higher education, vocational education, distance education, etc. It provides directions for technical and management education, reorienting the content and process of education, for the general well being and professional growth of teachers, planning and management of education, etc. Thus the policies on education provide a direction to the field of education in our country.

In your view have we succeeded in fulfilling the constitutional obligation regarding universalisation of elementary education? Justify your answer.

In your view what should be the considerations leading to policy formulation on an educational issue?

18.5 Further Reading

Rao, D.B. 1998. *National Policy on Education Towards an Enlightened and Humane Society*. Discovery Publishing House, New Delhi

Sharma, Y.K. 2001. *History and Problems of Education*. Volume1 Kanishka Publishers: New Delhi

Unit 19

Universalization of Elementary Education

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Learning Objectives

After going through this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the need and importance of universalization of elementary education in India;
- describe the structure of elementary education;
- describe various developments that took place for universalization of elementary education during pre and post independence periods;
- discuss the present scenario of elementary education in India;
- discuss various innovations, initiatives and strategies taken for universalization of elementary education; and
- explain the role of distance education in teacher training at elementary level.

19.1 Introduction

After India attained independence, elementary education became one of the most important item on the agenda of successive governments at the centre. This is because the makers of Indian Constitution had made a provision that within a period of ten years from 1950, free and compulsory elementary education would be provided to all children up to 14 years of age. The rationale behind such a provision was to make all the citizens of the country literate so that they could become productive members of society. Elementary education is provided to the children in the age group 6-14 years. This is the most important and formative period in a child's life. Apart from imparting a child the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic, necessary care is taken to foster all round development of the personality through curricular and co-curricular activities. A person with elementary education can become a self-reliant, sensible and productive citizen of the country. Research has shown that increasing the average primary schooling of the labor force even by one year can increase output substantially (World Bank). The Social benefits of elementary education are immense. Educated parents send their children to school. Elementary education leads to perpetuation of benefits from one generation to another (Sinha 2000). The importance of elementary education is very crucial not only for the country but also for all the citizens of the country. The concept of elementary education in its structural sense varies from state to state. However, there is a common structure of education, which has been accepted as the national system of education. Let us examine the structure of elementary education in the national system of education.

19.2 Structure of Elementary Education

The national system of education was enunciated by the National Policy on Education (1968) in the form of 10+2+3. The National Policy on Education (1986) defined that the structure of elementary education would consist of 5 years of primary education and 3 years of upper primary education. But there are variations in the states with regard to organization of elementary education. For example, some states have 4 years of primary and 3 years of upper primary structure. Some states have 5 years of primary and 2 years of upper primary structure. In spite of these variations, elementary education structure is understood as defined by the National Policy on Education (1986) as presented in Figure 1.1.

Age 4-6	Pre-Primary	Elementary Education
Class I-V Age 6-11	Primary	
Class VI-VIII Age 12-14	Upper Primary	
Class IX-X Age 15-16	Secondary	
Class XI-XIII Age 17-18	Senior Secondary	

Fig.1.1: National System of Education

Although serious concerns for elementary education to all were expressed during the post-independence period, one can also find similar concerns before the country became independent. Let us look at the concern for elementary education from a historical perspective.

19.3 Historical Perspective

During Vedic times, elementary education was imparted through *Guru-Shishya Parampara* (teacher-taught tradition). The children went to the Ashram (School) of the Guru where they were taught religious texts. With the rise of Buddhism children were taught through the monastic system of education. By the tenth century, there were *pathshalas* and *tolls*, which provided primary education to children. During the medieval period, *Maktabs* attached to mosques used to impart elementary education. The *Maktabs* were concerned with teaching children how to read and write and special emphasis was given on how to read the Quran.

The Pre-Independence Period

Serious concern for education among Indians during the pre-Independence period, i.e., the British period, started with the Macaulay's Minutes. The main purpose of Macaulay's Minutes was to spread western education among the masses. During that time, there were indigenous elementary schools, providing for the teaching of the three Rs – reading, writing and arithmetic – to a few categories of people like priests, business community and rich farmers. The British government introduced elementary education to educate Indians to help it in administrative work. The content of education was mostly western ideas, concepts, history of England, mathematics and science, etc. But the system of elementary education was not suitable for the local community. Hence, the Indian Education Commission of 1882 which emphasized elementary education suggested transfer of elementary education to the local community. With awakening among the masses for education, there was a great demand for elementary education.

The first ever demand for compulsory primary education was made by Gokhale. But his resolution was these a Parliament in India in 1910? was unfortunately defeated. During 1921-37, elementary education came under Indian control and made remarkable progress. But the large-scale expansion got a setback with the Hartog Committee Report in 1928. However, the committee emphasized improving retention, reducing wastage and stagnation and improvement of elementary education. Another landmark during the pre-independence period was that of the Basic Education Programme of Gandhiji. Popularly known as the Wardha scheme of education, it advocated a system of elementary education, which emphasized earning while learning. Teaching of craft, child-centredness, activity-based, close interface between school and community were some of the features of the basic education programme.

Post-Independence Period

The post-independence period witnessed a series of committees, commission and constitutional amendments recommending for free and compulsory elementary education. In 1947, the Kher Committee was set up to explore means to promote universal elementary education and it made recommendations on the association of local bodies with the administration of primary education and the creation of education bodies.

But the first milestone to universalize elementary education was laid by the Constitution of India, adopted in 1950. Article 45 of the Indian Constitution under the Directive Principles of State Policy says: "The state shall endeavour to provide within a period of 10 years from the commencement of the Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete 14 years."

Following the constitutional directives, the Five-Year Plans allocated large finance for elementary education. There was an attempt to adopt Basic Education of Gandhiji as the national pattern of elementary education. However, the attempt did not get support. The Education Commission (1964-66) recommended the 10+2+3 pattern of education, which was accepted by the first ever National Policy on Education (NPE 1968). But the most comprehensive policy on education was the National Policy on Education (NPE, 1986), which was reviewed and revised in its Plan of Action (POA 1992). Both NPE (1986) and POA (1992) took universalisation of elementary education with serious concern and emphasized universal access, universal enrolment and universal retention. In 1990, Acharya Rammurthy Committee also recommended for compulsory primary education. In 1992, India signed 'UN Convention on Right of the Child' and committed itself to providing compulsory elementary education. In 1993, the Supreme Court upheld elementary education as a fundamental right. The Saikia Committee also recommended making elementary education a fundamental right in 1997. In 2001, the 93rd Amendment Bill was introduced to make free and compulsory elementary education a fundamental right. The 93rd Amendment Bill was passed (renumbered as 86th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002) by the Parliament in December 2002 and free and compulsory elementary education became a fundamental right of every citizen.

Reflection and Action 19.1

Trace the development of Elementary education in India.

19.4 The Present Scenario

Table 19.1: Literacy Rate

Year	Persons	Literacy rate %	
		Males	Females
1951	18.33		
1961	28.31	27.16	8.86
1971	34.45	40.40	15.34
1981	43.56	45.95	21.97
1991	52.21	56.37	29.75
2001	65.38	64.13	39.29
		75.85	54.16

Source: Selected Educational Statistics (2000-2001), MHRD, Government of India New Delhi, 2002

From the Table 19.1, we find that the literacy rate has significantly increased from 18.33 in 1951 to 65.38 in 2001. Although literacy rates of males and females have increased since 1951, the literacy rate of females is still far behind that of males.

Table 19.2: Number of Primary and Upper Primary School in India

Year	Primary Schools	Upper Primary Schools	Ratio of Primary to Upper Primary Schools
1950-51	2,09,671	13,596	15.4
1960-61	3,30,399	49,663	6.7
1970-71	4,08,378	90,621	4.5
1980-81	4,94,503	1,18,855	4.2
1990-91	5,60,935	1,51,456	3.7
1995-96	5,90,421	1,71,216	3.4
1998-99*	6,26,737	1,90,166	3.3
1999-2000*	6,41,695	1,98,004	3.2

* Provisional

Source: Selected Educational Statistics, 1990-2000, MHRD, Government of India 2001.

From the Table 19.2, it is evident that the number of primary and upper primary schools has significantly increased since 1950-51. Now let us look at the Gross Enrolment Ratio, All India Level, 1950-51 to 1999-2000.

Table 19.3 : Gross Enrolment Ratio, All India Level

Year	Primary Level			Upper Primary Level		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1950-51	60.6	24.8	42.6	20.6	4.6	12.7
1960-61	82.6	41.4	62.4	33.2	11.3	22.5
1970-71	95.5	60.5	78.6	46.5	20.8	33.4
1980-81	95.8	64.1	78.6	54.3	28.6	41.9
1990-91*	98.1	75.9	80.5	79.8	54.6	62.1

From Table 3, it is clear that enrolment figures in terms of Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at primary and upper primary levels have improved from 1950-51 to 1999-2000. Moreover, the differences in the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) have also reduced. But, the Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) at Primary level for boys was 78 per cent and for girls 64 per cent in 1997-98. The overall NER was 71 per cent suggesting that 29 per cent of children at primary level in 6-11 age group continued to remain out of school. Educationally backward states have even lower NER than the national average of 71 per cent. (Sinha 2004). Moreover, dropout rates continue to be high, retention of children in schools is poor, achievement levels are low, and wastage is considerable. Despite increased participation of girls, disparity still exists, more particularly among scheduled castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) (Gopalan 1998).

The National Policy on Education (1986) and the Programme of Action (1992) took up the challenge of universalization of elementary education seriously. The following three are the main points of emphasis of these policy documents.

- Universal access
- Universal enrolment
- Universal retention

Apart from emphasizing these three aspects, the documents advocated:

- decentralized participative planning with community involvement;
- infrastructure support provision in terms of improved school environment; satisfactory condition of school buildings, provision of teaching and learning materials;
- qualitative improvement in elementary education through child-centred, activity based teaching learning process;
- Restructuring of pre-service and in-service training;
- addressing the issues of access and quality.

The concern of the NPE and POA got further strengthened by the international efforts made by UNICEF, UNDP and the World Bank. The World Conference on Education for All (EFA), held on March 5-9, 1990 in (Thailand), organized by UNICEF, UNDP and the World Bank, adopted a Declaration calling upon 155 member states and international agencies to take effective steps for achieving EFA by the year 2000. It emphasized basic learning needs of all children like literacy, oral expression, numeracy, problem solving and basic learning contents such as knowledge, skills, values and attitudes.

For fulfillment of these learning needs, the Declaration of EFA took a broadened vision of basic education as consisting of formal schooling, non-formal education programmes as well as open learning systems which together attempt to provide basic-education to all children as well as adults (DEP-DPEP 2003). As a follow-up to the Conference, the World Education Forum of Education for All met at Dakar, Senegal, during April 26-28, 2000. The six goals adopted by the forum are:

- Expanding and improving comprehensive early education care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged sections.
- Ensuring that by 2015, all children, particularly girl children, in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities have access to free and compulsory primary education of good quality.
- Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skill programmes.
- Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.

- Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
- Improving every aspect of the quality of education and ensuring their excellence so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and life skills.

Box 19.1: National and International Level Initiatives for achieving Universal Elementary Education

The national/international level initiatives like, the resolution of the National Policy on Education (1986) and the Programme of Action (1992) to ensure free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality to all children upto 14 years of age by 2000, the Education for All (EFA) Summit of the nine high-population (E-9) countries held in New Delhi in December 1993, the World Conference on Education for all in Jomiten, in March 1990 and subsequent Dakar Framework for Education for All (2000) emphasizing on E-9 countries to generate their own approach towards achieving EFA, have resulted in a number of innovations, initiatives and strategies being implemented in India to achieve universalisation of elementary education.

19.5 Initiatives, Innovations and Strategies

Although the government of India has recently made concerted efforts to universalize elementary education several initiatives were taken right after NPE (1986). Let us discuss the initiatives taken after 1986.

Operation Blackboard: The scheme of Operation Blackboard was launched in 1987. The basic aim was to improve the school environment and enhance retention and learning achievement of children by providing minimum essential facilities in all primary schools. According to this scheme, the following are provided to each school.

- i) At least two reasonably larger all-weather rooms, with a veranda and separate toilet facilities for boys and girls;
- ii) At least two teachers – one of them a female – for each school; and
- iii) Essential teaching-learning materials including blackboards, maps, charts, toys and equipment for work experience.

As part of this scheme, some 523,000 primary schools have been covered as originally envisaged with central government assistance.

Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project: The Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project (APPEP) was initiated with the assistance of Overseas Development Agency (ODA) with an estimated outlay of Rs.1000 million during the 8th Plan. It adopted a two-pronged strategy of improving classroom transaction by training teachers and giving a fillip to school construction activities.

Bihar Education Project: The Bihar Education Project (BEP) was launched in 1991. The main aim of the project was to bring about quantitative and qualitative improvement in the elementary system, with emphasis on the education of deprived sections of society, such as SCs, STs and Women. The project emphasized participatory planning and implementation. The total project outlay was Rs.3600 million, which included the total outlay for the second phase (1996-98) i.e. Rs.613 million which was shared by the UNICEF, Government of India and Government of Bihar.

Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Programme: The Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Programme (UPBEP) was launched in 1993 with the assistance of the World

Bank, through its International Development Agency (IDA). It had an outlay of Rs.7,288 million spread over seven years. The UP Government had to share 13 per cent of the total project cost. The project emphasized construction work of schools, Block Resource Centres (BRCs), preparation of training materials for teacher trainers and training of in-service teachers.

Reflection and Action 19.2

Why do you think it is essential to reach elementary education to every one in the society?

Non-Formal Education (NFE): The scheme of Non-Formal Education was introduced by the Government of India in 1979-80 with the objective of supporting the formal system in providing education to all children upto the age of 14 years . Initially, it targeted 10 educationally backward states of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. But the NPE (1986) reviewed the scheme and concluded that it was not catering to the children from habitations without schools, working children, and girls. Hence, the Policy suggested that apart from focusing on 10 educationally backward states, the scheme needed to be extended to urban slums, hilly, tribal and desert areas and working children in other states and UTs as well. It also recommended central grants to Voluntary Agencies (VAs) for running NFE centers. The Programme of Action (POA) 1992 further suggested some strategies for strengthening of the NFE scheme as mentioned below:

- i) Setting up NFE centers based on micro-planning exercise carried out for UEE.
- ii) Central role for community by involving them in setting up of the centre, identification of the instructor and supervision of the NFE centre.
- iii) Efforts to evolve different models of NFE programme for different target groups.
- iv) Adequate training and orientation of NFE instructors (30 days initial training of instructors and 20 days in subsequent years etc.).
- v) Linkage with the formal school to facilitate lateral entry of the learners from the NFE stream.
- vi) Efforts to link non-formal courses with formal schools.
- vii) Adoption of learner-centred approach. The learning levels for the learners to be equivalent to the formal system.

The NFE scheme had certain shortcomings in terms of very low investments; poor community involvement; problems in release of funds; several quality issues including training of instructors, and number of hours of teaching per day. Evaluation studies on the scheme of NFE were carried out by Parliamentary Standing Committees on Human Resource Development and on the dropout problem. Similarly, another study was conducted by the Planning Commission. Based on the findings of the studies, the scheme of NFE was restructured and renamed as Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative Innovation Education (EGS and AIE). The new scheme was introduced with effect from April 1, 2001. According to MHRD (2001-2002), "EGS and AIE envisages flexible strategies including schools in unserved habitations, seasonal hostels or condensed courses for migrating children, bridge courses, residential camps, drop-in centers for street and slum children, remedial coaching for children enrolled in formal schools and short-duration summer camps".

The scheme would support the following broad strategies:

- i) Setting up of schools in school-less habitations
- ii) Interventions for mainstreaming of 'out of school' children viz. through bridge courses, back to school camps, etc.

- iii) Strategies for very specific, difficult groups of children who cannot be mainstreamed.

These schemes became, later on, a part of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) the overall programme for Universalisation of Elementary Education.

National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (Mid-Day Meal-Scheme), 1995: The scheme was launched on 15th August, 1995 to give a boost to Universalisation of Elementary Education. It emphasized increasing enrolment, retention and attendance in primary classes by supplementing nutritional requirements of children attending primary schools. The scheme was implemented in 2408 Blocks in the first year, and covered the whole country in a phased manner by 1997-98. The programme originally covered children of primary stage (Classes 1 to V) in government, local body and government aided schools. It was extended to cover children studying in Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative Innovation Education (AIE) Centres in October 2002.

National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL): NPEGEL aims at providing education to under privileged/disadvantaged girls from class I to VIII as a separate and distinct gender component plan of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). The programme is necessary to achieve UEE for girls in educationally backward areas.

The objectives of NPEGEL are:

- a) To develop and promote facilities to provide access and to facilitate retention of girls and to ensure greater participation of women and girls in the field of education.
- b) To improve the quality of education through various interventions and to stress upon the relevance and quality of girls' education for their empowerment.

The scheme would be applicable in Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs) where the level of rural female literacy is less than the national average and the gender gap is above the national average, blocks of districts which have at least 5% SC/ST population and SC/ST female literacy rate below 10%, and selected urban slums. The target groups under this scheme are out of school girls, dropout girls, over-age girls who have not completed elementary education, working girls, girls from marginalized social groups, girls with low attendance and girls with low levels of achievement. The programme aims at development of teaching learning material CDs, films, guidelines for gender concerns, compilation of supplementary reading material, etc.

Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV): The scheme called Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) has been approved by the Government of India to set up upto 750 residential schools with boarding facilities at elementary level for girls belonging to SC, ST, OBC and minorities in difficult areas. The scheme will be coordinated with the existing schemes of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) and Mahila Samakhya (MS). The objective of KGBV is to ensure access and quality education to the girls of disadvantaged groups of society by setting up residential schools with boarding facilities at elementary level. The scheme will be operational in these Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBS) where, as per Census data of 2001, rural female literacy is below the national average and gender gap in literacy is more than the national average. Among these blocks, schools may be set up in areas with:

- Concentration of tribal population, with low female literacy and/or a large number of girls out of school;

- Concentration of SC, OBC and minority population, with low female literacy and/or a large number of girls out of school;
- Areas with low female literacy; and
- Areas with a large number of small-scattered habitations that do not qualify for a school.

The scheme will be implemented by the State Government through the Mahila Samakhyas (MS) Society in MS states and through the SSA in case of other states. Training for teachers and staff at the residential schools will be coordinated by the District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs), Block Resource Centres and the Mahila Samakhyas Resource Groups.

Lok Jumbish Project: Lok Jumbish Project was initiated in Rajasthan during 1992-94 in the first phase and extended upto 1998 in the second phase. The expenditure in the project was shared between Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (SIDA), Government of India and Government of Rajasthan. It is a unique project in which government agencies, teachers, NGO elected representatives and the people worked together to promote universalisation of primary education. The allocation for the project was Rs.1100 million for Phases I and II and Rs.4000 million for Phase-III. The seven guiding principles of Lok Jumbish are:

- A process rather than a product approach;
- Partnerships;
- Decentralized functioning;
- Participatory learning;
- Integration with the mainstream education system;
- Flexibility of management; and
- Creating multiple levels of leadership committed to quality and mission mode.

Janshala Programme: The Janshala Programme aimed at supporting ongoing efforts of the Government of India towards UEE. The programme was a joint effort of five UN agencies - UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO and UNFPA to universalise primary education. These agencies provided financial and technical support to the Government of India for a community-based primary education programme called the Joint Government of India-UN System Education Programme, the Janshala Programme. Special focus was given to the problems of girls and marginalized children. Though the programme was initiated in March 1997, the implementation was carried out in August 1998. Nine states were covered under this programme. In these states, the districts and blocks, which were not covered under DPEP, were taken into account by identifying blocks with low female literacy, high concentration of SCs, STs and high incidence of child labour. The main objectives of the programme were:

- To enhance and sustain community participation in effective school management;
- To improve performance of teachers in the use of interactive child-centred and gender-sensitive methods of teaching, especially in multi-grade classrooms;
- To improve performance of teachers in the use of interactive child-centred and gender sensitive methods of teaching, especially in multi-grade classrooms; and
- To redress social constraints which affect attendance and performance of children (Mainly girls).

The project period was for five year (1998-2002). The total project outlay was Rs.1031 million. The states covered under the programme were Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Chhatisgarh.

Free and Compulsory Education as a Fundamental Right: The Constitution (86th Amendment) Act 2002, enacted in December 2002 sought to make free and compulsory education a Fundamental Right for all children in the age-group 6-14 years by inserting a new Article 21A in Part III (Fundamental Right) of the Constitution.

The new Article 21A reads as follows: "21A. Right to Education - The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine."

District Primary Education Programme (DPEP): The DPEP was launched in November 1994 to achieve universalisation of elementary education through district-specific planning and disaggregated target setting. The programme as conceptualized based on the experiences of APBEP, BEP and UPBEP. Unlike the earlier programmes, which had schematic piecemeal approach, the DPEP took a holistic view of primary education. The major features of DPEP were decentralized management, community mobilization, and district specific planning based on contextuality and research-based inputs.

While 85% of the cost involved in the programme was borne by the Central Government, the rest of the cost was the responsibility of the State Governments. The Central Government managed the fund with external funding. IDA provided \$260 million and \$425 million under Phase-I and Phase-II respectively. The European Union (EU) provided 150 Million ECU. The ODA (UK) extended a grant of \$80.21 million. The grant from the Netherlands amounted to \$25.8 million. The first phase of the programme covered 42 districts in the states of Assam, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamilnadu and Madhya Pradesh. The second phase covered 80 districts of Orissa, Himachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat and all the states of Phase-I. The districts were selected on the basis of female literacy below national average and (Total Literacy Campaign) TLCs have made a demand for elementary education in these districts.

Box 19.2 : Objectives and Achievements of DPEP

The main objectives of DPEP are:

- To provide all children with access to primary education either in the formal system or through the non-formal education (NFE) programme.
- To reduce differences in enrolment, dropout rates and learning achievement among gender and social groups to less than 5%.
- To reduce overall primary dropout rates for all students to less than 10%.
- To raise average achievement levels by at least 25% over measured base line levels and ensuring achievements of basic literacy and numeracy competencies and a minimum of 40% achievement levels in other competencies by all primary school children.

The achievement under DPEP obtained so far is as below:

- Opening of new schools numbered 0.160 million of which 0.084 million were alternative schools.
 - Creation of additional schooling facilities.
 - 45,900 new school buildings
 - 46,800 additional classrooms
 - 15,302 resource centers
 - 46,500 toilets
 - 16,700 drinking water facilities
- Appointment of para teachers/shiksha karmis (0.177 million)

Source: MHRD Annual Report (2002-2003)

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA): The scheme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was approved by the Government of India in November 16, 2000. It would subsume all existing programmes of UEE except Mahila Samakhya and Mid-day Meal Scheme. The districts would be units of programme implementation. Apart from improving the efficiency of the delivery system for quality-based education up to Class VIII, it would bridge the gender gap by involving the community in school management. The broad objectives of the scheme are:

- All children in school, Education Guarantee Centre, Alternate School, Back-to-School Camp or bridge course by 2003;
- All children in the 6th age group complete five years of primary schooling by 2007;
- All children in the 6-14 age group complete eight years of elementary schooling by 2010;
- Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life;
- Bridging of all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010; and
- Universal retention 2010.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a massive mission-mode campaign which covers the entire country and seeks to address the needs of 192 million children in 1.1 million habitations. Nearly 0.85 million existing primary and upper-primary schools and 33 million existing teachers would be covered under the Abhiyan (MHRD, Annual Report 2002-2003).

Reflection and Action 19.3

Critically evaluate attempts of government of India for the universalisation of elementary education

19.6 Innovative Intervention in Teacher Education for Universalization of Elementary Education

Shiksha Karmi Project (SKP)

The project was initiated in Rajasthan in 1987 with assistance from the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (SIDA). The project aims at UEE in socio-economic remote backward villages in Rajasthan with emphasis on girls' education. It identified teacher absenteeism as the main cause of high dropout rates. Under this project, regular teachers are replaced by local teachers who are less qualified, but specially trained. The Shiksha Karmi is a local person with a minimum qualification of Class VIII for men and Class V for women. She is given both induction training programme as well as periodic refresher courses. One of the outstanding achievements of SKP was 100% enrolment of children in 576 villages i.e. more than one fourth of the project villages.

MV Foundation Programme

This programme is implemented in the Ranga Reddy district of Andhra Pradesh to achieve universalisation of elementary education. The main concern of this programme is to eradicate child labour and put children into regular government schools by releasing them from child labour. Under this programme, the para teachers are appointed:

- To campaign against child labour;
- To mobilize children, parents and the community in favour of schooling;

- To run bridge courses for children released from labour for giving them basic literacy and numeracy skill and getting them used to school life; and
- To assist the government teachers in teaching, and to retain the new entrants recently released from labour and put into school after an intense campaign.

The programme started in 1991 and had been successful in putting children back into schools.

Himachal Pradesh Volunteer Teacher Scheme (HPVTS)

The scheme was introduced by the State Government in 1984. Under this scheme, an additional volunteer teacher was provided to single teacher primary school. This was done as there was increase in the enrolment in government schools. Another objective of this scheme was to provide unemployed youth job in schools. These volunteer teachers after serving for 10 years got permanent employment as Junior Basic Teacher in Schools.

19.7 Role of Distance Education in Teacher Training at Primary Level

With a well-established distance education system fully equipped with latest communication and information technology, teacher training at primary level has received focused attention from all national and state level institutions and agencies. The role of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) and National Council of Educational Research and Training is noteworthy.

IGNOU in collaboration with NCERT launched a Certificate Programme in Guidance (CIG) in 1993 for primary school teachers and parents. A similar kind of collaborative effort between the two organizations culminated in the development of a comprehensive programme titled “Diploma in Primary Education (DPE)”, which was launched for training of untrained primary school teachers in North-Eastern States, Sikkim and Jammu and Kashmir. The programme broadly emphasizes developing knowledge and understanding of primary school curriculum, factors affecting child development and role of teacher in the socio-cultural and political context of the country in general and in the primary education system in particular. The programme is conducted through print material, audio-visual aids, conduct of practicals, handbooks, teleconferencing and evaluation.

The NCERT also made use of interactive video technology in 1996 to train primary school teachers of Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka under its “Special Orientation Programme for Primary School Teachers (SOPT)”. It was a seven day training programme covering topics such as Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL), Teaching Aids, Multi-grade Teaching, and Strategies for Teaching Mathematics, Environmental Studies and Languages.

Distance Education Programme Under IGNOU in Collaboration with NCERT

IGNOU in collaboration with NCERT launched Distance Education Programme (DEP) as part of DPEP in 1996. The project was financed by MHRD through a loan from the International Development Association (World Bank) towards the cost of second phase of DPEP. The broad goal of DEP-DPEP was to strengthen the ongoing training programme of primary education personnel by using distance learning inputs and materials. This was to help evolve a sustainable system of in-service training linked to improving effectiveness of the teaching-learning process in primary schools (DEP-DPEP, IGNOU, 2003).

Distance Education Programme Under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (DEP-SSA)

The DEP-SSA was created by the MHRD as a national centre for distance education activities under SSA on July 1, 2003. The implementation of the project in states and UTs has been entrusted to IGNOU. The main aim of the project is to support the states and UTs to achieve the objectives of SSA.

It covers 28 States and 7 UTs for elementary school stage. It caters to the needs of elementary teachers, BRC/CRC coordinators, VEC members, community leaders and parents, alternative school functionaries/para teachers, faculty of Distance Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs), State Council for Educational Research and Training (SCERTs), State Institutes of Education (SIEs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) (IGNOU Profile 2006). It provides printed self-learning materials, audio-video programmes and organizes teleconferences.

Reflection and Action 19.4

Do you think appropriate teacher training will facilitate spreading the elementary education. What are the requirements for such teacher training programmes?

19.8 Conclusion

Through this unit we made an attempt to present to you in a synoptic manner the concept, history and the present scenario of universalization of elementary education and the initiatives and strategies taken by both central and state governments to achieve universalisation of elementary education. Elementary education is very crucial not only for the country but also for all the citizens of the country. The makers of the Constitution had made a provision that within a period of ten years from 1950, free and compulsory elementary education would be provided to all children up to 14 years of age. Before independence the demand for compulsory primary education was proposed by Gokhale. After independence, the first milestone to universalize elementary education was laid by the Constitution of India in 1950, but, the serious concerns to universalize elementary education were shown by the National Policy on Education (1986) and Programme of Action (1992). The concerns of the NPE and POA got further strengthened by the international efforts made by UNICEF, UNDP and the World Bank through the Declaration of Education for all (EFA). Several initiatives innovations and strategies have been taken by both central and state governments towards universalisation of elementary education. Some of them are Operation Blackboard, APPEP, BEP, UPBEP, NFE, Mid-Day Meal scheme, Lok Jumbish Project, Janshala Programme, Free and Compulsory Education as a Fundamental Right, District Primary Education Programme, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). Several initiatives in teacher education have also been taken for universalization of elementary education. Some of them are Shiksha Karmi Project, MV Foundation Programme, HPVTS, etc. Distance and Open Learning have also played a part in universalization of elementary education. IGNOU offers academic programmes for training of primary school teachers. Distance Education Programme (DEP-SSA) is also supporting the states and UTs to achieve the objectives of SSA.

19.9 Further Reading

Gopalan, K. 1998 *Indian Strategies to Achieve Universalisation of Elementary Education*. Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts: New Delhi

Sinha Shabnam 2004, "Elementary Education in India". in J.S. Rajput (Ed.) *Encyclopaedia of Indian Education*. National Council of Educational Research and Training: New Delhi

Unit 20

Crises in Indian Higher Education

Contents

- 20.1 Introduction
- 20.2 History and Evolution of Higher Education
- 20.3 Major Issues
- 20.4 Emerging Challenges and Search for Alternatives
- 20.5 Conclusion
- 20.6 Further Reading

Learning Objectives

This unit is intended to trace the development of higher education in India since independence and identify major issues and problems faced by it. It also analyses the factors responsible for crises in higher education. At the end of the unit, you should be able to:

- identify the major policies related to higher education;
- trace the developments and expansion (both quantitative and qualitative) of higher education since independence;
- analyse the major factors responsible for crisis in Indian higher education; and
- present the future of Indian higher education.

20.1 Introduction

The Indian education system has come a long way from the days of Gurukul Pathashalas in the ashrams of Rishis/Gurus and learned people, where students used to go and stay with the Gurus till they were educated/gained a certain amount of skills and knowledge. Today these are government-funded schools (including residential schools in remote and rural areas) and privately managed public schools. The post-independence era has seen the expansion of education in all dimensions at all levels – primary, secondary and higher education. Expansion of higher education has been phenomenal during the last five decades. The manifold quantitative expansion of higher education facilities has fulfilled many goals and produced manpower required for various sectors. At the same time it raised many issues, posed a number of challenges and problems and resulted in a crisis situation on many aspects. This unit deals with a brief history of various policies related to higher education; presents existing scenario and analyses major issues responsible for crises in Indian higher education. It also suggests a few alternatives to overcome the emerging crisis in higher education.

20.2 History and Evolution of Higher Education

Indian higher education has a long history with universities like Nalanda and Takshashila. However the modern system can be traced back to the establishment of three universities at Bombay, Calcutta and Madras in 1857. The British promoted higher education to produce manpower which suit the colonial administration. After independence in 1947, priorities for national development were drawn up and, accordingly, the objectives of higher education were formulated and the system was expanded and developed. At the time of independence there were 17 universities and 400 colleges. Expansion during the last 50 years resulted in over 300 universities and more than 14,000 colleges with about 10.5 million students and around 0.35 million teachers, representing one of the largest higher education systems in the world.

The growth of institutions, enrolment and teachers in higher education is given in the table below:

Table 20.1: Number of institutions of higher education, Enrolment and teachers (10th Plan, vol. II)

Year	Number of colleges	Number of universities*	Students (In 000)	Teachers
1950-51	750	30	2,63,000	24,000
1990-91	7,346	177	49,25,000	2,72,000
1996-97	9,703	214	67,55,000	3,21,000
1998-99	11,089	238	74,17,000	3,42,000
2003-04	13,500	304	105,00,000	3,50,000

* Includes institutions that are deemed to be Universities, but excludes other institutions.

Source: UGC Annual report 1996-97 and 1998-99 and Selected Educational Statistics, Ministry of HRD

In addition to that there are many professional institutions – agriculture universities/institutions, medical institutions, technological and engineering universities/institutions established during the post-independence period to produce professionally trained manpower in respective areas. There were only 46 engineering Colleges and 53 Polytechnics in 1947 with an annual intake of 76,240 students. In 2001-02 AICTE. approved technical management institutions has risen to 4,791 with annual intake of 6.7 million students (10th plan Vol. II).

Higher Education Policies at National Level

The Indian higher education system is one of the highly reviewed subjects by various committees and commissions from time to time. The major ones were – University Education Commission of 1948-49, Education Commission of 1964-66 (also known as Kothari Commission) and New Education Policy 1986. In addition to these Commissions, many committees and groups reviewed higher education and suggested measures for improvement of various aspects. Many of the measures have been implemented and many more recommendations are yet to be implemented. Particularly, the recommendations related to access, standards and quality of higher education. Relevance and job orientation of the higher education courses are yet to be implemented on a large scale with intensity. Though these issues are crucial to the development of higher education, efforts to bring reforms in these areas are not significant. Some of the recommendations of these commissions, though not implemented due to various reasons, are still valid and appropriate to the present context. This indicates the vision shown by these commissions for the development of higher education. At the same time reforms brought so far by these national policies in the following areas are worth mentioning:

- introduction of semester system;
- implementation of national eligibility test (NET) as a pre-requisite for appointment of university and college teachers;
- examination reforms;
- introduction of autonomous colleges concept;
- administrative staff colleges for continuous professional development;
- establishment of centres of advanced studies for quality research;
- use of modern technology for improvement of quality of teaching;
- development of open and distance education system etc.

The above reform and policy direction of various commissions/committees in the National Policy for Education, 1986 and Programme of Action 1992 are reiterated by 9th and 10th five years plans for the improvement of higher education system in India.

In addition to the above mentioned efforts at the national level, many state governments also set up committees to look into various aspects of higher education such as examination reforms, management of universities and colleges, financial management etc. All these efforts indicate that Indian higher education has been subjected to rigorous review to empower it for self-renewal and to cope with ever changing socio-economic conditions in the society.

Reflection and Action 20.1

What are the reforms mooted by the national policies on education to for an efficient higher education structure in India

Expansion of higher education

The expansion of higher education system is closely associated with the huge expansion that had taken place at other levels of education during the last five decades. The thrust shown by the Union Government was evident with the allocation of 7.86% of the total plan outlay on education in the First Five Year Plan (1951 - 1956). However, the level of allocation for education declined gradually in subsequent plan periods. The proportion of allocation for higher education to the total outlay for education increased from 9% in the First Five Year Plan (1951-1956) to 25% in the Fourth Plan period (1969-1974) and then fell to 8% in the Eighth Plan (1991-1996). This fluctuation in the allocation to the education sector is because the priorities of the government shifted to other sectors. The same is the case with in the education sector – priority for primary education over higher education.

In spite of all the hurdles and challenges, the Indian education system’s tremendous growth can be seen in Table 2 (Panda 2005) below:

Table 20.2: Growth of Education in India (Panda, 2005)

Levels	Institutions (thousands)		Students (millions)		Teachers (thousands)	
	1950-51	2003-04	1950-51	2003-04	1950-51	2003-04
Primary	210	638	0.19	114	538	>1,900
Upper primary	13.6	206	0.31	42.8	86	>1,500
Secondary and Senior Secondary	7.4	126	0.15	27.6	127	>1,800
Higher education	27U ^a 590C ^a	304U ^a 13,500C ^a	-	10.5 (C + U)	-	350 (C + U)

^a Actual figures (not in 000s); U = university, C = college.

Source: Powar (2003); Chaudhary (2003)

In addition to the above network, India has premier institutions like the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) which produce high quality human resources, who are competing with the best in the world. Agriculture Universities and Institutions are contributing to the growth of this sector through research and extension activities. The last two decades have seen the growth of quality institutions established largely by private initiatives in the area of information and technology in the country, producing high quality human resources, who are in demand in many developed countries along with other countries.

Reflection and Action 20.2

How do you interpret the growth of Indian higher education so far?

20.3 Major Issues

Indian higher education is confronted with many problems such as – lack of adequate infrastructure, relevance of the curriculum, quality of education provided, access and equity, resources etc. We shall briefly discuss these issues in this section.

Infrastructure

When we talk of infrastructure in educational institutions we talk of land, buildings, equipment, laboratories, libraries, personnel – both academic and administrative, their accommodation and hostel facilities etc. Looking at the number of institutions, teachers and students involved in higher education system facilities required are huge in terms of quantity and quality. The higher education institutions are mainly dependent on either central or state government funding. Recently privately funded institutions are emerging very fast. The older institutions need modernization of its infrastructural facilities, whereas the new ones have to start from scratch, both requiring a lot of resources. Government funding to these institutions is increasingly becoming difficult. Moreover in the wake of economic liberalization, most of the educational institutions are urged for self-generation of resources. Institutions located in rural and remote places are hard hit due to lack of government funding and at the same time not in a position to generate resources on their own, which adversely affects the infrastructure and overall quality of education imparted by these institutions.

There are many government-funded institutions with reasonable physical infrastructure, but when it comes to qualified teachers, either they are not available (particularly in rural and remote areas) or vacancies are not filled for long period due to various reasons. Teachers recruited long back do need exposure and continuous development to update their knowledge and skills. Those who have the facilities of books and other technologies are at an advantage; those without these facilities do remain with the disadvantage. To overcome this weakness, Academic Staff Colleges (ASCs) were established by UGC. These college are responsible for organising seminars, workshops, orientation and refresher programmes for colleges, and university teachers. To sum up all the universities and colleges are not at one plane as far as infrastructural facilities are concerned this situation seriously affects the quality of education provided and students produced by these institutions.

Relevance and Quality

The above analysis indicates that we have a large and diverse nature of institutions along with a few institutions of excellence in the IITs, IIMs, the Indian Institute of Science etc., which compete and collaborate with the best in the world, and upgrade/update and modify the curriculum to suit the ever changing societal needs. But a large number of higher education institutions, both colleges and universities follow a curriculum developed long ago without appropriate changes to suit the ever changing societal needs. In the process these institutions produce a large number of graduates in general education courses – who are neither professionals nor skilled to get a job in the market. Hence a large number of them remain unemployed.

The picture is dismal particularly at the first degree level, whose enrolment accounts for 88% of the total enrolment for higher education. Out of this 80% represent general education programmes of Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, Commerce and Sciences - products of diverse institutions marked by

indifferent quality, irrelevant curriculum and lack of relevance to societal needs. Professional programmes at the first degree level represent 20% of the enrolment, whose relevance and quality is relatively better.

In this context, it is very important to mention that quality is a collective societal concern and it ought to be adhered to by all the providers of higher education. Against the backdrop of economic liberalization and GATS on the one hand and of the increasing demand for higher education on the other, several institutions, both national and international, have come up as providers of higher education. Unfortunately many of these institutions do not ensure the required quality of higher education. Though many of these institutions and their educational programmes are being derecognised by the UGC, DEC and AICTE, a vast number of them still exploit the innocence of the students.

The contribution of Indian Universities is mainly to post-graduate education and research, with acceptable levels of quality and standards, but this segment represents only 12% of higher education enrolment the remaining 88% belongs to under-graduate education with varying degrees of quality (Mukhopadhyay, 2001). Even the post-graduates in some social science subjects and a few science disciplines remain unemployed due to lack of opportunities. The picture can be attributed to lack of relevance of the curriculum in these subjects, even at this level, to societal needs.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) had undertaken certain measures in the late eighties and nineties to restructure the curriculum and diversify the courses, particularly at the under-graduate level. There was some progress on this front – some institutions have changed the combination of the courses and restructured courses offered at the first degree level. But there is a long way to go, with the majority of institutions yet to start the journey in this direction. The UGC has embarked on a plan to promote quality and relevance of higher education by initiating complementary skill-oriented courses.

As we discussed in the initial sections of this unit higher education in India has been subjected to thorough and comprehensive reviews by several commissions and committees. The result of these reviews were good ideas and intentions to address crucial issues, but implementation has been lax due to lack of will and commitment at various levels. Thus qualitative reforms have not penetrated Indian higher education. Such reforms are really the need of the hour to overcome the crisis situation.

Access and Equity

Access and equity are major issues in Indian society which represents the most diverse socioal economic and cultural settings in the world. Particularly in a democratic society, all groups and segments of the population should have access to higher education to provide them with equal opportunity. Let us examine the situation with the help of facts.

India has the second largest system of higher education with more than 300 universities and 14,500 colleges catering to over 10.5 million students and 3.5 million teachers. This large network is catering to about 6% of the population in the relevant age group of 17-23 years. The main objective is to raise this from 6% to 10% by the end of Tenth Plan i.e. 2007. This rate of participation in higher education is much less in comparison to developed countries (about 40%) and even to some of the developing nations (about 19%). What about the rest of the population in the relevant age group? How to provide access to this large population to democratize higher education?

In terms of gender about 35% of the students are women, and about 12% belong to disadvantaged communities (Panda 1999; Powar 2000). Economic power and merit equally determine access to higher education. Almost 80% of

the seats in higher education go to the top 30% of the income brackets (Mukhopadhyay 2001).

The Government has taken measures to reduce disparities and provide access to various social groups to participate in higher education through reservations, scholarships and establishing exclusive institutions for women, minorities and other weaker sections. There is another point of view among the educationists to this focus on access and equity in higher education – that quality and standards are compromised. Balancing both by the governmental mechanisms/ measures is the only way; otherwise with increasing globalization and competition disparities between advantaged and disadvantaged communities are bound to grow.

Reflection and Action 20.2

How will improving access and equity in the field of higher education will help the mainstreaming of marginalised in Indian society? In your opinion what are the possible strategies that can be adopted?

Resources in Higher Education

The major issues and challenges faced by higher education, which are explained above are on one side, and the issue of resources in higher education alone on the other side with equal importance or more. Let us examine the facts. At present about 4% of GDP is devoted to education. Assurances of 6% of GDP allocation for education promised by various central governments in the past were never kept. Korea (21%), Thailand (17%), Malaysia (23%), Nepal (14%), and the US (8%) spend more on education than India in terms of GDP (TOI 2006). When it comes to budget allocation for higher education was a steep fall from 25% of the total education allocation in the Fourth year plan (1971-76) to about 8% in the Ninth Plan. With increasing governmental priority for basic and primary education, financial allocation to higher education is decreasing rather rapidly. Universities are under pressure to mobilize resources and adopt measures of financial stringency and efficiency. This trend is evident even in the budget, for the fiscal year 2006-07. Of the Rs. 24,115 crores allotted for education, elementary education alone would get Rs. 16,892.50 crores. The remaining amount has to be shared by adult, secondary, higher and technical education (TOI 2006). With increasing pressures from world bodies, the impact of the General Agreement in Trade Services (GATS) and liberalization within the country, the government is seriously taking measures to reduce the subsidy to higher education. Another argument from critics of subsidy is that higher education largely benefits the upper-middle class and upper segments of the society, hence, it has to go.

There have been several suggestions by education planners. One extreme view has been that the users should pay. There has been the suggestions for a fee hike, and increasing the income of institution through linkages with industry and offering of consultancy services, etc. But whenever there is an increase in fees, one can watch the militancy among students with full support of all political parties without any exception. Thus, we still charge Rs. 18 as monthly fee as fixed about 45 years ago in some of the colleges. It a remotely located college or university has to collaborate with industry, to mobilize resources, which industry we are talking about? Thus we are putting higher education institutions under a lot of pressure; and at the same time we expect them to perform and excel in the field. In some regions of the country, we hear that teachers get their salaries not every month, but once in a few months or whenever institutions get/receive funds from the government. Facing this crisis boldly, we are still producing through our higher education institutions, human resources which are essential to the socio-economic development of our society and also exporting to other countries to shine flourish there.

Another dimension to the resources in higher education institutions are under utilization and misutilisation of funds. Underutilization largely occurs due to the inefficiency of the personnel at various levels, whereas misutilisation is the result of wrong priorities of the leaders/heads who run the institutions. Measures to remedy these situations may be difficult to suggest or to take, but teachers have to be utilized fully as stipulated by the UGC i.e. 40 hours of stay and work per week for teaching, preparation, and research. How can higher education institutions face these grave crises with piecemeal approaches to major issues? Concerted and concrete efforts are needed to face this crises situation.

The crisis situation analysed above is likely to continue and affect the future of higher education as well. In the following section an attempt is made to bring out those issues.

Reflection and Action 20.3

List some more issues (other than those listed above) that Indian higher education is facing.

20.4 Emerging Challenges and Search for Alternatives

The major issues and emerging challenges in higher education along with the search for alternatives are presented in this section.

Globalisation

With the opening up of the Indian economy in the 1990s a large number of universities from developed countries opened centres in India and started offering programmes and courses to Indian students. The response to these programmes particularly from the middle and upper classes of society, who can afford high fees charged by these institutions, is gradually increasing. In the process have emerged the large number of fake universities announcing their programmes with addresses/collaborations with foreign universities, in different parts of the country, to exploit the growing demand for higher professional education. We have witnessed in the recent past in of Chhatisgarh and some other parts of the country the overnight mushrooming of universities, without any sort of infrastructure and credibility. Some of the institutions were setup in a one room garages in commercial places which are meant for fancy, and grocery shops. With intervention of the central government and courts of law, some of these “educational shops” had to close down. There must be proper mechanisms to address and promote the entry of foreign institutions in the era of globalization and GATS agreement. What we are witnessing in the name of globalization is total commercialization of higher education leading to further widening the disparities between the education haves’ and haven’ts.

To check this trend, the government constituted the ‘Committee on Promotion of Indian Education Abroad (COPIEA) in April 2002, with the mandate to monitor the promotion of Indian education abroad and regulate the operation of foreign institutions in India (10th plan, vol. II). To arrive at and to fully address the correct position on this is important issue, consultations among providers of higher education has been intensified during the Tenth Plan.

Privatization

Private initiative is not new to the Indian higher education system. Private colleges both general and professional (medical and engineering) were established during the last few decades by educational trusts/societies with the noble objective of spreading education and to cope with the increasing demand for higher and professional education. In the capitation fee, medical

and engineering colleges only the rich can afford to enrol, the meritorious poor cannot. Though courts pointed this out and took objection to such blatant commercialization, the process is continues in one form or the other. The quality offered by some of these institutions with limited expertise and inadequate infrastructure and the products produced by such institutions, are always under the scanner of employers. Some of these institutions are being accorded the status of 'deemed to be' universities by the University Grants Commission. Many of the big corporate houses, media corporations and others are awaiting for the clearance of the 'Private University Bill' which is pending in the parliament. One of the reasons, probably, for delay in clearing the bill by the parliament, is the complexity of the issue - allowing private institutions in higher education may further increase commercialization in the absence of proper controlling mechanisms (who would do it and how to do it etc?). Experts observe that the "Private players are inevitable in higher education. However, the Government should propose schemes and regulations which would not only regulate their functioning but also give them space to flourish" (Mungekar 2006).

State-run bodies like AICTE, MCI, and DEC should also be empowered to assess private institutions and accredit them from time to time on the lines of state funded higher education universities and institutions, or the government should appoint a separate regulatory authority for private universities. As education is a Concurrent subject, the Union and States Governments should collaborate in inspection of universities and in implementing the regulatory mechanism.

Reflection and Action 20.4

Can you think of some more challenges due to globalization and privatization of Indian higher education?

Emergence of Open and Distance Education

As elaborated above higher education in India has faced numerous challenges, This has led to the development of open and distance learning (ODL) all over the world This has emerged as an effective alternative response to these challenges. Let us examine a few of the issues that have led to the emergence of the ODL system.

- In spite of tremendous expansion of higher education, demand is increasing; and the existing network of higher education is not in a position to accommodate the growing demand. This led to search for alternatives in the form of distance learning by the Central and State Governments and private institutions. Accordingly the Government set the target of 40% of higher education students to be accommodated in distance-learning institutions in the 10th Plan.
- The participation rate in higher education of the eligible age group is about 6% only; to raise it to 20% as planned by the Government and to provide access to various groups and communities, existing institutions alone will not suffice, Hence one of the major alternatives is distance and open learning.
- The continuous decline in funding of higher education by the state, left the institutions to mobilize their resources by research and consultancy and offering programmes through distance learning etc.
- Relevance and quality are two important issues faced by higher education institutions particularly at the undergraduate level. Many of these institutions could not diversify their programmes and improve the quality on accepted levels. At such a juncture ODL institutions with flexibility and innovativeness started offering job-oriented programmes with best quality reaching for flung areas where, conventional institutions could not reach.

- With increasing competition from within and outside due to globalization, most of the existing higher education institutions are forced to be innovative and change their practices, operations and ultimately nature of academic programmes. In this process most of the institutions are using information and communication technologies, the concept of continuous professional development (CPD) and life long learning, quality benchmarking and development of linkages and partnerships with other agencies and institutions. The listed reforms and innovations are more effectively used and on a large scale by open and distance education institutions than the existing higher education institutions due to the flexible nature of their systems and extensive use of technologies.
- Training of teachers at higher education level was never thought of till Academic Staff Colleges (ASCs) came into existence recently. Even these ASCs are not in a position to meet the growing needs of training of university and college teachers. The situation at school level for training of untrained and continuous training of trained teachers is grim and a major challenge to be addressed. Both at school level and tertiary level - planners are looking forward to using distance and open learning methodologies to impart training for continuous professional development.
- To make the higher education programmes and courses more relevant to societal needs and for gainful employment, the Government and the UGC had introduced measures for curriculum updating, diversification and restructuring of programmes and particularly at first degree level. Some effort has been made in this direction by a few institutions, but a lot has to be done by the majority of institutions and universities. Research and extension, which are two significant components of university education, are yet to achieve the rigour required for overall improvement of the tertiary education systems.

Many of the issues and challenges faced by Indian higher education institutions as explained above, and for continuous search for alternatives resulted in the following developments:

- The first Correspondence Course Institute was established at the University of Delhi in 1962 with the intention of catering to those who missed conventional higher education or who could not afford it. Since then many other conventional universities followed suit and established correspondence Course Institutes/Directorates of Distance Education. Now there are about 106 CCIs/DDEs in India catering to the growing higher education demands, and thus contributing to access and equity issue. Another major contribution of the CCIs/DDEs is generation of additional resources to fund conventional education and research of the concerned parent university, which are affected by the severe resource crunch. The CCIs/DDEs have some major limitations such as – lack of autonomy in operations, and inability to utilize the resources generated by them for improvement of quality and for self-development etc.
- To overcome these limitations of CCIs/DDEs and to address many other challenges faced by conventional higher education, another significant development occurred with the establishment of the first singlemode open university in India i.e. Andhra Pradesh Open University (APOU) in 1982 at Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh. Its name is now changed Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar Open University (B.R.A.O.U). Many other state governments followed suit and established state open universities to make use of the full potential of the open and distance system.
- Another major milestone in the historical development of the distance education system in the country was establishment of a national open university, i.e., Indira Gandhi National Open University, in 1985. IGNOU transformed the face of Indian higher education with its innovative instructional system, flexible admission features, offering unconventional

and job oriented academic programmes across various disciplines, catering to over one million students at any point of time, throughout the length and breadth of the country and also in several other countries.

- There are 14 open universities and 106 CCIs/DDEs which offer programmes through distance mode to more than 2.8 million higher education students i.e. 25% of the total enrolment in higher education (Panda 2005). The 10th plan target is to increase the per centage of DE students to 40, by the end of the plan.
- The open and distance education network in the country addressing the many issues and challenges of Indian higher education, which we discussed elaborately in the earlier sections of this unit. The contribution of this network can be seen in
- offering unconventional programmes in various disciplines to make it more relevant to societal needs with job orientation;
- reaching rural and remote areas thus contributing to access and equity issue;
- providing best quality of education to diverse clientele groups, geographically widespread including remote areas, with the use of multimedia and latest satellite technologies;
- contributing in the direction of democratization of higher education.

Reflection and Action 20.5

Do you agree with the emergence of ODL system as one of the alternatives to face challenges in higher education? What implications you are visualising in this process, to Indian higher education?

20.5 Conclusion

Indian higher education system is one of the largest in the world in terms of number of institutions, students and teachers. Any system with a huge network operating in a diverse social, economic and cultural setting is bound to face numerous issues and challenges, the same is the case with Indian higher education. These issues are related to the relevance of the programmes to changing societal needs and the quality of the programmes offered by diverse nature and types of institutions – which are mix of a few institutions of excellence/premier institutions, many standard ones and large number of average institutions. Infrastructure facilities possessed by these institutions, resources at their disposal etc determine the ultimate efficiency and effectiveness of these institutions. Particularly with declining funding from the state, the higher education institutions are left to generate and mobilize their resources, which is a major challenge and does affect the performance of these institutions.

Globalisation and privatization are other major issues faced by Indian higher education leading to commercialization and exploitation of the students of higher education. To overcome the crisis situation a search for alternatives continued. One of the major alternative that emerged is the growth and development of the open and distance education system.

The above issues, challenges and alternatives in front of the Indian higher education system have been dealt with length in this unit. As a student if you are interested in in-depth reading of these issues, vast literature is available on higher education, particularly policy documents of 1964-66, 1986 and 1992.

20.6 FURTHER READING

Chaudhary, S. 2003. *EduSat for Distance Education*. Indian Space Research Organisation. Ahmedabad

Unit 21

Expansion of Professional Education and Private Sector

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- 21.1 Introduction
- 21.2 Private Sector in the Field of Education
- 21.3 Need for Private Sector Involvement in Professional Education
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- 21.8 Conclusion
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Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- understand the need for the participation of the private sector in the field of professional education;
- comprehend the extent of expansion of the field of professional education;
- appreciate the contribution of the private sector in the expansion of professional education; and
- reflect on the concerns regarding the rapid growth of private professional educational institutions

21.1 Introduction

In the decades since we became independent, the field of education has undergone rapid expansion. Expansion has been witnessed at different levels and in different types of education. There has been expansion not only in terms of facilities but also in terms of enrolment at the different levels of education. The field of professional education is no exception. From just a few institutions at independence, today the number of such institutions runs into thousands. There are many more institutions offering professional education and the enrolment in these institutions has also multiplied several times since independence. Apart from these factors, there has been diversification of subject areas and several new areas have come up. There are new areas of specialisation that are today taught in the institutions offering professional education. Thus, in comparison to the period immediately after independence, expansion in the field of professional education has been phenomenal.

Participation of the private sector education is not new. But its entry and massive growth in the field of professional education is a relatively new phenomenon. This has resulted in great expansion in professional education. The reason for such expansion is the changes in the socio-economic order of our country and of the world. There is a rising awareness of the importance of knowledge as the propeller of the new economic order in the globalised world. The economies of the world are getting integrated and are mainly knowledge driven. The transition to a knowledge-based societies requires continuous supply of professionally skilled manpower. The educational institutions run by the Government being too few, they not enough to cater to the needs for the huge supply of professionals to serve the different sectors of the economy. Therefore, certain policies were framed by the

Government to encourage the participation of the private sector in the field of professional education. In this unit we shall concentrate first on the issue of participation of the private sector in the field of education. Thereafter let us study certain issues that are related to the expansion of professional education and the participation of the private sector therein.

21.2 Private Sector in the Field of Education

Educational institutions in our country are under different types of administration. Some are under the administration of the Government, the rest are under private administration. Education in the Concurrent list and is hence the joint responsibility of the states and the central government. Among the educational institutions under Government management, some are administered by the state government like schools, colleges and some professional institutions, while some are under the administration of the Central Government such as the Central universities, educational institutions of national importance, certain categories of schools such as the Central Schools, Navodaya Vidyalayas, etc. In the category of educational institutions under private management, there are schools, colleges, deemed universities, institutions of professional studies, etc. These institutions are run by individuals, trusts, religious bodies, non government organisations, corporate houses and so on.

The presence of the private sector in education is not a new phenomenon it has been there since historical times. It was not uncommon for the wealthy people of society to open educational institutions and run them. Even today there are many educational institutions like schools, colleges, institutions offering professional programmes that are run by such individuals. Today non-government organisations are active in providing educational opportunities to the deprived sections of society and are complementing the efforts of the Government in its educational endeavours. Among the private administrators of educational institutions, religious organisations have been active in promoting the cause of education for several centuries. The followers of different faiths have been running educational institutions since long back. We have had seminaries like madrasas, monasteries, etc. since historical times and the practice continues today. Christian missionaries too have been running schools and other educational institutions for the last few centuries in our country. There are also educational institutions run by the Khalsa group, the Arya Samaj, the Ramkrishna mission, etc. Thus, people in their individual capacities as well as groups, representing their organisations, societies, communities have been promoting the cause of education (Verma 1984).

Today corporate houses are actively involved in the educational scenario. Renowned industrialists like the Tatas, Birlas, the Reliance group, and many other such business houses have made forays into the field of education. Schools, colleges, deemed universities and other educational institutions that provide general education and professional education are being run by them. There are a number of institutions offering teacher education, technical education, management programmes, etc, that are run by corporate houses.

We thus see that the presence of the private sector in the field of education is not a new phenomenon. It existed in the past and does so now. Not only in our country but also in several others, the responsibility of providing education is shouldered by the private sector along with the public sector. However, in the past in India the private sector was mainly involved in providing school education. It was also involved to some extent in providing higher education that was of a general nature. Its role in providing professional education was limited. With the liberalisation policies of the government regarding the participation of the private sector providing higher and professional education, more and more private bodies are getting involved in providing professional education.

Besides government policies, a factor that has led to the rapid growth of private educational institutions providing professional education is the changing socio-economic environment of the world and also of our country. With globalisation, the economies of the world are getting integrated. The revolution in information technology is making the world a global village. In the new economic order, there is need for our society to undergo a transition to a knowledge-based society where knowledge would be the driving force of the economy. Rather than men, materials and capital, knowledge – its generation, utilization and upgradation – are important. There is a paradigm shift and from the labour intensive economic model, one that stresses professional knowledge and skills is in. Therefore, there is a rising demand for professionals in different fields. At the same time the demand by a huge number of aspirants seeking professional education cannot be fulfilled by the public sector alone. Hence, the active participation of the private sector is needed to cater to the emerging need for preparing future professionals. As a result today individuals, religious groups, welfare organisations, corporate houses, and other such bodies are running educational institutions that are providing professional education.

Yet another factor that has led to the mushrooming of private institutions in education, whether it is school education or higher and professional education is that today according to certain estimates, the world over, the business of education involves over trillions of dollars. In India too the field of education has become a lucrative area. Investments made in the field of education are rewarded by high returns. The monetary returns are motivating more and more private players to venture into the field of education. With increasing awareness regarding the indispensability of education for improving the quality of life, growing number of aspirants are seeking quality education. This is true not only of school education, it is all the more so for higher and professional education. India with its over one billion population and a sizeable student population, is attracting educational entrepreneurs even from across jurisdictional boundaries. The provisions of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) are further facilitating such entry of multinationals in the field of education. The economies of the world are opening up to allow the entry of foreign educational services. Hence, private educational institutions from within the country as well as foreign institutions are rapidly growing in number.

The involvement of the private sector in education is thus undeniably on the rise. The area of professional education is a relatively new field into which the private sector is making forays. Although the entry of the private sector into the field of professional education is a recent phenomenon, its growth has been rapid. There is a boom in the institutions offering medical, engineering, technical, teacher education and other such professional programmes during the last few decades in our country.

Reflection and Action 21.1

Broadly classify the different types of management that govern professional institutions. What were the needs that propelled the expansion of the field of professional education in India?

21.3 Need for Private Sector Involvement in Professional Education

In the previous section we have discussed the involvement of the private sector in the field of education and especially its growing involvement in professional education. Now let us discuss the dimensions of private sector participation in professional education.

The government has an obligation to provide education to one and all but the task is not easy. The government sector alone cannot shoulder the responsibility

of providing education to the huge population of learners. This is not a new problem. It was a problem even during the British period though much smaller per centage of the population enrolled in educational institutions then. In 1882, the Hunter Commission had presented its report. It had recommended the careful withdrawal of the government from the field of higher education, and its being taken over by the private enterprises while the state paid more attention to primary education (James and Mayhew, 1988). The need for the government to concentrate its efforts and resources on elementary education is all the more important because of the obligation imposed by the constitution to provide universal elementary education to all children in the age group of six to fourteen years. Hence, resources left for higher and professional education are limited. The Government has to concentrate its efforts in developing educational areas such as elementary education, vocational education, non-formal education, etc. so as to build the basic foundation of the educational system. It is felt that the task of carrying out vertical growth upon the foundation thus built can be left to the private sector to some extent.

This prompted the government to welcome private initiatives in the field of higher and professional education. In order to support the initiatives of the private sector in the field of education, recognised schools and colleges under private management are provided with aid by the government. Owing to the constitutional provisions, even the educational institutions run by religious and linguistic minorities are entitled to receive aid from the government. This encouraged the private sector to get involved in the field of education and there was a spurt in the growth of private educational institutions.

Another reason for the proliferation of privately managed educational institutions is the presence of a section of the population, which is capable of paying the fees charged by the private educational institutions, especially schools. It is often expressed that private schools with their better infrastructure and accountability, offer better quality education. Such feelings justify the overwhelming presence of the private sector in the field of school education. In the field of higher and professional education too there are a number of institutions that offer quality education. In recent days concern has been expressed by a body of surgeons about the deteriorating quality of surgical education in government medical colleges in comparison to the private ones (Falaknaz 2005). Therefore, private professional institutions that can afford better infrastructure, enriched curriculum and research facilities are needed to develop the field of professional education and provide quality education.

The limited facilities under the Government can not accommodate the large number of aspirants seeking professional education. For instance, there are just a handful of IITs and IIMs. Only a few thousands are accommodated by these institutions. In order to stem the outflow of resources and students we need to have adequate number of educational institutions that offer quality education. This facilitated the large scale entry of the private sector into the field of professional education.

In recent times there is an increasing flow of educational services from abroad. This complements the existing private sector in the field of education. As we have already discussed, on account of GATS, foreign entrepreneurs cannot be stopped from providing educational services. They are already actively offering educational services to the student population of our country. Today there are thousands of aspirants who can afford high expenses and avail of foreign educational services.

We shall now discuss the second apprehension regarding the cross border provision of educational services. As we know, education is a potential means for influencing the culture of the people. It is the means for cultural conservation and transmission. Today there are apprehensions that there would

be cultural dominance as a by-product of cross-country educational services. It is well known that the developed countries have a greater share in the globalised economy while the developing nations, at the periphery are still struggling to reach its core. In the field of education as in the case of other goods and services there are apprehensions that there would mainly be a one-way traffic of educational services from the developed western nations to the developing countries. Even in the field of distance education, due to the digital divide the technological haves are the main education providers while the technological have-nots are the receivers. There is a concern that educational inflow from abroad would be a potent means of ushering in cultural imperialism also called neo-colonialism. There would be cultural hegemony and to some extent there would also be cultural homogenisation due to the intermingling of cultural elements with loss of uniqueness and diversities of different cultures. Such apprehensions can be allayed if educational import can be countered by adequate educational facilities within the country provided by the private sector and the public sector working together.

The need for private sector participation in the field of education is thus undeniable because of the budgetary and other constraints of the government. It is well known that in view of the ever-increasing demand for professional education and limited resources of the government, the involvement and growth of the private sector in the field of professional education is indispensable to bridge the gap between the facilities available and the demand for educational opportunities and bring about rapid development of the human resource of the country.

Reflection and Action 21.2

How can the growth of professional education help us to curb the outflow of resources? Do you think the expansion of professional education is essential for the globalised economy? Why?

21.4 Expansion of Professional Education

Education in the last few decades has undergone considerable expansion. The number of students enrolling in different levels of education has increased by several times in comparison to that at independence. It is indeed heartening that such a rising trend in enrolment has also been witnessed among the marginalised sections of society. Enrolment of women and students from the backward sections of the society has increased considerably during the last few decades in institutions offering general education as well as in those offering professional education. Expansion has also been due to the increase in the number of professional institutions offering different types and levels of education. The third dimension along which there has been expansion is the diversification in the areas of teaching and learning and the emergence of new areas of specialisation. Today there are professional educational programmes in new areas such as nano technology, biotechnology, educational technology, etc. In Table (21.1) below, the data reflects the expansion in the field of education in terms of the growth of the number of educational institutions. The sixth column reflects the growth in the number of institutions offering professional education.

Table 21.1: Growth of Recognised Educational Institutions from 1950-51 to 2001-2002

Years	Primary	Upper Primary	High/Hr.Sec/ Inter/Pre. Jr. Colleges	Colleges for General Education	Colleges for Professional Education (Engg., Tech) Arch., Medical and Education Colleges)	Universities/ Deemed Univ./ Instt. of National Importance
1950-51	209671	13596	7416	370	208	27
1955-56	278135	21730	10838	466	218	31
1960-61	330399	49663	17329	967	852	45
1965-66	391064	75798	27614	1536	770	64
1970-71	408378	90621	37051	2285	992	82
1975-76	454270	106571	43054	3667	** 3276	101
1980-81	494503	118555	51573	3421	** 3542	110
1985-86	528872	134846	65837	4067	** 1533	126
1990-91	560935	151456	79796	4862	886	184
1991-92	566744	155926	82576	5058	950	196
1992-93	571248	158498	84608	5334	989	207
1993-94	570455	162804	89226	5639	1125	213
1994-95	586810	168772	94946	6089	1230	219
1995-96	593410	174145	99274	6569	1354	226
1996-97	603646	180293	103241	6759	1770	228
1997-98	619222	185961	107140	7199	2075	229
1998-99*	626737	190166	112438	7494	2113	237
1999-2000*	641695	198004	116820	7782	2124	244
2000-2001*	638738	206269	126047	7929	2223	254
2001-2002*	664041	219626	133492	8737	2409	272

* - provisional data

(Source: <http://www.education.nic.in>)

We see that the number of institutions offering professional education has risen rapidly during the last several decades. Owing to the rapid expansion of the knowledge base and the emergence of new methods and techniques of doing things, advancement in the field of professional education has been tremendous. As mentioned earlier, the demand for people equipped with the professional knowledge and skills is increasing in the knowledge driven modern world. In the globalised economy there is free movement of skilled people, knowledge and information and there are many people of our country who have been rewarded with offshore jobs following education from professional institutions. Therefore, for private educational institutions to be actively involved in this expanding field of professional education and undergo rapid growth is quite natural. It is in fact a part of the ongoing process of evolution of the field of education.

We find that mainly two factors have resulted in the expansion of professional education. The first is the rising demand for skilled professional in the new economic order. The second factor is the headway made in the earlier stages of education, namely elementary and secondary education. Since independence, the number of students successfully completing school education and desiring higher and professional education has increased massively. To accommodate the ever-increasing number of aspirants, the number of professional institutions too had to be increased. It was felt that the number of institutions run by the Government is too few to accommodate the huge number of aspirants who could contribute effectively to the economic development of the country *after professional. This led to the policies that provided encouragement to the private sector to enter the field of professional education.*

The credit for the significant expansion of professional education goes mainly to the growth of private professional institutions. It is the entry of the private sector that has brought about the tremendous increase in the number of educational institutions offering professional education. Such increase has been the great increase in enrolment for professional education. Today the number of Government institutions is far outnumbered by those under private management. The different states of our country have been opening up professional education to private entrepreneurs. The governments of some of the states have been inviting participation and cooperation of the private sector including Non Resident Indians in opening institutions for professional studies. To solicit the participation of the private sector in this area, incentives for instance land at concessional rates, is provided to those opening professional institutions.

Reflection and Action 21.3

What is your view regarding the under representation of women in institutions of professional education, especially those offering technology based education? What steps do you suggest in this regard?

21.5 Private Sector in Professional Education

Today there exist different types of professional educational institutions. One category comprises professional institutions under the management of the Government, for instance Government run teacher education institutions, institutions offering technical education, etc. The second category comprises institutions under private management but receiving government aid. The third category comprises self-financing institutions, which are institutions under private management that do not receive any aid. However, they are also recognised institutions. Let us study the expansion of professional education in terms of the growth of institutions offering professional educational programmes of different categories with the help of Table 21.2.

Table 21.2: Growth of institutions of Professional Education of Different Categories

Type	1961	1971	1981	1986	1991	1996	1997	1998
1) Degree Standard and above Professional and Technical Institutions for:								
a) Agriculture and Forestry ³⁵	59	61	70	80*	90	NA	NA	
b) Engineering, Technology and Architecture	111	134	171	248	351	422	607	NA
c) Medicine*	133	179	249	288	346@	437	NA	NA
d) Veterinary Science	17	22	22	22	27+	46	NA	NA
e) Teacher's Training	147	274	341	432	474	633	697	848
2) Below Degree Level Professional/Vocational and Technical Institutions	4,145	4,401	4,808	5,381	5,739	6,513	6,542	6,561
+ Related to the Year 1998 (IAMR – Working Paper)								
@ DGHS – Health Information of India – 1993								
* Medicine includes Allopathy, Homeopathy, Ayurveda and Unani.								

The data in this table reveals that there has been considerable expansion of professional education in the past four decades. In the British period the foundations for professional educational programmes such as medical education, technical education, law, teacher education, etc., had been laid but not much effort was made to expand the facilities. Professional education was not considered as a potent means of nation development and prosperity. Therefore, the number of institutions for professional studies and enrolment were not adequate. Initially there were a few institutions offering technical education. They mainly aimed at developing skilled people who could contribute towards infrastructure development such as constructing bridges, canals, roads, etc. Starting with civil engineering, later on education in other branches of

engineering such as electrical and mechanical engineering was started. However, the professionals thus educated were meant mainly to function as foremen, overseers and such officers who would occupy comparatively lower ranks in the hierarchy. Those occupying higher positions were usually British who had received professional training abroad.

Following independence there was a shift in the paradigm from the primarily agrarian economy to an industrialized one and moves were made towards industrialization. In order to accelerate industrial development, growth of technical education was considered to be essential to supply the manpower needed. Institutions for imparting technical education were established at the national level, regional level and also at the state level. Institutions of national importance were also established. Aided and unaided private institutions as well as the non-formal sector in the field of technical education came up. Later on emphasis was laid on information technology and a number of institutions offering programmes related to information technology came up. Now we are moving towards a knowledge-based economy that requires constant generation and use of knowledge. (Kalam 2005). Hence, there has been goal oriented and planned efforts to expand the field of technical and other professional education. These measures led to the expansion of the field of professional education.

Similar has been the case with institutions offering other types of professional education. A number of medical colleges have been come up. There has been a phenomenal growth in the number of institutions offering management programmes, those related to business studies and teacher education. Besides the proactive role of the government, we owe the growth of the number of institutions and corresponding rise in enrolment also to the private sector. The policies of the Government have nurtured the growth of the private sector in the field of professional education. The judgments of the Supreme Court regarding fee rationalization, especially the recent one on admission of students in self financing institutions have encouraged the participation of the private sector and its contribution towards the expansion of education.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has decided to encourage self-financing private institutions offering higher and professional education by conferring upon the promising ones that are yet to fully comply with all the statutory requirements the provisional status of deemed universities. Thereafter these institutions can apply to the UGC through the Ministry of Human Resource Development for the status of deemed universities. This move will encourage not only private sector participation but will also motivate them to function as centers of excellence and provide quality education in emerging areas. India has been a heavy importer of foreign educational services but to encourage their export, private educational institutions have also been empowered to operate multi campuses and open foreign campuses so as to enroll foreign students. Besides this the decision has also been taken to reserve 15% of the seats in private professional educational colleges for students who are Non-Resident Indians (Gautam 2000).

For the expansion of professional education credit goes not only to the large number of institutions offering education in the conventional mode but also to those that offer professional education through the distance mode. Today professional educational programmes are available to distant learners. There are professional programmes on technology, medical sciences including surgery, nursing, agriculture, veterinary science, animal husbandry, teacher education, etc. offered through the distance mode. The state open universities, and especially Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) has a number of programmes that are meant to provide professional education to thousands of students who for a variety of reasons cannot attend conventional institutions. Professional education is thus available to the students at their home. There are study centers and programme centers to take care of the practical

component. Thus distance education has been playing a significant role in the expansion of professional education.

With increase in the number of institutions offering professional education, especially those under private management, it was felt that the respective professional councils should monitor the functioning and standards of professional educational institutions. The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) established in 1948 as an advisory body in matters related to technical education was vested with statutory authority in 1988 for planning, formulating and maintenance of norms and standards, accreditation and ensuring coordinated development of technical and management education. In the case of institutions offering programmes on pharmacy and architecture there are the respective councils to oversee the functioning of educational institutions in these areas. Similarly the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) is a statutory body to facilitate the planned and coordinated development of teacher education throughout the country. It formulates norms and sees to their adherence by the teacher education institutions. Similarly there are professional councils for medical studies, law, etc., to monitor and guide the functioning of the educational institutions of their respective areas.

We thus see that there has indeed been an expansion of professional education. In comparison to the scenario that prevailed a few years after independence, the number of institutions offering professional studies has shot up. The changing socio-economic needs shaped the policies of the government, which in turn facilitated the expansion of professional education with the help of the private sector. Today private institutions offer a wide spectrum of educational programmes. They not only cater to the numbers but with their greater resources and autonomy they can experiment and develop new programmes that are need-based. Therefore, there is a growing popularity of private institutions among students.

Reflection and Action 21.4

From a state of your choice collect information on the ratio of:

- Government technical education institutions and private ones and
- Government teacher education colleges and private ones

21.6 Concerns Regarding Private Sector Participation

We have been discussing in the previous sections the need for the participation of the private sector in professional education and the expansion of this area as a result of the entry of the private sector. Although participation of the private sector is today the need of the hour, nevertheless certain concerns are expressed regarding the rapid growth of educational institutions under private management. In this section we shall discuss some of the major concerns.

a) Under-representation of the weaker sections

Expansion of educational facilities cannot be deemed to be satisfactory unless it is holistic. People from the marginalised sections of society are still to catch up with the rising trend in enrolment in institutions offering professional education. Students from rural areas, those belonging to the backward communities, and female students are still behind when it comes to proper representation in these institutions. Women's participation is still below fifty per cent at all stages of education and in institutions offering professional

education it is no better. Besides lower enrolment of women another trend being noticed is the relatively much lower enrolment of girls at the higher secondary level and above in the science stream and in technological courses.

As per the data given for enrolment in Engineering/Technology/Architecture by levels and sex all over India, by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, in 1971, there were 84025 male graduates in these areas while the female graduates were only 820. In 1998 there were 285137 male graduates in these areas while the female graduates were 57958. The level and sex wise enrolment data given by the MHRD reveal that in India in Medicine (including Allopathy, Homeopathy, Ayurveda and Unani) in 1971 the total number of male graduate, post-graduates and doctorate degree holders was 72205 and for females it was 18742. In a time span of two and a half decades, that for males rose to 97591 and for females it rose to 42383. In the case of agriculture and forestry, in 1971 the number of male graduate, postgraduate and doctorate degree holders was 24934 and for females it was just 177. But within 26 years women fared much better than before and the number of female graduate, post graduate and doctorate degree holders rose to 3362, while for male students it was 41738. In 1971 the number of male graduates in teacher education programmes was 34798 and female graduates were 21234. In 1998 the number of male graduates was 64416 and female graduates were 48857. A similar trend with lower enrolment figures for women in comparison to men is observable in the fields of business management, journalism, law, library science, physical education, etc.

From the prevailing data it is clear that there has indeed been expansion of professional education and enrolment of women in professional institution has also increased considerably but still a lot has to be achieved to attain parity between genders.

Reflection and Action 21.5

In your opinion is the private participation in the field of professional education a welcome move? How can private participation in the field of education contribute towards curbing cultural dominance and homogenisation of cultures?

b) Skewed distribution of professional educational institutions

We have seen that the number of educational institutions offering professional studies in different states of our country have grown considerably. Now let us study with the help of Table 21.3 the state wise distribution of professional institutions in the year 2002-03.

Table 21.3: State wise distribution of professional institutions - 2002-03

State / UT	Number of Professional Institutions
1) Andhra Pradesh	359
2) Arunachal Pradesh	1
3) Assam	49
4) Bihar	47
5) Chattisgarh	5
6) Goa	15
7) Gujarat	123
8) Haryana	70
9) Himachal Pradesh	13
10) Jammu & Kashmir	18
11) Jharkhand	13
12) Karnataka	356
13) Kerala	127
14) Madhya Pradesh	79
15) Maharashtra	525
16) Manipur	5

17) Meghalaya	2
18) Mizoram	2
19) Nagaland	2
20) Orissa	51
21) Punjab	84
22) Rajasthan	76
23) Sikkim	3
24) Tamil Nadu	215
25) Tripura	3
26) Uttar Pradesh	224
27) Uttaranchal	4
28) West Bengal	88
29) Andaman & Nicobar Island	1
30) Chandigarh	9
31) Dadar & Nagar Haveli	0
32) Daman & Diu	1
33) Delhi	44
34) Lakshadweep	0
35) Pondicherry	16
India	2610

As we can see from this table, in some of the states there are hundreds of professional educational institutions while in some states there are as few as one or two. There has thus been a lopsided development in this field. There is greater number of institutions in the southern region of the country but much less in the northeast region. This reflects regional imbalance.

Reflection and Action 21.6

In your view has the expansion in the field of professional education been satisfactory? Justify your answer. What are the reasons that cause concerns regarding the quality of education provided by some of the private educational institutions?

c) Quality of education

As we have been discussing earlier, there has been phenomenal growth in the field of professional education with the opening of a number of private institutions providing education in technology, engineering, computer sciences, medicine, teacher training, etc. Concerns are being expressed as to the quality of education that is being provided by many of these institutions. It is a general belief that private schools usually offer quality education. The higher fees charged by the private schools do not deter parents from choosing them because of the opinion about the quality of education. In the field of higher and professional education, however such generalisation cannot be made. Unlike private institutions that are more sought after at the school level, the reverse is true for higher education. Private institutions are seldom the first choice of those aspiring for higher and professional education. Even today many institutions of excellence in the sphere of professional education are run by the government. Premiere institutions of engineering, technology, medicine, management, etc. enjoy a great degree of autonomy but are nevertheless under Government management.

There are allegations that the quality of education offered by many private professional educational institutions are not up to the mark in spite of the hefty fee charged by them. It has been alleged that unlike Government organisations like the IITs, IIMs, engineering colleges at Roorkee, Jadavpore,

and many others and also many private aided institutions that are providing quality education, there are several unaided private institutions that are not providing quality education due to the lack of proper infrastructure and faculty. It is further alleged that in the field of technical education and engineering the amount spent per student per annum by the IITs is satisfactory, that spent by the regional colleges is comparatively less yet does not violate the AICTE norms but the amount spent by several self-financing institutions is much less than that stipulated by the AICTE. Such institutions have failed to enhance the quality of professional education and the growth in the number of such institutions could result in serious decline in a educational standards (Ragesh, 2003). Similar allegations have been made against several private teacher education institutions. There are allegations about the undermining of quality due to mass enrolment and lack of adequate facilities in several of these institutions.

Reflection and Action 21.7

From any three types of private professional educational institutions of your choice, collect information about the regulations regarding the fee charged from the students and policies regarding admission.

Such allegations however do not imply that the growth of self-financing institutions should be discouraged. Rather, the professional councils have to effectively monitor and supervise them. It is to be ensured that if the self-financing institutions are generating surplus funds then they are spent on the development of the organisation. As stated by Dasgupta, Secretary, Urban Affairs & Employment, the NPE (1986) laid special emphasis upon the qualitative as well as quantitative development of technical and management education. Guidelines were issued as to the establishment of linkages amongst the concerned agencies, manpower assessment, cost effectiveness, modernization, removal of obsolescence in laboratories and workshops, etc. It has been further underlined that the quality of the infrastructure with laboratory facilities, that of the faculty, research facilities, etc. of many private professional institutions is not up to the mark. The faculty has to be adequate in number and possess the right type of qualification. Provision of regular in-service education is also needed for professional growth. Teaching methods adopted should encourage independent learning, innovations, creativity, problem solving, etc. The laboratories and workshops too need modernization. Research and extension services should also be encouraged in these institutions. These institutions also need to develop self-renewal capacity. It is also necessary for them to network amongst themselves, with other related organisations and industries within the country and abroad. Such networking with provision for the sharing of human and material resources and administrative experiences, transfer of credits, launching of joint programmes can lead to the capacity building of these institutions. Networking and multiple utilization of the infrastructure will also lead to the optimum utilization of resources.

You may be feeling why the onus of providing quality education should be on the private sector when there are serious concerns regarding the quality of education provided even at Government-run institutions. As we have already discussed, it was reported that concern has been expressed about Government medical colleges, which were once the pioneers of surgical techniques but are today struggling to keep pace with the rapid technological advance. The archaic syllabus and techniques and outdated infrastructure are taking a heavy toll of surgical training, education and patient care and as a result they are losing out to private medical institutions. Therefore concerns regarding quality are there for both Government and private institutions. However as stated repeatedly in this unit, the expansion of the field of professional education owes a lot to the private sector. The number of Government institutions in certain areas is outnumbered by private ones. Therefore lowering of standards by these

institutions will adversely affect the concerned area. It has been rightly pointed out by Mukhopadhyay (2000) that the biggest challenge for the private sector and the biggest reason for it to enter the field of education are not merely to deal with the huge number of aspirants but mainly to provide quality education. There are certain private non-university institutions that are models in catering to quantity while maintaining quality. Therefore, professional educational institutions have to maintain quality and the private sector being new entrants in this area, more is expected of them.

21.7 Commercialisation of Education

Another serious allegation often made against the private professional educational institutions is that they are commercialising education and that students as well as the faculty are exploited in these institutions. Commercialisation, in the field of education refers to the motive of making money or generating finances by devising commercially profitable procedures such as mass admission without ensuring requisite facilities/services for imparting sound education (Anand 1997). Education is thus not provided with the motive of achieving social development but for minting money. High fees charged are not justified by the quality of educational services provided. There is an apprehension that the rise in such institutions would lead to money rather than merit becoming the deciding factor for enrolment. Professional education would thus become the means for the progress of the individual rather than of society and be the privilege of only the moneyed class.

Earlier several institutions enrolled thousands of aspirants seeking teacher education without adequate infrastructure, teacher-student ratio and student support services. This not only affected the quality of education but the process was akin to commodifying education and selling degrees to a huge student population every year. B.Ed. through the correspondence mode was especially misused. Now these programmes are under the supervision of NCTE and Distance Education Council. There is at present a ban on the charging of capitation fees by private institutions and profiteering of any sort is also unacceptable. The generation of surplus funds by these institutions is allowed but on the condition that it is applied for the upgradation and development of the organisation. Policies are also being framed by the government to regulate the fee charged by private institutions.

It is a well known fact that moneyed individuals like rich farmers, traders, contractors, politicians, those already in the business of running public schools, etc. today often prefer to invest their surplus money in the field of professional education because of the heavy returns. It is well known that there are professional educational institutions where teachers are hired and fired at will, not adequately compensated, those without proper qualifications are recruited, money is extorted from the students on various pretexts, necessary infrastructure is not provided and other such malpractices are carried on. It is, however seen that the renowned corporate houses that are providing professional education are maintaining better standards. There is a strong linkage between educational institutions and industries. They have an added advantage that they are aware of the present industrial scenario and can project the future needs of industries.

Therefore, a more proactive role has to be played to ensure that education is not for sale. The government, the professional councils, the accrediting agencies and the stake holders need to be active in this regard.

Reflection and Action 21.8

What is the major social impact of commercialisation of education? Explain any two steps that can be taken to improve the quality of education provided by institutions offering professional education.

21.8 Conclusion

We have discussed that the participation of the private sector in the field of education has been there for a long time. Religious bodies, missionaries, charitable groups, wealthy people of the society and other such groups and individuals have been active in providing education. In the period following independence, schools and colleges run by the private sector was common. However, the massive participation of the private sector in the field of professional education is a relatively new phenomenon. This has been in response to the emerging need for private participation. The Government is under an obligation to provide universal elementary education, which is a task of gigantic proportions and the resources are limited. The private sector is needed to complement the efforts of the government. Keeping pace with the globalised economy demands learning societies with knowledge driven economies. For this a work force equipped with professional knowledge and skills is required. Government institutions are too few in number to supply the manpower needed. There is need for active participation by the private sector for human resource development. Moreover today with globalisation, providers of education from abroad are many in number. Import of educational services in our country is considerable. The result is not only the outflow of human and financial resources but there is also the danger of cultural hegemony and homogenisation through the education provided by the developed nations. To reduce import and enhance export of educational services adequate expansion of the field of professional education is required and the private sector can help in this direction.

Since independence the number of Government and private institutions providing professional education has risen considerably. Aided as well as self-financing institutions have come up in large numbers. The supportive policies of the Government and its agencies such as the UGC and the rulings from the judiciary have encouraged expansion in this field. While such expansion is the need of the hour, there are also some concerns about it, especially about the rapid growth of private institutions. It is felt that the marginalised section of society including women, students from rural areas, backward communities, etc. are yet to benefit significantly from such expansion. Secondly there is regional imbalance in the distribution of these institutions and there are certain regions with only a few institutions. Thirdly, the quality of education provided by some of the institutions is also a matter of concern. Allegation are also leveled that with the increase in the number of private institutions, especially the self-financing ones education is being commercialized. It is agreed that expansion of professional education is the need of the hour and private participation in this field is indispensable. Therefore, it is necessary to address the issues that are the causes of concern so that the expansion of this sector is healthy in all respects.

21.9 Further Reading

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Unit 22

WTO, GATS, ICTS and Higher Education

Contents

- 22.1 Introduction
- 22.2 Globalisation, ICTs and the Emergence of Knowledge Society
- 22.3 General Agreements in Trade in Services (GATS) and Education
- 22.4 GATS and Modes Education
- 22.5 ICTs Marginalised People and the Higher Education in India
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Learning Objectives

This unit aims to examine the

- Interlinkages among the processes of globalisation, knowledge economy and higher education,
- Coverage of higher education under the GATS,
- Emerging social processes affecting the structure and functioning of higher education in the globalised world,
- Developing a critique of the free market philosophy on higher education.

22.1 Introduction

Education as a social process and an institution influences the processes of social progression, economic growth, political articulation, intellectual and human development and technological advancement of a society. Education also operates in time and space embedded socio-cultural, techno-economic and politico-administrative processes, which widely influence its course and direction. The emerging composite social processes have brought forth new opportunities and challenges to the education system in general and to the ODL in particular by way of fostering a new paradigm of economic, technological, cultural and political development and discourse.

In the wake of globalization and the exponential expansion of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) driven service and knowledge economy, and fast flow of human and commercial capital all over the globe, contemporary societies have been marked by an extension of trade in all areas of human creativity, including education. With the increasing intensity of the human and capital flows, communities are no longer solely described in geographical terms, rather ordered across time and space in terms of cultural decontextualisation. These altogether have set in motion processes of fast diffusion of human resources, creativities and educational knowledge and their commercial integration globally. The formalization process of trade liberalization through the WTO and its General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) have introduced trade in education with several new dimensions attached to it, which were hitherto unknown to the world of education, especially in the developing countries. In the changing socio-cultural and techno-economic environment, the higher education system, which has long been considered to be a potential force for achieving development in arts, science and technology and finishing higher levels of human potential and promoting human-centered development for a vast section of the population, has now largely emerged as an important vehicle for commercialization of knowledge globally.

In this background the changing state of higher education and its commercialization are required to be understood in the context of globalisation, advancement of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), emergence of knowledge economy and the expansion of market forces all over the globe. Some of these processes we have discussed at length in Book-II of MSO-003. Let us discuss them further to contextualise higher education within these processes.

22.2 Globalisation, ICTs and the Emergence of Knowledge Society

The process of globalization has both ideological and empirical dimensions. Ideologically many scholars have seen it as an expression of the capitalist ideology (Ferguson 1992); as the alternative expression of cultural imperialism, and as the process of construction of transnational domination. According to Bartekson (2000) empirically it involves at least three processes— a process of ‘transference’ of exchange of things across existing unit boundaries, a process of ‘transformation’ of the identity of the unit, and also ‘transcendence’ that dissolves the divide between inside and outside (Bartelson 2000: 184-86). Globalization indeed is a plural phenomenon that includes the processes of economic integration, exchange of goods and services, and mobility of resources and adaptation to the structural adjustment programme of the IMF and the World Bank, transnational cultural flows and communication to territorialize culture (viz Americanization, hybridization etc cf. Barber 1992, Appadurai 1996), planetarisation of ecology (Meadows 1972), cultural extension and technological connectivity. Globalization, moreover, takes place in different socio-historical contexts, which provide very different meanings and implications in various parts of the world. It is posited in composite economic, technological, socio-cultural and political connectivity, ‘with multiple tendencies to a worldwide reach and connectedness of social phenomena or to a world-encompassing awareness among social actors’ (Therborn 2000: 154).

The process of globalisation needs a faster flow of goods and services across the globe. This is possible only with the help of advanced technology. Globalization is thus closely linked with the process of technological transformation and innovations. Human advancement is closely associated with technological advancement. Contemporary society is witnessing revolutionary innovative advancements in the field of technology, especially information and communication technologies (ICTs), which is characterized by phenomenal expansion of computer communication, and electronic technology. ICTs tremendously increase the pace of globalization and these together make a far-reaching impact on every aspect of society including economic, social, cultural political etc. A major outcome of this is the emergence of a knowledge society or information age where knowledge or information becomes the driving force for the all-round advancement of humanity. Gaining knowledge and applying it for knowledge production become the basic necessity for economic advancement.

Box 22.1: Social Development and Technological Advancement

History has proved that every form of technological transformation and innovation is linked to the emergence, proliferation and sustenance of a distinctive form of economy. The advancements in ICTs that is witnessed in the present day society is also linked to a new variety of economic activities which is a characteristic form of knowledge economy. Let us elaborate on this a little more. The process of knowledge generation, production and dissemination are challenged in the age of new ICTs. In the ICT-led knowledge economy, according to Romar (1990) as distinct from peasant and industrial economy where economic wealth is produced by using human manual labour and machines respectively, the processes of

generation, dissemination and exploitation of knowledge produce economic wealth predominantly. In the emerging society the ICTs have been envisioned as breaking the barriers to knowledge to develop human capabilities in all areas throughout the globe and among the poor and the rich alike. This is reflected in the work pattern of the society. Unlike the domination of the agricultural sector in the pre-industrial society and the industrial sector in the industrial society, in the ICT age knowledge-based service sector takes the dominant place. The service sector is marked by the creative use and exploitation of knowledge, which in turn depicts a significant role for the institutions that deliver knowledge.

By now the interlinkages between the expansion of globalisation, ICTs and knowledge economy must have been clear to you. You should also know that globalisation, ICTs and knowledge economy need a distinct variety of workers with educational process, which are linked to world market. This educational process is deeply embedded in commercially inclined life-long learning.

Box 22.2 : Knowledge Workers and Education

The knowledge economy and the workers have distinctive features and specific educational requirements. Let us examine some of the features of the knowledge economy and their relation with education:

- a) The knowledge workers of the knowledge society are the “symbolic analyst” who manipulates symbols rather than machines. Significantly their emergence is becoming faster than ever before with ever increasing productivity in all sector of the economy.
- b) The workers of the knowledge economy get access to work and social through formal education and training.
- c) Formal education and educational institutions occupy the centerstage of the knowledge society in a way similar to acquiring and distribution of property and income have occupied in the age of capitalism.
- d) In knowledge economy people are to learn throughout their life making the state of acquiring of knowledge a life-long process rather than an age specific affair.
- e) Knowledge society is far more competitive than the earlier society, as knowledge is the key competitive factor for career and earning opportunities.
- f) Knowledge workers own the tools of production. Unlike the capitalist society, true investment in the knowledge society is the knowledge of the knowledge workers, without knowledge the whole production process is unproductive. The higher the quality of education and training, the higher the demand of the knowledge worker.

Life-long learning is an important dimension of the knowledge society. New skill and knowledge are required to be imparted to meet the changing need of this society. Hence to fulfil this need several systems of education – convention system, open and distance system – dual mode system (combining both the conventional and the open and distance mode together) – have emerged across the globe. Significantly all these educational systems now draw heavily on the information and communication technologies (ICTs) both for the generation and dissemination of knowledge. There have emerged virtual universities and expansion of borderless education through ICTs. Indeed the ICT driven education system have acquired a place of prominence in present society.

The interlinkages among globalisation, ICTs, knowledge economy and education have not only thrown open new challenges to higher education, but also several opportunities that could be harnessed socially, economically and

politically. Thus there have emerged the following potential opportunities:

- Using of education as a tradeable commodity.
- Expand the boundaries of this trade all over the world.
- Institutionalise trade in education by creating new national and international arrangements. The new arrangements are those of the GATS and others.
- Extensive use of ICTs for the expansion of trade in education.

In the following sections of this unit, we shall be dealing with all these issues. As the ICTs are important components to deliver education across the globe and to commercialise education, let us examine the form and extent of ICTs use in the contemporary world.

Action and Reflection 22.1

Explain the significance of education in the knowledge economy. Discuss the relationship between the technological change and globalisation

As there has been greater realization about the potential of knowledge economy in the developing countries and the roles of ICTs therein, many of the multinational organizations including the World Bank, UNDP, International Telecommunication Union (ITU), etc., have fostered multiple initiatives in the Third World countries to create a framework for influencing policy formulation, opening up markets, introducing competition and deregulate the ICTs market (Balakrishnan 2001: 966). Since old structures and arrangements (like UN) are unable to accommodate the emerging flow and speed of economic engagements and interactions, now new structures are evolved to accommodate them. Now let us briefly explain the process of trading of education through the GATS.

Reflection and Action 22.2

Explain the major trends of access to ICTs in the contemporary world

22.3 General Agreements in Trade in Services (GATS) and Education

The emerging processes of globalization, expansion of ICTs and knowledge economy show an implicit and explicit relationship with commodification of education through GATS. Under the WTO regime education is a tradable service and this is to be traded in a unitary framework across the globe.

Box 22.3: GATS and Service Sector

The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) is the first and only set of multilateral rules governing international trade in services. The GATS was negotiated in the Uruguay Round, and was developed in response to the huge growth of the services economy over the past 30 years. In the global economy the service sector accounts for 60% of the global output, 30% of the global employment and 20% of the global trade (WTO 2005). If you look at the developed countries like the UK, the USA and Australia more than 72% of their GDP is earned from service and around 75% of the employed persons are engaged in the services economy (World Bank 2006 UN DP 2005).

The idea of bringing rules on services into the multilateral trading system was floated in the early to mid 1980s. The agreement was developed within the framework of rules and also in terms of the market access commitments. The GATS covers all traded services - for example banking, telecommunications, tourism, education, professional services etc.

The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), a set of multilateral rules governing international trade in services, is governed by principles relating to coverage, principle of trade and issues of protection of patents and copyrights. The various modes of trade in services in general and education in particular governed by GATS shall be understood in the backdrop of the basic principles of GATS. Let us see them briefly here.

- a) **Most-favoured-nation (MFN) treatment:** MFN means treating one's trading partners equally on the principle of non-discrimination. Under GATS, if a country allows foreign competition in a sector (for example education), equal opportunities in that sector should be given to service providers from all other WTO members.
- b) **Commitments on market access and national treatment:** Under the GATS all countries committed to open markets in specific sectors - and how open those markets will be - are the outcome of negotiations. Through these negotiations the member countries can increase market access (for example allow foreign universities to operate in the domestic market), limit the market access and decide the national treatment (i.e. whether or not the foreign universities be given all the opportunities which are given to the domestic/national universities).
- c) **Transparency:** GATS says governments must publish all relevant laws and regulations, and set up enquiry points within their bureaucracies. Foreign companies and governments can then use these inquiry points to obtain information about regulations in any service sector.
- d) **Regulation by Government:** As per the GATS, the government shall be using objectivity, reason and impartiality. A commitment to national treatment, for example, would only mean that the same regulations would apply to foreign suppliers as to nationals. Governments retain their right to set qualification requirements for doctors or lawyers, and to set standards to ensure consumer health and safety.
- e) **Recognition:** National governments can negotiate on the issue of recognition of each others educational qualifications to make them comparable. However, according to GATS "the recognition of other countries" qualification must not be discriminatory, and it must not amount to protectionism in disguise" (Ibid).
- f) **International Payments and Transfers:** Once a government has made a commitment to open a service sector to foreign competition, it must not normally restrict money being transferred out of the country as payment for services supplied in that sector.
- g) **Progressive Liberalization:** The WTO commits itself for progressive liberalization of trade including trade in services. Liberalisation of trade in services through the GATS requires more negotiations, which began in early 2000 and are now part of the Doha Development Agenda. The goal is to take the liberalization process further by increasing the level of commitments made under the GATS.

As already indicated, GATS covers a wide range of subjects. Work on some of the subjects started in 1995, as required, soon after GATS came into force in January 1995. Negotiations to further liberalize international trade in services started in 2000, along with other work involving study and review. The Articles of GATS which specify the broad guideline for negotiation has wider ramifications on services like education. Now let us learn more on the modes of trade in services in general and education in particular.

Box 22.4: WTO's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS)

Another important international agreement relating to knowledge creation and education that falls under WTO is Trade Related Property Rights (TRIPS). TRIPS, negotiated in the 1986-94 Uruguay Round, introduced intellectual property rules into the multilateral trading system for the first time. The WTO recognizes that ideas and knowledge are increasingly becoming parts of global trade. The creators must be given the rights to prevent others to use them without acknowledging, rewarding and recognizing the creators. Internationally there are variations on the extent of protection and reinforcement of these rights. TRIPS aims to bring uniformity in this aspect. TRIPS laid down that patent protection must be available for inventions for at least 20 years. The agreement describes the minimum rights that a patent owner must enjoy.

The areas covered by the TRIPS Agreement are:

- Copyright and related rights
- Trademarks, including service marks
- Geographical indications
- Industrial designs
- Patents
- Layout-designs (topographies) of integrated circuits
- Undisclosed information, including trade secrets (WTO 2005)

It is now established that the remaining services economy needs an educational arrangement and programmes that can be traded across the border as commodity both through the ICT based distance and conventional education. Privatisation of education, production and promotion of market driven self-financing educational programme, quick adoption of ICTs, repackaging of available course materials, development of collaborative arrangements with foreign universities to trade education are some of the recent trends not only with the distance learning but also with several conventional universities. The hidden potential of the open and distance learning especially its flexible structure, capacity to produce innovative academic programmes and its wide adherence to the ICTs based virtual and online learning have attracted the attention not only of the proponents of the knowledge economy but also the multinational corporations (We have discussed about ODL in the last block of this book).

In the given context the higher education scenario has been characterised by

- Increasing demand in higher education in India
- Emergence of a demand for lifelong learning
- Emergence of open and distance learning system as important providers of education
- Emphasis on ICTs aided learning
- Growing emphasis on dual mode education system whereby conventional education system also provides education through distance mode. In India of the 327 regular universities, 176 now also provide education through distance mode. More than 20% of students in India are now enrolled in the open and distance learning system.
- Increasing commercialisation of education through ICTs.
- Proliferation of 'for profit' private providers of higher education especially in the technical and professional cover.
- Proliferation of foreign universities campus.

In the developing world while the democratic states perceive education as service with social commitment, emerging market forces influence the state to redefine the function of education as a potential tradable commodity - a trade that can be transacted across the globe with the help of ICTs. In the context of the changes in the economy and the GATS the state's approach to education has undergone a phenomenal shift. Let us see the implication of this on higher education in India.

22.4 GATS and Modes Education

The GATS suggests four "modes" of trading of all internally traded services - for example banking, telecommunications, tourism, professional and education services, etc.

Mode 1: Service supplied from one country to another officially known as "cross-border supply"

Mode 2: Consumers or firms making use of a service in another country, officially known as "consumption abroad"

Mode 3: A foreign company setting up subsidiaries or branches to provide services in another country, officially described as "commercial presence"

Mode 4: Individuals traveling from their own country to supply services in another officially "presence of natural persons" (WTO, 2001)

Under the GATS the modes in which education could be traded globally is shown in Table 4.

Table 24.1: Mode of Supply of Education under GATS

Mode of Supply According to GATS	Explanation	Examples in Higher Education	Size/Potential of market
1. Cross Border Supply	-the provision of a service where the service crosses the border (does not require the physical movement of the consumer)	-distance education -e-learning -Virtual universities	-currently a relatively small market -seen to have great potential through the use of new ICTs and especially the internet
2. Consumption abroad	-provision of the service involving the movement of the consumer to the country of the supplier	-students who go to another country to study	-currently represents the largest share of the global market for education services
3. Commercial Presence	-the service provider establishes or has presence of commercial facilities in another country in order to render service	-local branch or satellite campuses -twinning partnerships -franchising arrangements with local institutions	-growing interest and strong potential for future growth -most controversial as it appears to set international rules on foreign investment
4. Presence of Natural Persons	-persons traveling to another country on a temporary basis to provide service	-professors, teachers, researchers working abroad	-potentially a strong market given the emphasis on mobility of professionals

Table 5: Classification of education services under GATS

Category of education service	Education activities included in each category	Notes
Primary Education (CPC 921)	-pre-school and other primary education services -does not cover child-care services	
Secondary Education (CPC 922)	-general higher secondary -technical and vocational secondary -also covers technical and vocational services for the disabled	
Higher Education (CPC 923) Adult Education (CPC 924)	-post secondary technical and vocational education services -other higher education services leading to university degree or equivalent -covers education for adults outside the regular education system	-types of education (i.e., business, liberal arts, science) are not specified -assumes that all post secondary training and education programs are covered -further delineation is needed
Other Education (CPC 929)	-covers all other education services not elsewhere classified -excludes education services related to recreation matters	-needs clarification re coverage and differentiation from other categories -for example- are education and language testing services, student recruitment services, quality assessment covered?

Source: Night, J. 2002

As we have seen earlier under the principle of GATS all member countries will provide equal market access and national treatment to all WTO members and guarantee equal conditions for foreign exporters and importers of education and investors in this to do business. The member governments are to make all relevant laws and regulations to suit this requirement of GATS.

The contemporary world has been conspicuously worked by a) sharp decline in public funding in higher education, b) sharp increase in the number of adults student seeking specialized educational training to start newer or to advance present career, c) proliferation of ICTs-based distance learning educational institutions and private corporate houses, e) increase in the potential of profitability of global market of education which is currently estimated to be US \$ 50 billion industry, f) increase in the 'for - profit' providers of higher education. Against this backdrop, higher education which was considered a public good and agent for equal opportunity considered by many a lucrative business in the 'service economy. For-profit providers and investors visualize the WTO and GATS as essential to dismantle what they consider to be barriers to trade in educational services and maximise their profit making opportunities on a global scale (public citizens 2006). Thus there have been serious efforts to transform higher education from a public good to a global services market" through the GATS. These have several implications.

Implications

- The provision of national treatment emphasizes that both the foreign and domestic providers of education be treated equally. The developing countries in particular and all the countries in general have a special commitment to provide subsidies in education to the weaker section of society. There are also facilities of freeships, scholarship for the students in Government-run or non-profit educational institutions. Under the national treatment provision either these protective subsidies be extended even to the providers of education or be withdrawn to ensure national treatment to all providers of education.
- Cross border education services are to be recognized by members of the WTO and provided accreditation. Refusal and delay may give rise to trade complaints. The stringent provision in providing accreditation, which may be a necessity on the part of some countries to protect their specific cultural and societal interest, could be challenged in the WTO tribunals as “more burdensome than necessary to ensure quality of service”.
- As cross-border education has provided enormous opportunities of making profit by trading education, there are possibilities of proliferation of fraudulent institutions. The online education service without proper accountability, standard and recognition would emerge as a tool for unscrupulous providers of education to exploit innocent students.
- It is also highlighted that the GATS has endeavoured to deregulate education to the advantage of the multinational firms by dismantling many of the domestic policies. Cross-border education and trade in education “does not simply entail students studying abroad to wide horizons and add depth, spice and culture to higher education experience”. This rather ensures effective elimination of “trade barriers” for the benefit of large multinationals and standards and policies are relegated to the category of “non-tariff barriers to trade” (Public Citizen 2006)

It is significant in this context that the initiative to include education under GATS has not come from experts in higher education, but from corporations and bodies like Global Alliance for Transnational Education, a subsidiary of a multinational telecommunication firm whose interest was to promote ‘for-profit’ education institutions abroad.

22.5 ICTs, Marginalised People and the Higher Education in India

“Education as an enabling mechanism” is a corollary to the processes of empowerment of the marginalized people. *The National Human Development Report 2001* writes: “Most importantly, education is a critical invasive instrument for bringing about social, economic and political inclusion and a durable integration of people, particularly those excluded from the mainstream of society” (GOI 2001:48). Marginalized people like the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, educationally backward minorities and women have always got low access to education in India. In recent years there have been serious debates on the issue of access of marginalized sections of society to higher education. India has high dropout rates at the primary and secondary levels of education. These dropout rates are highest among the marginalized groups.

The large section of these populations lag behind educationally at all levels. State policies on education is mandated to promote the educational well being of these people who have been relegated at the margin of society and are excluded from the mainstream economically, politically, culturally, and socially.

Even though India spends around 20% of total educational budget on higher education, of the total student population only 5.7% go to the colleges and higher levels of studies. In terms of age group, in India only 7% of the population of age group of 17-24 attain higher education as against 92% in the US, 52% in the UK, 45% in Japan (UNESCO 1999). In India, students' enrolment in higher education has significantly increased in recent years from less than 0.2 million in 1950 to around 10 millions by the year 2002. There, however, has been a very slow rate of increase of the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Trib and educationally backward students in higher education. For example the percentages of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled tribe students in higher education has been increased from 7% and 1.6% in 1950 to 7.78% and 2.7% in 2002 respectively (Rao 2002 cf. Weisskopt 2004). The per centage of girls' enrolment in higher education however has increased from 10% in 1950-51 to 40.5% 2003-03 (Govt. of India 2001-02).

In India there has also been a phenomenal growth of govt. recognized educational institutions from 209671 primary school in 1950-51 to 664041 in 2001-02; 7416 to 133492 high school, 587 to 11146 colleges (including colleges for professional education) and from 27 to 272 universities/institutions of national importance during the same period. More than 9.2 million students have enrolled in higher education in 2002-03 (Govt. of India 2001-02)

In spite of these developments higher education has remained beyond the reach of more than 94% of the Indian student population. The concept of open and distance learning is mooted for the educational well being of the marginalized. Can ICTs-based ODL be an effective tool for higher education among the marginalized in India? Let us examine the state infra structure or digital divide in India.

Experts often suggest several measures to integrate the ICTs and ODL to suffice the educational need of the marginalised. It is suggested that the ICT and ODL experts are to be sensitive to the need of the marginalized people in general and that of the workforce in particular. Educational curricula should focus on both their immediate and long-term knowledge need to pave the way to integrate them locally and globally through ICTs

Box 22.5: Digital Divide in Accessibility of ICTs

ICTs, however, function in a societal context. The Indian societal context is ridden with unequal distribution of resources, and divides based on caste, class, ethnicity and gender. Illiteracy, low income and spatial isolation widely contribute to sustain the pre-existing social exclusion. Along the time, there are also the dimensions of digital divides of various sorts. These divides are between rich and poor, between urban and rural, between English speaking upwardly mobile literati and non-English speaking rest of people. This digital divides are again accentuated with the varied extent of access to electricity, telephone and computer in different states in India. Table 3 shows the emerging form and the extent of digital and infrastructure divides in India. All parts of the country do not have full access to electricity and telephone connections, which are a pre-conditions for ICTS access. In the globalised world while there have emerged areas of inclusion; there also exists a vast section as excluded from within. While most of the urban areas have been connected with the forces of globalisation and ICT networks and a distinctive category of elites has emerged therein as the ICT-driven 'digerati', within the same urban set a large segment of the work force working mostly in the unorganized sector and surviving in a sub-human existence has remained excluded from ICTs access. In rural areas, on the other hand, while the rudimentary forms of connectivity have only touched the upwardly mobile gentry, agricultural labourers, tenants, poor peasants and the artisans who represent the vast section of the marginalized people of India have remained excluded. Their educational and economic status often bar them from getting integrated with the information age.

22.6 Globalisation, Free Market and Higher Education: A Critique

The process of globalisation has exposed higher education in India to multiple tendencies, reach, connectedness and contradictions. While there has been concern for the educational well being of the marginalized, the market triumph over education can seldom be denied. Significantly in the Social Development Summit 1995 Copenhagen, the Heads of States and Governments recognized that the importance of the ICTs and the Structural Adjustment Programme to ensure the process of empowerment of the marginalized people. They committed:

- 'to promote open free markets, to prevent or counteract market failure, promote stability and long term investment, ensure fair competition,
- to ensure that people living in poverty have access to education and training, technology knowledge and information,
- to promote lifelong learning by seeking to improve the quality of education to ensure that people of all ages are provided with useful knowledge,
- to ensure equal education opportunity for girls, women, youth, children and adults,
- to 'strengthen the links between the labour market and education policies realizing that education and vocational training are vital elements in job creation and combating unemployment and social exclusion in our societies,'
- to 'implement at the national levels structural adjustment policies to establish a more favourable climate for trade and investment to ensure human recourse development'(UNDP 1995)

It is usually pointed out the Social Development Summit was a prelude to the GATT and GATS in order to get the Heads of the States and Government committed to the free market philosophy and to initiate trade in education largely to protect the interests of the for-profit providers of educations.

The provision of 'cross-border supply' under the GATS has opened up a new horizon for transference and commercialization of education through ICTs. With the 'commercial presence' in other countries through local branch, satellite campuses, twinning partnerships, and franchising arrangements, the process of transformation of local identities has also been smoothened. However, these processes have not been able to resolve the contradiction between local cultural values and sensitivities inbuilt in education on the one hand, and the global drive to commoditize education on the other.

All countries of the world however are not equally posited in relation to their technological development. Commoditisation and commercial expansion of education will immediately help promote the interest of those countries which have already reached a higher level of technological development, access to ICTs, and have the capacity to invest a higher proportion of their GDP in education. It is widely recognized that the GATS has introduced market driven competition among unequal partners. The developing and least developed countries, which are yet to fully develop their markets, infrastructure, domestic capacity for investment, etc., face added disadvantages while encountering the process of harmonization. The market driven competition of GATS contribute to the decline in the uniqueness of educational institutions, elimination of cultural focus, thoughts and educational themes. It is apprehended that 'with corporate controlled education, the security of an educational institution will disappear as it loses out to big merger deals and high-stakes investing. In fact the very ideal of education will change. No longer will truth be sought, but rather whatever suits the interests of the multinationals (Fraser and O'Sullivan 2003).

Education has a social concern, especially in developing countries. Government subsidizes education to meet the national goal. As subsidized education is a barrier to free trade, government controls are to be minimized on education through GATS. "Government may be forced to allow private companies to issue accredited diplomas, even if there is little control over what is being taught by these private institutions. The potential for education to increasingly serve only as a corporate training ground is more encouraged, rather than encouraging critical enquiry and other democratically agreed upon ends (Ibid 2003)

Dissemination of knowledge, creation of knowledge and service to community are three tasks performed by educational institutions for nation building in the developing countries. GATS would undermine this task by converting education into a commodity and by altering the content of education in terms of the market need (Gill 2003)

There has been a perceptible change in the attitude of the Government towards higher education in the wake of introduction of the General Agreement in Trade in Services (GATS). Now there has been the added emphasis on private funding in higher education by way of (a) hiking student fees (b) introducing students' loan, (c) increasing role of private sector, (e) introducing self financing courses (Government of India 2001), (f) encouraging the private universities.

There is no denying the fact that the 'let the users pay' philosophy may work very well for the economically affluent or elite section of society. This approach however will adversely affect the students of the marginalized groups of society. As private investment in higher education will not go to the non-market-oriented courses and to research and development of knowledge, it would hit the interest of the students of the marginalized groups very hard. In the emerging scenario higher education is no more a luxury: It is essential to a nation's social and economic development (UNESCO 2001). Skilled human capital is to be developed in the country with the philosophy of access and equity, marginalised groups access to higher education is to be smoothed.

The country paper of Government of India, presented at the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education 1998, expresses its commitment to ensure the 'reach of higher education to the youth as well as to those who need continuing education for meeting the demands of explosion of information, fast changing of occupation, and lifelong education' It also recognized that "the university has a crucial role to play in promoting social change and it must make an impact on the community by a new emphasis on the community based programmes and the roles of ICTs therein"(GOI 1998).

In the mission to promote social change and to develop community-based programme for the marginalized, social science education has a lot to contribute to contextualise the ICTs and lifelong learning in terms of the local need. In spite of initiation of the process of harmonization through globalization, GATS and the Structural Adjustment Programme the world has got digitally divided, a large section of the marginalized has remained excluded, new identities are formed, and a new culture of resistance has emerged. The challenge lies for the social scientists in the ODL in undertaking the risk to integrate the localized plural values and cultural sensitivities of the communities with the process of global learning.

22.7 Conclusion

In this unit we discussed the broad context, in which the ODL is to function today, i.e. the frame of globalization, and the emergence of ICT based knowledge economy therein. In the wake of globalization, proliferation of ICTs and the emergence of the free market philosophy through the GATS and WTO, ODL has acquired several new dimensions and possibilities. The changing facets

of ODL are also presented in this unit. The roles of the ODL in empowering the marginalized through appropriate education and technology in the context of persisting socio-economic and digital divide in India are also discussed at length. Besides highlighting the opportunities as unfolded for the ODL for becoming an effective tool for the empowerment of the marginalized in developing societies, a critique of the functioning of the ODL has also been presented here. Throughout the unit our aim has been not to impose a conclusion on the interface between the ODL and globalization, but to facilitate you by way of providing you some crucial interrelated information to locate socio-cultural sensitivities, market underpinning and the emerging significance of the ODL in the globalised world.

22.9 Further Reading

Night, J. 2002. *Trade in Higher Education Services : The Implications of GATS*. The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education: London

Chanda, R. 2002. *GATS and Its Implications for Developing Countries: Key Issues Concerns*. Department of Economic and Social Affairs, World Bank: Washington

Unit 23

Education: Social Commitment vs. Commodification

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- 23.1 Introduction
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- 23.3 Constitutional and Legal Framework for Educational Development in India
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Learning Objectives

This unit deals with dichotomy between social commitment for and commodification of education. After reading this unit you should be able to:

- explain the various commitments made for the educational well being of the community by the state in India;
- examine the social commitment for the expansion of education by various international bodies and the conventions;
- analyze the emerging facets of commodification of education across the globe; and
- discuss the dichotomy between the social commitment for education and its commodification.

23.1 Introduction

Every society expresses its own commitment for the social development of diverse sections of the population through diverse means. These commitments are to be implemented through various institutionalized means. Education is one of the important means for the community, well-being and effective tool for social development. The Indian State has expressed its concern for educational well being and has framed various strategies towards this endeavour. Various international organizations have also expressed their commitment for educational well being of society and have directed member states to initiate actions to fulfill these commitments. This unit aims to highlight various commitments made for the educational well being of society both by the nation state and international communities. It begins with an overview of the constitutional and legal commitments made for educational development in India. It also looks into the various recommendations made by several important committees and commissions for education.

All heads of the State of the United Nations Organisation (UNO) have committed themselves to make education a tool for empowerment of the marginalized in the World Development Summit, 1995. They have also committed themselves for "Education For All". The Dakar Commitment (2000) has made it very explicit. The Millennium Development Goal of the UNO has pledged to eradicate illiteracy by 2015. Most of the member states of UNO have also signed General Agreements on Trade in Services (GATS) of WTO. This has paved the way for commodification of education by designating education as a tradable service. This unit also discusses the diverse facets of commodification of education and its implication

on the social commitments made by the State and international communities for the educational well being of the society.

23.2 Social Commitment for Education: Dimensions

Education plays the central role towards economic development, technological advancement, effective social and political participation of people by paving the way for human resource development, upward social mobility and collective conscientisation of society. Education as an enabling mechanism is a corollary to the processes of empowerment and an important component of power. As an emancipatory force, it has always been recognized as a means to improve personal and collective endowment and capacity, enhance human capital, and expand the bases of opportunities and choices of individuals and groups. The National Human Development Report of India (2001) recognizes that education “is not only a means to enhance human capital and productivity but also a critical invasive instrument for bringing about social, economic and political inclusion and a durable integration of people, particularly those excluded from the mainstream of society”(GOI 2001:48). Hence, according to UNESCO “The right to education is a fundamental human right. It occupies a central place in Human Rights and is essential and indispensable for the exercise of all other human rights and for development. As an empowerment right, education is the primary vehicle by which economically and socially marginalized, adults and children can lift themselves out of poverty, and obtain the means to participate fully in their communities” (UNESCO, 2006).

However, due to several social, economic and historical reasons all sections of population have not got equal access to education. Even among the literate or educated sections only a few have got access to higher, professional and technical avenues of learning. Consequently these vast sections of the population have remained deprived of the avenues and processes of human development and capacity building for upward social mobility. The state and the society have also remained deprived of the human potentials of these sections of society. Inequality in access to education has been historically rooted and socio-culturally circumscribed. In India, for example, traditionally only the upper castes have had access to education and the lower castes and the indigenous people were deprived of access to education at all levels. Such situations are available in many other parts of the world as well. For example, in the North American countries the Blacks and the indigenous people lag behind in their educational achievements.

It has long been realized and recognized that lack of education and unequal access to education has emerged to be a potential cause of socio-economic backwardness, poverty, ill-health and all forms of human deprivation. Since the significance of and disparities in access to education have widely been recognized, there have been several commitments to enhance access to education both by the state, international bodies and the civil society organization. Most of these commitments aim to:

- recognize education as the cornerstone of social and human development,
- enhance access to education to all sections of population,
- arrange special provisions for ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities,
- provide special attention for children, women and other vulnerable sections of society,
- arrange adequate resources for expansion of education,
- save education as a tool for national integration,
- use education as a tool for mainstreaming marginalized.

Let us now focus on the commitment to education specifically made in India through the constitutional and legal arrangements.

Why providing education to all shall be considered by the state as a social commitment to its people?

23.3 Constitutional and Legal Framework for Educational Development in India

India has recognized education not only as a tool for social and economic development, but also a force for social revitalization of human resources for all sections of the population. In the post independence period India has committed itself to the educational well being of all the segments of the society and has made several constitutional provisions towards this endeavour. The Constitution of India outlines general principles for guiding and governing educational development in the country. These provisions have tried to ensure educational interests especially of children, weaker sections and women, religious minorities, linguistic groups etc. The government of India has also appointed several committees and commissions towards these endeavours. Let us briefly explain the constitutional provisions first.

Constitutional Provisions

- Article 45 of the Constitution enjoins that the State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of 10 years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years. This constitutional obligation has been time and again deferred to 1970, 1980, 1990 and then to 2000. The Approach to the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007) has set the target of all children completing five years of schooling by 2007.
- Article 29(1) provides that any section of the citizens, residing in the territory of India and any part thereof, having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same.
- Article 29(2) lays down that no citizen shall be denied admission to any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them.
- Article 31 enjoins that all minorities, whether based on religion or language shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.
- Article 32 lays down that the State shall not, in granting aid to educational institutions, discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language.
- Under Article 46 the State is obliged to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and, in particular, of the Schedules Castes and the Schedules Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation (National Human Development Report 2001: 59).

Committees and Commissions: Overview of Social Commitments

The Government of India has appointed several commissions and committees on education from time to time. All of these committees have invariably suggested measures to improve the state of literacy and education among the marginalised sections of society. In pursuance of the National Policy on Education 1986, several schemes are made for the (a) abolition of tuition fee in government school at the primary and the secondary levels, (b) reservation of seats in higher education including IIT, IIM etc., (c) relaxation of cut points for admission

in the IITs, (d) special coaching (e) linguistic developments etc for the Scheduled castes and the Scheduled Tribes students. Several programmes have also been launched for the minorities. For example, (a) Area Intensive Programme for the Educationally Backward Minorities, (b) schemes for financial assistance for modernization of *Madrasas* etc. The Programme of Action (1992) of this education policy has suggested various proactive measures to be initiated for women, Scheduled castes, Scheduled Tribes, educational minorities, and the physically handicapped.

Box 23.1 : Higher Education as a social commitment

Higher education has always been assigned a special role to promote the cause of nation building, economic prosperity, expanding the base of highly trained manpower in the country. Several commissions and committees were set up over the last five decades to analyze and recommend the changing need of higher education in India. According to the Radha Krishnan Commission (1947) higher education in Indian society has to be committed to promote the 'social purpose we profess to serve', 'to produce community values and ideas', 'to promote human well-being, faith in reasons and humanity, democracy, justice, fraternity', 'to promote professional education to satisfy the occupational need of the society' (Radhakrishnan Commission 1947) The Education Committee on Higher Education emphasized that higher education should aim 'to promote self-reliance', 'economic growth, employment', 'vocationalisation through scientific and technical education' and to promote 'social and national integration' (Education Committee 1966). The Education Commission of 1966 widely known as the Kothari Commission viewed the role of education in India from a wider perspective. According to this Commission education in India must seek 'to seek and cultivate new knowledge', 'to provide leadership to help individuals to develop their potential', 'to promote social justice, 'to bring the individual closer to the community' (Education Commission 1966).

The National Policy on Education 1986 committed itself to enhance equity and relevance of education and also to make education a tool to enhance the pace of social change in India. It laid special emphasis on the removal of disparities and to equalise educational opportunity by attending to the specific needs of those who have been denied equality so far. Let us highlight some of the important commitments this policy has made for women, SC, ST, religious minorities, physically handicapped and others.

- i) **Education for Women's Equality:** Regarding women's education, educationist say "education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of woman. In order to neutralise the accumulated distortions of the past, there will be a well-conceived edge in favour of women. The National Education System will play a positive, interventionist role in the empowerment of women. It will foster the development of new values through redesigned curricula, textbooks, the training and orientation of teachers, decision-makers and administrators, and the active involvement of educational institutions.
- ii) **The Education of Scheduled Castes:** The central focus in the SCs' educational development is their equalization with the non-SC population at all Stages and levels of education. The measures contemplated for this purpose include:
 - Incentives to indigent families to send their children to school regularly till they reach the age of 14;
 - Pre-matric scholarship scheme for children of families engaged in occupations such as scavenging, flaying and tanning to be made applicable from Class onwards;

- Constant micro-planning and verification to ensure the enrolment, retention and successful completion of courses by SC students;
 - Recruitment of teachers from Scheduled Castes;
 - Provision of facilities for SC students in students' hostels at district headquarters, according to a phased programme etc.”
- iii) **The Education of Scheduled Tribes:** The following measures will be taken urgently to bring the Scheduled Tribes on par with others.
- Priority will be accorded to opening primary schools in tribal areas.
 - The socio-cultural milieu of the STs has its distinctive characteristics including, in many cases, their own spoken languages.
 - Educated and promising Scheduled Tribe youths will be encouraged and trained to take up teaching in tribal areas.
 - Residential schools, including Ashram Schools, will be established on a large scale.
 - Incentive schemes will be formulated for the Scheduled Tribes, keeping in view their special needs and life styles.
 - The curriculum at all stages of education will be designed to create an awareness of the rich cultural identity of the tribal people as also of their enormous creative talent.
- iv) **Minorities:** Greater attention will be paid to the education of these groups in the interests of equality and social justice. This will naturally include the constitutional guarantees given to them to establish and administer their own educational institutions, and protection to their languages and culture.
- v) **The Handicapped:** The objective should be to integrate the physically and mentally handicapped with the general community as equal partners, to prepare them for normal growth and to enable them to face life with courage and confidence.

In Indian national perception education is essentially for all and the state has a moral commitment to make education accessible to all. This is fundamental to our all-round development. The country paper of the government of India presented at the UNESCO conference on Higher Education, Paris (1998) suggests that 'there is a need to place greater emphasis on enrolment of students from underprivileged backgrounds such as the rural areas, the Scheduled Castes and tribes and other backward groups, minorities, the disabled and others who have suffered from discrimination which has existed for centuries. Hence, special attention has to be given to all these groups through various strategies to be adopted in the university system, especially for access to the system and qualitative development of performance (Govt. of India: 1998).

Notwithstanding such commitment a vast section of Indian population has not got access to education. They have mostly remained illiterate. These sections of the population mostly belong to the categories Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, women, and the rural population. You must have realized that literacy rate in India has remained quite low. As per 2001 census the overall literacy rate is 65.2%, male 76%, female 54%, rural 59%, urban 80%, Scheduled Caste 37%, Scheduled Tribes 29%.

Hence besides adhering to several constitutional commitments, the Indian state has also been a partner of several commitments made by important international bodies collectively. Let us examine India's commitment to 'education for all' which is a global commitment.

23.4 India's Commitment to Education for All

Since the 1990s the commitment of the world communities towards the educational well-being of the society have been very explicit. This has widely been reflected in the formulation of a global view on "Educational for All", that emerged out of a World Conference on Education for All in 1990 whereby representatives from 155 countries and 150 civil society organization made World Declaration on Education for All pledging to provide education to all segments of population. In this conference at Jomtien, Thailand it was highlighted that children, youth and adult would benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning need; and that education would be flexible, tailor-made, adapted to the needs, culture and circumstances of learners.

In view of the above objective India has formulated an elaborate plan of action in achieving goals of the 'educational for all' specifically to increase the access, retention, achievement and monitoring of education. So far as the access is concerned the government of India has committed itself to ensure universal enrolment of all children, including girls and persons belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. To improve the extent of retention it has committed to the reduction of dropout rates between Classes I to V and I to VIII to 20 and 40 per cent respectively; and for the improvement of school facilities by revamping Operation Blackboard programme upto the upper primary level also. The state has also committed to achieve the minimum levels of learning by approximately all children at the primary level, and to introduce of this concept at the middle stage on a large scale. For the purpose of monitoring it has formed the local level committee, with due representation to women and teachers, to assist in the working of primary education to oversee its functioning; and improvement of the monitoring system for universalisation of elementary education (MHRD 1995 Govt. of India).

In India the programme of education for all has taken the form of a social movement. Several missions are attached to this movement. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is an integral part of this movement towards achieving the long cherished goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) through a time bound integrated approach, in partnership with State governments. SSA, which promises to provide useful and quality elementary education to all children in the 6 -14 age group by 2010, and to provide community owned quality elementary education in mission mode. It also envisages bridging of gender and social gaps. The main objectives of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan are as follows:

- All children complete five years of primary schooling by 2007;
- All children complete eight years of schooling by 2010;
- Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life;
- Bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010;
- Universal retention by 2010 (Govt. of India 2006)

It has been categorically noted that education of girls, especially those belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, will be one of the principal concerns of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. There will be a focus on the educational participation of children from SC/ST, religious and linguistic minorities disadvantaged groups and the disabled children (Govt. of India 2006). To know more about the SSA you are advised to refer to the unit on Elementary Education.

Reflection and Action 23.2

Discuss the strategies adopted by Indian government to fulfill its commitment towards "Education for All"

23.5 International Commitment for Educational Well being

The international communities have committed themselves to espouse the cause of educational well being of humanity. Let us explain the nature of these commitments as expressed in the Social Development Summit 1995, Dakar Declaration 2000, and in the Millennium Development Goal 2001.

The Social Development Summit: Commitment for Education

In 1995 all heads of the states of United Nations Organization met in Copenhagen over the World Summit for Social Development and committed themselves to empower the people to maximize their capacities, resources and opportunities. In the wake of globalisation and initiation of new structural Adjustment Programmes they expressed their commitment to eradicate poverty, promote employment, social integration, human dignity and universal and equitable access to quality education. As indicated, in this Summit all the heads of the states committed themselves to ensure all the tools which are essential for effective human development. As education is one of the vital components of social development, their commitment to education was rather very elaborate. Let us depict in length the commitment the Social Development Summit on education.

The Summit declared: "We commit ourselves to promoting and attaining the goals of universal and equitable access to quality education, without distinction as to race, national origin, gender, age or disability". As a strategy the Summit committed that "at the national level, we will:

- a) Formulate and strengthen time bound national strategies for the eradication of illiteracy and universalization of basic education;
- b) Emphasize lifelong learning by seeking to improve the quality of education to ensure that people of all ages are provided with useful knowledge reasoning ability, skills and ethical and social values required to develop their full capacities;
- c) Ensure that children, particularly girls, enjoy their rights and promote the exercise of those rights by making education, adequate nutrition and health care accessible to them, consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- d) Take appropriate and affirmative steps to enable all children and adolescents to attend and complete school and to close the gender gap in primary, secondary, vocational and higher education;
- e) Ensure full and equal access to education for girls and women, recognizing that investing in women's education is the key element in achieving social equality, higher productivity and social returns in terms of health, lower infant mortality and the reduced need for high fertility;
- f) Ensure equal educational opportunities at all levels for children, youth and adults with disabilities, in integrated settings, taking full account of individual differences and situations;
- g) Recognize and support the right of indigenous people to education in a manner that is responsive to their specific needs, aspirations and cultures, and ensure their full access to health care;
- h) Develop specific educational policies, with gender perspective;

- i) Strengthen the links between labour market and education policies, realizing that education and vocational training are vital elements in job creation and in combating unemployment and social exclusion in our societies, and emphasize the role of higher education and scientific research in all plans of social development;
- j) Develop broad-based education programmes that promote and strengthen respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- k) Focus on learning acquisition and outcome, broaden the means and scope of basic education, enhance the environment for learning and strengthen partnerships among Governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, local communities, religious groups and families to achieve the goal of education for all;
- l) Establish or strengthen both school-based and community-based health education programmes for children;
- m) Expedite efforts to achieve the goals of national health-for-all strategies, based on equality and social justice in line with the Declaration on Primary Health Care;
- n) Promote, in all educational and health policies and programmes, environmental awareness, including awareness of unsustainable patterns of consumption and production.”

At the international level, the heads of the states committed to

- “Ensure that international organizations, in particular the international financial institutions, support these objectives, integrating them into their policy programmes and operations as appropriate.
- Strengthen intergovernmental organizations that utilize various forms of education to promote culture; disseminate information through education and communication media; help spread the use of technologies; and promote technical and professional training and scientific research.
- Intensify and coordinate international support for education and health programmes based on respect for human dignity (UNDP 1995).

Dakar Commitment

The collective commitment for education achieved a new dimension in Dakar, Senegal in 2000. The Dakar framework for action entitled: *Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitment* stipulated clearly that “Governments have an obligation to ensure that EFA goals and targets are reached and sustained. This is a responsibility that will be met most effectively through broad-based partnerships within countries, supported by cooperation with regional and international agencies and institutions.”

The representative of Governments accepted ‘Education as a fundamental human right’ and collectively committed themselves to the attainment of the following goals:

- a) expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
- b) ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
- c) ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes;
- d) achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;

- e) eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality;
- f) improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills."

To achieve these goals, the governments, organizations, agencies, groups and associations represented at the World Education Forum pledged themselves to:

- a) mobilize strong national and international political commitment for education for all, develop national action plans and enhance significantly investment in basic education;
- b) promote EFA policies within a sustainable and well-integrated sector framework clearly linked to poverty elimination and development strategies;
- c) ensure the engagement and participation of civil society in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of strategies for educational development;
- d) develop responsive, participatory and accountable systems of educational governance and management;
- e) meet the needs of education systems affected by conflict, national calamities and instability and conduct educational programmes in ways that promote mutual understanding, peace and tolerance, and help to prevent violence and conflict;
- f) implement integrated strategies for gender equality in education which recognize the need for changes in attitudes, values and practices;
- g) implement as a matter of urgency education programmes and actions to combat the HIV/AIDS;
- h) create safe, healthy, inclusive and equitably resourced educational environments conducive to excellence in learning with clearly defined levels of achievement for all;
- i) enhance the status, morale and professionalism of teachers;
- j) harness new information and communication technologies to help achieve EFA goals;
- k) systematically monitor progress towards EFA goals and strategies at the national, regional and international levels; and
- l) build on existing mechanisms to accelerate progress towards education for all.

The Dakar commitment also emphasized our need of political will for the effective and successful implementation of the above strategies. It also affirmed that no countries seriously committed to 'education for all' would be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by a lack of resources. (UNESCO:2001). Towards this endeavour there would be concerted efforts for

- i) increasing external finance for education, in particular basic education;
- ii) ensuring greater predictability in the flow of external assistance;
- iii) facilitating more effective donor coordination;
- iv) strengthening sector-wide approaches;
- v) providing earlier, more extensive and broader debt relief and/or debt cancellation for poverty reduction, with a strong commitment to basic education; and

- vi) undertaking more effective and regular monitoring of progress towards EFA goals and targets, including periodic assessments (UNESCO 2001).

Education in the Millennium Development Goal

The United Nation has articulated the Millennium Development goal. In its goal No.2 it talks about education: To achieve Universal Primary Education by 2015, it aims to ensure that “by 2015 children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary education.” The UNO recognized that better education is fundamental to the prospects for economic and social development and poverty eradication.

Reflection and Action 23.3

Discuss the various features of commitment for education as expressed in the Social Development Summit 1995. Also compare Social Development Summit’s commitment for education with those of the Dakar’s Commitment

All through these declarations and the goals the international communities have committed themselves for the educational well being of all sections of population irrespective of age, sex, caste, ethnicity, religious, language. They have also committed themselves to eradicate the problem of finance that may come in the way of ensuring the process of access to education by all sections of population. Several strategies are indicated towards these endeavours.

In the fast changing globalised world most of the nations’ economics are getting transformed into knowledge economy. In knowledge economy knowledge as an economic capital has acquired a commodity value. No knowledge economy can prosper without elaborate educational arrangement for that society. Against this backdrop, social commitment for educational well being is but a prerequisite for survival of the present state of a country’s economy, its transformation and integration with knowledge economy, with the process of globalisation and contemporary economic order.

Different segments of the population are having different educational needs. National and international communities have committed for the expansion of education at all levels (primary, secondary & tertiary), of all types (professional, vocational, liberal arts, science), at all stages of life (lifelong learning) and through all means (conventional, ICT based on line/web based etc.). This leads to more and more need of knowledge and education and thereby its commodification. Hence besides social commitment, commodification has become another aspect of education in the contemporary world. Education is not only a basic human right for the full expression of human potential; it is also a tradable service, a capital that can be sold and purchased in the market. Marketisation, privatization and commodification of education are considered important aspects of these endeavours. Thus in the social commitment for education, the significance of market forces are underlined. For example, the Social Development Summit highlights the significance of the linkages between the education and labour market. In the next section of this unit, we shall be discussing the issues of commodification of education.

23.6 Commodification of Education

In the previous two units of this block we have discussed the issues of privatization and trade in education through the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) of the WTO. We have also discussed the emerging socio-economic contexts of globalisation, proliferation of information and communication technologies, emergence of knowledge economy, which have in one way or the other contributed towards commodification of education.

In the era of globalisation, social commitment for education cannot be seen only as the commitment of the state and to be fulfilled by the state alone. The intervention of the international agencies, civil societies, and that of the private players in education are to be taken into consideration as a social reality. Simultaneously the revolution in the information and communication technologies has made a tremendous impact on education. In this complex situation the state should not remain a passive observer to the market take over of education. Rather, the state should commit itself to provide quality education not only through the conventional means as and where absolutely necessary, but also through all advanced means to match the knowledge requirement of society, hence there is a need to reformulate the educational policy in India.

Emerging Thrust of Educational Reforms

Societies in India are undergoing rapid process of social transformation specifically caused by planned development of the economy and industrialization in the 1950s, the Green Revolution in the 1960s and 1970s, introduction of Structural Adjustment Programmes in the 1990s and penetration of ICTs in 1990s and thereafter. In response to these transformations education needs to meet the emerging requirements of the society. Against this backdrop, educational reform has been a serious concern in India. The committees and commissions on education (e.g. Radhakrishnan Commission on Higher Education (1948-49), Laxamaswamy Mudaliyar Committee on Secondary Education (1952-53), the Kothari Commission (1964-66), National Policy on Education (1986) etc.) have made significant recommendation pertaining to universalisation of elementary education, vocationalisation of secondary education and to strengthen higher education. However, most of these goals were not achieved due to the slow and haphazard and half-hearted implementation of the plan of action, decline in the allocation of resources to higher education, inadequate infrastructure and lack of coordination among various bodies.

The Policy Framework for Educational Reforms in India: A Guide to Commodification

In the wake of implementation of the structural Adjustment Programme, proliferation of ICT based knowledge economy in India, the government appointed a committee to suggest a framework for educational reforms in India. *The Policy Framework for Reforms in Education* known as *Ambani-Birla Report* highlights some of the crucial state of education in India. This report initially recognizes that education has become even more vital in the new world of information. "Knowledge is rapidly replacing raw materials and labour as the most critical input for survival and success. Knowledge has become the new asset. More than half of GDP in the major OECD countries is now knowledge based. About two thirds of the future growth of world GDP is expected to come from knowledge led businesses." According to this report India's education system is highly skewed. Her literacy rates are not only low, but also highly skewed on gender, state-wise spread and urban-rural spread.

While highlighting educational divides in India this report emphatically points out that as the larger world embraces the information age, the world of education in India encompasses different 'worlds' that live side by side.

- One world includes only a fortunate few with access to modern institutions, computers, Internet access and expensive overseas education.
- A second world wants to maintain the status quo Teachers, administrators, textbook publishers, students - all have reasons to prefer things to remain as they are or change only gradually.
- The third world struggles with fundamental issues such as no books, wrong books, teachers desperately in need of training, teachers with poor

commitment, rote learning of irrelevant material, classrooms with hundred students, dirty floors and no toilets. India cannot hope to succeed in the information age on the back of such three disparate worlds.”

According to this report as the developed world moves to forging an information society founded on education, India cannot remain behind as a non-competitive labour oriented society.

It suggests as against this backdrop that it is “imperative for India is to raise standards of the vast majority with poor education, break the education sector free from its inertia and forge a society that places knowledge as the cornerstone of its development. Thus, the vision for education in India would be “To Create A Competitive, Yet Co-operative, Knowledge Based Society”. Towards this endeavour this report has suggested several strategies:

- Provide quality primary education facilities to every citizen of India, preferably within a distance of one kilometre from his residence.
- Provide and support the private sector in the establishment of high quality, secondary education facilities in every taluka.
- Integrate education with information and communication technologies
- Market India as a destination for affordable, high quality education.
- The government should establish an education development fund for primary and literacy education with donations to this fund exempted from income tax.
- Government should also progressively reduce the funding for universities and make them adopt the route of self-sufficiency. Concurrently, a credit market for private finance of cost of higher education should be developed.
- A Private University Bill should be legislated to encourage establishment of new private universities in the fields of science and technology and management.
- Existing centres of excellence should be encouraged to establish international centres to attract overseas students. Foreign direct investment in education should be allowed, to begin with, limited to science and technology and management areas.
- All political parties should come to an understanding that they will keep away from universities and educational institutions.
- Any form of political activity on campuses of universities and educational institutions should be banned.
- Regional Engineering Colleges must be provided autonomy and resources and facilities must be upgraded.

According to this report the education sector in India needs a revolution that embraces information and communications technologies, fosters freedom and innovation and induces a market oriented competitive environment which is vital for progress and prosperity in the information era.

Social Implications of Commodification

The Birla Ambani Report though has been widely successful in capturing the imagination of the knowledge society, in articulating the role of education therein, and in establishing the prevalence of educational divide in India, its suggested strategies predominantly pave the way for the commodification of education. Its recommendations for encouragement of private sector in education, marketing India as destination of higher quality education, reducing funding for universities, private finance in higher education, establishing private universities, promoting foreign direct investment in education, banning of political activities in the educational campus, etc., not only encourages commodification and privatization of education, but also discourages the state

from fulfilling its social commitment for the educational well being the community. Can a developing country like India afford the state withdrawal from higher education? This report leaves primary education with the state. However, it does not spell out the obligation of the state to provide free quality primary education to all children. The private players are already there, in the primary sector to breed inequality in education at an early stage. Will the privatization of education or in that sense commodification of education be a panacea for all ailment, backwardness, inequality, inaccessibility and stagnation in education?

Argument in Favour of Commodification of Education: Commercialisation of education has been a contentious issue not only in India but all over the world.

Many are of the view that true competition in the education sector would improve the quality; that social accountability of education institution would be fixed by the conscious uses of these educational facilities; that the access of the marginalized group to education be increased by attracting them to the quality of education and by making education there need based and that private schools are more accountable than Government run schools. It has also been pointed out that in the spite of constitutional mandate the state has failed in last the 60 years in eradicating illiteracy and in ensuring the access of the marginalized groups in quality education. It has been suggested that the initiative of the state should continue in providing financial assistance, infrastructure etc. for educational development and the private sector should be encouraged to generate a creative and competitive environment to impart education.

You must have observed that in recent decades all over India the attraction towards private schools has increased. A careful scrutiny of facts would reveal that this has been mostly because of

- callous attitude of the bureaucracy towards Government schools,
- unsupportive and inadequate management in these schools,
- declining student-teacher ratio,
- lack of motivated teachers,
- lack of proper infrastructure,
- lack of accountability,
- proliferation of private schools with better management, better teacher-student ratio, good infrastructure and teachers and better accountability.

Such a scenario has helped only to breed inequality in quality of education and thereafter unequal access to education. While the private English medium schools have emerged to cater to the need of the elite segments of society, the vast sections of the students who are mostly from either the poor or the average economic background join the government run vernacular medium school.

It is important to mention that equal access to education is widely determined not by the progressive policy formulation of the state alone but by its democratic ideals and strong political will and commitment to ensure greater equity in education and its willingness to share power with all sections of the society. It is argued that commodification of education will help to ensure equality against the backdrop of the state's failure in providing quality education for all.

Arguments Against Commodification: A group of scholars are of the opinion that commercialization of education would lead to privatization and that as there would not be adequate control the quality will suffer, and in the process

of commercialization only market oriented academic programmes or courses would be given preference while other streams would suffer; that the commitments to enhance the marginalized groups' access to education would suffer and that the profit motive would get preference over social commitment.

- As you have understood education has several important roles to play especially for social development, collective empowerment and in advancing social and economic well being of society, accumulating and sharing knowledge and cultural capital. It is also a means for individual development and expression. As education plays the critical social role it cannot be reduced to a mere tradable commodity. It is important that economic forces unclashed by the forces of globalization endeavour to treat education as a marketable commodity ignoring its social and national role.
- The National Union of Students in Europe (2001) points out that it is imperative for the state to ensure free education at all levels. However, in violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Covenants on Social, Cultural and Economic Rights which has called for open access to higher education, many states in Europe introduced tuition fees to augment finances in higher education in the 1950's. This has resulted to an exclusion of student specially from disadvantaged backgrounds from the corridors of University education and where the elite students have got comfortable access.
- The structural adjustment programme of IMF and World Bank have let to extensive privatization of higher education in the post 1970's and after wards. The profit motive of the private providers has ignored the vital social, cultural and economic role of education and furthered the exclusion of learners from the disadvantaged groups from higher education.
- The liberalization of trade in education services under the GATS of the WTO imposed several binding obligation for specific sectors on the member states of the UNO. The most important obligation is that of "*most favoured nation principle*" which means service suppliers from different countries have to be treated equally. Again there are rules for unlimited market access and the so-called national treatment, which means all providers of education have to be treated equally with the to national one. The phenomena of transnational education in the form of on line education, internet-based universities, branch campuses or offshore education institutions, etc., have got prominence under the GATS regime.
- The expansion of transnational education undermining the significance of the social and national role of education have not only furthered commodification of education but have also ignored the fact that education is a basic human right and has to be made accessible to as many as possible. Such conceptualization jeopardizes the basic democratic, liberal, moral and social significance of education in all parts of the world. To them the process of commodification of education would lead to the expansion of an elitist, exclusive, profit-oriented education system. (The National Union of Students in Europe www.esib.org/issues/tne.php). In this context Stephen J. Ball (2004) says that in the process of commodification of academic labour the student explicitly becomes the consumer, degree becomes a commodity which can be exchanged for a job rather than preparing the student for a life. Again curriculum is recognized under the process of commodification as a sequence of knowledge goblets, which can be referred as credits with a cut and paste, repackaging mechanism. In this process the pedagogic relationship and values are marginalized and the student as consumer becomes a passive learner. To quote him "privatization is not simply a technical change in the management of the delivery of educational services – it involves changes in the meaning and experience of education, what it means to be a teacher and a learner. It changes who we are and our relation to what we do, entering into all aspects of our everyday practices and

thinking – into the ways that we think about ourselves and our relations to others, even our most intimate social relations. It is changing the framework of possibilities within which we act. This is not just a process of reform, it is a process of social transformation. Without some recognition of and attention within public debate to the insidious work that is being done, in these respects, by privatization and commodification - we may find ourselves living and working in a world made up entirely of contingencies, within which the possibilities of authenticity and meaning in teaching, learning and research are gradually but inexorably erased (J. Ball 2004).

- In the Indian context, the issue of commodification of education has several social economic and political ramifications. “Traditionally, investment in education was considered more of a social obligation, which the state had to fulfill. However, ever since economic reforms were introduced in India in the early 1990’s, resource allocation for higher education has consistently followed a downward trend. With the Government’s ability to finance higher education reaching a saturation level, it was argued that higher education might be considered as a ‘non-merit good’, as the benefits accrue more to individuals than to society in general.” As an implication of such formulation (a) the Government would stop providing subsidies to non-merit goods, (b) withdraw itself gradually from the pre-given social commitment of open access to higher education, (c) smoothen the way for privatization and commercialization of education. As a further ramification to such processes of commodification and privatization of education more and more attention could be paid towards the market driven courses, while the general courses like General Science, Social Science, Humanities, Art and Literature will be areas of least priority. It would become no longer appropriate to read Shakespeare, while courses like Communicative English, Professional writing or Business English would become the order of the day. The economic non-viability of certain courses cannot become a justification for their withdrawal (Sudha Sitaraman, 2004).

23.7 Conclusion

The right to education is a fundamental human right. The State, international bodies and the civil society have committed themselves to ensure this fundamental right. This unit has dealt in detail with the commitment made in the Constitution of India for the educational well being of all sections of population – women, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, religious and linguistic minorities. However, in spite of such commitments the curse of illiteracy has been looming large on the horizon of Indian society. Several committees and commissions have recommended several remedial actions to ensure education for all and to enhance access to quality education by all sections of the population. The World Development Summit, the Dakar Conference, the UNO have categorically expressed and all the members States of the UNO have accepted the commitment for the eradication of illiteracy and promotion of professional education among all. All the member States of UNO have also committed towards the philosophy of commodification of education and have liberalized their market to introduce trade in education. The contradictory processes of commodification on the one hand and of social commitment on the other have severe implications for the members of society. In this unit we have discussed all these implications in detail.

23.9 Further Reading

Stephen J. Ball 2004 “*Education for Sale!*” *The Commodification of Everything*. King’s Annual Education Lecture 2004, Institute of Education, University of London.

The National Unions of Students in Europe 2006. *Transnational Education*.
<http://www.esib.org/issues/tne.php>

Unit 24

Social and Philosophical Foundations of Open and Distance Learning (ODL)

Contents

- 24.1 Introduction
- 24.2 Defining Open and Distance Learning
- 24.3 Philosophical Foundations
- 24.4 Historical Evolution
- 24.5 Different Forms of Distance Education
- 24.6 Emerging Models of ODL
- 24.7 Conclusion
- 24.8 Further Reading

Learning Objectives

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- Define Open and Distance Learning (ODL);
- Describe the important theories of ODL;
- Trace the evolution of ODL;
- Identify the different forms of ODL; and
- Discuss the emerging models of ODL.

24.1 Introduction

Since you are pursuing your studies at an open university you must be familiar with the term Open and Distance Learning (ODL) and may have some knowledge about the ODL system. In this unit we will be defining the terms “Distance Education” and “Open Learning”. An attempt has been made to give you an overview of the major philosophies that underlie Distance Education (DE). We have also traced the historical evolution of DE through broadly three distinct phases namely, Correspondence Education, Open Education and Virtual Education. Lastly we have discussed the different forms of ODL existing today and also the emerging models in the light of the developments in communication technologies that have penetrated all over the world. After going through this unit you will get a deeper insight with regard to the ODL system.

24.2 Defining Open and Distance Learning

Open and Distance Learning (ODL) can be simply described as “learning/studying at a distance”. The teacher and learner are separated both in space and time. Bridging the distance and guiding the learning process is effected by means of specially prepared materials (self-study (learning) materials), which may be delivered through various media e.g., print, TV, radio, satellite, audio/video cassettes, CD-ROMs, Internet etc. Prof. Kulandaiswamy, former vice chancellor of Indira Gandhi National Open University maintained that Distance Education is the third stage in the evolution of education, the first two stages being the Gurukul system of the past and the Classroom system of the present.

A technological medium replaces the inter-personal communication of conventional education, as two-way communication is possible for both the student and the teacher. This form of education is known by a variety of names, viz., ‘Correspondence Education’, ‘Home Study’, ‘Independent Study’, ‘External Study’, ‘Off Campus study’, ‘Open Learning’, ‘Open Education’, etc.

In Australia, its official name is External System and Extra-mural System in New Zealand. This description carries the vibes of old London External system, which only provided examination but no teaching. The external exam system was introduced by London University in the second half of the 19th century to cater to the needs of higher education of people geographically distant from London. In such a system the learner was not provided any study materials and had to prepare for the exams on his/ her own.

Today two terms that are being used almost inter-changeably are 'Open Learning' and 'Distance Education' and they are often combined to be known as Open and Distance Learning (ODL). Let us understand the meaning of these terms and what they connote.

Reflection and Action 24.1

What do you understand by Open Distance Learning?

Distance Education

Distance education (DE) is an umbrella term, which describes all the teaching learning arrangements in which the learner and the teacher are normally separated by space and/ or by time. Such a form of education transcends the barriers of time, space, sex, creed community and religion, thus breaking the myth of elitism in conventional education.

The most complete definition of DE can be attributed to Keegan (1986; 1996) who characterizes DE as:

- **Separation of teacher and learner**

This is found in many definitions and is central to the whole concept of DE. But Keegan's definition allows for limited face to face contact between the teacher and the learner and among learners themselves and also through other technological media like audio / video conferencing etc.

- **Influence of an educational organization/Institution**

This characteristic has been emphasized by Holmberg (1981) in his definition of DE (which we will be discussing in the next section). Keegan also adopted it to include the influence of an educational organization / institution in the planning and preparation of learning materials that differentiates DE from private study.

- **Use of technical media**

Naturally the separation of the teacher and learner would require the process of communication to take place in some other way, i.e., by print, electronic, mechanical and other devices.

- **Provision of two- way communication**

Moore's (1973) and Holmberg's (1981) definitions of DE stress on this factor that Keegan incorporated in his definition (See 24.3.2 and 24.3.3 for details). DE must involve a significant amount of real non-contiguous two-way communication between teacher and learner for facilitating and supporting the educational process.

- **Separation of learner from peer group**

Obviously when the learner is studying at a distance at his or own place, there will be a separation of the learner from his or her peer group.

- **Industrialization of Education**

This concept stems from Peters (1967) definition of DE. Keegan accepted Peters' view that DE is the most industrialized form of education as compared to conventional oral education.

- **Individualization of Learning/Student Autonomy**

Wedemeyer (1981), like Keegan also emphasized DE to be a form of self-study, as it is based on personal work by an individual learner, more or less independent from the direct guidance of tutors. In other words, a quasi-permanent absence of the learning group throughout the length of the learning process, with the possibility of occasional meetings, either face to face or by electronic means.

Open Learning

Open learning covers a wide range of innovations and reforms in the educational sector. It is generally regarded as being a learner-centered system, which is far broader than distance education. Open learning systems aim to redress social or educational inequality and to offer opportunities not provided by conventional colleges or universities. Educational opportunities are planned deliberately so that access to education is available to larger sections of society. Hence there is flexibility with regard to entry, place, method, but also with regard to the choice and combination of courses, assessment and course completion etc. The larger the number of such restrictions left unobserved, the higher the degree of openness.

Thus DE stresses the means by which education is achieved, the latter the objectives and the character of the educational process. As Prof. Ram Reddy (1988) the founder of Indian Open Universities said, “the idea is to provide educational facilities to a larger number of people scattered all over, i.e., providing greater access to education”. Several countries of the world have adopted the open learning philosophy and have started open universities to provide innovative education and to strengthen distance education. The main features of open universities are:

- like conventional universities, they are autonomous bodies and are free to take their own decisions;
- they use multiple media for instructional purposes, and for supporting distance learners in their learning endeavours;
- they have a strong learner support system;
- high quality materials are prepared by a team of experts;
- entry qualifications are flexible and relaxed;
- the learner can study at his / her own pace, place and convenience;
- there is uniformity on the quality of education as students have access to the same high quality education from wherever they want to access it. (Reddy 1988).

Reflection and Action 24.2

Reflect on the main features of Distance Education. Compare the functions of conventional universities to that of Open Universities.

24.3 Philosophical Foundations

Several theorists have developed their own theory about ODL. Let us discuss some of the well known theories pertaining to DE.

Industrialized Form of Education

An influential theory is that of *Otto Peters* (1973) who described DE as rationalized form of industrial production: a division of labour with each individual in the course team having a different role in the production and dissemination of knowledge; mechanization, as the dissemination of knowledge was achieved through assembly line production; mass production, since there was theoretically no limit as to the number of copies of the same course that could be produced or students who could study the course once it was produced.

Independent Study

Yet another theorist who was influential in the 1980s was Charles Wedemeyer (1977) who regarded DE as an optimistic enterprise in the provision of lifelong learning in which learners are independent of teachers, which he defined as "independent study".

Michael Moore (1973) also confirmed the notions of Wedemeyer (1977) and he further sharpened them by stressing on two critical characteristics of independent study, namely, dialogue and individual study. For Moore dialogue may be interpreted as academic interaction aimed at effecting teaching and learning. Individualization is a measure of the extent of the responsiveness of a programme to the objectives of an individual learner. According to Moore, the distance between a teacher and a learner should not be measured in spatial terms but in terms of the degrees of dialogues and individualization. The higher the degree of both these components the less they are distant pedagogically and conversely a low degree of both variables will make a course / programme greatly distant.

He further pointed out that a distance learner was an independent learner as he/she was relieved from the tyranny of attendance and could study at his/her own pace, place and time. This type of study could be described as self directed learning whereby the learner develops a sense of maturity. The focus of this type of education is more on learning than teaching. Hence, it is said to be a learner centered system.

Guided Didactic Conversation

Another significant theorist of DE was Holmberg (1981) who propounded the theory of teaching learning conversation in DE. The idea that he projected was that a DE course represents a communication process that is felt to have the character of a conversation, only then the students will be more motivated and successful than if it has an impersonal text book character. The conversational character is brought about both by real communication through tutor comments on students' assignments, or comments over the telephone/fax/e-mail/post etc. by the teacher and by adopting a conversational style in printed and recorded subject matter which attempts to involve the students emotionally and engage them in a development and exchange of views. Just as a lecturer in a class-room tries to provide instructions or deliver content in an understandable manner and so to say adopts a conversational approach with regard to presentation of content. It is exactly in the same manner Holmberg refers to adoption of conversational style in the development of self-learning materials for distance learners, what many refer to as building the teacher in to the text.

He regarded it as a form of guided didactic conversation and who considered seven postulates to DE namely: creation of personal relationship between teaching and learning parties; well developed self instructional materials, intellectual pleasure in the exercise, language and conventions should foster friendly conversation, message received by the learner should be conversational intone, conversational approach should always be used and lastly planning and guiding are necessary for organized study. Holmberg's approach is therefore more humanistic than Peter's analysis.

Cooperative Learning

Today with the onset of online learning (which is a subset for DE) we have cooperative learning propounded by Johnson and Johnson (1990) and Mc Connell (2000), wherein the learning process is not seen as an individual pursuit but as a part of a social process where learners help each other develop understanding of content in an enjoyable and stimulating process and at the same time construct knowledge which would not have been possible individually

but only in a group. This type of learning is particularly possible in computer supported learning environments or web based education/online learning/e-learning.

Thus DE is no longer a one-way transmission of knowledge as it was in correspondence education, that implied student passivity. Cooperative learning is the best example of how DE has evolved over the years and culminated into a dynamic interactive process with its focus more on the learner and his/her learning.

Reflection and Action 24.3

Describe various forms of transacting process of education. Which according to you is most suitable for India and why?

24.4 Historical Evolution

The history of the evolution and growth of ODE is closely linked to the growth and expansion of technology. It can be broadly divided into 3 distinct phases: Correspondence Education phase, Open Education phase and Virtual Education phase, that we have discussed below.

Bos 24.1: Quote

A forerunner: "Apostle Paul, who wrote the famous epistles in order to teach Christian communities in Asia Minor how to lead a life as Christians in an adverse environment. He used the technology of writing and transportation in order to do his missionary work without being compelled to travel. A technology based but a pre-industrial approach." - Otto Peters

Correspondence Education Phase (mid 19th century - present)

Correspondence study is the oldest form of ODL. Its origin can be traced to the 1840s when Sir Issac Pitman came up with the ignominious idea of delivering instruction through penny post. Thus ODL originated in the private sector as a means to provide teaching service to home-based students. Within a few decades (by the end of the 19th century) private correspondence colleges were established in many countries. For example, Skerrys College, Edinburgh (1878); Foulks Lynch Correspondence Tuition Service, London (1884); University Correspondence College Cambridge (1887) (taken over by the National Extension College in 1965); Diploma Correspondence College (1894) presently known as Wolsey Hall, are some of the well known institutions that came up in England (Dinsdale, 1953). The other famous correspondence colleges, were Hermods School, Sweden (1868) (now Hermods-NKI, in Skolan) (Gadden, 1973); Illionoise Wesleyan College (1874) (Correspondence University Ithaca, N.Y., (1883) and the University Extension Department of Chicago University (1890) in USA (Mathieson 1971).

The 20th century witnessed the continuing expansion of commercial correspondence education, which can be distinguished from the 19th century by the growth of interest in DE on the part of national authorities as a means to reach out to those students living in isolated places. Hence during the first half of the 20th century DE made significant development in countries like USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Russia, France, etc. This form of provision suited countries with large national territories and sparse populations. It was therefore not surprising that initially European governments remained relatively uninterested with the exception of France, which took to it due to the disruption caused mainly by the outbreak of the Second World War (Rumble 1989).

DE took deep roots in several countries in the 1930s. The founding of the International Council of Correspondence Education in 1939 is indicative of the

fact that the idea caught the attention of educationist throughout the developed world. The first world conference of this council was held in Victoria, British Columbia, in August 1938 and 88 delegates mostly from Canada and the USA attended the conference. Australia, New Zealand and Scotland were also represented (Srivastava and Reddy 1998)

It was only a matter of time before the principle of egalitarianism was expanded to cover not just those who were unable to attend a normal college / college at the normal age but those who earlier in life lacked the opportunity to do so. Such concerns arose after the Second World War not only in developed countries but also in the developing countries as well, soon after they achieved their independence. In the developing countries of Africa and Asia (1960s - 70s) and South America (1970s - 80s) the problem was not only of numbers due to population growth but also that of increasing participation rates. Correspondence education emerged as a viable alternative to meet the enormous demand for access to formal education following de-colonization. This burgeoning demand created a consequential requirement for trained teachers, DE came to be seen as a way of doing both these things (Manjulika and Reddy 2002).

Reflection and Action 24.4

What was the most primitive form of ODL and where and when did it commence in India?

Open and Distance Education (1969 - present)

A century's worth of research into cognition gave birth to pedagogical method and the concept of providing effective support to distance learners emerged. The increased desire to use more media (specially radio and television) and also the desire to open up higher education to larger segments of the population by eliminating entrance requirements and offering higher education at affordable prices gave birth to the first open university namely the Open University (OU) of UK (1969). It introduced new elements in DE such as the use of course development teams; use of tutor counsellors; regional and study centers; and the inclusion of audio/video material into course materials. OUs employ media in many forms and to varying extents. It includes mail, fax, radio, TV, satellite broadcasts, video/audio tapes, teleconferencing, computers and recently the Internet. Since the 1980s more interactive technologies began to be employed.

The founding of the OU, UK was a major landmark in the history of ODL. It raised the profile of DE, bringing DE from the margins closer to the centerstage of higher education. As thenceforth DE institutions emulated the example of the Open University (OU), UK and provided distance learners with opportunities for interpersonal communication and feedback, which was almost absent in correspondence education. It was not only the course materials developed by OUs but also the learner support services and feedback provided by these universities that enabled ODL to come of age. In the two decades following the establishment of OU, UK, several such OUs were set up across the world. Today there are more than 50 Open Universities, of which the maximum are in Asia (Reddy and Manjulika 2000).

Thus the period from 1969 onwards has been the most progressive period for the development and credibility of ODL in the world. The list of Open Universities established in different parts of the world is given below in Table 1.

Table 1: Open Universities of the World

Asia

1. Allama Iqbal Open University (Pakistan)
2. Al-Qudds Open University (Palestine)
3. Anadolu University (Turkey)
4. Arab Open University (Kuwait)
5. Bangladesh Open University (Bangladesh)
6. Central Radio and TV University (China)
7. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University(India)
8. Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar Open University (India)
9. Krishna Kant Handique Open University (India)
10. Hanoi Open University (Vietnam)
11. Indira Gandhi National Open University(India)
12. Karnataka State Open University (India)
13. Korea National Open University (Korea)
14. Kyong Open University (South Korea)
15. Madhya Pradesh Bhoj Open University(India)
16. Nalanda Open University(India)
17. Netaji Subhas Open University(India)
18. Open University Hong Kong (Hong Kong, China)
19. Open University Malaysia (Malaysia)
20. Pandit Sunderlal Sharma Open University (India)
21. Payame Noor University (Iran)
22. Shanghai TV University (China)
23. Sukhotai Thammathirat Open University (Thailand)
24. Tamil Nadu Open University, India
25. The National Open University (Taiwan, China)
26. The Open University of Israel (Israel)
27. The Open University of Sri Lanka (Sri Lanka)
28. The University of the Philippines Open University (Philippines)
29. Tianjin Radio and Television University (China)
30. Universitas Terbuka (Indonesia)
31. University of Air (Japan)
32. University of Distance Education (Myanmar)
33. UP Rajarshi Tandon Open University, India
34. Vardhman Mahavir Open University, India
35. Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University, India
36. Yunnan Radio & TV University of China

Africa

1. Nigeria Open University
2. The Open University of Tanzania (Tanzania)
3. University of South Africa (South Africa)
4. Zimbabwe Open University (Zimbabwe)

Europe

1. Consorzio per l' Universita a Distanza (Italy)
2. Fern Universitat (Germany)
3. Jutland Open University (Denmark)
4. Open Universiteit, (The Netherlands)

5. Centre National d' Enseignement a Distance (France)
6. The Hellenic Open University (Greece)
7. The Open University (UK)
8. Universidad National de Educacion a Distancia (Spain)
9. Universidade Aberta, (Portugal)

North America

1. Athabasca University (Canada)
2. Open Learning Agency (OU and OC)
3. Open University of British Columbia (Canada)
4. Tele Universite (Canada)

South America

1. Universidad de la Sabana (Sabana OU, Columbia)
2. Universidad Estatal a Distancia (Costa Rica)
3. Universidad Nacional Abierta (Venezuela)

Source : <http://www.icdl.open.ac.uk>

Reflection and Action 24.5

What do you think have prompted the development of open and distance system of education in India?

Virtual Education (1990s - present)

With the widespread availability of personal computers, two new forms of technology became viable for DE purposes: multimedia (specially CD-ROM) and computer networks. The rapid developments in information technology, specially the Internet, promises greater learner centeredness, facilitates more constructivist methods and better quality interaction (synchronous as well as asynchronous); the advantage of time space independence of asynchronous communication; and unlimited access to information. This computer-mediated communication (CMC) is providing an antidote to the main weakness of the correspondence as well as Open University systems of education.

The increasing diversity in demand for education from different quarters had made virtual education a popular model for the 21st century. Concepts of life long learning, individualized / personalized learning and time-free, space-free "just in time" learning arrangements are emerging to provide opportunities to learn on the job, professional upgrading of employees, staff development and training, teaching, extending classrooms to remote and rural areas, adult education, curriculum enrichment, and a convenient choice for full time learners. New alliances have emerged between education and industry and among universities and other educational institutions. Many new providers of higher education have entered the market, such as private enterprises (e.g., Phoenix University and Jones International University, USA; NIIT, Aptech, Zee Education, India), corporate training networks, specialized service organizations and textbook publishers (e.g., IBM Global Campus and McGraw Hill Learning Infrastructure); business corporations (e.g., 9 Universities have joined Next Ed on the online company in Hong Kong that produces technology for DE to form the Global University Alliance) (Manjulika and Reddy 2006).

The US is undoubtedly the world leader in the use of ICT in education and in demonstrating virtual education. Some 170,000 American students took online courses in 1998 and the number would have tripled by the end of 2002. USA also boasts of several new alliances between education and industry and consortia of universities offering virtual education (e.g., NTU Consortium of 51 universities; AT&T Learning Network, WGU, etc.).

The ICT boom has also enveloped Europe and Australia. The European Union has been a major driver of virtual education. However, the UK has led in the

way in Europe. Like in North America and Europe, in Australia too, a number of universities have set up virtual campuses to attract students from across the globe. In Latin America, ITESM is a private institution located in Mexico with 29 Campuses across Latin America and North America linked via satellite and digital integrated network.

In Asia and Africa, as compared to North America and Europe, the proportion of population participating in the Internet revolution is small, but the rate of growth is rapid. A few open universities namely, OUHK, Hong Kong, KNOU, South Korea and IGNOU, India have taken the lead. In Africa the World Bank has taken the lead in setting up the African Virtual University in 1997, which provides high quality education to countries of Sub-Saharan Africa (Reddy and Manjulika 2002).

Reflection and Action 24.6

What can be attributed as the major reason for the growth of Virtual Education? What is the future of virtual education in the context of aims of open and distance education?

24.5 Different Forms of Distance Education

The oldest form of distance education is the “correspondence education model”, i.e., a student studies in isolation from the other students and from his/her teacher/instructor, primarily through printed materials sent by post. (e.g., Correspondence Course Institutes attached to conventional universities in India)

The next form of distance education is “multi-media model”, wherein besides print other technologies such as audio/video tapes, radio and television broadcasts, telephone, teleconferencing etc., including limited face to face sessions, began to be used for instruction as well as for supporting the distance learner (e.g., UKOU (UK), IGNOU (India), Fern Universitat (Germany), etc.).

The third form is the “tele learning model”, where in institutions began to use TV to reduce campus space pressures by delivery of courses to students at home. The basic tele-learning model involves three elements, in text, a study guide and a series of video lessons and occasional on campus meetings (e.g., Central Radio and TV University, China).

The fourth form is the “distributed learning model”, which is greatly stimulated by the arrival of interactive telecommunications. This model is based on real time delivery system. Secondly the technological infrastructure is pre-determined by the sponsoring institution. This institution retains control over the time and pace of study, wherein the instruction is highly spontaneous, interactive with emphasis on instructor centered, lecture-based approach that characterizes most classroom instruction (e.g., Video based extension of face to face teaching at National Technological University, USA and a technology based distance teaching done at Project, Canada).

The latest form of DE is the “flexible learning model”. The primary technological agents that have led to this model are computer based communications – from electronic mail to the worldwide web and CD-ROM, with others already being used in DE, offer students the opportunity to study anytime anywhere. It also provides them a much richer environment for interaction both synchronous as well as asynchronous, but also greater control over the subject matter and over the pathways through that subject matter, creating a new kind of learning community. These key characteristics – asynchronous interactivity, resource-based, learner-centered, spontaneous and at the same time autonomous independent learning is reshaping the curriculum as well. It is giving rise to a new concept namely that of customized or personalized learning, allowing the

learner to tailor the curriculum in accordance with his or her own needs that the institution readily provides. The defining characteristics are no longer geographic distance, and learner autonomy, but learner control, an active learning environment that emphasizes learner interaction with resources, with other learners and with the instructor. (e.g., Virtual/Online Universities of the World). A list of some of the prominent Virtual Universities of the world is given below in Table 2.

Table 2: Major Virtual Universities of the World

1.	African Virtual University, www.avu.org
2.	Bool Virtual University, www.bool.tit.ac.kr
3.	British Aerospace Virtual University (UK), www.bac.co.uk
4.	California Virtual University www.california.edu
5.	Canada Virtual University
6.	Contact North, www.cnorth.edu.on.ca
7.	CU Online (Colorado University), www.cconline.org www.cuonline.edu
8.	Cyber ED (University of Massachusetts Dartmouth), www.umassd.edu/cybered/distancelearninghome.html
9.	Digital Think, www.digitalthink.com
10.	Edu.Com, www.educum.edu
11.	Knowledge Online (Mind Extension University), www.mcu.edu/meu/
12.	Korea Virtual University Consortium, www.knou.ac.ka
13.	National Technological University, www.ntu.edu
14.	Net Varsity, www.niitnetvarsity.com
15.	Online University, www.uol.com
16.	The Global Learning Network of NKI (Norway), www.nettakolen.com
17.	Virtual Online University (Athena University) www.athena.edu
18.	Virtual University Enterprises (Netherlands), www.vuc.com
19.	Virtual University of Hagan (Germany), www.femuni.hagen.de
20.	Western Governors University, www.wgu.edu

24.6 Emerging Models of ODL

What is emerging today is a very complex educational mosaic. Institutions offering distance education courses can be arrayed on a continuum from physical to virtual. The growth and development of virtual education is fostering the emergence of new organizational forms. Some of which are described below :

Model 1: Networked Model - Institutions that use digital networks synchronously / asynchronously for the delivery and tuition of courses. Learner support is also provided online. They draw upon the best resources wherever they are located. Examples: African Virtual University (Africa), Australian Universities overseas campuses, and all Virtual Universities of the world.

Model 2: Advanced Open Distance Education Model - Institutions that adopt Internet based instruction and support to strengthen the existing courses already being taught at a distance. Examples, UKOU, KNOU, IGNOU etc. Some of dual mode universities of Australia would come under this category that have adopted third generation distance education technologies for offering both instruction and support to their distance learners.

Model 3: Consortium Certification Model - Pooling together of distance education courses offered by different institutions. Such a consortium does not provide instruction but are authorized to award credentials and to provide a variety of services such as registration, assessment, learning records etc. Examples are Regents College (US) Western Governors University (USA) Open Learning Agency (Canada), etc.

Model 4: Consortium Service Provider Model - This is yet another consortium that offer a pool of courses offered by different institutions but do not have the right to confer certification / awards. Example California Virtual University (USA), etc. (Manjulika and Reddy 2006).

Reflection and Action 24.8

Keeping existing models and emerging models of ODL in view, what should be the focus of Open Universities?

24.7 Conclusion

From a near total reliance on print based courses, over the years, technology used in distance education expanded to include a plethora of technologies, shifting the emphasis from single technology delivery systems to integrated approaches. Also with respect to the teaching-learning methodology there has been a paradigm shift. Correspondence education totally lacked live communication or for that matter any type of communication besides the course material. Later radio and TV broadcasts offered lecture aspect of the classroom but not the interaction opportunities. The adoption of interactive technologies like audio conferencing, teleconferencing offered limited learner participation mainly through telephone communication, though two-way video conferencing simulates a class-room situation and real time synchronous interaction. The latest computer mediated communication provides “real time” multimedia interactive communication through the “virtual” equivalent of the regular classroom experience.

24.8 Further Reading

Reddy, G. Ram 1988. “Distance Education, What, Why and How?” In B. N. Koul., B. Singh and M. M. Ansari (eds.) 1992. *Studies in Distance Education*. Association of Indian Universities and IGNOU: New Delhi

Reddy, Venugopal and Manjulika S. (eds.) 2000. *The World of Open and Distance Learning*. Viva Books Pvt. Ltd.: New Delhi

Srivastava, Manjulika and Reddy, V. Venugopal 1998. “Distance Education: A Global Perspective”. In Tilak R. Kem and Rubi Esirgen (eds.) *Reengineering of Distance Education*. Aravali Books International: New Delhi

Unit 25

Critical Issues in Open and Distance Learning

Structure

- 25.1 Introduction
- 25.2 Equity and Access
- 25.3 Cost Effectiveness
- 25.4 Integration of Technology
- 25.5 Networking and Collaboration
- 25.6 Quality Concerns
- 25.7 Research in ODL Systems
- 25.8 Apprehensions Regarding ODL
- 25.9 Conclusion
- 25.10 Further Reading

Learning Objectives

After studying this unit you should be able to:

- Understand the importance of ODL in bringing about equity and access in the field of higher education;
- Comprehend that ODL is an economic mode of providing education;
- Appreciate the contribution of technology ODL;
- Internalise the need for networking and research in ODL;
- Understand the need for maintaining quality in ODL; and
- Comprehend the apprehensions regarding ODL.

25.1 Introduction

In Unit 24 you have studied the social and philosophical foundations of ODL. In this unit we shall discuss certain critical issues that affect the functioning and growth of ODL systems. Earlier, distance education was considered to be an alternative to the conventional system of education that provides instructions in a face-to-face manner. However, now it is no longer merely an alternative or the second choice but a system in its own right that is gaining popularity as the first choice of thousands of people seeking higher education. Since it started in 1962 in India as correspondence education, it has covered a long way. Mainly due to the great degree of flexibility and openness attached to it, it is today popularly known as Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system. The popularity of this system lies in its ability to reach out to people from geographically different places, remote areas and to those with varying social and academic backgrounds. The thousands, who for a variety of reasons find themselves unable to enroll in institutions requiring physical presence of the learners find in the ODL system the answer to their problem.

The term 'Open' in ODL implies greater access to educational system, greater flexibility within the system and greater independence of the learner studying through this system. Although learners may or may not be at a distance from the institution offering ODL, the greatest advantage for the learners is that they need not be physically present in at institution. This is the main reason why ODL as a system is undergoing rapid growth and expansion. For ensuring that the growth of this system is not only rapid but also healthy, there are certain critical issues that need to be addressed appropriately. In this unit, we shall study some of the critical issues pertaining to ODL such as equity and access, cost effectiveness, use of technology, networking, quality, need for research and apprehensions as to the impact of the rapid growth of ODL.

These issues are considered to be critical because they have a direct bearing upon the healthy growth of the ODL system and its ability to achieve its goals.

25.2 Equity and Access

In this section we shall discuss first the role of ODL in bringing about equity in educational opportunities and thereafter about access to such opportunities. First let us discuss the need for equity and the means for achieving it. The system of ODL as we know, emerged mainly to equalize educational opportunities and thus democratise it. It was being increasingly felt, the world over that the conventional system of education can cater to the educational needs of only some of the aspirants seeking higher education while the rest are left out. At the same time it was accepted that education is the only means of ushering in social development and that more than the erstwhile important land, labour and capital, knowledge is becoming the driving force of the economies of the world. Therefore, for the progress of the individual and the prosperity of the nation, ODL is the only potential means of bringing in equity through educational opportunities for one and all. As we know, the barriers to admitting huge number of students in the conventional system are their limited infrastructure and the limited teaching force. But in the ODL these barriers can be easily overcome and the benefits of the infrastructure and the teaching force already available can be multiplied several times to serve a huge population of students simultaneously. Therefore, in a situation with ever escalating demand for enrolment along with the paucity of human and financial resources, one practical choice was to opt for open universities in order to provide higher education (Yadav and Panda 1999).

The rising popularity of the democratic form of governance all over the world during the last century resulted in national policies that led to the democratization of educational opportunities too. With the realization of the potential of distance education, state policies were framed in this regard, as a part of the national policies on education. It was felt that the needs pertaining to egalitarianism, modernization, rural development, continuing education for providing training to those in-service, economic means of providing education, etc. that are directly related to social development could be fulfilled to a great extent by resorting to ODL (Rumble 1986). These needs are mostly the needs of the nation and its masses. Hence, ODL while attempting to fulfill these needs purports to uplift the masses through equalizing educational opportunities.

There are people in our country who live in geographically remote and isolated places like difficult hilly terrains, remote border areas, isolated islands, etc. where people are deprived of proper educational facilities due to the lack of institutions offering higher education. Such people can benefit through the educational opportunities brought to their doorsteps by ODL. There are also many people who had to drop out of the formal system of education and discontinue their studies due to a number of reasons. They may find it too late or inconvenient to rejoin the conventional system of education with its too many rigidities. Distance education, which is more flexible, can be the choice of such people. Also the people, who are in-service and require professional development will constantly need to update their knowledge and skills, undergo orientation programmes and other sorts of training, with the demands placed by the changing economic and technological scenario and the ever-expanding knowledge base. ODL happens to be the viable means for providing training and fulfilling the educational needs of the in-service people.

Access to education

We have discussed that ODL is the means for bringing about equity in the field of education and making it accessible to a wide cross section of the people. However, accessibility in the true sense means not only the availability of

educational opportunities but also that following enrolment in the educational programmes the learners are not deterred in any way by the complications of learning from a distance. This requires adequate student support services. Moreover, the nature of the programmes should be such that they fulfill the divergent and dynamic needs of the learners.

Let us discuss the first issue, i.e., necessity to provide student support. It is well known that the dropout rate in distance education is quite high and there is also the allegation that quantity (huge enrolment) is not matched by quality of student support, leading to high attrition rates. It is not enough to provide educational packages to the adult learners, especially those who may be new learners. It is more important that they are provided with adequate student support so that they remain motivated and do not drop out. Student support in the form of adequate academic and non-academic counseling, tutoring, face to face contact programmes, wherever necessary opportunities for practical training, etc. should be an integral part of the educational programmes so as to improve the accessibility of available educational opportunity.

Now let us discuss the second issue, i.e., need for socially relevant programmes. It is important that through ODL, educational programmes that would fulfill the educational needs of the masses in the true sense are provided. Unlike the earlier practice which emphasized that educational programmes are mainly of academic value, ODL has to be treated as the channel that would provide education which is not only of academic value but is also need-based and caters to the diverse requirements of the learners. For instance, there are today pressing social problems like illiteracy, female foeticide, AIDS, etc., that require mass education programmes. There is also the need to provide educational programmes that would bring about rural development and women empowerment. Programmes for adult education, for training those in-service and for improving the functioning of those pursuing different occupations like farming, running poultries, etc. are required for mass education, continuing education and above all for making education a guarantor of social and economic development. Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) and several other open learning institutions of our country have educational programmes of academic value as well as those that can fulfill these requirements. Teacher education programmes that are training thousands of teachers at different levels of education every year, programmes for generating awareness about AIDS, and for empowerment of women, those catering to the needs of farmers, engineers, doctors, nurses, are some such programmes that have social relevance.

Accessibility has yet another connotation. While offering programmes it is to be seen if the technologies integrated keep the programme within the reach of the target group. Hence, while designing educational programmes, whether the expenses incurred for purchasing the hardware and the software is within the means of the learners needs to be considered. Also whether the infrastructure generally available permits their use has also to be seen. A course with softwares integrated into it that requires heavy financial investment by the learners can adversely affect accessibility.

Therefore it has to be ensured that ODL not only makes education accessible to many but also fulfills their diverse needs so as to bring about human resource development in diverse areas. Then only would the social development brought about by education spread out evenly throughout the country and not just in urban areas.

Reflection and Action 25.1

How can ODL democratize educational opportunities? How can ODL opportunities be made accessible in the true sense to the adult and in-service learners?

25.3 Cost Effectiveness

Since independence, with increasing demand for higher education, the conventional system of education has undergone great expansion. There has been tremendous increase in the number of institutions as well as in the enrolment at the tertiary level of education. Due to the priority accorded to elementary education, the government is finding it difficult to contribute adequately towards higher education. Therefore, it is becoming necessary for educational institutions to exercise economy without sacrificing the quality of education. There have been studies indicating that ODL is cost effective and in the long run it turns out to be the more economic means of providing education. As we know distance education can use the physical and human resources already available with it for increasing enrolment without incurring significant additional expenses.

There have been studies that reveal that the unit cost of teaching is lower in the distance mode than in the conventional mode. Greater number of learners can hence be educated by spending less amount of money through the distance mode. As underlined by Rumble, (1986) a cost analysis carried out in institutions offering distance education in different parts of the world reveals that they incur less cost per student, per graduate and per credit. Also when we consider the cost incurred in distance mode and conventional mode, the per capita expenditure for providing instructions is found to be lower in the distance mode. The average annual recurrent cost incurred for providing instruction to a learner of an open university has also been found to be significantly lower than that of a conventional one. It has been found that in open universities, following an investment of a certain amount of capital the recurring expenses get lower in the successive years if the enrolment figures can be maintained at a high level.

Education offered by ODL is cost effective mainly because it adopts a sort of industrial approach with mass production and distribution of learning material with the help of the infrastructure already established to a much larger student population that has been enrolled. The need for a bigger campus, buildings, and more classrooms and more teachers does not arise. Teachers are inbuilt in the pedagogically designed learning materials. There is thus substitution of teachers or labour of conventional systems with media i.e. capital in ODL systems. Also, a small group of teaching and non-teaching staff can operate the entire network of headquarter, regional centers, sub regional centers, study centers and programme centers with the help of information and communication technology.

In ODL the initial investment is quite heavy with expenses being incurred for establishing the infrastructure, which requires facilities for telecommunication through the electronic media and even satellites. Thereafter significant costs are incurred in designing, developing and launching academic programmes by producing learning materials in the print and electronic media. But it has been experienced that the initially high investment, is overcome by subsequent high enrolment mainly because reproduction of learning materials requires comparatively less cost. It has also been found that ODL systems become financially self-supporting earlier due to the regular income generated from fees, sale of forms, etc. and lower recurrent expenditure. In this regard certain instances have been cited by Ramanujam (2000). The Open University of Hong Kong became self-supporting within a span of just four years from its establishment. IGNOU, established in 1985, could meet 93.7% of its recurring expenditure through government funding in 1986-87. Within a decade it attained a financial position whereby it could meet 80% of its recurring expenditures from the fees paid and other sources and received Government grants only for the development of its infrastructure. Key to such financial self-sufficiency lies in the greater enrolment in ODL systems.

Now let us have a further discussion on the impact of enrolment on the various types of costs in ODL systems. We know that budgetary allocations are required for activities relating to academic functioning, for instance development of learning materials in the print form and software where a multimedia approach is adopted for imparting instruction. Related activities such as counseling, training and orienting staff for their professional development, conducting seminars, workshops, etc, undertaking research based activities, development and maintenance of the infrastructure, providing student support services, administrative functions, etc. also require budgetary allocations. According to Pillai and Nanda (1999), among the various operational costs in ODL, the fixed costs on development and production of self-learning materials do not change significantly with increase or decrease of enrolment. Variable costs on the other hand that include expenditure on student support services, delivery of learning materials, counseling, term end evaluation, etc. vary with enrolment. However, higher enrolment generates greater income and helps in recovering these costs and even in generating surplus funds for the institution. Therefore, having a large number of academic programmes, unable to attract significant student population, will enhance the unit cost.

We thus see that ODL is an economic option of providing education. Rumble (1986) has suggested certain guidelines that could further cut down costs. Some of them are discussed below:

- In ODL, a higher proportion of the costs such as those incurred for developing learning materials are in no way related to the student strength. Such developmental costs cannot be recovered if enrolment is low or for some reason if the courses are not allowed to run for a reasonable duration. Reducing expenses and managing costs being difficult in the distance education system, it is necessary to carry out a cost analysis of developing the courses, taking into account the fixed and variable costs. Instead of lowering the fixed costs that could affect the quality of the programmes, the individual elements of a course can be considered and some of them like the tutor marked assignments could be reduced. Also, instead of frequent replacement of old courses with new ones, the old ones should be allowed to run for a reasonable duration to save money.
- Choice of media is also important for reasons of economy. For instance, it has to be seen whether offering CDs would suffice or over the air transmission is also required for a particular topic.
- Purchasing the rights to adapt and use academic content developed by other institutions could also be economic.
- Appointing temporary staff for tutoring, counselling, etc., as and when required, can bring down costs.

Besides following these steps, it is necessary to base practices on principles of financial management such as subjecting proposals and plans to a cost benefit analysis, zero-based budgeting, etc. to efficiently manage the financial resources.

Reflection and Action 25.2

Explain any two ways that help in cutting down expenses in ODL systems.

important role in revolutionizing distance education in its present form. Since the last century, technology has developed a lot. There have been new inventions and their integration in different fields such as medicine, defence, etc. The field of distance education too depends heavily on technology today and its functioning is becoming more and more dependent on technology.

present form. Since the last century, technology has developed a lot. There have been new inventions and their integration in different fields such as medicine, defence, etc. The field of distance education too depends heavily on technology today and its functioning is becoming more and more dependent on technology.

Today almost every aspect of distance education is supported by technology. In the teaching - learning process, technology is becoming an integral part. Also the development of learning materials, their delivery through different media, evaluation of learners, and many other things related to the academic processes depend on technology. In distance education, technology is resorted to for preparation, maintenance, revision, storage and rapid exchange of academic and other types of documents and information. It goes without saying that administration becomes easier when it is supported by technology. In ODL since the enrolment figures are quite high therefore manually preparing and maintaining records is difficult.

In the field of distance education the faculty being involved in the process of material development needs to be provided with the necessary technological facilities and know-how for the preparation and transaction of the curriculum. In India, in most of the programmes offered through the distance mode, the print medium still happens to be the master medium and students rely on this medium the most. Later on usually in a supplementary mode, along with the print medium learning materials are provided through other media. Nowadays with the availability of facilities for desktop publishing with the help of computers, the process of preparing learning materials through the print medium is easier. Also the availability of the Internet in ODL institutions provides facilities such as online libraries, online encyclopedias, scope for discussions with experts, etc. that help the process of course preparation.

Word-processing the units, editing, preparing and inserting necessary illustrations are all aided by technology. Thereafter proof reading, for errors in spellings, grammar, computations, etc. are all aided by computers. Networking of the computers at the local and wider level facilitates teamwork through computer conferencing facilities. Soft copies unlike hard copies are also easy to exchange. Computerized typesetting can be used in conjunction with word processing systems (using direct electronic communication or optical scanners for both texts and graphics). Laser printers also aid in the preparation of camera-ready copy from discs on which texts and graphics have been merged (Rumble 1986).

ODL systems today impart instructions through multimedia approach. Apart from the print medium, audio and video cassettes, computer discs, telephone, programmes on radio and television, many of which are interactive in nature, satellite mediated teleconferencing, computer conferencing, etc. are used for providing instructions and counselling. Virtual universities with provisions for online learning are also becoming popular. In India IGNOU too offers online programmes in certain areas.

We thus see that technology is indispensable for the smooth and efficient

investment being made in a particular technology is worthwhile. Instead of succumbing to the pressure to go for the latest technology, those already available have to be put to full use. Heavy investment in technology can be justified only through its regular use. Softwares produced for the electronic media and teleconferencing if not used by the learners lead to waste of resources. The pedagogic value of a technology is also to be deliberated upon before it is integrated into a particular course. Therefore, investment in technology calls for adequate planning and budgeting. Another aspect that calls for caution in technology driven ODL systems is that today through the Internet many virtual universities are trying to attract students from all over the world. Such cross border provision of education requires monitoring for its operation, accreditation, quality, curriculum and other aspects. The student community has to be aware that foreign education providers should have credibility and abide by certain norms established by the Government of the recipient nation.

We thus see that technology is indispensable for the functioning of the ODL systems. Academic activities as well as administration are aided by technology. Moreover for the multimedia approach to imparting instruction, technology is used by the ODL systems. However, while integrating technology caution has to be exercised to avoid waste of financial and other resources.

Reflection and Action 25.3

What are the benefits of using technology for developing self-learning materials?

25.5 Networking and Collaboration

Nowadays it is being increasingly realised that an organisation cannot function successfully in isolation. It has to develop and nurture linkages with other institutions and thus be open to the environment in which it is operating. Interchange of academic and other material resources, information and human resources help in invigorating the organisations. Therefore, in the field of distance education too, ODL systems are developing linkages with each other to form a network. Such networking can be at the regional, national and even international level.

ODL systems are nowadays developing collaborations with not only each other but also with institutions of other types, such as institutions offering conventional education and organisations sharing common interests with the ODL system. An ODL system can enter into collaboration with an industrial organisation, or a hospital or a college that teaches through the conventional mode. Such collaborations are usually formed for specific purposes. For instance, an ODL system with educational programmes related to an industry can collaborate with that particular industry and the two can jointly function in certain areas. Then ODL systems can collaborate with hospitals and clinics for programmes on health. The participants are bound by certain rules and regulations that govern the collaboration and they stand to benefit from each other as a result of the collaboration. Networked collaborations today provide greater flexibility to the students who enjoy the option of learning from different institutions and interact with peers and teachers from these institutions. Learning thus gets a wider perspective.

As underlined by Rumble (1986), networking and consortia formation provide a forum for diverse participation and reduce territoriality and competition. In addition, there are several other benefits that are encouraging modern trends of network formation by open universities. In Europe there is a European Association of Distance Teaching Universities. In Asia there is the Asian Association of Open Universities. Such associations of open universities also

exist in the other parts of the world. The Commonwealth of Learning, an intergovernmental organisation created by Commonwealth Heads of Government to encourage the development and sharing of open learning/distance education knowledge, resources and technologies too undertakes activities that encourage partnerships and networking for the sharing of resources and joint functioning. There are also multinational regional universities that promote regional cooperation in the field of distance education by linking their campuses and centers. In India, IGNOU and other open universities of the states are functioning together in certain areas and a network committee set up by the Coordination Council of IGNOU in 1988 identified broad areas of cooperation such as institutional development, material development and student support services (Singh 1999).

Networking, consortia and collaboration formation bring different institutions closer and there are several benefits such as the sharing of infrastructure, with buildings and equipments that may be pooled for joint use. Study centers and programme centers can also be used on a shared basis. There can also be the exchange of faculty members among different institutions offering ODL. Then programmes for the professional development of teachers, orientation programmes for counselors, tutors can also be held jointly. Procuring learning materials from one institution and then adapting/translating by others can also be done. All these steps not only help in economizing but also in accessing the best that is available in the different institutions. It thus widens the perspective of functioning. The learners have a greater choice of courses and facilities for credit transfer and student mobility brought about by networking add to the flexibility of the ODL system. The institutions as well as the learners both stand to gain through networking as there is access to a wider choice and resources.

Reflection and Action 25.4

State any two benefits of networking among ODL institutions. Collect information about the main objectives of any consortium that has been developed in the field of ODL

25.6 Quality Concerns

Today terms like quality assurance, quality control, total quality management, etc. earlier used in the field of industries are gaining popularity in the field of education. It has been realised that as with goods and other different services, in the field of education too quality is important and has to be maintained. Earlier providers of educational services often considered students to be their beneficiaries who were supposed to remain obliged to them for the services received. But today, with rising cost of higher education and the growing importance of the need for professionalism in every field, it is being felt that students too, like consumers, have certain rights and expectations that have to be fulfilled to ensure the growth of the organisation. In this regard it has been pointed out by Tait, (1997) that students are no longer in a subservient position, accepting poor services or care from the teachers and administrators. Thus there is widespread concern regarding the quality of education provided by educational organizations.

What does the term quality mean? Quality has been defined by Harvey and Green (quoted by Mohan 1999) as being synonymous with several things such as being exceptional or of strikingly higher levels of perfection with consistency, being a well designed process with zero defects, having fitness of purpose indicating that the institution is capable of fulfilling the stated objectives, providing value for money that translates to accountability and satisfies the needs of the customer, etc. From this definition we do get an idea about the concept of quality but at the same time it has to be noted that in the field of education unlike in industries, it is difficult to develop specific and

measurable criteria for assessing quality since human beings and not goods and services are the focal elements of educational institutions. Nevertheless in the field of distance education, which adopts an industrialized approach with mass production of learning materials, transportation, need for timely delivery of the right type of materials, criteria for assessing the quality of the educational services can be developed.

Quality is to be maintained in every aspect of the functioning of institutions offering distance education. Development of learning materials and as we have discussed earlier, their production, timely despatch and delivery, student support services, evaluation, etc, are the major areas that are required to maintain quality. The concerns regarding quality are not merely to satisfy the users or the beneficiaries of the educational institutions but also to continuously improve the functioning of the institution. In the industrial sector quality is often maintained by checking the finished goods but in the field of education, the entire process is important because there is no such well-defined finished product. Therefore, quality assurance, which takes care of the entire process rather than quality control that is more concerned with the finished goods, is more important in the field of education.

Quality assurance, is important in the field of education but it all the more so in the field of distance education. Why is it so? In several countries, distance education is yet to fully establish its credentials as an educational system, which is at par with the conventional system. Still there are questions as to its credibility and it is often considered to be the second choice of learners. Therefore, any compromise regarding quality would aggravate such doubts. Therefore, practices related to quality assurance are important in distance education institutions. Moreover there is another issue, which happens to be related to the target group of distance education programmes. The target group comprises learners from heterogeneous socio- academic backgrounds and could be highly dispersed not only with in the country but also internationally. They are adults and many of them are in-service. Therefore they are mature enough to be aware of their rights and assert them. They may not hesitate to seek legal recourse if they feel that they have not got the full value for their money. Also study materials of distance education programmes reach far and wide and are subject to much greater and wider scrutiny by adult learners.

Let us try to explain certain elements of the definition of quality that we have given earlier. When we say that quality refers to the fulfillment of the intended purpose, in the ODL system, it can be equated to the students graduating being in demand in the fields of further education and jobs and also the educational needs of those enrolling are fulfilled. Value for money can refer to the students being satisfied with the services provided to them as well as the programmes being quality ones and getting popular following the investment made in developing them. But can we emulate the standards maintained in the reputed institutions at the national or international level? Bo (1977) has rightly pointed out in this regard that quality assessment system that has been adopted by one institution cannot be transported to another because of the varied socio cultural and organizational differences. Again standards are not fixed but dynamic and this has to be taken into account. Then maintaining consistency in the standards achieved is also a challenge in ODL and calls for dedicated efforts on a continuous basis.

Reflection and Action 25.5

Why are concerns regarding quality all the more important in ODL?

John Daniel (quoted by Ramanujam 2000) has highlighted the main aspects within distance education that demand quality. Let us discuss some of these aspects:

Learning materials: In distance education the learning materials produced are very important as they substitute the teachers and in places without the facilities of libraries and other such resources are the only printed materials available for studying. Therefore the quality of the content in terms of its richness, adequateness and pedagogy is important. In this respect Koul (1999) has also specifically underlined that quality is to be maintained in the designing and development of the course materials. Quality needs to be assured in every step in the academic inputs, in editing, formatting, proof reading, preparing camera ready copies, quality of paper, print, illustrations, timely despatch of materials, adherence to schedules handling assignments, counselling services, revising the courses, etc.

Student Support Services :It has been found that ODL systems have greater number of dropouts than the conventional system. To check this it is necessary to improve the quality of the student support services so that the morale of the distance learners is maintained.

Logistics: Quality of the logistics is required so as to ensure the proper delivery of the learning materials to the widely dispersed student population.

Research base: A sound research base is to be maintained to use it for future developmental activities of the institution. For instance, a record of the feedback collected on a continuous basis helps during the revision of courses.

With the growing demands for higher education there has been mushrooming of institutions offering ODL and many directorates with thousands enrolling in them have been opened in conventional educational institutions. However it is alleged that in spite of the huge funds collected through them they are accorded neither the status nor the recognition they deserve. Consequently the quality of the learning materials and student support system both suffer. Hence the drop out rate is also quite high. In some of these directorates there have been efforts towards revamping the delivery system, student support services and revising the course materials. Still there is a concern that there are hardly any integrated efforts that are essential for total quality management. Nowadays for maintaining quality in distance education, the Commonwealth of Learning, the University Grants Commission (UGC) and mainly the Distance Education Council (DEC) are functioning actively (Manohar 1999). It is therefore, important to ensure through quality assessment measures that the allegation that ODL caters to quantity at the cost of quality does not arise.

Reflection and Action 25.6

Go through the provisions of GATS that pertain to the educational services and consider the impact of foreign education on local culture. Also deliberate upon whether education through ODL is the only threat to the local culture or if cultural exchange is an ongoing process and is caused by other agencies too.

25.7 Research in ODL Systems

Institutions offering higher education have two main functions - knowledge dissemination and knowledge generation. Educational institution at the tertiary level especially universities under the conventional system of education are actively involved in carrying out research work. For adding to the corpus of existing knowledge, testing theories and principles developed earlier under new circumstances, finding solutions to the problems existing in the concerned field are some of the major objectives for carrying out research work. In distance education institutions, apart from research in the disciplines taught, that in the area of distance education is indispensable for strengthening the system since it is a relatively new area, which is still developing. There are several areas in this field that need in-depth study to sort out the pressing problems.

We shall now discuss some of the areas that merit research in the field of distance education:

Learners: The socio- economic and academic background of students who enroll in distance education, their learning styles, constraints, level of motivation, etc.

Educational programmes: Pedagogic aspect of the content, integration of technology, etc.

Media: Use and integration of different types of media in the educational programmes so as to have a multimedia approach, use of media by learners, etc.

Enhancing cost effectiveness: Studying the expenses incurred in different areas, devising means to make the system cost effective and making optimum use of funds.

Student support services: Improving student support services not only for the learners who are enrolled but also for those who have graduated for their placement.

Assessing achievement: Assessing achievement of those graduating as far as their further education and placement are concerned.

Unlike some of the open universities of the western world where research is a regular activity, in the open universities of India it is yet to gather momentum. Therefore, it is necessary for these institutions to formulate definite and comprehensive policies so as to encourage and regulate research work. Research in distance education institutions as in others can involve both the qualitative as well as the quantitative methods. Therefore, experimental studies, historical studies and descriptive studies such as case studies, surveys, causal correlation studies, etc. can be carried out. There have been some descriptive studies such as surveys and some empirical studies too but it is still not enough as a development oriented exercise (Koul quoted by Ramanujam, 2000). As research is an important tool for the development of the discipline as well as the system, it has to be taken up earnestly in distance education institutions.

Reflection and Action 25.7

Why is system-based research important in ODL systems?

25.8 Apprehensions Regarding ODL

We have been discussing in this unit some of the critical issues in ODL. Let us also discuss some of the apprehensions regarding ODL such as the commercialisation of education through ODL by certain institutions and the cultural impact of ODL from abroad.

a) Commercialisation of Education

The ODL system is today indisputably the means of democratizing educational opportunities. One of the reasons for this is its ability to enroll huge numbers simultaneously. But today not all such institutions operate with the altruistic motive of bringing about equity in the field of education. There are instances when the potential to enroll huge numbers has been grossly misutilized to earn money through the fees collected. For instance, in India teacher education programmes through the distance mode were once used to enroll a huge number of learners but these institutions possessed neither the necessary infrastructure nor the student support required. This was adversely affecting the quality of education provided. The prime motive of these institutions appeared to be to make financial gains. This continued till the National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) clamped down on such institutions.

As per certain estimates, the business of education the world over runs into trillions of dollars. More and more ODL providers are joining the fray. It is seen that huge profits earned through ventures in the field of distance education are bringing entrepreneurs from the western world to the developing nations with huge student population eager to possess degrees from abroad. There is the emergence of a global market where education especially that provided through the distance mode is being traded. There is the allegation that the claims of education anywhere, anytime, is becoming like edibles that are prepackaged and delivered at home by the multinational companies. The prepackaged educational services are produced through mass production techniques, whereby the students become the customers and the teachers the workers. Hence, it is felt by some people that more than altruism, profiteering is the motive of some ODL institutions. According to Greville (2000) the commercial approach of some ODL institutions with less concerns for student support is responsible for the high dropout rate.

As we know several distance education institutions are adopting a multinational approach in providing educational services. This trend is further facilitated by the General Agreement in Trade and Services (GATS). It is feared that as in goods and other services, the developing nations would find it difficult to compete with the developed nations because of their inadequate infrastructure and poor economic development and the agreements for globalising educational services may not work in their favour. The educational scenario of these countries would then be captured by the technologically advanced developed countries and their educational services would thus flood the markets of the developing world.

It is therefore necessary to check such commercial motives and formulate norms to regulate the operation of ODL institutions. In India the DEC, UGC, NCTE and other professional educational councils are monitoring distance education institutions to check profiteering and commercialisation.

b) Cultural Impact of ODL

As we have discussed earlier, owing to globalisation and agreements like GATS, educational services including ODL from across jurisdictional boundaries are expected to enjoy steady growth in coming years. The former would be the provider while the latter would mainly be the receivers. We know that education is the means of preserving and transmitting culture. Therefore, there is an apprehension that educational services from abroad would bring along with them, the cultural influence of the service providers. If there is one-way traffic of education from the technically and financially rich western countries towards the developing nations, there could be cultural hegemony whereby the western culture would dominate that of the developing world, resulting in a new kind of imperialism-neocolonialism. In case there is exchange of educational services among different nations, there would be a cultural homogenisation with the loss of the richness and uniqueness of different cultures. It is also feared that the curriculum designed by foreign nationals may not reflect the ethos, values, traditions and aspirations of the local people.

The apprehension regarding the cultural influence of ODL is, however, only for ODL from abroad. Because of the several benefits of ODL, especially that it allows learners to access the best educational services from any part of the world coupled with the fact that globalisation as well as ODL from abroad cannot be wished away, a pragmatic view has to be adopted. ODL services should not weaken national initiatives and their accreditation, entry and operation should be regulated by norms prepared by the government for foreign education providers. If necessary the curriculum may also be adapted as per the local needs. It is to be ensured that the curriculum takes adequate care to preserve and transmit the local culture and is sensitive towards it.

Reflection and Action 25.8

How can ODL bring about cultural hegemony? Do you think ODL can be misused for commercialising education? Why?

25.9 Conclusion

In the modern world, education is the key to allround progress. In the globalised economy only knowledge-based societies can thrive. Hence, it is necessary to ensure that education reaches one and all. The conventional system, because of its inherent rigidities and limitations cannot take education to one and all. Hence, ODL is the only recourse which can overcome all barriers imposed by geographic isolation, social problems, etc. For ODL to achieve its goals there are certain critical issues that merit our attention. These issues, if adequately addressed, can help the ODL system in the attainment of the goals that have been set. The issues discussed here are equity and access to educational opportunities through ODL, cost effectiveness in ODL, integration of technology that may facilitate the overall functioning of the ODL institutions, networking and collaborations that facilitate the sharing of material and human resources quality concerns of distance education, research in ODL, and apprehensions regarding the impact of ODL.

25.10 Further Reading

Tait, A. (ed.) 1997. *Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Selected Case Studies*. The Commonwealth of Learning: Vancouver

Rumble, G. 1986. *The Planning and Management of Distance Education*. Croom Helm: London

Panda, S. (ed.) 1999. *Open and Distance Education: Policies, Practices and Quality Concerns*. Staff and Education Development Series. Arravali Books International Pvt Ltd.: New Delhi

Unit 26

ODL: Problems and Prospects

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- 26.1 Introduction
- 26.2 ODL System: The Context
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Learning Objectives

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- articulate the state of distance education in the global context;
- appreciate the conflict between social commitment and market requirement; and
- understand the importance of study materials

26.1 Introduction

In the previous two units of this block we have discussed at length the social and philosophical foundations of open and distance learning. We have also discussed the critical issues of distance education today. In this unit we shall be discussing the emerging concerns of the ODL system. It has largely been pointed out that the ODL system has emerged to cater to the need of the socially disadvantaged, remote, second chance and part time learners. However, the ODL system has made a long journey and its interface with the mainstream conventional education system has rather been very obvious. In terms of the use of advanced technology for learning, flexibility in the curriculum development, promptness to accommodate the latest development in the learning process, the ODL system has emerged to be the provider of sophisticated form of education. In the wake of globalisation and introduction of the new structural development programme since the early 1990's, there have emerged several areas of concern for open and distance learning. In this unit, we have tried to place the ODL system within the ongoing socio political and economic processes and thereafter have identified several contradictions which are being encountered by this system. The issues of commodification of education, quality assurance in the course material, knowledge production, atomization of education etc. are discussed at length in this unit.

26.2 ODL System: The Context

The open and distance learning (ODL) system, as it stand today, has been evolved out of a long historical process. From the earlier stage of part time, casual, second chance, print-based correspondence learning it has emerged to be a viable alternative system of learning whereby a large section of the students of ODL are full time, first chance, achievement oriented, motivated and globally connected. It also simultaneously continues to save the interests of the marginalized section of the population. In terms of the modes of delivery it has evolved and transformed from the early system of penny beg, print-based singular modes to integrated modes of print, audio-video and e-learning.

Scholars have also identified significant structural transformation in the ODL system from the earlier system of Correspondence to Distance to Open Distance, to Virtual e-learning to Consortium-based learning. Recent decades have borne witness to the proliferation of dual mode educational institutions whereby the conventional educational institutions are patronizing and initiating distance learning from within their existing set up. Over the years ODL has emerged from a marginal to major and prime provider system of education all over the globe. The growing significance of open and distance learning in recent years has been widely circumscribed by:

- Expansion of the process of globalisation,
- Proliferation of knowledge economy all over the globe,
- Revolution in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs),
- Formalisation of the General Agreement in Trade in Services through GATS in WTO,
- Social commitments for Education as expressed in Dakar Declaration,
- Social commitment for 'lifelong learning' as pronounced in Social Development Summit 1995,
- Formulation of Millennium Development Goal by the UNDP for the eradication of illiteracy, hunger, unemployment, and AIDS,
- Popular and political mandates in the developing world to further the process of educational well being of the marginalized section of the population,
- Increasing thrust and demand for quality education all over the world,
- Increasing commercialization of education,
- Flexibility of the ODL system and its ability to accommodate a huge number of students without compromising with quality,
- Structural rigidity of the conventional system of education and its inability to meet the growing demand of education.

All these processes are indeed inter-related and at times have furthered the process of expansion of one another and they have a composite bearing on the ODL system. It is important to understand that globalisation and ICTs are co-constituents of the knowledge economy. A knowledge economy can't flourish without providing the space and provision of generation and trading of commercial knowledge through lifelong learning. In the market-driven state, in which introduction of structural adjustment programme is but an essential imperative, political commitments for lifelong learning through commodification of education and the use of ICTs rather have to be explicit. With the proliferation of knowledge economy the demand for education has increased across the globe. With this increasing demand, education is now traded across the borders by developing new structures like WTO and GATT. Along with these developments there have been the growing concern for quality, parity and recognitions for educational products. As against these backdrops, the ODL system of education has been encountering new problems, challenges, possibilities and prospects. In this unit we shall highlight some of the problems encountered by the ODL system in general.

Reflection and Action 26.1

Discuss the socio-cultural context of the functioning of the ODL system

26.3 Dilemmas between Social Commitment and Market Requirement

In the developed parts of the world, the ODL system has to respond to the need of the second chance learners and largely to the growing need of the market as the second chance learners have a specific educational requirement. To mention again most of the second chance learners are in-service students. It is not to say that ODL system in the developed countries has emerged to be market driven totally. In the developing world the ODL system has got the mandate to espouse the educational cause of the marginalised groups of society. However, ever since the inception of ODL in its modern form, it has been caught on the horns of a dilemmas between social responsibilities and market requirements. The process of globalisation, revolution the information technology, and a paradigm shift in the development strategy have obviously accentuated this dilemma of ODL as a function to an industry-vis-à-vis ODL as a force for imparting a transformative culture in society. Even though there has been a parallel development between these forces, the balance seldom tilts in favour of the liberating function of the ODL. There is no denying the fact that in a system of market economy where knowledge has acquired a commodity value, any knowledge industry would produce and disseminate those sets of academic packages which has a readymade market for its products, more financial return for its products and less risk involved in the producing and marketing of these products. Obviously with knowledge packaging in the areas of management and information technology, the existing skill upgradation of bureaucrats, managers and so on tends to be regarded as the areas of hot pursuit, as these initiatives provide easy returns and contribute significantly to the process of revenue generation of the academic institution. As the ODL system is posited with the challenge of getting integrated with these global phenomena, there has been a shift in emphasis towards the marketisation of knowledge.

26.4 Quality Assurance in the Study Materials

In recent years there have been growing concerns on the issue of quality of distance education course materials. Conceptually the notion of quality control in distance education has an industrial legacy. In the industrial sense “quality” is an error-free, totally reliable product or service that fulfils the expectation of the ‘customers’ at a given price (Holt 1990). Quality is also understood in terms of the fitness of the product in conformity with a set of expected standards (Guri 1987). Such a notion emphasizes the specialization of efforts and the division of labour. Strategically, to Sallis (1993), it involves the breaking down of work into narrow and repetitive tasks with the advent of mass production which took away from the workers the possibility of self-checking quality. A strict division of labour developed from it and necessitated the expansion of the system of inspection known as quality control (Sallis 1993).

It is important that the issue of quality assurance in distance education has been equated with the process of industrialization of education services by several scholars of distance education. To Otto Peter (1983) it to be the most industrialized form of education in view of the technology used, division of labour involved and adhere to quality ensured in the product of this industry.

a) **Academic Context:** In the distance education set up the concept of quality is frequently used with reference to the self-instructional course materials designed and developed by the ODL, and the student support services provided to the students in the following related activities:

- Dispatch of study materials (print, audio and video)
- Counselling (academic, personal, professional)
- Registration
- Evaluation (both continuous and term end)
- Monitoring (feedback collection and research reformation of policies)

There have been various processes leading to the systematization of these institutions for quality control and management. A host of activities are suggested by the scholars towards this endeavour: collaborative non-hierarchical course teamwork, reworking and redoing on the draft of the material with due consultation with subject experts, pre-testing of course materials, proper orientation of distance teachers and academic counsellors, monitoring of student assignments, collection of feedback from students, evaluation of the course materials by the experts, revision of the course materials at periodic intervals etc. There have been systematic reviews and inspections of the product and services of distance teaching in order to ensure quality.

b) Emerging Political Context

The concern for quality is widely related also to the emerging political scenario of the state. Tait (1993) has mentioned a political attribute to the issue of quality management in view of the facts that (a) national governments are interested in returns on public investments, (b) education and training are essential to economic recovery and growth, (c) conventional educational institutions have failed to achieve their mission, and (d) open and distance learning is now seen as the mainstream provider of learning opportunities in flexible ways without the full cost of the conventional delivery method'. Against this backdrop the "State has created a competitive environment so that the university takes on more and more of the characteristics of a company in a free market... customers (formerly students), who now pay more and more of the real cost of the services provided, come to the centre of the management's concerns... (and) in this context of a changing environment in many countries that quality assurance has gained a central place (Tait 1993).

In this emerging environment distance education institutions have accepted the challenge of quality assurance in the course material environment. There have been rigorous planning and action for "total quality control" which according to Holt implies a total involvement of the organization to provide the customers with reliable products and services that fulfil their needs (Holt 1990).

Let us examine the philosophy of quality assurance as executed in the Indian context. Here we shall present the case of Indira Gandhi National Open University as a study.

c) Strategy of Quality Assurance at IGNOU

In developing countries like India, political commitment for quality assurance has got an emphasis because of the fact that

- the conventional correspondence education failed to ensure quality in distance education in 1960s and 1970s.
- open universities have got the mandate of the state to provide quality education to distance learners
- in the free trade regime of GATS, quality education is essential to withstand the challenges from the new providers of education from across the border
- as the conventional education system is unable to accommodate all the aspirants of quality education, an alternative structure is immediately warranted to provide quality education to the vast masses.

In India only a very thin layer of students (6.2%) gets the opportunity of higher study in regular universities. Keeping in view the educational need of a large section of the society correspondence education was introduced in conventional universities in the sixties and it attracted a large number of students. However, there was a visible decline of standards of correspondence education for various reasons viz. lack of proper planning, total dependency

on print materials and conventional textbooks, inadequacy of funds, and lack of political commitment for the promotion of this system. In the background of increasing demand for distance education, the revolution in the mass communication and increasing social and political awakening in the country on the one hand; and the decline in the standards of correspondence education on the other, the open education system was established in the eighties as the feasible answer to provide quality education through the distance mode.

IGNOU was established by an Act of Parliament in 1985 to promote the educational well being of the largest segments of the population with diversity of means and to set the standard of open and distance learning in India. To use the diversity of means, IGNOU has adopted a multi-media approach (full self-instructional print material supplemented by audio-video inputs) of course development; and is in the process of integrating ICTs with its programmes. Management of its high quality has been the prime concern from its very inception and has initiated several measures. Towards the process of management of quality in course materials, teaching Faculty has initiated the following steps:

- a) Forming Expert Committees with nationally and internationally reputed experts available in India organizing societies of workshop, core group, brainstorming sessions to frame and design the most elaborate, advanced and up to date syllabus,
- b) Involving reputed teachers, and experts in the writing of course materials, and in editing the content of the course materials,
- c) Organizing workshops of course writers and course editors to acquaint them with distance education pedagogy and to ensure quality,
- d) Besides recruiting young and well-qualified academics, IGNOU organized a series of workshops to orient these academics in distance education and provide them the required skill for the development of self-instructional course materials, assessment and evaluation of students' performances. Various international agencies like Overseas Development Administration (ODA) of U.K., Open University, U.K., Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Japan, and the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), have also extended support to IGNOU for the development of quality educational material. IGNOU has been extremely successful in tapping the best resources of diversified academic pursuits available in India for the planning and development of multi-media course packages,
- e) Initiating regular training programme for faculty to equip them with distance education pedagogy and the style of presentation of the self-instructional course material,
- e) Undergoing training for audio-video production,
- f) Transforming the draft course materials by trained faculty in Self-Instructional Mode (SIM),
- g) Interacting frequently with the subject experts to avoid confusions and provide greater clarity to the students,
- h) Writing and rewriting of course materials according to one's area of specialization and interest,
- i) Collecting feedback from the subject experts on the already produced course materials,
- j) Undertaking correction and revision of course materials based on feedback collected from subject experts,
- k) Undertaking pre-testing of selected course materials among the students before these are made available for wider distribution,
- l) Collecting comments on the course materials from distance education and

language experts and preparing the final draft in accordance with the comments received from the above mentioned subject experts,

- m) Regularly preparing and monitoring assignments,
- n) Orienting the Academic Counsellors in the distance education pedagogy and on the Course materials of IGNOU,
- o) Collecting feedback from the students on the course materials, and
- p) Taking academic counseling sessions in the Study Centre of IGNOU. The faculty has also introduced various learning aids in print materials – for example, pictorial illustration, boxes with related concepts or information, biographical sketches of the thinkers, activities for the students to learn the subject of study from daily experiences. Indeed, the faculty's efforts have been to avoid the mechanical approach in transforming the self-instructional material; rather it tries to make it essentially creative and sensitive to the academic need of the students.

All these concerted efforts have helped IGNOU achieve wide recognition both in the country and abroad within a short span of time. Many open universities of the world have adopted course materials produced by IGNOU. Most significantly, undertaking rigorous review of course materials of IGNOU and the delivery of the IGNOU Programme the COL has declared IGNOU as the COL Centre of Excellence in 1993.

Action and Reflection 26.2

What do you mean by quality assurance? How can quality assurance be ascertained in the ODL system?

26.5 ODL and Knowledge Production

The ODL system plays a very significant role to disseminate knowledge among learners through state of the art technologies. It is important that an advanced learning system should not only disseminate knowledge but also generate new body of knowledge. Knowledge is not only a part of one's intellectual heritage, but also an asset of a particular stage of society which is being generated, evolved and constructed through various processes of validation, criticism and creative engagements. In the developing world ODL has got the mandate to be the tool for the empowerment of the hitherto neglected sections of society. Knowledge of all concerns are generated, transmitted, preserved and even reconstructed through certain structural arrangements of society. Should knowledge be a function to the construction of a praxis for empowerment of the marginalized there is an emergent need:

- a) To recast the existing body of knowledge that would question the various institutional arrangements and bases of legitimacy for subordination of the marginalized groups. The processes of social construction of caste ethnicity, gender etc. in Indian society may be cited as cases to this point.
- b) To document the regular struggle and resistance of the marginalised groups that challenge the dominant order as part of cultural heritage. The alternative institutional structure(s) emerged out of these processes to break the barriers of subordination are required to be reorganized as organized endeavours of redoing social construction.
- c) To enhance the accessibility of knowledge through all possible means for the marginalized section of society.
- d) To recognize and document the indigenous knowledge and social practices of the marginalized in the course curriculum; and
- e) To popularize science, vocational and professional programmes among the marginalized by modifying them as per their need and requirement.

All these need flexible systemic arrangements that have the capacity of contemplation, absorption and appreciation for an alternative body of knowledge. There lies the significance of ODL to sensitise the understanding by creating an alternative body of knowledge that could be used as praxis for empowerment of the marginalised. The best possible ways of producing this alternative body of knowledge are to promote research activities at the ODL on the issues of the marginalised groups and to integrate the knowledge emerged out of this research to the course curriculum, and encourage collaborative learning by integrating ICTs with the learning process of the marginalized.

ODL in the developing country's context and as it stands today provides more scope for reproduction of the existing body of knowledge than for creation of alternative one. Curriculum development based on research, and collaborative learning and action project need a longer gestation period. In a competitive market economy any ODL system seldom gets such a space for the generation of alternative body of knowledge and then to integrate them to the curriculum.

Teachers in the ODL have a moral responsibility for shaping an alternative body of knowledge. A proactive strategy of the teaching community is as essential for their professional empowerment as for the fulfillment of the commitment of ODL to the nation and society. It is only through the proactive initiatives of the teachers of ODL that an alternative body of knowledge is produced that would contribute towards the formulation of praxis for empowerment of the marginalised through demystification of knowledge. The structural flexibility of the ODL system provides enormous opportunities to initiate new and innovative academic curriculum. Several certificate, diploma and degree programmes are framed which are not conventionally available elsewhere. These opportunities are required to be fully utilized by the teachers of the ODL system.

Reflection and Action 26.3

How can the ODL system be a tool for empowerment of the marginalized? Suggest a few strategies based on your experience.

26.6 ODL, ICT and Market: A Critique

In recent years a lot of discussion has taken place on the interface of ODL with market forces and ICT. There are social, economic and political implications of the extensive use of ICTs in the ODL. In the following sections of the unit, we shall examine some of these issues

a) ODL, E-learning and Automation

In the wake of globalisation and the revolution in the ICTs there have been tremendous efforts both by the ODL institutions and by the regular universities to integrate the learning process with e-learning in particular and ICTs in general. These processes, while they have unfolded several new opportunities of learning; have also produced new challenges for society, academic institutions, teachers and for learners. Scholars have tried to understand this phenomenon with diverse perspectives.

Noble (1997), in his famous work *Digital Diploma Mill* has highlighted the commercial, pedagogical, and ethical implications of online educational technology. He demonstrates the significant correlations between the commercial capital and expansion of e-learning in the ODL system. To him, the high-tech transformation of higher education is being initiated and implemented from the top down, either without any student and faculty involvement in the decision-making or with it. It is also pointed out that getting technologically transformed the educational campuses are now functioning as a significant site of capital accumulation by 'converting intellectual activity into intellectual

capital'. To him, this process has started with the process of commoditization of the research function of the university and thereafter transforming commoditization of the educational function of the university, transforming courses into courseware, the activity of instruction itself into commercially viable proprietary products that can be owned and bought and sold in the market. The corporate and political leaders of the major industrialized countries, to retain their supremacy, now turn towards "knowledge-based" industries. This has led to the unprecedented collaboration between corporate and academic boardrooms and the foundation of joint lobbying efforts. The foremost promoters of this transformation are: (a) the hardware and software vendors who view education as a market for their wares, (b) corporate training advocates and (c) the university administrators, (who see it as a way of giving their institutions a fashionably forward-looking image, and view the computer-based instruction as a means of reducing their direct labour and plant maintenance costs and believe in undermining the autonomy and independence of faculty supported by a number of private foundations, trade associations, and academic-corporate consortia) and (d) techno zealots who simply view computers and e-learning as the panacea for all elements of education.

To Noble, there are several implications of the commoditization of university of education:

- a) teachers as labour are made subject to all the pressures of undergoing rapid technological transformation from above, reduce their autonomy, independence, and control over their work. Once faculty put their course material online, the knowledge and course design skill embodied in that material is taken out of their possession, transferred to the machinery and placed in the hands of the administration.
- b) The process of the commoditization of instruction involve the transformation of the university into a market for the commodities being produced. He points out that administrative propaganda routinely alludes to an alleged student demand for the new instructional products and thus try to create a market by fiat, compelling students and faculty to become users and hence consumers of the hardware, software, and content products as a condition of getting an education, whatever their interest or ability to pay.
- c) Students enrolled in courses using virtual software are in fact formally designated "experimental subjects."
- d) Commercialized higher education research thus has become a means to serve commercial ends by bringing universities and industry into close partnership. 'Faculty becomes producers of commodities for their employer'. Gradually the universities are emerging stronger by securing the patent rights of the intellectual capital. Here the instructional process, classroom teaching, is converted into marketable products, such as a CD ROMs, Websites, or courseware, which they may or may not themselves 'deliver'.

Noble also points out that as the universities are going into business for themselves, the issue of copyright has acquired a place of central significance. But the universities are now undertaking to undo such traditional faculty rights in order to capitalize on the online instruction. "In the wake of the online education gold-rush, many have begun to wonder, will the content of education be shaped by scholars and educators or by media businessmen, by the dictates of experienced pedagogy or a quick profit" (Noble 1997)

b) Market Drive, ICTs and ODL

Latchem and Hanna (2002) while identifying the major challenges encountered by open and flexible learning points out that in general 'higher education is experiencing a shift from supply driven to demand driven pressures. This has

been mostly because of the challenges encountered by the ODL from the forces of globalisation and Information and Communication Technology (ICT), competition from new providers, and the increasing drive for self-sustaining education. There have been growing demands for relevant accountability. Universities are increasingly seeking solutions to these challenges in the open and flexible learning and ICT. You have observed the proliferation of distance education institutes all over the world. There has emerged a trend to market the education through the distance education mode even in the conventional universities. In many cases ODL is getting transformed from quality driven and marginal to commercially-oriented and mainstream. There are both the opportunities and dangers in these developments. It is apprehended that in the move to internationalize and commercialize open and flexible learning, the need of the disadvantaged and the marginalized may be overlooked and in the blurring of distinction between the on-and-off campus teaching and learning, the particular needs of the distance learner disregarded (2003:203).

As education has emerged to be a tradeable commodity, many educational institutions use ODL as an important platform to facilitate trade in a competitive environment. Evans and King are of the opinion that the politicians and administrators of the developing countries use the produce packages of learning materials as a "quick fix"... readily to trade in market. They have also highlighted the aspect of academic imperialism as spread through ODL.

c) ODL, Technological Changes and Leadership

Starting from the *pre paid post* based correspondent education of mid nineteenth century to the *web based* open and the virtual learning institutions of the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries distance education institutions have been responding to the kind of learning technologies which function to serve new markets, 'improves with growing demands, achieves the quality expectations of the mainstream market and finally brings revolutionary changes in the industry displacing the established providers and the products'. As the market is becoming very competitive and the leading universities and colleges increasingly investing in ICT to develop web based programmes there have emerged several new forms of higher educational organisations. The process of formation of such alternative structure of higher education have not only ignored the existing the institutional, geographic, political and other contextual realities, these have also challenged the culture and the functioning of the conventional educational set ups. Christensen (1997)

Otto Peters (1967, 1983) has always visualised distance education as the most industrialised form of education which shares a host of characteristics of the modern industrial production process and that these distance education institutions are essentially bureaucratic in character. To him (2002) the history of distance education has been a history of its growing importance which is related to the technologies used in each period. He highlights that distance education has entered its fourth phase with a pedagogical revolution caused by the increasing use of digitalized learning processes that has taken distance education to hitherto unknown territory; the virtual learning space. Peters (1998) is of the belief that the demand of the post-industrial service economy will force a change in distance education to develop structures that post industrial society demands.

Many scholars recognized that as the economy is shifting its orientation from industry to knowledge, universities are also acquiring the corporate style of structure and function. Technological forces in the distance learning system call for new capacities in the leaders and staff, multiple specialist collaboration and new visions. It is suggested that the ODLS needs transformational and entrepreneurial leaders who can create and change culture than ordinary managers who live for a compromise. These new leaders are now required to create an optimal environment for innovation, reform organisation, motivation and inspiration for others. In the open learning system there are now

opportunities for new organisational models and strategies. The challenging working environment, need for introduction of advance technology and new academic programmes, expansion of the process of globalisation immediately invites rigorous transformation in the ODL institution with enlightened and the transformative leaderships.

Box 1 Otto-Peters observation in future ODL

What should be the nature of the universities in future? Otto-Peters (2002) is of the opinion that the university of the future will use and integrate a large number of forms: face to face, distance and digital and will thus develop new pedagogical configurations, which will no longer resemble traditional forms of teaching... These universities of the future will also be variable adaptive and flexible enough to provide tailormade programmes for all kinds of students, as well as for persons who want to continue their educational at the tertiary level (35).

What should be the role of the teachers in this changing environment? To him, the “Teachers not only be aware of these changes, but of the necessity to become active agents of these changes. At the same time they have to assume responsibility because they must function as protectors of their students against those technological forces which undo the mechanisation of education just in order to make profit. Teachers must be on the alert as they must protest and react when unnecessary exaggeration of technological enthusiasm dehumanises the process of teaching and learning and thus becomes detrimental to education. He also points out that the view of the critics of the digitalised learning are hardly heard in the prophecies of the distance education because of the fascination of the computer and euphoric frame of mind of the computer users. To him the central idea of establishing virtual universities must be to innovate learning and teaching at the university in order to adapt them to the requirement of the post industrial and the post modern knowledge society”. Here he emphasises on the flexibility of teaching and learning which can be maximised by self-directed and autonomous learning whereby the universities are to be flexible to give students more choices to provide the more intensified and enhanced support to fit it to the changed educational requirements of the post-industrial knowledge society (Peter, 2002 :155-156).

26.7 Transformation of ODL

In the previous section of this unit, we have discussed the challenges and possibilities encountered by the ODL system in course of its interaction with the ICTs, and market forces. In this section, we shall be discussing the process of transformation of the ODL system and its social, economic and pedagogical ramifications. Alan Tait (1995) points out that the ODL was framed as a progressive ideology, marginal system to serve the educational interest predominantly of the marginalized population. It stood for individual learners autonomy. However, over the years it has emerged to be a market driven mainstream educational institution, which is amenable for political maneuvering of the state. To him ‘the ODL is being reviewed to put an end to in representing the society in its own terms. The age of innocence for the ODL has ended’ (1995: 27). To him the process of the adoption of ODL as a mainstream method of delivery is acting to isolate and marginalize populations, whereas previously it provided for their inclusion. In the wake of globalisation and introduction of the structural adjustment programme the control of the government over ODL has rather been stronger.

Consequently, there has been a shift from the ideology of education for the marginalized population to mainstream Government-driven initiatives in ODL. Due to regular political intervention, the system of distance education is used increasingly to discharge functions in a narrower interest. In the name of

technological improvement, the universities have now emerged to be a market for techniciation of education (Harris 1987: 146). In recent years scholars have observed the Fordist and Post-Fordist tendency in the Open University. Edwards points out that the ODLs are predominantly Fordist in nature characterized by standardized products, mass production plants and with little scope of consumer choice. In the face of competitiveness faced by open universities there has been a move towards post Fordist course production models by which small scale quickly produced courses to meet particular needs of segments of the market are encouraged.

26.8 Conclusion

The ODL system has emerged to be an important, viable, mainstream and alternative mode of learning for large sections of student population in the country. It has widely been recognized that the conventional education system, due to its structural rigidity will not be able to accommodate all the aspirants of secondary and higher learning in the country. At present more than 21% of the learners in the country are enrolled with the ODL system. It is expected that by the end of the Tenth Five Year Plan the share of ODL system in the total education system will increase to 40%. Such voluminous increase in the student population in the ODL system would ask for several kinds of interventions on the part of the providers of ODL learning in the areas of social commitment, increasing access, quality assurance and democratization of the learning process. The ODL itself has undergone a process of transformation from part time, correspondence, casual to mainstream, integrated, web based and virtual learning. Such transformations have produced diverse varieties of challenges and opportunities for the ODL system. In this unit, we have discussed all these issues in detail.

26.9 Further Reading

Batliwala, S. 1993. *Empowerment of Women in South Asia: Concepts and Practices*, ASSBAF and FAO Freedom from Hunger Campaign, Action and Development. New Delhi

Scheffler, I. 1999 "Epistemology and Knowledge". In R. McCormic and C. Paechter (eds) *Learning and Knowledge. The Open University: London*