
UNIT 10 CHILD RIGHTS AND RIGHT TO EDUCATION

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10.1 INTRODUCTION

The right to education is a concept that is a part of international human rights law. It can be traced to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* that was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 10th 1948. This right was confirmed in 1960 in the *Convention against Discrimination in Education* and, in 1966, in the *Recommendation Concerning the Condition of Teachers*. Its application to refugees was spelled out in the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951). These declarations make it clear that governments must promote the access to education of all children on their territory, including refugees and internally displaced children, without discrimination. Under international humanitarian law also, education is protected in times of conflict. Every human being has got certain rights that are basic to becoming a respectable citizen. Education is a right of every individual to access sources of information and knowing about the opportunities for self-development. It is also important because through education one can know of human rights that are crucial to extending dignity of human beings. Education as Gandhiji said, should nurture respect for oneself and respect for one's own culture, community and country. Education should be seen as an equalizing force. It should not only make provisions and physical resources required for imparting education but actually making quality education available on equitable basis. Education should bring about equality in society

10.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you should be able to appreciate:

- the importance of education in everyday life;
- some of the major issues in education;
- the crucial issues of access and success in education; and
- the crucial role medium of instruction plays in education.

10.3 ISSUES IN EDUCATION

Historically, children's right to education has been under constant threat arising from early child marriages, child labour or even imprisonment. Various institutions including governments, have not agreed standards for transition from childhood to adulthood. In India for example, children are legally obliged to go to school until they are 14 years old but a large number of children get married much before attaining this age. In most areas where children have had no access to education are poor, some are heavily indebted while others were at war.

The obligation to secure free and compulsory primary education for all children was laid down for the first time in the European Convention of 1950. This convention was later supplemented in 1952 by the introduction of civil and political guarantees to the right to education. In 1996, economic and social dimensions were added to the European Social Charter in an attempt to guarantee free and compulsory primary education to all school age children in Europe.

At global level, the UNESCO Convention (1962) against discrimination in education is the oldest treaty that advocates free and compulsory education at the primary level. Within the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26 states that:

Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory.

Various treaties that advocates a guarantee to free and compulsory education are the:

- i) International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
- ii) The American Convention on Human Rights (dealt with civil and political rights).
- iii) Protocol of San Salvador (on Economic, Social and cultural rights).
- iv) African Charter on Human and People's Rights.
- v) Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the African Child.
- vi) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).
- vii) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)
- viii) Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against women (CEDAW).

There exists other treaties relating directly or indirectly to a child's right to education. These treaties include those that secure the rights of teachers, others on indigenous and tribal peoples rights, minimum age of employment and child labour.

Several governments have complied with the treaties on child right to education without much reservation. This commitment to child right to education in reality has not been translated into a constitutional obligation by those governments that have complied with the treaties. There are, however, countries in which the right to education is being realised.

Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child requires governments to:

- Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;
- Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education and to make them available and accessible to every child while taking appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;
- Make higher education available to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means.

10.3.1 Indian Scenario

India is a signatory to various treaties that guarantees the right to education with specific provisions for disadvantaged groups and children with disabilities. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was acceded to on 11th December 1992 with the following declaration:

“While fully subscribing to the objectives and purposes of the convention, realising that rights child of the child, namely those pertaining to the economic, social and cultural rights can only be progressively implemented in the developing countries, subject to the extent of available resources and within the framework of International co-operation; recognising that the child has to be protected from exploitation of all forms including economic exploitation; noting that for several reasons children of different ages do work in India; having prescribed minimum ages for employment in hazardous occupations and in certain other areas; having made regulatory provisions regarding hours and conditions of employment; and being aware that it is not practical immediately to prescribe minimum ages for admission to each and every area of employment in India — the Government of India undertakes to take measures to progressively implement the provisions of article 32, particularly paragraph 2 (a), in accordance with its national legislation and relevant international instruments to which it is a state party”.

The Lok Sabha did pass the ninety-third amendment bill, following mass public protests on November 28th 2001 that introduced the basic rights of children aged 6 - 14 for free compulsory education. The bill requires children to be able to attend schools situated within 1 Km of their homes. The constitutional obligation that guarantees right to education in India faces some challenges, namely:

- i) Financial Contributions by governments and non-governmental organisations including the private sector is needed since some parents cannot afford to pay.
- ii) The indirect financial burden of sending children to school in some parts of India are high and are beyond the ability of poor families.
- iii) Some children are discouraged from attending schools by uninspiring or even violent teachers.
- iv) Some schools in rural areas lack essential facilities like toilets, books, water or furniture.

Despite the above challenges, the government has made efforts to guarantee right to education in law and in practice. India is obliged to prohibit child atrocities like child debt bondage, child servitude, forced child labour and child protection from economic exploitation and dangerous duties. This is reflected in India's commitment to ILO Convention No.182 that saw bonded child labour as among the "worst forms of child labour." The government of India recognises the Right to Education as a fundamental human right. However, millions of children in the 7 - 14 age bracket are still unable to benefit from guarantees to education, due largely to poverty. To transform these guarantees into reality, the government is obliged to respect, protect and fulfil the right to educate. Three major provisions will have to be addressed, namely:

- i) Equality of opportunity in educational provision.
- ii) Non-discrimination without regard to race, gender or any distinctions like economic, social or political.
- iii) Provision of Access to education as expressed in the Dakar Framework for Action that was adopted by the World Education Forum, in April 2000. The Government of India is committing itself to creating an appropriate environment for survival, protection, and development of children as can be seen from the following constitutional obligations:
 - Article 24: No child below the age of 14 years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine engaged in hazardous employment.
 - Article 39: The state shall direct its policy towards child security and ensure that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter a vocation unsuited to their age or strength. The state would also ascertain that children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity.
 - Article 45: The state shall endeavour to provide within a period ten years (from the origination of the constitution) for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years.

Apart from this, a number of NGOs have demonstrated successful approaches in meeting the needs of disadvantaged children, especially girls, and have influenced mainstream education through replication of their models and through policy dialogue with successive governments. The policy report shows that the Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) is one of the few issues on which all parties have declared agreement; development economists stress the urgency of it; and activists raise it as a demand. It is significant to note that issues of child rights, child labour, and educational concerns have now come close enough to generate clarity on what needs to be done. The grass root evidence shows that even today million of children in India is totally deprived of education in any form.

It needs to be mentioned that Universal free and compulsory education was to become a constitutional requirement in India by 1960. This was as per the requirements of Article 45 of the Indian Constitution that says:

The state shall endeavour 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 14 years.

The above constitutional obligation was deferred for several years to 1970 and then followed to 1980, 1990 and finally to 2000. India was expected to achieve Universal Elementary Education by 2007 that has since been deferred to 2010.

The Indian government has committed itself to ensuring that all pupils are educated in accordance with their age, ability, aptitude and special educational needs. It shares a responsibility with State governments and various Non Governmental Organizations in promoting the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, emotional and physical development of pupils and to prepare them for the responsibilities and experiences of adult life. The government of India is also committed itself to the recommendations of UNESCO World Conference On Special Needs Education that requires that:

- Every child has a fundamental right to education and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain acceptable levels of learning;
- Every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs;
- Education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs;
- Every child with special educational needs must have access to mainstream schools that should accommodate them within a child-centered pedagogy capable of meeting these needs.

If we examine all the qualities that distinguish human beings from other living beings, education is definitely one of them. People often scramble over scarce resources in everyday life and the most noticeable tool that they use is education. Some people have succeeded in taking more benefits from the educational opportunities than others. It is important that those who have monopolised education as well as those who have been deprived of it know the importance of the situation. The struggle for the right to education has to be seen from two angles - one of providing education and once it is attained; people must try to make the same available to those who are still deprived. It is sometimes noticed as a tendency of the deprived, as **Paulo Friere** in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* pointed out, to "adopt an attitude of 'adherents' to the oppressor". That is actually a tendency of the educated elite to join the league of the oppressors. Just as it is important to let no one snatch the right of education, it is equally important that these 'oppressors' do not indulge, consciously or unconsciously, in subverting this crucial right to humanization.

Only if a sound foundation is laid, the HE can be expected to give quality output. Another hurdle in the success of education is the corruption perpetuated by the white-collar people. Corruption is one of the major hurdles in extending the benefits of education to the actual beneficiaries. Educational resources, right from chalk to computer have been misused. Those who are ill equipped cannot even raise the voice against them. However, because of the unequal distribution of education those in possession of this skill consider themselves superior to others. This argument needs no elaboration. How is it that those who work day and night in the rugged field conditions to feed those who work in comfortable conditions command less respect? Education should aspire to develop respect not only for ones own culture but also for culture of others.

All political parties irrespective of ideological differences show similar concern for education of the masses, but no party government has taken up this issue seriously. The reiteration of the obligation to provide basic education without making any effort is doubly harmful. Governments make the commitment again and again without doing anything in this direction.

A thumbnail sketch of the governments' expenditure shows that 25% of the state's funds go to defence, 26% to debt repayment and 18% for administrative expenses. Only about 31% of the funds are available for the basic needs of living that include,

among others education health, drinking water, shelter and roads. Political parties and governments raise the issue of mass-education but the essence of the problem is lost as their concern ends by making budget available for education. Mostly, children belonging to Scheduled Tribe (ST) and Scheduled Caste (SC) categories, disabled people, child labourers and the girl child are the most secluded from education. This can further be elaborated below.

The exclusion of dalit children from the education system

According to the 1991 census, there were around 138 million dalits in India accounting for 16.5 per cent of the country's population. In the mid 1990s, barely 41.5 per cent of dalits in rural India were literate and only 62.5 per cent of children in the 6-14 age groups had been enrolled in schools.

The policy makers face is to incorporate SC children in the education system. In India, a few initiatives have been taken by some civil society organizations (CSO) and the government to integrate ECTs into the formal education system. Accordingly, some 53.1 per cent of the rural population in India have access to radio and 49.8 per cent have access to TV sets. This shows that integrating Education and Communications Technologies (ECTs) with the formal education system may be one of the most feasible solutions to ensure the exclusion of SC children in mainstream education.

Education among ST

The participation rate of ST children in education is considered relatively low as compared to others. The enrolment of tribal children was about nine million in class I-V during the year 1997-98. The enrolment rates of ST Children depend on factors such as the availability of schools, their functioning, availability of teachers, the willingness of parents to send their children to school as well as their perception of the value of education. In India, education through ECTs can have an impact on the problem of teacher absenteeism and enhance the student participation in learning.

Educating the girl child

Given that the Right to Education is a fundamental right of all children, it is an important challenge to ensure enrolment of the girl child into the education system. Based on the official statistics available for 1997-98, it is estimated that around 11 million girls within the age group of 6-11 remain un-enrolled in schools, accounting for nearly 88 per cent of all un-enrolled children from the same age group. The corresponding figures for the 11-14 age group is around 16 million, constituting 58 per cent of all un-enrolled children in the age group.

Among the factors that affect the education of girls are the absence of effective early childhood education programmes as they are invariably burdened with the responsibility of taking care of younger siblings. Geographical distance norms work against the interest of girls as often they are not allowed to go out of the village for schooling. This could be solved by the provision of basic infrastructure and women teachers in school could influence this situation considerably.

Education of children with special needs

India is estimated to have around 1.6 million children with special needs while about 1.08 million such children are attending schools. There is an urgent need to question this gap if one has to ensure the fundamental right of education for each Indian child. It has been noted that most Indian schools lack disabled friendly infrastructure and facilities. Therefore, in such a scenario, ECTs can play an important role in engaging disabled children in the education network. A commendable effort in this direction has been undertaken by Enabling Dimensions, an NGO that has initiated an online portal to provide specialised e-learning courses for blind children.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

- 1) Mention any three salient features of Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

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- 2) Mention any three challenges faced in India's constitutional guarantee to the right to education.

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- 3) What are some of the recommendations of UNESCO World Conference On Special Needs Education which India is a signatory to?

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10.4 BETTER LIFE THROUGH EDUCATION

If we examine the achievements of modern society we will find that medical, transport, means of information and so on are the best ones. We can improve our lives by using them. Scores of studies suggest that illiterate people believe more in the traditional methods of treatment that includes black magic. These methods are not scientific and illiterate people, because of centuries of belief in these, tend to get trapped. Education has the benefits of medical inventions to support those who have access to scientific knowledge. Education gives access to sources of information and new discoveries and an educated person can reap benefits from the discoveries made world over. It has been found that educated parents seek medical advice on childbirth and child upbringing. It has been seen that ill-educated people have more children than well educated. All their earnings are spent on providing sub-standard health, education and other amenities of life. Because of low child mortality and immunization facilities, educated people have twenty-five percent less fertility rates. Because of less fertility and a small size family, the educated have a relatively more money and resources available for other luxuries of life.

Education, besides providing direct access to sources of information, indirectly extends benefits of developments in different areas like health, wealth and happiness. For example, those agriculturists who have access to knowledge tend to select the most appropriate type of crop for their land and also use optimum fertilizer. Knowledgeable people get maximum return for their investment. Those who do not get first hand information from the sources of information depend upon hearsay that is not scientific. Educated people don't have to learn from experience all the time and repeat mistakes made by others.

10.4.1 Exploitation Through Education

As against education being an equalising and empowering tool, it can also be used for exploiting others. Education is a handy tool in creating hierarchies in a society. For example, every colonial rule imposes its own systems of education, language of education, methods of evaluation etc. that mismatch with the learners' native system and practices. Explaining the character of Indian education in *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhiji said, "Our ancient school system is enough. Character building has the first in its and is primary education. A building erected on that foundation would last." He expressed the view that without weighing the consequences of adopting Western education we gave up our ancient systems and this was destined to bring unhappiness.

Children who are educated in a foreign system lose touch with their own system and find it extremely difficult to master an alien system. A foreign system of education brings texts along with examples that glorify a foreign system. Slowly the learners develop a liking for the foreign system and also develop apathy for natives. This apathy for 'native' and attraction for 'foreign' can be seen not only in educational matters but also spreading into other fields like culture, race, customs, and government, country and so on. It is only through education that masses can learn to respect one's own culture and discard whatever is not conducive to promoting human dignity in one's culture.

It is easy to fight colonialism because it is exploitative both in form and content. But exploitation through education is difficult to combat because it wears a progressive garb. Describing modern education of letters Gandhiji said, "It is merely an instrument and an instrument may be well used or abused. The same instrument that may be used to cure a patient may be used to take his life, and so may acknowledge of letters." When most human of humane charity - in this case, educational charity, — carries an exploitative agenda, it is difficult to counter.

10.4.2 Education for Planning Development

The development of the skills to read and write in a person may look simple but they have larger implications in the life of a person, a family, a society and a country. An educated person may adopt scientific methods and start using more industrial products demand more rights and privileges and ultimately may demand a 'share in the cake' that the informed ones share by default, as it were, in the absence of the demand from the illiterate. Education is the process to power and higher the degree of education more empowerment would follow to the person, family society or country. Educated individual is expected to take socially rational decisions based on scientific process of decision-making just as an educated society is expected to take globally rational decisions. This is also reflected in the development profile of states in India.

It is apparent that where we have more literacy, we have high life expectancy. Education was given a high priority in the planning of Kerala in the past and they have now attained a level where life is more secure and comfortable.

Human Development Report for the year 2000 had pointed that there is no cure better than education is relieving Indian women from the rampant and inhuman cruelties of domestic violence. Educating women has proved particularly beneficial in this regard, the Report claims.

The key activity of modern societies is planning. Through plans and policies made today, the resources and powers of tomorrow are ensured. Those who plan are qualified to plan because they understand the benefits of planning. If this understanding were extended to masses, planning would be more equitable. The participation of all

in the decision making process can be ensured only through education. Once educated, masses cannot be ignored, far less discriminated against. Every one can become part of the decision making process.

Education is thus an important empowering tool. Education is one of the most important agents for social and economic mobility for the individual and society. Education has the potential to decide the fate of individuals and groups in times to come. Such a situation was envisaged by the founding fathers who made provisions for education in the Indian Constitution.

10.4.3 Administering Education in India

The notion of 'Right to Education' encompasses large issues beyond the simple question of admission to a school. Somewhere we have to make a beginning however. In fact this dilemma has always remained. Article 45 made it mandatory for the Government to make educational provisions for children below the age of 14 by saying that "The State shall endeavour 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. Through the 42nd amendment to the Constitution, Education that was till then a State subject was transferred to the concurrent list making it a joint responsibility of the Central and the State Governments.

Let us also be clear that just making provisions for education is not enough. Unequal quality of education will give birth to unequal competition and as a consequence inequality in society. Only when education of equal quality is extended can there be real competition and equal distribution of facilities and privileges. The UN Convention held in 1989 on the 'Right of the Child' recognised the right to education. India was one of the signatories of this Convention which made it mandatory for India to make primary education (i.e. education of children up to the age of 14) compulsory and free. But this goal is evading the Indian planners even after 50 years of independence.

The government and non-governmental agencies in this area have taken some important steps. Foremost of course, is the Supreme Court decree that "every child/citizen of this country has a right to free education until s/he completes the age of fourteen years. Thereafter her/his right to education is subject to the limits of economic capacity and development of the state".

There have been a good variety of programmes launched in the country to combat problem of illiteracy among which are:

- Operation Blackboard
- Teacher Education
- Minimum Levels of Learning
- District Primary Education Programme funded externally by the World Bank.

According to the National Literacy Mission, India's level of literacy has risen from 52% to 62%. Besides, there are innovative experiments in education going on in the country such as Ekalavya (Hosangabad), Lok Jumbis (Rajasthan), Education Guarantee Scheme (MP). The government expenditure on education is also on the rise. Since the inception of the Five Year Plans in 1950-51, expenditure on education as a proportion of GNP has increased from 1.5% to 3.9%.

The concept of right to education entails two very different things. It can mean equal right to everyone to receive education or the right to equal education to all. Provision for maintaining schools have been made in all parts of the country; but it is not difficult

to notice a great difference in infrastructure and teacher attendance. The public schools are often ill maintained and most people like to send their children to the private schools (Privately owned and managed schools are often called public schools). The survey conducted by the Public Report on Basic Education (PROBE) team in rural UP, Bihar, MP and Rajasthan presented a report that teachers were often absent from schools. As against this, it was found that in the state of Himachal Pradesh, public schools were functioning efficiently and had moved to the top position in the scale of social development among states in India.

10.5 ACCESS / SUCCESS IN EDUCATION

One of the first hurdles in making education available is the issue of access to educational institutions. Access involves two key concepts - **Physical and Socio-Linguistic Access**. It has been pointed out time and again that location of a school influences accessibility. Quite often the most powerful person or the powerful community influences the decision of the location of a school in a village or town. There are no roads connecting the school to the areas of the less privileged. The less-privileged children have to walk down the difficult terrains to reach the school, which tire them and often influence their punctuality and achievement in the long run.

The schools, which are said to be free, in fact demand expenditure in terms of transport, passage, road and other related facilities. Learners do not have to commute on foot. Before deciding on the location of a school it is important to ensure that all learners have physically friendly access to the school. Constantly lagging behind children undergoes humiliation and finally dropout. Even though access to education is a major issue but it is not the only issue.

The Fifth All India Educational Survey says that 94.5 percent of the rural population had primary schools within one km and 83.98 per cent had upper primary school within 3 kilometres, which sounds reasonable as far as providing infrastructure facilities are considered. Besides, the issue of physical accessibility is the issue of social accessibility. Some children do not find any difference between the home and the school norms, for example, behaviourally and linguistically. Their total energy and concentration is devoted to learning activities but some find the home and the school norms totally different. Such children feel out of place in schools and suffer mentally and psychologically. They cannot concentrate. Often they feel discriminated and poverty denies them the right to education. Human Development Report (2000) indicated that education, especially universal elementary education is the best cure for removal of child labour problems in India.

10.5.1 Child Labour and the Right of the Child

The right to education is directly related to the abolition of child labour. Quite often we are confronted with data that abolition of child labour would cost much but unless and until children are debarred from working, they cannot go to school. According to one, report nearly 10 Crore children were employed as labourers during mid 1990s. Studies have proved that there is high desire for education but most of the times opportunities are not available. Neither the Governments nor the society can be spared of this responsibility of providing necessary facilities so that every child is attracted to the school.

Those who are involved in providing learning facilities particularly to the less privileged consider themselves as doing a charity. This notion should be dispensed with because equitable educational opportunities is a right of every individual and those involved in it should not make it a tool for further exploitation.

Education cannot be seen in isolation because it is one of the many sub-systems like administrative, police, or the government that mutually influence each other. We cannot expect a radical education system in a conservative society, which is still hierarchically arranged on colonial power patterns. By and large Indian institutions and systems still follow colonial power ethics. This actually calls for raising voice to change other sub-systems to make provision of education more democratic, equitable, and accessible.

10.6 ROLE OF MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

To carry on the process of education we need a language - as the medium of education. The choice of language is crucial as it drastically influences not only the process but also the success of learners. Most often the language of education in Indian schools is either English or one of the National Languages of India. On close examination we find that English is neither the mother tongue nor the first language of most Indians. Similarly, most Indians speak in a language that is not one of the National Languages but a dialect of these languages. In the case of learners who speak a dialect, they find it difficult to concentrate on the content of the subject because they have to first concentrate on the language used, understand it, and then understand the contents. In such a situation, don't you think every learner has the right to get education in a local **mother tongue**?

Programme evaluation of students (for success or failure) is usually done for understanding the content. Language is only a catalytic agent in these cases. The choice of one language as against the other as the medium of instruction puts some above the others and it has been seen with English language that a particular medium of instruction seeks to put one set of learners over many others because of the system's bias in favour of it.

10.7 DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING

The present system and structure of teaching-learning does not encourage original thinking and equity oriented education. Instead it develops a tendency to follow-first the teacher and later the boss. The traditional Indian system of education has been inquiry-oriented. That is why the classical texts are in the form of question and answer. From what we know, the Gurukul also followed a system of inquiry from students and answers from fellow students and the teacher. The present system is **information oriented** as it gives a secondary status to knowledge and wisdom. More dangerous is the fact that information of things alien to us are imparted in abundance but leave us totally ignorant about our surrounding. Once people get educated these issues will come up and transform not only the system of education but also the content of education i.e. the curriculum will change.

Priorities have to be decided upon by the Government and the beneficiaries as well. It becomes a chicken and egg question. Should education precede health care, eradication of child labour, provision for decent accommodation or these would precede education. The widely accepted and more forceful argument these days is that **education must precede everything** as the capacity to realize and utilize optimally the provisions of health and childcare and hygiene cannot be made without education. One of the major hurdles posed in making educational provisions is that learners are not ready; there is no demand for it. To explain the situation precisely it has been mentioned that learners i.e. children will have to be pulled out from industries and household jobs which will cost a lot of money. The families surviving on these wages would need assistance. The other argument is that because the illiterate people have not realized the importance of education, they keep being exploited generation after generation. Article III. 24

(a Fundamental Right) of our Constitution has clearly pronounced that “No child below the age of fourteen years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any hazardous employment” but still millions of children are employed for hazardous work in different sectors. Besides children are employed to do household jobs and often subjected to inhuman treatments. Can we create a system where economic capacity of the families can be enhanced leading naturally to a situation where the children engaged in hazardous works today are freed to pursue education. Education cannot be planned in isolation; it is an **important component** of social development. In this route one can see the practical possibilities of realizing the goal of ‘Education for All’ that will lay the crucial cornerstone for the Right to Education.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the Unit..

- 4) Mention some of the programmes launched in India to combat problem of illiteracy.

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- 5) Mention some of the problems faced by India in providing universal primary education.

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10.8 LET US SUM UP

Education is the gateway to success in life. It is one of the tools that makes people aware of the disparities, processes of creating and finally re-emerging disparities and develops equity in society. The importance of education is not realised by all. Some people have monopolised the provisions made for education and others are scared of joining the group and sceptical about their capabilities in receiving education. Education has been thought to bring about a qualitative difference in the life of individuals and groups.

To bring about a social change through information about the provisions of education and the right of every individual to education, it is expected that the demand for education will grow. This consciousness can be brought about through the process of education itself. It is one of the most important responsibilities of the governments and people involved in human affairs to find means and ways to make it available to all on an equitable basis.

10.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- 1) The three salient features of Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child require governments to:
 - Make primary education compulsory and available free to all
 - Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education and to make them available and accessible to every child while taking appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;
 - Make higher education available to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means.
- 2) Some of the challenges faced in India on the constitutional obligations that guarantees the right to education in India are:
 - Financial Contributions by governments and non-governmental organisations including the private sector is needed since some parents cannot afford to pay.
 - The indirect financial burden of sending children to school in some parts of India are high and are beyond the ability of poor families.
 - Some children are discouraged from attending schools by uninspiring or even violent teachers.
 - Some schools in rural areas lack essential facilities like toilets, books, water or furniture.
- 3) Some of the recommendations of UNESCO World Conference On Special Needs Education which India is a signatory to are:
 - Every child has a fundamental right to education and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain acceptable levels of learning;
 - Every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs;
 - Education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs;
 - Every child with special educational needs must have access to mainstream schools that should accommodate them within a child-centered pedagogy capable of meeting these needs.
- 4) Some of the programmes launched in India to combat problem of illiteracy are:
 - Operation Blackboard
 - Teacher Education
 - Minimum Levels of Learning
 - District Primary Education Programme funded externally by the World Bank.

5) Some of these problems includes:

- Children may have to be pulled out from industries and household jobs that will cost a lot of money.
- The families surviving on these wages would need assistance.
- Illiterate people have not realized the importance of education and so they keep being exploited generation after generation.
- Children are employed to do household jobs and often subjected to inhuman treatments.

10.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

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