

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 understanding 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 true 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 and 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-formal 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 belong 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

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

Rampal, A. 2000. Education for Human Development in South Asia. *Economic and Political Weekly*, July 22: 2523-2531

Sadgopal, A. 2000. *Shiksha mein Badlav ka Savaal — Samaajik Anubhavon se Neeti Tak*. Granth Shilpi

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, Nambisan 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'. Nambisan (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 disprivliege 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 disprevilege. 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

- Nambissan, Geetha B. 2000. Dealing with Deprivation. *Seminar*, September
- Govinda, R. 2002. *India Education Report*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press
- Sen, A and J. Dreze. 2002. *India: Development and Participation*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press

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 (Chana 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 (Chana 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' contributes 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

Chana, Karuna. 1993. "Accessing Higher Education - The Dilemma of Schooling: Women, Minorities, Scheduled Castes, and Scheduled Tribes in Contemporary India". In Chitnis, Suma and Philip Altbach (eds.). *Higher Education Reform in India : Experience and Perspectives*. New Delhi : Sage Publications

Chitnis, Suma. 1972. Education for Equality: Case of Scheduled Castes in Higher Education. *Economic and Political Weekly*, August, Special Number

Chitnis, Suma. 1988. "Educating the Weaker Sections of Society". In Singh, Amrik and Philip Altbach . (eds.). *Higher Education in India : The Social Context.* New Delhi : Konark Publishers

Unit 14

Education: Pluralism and Multiculturalism

Contents

- 14.1 Introduction
- 14.2 Culture, Society and Multiculturalism
- 14.3 Cultural Diversities in Multicultural Education
- 14.4 Dimensions of Multicultural Education
- 14.5 Why is Multicultural Education Essential?
- 14.6 Approaches to Multiculturalism
- 14.7 Multicultural Education: Goals and Strategies
- 14.8 Conclusion
- 14.9 Further Reading

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 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 nationa-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 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 Gorden (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 Chirn 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*. Mervin 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 SARRC 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 Sylhet. 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.ibe.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 percentage 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 310506 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

i 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 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 (MCHE), 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 &and 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 (INT 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

Rampal, A. 2000 "Education for Human Development in South Asia". In *Economic and Political Weekly*. July, 22

Haq, M. 1997. *Human Development in South Asia*. Oxford University Press: Karachi

Unit 16

Education in Europe: Case Studies-II

Contents

- 16.1 Introduction
- 16.2 Demographic Profile of Europe
- 16.3 Education in Europe
- 16.4 Educational Scenario in Some European Countries
- 16.5 Recent Trends of Funding of Education in Europe
- 16.6 Education in South Eastern Europe
- 16.7 Conclusion
- 16.8 Further Reading

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 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, Koprivshtitsa, 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 Alcobaça 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 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 Ksatriyas 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 pathshallas, 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 despatch 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 Bedekha, 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 percentage 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

Gopalan, K. 1998. "Indian Strategies to Achieve Universalisation of Elementary Education". In Saraswati, B.(ed.) *The Cultural Dimension of Education*. IGNCA: New Delhi

James, H.R. and Mayhew, A. 1988. *Development Of Education System In India*. Vanity Books: New Delhi

Kumar, A. 1991. *Current Trends in Indian Education*. Ashish Publishing House: New Delhi

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

minuscule part of the population. Later on it was realized that education has become more inclusive and encompass larger sections of the population in nature that development is widespread and sustainable. As has been the United Nations, equitable social development is a

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

Contents

- 19.1 Introduction
- 19.2 Structure of Elementary Education
- 19.3 Historical Perspective
- 19.4 The Present Scenario
- 19.5 Initiatives, Innovations and Strategies
- 19.6 Innovative Intervention in Teacher Education for Universalization of Elementary Education
- 19.7 Role of Distance Education in Teacher Training at Primary Level
- 19.8 Conclusion
- 19.9 Further Reading

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, *Maktab*s attached to mosques used to impart elementary education. The *Maktab*s 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 defeated. During 1921-37, elementary education came under Indian control and made remarkable progress. However, the committee emphasized with the Hartog Committee Report in 1928, ~~and improvement of~~ 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	
1971	34.45	40.40	8.86
1981	43.56	45.95	15.34
1991		56.37	21.97
2001	52.21	64.13	29.75
	65.38	75.85	39.29
			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 verandah 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 I 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 Samakhya (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 Samakhya 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 universalisationof 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 Chhattisgarh.

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)

**Universalization of
Elementary Education**

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 form 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)

	Institutions (thousands)		Students (millions)		Teachers (thousands)	
Levels	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	7.4	126	0.15	27.6	127	>1,800
Senior Secondary						
Higher education	27U ^a	304U ^a	-	10.5	-	350
	590C ^a	13,500C ^a		(C + U)		(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 colleges 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. If 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 Chhattisgarh 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 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” (Munekar 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 percentage 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