Unit 1
The Concept of Education

Contents

Learning Objectives

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

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

1.1 Introduction

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

1.2 Education and Literacy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Box 1.1: Literacy as an evolving concept

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

1.3 Education as Preparation for Social Role in Ideal State

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

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

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

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

1.4 Education as Cultivation of Reasoning Ability

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

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

1.5 Education as Learning What Children Want to Know

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

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

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

Reflection and Action 1.1

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

1.6 Built-in Value in Education

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

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

Box 1.2: Criteria of Education

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

i) "that 'education' implies the transmission of what is worth-while to those who become committed to it;

ii) that 'education' must involve knowledge and understanding and some kind of cognitive perspective, which are not inert;

iii) that 'education' at least rules out some procedures of transmission, on the grounds that they lack willingness and voluntariness".

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

1.7 Nature and Scope of Education: Cross-cultural Perspective

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

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

a) Education in Ancient Greece

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

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

Box 1.3: The Greek Contribution to Western Education

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

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

b) Education in ancient Rome

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

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

c) Education in Middle Ages

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

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

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

d) **Education in the Renaissance period**

In the Renaissance period, the scholastic model was challenged. The cleric who was trained in scholastic logic was not longer regarded as representing an educated person. Instead, the courtier who was liberally educated in classical literature, a capable diplomat, a man of style and elegance was treated as a model to be emulated by children. Education now basically consisted of learning classical Greek and Latin literature. The aim was not merely to teach the nuances of logic but to develop the all-round personality of an individual. It was in Italy that the effect of the Renaissance was most clearly marked because here the revival of commerce generated a financial surplus that was directed towards extending support to the arts, literature, and architecture. The elite of the country established their identity as custodians of knowledge, while the rulers set up court schools that would impart 'new learning'.

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

e) **Education in the age of Enlightenment**

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

1.8 Cultural Dimension of Education in India

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reflection and Action 1.2

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

1.9 Sociological Perspective on Education

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

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

Sociology of education surfaced as a legitimate field of enquiry due to the interest of sociologists in the process of education. More and more sociologists endorse the contribution of education in society. In the words of Mannheim (1940: 271), "Sociologists do not regard education solely as a means of realizing abstract ideals of culture, such as humanism or technical specialization, but as part of the process of influencing men and women. Education can only be understood when we know for what and for what social position the pupils are being educated".

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

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

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

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

Box 1.4: Areas of Research appropriate for sociologists

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

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

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

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

1.10 Conclusion

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

1.11 Further Reading

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

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

Unit 2
Theoretical Approaches

Contents

Learning Objectives

After going through this unit you will be able to:

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

2.1 Introduction

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

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

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

2.2 Functionalism

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reflection and Action 2.1

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

2.3 Conflict Theory

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.4 Interactionism

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

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

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

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

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

Reflection and Action 2.2

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

2.5 Postmodernism

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

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

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

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

Box 2.2: Dialogue based education: Freire

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

2.6 Conclusion

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

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

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

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

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

2.7 Further Reading

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

Haralambos, M and R. M. Heald.1980. *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press

Kumar, Krishna. 2004. *What is Worth Teaching*. New Delhi: Orient Longman

Unit 3
Thinkers on Education - I

Contents

Learning Objectives

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

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

3.1 Introduction

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

3.2 Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)

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

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

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

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

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

Box 3.1: Tagore on Visva Bharati

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

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

Box 3.2: Major Works of Rabindranath Tagore

My Reminiscences. 1917. London: Macmillan

Nationalism. 1917. London: Macmillan

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

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

3.3 Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948)

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

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

Box 3.3: Gandhi on alternative pedagogy

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

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

Reflection and Action 3.1

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

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

Box 3.4: Major Works of Gandhi

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

Basic Education. 1951. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House

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

3.4 Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950)

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

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

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

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

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

Box 3.5: Major Works of Sri Aurobindo

The Life Divine. 1939. Calcutta: Arya Publishing House

The Synthesis of Yoga. 1955. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo

The Human Cycle. 1949. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram

3.5 Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-1986)

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reflection and Action 3.2

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

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

Box 3.6: Major Works of Jiddu Krishnamurti

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

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

Letters to the Schools. 1981 madras: Krishnamurti Foundation India

3.6 Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888-1975)

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

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

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

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

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

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

Box 3.6: Major works of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan

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

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

Indian Philosophy. 1923. London: Allen and Unwin

3.7 Conclusion

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

3.8 Further Reading

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

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

Unit 4
Thinkers on Education-II

Contents

Learning Objectives

After going through this unit you will be able to:

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

4.1 Introduction

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

4.2 Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Box 4.1: Major works of Leo Tolstoy

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

Educational Writings. 1951. Moscow

4.3 John Dewey (1859-1952)

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

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

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

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

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

Box 4.2: Major Works of John Dewey

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

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

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

Democracy and Education. 1916. New York: Macmillan

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

Experience and Education. 1938. New York: Macmillan

4.4 Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937)

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

as the society which this development inevitably generates" (Monasta 1997: 599).

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

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

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

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

Box 4.3: Major Works of Antonio Gramsci

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

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

4.5 Paulo Freire (1921-1997)

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

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

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

Box 4.4: Freire's Method of Literary Training

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Box 4.5: **Major Works of Paulo Freire**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.6 Basil Bernstein (1925-2000)

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

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

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

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

Reflection and Action 4.2

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

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

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

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

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

Box 4.7: Major Works of Bernstein

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

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

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

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

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

4.7 Ivan Illich (1926-2002)

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

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

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

Reflection and Action 4.1

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

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

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

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

Box 4.6: Major Works of Ivan Illich

Deschooling Society. 1970. New York: Harper & Row

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

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

4.8 Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002)

Pierre Bourdieu was born in Denguin, France. His father was a sharecropper. Later, he joined the position of postman. He studied philosophy in Paris and later worked as a teacher for about a year. Bourdieu served in the French army during the Algerian War of Independence between 1958 and1962 in the course of which he undertook ethnographic research. From the year 1964 he held the position of Director of Studies at the E'cole des Hautes E'tudes en Sciences Sociales; in 1968 he founded the research center, Centre de Sociologie Europeenne; in 1975 he launched an interdisciplinary journal through which he revisited the well established canons of sociology; in 1981 he held the Chair of Sociology at the College de France. It is evident that Bourdieu sought to integrate theoretical ideas with empirical research grounded in everyday life. Bourdieu is known for his theoretical and empirical contributions in the fields of anthropology and cultural studies, education, politics, and sociology. The core idea in his writings revolves around the means by which the educated social groups employ cultural capital as a social strategy to distinguish themselves in society by acquiring status and respect. He explained the concept of social strategy in terms of conscious rational choices that people make in order that their own beliefs come true. Social strategies may be consciously or unconsciously adopted. Bourdieu's ideas are rooted in empirical research that he carried out in France for about four decades. He also used the concept of social strategy in order to explain the way in which individuals engage themselves in the struggle over symbolic capital. He explored the relationship between the relative autonomy of the educational system and its dependence on the structure of class relations. Much like Marx, Bourdieu accepted that the relationship between the ruling class and the subordinate working class is one of conflict and hostility. He agreed that the gap or the difference between the two classes derives from inequities in the possession of capital. For

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

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

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

Box 4.8: Major Works of Pierre Bourdieu

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

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

Homo Academicus. 1988. Cambridge: Polity Press

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

4.9 Conclusion

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

4.10 Further Reading

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

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

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

Unit 5
Education, Knowledge and Power

Contents

Learning Objectives

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

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

5.1 Introduction

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

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

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

5.2 Content of Education: What is Worth Knowing?

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

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

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

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

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

5.3 Perpetuation of Inequality through Education

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

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

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

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

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

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

Box 5.1: Education as Cultural Imperialism

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reflection and Action 5.1

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

5.4 Cultural and Economic Reproduction

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

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

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

Box 5.2: Banking Concept of Education

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reflection and Action 5.2

'Education is subservient to the political system.' Discuss.

5.5 Conclusion

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

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

5.6 Further Reading

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

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

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

Unit 7
Politics of Educational Curriculum

Contents

Learning Objectives

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

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

7.1 Introduction

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

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

7.2 Concept and Perspectives on Curriculum Planning

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

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

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

a) **Technical Production Perspective**

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

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

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

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

b) **Critical Perspective**

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

7.3 Educational Curriculum and the Politics of Domination

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

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

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

Box 7.1: The New Sociology of Education

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

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

a) Colonial Education in India

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

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

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

Box 7.2 : Bombay Report of 1844

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

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

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

1) the new system would be governed by a bureaucracy at every stage from primary schooling onwards, and in all aspects including the structure of syllabi, the content of textbooks, and teacher training;

2) the new system would aim at acculturating Indian children and youth in European attitudes and perceptions, and at imparting to them the skills required for working in the colonial administration, particularly at its middle and lower rungs;

3) the teaching of English and its use as medium of instruction would be a means of this acculturation and training;

4) indigenous schools would have to conform to the syllabus and textbooks prescribed by the colonial government if they wanted to seek government aid;

5) impersonal, centralized examinations would be used to assess students' eligibility for promotion and to select candidates for scholarships (Kumar 2004: 25 -26).

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

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

Reflection and Action 7.1

Discuss the role of education in colonial times.

b) Politics of Language

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

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

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

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

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

Reflection and Action 7.2

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

c) Women's Education

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7.4 National Curriculum Framework

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

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

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

i) "For the majority of students the higher secondary stage may prove terminal. For them, it would serve as a doorway to life and, more importantly, to the world of work" (pp. 63).

ii) While the top leadership would be provided by a small minority, to be groomed at the tertiary level, in every department of life. The second or intermediate level of leadership on a much wider scale would have to be provided by the products of the higher secondary stage. They are expected to make a meaningful contribution to our developmental efforts in agriculture, industry, business and various other social services" (pp. 64).

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

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

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

Box 7.3: Salient Features of National Curriculum Framework, 2005

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

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

7.5 Education and Politics: Comparative Perspective

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

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

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

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

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

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

7.6 Conclusion

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

7.7 Further Reading

Kumar, Krishna. 2005. *Political Agenda of Education.* New Delhi: Sage

National Curriculum Framework. 2005. NCERT

Posner, George J. 1998 "Models of Curriculum Planning". In L. E. Beyer and Michael W. Apple (eds.). *The Curriculum Problems, Politics and Possibilities.* State University of New York Press

Unit 6
Education, Nation-building, State and Ideology

Contents

Learning Objectives

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

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

6.1 Introduction

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

6.2 Education and Nation-building

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

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

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

Box 6.1: Colonialism, Imperialism, Indigenism

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

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

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

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

Reflection and Action 6.1

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

6.3 Nation-building in India

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reflection and Action 6.2

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

6.4 Nation-building in other Countries

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

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

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

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

Box 6.2: Education and the New International Order

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

6.5 Conclusion

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

6.6 Further Reading

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

Kumar, Krishna. 2001. *Prejudice and Pride*. Penguin

Thapan, Meenakshi. 2003. Pedagogy and the Future Citizen. *Economic and Political Weekly* April 12-18

Unit 8
Education and Socialization

Contents

Learning Objectives

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

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

8.1 Introduction

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

8.2 Understanding Socialization

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

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

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

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

8.3 Socialization and Formal Education

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

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

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

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

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

Reflection and Action 8.1

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

8.4 Education as a Social System

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

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

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

8.5 Family, Socialization and Education

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

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

Box 8.1: Family in relation to the School Class

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

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

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

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

8.6 Social Class, Socialization and Education

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8.7 Linguistic Development, Social Class and Education

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

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

Box 8.3: Speech differences between classes: an example

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

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

2) They are playing football and he kicks it and it breaks the window. They are looking at it and he comes out and shouts at them because they have broken it so they run away and then she looks out and she tells them off.

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

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

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

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

8.8 Peer Group, Socialization and Education

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

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

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

8.9 Gender, Socialization and Education

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

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

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

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

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

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

Box 8.4: Gender differences in educational opportunities

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reflection and Action 8.2

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

8.10 Caste, Socialization and Education

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

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

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

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

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

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

8.11 Conclusion

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

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

8.12 Further Reading

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

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

Chitins (eds), *Papers on Sociology of Education in India*. New Delhi: NCERT

Unit 9
Education and Social Change

Contents

Learning Objectives

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

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

9.1 Introduction

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

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

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

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

9.2 Concept of Social Change

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reflection and action 9.1

What is social change?

9.3 Goals, Objectives and Structural Patterns of Education

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

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

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

9.4 Education and Change in Society

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reflection and Action 9.2

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

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

a) Education and Economic Development

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

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

b) Education and Democracy

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

Box 9.1: Democratic Ideal of Education

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

9.5 Education and Social Change in India

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

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

Box 9.2: Education and the Disprivileged

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

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

i) Towards a close scrutiny of the indigenous social systems and culture leading topowerful movements of social and religious reform and protests movements like Satya Shodak Samaj

ii) Towards the process of self-discovery, self-assessment in the context of the new situation, leading to the creation of an alternative center of social cohesion, the anti-imperialist movement for national liberation.

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

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

9.6 Conclusion

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

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

9.7 Further Reading

Moore, W.E, 1963. *Social Change*. Prentice-Hall

Banks, O., 1968. *The Sociology of Education: Reader in Sociology*. London: Batsford

Dewey, J. 1976. *Democracy and Education*. New Delhi: Light and Life Publishers

Unit 10
Education and Social Mobility

Contents

Learning objectives

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

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

10.1 Introduction

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

10.2 Concept of Social Mobility

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

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

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

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

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

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

10.3 Social Mobility and Strategies of Educational Selection

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

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

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

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

Reflection and Action 10.1

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

10.4 Equality of Educational Opportunity

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

10.5 Equality of Social Access: Myth or Reality

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

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

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

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

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

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

10.6 Schooling and Equality of Educational Opportunity

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

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

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

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

10.7 Meritocracy and the Functional Paradigm

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

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

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

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

Box 10.2: Concept of Meritocracy: Critical assessment

The concept of meritocracy is not without problems.

i) It tends to assume that social inequality is inevitable.

ii) It focuses on placement in the occupational structure; it overlooks the significance of elites and the role of the propertied class.

iii) A meritocracy is a society with structured social inequality in which individuals have an equal opportunity to obtain unequal power and reward. On this basis, privilege and disadvantage are not eradicated as the educational system provides a different set of criteria to allocate people to social positions.

10.8 Neo-Marxist Paradigm

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

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

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

10.9 Status Competition Theory

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

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

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

10.10 Case Studies on Social Mobility

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

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

1) Classes I and II of professionals, administrators and managers are a service class.

2) Classes III, IV and V of clerical, self - employed artisans and supervisors are an intermediate class.

3) Classes VI, VII of manual workers and vice versa.

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

10.11 Relationship between Education and Social Mobility in Indian Society

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reflection and Action 10.2

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

10.12 Conclusion

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

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

10.13 Further Reading

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

Christofer, J. 1993. *The limits and Possibilities of Schooling: An Introduction to the Sociology of Education*. USA : Allyn and Bacon

Rao, M.S.A. 1967. "Education, stratification and social mobility". In Gore, Desai and Chitnis (eds.). *Papers on the Sociology of Education in India*. New Delhi: NCERT