
UNIT 3 MANAGING EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, we looked at the education system from the perspective of its organisation and structure as well as the larger issues of management at the systems level. In that context, we also considered several leading constituents of the system – the policy-makers and the regulators and also their roles and responsibilities.

We shall now move to the core of the education system, which is the large number of institutions – schools, colleges, universities, and so on. We call them institutions, and not organisations apparently because they are founded for a social purpose. Their purpose, unlike that of most business organisations, is not to develop a good product, sell it well and make a big profit. The centrality of social purpose in education has a great deal to do with the ways in which an educational institution is managed and its functions are organised and performed.

In this unit, we shall explore how this core character of an educational institution influences its styles of management as well as its organisation and structure. In this discussion, we shall be focussing on higher education institutions, especially universities, for two reasons: first, this course is designed for those who are likely to pursue a career in distance education management that is more evolved at the higher education level, and secondly because unlike the school system, universities represent a wide

variety of institutional types depending upon their size, programme mix, instructional quality, source of funding, governance patterns and organisational models. While we will continue to use the term educational institution more frequently in this unit, it is the university that is in focus.

3.2 OBJECTIVES

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- *analyse* and identify the critical areas of management of an educational institution;
- *explain* the inter-relationship between and among various areas of management of an institution;
- *identify* the challenges in the management of institutions; and
- *explore* the ways of meeting those challenges.

3.3 INSTITUTIONAL MANAGEMENT

Educational institutions have a number of features that distinguish them from the more common models of organisations in business, industry and trade. Some of these features are:

- Teaching and learning are the primary functions and activities in educational institutions.
- Teaching is not just transmission of information or even knowledge; it is a multi-dimensional function. It involves the development of a powerful relationship between the teacher and the learner which aims at the full development of the learner's personality with emphasis on self-reliance and the ability to form individual judgement and a sense of individual responsibility. It is not surprising that teachers are often held responsible by the rest of the society for most of the feelings associated with any failure, deficiency or decline in any aspect of national life.
- Learning is an activity associated with several uncertainties. The desire to learn, the learning process and the outcomes of learning involve a degree of unpredictability about them. For instance, learning might change an individual's outlook and attitude in ways that cannot always be predicted. The outcome of learning is often judged through examinations, and failure could lead to unwanted consequences.
- Curriculum changes involve constant modifications in what is taught and how it is taught. Most of these changes involve assumption of additional responsibilities by teachers even in areas in which they may not have adequate expertise.
- Environmental changes, especially technological and social changes, increased accountability and not the least, the growing erosion of the professional authority of the teacher, have all significant consequences for the management of the educational institution.

Historically, the primary functions of universities were to educate the elite and transmit the cultural heritage; in the industrial age, universities were engaged much more in the training of professionals, providing service through research and consultancy, and maintaining their elitist character. The post-industrial university has evolved more as a social system concerned with concerns of equity, access and inclusion, training for job specialisation,

provision for continuing education, and an instrument for change. The university in the 21st century is no more the “ivory tower” that it was perceived to be not so long ago; it is a living, dynamic instrument grappling with the problems of contemporary life in all its dimensions. In short, the modern university is an open system.

3.3.1 Social Systems Theory

Systems theory, especially open systems theory, has made significant contributions to understanding institutional life. The elements of this theory which are particularly relevant in this context are open systems theory, leadership, authority and power.

The protagonists of the social system theory argue that organisations that are subject to environmental pressures, and are constantly engaged in responding to these pressures (changes in the environment) are all open systems. As we have seen earlier, universities have come under enormous social pressure in the last half a century or so. They had to open up, expand their enrolment, teach what is relevant to today’s context, make provision for continuing professional development of people at work, focus on intellectual life, and establish linkages with all creative social and cultural endeavours. In practical terms, it meant that

- the universities redefined their goals;
- established new systems of governance;
- created new methods for improved communication with their constituents, and
- increased the sense of involvement of all components in achieving the new goals.

In short, universities became open systems. An open system is one that engages in mutual information exchange with other systems in its environment and depends upon the outcomes of its negotiations with those systems to find its equilibrium. An organisation will have established this equilibrium when it has found a balance among all external and internal forces operating to influence the system. An open system can survive only if it can achieve, restore and maintain this equilibrium, and in order to do so, it must learn from its environment through constant interaction and feedback.

Systems theory places a boundary between a system and its environment or between one sub-system and another across which transactions or exchanges flow. Management of this interface involves observing, interpreting and intervening at the boundary between groups, departments and between the organisation and external entities and forces. In an organisation, power and control is available to those who control boundary transactions, monitor external changes that may impact the organisation, are positioned to take timely action, and have knowledge of key interdependencies.

From the institutional perspective, managing the system boundary is crucial. Effective management of the system boundary involves:

- determining and defining the primary task;
- managing the information flow across the boundary;
- ensuring the availability of resources to plan the primary task; and
- monitoring the performance of the primary task to ensure that it relates to the wider system and to the environment.

Managers who relinquish their own boundary position cannot manage themselves; and managers who give up their position on the institution's boundary cannot manage the institution. Focussing on the primary task helps develop on-task leadership and avoids abuse of power. In a university, for instance, the primary function of its chief executive is to maximise "the energy available within the institution to accomplish institutional goals" (Hodgkinson, 1970).

Systems theory also enables us to understand the flow of authority through the institution. Authority, as we noted in unit 1, is the right to take decisions that are binding on others. It legitimises the exercise of power in an institution. It can flow from the top through a process of delegation and by the acceptance of those who join the institution at the lower levels.

Responsibility involves answerability or accountability for the outcomes either to a person in the institution, or more importantly to one's own consciousness. Responsibility has to go with the requisite authority to achieve the outcomes consistent with the primary task. Clarity in the understanding of an institution's organisation and structure through systemic analysis is important in establishing the explicitness of authority at various levels.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Space is given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

What do you understand by open systems? How universities became open systems? Answer in about 50 words.

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3.3.2 Mission and Goals

The systems approach proceeds from the establishment of goals, attainment of maximum consensus regarding the goals and their objectives and management on the basis of those objectives. No organisation can function effectively without a clear purpose. In organisational parlance, this purpose is called a mission statement. It helps people to understand who they are as an institution and where they want to go. It is futuristic, and it is a philosophic statement of the purpose of an institution. The last two decades or so have witnessed the emergence of several theories about organisational leadership. These theories suggest the imperative of leaders in all sectors articulating their vision, setting clear goals for their organisations, and creating a sense of shared mission.

You will notice that we have used three concepts here: vision, mission and goals. In the discussions on leadership, these terms are often used synonymously. However, these concepts have different theoretical foundations and it is necessary to have some clarity about their import for the purpose of operationalising them. The notion of vision is normally

associated with an individual. In the organisational context, it is generally the personal vision of the leader, drawing its influence from its impact on the leader's own behaviour and also from its potential to energise others and invest work with meaning that gets articulated as a vision statement.

This vision gets transformed into an organisational mission when a critical mass of people who have come together for a common purpose agree or accept the meaning of the work they have to do together. In other words, mission is a shared purpose that motivates people and engages them in action for something beyond their own immediate self-interest. A vision or mission signifies a quest for something and its success does not necessarily depend upon its achievement. Its real purpose is to establish a motivational urge for a common endeavour to achieve an agreed objective.

A goal, on the other hand, is a functional target. The mission of an educational institution might be articulated in terms of larger purposes like the advancement and dissemination of knowledge, meeting the personnel needs of the productive sectors of the economy, ensuring equitable access for all members of the community to good education, attainment of peaks of excellence in educational standards, and so on. Goals, on the other hand, would be set in terms of the realisation of certain immediate objectives like the nature and levels of programmes to be offered, number of learners to be enrolled, establishing acceptable levels of retention of enrolment, ensuring satisfactory completion ratios, and so on. These goals are ordinarily time-bound and are expected to be attained within the specified time limits. Unlike the vision or mission, goals do not have motivational or inspirational force; they focus attention of the people involved on a limited frame of activity.

Depending upon the levels (primary, secondary or higher education), and also the chosen sphere of activity, particularly by institutions of higher education (liberal, professional, technological as well as campus-based or distance teaching), the mission and goals of educational institutions can vary from institution to institution. What is important, however, is to recognise that:

- the mission should be capable of being translated into programmes and activities;
- the goals and objectives should define the distinctive character of the institution and address the needs of the society and the students it seeks to serve; and
- the mission and the goals should together reflect the traditions of the institution and its vision of the future.

3.3.3 Governance

Education, as we have seen in the previous unit, is a multi-layered activity. There is the national government that lays down policies and generally also provides funding (most of these functions might be devolving on the state governments in a federal structure); there are the regulators who elaborate the policies and oversee their execution; and there are the institutions (schools, colleges, universities) that actually enrol students, teach them and also test their attainments. As we are concerned only with the institutions in this unit, we shall confine our discussion to their management.

Traditionally, educational institutions (universities as we are focusing on them in this unit) are perceived to be self-governing institutions. There are

several reasons for the evolution of this tradition. Firstly, an educational institution is not an organisation that develops a product, markets it and turns a profit. Secondly, it serves a social purpose, affecting the lives of all people in several ways. Thirdly, teaching is essentially a solitary activity and the teacher enjoys substantial autonomy in the conduct of his/her work. All these features are reflected in the structure of management of the educational institutions. Generally, they are:

- Self-governing institutions; the power and authority to take all decisions in carrying out the mission and goals of the institution vested in the members who constitute the institution;
- The decision-making bodies are so constituted that they represent the members of the institution since all of them cannot be involved in all the decisions;
- These bodies have the freedom to decide what to teach and how, in determining the programmes, prescribing the curricula, setting out the entry and exit standards for the students, and the methods of assessing those standards; and
- These bodies are also vested with the responsibility for all decisions relating to engagement of personnel (teachers and other staff), mobilisation and deployment of resources, and creation and maintenance of infrastructure.

A significant nature of the self-governing structure is that all decisions are taken on democratic principles after considerable discussions and debates even though the process can be time-consuming. Further, the structure, though collegial in theory, is hierarchical in practice; it has individual members reporting to department heads who, in turn, report to Deans or Rectors, and they to the Principal, President or the Vice-chancellor.

3.3.4 The Educational Community

Education takes place within a community committed to the ideal of empowering individuals. An educational institution is a community comprised not only of teachers and administrators, but also students, their parents, and the members of the larger community outside. They come together to help educate students and one another in gaining some insights into how they understand the world for themselves. The academic community comes together to provide the intellectual space for individuals to consider issues greater than themselves. But the question of ideas relating to what constitutes right and wrong, what it means to be a responsible citizen, and what role one should play in the community are all matters that legitimately belong to a larger area for discussion within the community as well as with others outside the institution itself.

It has to be remembered that each constituent of this larger community has its own interests and concerns, some of which may often conflict with those of other constituents. For instance, while the university staff may seek better emoluments and working conditions, the university management may find the resources at its disposal too inadequate even to meet the legitimate demands of the employees; students and parents might consider the programmes and courses might need revision and modification to meet their needs and expectations; employers might consider that the end products from the institutions do not match their needs; teachers might feel that frequent changes in curricula and syllabi might place too big a burden on their capacity to respond; and governments might be tempted to ask too

many uncomfortable questions about the goings-on at the universities. It is not unlikely that considerable time and effort is taken to resolve these conflicts, and even then, the unresolved issues would continue to cause frequent tensions and strains within the community.

Good leadership is about anticipating these situations and initiating appropriate steps to prepare every constituent of the community to understand the limitations within which it is operating and to accept the environmental constraints while pressing on with its commitment to meet the institutional goals. That involves, as we said earlier, good communication among all constituents and securing their participation in the common efforts.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Space is given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

What is the relationship between mission and goals of an institution? Answer in about 50 words.

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3.4 ACADEMIC MANAGEMENT

The core functions of an educational institution are teaching and learning. For performing these functions, it is necessary to prescribe the programmes and courses for study, design and develop the curricula for them, establish the instructional system as well as its methods and practices and set out the learning outcomes that can be assessed and certified. All these functions are performed by the teachers of the institution though it should be noted that teachers generally are reluctant to admit that these functions fall within the province of management.

3.4.1 Programmes and Curricula

The academic programmes offered by any educational institution will be consistent with its mission and goals which were discussed earlier. In determining the programmes, the following considerations will have to be kept in view:

- At the school level, there would generally be a common national curriculum that most schools would adopt. The purpose of this core curriculum is to ensure some measure of uniformity in standards of learning outcomes across schools within a country and also to ensure that national standards are more or less comparable with international standards (this is assuming great importance as education is progressively getting more global). The school management can supplement this core curriculum with components that they consider necessary for the holistic development of children, and in addition, have local or regional relevance. In other words, the school curricula are

more or less given, at the university level, the position is significantly different.

- At the university level, there is much greater flexibility and substantial autonomy in the design and development of the curricula. Each university determines its programmes and their contents. The constraint in most cases will be the question of comparability of contents, the depth of their study, and the standards to be attained so that equivalence of qualifications awarded by different universities can be established.
- There should be a well-established process in place for designing and developing the curricula and for their review and revision. The Boards of Studies, the Faculties and the Academic Councils provide the mechanisms for performing this function. These bodies comprise mainly of teachers from within the institution, though external experts are also associated with this process. The important point is that decisions on these matters are taken collectively and are never left to individuals in the institution.
- Peer review and feedback from employers should preferably be a part of this process so that the curriculum of any programme is informed by the social demands and employment needs.
- The recent developments in knowledge and the diverse ways of its application are providing major challenges to curriculum developers across the academia. It is not unusual to hear criticisms of major gaps and mismatch between the needs of employment (skill sets required) and the education and training preparation of the young people. In order to bridge this gap, curriculum design and development is progressively becoming an area for collaboration and joint efforts by education providers and the user agencies of human capital.

Along with the design and development of curricula, two other important issues require to be settled. These are the instructional system and the student assessment procedures. The instructional processes include classroom lectures, laboratory work, group work and projects, self-study, etc. With the increasing applications of technology, there are now multiple channels of learning; classroom engagement is no more the only source of learning. An effective instructional system would have all these channels of learning carefully integrated so that the learning outcomes are optimised.

Assessment of the learning outcomes is an integral component of the instructional system. Institutions follow a variety of methods for this purpose. Most educational programmes take considerably long periods of teaching and learning for their completion. There are also considerable variations in the combination of contents within programme. Educationists therefore argue that a satisfactory system of assessment should involve continuous evaluation of the learning outcomes rather than an examination conducted at the end of the programme.

What is in all these that requires competence in management, you might ask. After all, teachers have been teaching for ages, and students have been learning. So, what is new? Not much really, except that new ways of teaching and learning are emerging leading to some kind of professionalization in the performance of the academic work. You will have noticed that in the recent decades, many universities have launched what are known as professional development programmes for teachers. In fact, in many countries, these initiatives have led to the creation of institutional facilities for organising

programmes for the professional development of the teachers. What started as refresher programmes and summer institutes for teachers to upgrade their knowledge and to enhance their awareness about the most recent developments in their fields of study, have now turned into more organised and professionally executed activities. These initiatives now include besides upgrading the subject competence, creating awareness about the ways in which technologies can be harnessed to enhance the processes of teaching and learning.

Much has been talked about the changing nature of the academic work. A central theme of this change, as we said earlier, is the increasing professionalization that often requires teachers to obtain new credentials in teaching. Several universities have launched short programmes to help teachers to acquire new knowledge and to improve their professional standing in a new environment in which teaching is emerging as a professional practice. The elements of this professional practice include planning, teaching, counselling students, assessing, evaluating student performance, and so on. Teaching will no longer be just delivering a lecture.

We have noted earlier that technologies are entering the world of teaching and learning in a big way. As sources of knowledge get diversified, students are helped to search for information, document and store information, collate and analyse those bits and pieces, retrieve them at will and use them in any way they like. Teachers can support the new pedagogic tools to enhance the learning experiences of students, and surely, this is a new dimension to traditional forms of teaching.

For the management of any institution, it is obligatory that students are fully informed about the programmes, courses and the processes associated with teaching and learning as well as assessment before they are enrolled. They should know in particular:

- The content, structure, flexibilities and combinations of content, etc., for every programme;
- The instructional processes in as much detail as possible; and
- The assessment system.

It should be remembered that any student who enrolls in any programme in any institution relies on these details before he/she commits himself/herself to pay the fees and spend his/her time in study. These are therefore the material premises on which the learning contract between the student and the institution is concluded.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: i) Space is given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

What are the distinguishing features of curriculum development at school level and higher education level? Answer in about 50 words.

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3.4.2 Student Services

We just concluded the previous section with the mention of the learning contract between students and their institutions. Before concluding the contract, students will have to be informed not just about the programmes on offer, but also about the extent and variety of services available to them. The choice of a particular institution by students depends largely on the variety of these services and their quality.

The range of services that institutions normally provide can be briefly summarised as follows:

- provision of reliable, accurate and comprehensive information about the institution itself. This will include information about programmes and courses, teachers and their qualifications, enrolment procedures, methods and practices of teaching and learning, student assessment system including the criteria for grades and other awards, procedures for settlement of disputes about assessment, etc.
- information about facilities provided by the institution to its students in their learning pursuit such as schedules of classroom lectures, library and laboratory work, tutorials, examination schedules, etc.
- facilities provided for co-curricular activities such as sports and games, cultural and social activities, community services, group work and projects, and so on;
- residential facilities and participation in their management, student associations and their management;
- financial support in the form of scholarships, loans or part-time jobs;
- career counselling and guidance including job placements on completion of studies.

All these facilities and services are generally common to all institutions. But with certain types of institutions, say, those engaged in distance education, informing students about what it does and how, is far more critical. We will deal with this issue in greater detail later in this course. But at this point, we wish only to draw your attention to the importance of student services as a critical component of a distance education system. As students are distributed across physical spaces away from the institution, and there is little or no personal contacts between the two constituents of the system, the services provided to the students and the ways in which they are provided, are of considerable significance for the credibility, efficiency and effectiveness of the institution itself. From the management's point of view, setting up of these service centres, equipping and staffing them, training of the staff, overseeing their performance, and maintaining a networked system of service centres are major responsibilities.

The provision of these services and their management can both be an opportunity and a challenge to the institution. A great deal of student satisfaction will depend upon the adequacy of some of these services and their quality. An unscrupulous management can make exaggerated claims on the generous provision of these services as publicity gimmicks to lure students; a sure way to find itself in great trouble.

Check Your Progress 4

Note: i) Space is given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

How are student services more crucial in distance education? Answer in about 40 words.

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3.4.3 Linkages and Interface

You will recall that we discussed in some detail the organisation of education as a social system. Education is a public cause, and the system exists to serve all people. It becomes essential, therefore, that those managing educational institutions remain constantly in touch with other systems in society as well as those directly involved in the management of the education system at the apex and sectoral levels. We discussed the roles of governments and the regulatory agencies created by them in the functioning of educational institutions in the previous unit. The focus of that discussion was the role that external agencies play. We shall now turn our attention to the manner in which institutions interact with these and other external agencies and interests.

In the first place, an educational institution has to function within the parameters of national policies laid down by the government. Its management and financing pattern would generally be determined by the laws and policies in force. Above all, most educational institutions depend heavily on their governments for nearly all its expenditure.

This interface with the government, at the micro level of each institution, may not be direct and immediate. There are, as we noted earlier, several agencies set up by governments for planning and coordination of the development of education at particular levels, or in specified fields. Most of them have also the responsibility to oversee the functioning of the institutions in their areas of concern from the point of view of ensuring quality, maintaining standards and generally implementing the guidelines laid down by the governments.

It will be a very delicate balancing act for most institutions to function within the parameters laid down by the governments and the regulatory bodies on the one hand and still maintain their academic freedom and autonomy, on the other. We have dealt with the issue of governments and university autonomy in some detail. Whether by design or by default, universities almost everywhere have to conform to certain externally imposed codes of conduct even if it might look like they infringe their autonomy. If the universities accept the discipline of these codes and function within the limitations imposed by them, there is less likelihood of any confrontation with the governments. As we have seen, the problem areas are generally administration and finance. If an institution can avoid conflicts in these areas, there will be less tension in the performance of its principal functions of teaching, learning and research.

The most significant linkage that education has to maintain is with the community and other organised systems in society. At the primary education level, the school management has to involve the local communities in such matters as the maintenance of school facilities, school improvement, enrolment and retention of children and even the management of the school itself. At the higher levels, these linkages become more extensive and complex.

The question of what should be taught, or the academic programmes to be offered, is now getting increasingly determined by the developments in other sectors. The academic management of the institution has to be sensitive to these developments and should have systems in place to monitor them constantly. Constitution of Boards of Studies and Advisory Committees with representatives drawn from major development sectors and employer organisations is one way to maintain this linkage. The synergy between employment needs and educational provision is essential for ensuring the relevance of programmes. Establishment of consultative groups for specific areas, organisation of conferences and seminars, etc., are also important in developing and maintaining these linkages.

There are several other concerns that the management of an educational institution has to worry about. A major source of concern is the regular and timely flow of funding. Often, the flow of funds depends on the institution providing the relevant information to the funding agencies on time, and meeting all the conditions laid down by them for providing the finances.

In recent times, universities and other institutions of higher education are increasingly being called upon to mobilise resources from non-traditional areas. These sources generally include research projects, consultancy and even hiring out the university estate for specific purposes like setting up offices by industry, and holding events like marriage ceremonies. The revenue generation is an important function of the management which calls for close interfaces with research councils and industry on the one hand, and the neighbourhood communities, on the other.

Traditionally, university campuses are also large townships. Several thousand students and teachers with their families stay on the campus. Maintenance of these campuses involves the performance of nearly all municipal functions, establishment and maintenance of systems for the provision of water and electricity, sanitation and health care, security of residents and their property, transport, and so on. Several large universities also establish and maintain schools for the education of the children of their employees on the campus. Many institutions also create and maintain facilities for a corporate life on their campuses which include cultural activities, sports and games and other social events.

Check Your Progress 5

- Note:** i) Space is given below for your answer.
ii) Check your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

Why do educational institutions have to maintain linkages with other sectors and how are they maintained? Answer in about 50 words.

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3.5 THE ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SYSTEMS

In the previous section, we looked at the core functions of an educational institution. Prior to that, we considered the structure of the management of the institution and its functions that include providing direction to the core functions (setting the goals, preparing the plans and executing them and monitoring performance). We shall now look at the third major component of the organisational structure of the institution.

You will recall that in Unit 1, while discussing the evolution of modern management practices, we had occasion to look at the distinction between administration and management. We noted that traditionally, administration is perceived to be a leadership function demanding thoughts and ideas, and management is generally about execution of thoughts, ideas and plans; we also noted that the two concepts often overlap, and that the two could possibly belong to two different domains, namely, administration to public systems and management to business, industry and other profit-driven enterprises. While this debate remains inconclusive, the continuing impact of this unsettled argument on university governance is discernible. Within a university, as we noted, the academic functions of teaching and research constitute its core activity while all other systems are designed to support this core. As part of the public systems, universities, nevertheless, have to conduct their affairs within well settled rules and procedures, especially in the processes of decision-making, spending, accounting and managing costs. As we noted, the academics are not very happy with this situation, and this resentment against what they call 'control by rules' often gives rise to tension between the academics and the administrators. Whether one likes it or not, this academics vs bureaucrats controversy has become part of university governance almost universally.

Without going into the merits of the arguments on either side, it is clear that no organisation can function effectively without some order and discipline. Chaos and anarchy do not lead to achievement of any goal; planned, well defined and focused efforts do. This latter approach enables all organisations in attaining their goals, and universities cannot claim to be any exception to this rule.

We call this component the administrative support system, partly because administration is not the core function of a university, and partly because without this support, university as an organisation will find it difficult to fulfil its mandate. Historically, the concept of administration is associated with the exercise of power and authority by governments under laws, rules and regulations. In an educational institution, it is the administrative system that interprets and administers all laws (Acts, statutes, rules, regulations, procedures) and exercises control over the administration of personnel and finances. These last two constitute much of the visible power and authority within an organisational context, and those who exercise these powers and authority find themselves in perennial conflict with the rest of the organisational systems leading to considerable tension within organisations.

Without going any further into the nature and extent of this controversy, let us look at the components of this support system within the context of university governance.

3.5.1 Personnel Management

Personnel management deals with managing people who constitute the organisation. In modern organisations, this function has become a highly

specialised area called ‘human resource management’. As human capital has become the most productive wealth of all enterprises, a great deal of attention and care is now devoted by organisations to nurturing talent, recruitment and training, placement and career development, compensation packages and incentives, performance appraisal and retention, and so on. There is no doubt that it is the level of efficiency and commitment of the people in any organisation that makes for its progress.

In all organisations, people get classified either because of the nature of their functions or because of their value as a class to the organisation. Those who are engaged in the core functions would naturally assume that they sustain the organisation and those who support the core functions would be tempted to feel that without them the core will collapse. We often witness this class war in most organisations; the professionals against the administrators, the technical personnel against the administrative staff, and the finance personnel against the rest. In an educational institution, the two distinct categories are: teachers who perform the academic functions, and the administrative staff who performs the supporting functions. This latter category of functions includes recruitment and promotion, training and placement, maintenance of service records, and organisation and implementation of staff benefits.

The management of most institutions will have formulated a personnel policy. Since the nature of the functions and responsibilities of the academic and administrative staff is very different, there could be significant variations in the elements of the policy for the two categories, though there could be several components that are common to both. For instance, while the methods of recruitment and promotion applicable to teachers could be very different from those of the administrative staff, the staff benefit schemes might be uniformly applicable to all. From the management perspective, the issues which are significant include the following:

- there should be a well articulated personnel policy for all categories of staff;
- the policy should clearly indicate how the personnel needs are assessed and how the additional needs are going to be met;
- the mechanism for recruitment to all positions should be clearly spelt out. This would include identification of the unit in the institution that is responsible for assessment of vacancies, the periodicity of such assessment, the methods of recruitment for specified types of vacancies, etc. (It is now common practice for all major organisations to establish dedicated Human Resource Directorates or Divisions for talent hunting, recruitment, training, placement, career development, and so on);
- the methods or recruitment should specify the processes associated with selection both for promotion as well as recruitment from the open market. These processes may include assessment of the records of performance of those eligible for promotion at specified intervals, constitution of Selection Committees for different categories of personnel, and so on;
- the terms of engagement for different categories of staff that specify appointments on contract for specific periods, grant of tenure (permanent appointments), probation and confirmation, retirement benefits, medical benefits, etc.

- the policy would also specify the institution's strategies and programmes for the professional development of its staff, their career advancement, and the remuneration packages available to them.

It is not enough to have a policy in place. The implementation of the policy in letter and spirit is of crucial importance. It is in the implementation of the policy that transparency in administration becomes critical. In order to ensure transparency, every individual in the institution should be fully aware of all the details of the policy and the manner in which it has been applied to his/her career in the institution. More often than not, such transparency is not evident in most organisations. On the contrary, personnel administration is nearly always conducted in an atmosphere shrouded in mystery, leading to mistrust and more people nursing perennial grievances during most of their career rather than feeling satisfied with, and committed to, the institution which they are associated with.

The extent to which an institution is able to attain its goals and fulfil its mission will undoubtedly depend on the efficiency of its people and their productivity. Most organisations engaged in the production of goods and services have also evolved norms of efficiency and productivity for their staff. In education, however, efforts at the development of such performance indicators have not met with much success. We shall explore this issue in the next unit.

We mentioned a little while earlier that the tension between academics and administrators has been a perennial problem that has bedevilled the management of educational institutions. We should look at this issue in some detail. We noted earlier that educational institutions are self-governing organisations. In this pattern of governance, it is generally the academics who participate in the decision-making processes through their membership of various bodies. While the academics nearly always blame the administrators for one blunder after another, the administrators feel that the academics' role in governance is the key factor that inhibits change as they feel that academics are too comfortable with status quo to be open to experimentation and innovation.

In the last fifty years or so, the administrative support system of every institution has expanded very considerably. This was mainly due to the fact that every institution was called upon to provide a variety of services and facilities for an ever increasing enrolment. The provision of the services and facilities that we discussed earlier in this unit required more administrative staff for their maintenance. The result was an exponential growth in administrative support leading also to more "administration" of administration.

Fortunately, effective technological means are now becoming available for the performance of most of the routine administrative functions. Increasing technology applications have reduced human interventions in record keeping, accounting, student records maintenance, grade cards preparation, storage and retrieval of information and a host of such other functions. Applications of technology are also contributing significantly to increasing professionalization of the performance of routine maintenance functions. With this development, the quality of the administrative support system and the personnel engaged in the provision of these services are bound to change and one can hopefully look forward to an era of declining administration in educational institutions and correspondingly enhanced focusing on the performance of their core functions.

Check Your Progress 6

- Note:** i) Space is given below for your answer.
ii) Check your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

What will happen in the absence of transparency in the implementation of personnel policy in an institution? Answer in about 40 words.

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3.5.2 Infrastructure Management

The physical infrastructure of an institution is a major component that contributes to its performance. The important elements that constitute this infrastructure are land and buildings, laboratories and library, equipment and furniture, health centres, sports and recreation facilities, campus utilities (water, electricity, transport), and so on. Besides this traditional infrastructure, the growing applications of technology require new infrastructure; computers, audio visual instruments, video equipment, DVD writers, production studios, editing suites, duplication facilities, and so on. These also require appropriate software to make them functional. No less important are networking and its administration, connectivity and related issues. It is unthinkable in today’s context to expect an educational institution without these infrastructural facilities.

The creation of this infrastructure requires heavy investments and takes considerably long periods to put them together. Since educational institutions never really have the luxury of enough financial resources at their disposal, the planning and actual commissioning of the facilities require to be done with great care and imagination. It is important that realistic plans are prepared and implemented so that available resources are optimally utilised.

It is not enough to create excellent infrastructure. Its maintenance is just as important. It is not uncommon to see campuses of many good institutions in a state of disrepair – poorly maintained buildings, unhygienic sanitary conditions, costly equipment rusted and cluttered on the corridors for want of adequate space for their installation, inadequate repair, replacements and maintenance to enhance the use of modern equipment, and not the least, rows upon rows of moth eaten records stacked all along corridors. Though all these infrastructural facilities may not have a direct contribution to make to the processes of teaching and learning, they do contribute to the creation of a desirable learning environment in the institution. If the environment is not conducive to learning, no effective teacher-student engagement will take place leading to considerable frustration and loss of confidence in the institution’s capacity to provide good quality education.

3.5.3 Financial Management

Traditionally, education has been in the domain of the governments. This was so primarily because education has had no profit motive, and the absence of profits inhibited private initiatives. Education, therefore,

depended on public spending, supplemented to a limited extent by religious institutions and public charities. This approach to education changed in the post-industrial society. With the rapid expansion in knowledge and the emergence of science and technology as engines of growth, the need for people with specialised education and training became essential for development. The nature and type of institutions offering education got diversified, and so did their sources of funding as well. Even so, the major provider of funds for education in most societies continues to be their governments.

Government funding meant public spending. And public spending always had strings attached to it. The managers who spent public money were always preoccupied with the concerns of judicious spending, proper accounting and rigorous financial control. In this culture, there was very little scope for modern concepts of financial management like resource mobilisation and management, activity costing and cost control, building up resource bases and taking any risks with finances. In recent times, public spending on education, especially at the higher levels, has been progressively declining and therefore it has become necessary to explore alternate sources of funding. In so doing, educational financing is also being progressively influenced by the methods and practices of modern financial management.

The major component in the expenditure of any educational institution is the teaching cost. Teaching is labour intensive as there is a fixed teacher-student ratio to ensure effective teaching. The second major element is the administrative cost. This again is people-oriented. Thus a significant component of the expenditure on education is accounted by salaries paid to the people working for the institution. The other elements are cost of teaching materials, books and journals, maintenance of infrastructure and cost of student services.

Since the items of expenditure are generally fixed, and the pattern of their growth is predictable, the annual budgeting exercise is generally confined to preparing the estimates on the basis of past spending with provision for the usual incremental growth. These estimates form the basis for determining the government grants which generally follows the pattern of covering the deficit. Under this regime, the government grants represent the difference between the total income and expenditure, the income being the tuition fees levied from students. Generally, the fee income is a minor fraction of the total annual expenditure and therefore dependence on government grants for most institutions is very acute.

As the level of public funding declines, the search for alternate sources of funding has become intense. Some of the efforts in this direction are:

- progressively increasing the recovery of the cost of education through periodic increases in tuition fees;
- extending the facilities of the institutions, especially their expertise and physical facilities for external projects (applied research, consultancy, product design and development, testing, etc.) for a negotiated cost;
- collaboration and networking among institutions for sharing intellectual and physical resources;
- organisation of professional development programmes for company-specific personnel;

- establishment of chairs by industrial houses or other sponsors;
- creation of endowments with donations and benefactions from wealthy alumni groups and their organisations.

These new initiatives would necessarily involve a major shift in approach to financial management, from the existing pre-occupation with accounting and auditing to cost reduction, increase in productivity, higher returns on investments, and so on.

3.5.4 Methods and Procedures

The basic functions of educational institutions are to prescribe programmes of studies, enrol students, teach them, and then examine and certify their attainments. There are also several other functions which are incidental to this core that all organisations have to perform. They are budgeting and accounting, administration of property, administering the staff and reporting on the organisational performance to the funding authorities, legislatures, government, etc.

The performance of each of these functions always requires observance of certain methods and procedures. We have noted earlier that organisations need to function in an orderly manner, and that in large systems, explicit procedures and regulations are essential to govern the conduct of their business, flow of responsibilities and the interrelationships among organisational units. Educational institutions are public institutions dealing with the general public and it is all the more important that they should have appropriate methods and procedures to govern their functions, and more importantly, the public should be aware of them. It is this transparency in the administration of the institution that inspires confidence about it among the public.

The instrument under which an institution is established would have broadly specified the methods and practices it would follow in the pursuit of its objectives. For example, university legislations would designate the authorities who can prescribe courses, determine the syllabi, and lay down the requirements to be fulfilled by students to complete the programmes and qualify for the relevant awards. These broad provisions in the legislation will then be made into detailed ordinances and regulations that teachers and other staff in the institution will have to follow in performing their tasks. These details would include the qualifications for admission to every programme, the methods of selection, the time-tables for class work, practicals, examinations and so on, the requirements for examinations and their schedule, the levels of performance for securing different grades, the time for declaration of results, etc. All these elements constitute what is generally known as academic calendar of an institution which is prepared with great care and attention.

Adherence to this calendar and its observance in letter and spirit ensure the reputation and credibility of an institution.

Among the other major organisational tasks are personnel administration, budgeting and accounting. We have considered the various tasks that go into the performance of the personnel management function earlier in this unit. We shall now take a brief look at the procedural aspects associated with this function. When a person is recruited, he/she has to be informed about the terms and conditions of his/her service. These would be standardised for all members of the organisation. A great deal of employee satisfaction would

depend upon how these terms and conditions are implemented. Promotions, performance appraisals and grievance redressal are the most sensitive among them. While there could be a great deal of similarity in these matters between the non-teaching employees (office assistants, accountants, supervisors, computer operators, typists, record-keepers) and similar staff in other systems, the terms and conditions of service of teachers will generally be different since their functions, and the ways in which they function, are considerably different. Appropriate performance appraisal systems that reflect the functional nature of the responsibilities of every category of employees should be put in place and meetings of the committees of experts should be convened in time to advise on the suitability for promotion. It is important that the procedures followed in these matters are clearly spelt out and made known to all employees. So is the case with grievance redressal. Methods and procedures need to be established for looking into the grievances of the employees and redressing them for keeping up their morale.

Financing and accounting are functions common to all organisations. Usually, organisations frame a financial code that would set out all their anticipated income and expenditure as also the procedure for registering all the incomes received and all the expenditure incurred. The code will also specify the authorities competent to approve expenditure, authorise payments and, where necessary and unavoidable, waive payments or write off losses. No organisation can survive without acquiring property (buildings, equipment, furniture, stationery) and managing it. Depending upon the nature and scale of transactions involved, the procedures would suggest whether tenders should be called or not, and, if yes, how. Apparently, the observance of all these procedures might appear to be a bureaucratic hurdle, but certain degree of transparency and order is unavoidable when dealing with public property. Due diligence, in other words, is the name of the game.

Check Your Progress 7

- Note:** i) Space is given below for your answer.
 ii) Check your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

What is the main reason for the conflict between academics and administrators? Answer in about 50 words.

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3.6 INSTITUTION BUILDING

Institution building as a process essentially implies management of the development of an institution. Warren Bennis (1969) defines organisation development as “a complex educational strategy intended to change the beliefs, attitudes, values and structure of organisations, so that they can better adapt to new technologies, markets and challenges.” It is a long-term effort to enhance an organisation’s problem-solving and renewal capabilities

through an improvement in its culture. An organisation's culture is the aggregate of its ways of doing things, the habits and behaviour of its employees, their attitudes to one another and to those outside as well as the principles and values it stands for. A great deal of an organisation's culture gets shaped and developed in the initial stages of its establishment, by those who are involved in leading its early stages of development. However, it does not follow that all organisations get stuck with its initial outlooks and attitudes; organisational renewals are now part of the development strategies. These include formulation of institutional plans to consolidate the strengths, correct the weaknesses, and redesign the strategies in the context of new opportunities and challenges. The implementation of these plans might involve redesigning the organisation and reworking its current strategies. Effective leadership is the key to institution building.

3.6.1 Education and its Environment

How do educational institutions change? While the primary purpose remains the same, there are several changes taking place in the environment in which an educational institution functions. For example, social and economic development, demographic changes, changes in technologies and their applications would all have a direct impact on the education system. As the economy grows, productive sectors expand; demand for new and different sets of skills increases. New technologies will need better trained personnel to use them. Development leads to more people seeking educational opportunities. People at work, unemployed youth, those who wish to switch jobs, and people who are traditionally not part of the workforce in any significant numbers like women, for example, will all be keen to take advantage of the new opportunities by improving their knowledge and skills. Educational institutions have to respond to these changes, and more often than not, they do. The growth of education, both quantitatively and qualitatively, in the last half a century or so provides a fine example of the organisational changes that have metamorphosed some of the classical universities into the most modern organisations of the 21st century.

First, education has turned into a mass enterprise. School education is now compulsory almost all over the world. Those who lag behind are now in a big race to catch up. Participation in higher education is now well over 50% in most developed countries. The developing countries are making every effort to follow suit. Adult education, community education, workplace training, in-company professional development programmes have all become instruments to extend the benefits of education and training to non-traditional student groups. As the coverage grows, so do methods. Part-time education, distance education, e-learning, self-study, have all added to the innovative ways in which people teach and learn. And these innovations have also pioneered newer and more effective institutional paradigms as well. Open universities, dual mode distance teaching institutions, internet-based e-learning systems, virtual universities, the range and varieties of institutional forms and types have indeed multiplied. More importantly, many institutions are now into marketing their products and services not just within their own countries, but beyond their borders as well. The organisational changes in education have been as extensive as they have been varied.

What we have just described are the changes that have overwhelmed education as a system in the last five decades. How did the institutions respond to these systemic changes? Education, traditionally, is very slow to

react to changes. Conservatism is deeply embedded in the education system. However, the recent history of educational development testifies to the fact that as a system education has not been unwilling to learn and reinvent itself.

What are some of the more noticeable changes in the management of the education system of the 21st century? We have discussed them briefly at several places. Nevertheless, it would be appropriate to list some of the more visible changes for a better appreciation of the readiness of the education system to adapt to environmental changes.

- The traditional patterns of self-governance have given way to corporate governance structures and styles. More compact and cohesive Executive Councils (or Boards) have replaced the large and often unwieldy governing structures of most universities;
- Planning, coordination and monitoring of performance have emerged as critical components of the management practices of universities. Though there is still resistance to the notions of productivity and performance appraisals, academics are no longer unresponsive to the idea of improvements in efficiency, accountability, and quality improvement;
- Teacher is no longer the only source of knowledge; information and communication technologies have diversified sources of knowledge and made access to it easy and convenient. Learning styles and practices changed and with it, the role of teachers is changing too, from imparting instruction to facilitating acquisition of knowledge;
- The impact of changes in the teaching and learning styles and practices is becoming evident. Cooperation, collaboration and networking among institutions are now the norm;
- Institutions are now looking for opportunities and new markets. Cross-border education has opened up possibilities of globalisation. Though this trend has its own share of problems and challenges, innovative ways of reaching out, ensuring quality and credibility, and managing educational provision in different environments and regulatory frameworks are all becoming part of the system's governing agenda;
- The more recent initiatives of open source movement that makes the courseware of some of the best universities in the world (MIT, for example), freely available to any institution that wishes to use them has not just opened up new possibilities, but also posed fresh challenges. How do institutions manage these changes and make the best out of them? Only time will tell.

3.6.2 Organisational Diagnosis, Evaluation and Renewal

What we looked at in the preceding section was the larger context of environmental changes impacting educational systems. This impact on the system is the aggregate of the changes at the micro level of institutional changes and the ways in which an institution or a group of institutions assesses its response and prepares itself for changes.

The common method used for assessing an organisation's performance is to undertake a SWOT analysis. This analysis identifies the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT). While business organisations engage professional consultants for such evaluation, educational institutions prefer to do it through self-study. The method

employed is to elicit the views of all the major constituents of the institution and its stake holders. They would include teachers, students, parents, staff, employing organisations as well as senior educators and academics from outside the institution.. Their views could be elicited as response to structured questionnaires that could then be analysed to obtain the general perceptions on a number of parameters ranging from the fulfilment of the mission and goals of the institution to its performance in terms of student achievements, excellence in academic standards, employee satisfaction, organisational culture, instructional system, innovative initiatives, and so on. This analysis of the responses is then classified into areas of (a) strengths; (b) weaknesses; (c) opportunities; and (d) threats.

Though this exercise could be done within the institution itself, generally a peer review is an integral part of this process. Such a review brings to bear on the diagnostic exercise a fair and objective analysis and assessment by a set of knowledgeable people whose views are not coloured or biased.

This diagnostic exercise would lead to the next stage of looking critically at the areas of strengths and weaknesses. This review will also take into account the new requirements that have arisen from the changes in the environment as well as the threats posed by competition from other institutions. For example, if the enrolments in the traditional programmes of degree education in the humanities and social sciences are continuously declining, even if the quality of the programmes and their delivery are of a high order, it would be worthwhile to consider addressing the needs of non-traditional student groups who might benefit from these programmes. Simultaneously, it might also become necessary to make such changes in strategy as to attract enrolment of new student groups by introducing flexibilities in the methods of programme delivery. In another case, it might be necessary to shed some of the current low-enrolment programmes in favour of more popular and high-demand academic offerings.

As we noted in the preceding section, the increasing involvement of information and communication technologies in education poses serious challenges to most of the existing institutions, while it also offers them enormous opportunities. The collapse of the barriers of time and space is one of the severest challenges in the post-modern era in education. These new developments have completely overturned the traditional ways of teaching and learning; separation in time and space is no longer an impediment to education. At the same time, new ways of dissemination of information and knowledge are emerging at a rapid pace, ushering in not just globalisation, but more importantly, an era of fierce competition also in education.

You might recall that we had mentioned the new development of well known institutions making their courseware freely available to anyone who wants to access them. It all started with the MIT putting out all its courses on the Web. Anyone can use these materials freely. Using these materials does not assure MIT education or qualifications, nor does the user has access to MIT faculty. What it does is to make available the contents for study programmes. The significance of this development, now known as the Open Education Resource (OER) movement, is that many new institutions that were struggling for getting contents developed have now access to some of the finest study materials free of cost. Following MIT, several other institutions have also made their courses freely available online. This initiative has proved to be at once an opportunity and a challenge. Opportunity because excellent courseware in a ready-to-use form is now available for free. It is a challenge because the use of these materials requires

competent faculty and technology infrastructure to take full advantage of them; it is an opportunity because some of the best known institutions are making their courseware freely available.

It is important that in today's world, all educational institutions take note of these threats and opportunities and redesign their strategies and structures to meet them. A meaningful plan for organisational renewal will have to take the following elements into account:

- A review of the current mission and goals and reformulation of the directions in which the institution wishes to move. This might even involve framing of a new vision of the future, preparing a new mission statement and resetting the long and short-term goals;
- Prioritisation of the areas of development in the context of the current strengths and weaknesses. This might necessitate greater focussing of the current effort and resources on areas of strengths to consolidate them even as the weakest areas might be put on hold or completely disengaged;
- Securing the commitment of the members of the institution to the new goals and the strategies to attain them;
- Mobilising the resources necessary for implementing the new plan of action.

3.6.3 Institutional Leadership

What we have discussed so far in the previous sections are about the ways in which institutions introspect, assess their strengths and weaknesses and try to reposition themselves as leaders in their areas of activity. This does involve a significant management challenge, a challenge that most private corporations try to meet by hiring highly specialised professionals. In a society in which knowledge is increasingly turning out to be the currency of power, private sector corporations are organising themselves like universities in preference to their existing hierarchically structured forms of management.

We noted in the previous paragraphs that organisational renewals are often predicated by changes in environments and that the most significant driver of change today is technologies. Drucker (1997) argues that the stiff resistance to technologies of the 1980s has largely been dissipated as everyone now understands the need for continuous change. He however believes that it is important to involve staff and clients/customers in the processes of change as only those changes in which the people most affected are a part of the fundamental processes, will endure. In other words, organisations have to find a fine balance between change and continuity, and it is in finding this balance that leadership has to play a crucial role. In recent years we have observed some leaders of educational institutions prefer change without the participation of staff in the process and total disregard to the continuity aspect. Such trends would not benefit institutions.

The acceptance of the reality that times are changing is not the only prerequisite for change. In a university environment, the institutional leader should be well prepared to usher in changes. His/her approach should be strategic, systematic, open, informed and long-term to be effective. What are the qualities of a leader? Leadership is a much discussed theme these days. There is a whole body of literature on leadership; there are centres and institutes that specialise in studies and research on leadership, and there are

any number of conferences, seminars and training programmes organised across the world on executive leadership training.

You will recall that in Unit 1 of this Block we had occasion to make a reference to the distinction between managers and leaders. While a good manager is a professionally accomplished person, who has attained excellence through learning, training and, of course, hard work, the qualities of leadership are perceived to be natural gifts and talents. Mahatma Gandhi or Martin Luther King always comes to mind when one talks about a naturally gifted leader. But in the context of an organisation, or an institution, leadership is an entirely different matter. At a time when educational institutions particularly at higher education level, are faced with a situation of declining resources, when the general community (parents and students in particular) is very sceptical about what the institutions are offering and the ways in which they are functioning, and when stagnation and drift pervade the socio-cultural environment, it is very difficult to argue what kind of leadership can bring institutions back on rails.

What is important in the context of educational institutions is not that people at the helm are born leaders. It is difficult to conceive that a vice-chancellor of a university, a principal of a college, or head teacher of a school, all by himself/herself, leading their institutions to glory and peaks of excellence. These people are not the rallying points around whom the rest of the community (of their institutions) gathers to seek guidance and inspiration. We have noted earlier that educational institutions are self-governing entities and that the core of the relationship that binds its members is collegiality. It is in this kind of an environment that often qualities of leadership manifest. It should be remembered that it is not the person at the top alone who is the leader; there is leadership at several levels. The pro-vice-chancellor and the vice-chancellor, the dean or the departmental head, in fact at all levels, there is leadership and it is the emergence of such leadership at multiple levels that makes educational institutions dynamically evolving organisations.

The performance of an institution is the aggregate of the contributions of its members. When they work in teams, they develop synergy. As a result, the productivity of the members of the group becomes greater than the sum total of individual contributions. It would therefore be useful to organise work in the institutions around departments, interest groups or projects. In this work culture, the role of the leader is to sustain the common interest by motivating and inspiring the team members to strive towards attainment of the common goal. In an educational community, there is less room for inspiring members through exhortations or stirring emotional appeals; there is more to giving its members a voice, a role and recognition in whatever they do in moving towards the common goals set for them.

What then are the attributes of leadership in an educational institution? Some of them surely have to do with encouraging participation, mutual respect and recognition, nurturing ability and willingness to develop a shared vision and goal, supporting innovations and experiments and continuously strengthening the evolving relationship among the members. It is the aggregate of these attributes at various levels in an institution that defines its values and principles and also makes for its organisational culture. As long as an institution functions in an environment in which these values and principles shape and guide its operations, and the community that constitutes the institution shares these values, it is well with the community that it leads.

Check Your Progress 8

Note: i) Space is given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

What is the role of leadership in educational institutions in a fast changing society? Answer in about 50 words.

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3.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have dealt with the following issues:

- What makes educational institutions different from other forms of organisations;
- The mission, the goals and the structure of governance of educational institutions;
- The components of academic management such as programmes and curricula, student services as well as linkages and interface;
- The elements that constitute the administration of educational institutions; and
- Institution building and the role of leadership in it.

3.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

Social systems and their organisations that are constantly engaged in responding to pressures from their environment are known as open systems. From this continuous engagement and the outcomes of the negotiations with different constituents in the environment, these organisations seek to find their own equilibrium. Universities become open systems when they redefine their goals, create new systems of governance and establish new methods of communication with other systems and follow a participatory approach in achieving their goals.

Check Your Progress 2

Mission is a shared purpose that motivates and engages people who have come to work together for the attainment of a common objective that they have all agreed upon. Goals, on the other hand, are set in terms of broad functional targets, ordinarily expected to be attained within a specific time-frame. A mission may consist of a number of goals, each with a specified target and time-frame.

Check Your Progress 3

The school curricula in most countries have a common core that ensures a measure of uniformity in standards of learning outcomes across schools within a country and also ensures comparability between national and international standards. This core is usually set by the national agencies

responsible for school education. University curricula have greater flexibility, and are set by each university taking into account the comparability of content, depth of study and the standards to be attained so that equivalence of qualifications can be easily established.

Check Your Progress 4

Distance learners are distributed across geographical locations away from their institutions. There is little or no personal contact between the institution and its learners. It is therefore necessary that they have access to a variety of services that include timely availability of study materials, academic counselling at regular intervals, facilities for submission of assignments and obtaining feedback, doing experiments and projects, and meeting such other learning needs. Provision of these services ensures that distance learners are not totally isolated and that they belong to an institution and can avail of its services.

Check Your Progress 5

Knowledge and its applications are growing at a rapid pace. Very often, this growth and development take place outside educational institutions. It is necessary for universities to bridge this gap as its graduates have to be prepared to enter the job market. Universities often do this through constant interaction with various development sectors through joint projects, collaboration and getting the representatives of productive sectors on their advisory or governing mechanisms.

Check Your Progress 6

Transparency in administration guarantees that all employees are treated equally and that the consideration of their interests, concerns and prospects receive just and fair treatment. Justice and fairness demand that the games are played by rules and that the rules are well known to the players and the umpires. If the personnel policy and its implementation are transparent, there would be no room for mistrust, perennial grievances and dissatisfaction among employees.

Check Your Progress 7

The conflicts arise primarily because of the differences in the nature of the work culture of academics and administrators. Teaching is a solitary endeavour, and freedom is its guiding value. Teachers do not belong to any established hierarchy of organisational relationship; collegiality and shared beliefs are at the core of their work ethics. However, the power structure in most universities favours the administrators as they are the ultimate arbiters of resource allocation, personnel deployment and other organisational management issues. This dispensation seemingly confers greater and more visible power and authority on the administration that is always a flash point between academics and administrators.

Check Your Progress 8

In a self-governing, collegial organisational structure of universities, leadership is about team-building. A university performs best when its members work in teams and develop synergy. Leadership in this environment is not of the inspirational or authoritarian type that one sees in many business organisations and political institutions: it is a type sustained by shared beliefs in, and commitment to, the values of freedom, equity, access and the pursuit of excellence.