UNIT 2 HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES: AN OVERVIEW

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

The term higher education, often used synonymously with tertiary education, is education of an academic level higher than that attainable on completion of a full secondary education course. The generally accepted definition of higher education is "that which requires as a minimum condition of admission the successful completion of secondary education or evidence of the attainment of an equivalent level of knowledge" (Page & Thomas, 1977). Though the narrow notion restricted to traditional universities and colleges does not reflect the growing complexity and diversity of the contemporary higher education system, to cope with which, and to cater to the myriad demands of the clientele group, there exists today a large array of higher education institutes in many of the Third World countries, as elsewhere in the world. The term higher education is often used interchangeably with
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'university education'. Today, universities are not the only element in the post-secondary educational system, but they attract maximum attention and critical analysis, particularly in the Third World. Higher education, in the particular context of the Third World has been used to designate the education imparted by various types of formal post-secondary education institutions besides universities, which train middle and higher-level professional personnel through degree, diploma and certificate granting programmes.

In Unit-1 of this block you read about higher education in India, its origin, development and future. In this unit an attempt has been made to present you with an overview of higher education in various countries--developing and developed--with emphasis on Third World countries, and the commonalities and variations in several aspects of higher education among these countries.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you should be able to

- describe the status of higher education in general, and in third world countries in particular,
- explain major commonalities and variations in higher education systems among various third world countries,
- examine the financial management in the institutions of higher education, and
- analyse curricular and language issues in these institutions.

2.2 HIGHER EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The traditional definitions of the Third World emphasised "low per capita income, low literacy rate, the lack of social infrastructure and institutions, and problems of the essential definition of the nation. While some countries still have these characteristics, many have achieved varying levels of development and are, in some respects, 'developed' nations" (Altbach, 1982).

Since World War II, the globe as a whole has experienced tremendous political upheavals, with far reaching impact on the socio-economic dimensions in different countries. Many of these have begun to affect the systems of higher education, especially in countries that gained freedom and status as independent nations. In most of these Third World countries, higher education has undergone radical transformation. The higher education institutions were expected to take part in the development and modernization of their nations by enlightening and training the personnel for national...
administration, accepting the western academic experts’ views stressing, along with other ideas, the creation of key social infrastructures at the top of the society as the route to modernization. Many Third World nations emphasised building or expanding the higher education system as an immediate top priority in the post-independence agenda. The education budget of many of these countries was skewed toward post-secondary education and expectations were high from this sector. Universities ‘produced’ graduates who occupied vital positions in the countries’ administrative hierarchy. In some countries, however, the over supply of such graduates in the field of the liberal arts was obvious while shortages continued in the technical/professional areas. Moreover, other vital areas like primary education and adult education were neglected as in the case of India, and development remained uneven. In recent years, a change in perspective is coming about in some countries. For example, in India, in recent years, universalisation of primary education and campaigns for total literacy have moved to the top of the development agenda.

Despite the fact that due to changing trends in development policies, less attention is being paid to university development by scholars and by international agencies, Third World nations remain committed to higher education as an important part of the process of modernization. University development is seen as a key priority in almost every Third World nation regardless of ideological persuasion or economic status. The stress on non-formal education, the need for building up basic literacy, etc., have in recent times contributed to some deemphasis on higher education.

2.2.1 The common inheritance

There are some general characteristics of Third World higher education, which, in most countries, are common. These issues which are complex and have major implications for the direction, and policy-orientation of higher education in the Third World, are:

- the colonial past, which still remains a major influence on the intellectual and educational life of many of these nations. The latter have freed themselves from colonial bondage only to enter into an era of neo-colonial dependency; that is, the continuing direct or indirect domination of the industrialised nations. Despite the technical freedom to shape their own destinies, for various economic and political reasons, these nations are still, in many ways, under the influence of former colonial powers and other industrialised nations.

- the element of ‘metropolis-province’ dichotomy; that is, the developed world functioning as the metropolitan centres with their key elements of intellectual life -- the universities, publishing houses, research institutes, etc, and their languages used by the international communication networks dominating most Third World countries. The
latter’s ‘provincial status’ handicaps them in the creation and distribution of knowledge which are critical to economic growth, technological development, cultural advancement, political communication, etc. Without access to multiple institutions that dominate knowledge production, they are barred from free participation in the international intellectual community life. The development of independent means for the creation and distribution of knowledge is vital to the Third World, if they have to take effective control over their own intellectual and creative life.

These major constraints have drastically affected other equally important areas of educational progress. For example, the atrophy of indigenous intellectual institutions under colonialism led to the dominance of European-style education; the colonial language determined employment in the modern sector since it was the medium for commerce, political science and government, and the dissemination of knowledge and, in general, the key to intellectual development.

2.2.2 The third world universities

Third World universities, primarily based on western models, are, in a sense, foreign institutions in their own countries, reflecting many of the norms and values which often clash with those of the still traditional societies; the nature and logic of the curriculum and the organisation of the institutions are at odds with the patterns of the society which they are expected to serve. While the western academic models have the same origin, there are major variations among the models exported to the colonies which continue to affect contemporary academic life. For example, the essentially British academic model in Singapore and Malaysia differs significantly from the Dutch pattern in Indonesia and the primarily American inclination in the Philippines. In Latin America, the Spanish colonial tradition was largely followed except for Brazil with a predominantly Portuguese influence. Contemporary western influence, particularly that of USA, is perhaps of major importance in many Third World nations with adapted patterns of academic and curricular organisation.

Certain other common features of university life in these countries are:

a) The instructional medium in the universities and other higher education institutes still remains a foreign language and many of the faculty have been trained outside the country. The language for teaching and research, is a prime issue of concern in most Third World nations except the major part of Latin America. The practice in many of these countries is to have a European language as the medium in higher education, while the lower stages of education have one or more indigenous languages.
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b) The academic infrastructure is inadequate to support the network of intellectual communication necessary to stimulate a full range of scholarly activity.

c) The universities seldom have enough funds for research, and governments are usually required to spend first on immediate development rather than on less tangible research work. Research is not always a part of the academic enterprise; laboratories are often poor and computer facilities are scarce, libraries are not equipped for modern advanced scholarly pursuits.

d) Many faculty members are too busy with heavy teaching loads or with responsibilities such as advising government agencies or holding outside jobs to pursue research interests.

e) The academic systems serve a small proportion of the so-called relatively “elitist” section of the relevant age-group even in those countries which have been making major efforts to expand higher education, like Nigeria, Thailand, the Philippines and India. Virtually all the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America are at the ‘elite’ stage of academic development, with usually a very small percentage of the relevant age group attending post-secondary institutions of any kind.

f) The universities tend to be linked, perhaps due to historical traditions often related to colonialism and contemporary realities, with the major academic systems in the industrialised nations -- the UK, France and the United States, in particular. These relationships are, in general, unequal in nature with the Third World universities mostly at a disadvantage.

Even to-day, the Third World nations have not been able to free themselves totally from foreign influence. The continuing, rather complex impact of the industrialised nations is glaringly obvious. Some of the key elements are:

a) In several Third World countries, as in the oil-rich Arab nations, foreigners constitute a majority of teachers in both secondary and higher education. In many cases, expatriates among the academic staff, often hold senior appointments, as in Nigeria with a large number of expatriate academics from Britain. Sometimes teachers from other Third World countries, like India or Egypt, serve as expatriates; these faculty members invariably affect their employer institutions with their academic thinking style; norms and values; orientation towards research, teaching styles; etc.

b) Students from many Third World countries have to go abroad for higher education. For example, students from countries like the Arabian Gulf states, Malaysia, Singapore and several African nations constitute a large percentage of the overseas students in USA, Britain, France and Russia.
A significant trend which has emerged in recent times is cooperation among the Third World countries in sharing facilities, exchanging students and seconding teachers for work in each other’s institutions. Such regional links can potentially be an important force for the improvement of higher education; coordinating academic activities to avoid duplication and ensuring the most effective use of limited funds. Strong links exist in terms of regional groupings between the members of the SAARC and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), which foster regional cooperation, scholarship programmes, etc., in the particular region. Some sort of links also exist among Latin American nations.

Notwithstanding the dependence of higher education institutions on the colonial past or on foreign models, in recent years reforms are being conceived and implemented. There have been ‘explosions’ --- both in student enrolments and in technology, and the accompanying progress made in the democratization of higher education, the change in attitudes to the right to education and the development of international exchanges. All these factors have resulted in universities and post-secondary education, in general, finding themselves in a state of effervescence and spectacular quantitative expansion” (UNESCO, 1996). Many developing countries have, at great cost, established entirely new institutions of higher education to provide different curricular and organizational models. In some countries private institutions have been set up to meet the market demand for professional training. In others, institutions for education, research and training like the Institutes of Technology (IITs) in India were started to provide quality academic work in areas of national importance. In still others, new universities, based on different organizational patterns, were set up, often with the aid provided by industrialized nations in the form of funds, equipment and technical expertise.

Check Your Progress 1

What are the three major common features of the universities in the third world countries?

Note:  

i) Space is given below for your answer  
ii) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.
2.2.3 Variations in strategies and approaches

The Third World countries have adopted widely divergent policies which have significantly affected the nature, orientation and curricula of their academic systems, as also their societal roles. A noteworthy feature is that none of these nations has moved away, as such, from the fundamentally western model of the university. During the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese tried to radically reorient their higher education system and deviate from the western/Soviet models and norms, but on finding their efforts unrewarded, have moved back to a western concept of higher education.

Despite basic organizational similarities and often, common policy orientations, in many instances significant differences are obvious among the Third World universities. For example, while most academic systems are committed to providing greater access to post-secondary education, and generally, to the expansion required to provide this access, the approaches to expansion have varied. Third World expansion has been, in general, more rapid than in the industrialised nations, partly because the original base was very small. Nevertheless, such rapid explosion of the academic system in a decade or so, has taken its toll in both financial and human terms.

Some Third World countries have been able to successfully guide expansion in ways relevant to national development, usually by emphasizing scientific and technical fields; but many academic systems have yielded to the immense pressure of quick, virtually unplanned growth. The Social Sciences, Humanities and Law being least expensive fields to develop, have grown more rapidly in comparison with other subjects. Consequently, carefully articulated national policies on higher education have often not been implemented due to various countervailing pressures in several Third World countries with a significant private sector in higher education as in the Philippines and certain Latin American countries. Major gaps have obviously developed between the higher education policy and the realities emerging from rapid growth patterns.

The orientations of the Third World nations diverge widely in terms of the higher education policy with significant shifts in their directions over time becoming evident. Centrally planned countries like Cuba, Vietnam and China have generally emphasised the vocational and technical aspects of post-secondary education. They have been able to ensure the implementation of centrally planned policies, although in China, shifts in direction and the admission of large errors in the basic educational policy have been conspicuous.
Stimulated by the thought (western in origin) that the development of higher education would lead to economic growth and political stability, and partly in response to the demands of the elite at home, most Third World nations invested substantially in post-secondary education after independence. With the realisation that higher education was not the panacea for all developmental problems, that other segments of the educational system were more important, and that 'non-formal education' might deal more effectively with their educational dilemmas, the government priorities shifted. Moreover, cost escalation made higher education expansion difficult for the governments. Consequently, the educational policy emphasis of many Third World countries shifted, leading to a de-prioritization of higher education since the 1970s. For example, in many countries, including India, the focus is now on basic education.

The considerable variations in the higher education policy of the Third World nations may also be attributed to variables like ideological perspective, levels of economic development, internal political factors, ethnic or religious factors etc. Besides, the international trends in educational thinking and the aid policies of the major donor countries also play a decisive role in policy formulation.

Check Your Progress 2

Identify the following statements as 'true' or 'false'.

Note: Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

i) Teaching of social sciences and humanities expanded rapidly in third world countries. ( )

ii) China and Vietnam emphasized education and training in vocational and technical fields in their post secondary educational institutions. ( )

2.3 MANAGEMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE THIRD WORLD

The 1980s and early 1990s were a difficult period for institutions of higher education all over the world. In contrast to their relatively small clientele and the fairly predictable funding and demand environment, they were called upon to provide 'mass' higher education and establish relationships with multiple constituents – adult learners, serving personnel, unemployed youth, and so on. Demands on management in these situations differed; the extent and manner
of adaptation to them were influenced by: (a) changes in external environment like economic pressures, technological development, social demands, political ideology, etc.; and (b) the type of steering policy adopted by government. Some systems were sheltered from the full force of external impact while others suffered but could make only limited adjustments due to severe government regulation. Still others had to develop their managerial capacities to improve performance and compete with other institutions for funds. Different countries have responded differently to the rather diverse situations which have nevertheless retained certain common managerial policies with an impact on institutional functioning.

Higher education systems, as we have seen in the previous unit, have generally been subject to some kind of regulation by their governments though there could be variations in the rigour of the regulatory regime.

Regulation is "the informed and periodic process through which a system, institution, programme or procedure is attuned over time to expectations (intentions, standards, norms) through choices and actions judged by the regulator(s) to be needed as a result of formative or summative evaluation" (Sanyal, 1995). Institutions in countries namely Singapore, Phillipines, Nigeria, Algeria, like in the Nordic countries, might be classified as institutions where governments have already decreed a policy change to a more self-regulatory type of system, and with the cooperation of higher educational institutions, certain elements have been implemented. However, the impact of these changes, (which are very recent), on institutional management has not been fully analysed.

In certain Latin American countries, as in some East European ones, the governments have announced a policy change but have faced problems in implementing it. In many developed countries such as France, Italy, Austria and Germany the institutions are under direct centralized planning and control.

**2.3.1 Administration**

In general, the approaches to higher education administration have evolved without careful planning because the early universities in the Third World were small institutions, not needing a complicated administrative mechanism. The debate concerning autonomy and accountability in higher education is a world-wide one; in this context, certain issues in the Third World are more complex than the ones in the industrialised nations: Some of these issues are:

a) the colonial model of the university offered little scope for academic autonomy, as for example, in India colonial higher education was moulded in a culture of 'subservience';
b) the culture and polity in many countries are not well developed and political authorities often feel that they cannot afford a fully autonomous university which might lead to political problems and a source of dissent; (in Indonesia, Thailand, South Korea and China, students have played a key role in overthrowing governments; fear of this compels the governments to limit the autonomy of academic institutions);

c) in relation to their costs, universities in the Third World are expensive institutions and they depend on governments for funding -- a massive government fiscal support virtually prompts the governments to have a major voice in goal setting for higher education and in determining some of the details of university operations;

d) the demands of development often need higher education to play a key role with the government generally expecting universities to produce the needed manpower, engage in relevant research and provide it with the necessary expertise.

All these pressures and demands on higher education are ‘legitimate’ as are the norms and values of traditional higher education. The need for maintaining a proper balance between autonomy and accountability is imperative. Subtle differences between a developed country and the Third World nations are sure to impinge on academic autonomy; what is appropriate in France may not be applicable in Bangladesh and vice-versa. A blueprint for academic administration in the greatly varying contexts of Third World countries, which are at different levels of development, is difficult. Some of the common key issues, however, are:

- The administrative structures evolved for small, usually elitist institutions, can no longer effectively manage the complex tasks that Universities are called upon to perform. There is an urgent need in many of the Third World countries to consider ways to improve the effectiveness of academic administration.

- The scope and functions of academic administration have expanded manifold. Various kinds of student services, increasingly diverse and complicated degree structures requiring more complete coordination and record keeping; growing infrastructure, countless students, academic and other staff -- have all raised the size and scope of management functions.

- The competence -- both technical knowledge and administrative skill-- of the university administrative staff across the Third World needs strengthening. Too little attention has been given to the increasingly complex administrative structures and functions of the modern university with its special problems. Governance on the one hand and the detailed aspects of day to day administration on the
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other, need to be defined to enable rational and efficient restructuring of the university’s academic organisation.

While some governments have been conscious of the deficiencies of their centralized bureaucracies, there is apparently an inability or unwillingness to implement any radical change or reform. For example, in India, though the 1986 Policy on Education emphasized decentralisation and client-involvement in higher education, little efforts are evident in this direction.

The wealthier, particularly the newly industrialized countries have put the higher education system under government steering in order that they serve particular industries and scientific fields. The Korean Republic and Singapore controlled access with only the best entering Science and Engineering courses. In Malaysia and Indonesia, higher education remains centralised. The institutions in the latter, being largely private the relevant department monitors all performance, appoints key administrators and regulates admissions; the goals are set by the National Planning Board.

In Asia innovations aiming to link universities with industry to enhance external funding and growing interest in using computers for management, (as in Indonesia and Thailand) is clearly noticeable. The attempt to create a new university devoid of bureaucracy is on. Thailand’s Suranam Technology University is an example, though “little change to university structures or management in the public sector has been reported”, (Sanyal, 1994). In some places, as in the case of Birla Institute of Technology and Sciences in India, institutional management have been private and often assisted by the local industries and foreign aid agencies.

In general, Asian universities are basically government regulated, with weak executive and faculty management. For example, in China, the administration tends to make standard decisions despite the varying needs and situations; in the Korean Republic, the universities are centrally administered -- only the details are decided by the universities themselves. Indonesian public universities have little autonomy in planning and budgetary decisions are dependent on resource allocations; the use of student fee is highly regulated and other income is small. The government offices are in regular liaison with the Rectors; data gathering is limited, and centralised accounting does not allow the identification of the costs of university sub-units. Higher educational institutions in the Philippines are under state regulation; with governance, programmes, operations and educational policies -- each having a legal basis.

Some universities in the region exercise more management initiative. In Singapore, universities are comparatively freer to decide admission numbers, course design, examination policy, staff selection, financial management and so on, but there is a gradual erosion with human resource
development becoming critical. Though Malaysian universities are largely
dependent on public funds, they have considerable autonomy in academic
matters and internal administration like determining course content and staff
recruitment/dismissal.

2.3.2 University finances

A growing number of Third World nations, characterised as advanced
developing countries like Singapore, Malaysia, Hongkong, Taiwan, South
Korea, Kuwait and the oil-rich nations of the Gulf Region, with high
economic growth are devoting substantial attention and resources to
develop stable higher education systems. These countries have certain
distinct advantages. For instance, their relative economic prosperity has
enabled them to provide adequate funds to build and maintain educational
institutions at all levels; well-developed social infrastructure has provided the
required support for their growth; and they have no inhibitions in acquiring
technology and securing the services of experts from outside. For example,
Malaysia and Singapore have, for a long time, used internationally-
available expertise to help them in university development and government. A
relatively slow growth in the number of educational institutions has made
quality maintenance possible. Planning and implementation of educational
programmes have strengthened this objective.

The universities in these advanced developing countries compare quite
favourably with those in the west. “Student-teacher ratios, library and
laboratory facilities, the basic amenities, teaching loads, and in some
countries even salaries, are very much in accord with international
standards... Universities continue to build up their capabilities” in terms of
research facilities, dissemination, etc. (Altbach, 1982).

In many of the Third World countries, however, the ‘resource crunch’ is a
perennial problem. The management of higher education finance occupies
a significant position in these countries. Empirical exercises show that in
Latin America, the budget is the main instrument of academic control, but
the process is over-centralized, and this causes delay. There is little
correspondence between plans and budgets; statistical and qualitative
data are insufficient and economic and financial analysis are absent. An
authoritarian concept of management and control has tended to curb any
interest in cost efficiency. Institutions act defensively and lack adequate
systems of financial management to enable them to produce cost data.
Government policies favour pro lump-sum formula funding; Chile and
Mexico have introduced some incentive mechanisms, but the common
university reaction is generally to oppose or delay though there are some
attempts at preparatory activities, such as research on financial management
and cost analysis. The University of Mexico has revealed that, as with most
institutions, the low direct instructional costs of Business Studies,
Humanities and Law were associated with high student-staff ratios (SSR); large class size, low faculty salaries and longer lecture hours. On the contrary, the higher costs for Arts and Education Programmes "did not seem to be justified, thus indicating where greatest efficiency might be achieved" (Sanyal, 1995).

In Africa, universities tend to be expensive, inefficient and inadequately financed leading to poor maintenance of infrastructure like buildings, equipment, and library resources; totally insufficient access to hard currency; inflexible management of financial and staffing resources; and ineffective relations with their governments, particularly in respect of financial matters. There is a system of negotiated funding which is usually not based on specific criteria but on the previous year's budget. The budget is often drastically reduced by the government without any prior decision to reduce staff, student enrolment, etc., thereby paving the way for disaster. Almost all are public universities which are funded 90-100% by their governments which in many cases appoint the key staff for administration and academic affairs. Universities may have some control over the internal allocation of resources for the relatively small amount not devoted to salary.

There is a large difference in the capacity to manage finance within institutions. Of particular interest is the Botswana University which has started using task-forces/workshops to implement extensive structural changes to enhance cost effectiveness, accountability and the development of more effective delivery systems based on forecasts of rapid growth in student numbers and fast escalating costs. The University of Makerere, Uganda has, comparatively, the least freedom to spend. The Tanzanian university of Dar-es-salaam has recently acquired some flexibility with budgeting partially decentralized to faculty level under strong administrative control. The ceiling is decided by the Ministry and the Bursar makes priority-wise allotments for salaries, administration and student welfare. Zimbabwe University still practices the traditional collegial incremental line-item process; a private firm audits the accounts -- but the departmental heads look after the control and certification of expenditures against their cost centres and may re-allocate funds, generate income for departmental use and carry forward underspending to the next year (Mageza, 1993).

Stimulated by their own financial problems and the work of various agencies the African universities, in general, are becoming cost conscious; they are now aware of what needs to be done. This is obvious from the Windhock Declaration of August 1992, adopted by high-level policy makers and Vice-Chancellors of Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaiziland and Zimbabwe.
What are the major issues in the financial management of universities in the Third World?

**Note:**

i) Space is given below for your answer

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

In Asia, government funding per student in real terms generally decreased in the 1980s. For example, it declined by 22% per student during 1980-1985; in Pakistan and India, universities regularly had to resort to overdrafts; quality maintenance is difficult and there is constant pressure to expand, upgrade and to conduct applied research.

The revenue, earned from tuition fees, which are under government control, is small and has declined in public universities; in Nepal and Pakistan fees have remained unchanged for over the last 13 years and 40 years, respectively. In Thailand, only 5% of the funds for universities are from fees, while in the Philippines, India, Singapore and Korea it is varying from 10% to 50% respectively. Private institutions in Korea and the Philippines get 80% of their revenue from fees but unit costs are lesser.

Funds are allocated according to line-item budgets on 'historical incremental' basis. In Philippines, budgets are negotiated on the basis of staff posts, operating expenditure and enrolments. Monthly cash allotments are released, though sometimes delayed, as are capital expenditures. Salaries, however, are paid regularly. University cost analysis shows a reduction in administrative expenditure -- the proportion falling from 17% in 1987 to 15% in 1990, (Sanyal, 1995).

In China, power is still concentrated in the central government which allocates resources, controls teaching plans, appoints staff and assigns students with grants. The 1986 Regulations laid down norms for size and
quality of staff, classroom space and books per student. During the last
decade, as part of its economic reform measures, the Chinese state redefined
its role -- a sharing of responsibilities between the centre and local levels.
The centre lays down principles, carries out macro-planning and evaluates
quality; the institutions look after course introduction and revision;
admissions, research fund utilization; staff appointment and general
management. The key administrators are under party guidance; the staff are
state employees; transfers involve a complicated process and, are
therefore, rare. Though institutions may take in fee-paying students, they are
still given an enrolment quota for such students. Despite certain technical
institutions earning from research and training contracts, etc. the
underlying major problem of high unit cost still remains. Improvements have
been made by broadening educational programmes and organizing
institutional networks to share facilities; but these do not affect the high
costs of such institutions which even offer services like hospitals and
schools to their staff.

In India, the system depends on whether the universities are centrally funded
through the UGC or by the states. Governments met 80% of expenditure in
1992 against 40% in 1947. The universities have had to forgo considerable
autonomy for increased state funding. Conspicuous features in financial
management of Indian higher education are the lack of proper rules on staff
ratios, infrastructure and admissions; cuts in funds for books,
laboratories and equipment, which have led to undesirable expenditure
patterns and too much spending on non-teaching staff in comparison to that on
infrastructure.

In 1989, the Pakistan government tried to improve their financial position
by eradicating deficits and enhancing tuition fees. The responsibility for
higher education was transferred to the provisional government. Institutes may
now, "create endowment funds, acquire industrial and agricultural assets
and negotiate foreign assistance (Siddiqui, 1990).

In the Arab countries, line-item budgeting for universities with reimbursement
of actual costs, is practised. Ministries pay salaries and decide on other
investments like buildings, etc. The measures for improvement include
reduction of student intake, privatization and taxation for financing tuition.

For enhancing flexibility for financial management, in Tunisian
institutions any unspent credits at the end of the year may now be transferred
to a fund at the disposal of the particular institution, which then has to get
the approval for expenditure from that fund in the following year.

Countries like Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, major Latin American
countries -- Mexico, Argentina, Brazil and partly Venezuela, and the oil-
rich nations of the Gulf Region -- each with a different type of economy,
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and differing in other areas like literacy, draw attention to the fact that the availability of financial resource is vital, but not "the only ingredient for building an effective academic system" (Altbach, 1982). Several countries in South-East Asia and East Asia have experienced high rates of economic growth in the past decade and have invested considerable resources in education. In these countries like Singapore, Taiwan, Malaysia and South Korea higher education has made impressive gains in terms of expansion of the system as also of quality improvement though their academic system serves only a small portion of the relevant age-group; many students, unable to enter the local universities, go abroad for academic pursuits.

2.3.3 The academic community

The situation of Third World academics is paradoxical. They are members of an international community with links to professionals in the major world centers of research and scholarship; but, in many countries they face difficulties in terms of access to international journals, research facilities and contacts with the research centers. "Without the material resources and the academic sub-culture to stimulate research and writings, Third World universities contribute less than they might to production of research and writing" (Altbach, 1982). Third World academics are often among the elite of their society; are frequently involved in extra-university activities such as providing guidance and expertise to the government like in Indonesia and India. Yet, they are often not paid according to their status and expertise.

Conflict between the key traditional academic functions of teaching and research in the Third World context is not uncommon because of: (a) the lack of time; (b) heavy teaching responsibilities; (c) poor infrastructural facilities; and (d) difficulty in access to current knowledge which ultimately leads to poor research and low scholarly productivity in some countries. Teaching conditions are also difficult -- large classes, a shortage of reading materials, teaching styles that favour lecturing over discussion, all affect the nature of student-teacher interaction.

The academia in many Third World nations face another constraint -- the concept of academic freedom is defined in numerous ways and often constrained. The academic profession has only limited autonomy and has to show loyalty to the government in both teaching and not-teaching activities.

There are conspicuous differences among the Third World nations with regard to the status of the academic profession. For example, in the oil-rich Arabian Gulf countries with recently established universities, the academic staff are handsomely paid; but the lack of an established university tradition and the absence of well-stocked libraries stifles the effectiveness of the profession. In Singapore, and to some extent in Malaysia the growth has been
carefully planned so that expansion has not completely overwhelmed the profession. However, in both countries there is a preponderance of inexperienced (and often inadequate) academics and the use of expatriates in some senior positions. "In the Latin American region, there have been major efforts to 'professionalise' the teaching staff by raising the degree requirement for entry, emphasizing research, increasing salaries, and making professorial appointment a full-time responsibility. Substantial variations also exist in the academic systems within countries like India, where the difference between working conditions, teaching load, facilities, income of college teachers and university staff is substantial making for two separate and sometimes antagonistic academic cultures. Besides, the different types of post-secondary level institutions accentuate the differences affecting the academic profession as well. Teachers in the non-university sector have lower social status, fewer opportunities and hopes of research, and "in general are seen as teachers rather than scholars" (Altbach, 1982).

2.3.4 The students

The locus of student activism, regardless of its orientation, is in the university. Considerable attention has been given to student politics in countries like Thailand, Iran, Peru, South Korea, China, Afghanistan and India where they are a continuing source of unrest. In Latin America, the governments have tried hard to "depoliticize" the universities. During the post-independence period, in many Asian countries, student movements have been politically volatile and sometimes decisive, causing political crises and fall of governments as in Turkey, South Korea, South Vietnam, Indonesia, and Japan. China witnessed students playing a comparatively more complex role in its political evolution. Iran, which sent the majority of its students overseas for higher education, has little student activism within the country though their agitations and activities in the other countries caused concern. That students at the higher education level have played a key role in the creation of nationalist movements, if not in their practical operations, is also obvious as in the case of the Indian freedom struggle.

In the Third World, as elsewhere in the world, university students provide political leadership and innovation, and often point the way to social change and sometimes to revolution. There is, however, limited research on the backgrounds, roles, attitudes, activism etc., of the Third World students in higher education.

2.4 PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

Almost all countries of the Third World are grappling with enormous problems. Their economies in many cases are in shambles; their history of independent nationhood is no more than half a century old. While the
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developed world is in the process of transition from the industrial revolution to the information revolution (from the modern to the post-modern societies), most of the Third World countries are still to reach the stage of modernisation. There is no denying the fact that education has to play a crucial role in bridging this gap, in accelerating the process of modernisation and creating the environment for transition to the post-modern societies. The problems are plenty, and the prospects awesome. We shall make a quick survey of this landscape in this section.

2.4.1 Curriculum and the organisation of study

The Third World academic systems, in general, inherited a curriculum heavily loaded with the liberal arts disciplines and organised in the classical European style—its basic assumptions often being questionable due to the very different realities of these nations. The clientele lacked a western cultural background; the need for educated manpower was quite different, and these universities were required to provide human resource for the emerging technological societies. Despite all these, change has been slow since the Third World nations felt the top priority was to offer university studies to a growing population, and the old order continued with the curriculum and courses organised in the traditional way, ultimately resulting in the oversupply of graduates in liberal arts and a general fall in academic standards.

In the advanced developing countries, the concentration on liberal education gradually lessened, through a stress initially on the Social Sciences and later, on natural sciences and applied technology. Curricula in fields like Education, Economics and Sociology have been partly adapted to indigenous needs. Areas such as Engineering, Management studies, etc., have become prominent. The growth and diversification of national economies has led to needs both in skills relevant to Financial Management—Business Administration, Accountancy, specialised fields in Law, Marketing and Advertising, and in the applied technologies. Singapore's world renowned urban housing programme is the handiwork of local university trained planners, besides the development of sophisticated financial institutions like the Asian Dollar Market, the School of Accountancy and Business Administration and the School of Postgraduate Management Studies. South Korea also has made an impressive use of its technology-trained personnel who have won major contracts abroad. In Malaysia the need to expand, strengthen and upgrade agricultural technology was recognised as crucial. Malaysia's Agricultural University was upgraded from college to university status in 1970. Its success in diversifying the economy and its ability to undertake relatively large rural modernization projects was possible only because of successful
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Restructuring of higher education. In India too, the scenario is changing fast, and newer subjects are rapidly gaining popularity.

In recent years, efforts to modify the classical pattern of organisation of studies have been widespread; the academic systems, in general, have moved from the European to the American pattern of organisation. ‘Continuous assessment’ of academic work and shorter courses with specified marks assigned to monitor students closely are in practice permitting the teachers to be in more direct contact with the learning process and provide ‘feedback’ for students. Some universities like that of Kuwait have implemented a major shift from the British model to American style ‘course-credit’ system, while many universities in India have retained the traditional system despite it being ill-suited to the Indian realities.

There is no single model for the nature or the organisation of curriculum that will work effectively in all developing countries of the Third World, but it is for sure that “the traditional European curricular and organisational pattern inherited with colonial universities or copied without serious consideration, is not well suited to the Third World realities” (Altbach, 1982). Drastic attempts at curriculum-restructuring run the risk of lowering academic standards.

Gradually, universities throughout the Third World are trying to diversify the curriculum; but a number of constraints still impede this effort; like (a) textbooks mostly continue to be imported from the industrialised nations; (b) only countries with a large higher education system -- like India -- seem to have attempted substantial adaptation; (c) the faculty, in most of these countries is often trained abroad in Europe or North America and do not adapt their academic expertise to suit the local circumstances; (d) in some countries, like Singapore, Malaysia and the Gulf countries, expatriates form a significant part of the faculty especially in the newer applied and scientific fields. Another significant hurdle is the language used by the universities.

Third World countries have been mostly using European language. The continued use of a European language eliminates a significant segment of the country’s population from access to higher education which gets insulated from the society. The privileged sections largely from the urban areas who can access education in the metropolitan language, generally dominate the scene.

Check Your Progress 4

What are the constraints in diversifying the curriculum by universities in Third World countries?

Note:  
   i) Space is given below for your answer  
   ii) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.
2.4.2 Language

The selection of the instructional language is often a matter of controversy and immense sensitivity within and outside the university. In the colonial past, academic institutions were primarily the preserve of the upper reaches of the society and even to this day this is true of certain Third World nations. Use of the national language broadens access to, and influence of, higher education; research and analysis done in the universities can be communicated in a widely understood medium, and all these contribute to nation-building -- a key goal in most countries.

Many of the Third World nations are multilingual with the language policy often being politically volatile. The use of a European language as the central medium for intellectual exchange blocks access to knowledge for large segments of people in these nations; language becomes a device of social stratification. Those with command of a European language succeed in entering the professional sector and the modern business world, while the others are denied positions with potential of upward mobility; for example in anglophone and francophone Africa. The domination of the higher education system by the western languages, particularly English and French, has resulted in these languages continuing to be the key to graduate education and research studies in the Third World even in countries with some commitment to national languages, like Indonesia, as well as to the paucity of technical and scholarly books in the national languages. The Third World directly takes knowledge from the industrialised nations to use for its own purposes as evident in the Indian sub-continent. The role of translations in the international network of knowledge diffusion indicates how the Third World languages are in an intellectual backwater. “Most of the world's translations are from the major European languages....” (Altbach, 1982).

The world's knowledge system continues to be dominated by the industrialized nations because of their “domination of the world's research system, of publishing houses, the use of the major metropolitan languages, in particular English and the sheer size and wealth of the academic systems in the industrialized nations.... Academicians trained abroad in metropolitan languages are hesitant to teach at home in indigenous
languages; textbooks and other instructional materials are mostly unavailable in such languages besides being expensive and difficult to produce. Many countries with an indigenous language as an instructional medium, have a common complaint -- that they still depend mainly on books in European languages and students, therefore, have to learn a foreign language.

Advanced training at the post secondary education level is almost inevitably linked to the international academic system and hence, to a European language.

Despite these constraints, much progress is evident in the use of non-European languages in higher education, as in Japan, Taiwan, China, Korea and Malaysia. While all Arab countries are committed to use Arabic as the instructional medium, some do use English partly -- like Kuwait. However, in many Third World nations, most students are effectively bilingual; the synthesis of instruction in an indigenous language combined with the use of books and text materials in a European language, is not impossible. For example, long ago India made a commitment to use the country's regional languages, but it still continues to use English in the educational system, enabling universities to fulfill their national and international roles. India's curricular materials in indigenous language(s) in the tertiary sector have been only partially successful as intellectuals still prefer and depend on books in European languages -- mainly English.

Since developing nations are, invariably, dependent on expatriates to help establish new and more applied disciplines, more relevant to developing economies, and they can function in a European language, and since these nations need to send students overseas, especially for higher studies, they need to hold the balance between nationalistic desires for doing away with colonial languages and expatriate expertise plus the continued, if selective, reliance on the metropolitan languages. Western academic institutions also need to be more sensitive to the dilemmas that face nations and support national policies; in this context the attempt to withhold recognition of medical degrees in certain countries consequent to a changeover to the indigenous language as the medium of instruction at the university, highlights the difficulties that even some advanced developing countries face in making their education system more relevant and more at par with that in the advanced countries.

Universities the world over are part of an international intellectual network. Historical origins are not rare; various academic disciplines are linked by common research paradigms, journals and organisations. This network is dominated by major universities as the nerve-centres, though for the large industrialised nations, academic institutions elsewhere are to some extent, peripheral. The Third World universities have to come to grips with this peripherality and devise policies aimed at maximising independence. In this regard, language policies are important and they have numerous
implications; the use of indigenous languages may create a more accessible university, but sever the community's international linkage.

2.4.3 Inter-third world country status

The current status of the Third World nations vis-a-vis higher education may largely be attributed to the various types of steering policies adopted by them, as revealed from the trend study during an empirical investigation (Sanyal, 1995). From the preceding discussion, emanate the inter Third World country similarities and differences, in respect of various variables. The status of the various regions and countries with regard to these, is as follows:

Central and Latin America

The major problems in the region, in higher education are: (a) mass social demand, (b) declining quality, (c) students inability to study full-time, (d) low staff salaries compelling good academics to leave/take up additional jobs, (e) politicization of all issues by teachers and student unions, (f) inadequate social/political framework to manage change, and (g) government bureaucracy.

The measures adopted include: (a) tight government control over expenditure, (b) encouragement of growth of private institutions offering cheaper education with a variety of structures ranging from autocratic to entrepreneurial to respond to the pressure of social demand and, (c) curb on universities' role in budget establishment or salary scale fixation. Efforts are on to abandon incremental budgeting, lessen isolation, and institute evaluation as an instrument of policy. In general, higher education systems are equipped with accreditation type of evaluation conducted by ministerial autonomous bodies of a buffer type. However, in Venezuela, university evaluation was contested. In Mexico, the governmental effort has been to steer its university system towards a more regulated expansion, institutional evaluation, closer links with the productive sectors and differential salary scales for the academics.

In the early 1990s, Chile established a National Council of Higher Education for accreditation of new universities and supervision of the existing ones. This was strongly resisted; the private universities did not want obligatory evaluation, and the public universities did not want to share funds with the private sector -- linking of performance to budget did not appeal to them. The attitude was one of apathy -- 'university staff are accustomed to leaving the government to manage'. Similar attempts were made in Colombia, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil and Ecuador. In Cuba, a decentralization process was initiated to give more flexibility in curricula and teaching. Administration was to work according to objectives and not by tasks. Institutional heads, however, were hesitant to take decisions and decentralization, in this context, was not
successful. "Nevertheless, Cuba is continuing its efficiency measures by merging institutes and faculties and increasing activities to generate revenue"", (Sanayal, 1995).

In this region, despite problems at the national level, individual institutions have taken management initiatives, in large universities in Mexico and in Brazil funds have been provided for computers and information systems indicating the availability of tools to assist efforts for achievement of more efficient management.

Asia

This region comprising some of the richest and the poorest countries, has tried: (a) cooperation with the productive sector, emphasising technology and science; and (b) privatization which has greatly expanded the provision of higher education.

In the Philippines, more than 80% of the higher education sector is private with its own assistance fund. The public chartered institutions have more autonomy while the non-chartered ones are supervised by the Department of Education, Culture and Science; but for both, the governing boards -- which approve all the programmes, budget and staff appointments, are appointed by the country's President. Control is also exercised through the budget, which provides 80-90% of the total funding. Though efforts for self regulation in the state institutions has been on for a longer period than in many other countries, the actual implementation has been delayed due to the lack of a stable national policy commitment by the government. The processes for executing institutional self-regulation, that is, the accrediting agencies, are functioning at present.

It is evident that most Asian Countries have conducted, in cooperation with bilateral or international agencies, sporadic overall system evaluations necessary for reform decisions.

Africa

The African region has been tremendously affected by: (a) the world economic crisis; (b) serious financial and management problems in higher education, (c) compulsion on the universities to produce too many graduates to meet the insatiable social demand, and (d) high enrolment and imbalance in disciplines leading to problems regarding low quality, unemployment and unrest.

The measures adopted by the African countries include: (a) reduction of unit costs by encouraging students to live off campus -- as in Ghana, Uganda and Tanzania; (b) cutting out certain allowances and course rationalisation as in
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Nigeria and Ibadan; (c) converting bookshops and cafes into self-financing enterprises as in Uganda and Zambia; (d) student loan schemes as in Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Rwanda, Zambia and Zimbabwe; and (e) payment to academic staff by lecture output as in Uganda. These measures have been useful but not adequate to arrest the declining quality of teachers, buildings, and equipment, etc. Certain universities in the region, as in Mozambique, depend largely on donor assistance for survival.

Under the circumstances, little increase in higher education budgets is possible; national governments, universities, associations of universities and aid agencies are participating in a major drive to improve management efficiency. Study teams have visited most of the universities to draw up plans for targeting aid from donor agencies. Visitation panels, as in anglophone Africa, may bring about wide-scale reforms like in Uganda, which recommended a change over to the semester system, distance education, income generation activities, etc.

Private higher education is receiving some encouragement in Kenya and Zimbabwe but due to their level of economic development, it cannot flourish to the same extent as it has in Asia or Latin America. The improvement of public university management is considered a particularly critical target area by donor agencies.

Evidently, there was strong government control; but until recently, little assistance was given to the improvement of university management except in Ghana and Nigeria, which have invested in computers and information systems. Efforts at improvement are now on in the other African countries.

Arab States

The problems faced by the higher education systems are: (a) their largely traditional nature and inability to cope with necessary changes due to lack of capable administrators, sound planning, clarity of objectives and control. Faculties have little autonomy, as the ministry manages the staff and budgets are extrapolated from previous years; (b) little attempts by the governments/institutions to innovate; and (c) mass higher education as seen in Algeria, Yemen, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Iraq.

The salient features of this region are strong government bureaucracy, weak executive level university management, and lack of management expertise and culture. The governments of several countries in the region have recently expressed a desire for change.

The Arab states have excessive centralisation. In Iraq, the Ministry decides, besides policy and funding, faculty work loads, programmes and examination schedules. The Egyptian Supreme Council of Universities decides the
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enrolments, sets down admission regulations, etc. In Kuwait, measures were taken to strictly enforce university entrance and staff regulations. Tunisia has adopted a policy to expand technical education; in 1988, it rationalised higher education by regrouping faculties around basic administrative units and in 1989 passed a law to reorganise the system into a more autonomous and diversified one; distribution of funds is according to norms with an incentive for efficiency; universities have to seek other sources of revenue, set institutional goals and introduce a students’ loan scheme. The Algerian Ministry in 1990, decided to decentralise all responsibilities except budget allocations. In Tunisia and Algeria, these reforms faced intense teacher resistance.

The pressure of social demand is being met through the establishment of private institutions, as in Kuwait and Egypt. In Egypt, the first private institution was opened in 1989; financial support from the industries has also been obtained. Moreover, with the creation of a Centre for Higher Educational Reform, the Ministry is trying to form the basis for modernization. Sudan has established new regional universities, expanded higher education with structures strengthened at the executive level and stipulated that the majority of the executives have to belong to the region and to the commercial and other economic sectors.

On the whole, the picture that emerges is that there have been serious attempts at reforms in several Third World countries, especially in those which have a regime of centralised planning and control. These attempts were not as strong in those countries which had adopted self-regulation and accountability. In the developing countries this has happened because the governments have taken little action, and without the political will, the institutions can take no initiatives.

Check Your Progress 5

Identify the following statements as ‘true’ or ‘false’

Note: i) Check your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

i) Universities in Mexico and Brazil have taken initiatives in modernising their management, though there are problems at the national level. ( )

ii) Most Asian countries have conducted sporadic overall system evaluations necessary for reform decisions. ( )

iii) Most universities in the African region do not depend on donor assistance for survival. ( )

iv) Excessive centralisation, rigid bureaucratic control and a complete absence of modern management culture are the major features of universities in the Arab Region. ( )

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Tasks Ahead

Government funding mechanisms and institutional financial management have not changed markedly in the developing countries, irrespective of their economic and educational development levels. Monetary constraint has tended to result in tight control, making innovation or risk unaffordable.

Besides, traditional approaches to higher education planning and decision-making have failed to build appropriate mechanisms into their development and reform strategies to assess uncertainty and risk. The educational planners are, therefore, confronted with the need to move away from a crisis management attitude to a risk analysis approach. In the case of higher education reforms..., what is really needed is an impact assessment approach reflecting the nature of higher education reforms and innovations which by essence, challenge established practices and vested interests.” (Salmi, 1991).

2.5 LET US SUM UP

We have made an effort in this unit to provide you with a broad-brush treatment of the development of higher education in the Third World countries. Their number is very large, and their problems immense. They have a common inheritance, but have widely varying strategies and approaches to address their concerns. These variations are influenced by economic compulsions, ideological predilections, cultural contexts and the larger social systems that constitute their environment. Since this course is on the management of education, we have focussed our attention on the issues of managing the transformation of a dysfunctional higher education system into a dynamic and vibrant instrument of social change and development. However, the broad picture that emerges is one of many inadequacies, of resources, of commitment and of will.

2.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : POSSIBLE ANSWERS

1. Three main features that are common to the universities in the Third World countries are:
   i) the instructional medium used for teaching and research is, in many cases a foreign language, with the exception of certain Latin American countries;
   ii) inadequate infrastructure to support intellectual communication with other institutions to stimulate academic activity and
   iii) lack of funds and laboratory facilities to carry out advanced research.

2. i) True, ii) True
3. Most of the Third World countries do not have the necessary social and economic infrastructure to support and sustain high quality education and research in their universities. Many of them depend on international aid to develop the higher education infrastructure. Since internal resources are far too scarce, the rigour and discipline associated with financial management are seldom emphasised, and management of aid programmes tends to become loose and soft practices.

4. The major constraints in the Third World while diversifying curriculum are: i) textbooks continue to be imported from other developed nations; ii) there is not enough expertise or infrastructural support to try and adapt these materials to local needs or in local languages; iii) foreign trained academics cannot adjust their expertise to suit local conditions; iv) in some countries, expatriates form the main faculty in applied scientific fields.

5. i) True, ii) True, iii) False, iv) True.