

Unit 16

Education in Europe: Case Studies-II

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Learning Objectives

This unit aims to analyse:

- educational development in Europe in historical vis a vis present context;
- educational reforms by European Union;
- case study of selected countries in historical context; and
- present educational scenario in South-eastern Europe

16.1 Introduction

In the previous Unit 15, you have studied education in SAARC countries. In this unit, we shall apprise you of the educational system of European countries. An attempt has been made to give case studies of a few European countries in a brief historical as well as present educational development context. The last part of this unit shall apprise you of the present educational scenario of South- Eastern Europe.

16.2 Demographic Profile of Europe

Europe is the 6th largest continent and has 46 countries and assorted dependencies and territories. In exacting geographic definition, Europe is really not a continent, but part of the peninsula of Eurasia which includes all of Europe and Asia. Turkey and the Russian Federation (*Russia*) are considered a part of both Asia and Europe. In the year 2000, the total population of Europe was 729.3 million, of whom 306.6 million were in Eastern Europe, 93.7 million in North Europe. 144.8 million in Southern Europe, and 184 million in Western Europe. The annual rate of population growth in Europe declined from 0.44% to 0.16% between 1985-1990 and 1990-1995 and is projected to reduce to 0.03% during 1995-2000. The population decline trend is parallel to the increase in the average age of the population. The proportion of population in 65+ age group is increasing from 11.9% in 1985 to 19.8% in 2025 (projected), but the proportion of population in 0-14 age group is decreasing from 21.3% to 16.3% during the same period. Rural population is remarkably decreasing in Europe from 207.3 million in 1985 and 192.8 million in 1995 to 128.4 million in 2025 (projected) (<http://www.unhabitat.org>).

16.3 Education in Europe

Primary and Secondary Education

Education in Europe has both deep roots and great diversity. In 1976, education ministers first decided to set up an information network, as the basis for better understanding of educational policies and structures in the then nine-

nation European Community. This reflected the principle that the particular character of education systems in the Member States should be fully respected, while coordinated interaction between education training and employment systems should be improved. Eurydice, the information network on education in Europe, was formally launched in 1980.

All countries emphasise the crucial importance of developing the skills needed for the knowledge based economy and society, and for economic competitiveness. In relation to social inclusion, all countries indicate that access and the employability of target groups are defining components of their policy. Many countries and in particular those where levels of spending on education and training are comparatively low, emphasise that financial constraints limit their capacity to implement all necessary policies. Most of the countries highlight that in their education and training policies economic and social objectives are mutually supportive. On the other hand, other countries argued that if the economic and employment agenda is successful, the social goals can be addressed more readily. These issues are particularly relevant to the discussion on the European social model.

About 10% of adults in Europe, aged 25-64 takes part in lifelong learning, representing some progress since 2000, with significant variations between countries. The need to increase participation rates in further learning remains a major challenge for Europe, particularly in the southern European countries and the new Member States of the European Union. Low rates are an obstacle to increasing labour force participation, and are therefore, costly to the economy and society as a whole. About 16% of the young people (age group 18-24 years) leaves school early in 25 European Union countries. There was continuous improvement in recent years in reducing the share.

Nearly 20% of 15 year-olds continue to have serious difficulty with reading? literacy, reflecting no progress since 2000 against the EU benchmark of reducing the share by one fifth. 77% of 18-24 year-olds complete upper-secondary education, still far from the Europe Union benchmark of 85%, despite good progress in some countries. The high number of young people leaving school without a basic level of qualifications and competences are a worrying signal that initial education systems are not always providing the necessary foundations for lifelong learning. This concern is also reflected in the new Lisbon integrated guidelines and in the European Youth Pact.

In some countries vocational education and training (VET) has a positive image, for example, Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark and Finland owing to such factors as having a dual system i.e. alternative training, double qualifications and recent measures in favour of access to higher education. It is still too often the case, however, that vocational pathways are less attractive than academic ones. On the other hand, a large majority of countries express concern about the needs of low skilled people, currently numbering almost 80 million in the Union, highlighting the importance of labour force participation and the role of VET systems as a key means of ensuring social inclusion.

The share of young population (aged 20-24 years) who has completed upper-secondary education has improved in 2004. The highest per centage (91%) of people who completed upper secondary education was from the Czech Republic and the lowest (48%) were from Malta (48%) and Portugal (49%). Public spending on education as a per centage of GDP is increasing in nearly all EU countries (EU average: 4.9% in 2000, 5.2% in 2002). This rising trend is a promising sign that Governments consider public expenditure in education to be a priority. Nonetheless there are large variations between countries, ranging from 4% to 8% of GDP. Many countries are stimulating private investment from individual and households, particularly in areas where there are high private rates of return. On the other hand, there is little evidence of an overall increase in

employer investment in continuing training. The available data show, differences in spending levels between countries. Denmark and Sweden spend over 7.5% of GDP on education, while some countries spend less than 4% of GDP.

Tertiary Education

Tertiary education plays a central role in the development of both human beings and modern societies as it enhances social, cultural and economic development, active citizenship and ethical values. At European level, education in general and higher education in particular are not subjects of a common European policy.

However, according to Article 149 of the Treaty of Amsterdam, the Community shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States, through a wide range of actions, such as promoting the mobility of citizens, designing joint study programmes, establishing networks, exchanging information or teaching languages of the European Union. The Treaty also contains a commitment to promote life-long learning for all citizens of the Union. Therefore, the Community has a complementary role to play: to add a European dimension to education, to help to develop quality education and to encourage life-long learning. All the recent European summits (from Lisbon 2000 on) underlined the contribution of education in setting up the European knowledge society.

The main tool for putting this ambition into practice is the SOCRATES programmes which contains an action specifically focused on Higher Education. It supports and encourages exchange of students and teachers, the launching of joint study programmes or intensive courses, pan-European thematic networks and other measures aiming at the development of a European dimension in higher education. The second phase of the Socrates Programme will end in 2006 and Socrates will be replaced by new educational programmes. In terms of quality assurance in higher education, a European network was set up in 1999 following a pilot-project and a recommendation adopted in 1999. In 2003, the Commission adopted two major communications on the future of Higher Education in Europe:

- Investing efficiently in education and training – an imperative for Europe, and
- The role of the universities in the Europe of knowledge.

At the same time, the higher education sector and institutions are fully involved in the European initiatives presently on-going in the field of e-learning in the area of Lifelong Learning as well as in the European Year of Languages (2001). Moreover, in 1999, Ministries from 29 European countries signed the Bologna Declaration, which aims at the establishment of a European area of higher education by the end of this decade. This area should facilitate mobility of people, transparency and recognition of qualification, quality and European dimension in higher education, attractiveness of European institutions for third country students.

The total public and private investment in higher education in European Union in 2001 was 1.28% of GDP, compared to 2.5% in Canada and 3.25% in the USA. The three highest spending European Union countries were Denmark (2.8%), Sweden (2.3%) and Finland (2.1%).

In the above section, you have studied about the European educational system which consists of 25 European countries. In the forthcoming section, we shall give a brief history and current educational development of selected countries in Europe. If you are interested in details of the historical educational development of these countries then you may visit web site i.e. www.eurydice.org

16.4 Educational Scenario in Some European Countries

Belgium

The Education in Belgium was being offered for three different communities i.e. French, German and Dutch speaking communities. After the social movements at the end of the nineteen sixties, there was an innovation in Belgium. This innovation was presented as being mainly a means of achieving real democratisation of education with the aim to make access to higher and even general academic education easier for the less-favoured children too. Within the scope of the first innovation it was possible to create an inter-age group (5-8) with the aim to smoothen up the transition between pre-school education and primary school. The law of July 19, 1971 established a new type of secondary education: reformed secondary education system. In the first two years of secondary education the splitting-up in different courses or sections was replaced by a two years. The law passed on May 19, 1914 prescribed compulsory school attendance for all children between the ages of 6 and 12 and decided that the utmost age of compulsory attendance had to be increased gradually to 13 and then to 14. However this law was only implemented after the First World War. In 1970 pupils ended their school-career at an average age of 15 years 8 months. The law of June 29, 1983 fixed the end of compulsory (full-time and part-time) school attendance at the age of 18 (12 years in school). This reform aimed at a guarantee for better qualification of young people to enable them as a result to have an easier access to professional life. As this law delayed the beginning of professional life, it helped as it were to reduce the constantly increasing number of unemployed young people.

In 1830, when Belgium became independent, there were three state universities Ghent, Leuven, and Liege. The law of 1835 on higher education acknowledged two free universities and two state universities. In the 19th century, all universities and colleges of higher education with an academic level were French speaking as was the public for which these schools were meant, i.e., the upper classes. Since the 1960s, higher education outside university has grown much more than university education. At present a reform of higher education is taking place. This reforms has to be seen in the light of the Bologna declaration, signed in 1999 by the Ministers of Education of 29 European countries. The declaration intends to create a European educational area in to order to bring more unity in European education. On April 4, 2003 the Flemish government approved the Decree on these structuring of higher education.

Bulgaria

The Bulgarian educational system has rich history. The Bulgarian people have established and preserved deep-seated and intransient educational traditions throughout their 13-century existence as a state; they have maintained and developed the Cyrillic alphabet, created by the Cyril and Metodius brothers as early as the 9th century, and reached the "golden age of Bulgarian literature and culture" in the 10th century, when Kliment Ohridski established the first Bulgarian school. Bulgarian people have preserved their love of learning and education through the years of the Ottoman rule. Cell schools were established in the 18th - 19th century, which were either monastery schools or public schools where the nature of the former was predominantly religious and public schools provided pupils with secular knowledge.

Public schools were established on a larger scale at the end of the 18th century, and especially in the 30s and 40s of the 19th century, known as "new Bulgarian" schools, which were described in detail in the records of the schools in Samokov, Koprivshitzta, etc. The state educational system was established after 1978.

which was also the time when the first school laws were dated. The first educational law, "Provisional Bylaws of Public Community Centers", was adopted in August 1978 and the Elementary School Act in Eastern Roumelia was adopted in December 1880 and promulgated in February 1881. The above laws recognized the democratic principles applied to school establishment and running. At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the educational system underwent rapid development.

During the period 1990-2004, a number of democratic changes have been brought about both in society as a whole and in the educational system in particular. A new Education Act was adopted (1991), which is still in force in the educational system, and Bulgarian legislation underwent serious changes. School education in the Republic of Bulgaria is compulsory up to the age of 16. It begins at the age of seven, when children are enrolled as first-grade pupils. Children at the age of six can also be enrolled as first-grade pupils, if their physical and mental behaviour, in the judgment of their parents or trustees, allows it. Since the 2003/2004 school year, children's training in preparatory groups with kindergartens or preparatory classes to schools has become compulsory as their parents or trustees are exempt from payment of fees. The compulsory education up to the age of 16 may be completed in a private school, which has been established pursuant to the National Education Act and is authorized to issue valid certificates for completed class or acquired professional qualification as well as diplomas for completed secondary education. The student has the right to complete his education in a state, municipal or private school chosen by him. By the age of 16 he is obliged to study in any of the various types of schools, private included.

Higher education in Bulgaria originated in the late 19th century after the liberation of Bulgaria from Ottoman yoke in order to satisfy the cultural, economic and political necessities of the young state. The first Bulgarian university was opened in Sofia with priorities in applying the legal system, the state administration and the schools with qualified specialists. The oldest university in Bulgaria started its activities with three faculties: Faculty of Law, Physical and Mathematical Faculty, and Historical and Philological Faculty. The deep social and economic transformations in the country inevitably had their impact on education as a whole, and, in particular, on higher education. This transition is related to creation of private higher education; introduction of new subjects and areas of knowledge taking into account the necessities of society; "opening" of higher schools to international partnership and cooperation with European universities and institutions; reinstatement of university autonomy; limited financial independence and high responsibility for the quality of educational services offered. By signing the Bologna declaration (1999), Bulgaria takes the challenge to participate actively in the building of a European Higher Education Area and a common European market of labour and research. At present this network includes 51 public higher schools, of them 42 universities and specialised higher schools, 41 colleges within the structure of the higher schools, and 9 independent colleges.

Czech Republic

Czechoslovakia was established in 1918. Since then one major issue to tackle was the creation of a uniform education system, bringing into line the cultural standards in the three different parts of the country: the Czech lands, Slovakia and Transcarpathian Ukraine. A large number of laws were passed between 1919 and 1923, the most important being the so-called "Small School Act" of June 1922. This Act left the structure of Czech education unchanged and imposed this structure on Slovakia but not on Transcarpathian Ukraine. The post-war orientation of education was determined by the cataclysmic events of 1948. The School Act of April 1948 stipulating the basic principles of comprehensive education nationalised the education system as a whole and

eliminated the influence of the Church. Basic education lasting nine years was compulsory, uniform and free of charge. The law also provided for support hours for socially disadvantaged children and non-compulsory education in the form of leisure time activities, which at the same time performed a social function. Basic education was preceded by a non-compulsory *matežská škola*. After basic education, which was divided into a 1st and a 2nd stage, there were schools of the "third stage" - *gymnázia* (upper secondary general schools) and *odborné školy* (vocational and technical schools) - and then higher education institutions.

In 2000 an amendment to the School Act was passed that relaxed admission requirements for upper secondary schools. Other changes of the School Act are related to the state administration reform in 2000. The Concept of the State Information Policy in Education was approved by the government in April 2000 and was implemented progressively over the next 5 years. In developing it the Ministry of Education took into account the European documents, *Learning in the Information Society* (1996) and *e-Learning -Designing Tomorrow's Education* (2000).

Czech higher education dates back six hundred years. In 1348 Emperor Charles IV founded a university in Prague which is the oldest academic institution in Central Europe. It is now called Charles University. In 1573 a university was established in Olomouc (Moravia). The beginnings of technical education go back to 1717 when the Czech Corporative Engineer School was set up in Prague (later on the Czech Technical University). After several years of experience it was realised that some matters needed new legal regulations. After a large debate the Higher Education Act was passed in April 1998 and it came into force on 1 July 1998. However, most of its provisions came into effect on 1 January 1999. This new law changed the status of existing state higher education institutions (with the exception of military and police ones) into public ones, all property used so far was transferred into their possession. The law further distinguished the higher education institutions of university and non-university types, enabled the establishment of private higher education institutions and strengthened the responsibilities of the Accreditation Commission. By 2004 it was amended eight times. The amendments specified the responsibilities of higher education institutions in relation to their assets, with the aim of facilitating multi-source funding. It changed the duration of Master's study following on from Bachelor's study (previously 2-3 years and now 1-3 years), it made it possible to study for a Master's degree at non-university higher education institutions and it allowed the cross-crediting of lifelong education courses after entry to regular higher education study.

Germany

Even in the early post-war years, conflicting decisions were taken in the three western occupation zones in Germany and in the Soviet zone regarding the political foundations of the education system. The *Länder* formed in 1946 in the west built on the federalism of the German Empire (1871-1918) and the Weimar Republic (1919-1933) in constitutional terms. The *Grundgesetz* of 1949 (Basic Law) stipulates that the traditional federal order be continued in the areas of education, science and culture.

With the foundation of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in 1949, the German Central Administration for National Education was transformed into the Ministry of National Education, which was responsible for schools and institutions of higher education. The 1965 law on the standard socialist education system then formed the conclusion to a process of development which had commenced in the 1950s and which continued to determine the GDR education system until the end of the 1980s without being reformed to any significant extent.

The development of German unity in the education system since 1990 shows different picture. Since the unification of the two states in Germany, a central task of educational policy has been the reorganisation of the school system on the basis of relevant agreements of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs, as well as the reform of higher education in the Länder in eastern Germany. In the German education system, fundamental changes have been initiated under which special importance is attached to the various efforts for quality assurance and quality development.

In the 1960s, there was a lively public debate in the Federal Republic of Germany on pre-school education and children's transition into primary education. There were detailed discussions of the extent to which, through compensatory measures, educational opportunities for children from disadvantaged socio-cultural backgrounds could be improved on their entrance into primary education, and whether it would be useful to bring forward the start of compulsory schooling from 5 to 6 years of age. The Federation and the Länder then carried out an extensive programme of pilot projects, which was backed up by scientific support. In the end, however, the start of compulsory schooling was not brought forward. Yet the lively public debate served to heighten awareness of the importance of pre-school education, and from the 1960s onwards the pace of Kindergarten expansion was stepped up. In 1960, Kindergarten places were available for only one third of 3 to 6 year-olds in Germany. This had increased to around 90% in 1998.

In 1959 these compulsory eight-year schools were transformed into polytechnical high schools. As at the beginning of the 1991/92 school year, the Polytechnische Oberschulen were abolished and the differentiated system of secondary education was introduced in the Länder of eastern Germany. Based on the Education Acts, School Administration Acts and Compulsory Schooling Acts of the German Länder the school regulations known as Schulordnungen for schools providing general and vocational education contain detailed regulations covering the content of the courses as well as the leaving certificates and entitlements obtainable on completion of lower and upper secondary education.

Higher education in the GDR evolved under completely different conditions. It was based on a unitary and centrally controlled concept in the service of Marxist-Leninist party ideology and committed to serving the ends of a planned economy (supplying cadres). Higher education there did not see unchecked expansion: the enrolment figures peaked in 1972 after the universities had been opened expressly for the sons and daughters of workers and peasants in the first years after the war and distance learning courses had been introduced to reach many working people.

In 1989, following the peaceful revolution in the GDR, a number of reforms in higher education were launched there even before its unification with West Germany, viz. higher education came within the remit of the newly established Länder, the autonomy of institutions of higher education was restored along with freedom of research and teaching, ideologically encumbered faculties were overhauled, and wider access to the Science Council was given a mandate to examine the state of non-university research and draw up recommendations for a reorganisation of higher education. As part of this reorganisation, some institutions of higher education were closed or integrated into universities, new faculties were set up in the fields of law, economics and business and social sciences.

Hungary

The present educational system of Hungary crystallised in the 17th and 18th centuries. Hungarian public education has been undergoing continuous reforms, some of which sometimes worked against the previous one. Reforms concentrated mainly on the content of education, but the issue of

decentralising and democratising the entire public education system always lingered in the background. The process was triggered by Act I of 1985 on public education that set out to implement a structure built on the professional independence of institutions of teaching and education to replace the previous, rigidly centralised education system. That move firstly opened the door on alternative pedagogical views in school practice, and, secondly, it invited the elaboration of schooling/education concepts more in line with local needs.

In harmony with the government programme, and the tasks arising from accession to EU, the Minister of Education decided to embark on a comprehensive modernisation, and development programme. Preparatory efforts to create a new Act on Tertiary education, were elaborated, then implementing the various elements of the Hungarian Universities Programme were undertaken. The Campus Hungary Association was founded with the participation of 40 institutions in February 2004, enjoying the support of the Hungarian Ministry of Education. The commissioned Hungarian Scholarship Board created the database for the use of Hungarian Higher Education Institutions and foreign HE students and organized the framework of the Association. The most important aim of this organization was to create publicity of Hungarian Higher Education abroad and to motivate Hungarian institutions to launch more courses in foreign languages.

Portugal

In 1996, the Ministry of Education, Portugal in partnership with the then Ministry of Labour and Social Security and the Ministry of Equipment, Planning and Territorial Administration, introduced the Programme for the Expansion and Development of Pre-school Education, with the aim of consolidating what were previously uncoordinated efforts and to making proposals for the effective enlargement and expansion of the network, in a partnership between public and private initiative, developing pedagogic intervention proposals at syllabus and teacher training level, as well as promoting and monitoring the launch of innovation, training and research programmes. In March 2005 the XVII Constitutional Government came into office, whose programme makes changes in order to provide quality education for all, progressively making pre-school education available to all children of the appropriate age.

The first Portuguese university was founded by royal decree in 1920, issued by King Dinis, although there had been two large mediaeval-style religious schools in Coimbra and Alcobaca since the twelfth century. At the close of 1979, what until then had been known as short duration higher education, became known as ensino superior politécnico, and polytechnic colleges were set up to co-exist with the universities. Between the second half of the eighties and the beginning of the nineties, this growth exceeded 50% in both state and private and co-operative teaching. By the early nineties there were 152 state and 81 private schools of higher education.

The new Education Act, approved by parliament, contained Lisbon Strategy guidelines and the underlying principles of the Bologna Declaration, those worth being highlighting are:

- The alteration to the access system for higher education;
- The strengthening of the principle of equality among the various sub-systems of higher education in accordance with the value of educational, scientific and cultural projects;
- Growth of quality in education, research and experimentation;
- Demand for quality for the attribution of degrees regarding the merit of the institution;
- The reorganisation of the higher education system via the achievement of the objectives of the Bologna Declaration; and
- The alterations to the Finance Act.

The reformulation of the School Social Action policy in higher education is being prepared. The following structural questions regarding higher education are also being debated:

- Restructuring the academic degree system in three stages, in the implementation of Bologna Process;
- Administration of higher education institutions;
- Improving the access system to higher education and the subsequent passage to higher education institutions;
- Autonomy and regulation with the implications for the different stakeholders;
- Reformulation and growth of scientific research;
- Revision of the higher level assessment and accreditation system of competencies; and
- Conjugation of formal qualifications with non-formal ones, from a lifelong learning perspective.

United Kingdom

In Northern Ireland there was no statutory requirement for the provision of nursery education. However, government initiatives in the late 1990s set targets to provide additional government funded part-time pre-school places in a range of settings. During the 2003/04 school year, free (part-time) places were available for all children in their immediate pre-school year whose parents wanted them.

In England and Wales, the main aims of these strategies were to raise the quality of care, and to make childcare more affordable and more accessible by increasing places and improving information. The childcare strategy in Northern Ireland focused on the principles of inclusion, social justice, quality, affordability, flexibility, accessibility and partnership. Early years development and childcare partnerships in England and Wales and pre-school education development plans in Northern Ireland were subsequently set up to implement the strategies.

In September 2000, the foundation stage of education, which is based on six key areas of learning known as the early learning goals, was introduced in England. This is a distinct stage of education for children from the age of three until the end of the primary school reception class (usually aged five) and has now become a statutory part of the National Curriculum under the Education Act 2002. During the foundation stage, the overwhelming majority of children attend some form of pre-school or nursery education, either full- or part-time. Only a few children remain at home during the foundation stage, first attending school at the beginning of Year 1 (aged five+).

Elementary education provided by voluntary bodies became increasingly widespread throughout the nineteenth century. The Elementary Education Act, 1870 provided for the creation of School Boards, which could set up new 'board schools' in areas where existing voluntary provision was insufficient. This marked a significant turning-point in state participation in education. The Education Act (Northern Ireland), 1947 introduced legislation similar to the 1944 Education Act in England and Wales. Important reforms were introduced by the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986, the Education (NI) Order 1987, the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989, the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1993, the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996, the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 and the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998.

There has recently been widespread consultation on the future of education for 14- to 19-year-olds in England and Wales, and for post-primary education in Northern Ireland. In England, a new government strategy document of the Department of Education and Skills (DfES 2003) proposes changes to the current system.

The Government's White Paper, 'The Future of Higher Education', published in January 2003, set out the Government's strategy for the reform of higher education in England, as well as a number of measures which affect the rest of the United Kingdom. In July 2004 the Higher Education Act, 2004 was passed which legislated for the proposals in the White Paper. The Act introduces a new graduate contribution scheme under which universities in England will be allowed to seek a contribution of between £0 and £3,000 per year for each course. Students will be able to defer their contribution until after graduation, when payments will be through the tax system, linked to ability to pay. These changes will be implemented from 2005.

Recent Changes

The Leadership Foundation for Higher Education was launched in March 2004 to identify and meet key management and leadership needs across the higher education sector, build an elite group of professional leaders and managers, and develop good practice in leadership and management. An Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), or student ombudsman, was set up in January 2005 to consider student complaints in England and Wales. In 2003 a new Research Forum was set up, designed to strengthen the dialogue between government ministers and the higher education sector on research. This forum will enable the Government Ministerial group promoting research reform to exchange ideas on the key issues of the link between teaching and research, and developing greater research collaboration (<http://www.eurydice.org>).

Box 16.1: Multi Cultural Education in Britain

In 1981 a Committee chaired by Lord Swan was constituted to enquire into the education of the ethnic minority pupils. The committee in its report stressed need for the re-education of the majority society so as to lay the foundations for a genuinely pluralist society. The report pointed out that the majority society is not even considering the need for a multi-cultural education as they think that their society is one of mono-cultural. In order to provide "Education for All" the Committee made certain recommendations, such as:

- Britain is a multiracial and multicultural society and all pupils must be enabled to understand what this means.
- This challenge cannot be left to the separate independent initiatives of the Local Education Authorities and schools. Only those with experience of substantial numbers of ethnic minority pupils have attempted to tackle it, though the issues affect all schools and pupils.
- Education has to be about something more than the reinforcement of the beliefs, values and identity, which each child brings to the school.
- It is necessary to combat racism, to attack inherited myths and stereotypes and the ways they are embodied in institutional practice.
- Multicultural understanding has to permeate all aspects of a school's work. It is not a separate topic that can be welded on to existing practices.
- Only in this way can schools begin to offer anything approaching equality of opportunity for all pupils, which it must be the aspirations of the education system to provide.

Source: Abraham 1989

16.5 Recent Trends of Funding of Education in Europe

The funding of education is always a debateable issue all over the world. At present, the financing and management of school resources are debateable

issue on the future of compulsory education in Europe. In some countries, decentralisation policy is adopted. For instance, in the five Nordic countries, plus U.K., Bulgaria, Lithuania and Poland decentralisation of financing to the local authorities is very extensive, since they are in charge of funding school staff, operational and capital resources. The same applies to Hungary and Slovenia but in these two countries schools are also provided with funds for these resources from other public bodies. The financing of resources is almost entirely, the responsibility of the Community in the French Community of Belgium, in the case of schools administered by the Community authorities, and grant-aided private education, and in the Flemish Community in the case of all schools.

For many countries funding remains a key challenge and an obstacle to implementing the modern agenda. Several new Member States are aiming to tackle this issue by establishing partnerships with universities abroad for the provision of joint degrees. Many European countries made efforts to provide higher education to learners who belong to lower socio-economic backgrounds. This has been initiated for increasing the participation levels in higher education. Recently Open Universities are getting popularity for continuing professional development by using distance and blended learning and ICT-based learning approaches.

16.6 Education in South Eastern Europe

Although the countries of Southeastern Europe— Romania, Bulgaria, and Moldova— have been independent democracies since the 1991 fall of the Soviet Union, each has had problems transitioning from a centrally-planned economic system to a market-based economy. Both Bulgaria and Romania were significantly affected by the economic embargo placed on Yugoslavia in the 1990s, suffering billions of dollars in losses due to disrupted trade, transport, and investment. (<http://www.eia.doe.gov>)

At present, South-Eastern Europe (SEE) shows commonality in the challenges and problems in education. There is low GDP for education, low teacher salaries, child poverty and overloaded curricula. The regional diversity is too great. Like in other regions, the education system can be evaluated in terms of four main characteristics: availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability. (<http://devdata.worldbank.org>)

The Balkan peninsula in South East Europe is one of the world's most complex areas in terms of ethnicity, language and religion. Nation states mean less, generally speaking, than ethnic allegiances that cross borders: there are Albanians in Macedonia, Macedonians in Bulgaria, Croats in Bosnia, and Serbs in Croatia – the mix is often uneasy, and in recent times has been explosive (e.g. Kosovo, Bosnia). This regional diversity does not apply only to languages, religion and ethnicity – it permeates the entire geo-political history of SEE, preceding even the division of the Eastern and the Western Roman Empire.

Various studies conducted on “The Right to Education” show that some problems are common across the region i.e. low share of GDP for education; low teacher salaries; child poverty; overloaded curricula; deteriorating material base etc., but that there are no common solutions to these problems. After World War II, all SEE countries changed their education systems, mostly due to Soviet influence. The most common aims were the elimination of illiteracy and the extension of basic education from 4 to 8 years. Undeniably, the new systems were highly ideological. At least three distinctive types emerged: the Albanian, the Soviet and the Yugoslavian. Four year technical schools became common, while vocational education and training 13 were linked to the socialist industrial complex, organised differently in each of the three types.

All SEE countries have reached a level where access to basic education is not the main issue, but quality elementary education for all - including rural children, children of minorities, children with special needs, and children who are socially or emotionally at-risk - is the real task.

General upper secondary education today seems to occupy a better position than vocational education and training, in most SEE countries. The term "tertiary education" deserves more attention and debate. Mostly, a traditional model of university education is still in force. Unfortunately, this only sharpens questions of access, equity, and quality. Adult education and life-long learning seem to be under-valued. High unemployment and a completely altered structure of industry demand the development of a labour force that has different, broader work skills. *Teachers' education and development* need radical modernisation, both in its pre-service and in-service forms. The entire region needs modern institutions in this area. Education to be delivered through Open and Distance learning is the answer to all problems.

16.7 Conclusion

The analysis of the education system of Europe shows that education has a similar role to play in all countries. Educational systems are not traditional unchangeable structures. They need flexible changes in economic and social conditions. That is why educational system cannot be analysed without taking these conditions into account. In all the case studies of each country mentioned in this unit the educational systems have passed through fundamental changes during reforms. The aims of the reforms achieved were same i.e.,

- to make the relationship between educational and employment systems closer and more consistent;
- to make the preparation of the young graduates correspond to changing social requirements;
- to develop personal skills among youth;
- to contribute to increasing personal opportunity for social mobility.

The relationship between social requirements and the abilities of the educational system to satisfy them, naturally leads to the permanent outdistance of the requirements. At the same time, substantial differences among the educational system of the various countries could be found.

We have made an effort in this unit to provide you with a broad-brush treatment of the development of education in Europe. It is not possible to apprise you with the educational system of each country in a single unit because of their differences in cultural and sociological nature. Since, the unit is on 'Education in Europe', we have focussed our attention on the issues of managing the transformation of a dysfunctional education system into dynamic and vibrant of social change for development.

16.8 Further Reading

Masahiro Tanaka, 2005. *The Cross-Cultural Transfer of Educational Concepts and Practices: A Comparative Study*. Oxford: