
UNIT 1 EDUCATION AS AN OPERATIONAL ASPECT OF SOCIETY

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

Education influences the economic and social order of society. Education was once considered as a pursuit for those who had leisure. An educated man was supposed to be an idler, a person who did not like to work with his own hands. It was generally believed that a person of high education was only fit to be an armchair politician, philosopher or thinker.

During the re-Christian era, Greek city-states were at the zenith of their prosperity. Education during this period aimed at preparing students for citizenship and enabling the youth to successfully participate in statecraft. In Sparta, education was controlled by the state and every individual had to get military training for the defense of Sparta. Attaining physical excellence was the main criterion for the success of education. In Athens, the influence of sophists and their philosophy was significant and they promoted the growth of individualism. As such, civilizations designed their own education systems. We find the Pre-British period, British period, and Post-independence period in the history of education of India. Each had its emphasis according to the socio-political situation then prevailing.

In this unit we will be looking at the contribution of education to our society. We will discuss how education is a sub-system of society, how education changes society, and how it is influenced by the political and technological changes. We will also take a look at the constitutional provisions with regard to education.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

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

- describe education as a sub-system of society;
- understand the functions of education;
- analyse how education has evolved out of societal needs;
- explain how education has contributed to Indian society; and
- assess the efforts done by different ruling powers for education

1.3 EDUCATION AS A SOCIAL SUB-SYSTEM

1.3.1 Concept of System

A system is set of interrelated units. These units include people, buildings, animals, beliefs, laws, and so on. The word set implies that the units have common characteristics. Each unit is related to and dependent upon other units within the same system: a change in one unit results in changes in other units. In short the system is always more than the sum of its parts. You may be familiar with various systems like the social system, political system, educational system, digestive system, respiratory system etc. A system consists of parts that are inter-related and inter-dependent. The functioning of a system depends on the functioning of every part. The system functions towards the attainment of certain goals. The function of each part may appear different from the goal of the system.

The human body is an example of a system. It is made of number of interrelated parts. These parts have different functions. They perform their functions in relation to other parts. If any part of the body malfunctions, the rest of the body also malfunctions. For example, if the pancreases do not function well it results in excess of blood sugar which in turn can affect the heart, eyesight and other vital organs.

The goal of the digestive system is to break down food into the simplest form to be absorbed by the body. However, the function of esophagus may appear different from that of liver, teeth, and stomach. Nevertheless, if any one of them fails to function, the system is severely affected.

1.3.2 Society as a System

A social system is a set of interrelated social units. **Social units include individuals, groups, and organizations. A society can be considered as a system with a set of goals to achieve.** Social system is a network of social interaction and

action of individuals organized to carry out one or more essential tasks of the society. The society has interrelated units/parts which function for the attainment of the goals of the society. The different social units are the economic system, political system, education system, transport system etc which work in an inter-related, inter-dependent manner towards achieving the goals of the society.

Unless these units function in a coordinated manner, the goals of the society cannot be attained. Achieving total literacy, upliftment of the downtrodden are some of the goals of our Indian society. These cannot be achieved without the integrated effort of the political system, education system and the economic system.

1.3.3 Education as a Sub-system of Society

Education itself is a system. It is an agent for the transference of knowledge as well as socialization of individuals. The units of this system are: the education ministry, the education boards, the school complexes, teachers' associations, parents' associations, universities, colleges, national bodies like UGC, IGNOU, and NCERT. Education has a well-defined structure and sets of roles and it affects other social systems. Education as a system has its goals to achieve. The goals of schools, colleges, teachers' associations, Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), and education boards would be different. Nevertheless, they have the common goal of imparting quality education. The various units of the education system form a network.

Education functions in close relation to other systems like the political system, and family system. The policies of the State, the funds provided by the State, the family background of the students, training given to the teachers, and admission policy, influence the success of an education system. **Within society, it is a sub-system. It functions towards helping the society to attain its goals. It is a sub-system and is responsible for bringing about changes in other social systems.** *The demise of the Indian indigenous system is a clear example of the subordinate role of education compared to other dominant social systems.*

The education system provides the essential human resource for the other sub-systems of the society.

The characteristics of education as a social sub-system:

- Education is a powerful agent in building social individualism. It develops respect for social norms as well as values, knowledge and understanding in an individual for making him/her responsible and effective in society.
- It helps to mould society in the desired direction.
- It studies the interaction system which emerges from the structure and functioning of human groups and also helps the child to understand these interaction parameters.
- Education system emerges as a result of the working and dynamics of different institutions of society.

- Educational institutions such as schools and colleges provide opportunities for meeting man's needs to pass on the desirable characteristics of his culture in the form of values, and norms.
- Educational system through its experiences enriches the discipline of Education and gives new insights for the solution of educational problems.

1.4 EDUCATION AS AN OPERATIONAL ASPECT OF SOCIETY

1.4.1 Functions of Education

Brown (1947) says, '*Education is the consciously controlled progress whereby changes in behaviour are produced in the person and through the person within the group.*' **Havinghurst and Neugarten** (1964) has given two important functions of education system. According to them, it is to be

- i) a mirror that reflects society as it is or to be a stabilizer of society
- ii) an agent of social change and a force directed towards implementing the ideals of society.

George Payne considered three main functions of education from the point of view of educational sociology. They are:

- i) assimilation of traditions
- ii) development of new social patterns
- iii) creative and constructive role

Emile Durkhiem (1956), the French sociologist, saw the major function of education as the transmission of society's norms and values. He maintained that, '*Society can survive only if there exists among its members a sufficient degree of homogeneity; education perpetuates and reinforces this homogeneity by fixing in the child from the beginning the essential similarities which collective life demands.*'

These eminent persons have identified the functions of education. A common thread found among their views is the change, the survival, and the stability factor of a society. We can broadly classify the three functions of education as follows:

- i) It transmits culture from one generation to the other.
- ii) It trains people for specialized adult roles.
- iii) It changes the cultural heritage by developing new knowledge.

i) **Transmission of Culture**

Franz Boaz (1930-34), a German-American anthropologist says, "*Culture embraces all the manifestations of social habits of a community. The reactions of the individual are affected by the habits of the group in which he lives and the products of human activities determined by those habits.*"

Culture involves the common ways followed by a particular society in their food habits, attire/dress, greetings, dance, music, hospitality, interactions, art and architecture, literature, customs, beliefs, ideologies, rearing of young ones, and values. These differ from society to society.

Bronislaw Malinowski (1953), a Polish born British anthropologist expresses the view that man varies in two-respects-physical form and in social heritage or culture. The variations physical form are due to heredity. The gene combination does not determine his life cycle. The social environment brings changes in the behaviour pattern and plays a vital role in his developmental process. Also as he develops, he contributes to his social environment. The cultural heritage in which he is born helps him to satisfy his needs. He further says, "*culture deeply modifies human innate endowment, and in doing this it not only bestows blessings but also obligations and demands the surrender of great many personal liberties to the common welfare.*"

Education is required to perform the function of transmission and enrichment, acceptance and reformulation, change and reconstruction. It transmits the culture to the new generation and transforms the outlook of the young towards life in the background of the past, in the context of cross-cultural influences and in the light of future requirements for the individual and the society. It provides for the fulfillment of the need of the individual born out of his being a member of a culturally oriented society. Its function is also to make the life of the individual rich by giving him the cultural attainments of his race.

Emile Durkhiem argues that to become attached to a society, the child must feel it is real, alive and powerful, a feeling that dominates the person and to which he owes the best part of himself.

In all societies, parents teach their children things like values, attitudes, roles and so on. In simpler societies, this informal teaching may be enough to transmit the store of knowledge. There is no great specialization or division of labour. There is little accumulated knowledge.

In modern societies, by contrast, the store of knowledge is enormous. Families cannot transmit all the knowledge. Hence, education as a social system which can store, preserve, and transmit culture, was institutionalized. In advanced industrialized societies education is provided by the state as a matter of right to all its citizens. In non-literate societies, formal education was unknown. Young people learned their lessons for life largely by joining the adults in their daily routines.

Education helps the individual in developing a behaviour-pattern which makes him acceptable in a cultural milieu and also equips him for formulating the cultural milieu with the experiences gained by him by living his own life. Education equips the individual for bringing about cultural changes and for constructing new cultural patterns.

Enculturation: Mary Goodman uses the word enculturation to describe the process of transmitting a culture to the young. The process by which the young learn the traditional ways of the society is called enculturation. It differs from society to society. The enculturation to a great extent takes place through indirect, informal and unconscious process. It is by living in a cultural milieu that the transmission of culture takes place. Through education the enculturation process is formalized.

It should be based on:

- An understanding of the culture of the society.
- An understanding of the individual.
- An understanding of the individual and unconscious ways by which the child acquires the cultural pattern.
- An understanding of what needs to be transmitted in the light of the present and the future needs of the society.

It is the process which creates cohesiveness in society. It maintains the commonly agreed upon conduct, customs, food habits, interaction, and costumes. This gives each society a typical identity. Enculturation ensures the continuity of this identity. Otherwise with time, the various communities would have lost their identity.

ii) **Training for Specialized Roles**

Durkheim argues that in complex industrial societies the school serves a function which cannot be provided by either family or peer group. Membership in the society as a whole is based on neither their kin nor their friends. In the school the child must interact with other members of the school community in terms of a fixed set of rules. According to him, it is by respecting the school rules that the child learns to respect rules in general and develops the habit of self-control and restraint.

Durkheim observes that education also teaches the individual specific skills necessary for future occupation. The relatively unspecialized division of labour in pre-industrial society meant that occupational skills could easily be transferred from parents to children without the need for formal education. In industrial society, solidarity is based upon the interdependence of specialized skills. Industrial society is thus united by value consensus and a specialized division of labour whereby specialists combine to produce goods and services.

American sociologist Talcott Parsons argues that after primary socialization within the family, the school takes over as the focal socialising agency. School acts as a bridge between the family and the society as a whole, preparing the child for his adult role. Within the family the status of the child is ascribed by birth. Parents treat their children as their particular child rather than judging him in terms of a standard yardstick which can be applied every individual. However, in advanced industrial society, status in adult life is largely achieved: for example occupational status. The school prepares the individual for this transition. *It establishes universalistic standards in terms of which all pupils achieve their status. Modern industrial society is increasingly based on achievement rather than ascription.*

Parsons sees the educational system as an important mechanism for the selection of individuals for their future role in society. "It functions to allocate these human resources within role structure of the adult society" according to Parsons.

With the change in technology and the knowledge explosion, the role of the teacher, the evaluation system, and curriculum are undergoing a sea change. New specializations in various fields, and automation, demand new skills and pattern of working. Call centers, on-line exam, on-line courses, ATMs, credit cards, SMS, and cyber crime were unheard of in the past.

For example, for a person to be employed even as a shop assistant or in a call center, knowledge of computers has now become essential. A glance at the newspaper advertisements for employment will reveal this. Children learn how to operate computers and other electronic gadgets even before they learn writing and reading.

The education system is reviewing its policies to suit the trend of society. The individual cannot survive by acquiring a skill for a lifetime. One needs to keep abreast with changes happening very frequently. Hence education has to equip the individual with skills to upgrade oneself. Thus it needs to be life long learning.

iii) Change in Cultural Heritage

Education is not only concerned with the simple transmission of knowledge, its importance is in preparing the child to meet the demands of society. Since society is continually changing, its needs also go on changing. It is for meeting the changing needs and also for bringing about the desirable changes in society that education is needed.

We find significant changes happening in our society. More women are now entering the workforce, there is a reduction in child marriages, women are participating in sports which has been a male bastion and more people are going in for education. Marriages through Internet, (even nikah), invitations and correspondence through mobile or net, more people nurturing high aspirations and achieving them, mushrooming of new professionals (like wedding planner), rampant concern for health and beauty – these are some of the changes in cultural heritage.

Society undergoes change due to many reasons: political, economic, technological, and philosophical. Education always plays a part in its propagation. These changes mentioned above change the cultural heritage of the society. They alter the social interaction, and values.

Now we have to decide how much of the culture should be altered, replaced, maintained. Some of the customs may be found to have lost their purpose, in which case, they should be corrected. Education helps us to know about the cultures, scientific discoveries, human achievements, and human struggles. It encourages us to question the validity of our cultural practices.

Acculturation: It is required that the members of society must learn to adapt to constant changes in the culture. The process by which individuals learn the new or emerging customs and values is called acculturation.

The two processes of acculturation and enculturation ensure cultural continuity. Our country has been invaded, and ruled by many foreign forces over time. However, our society has not lost the element of our culture. On the other hand we have ingrained many customs of other cultures in our language, food habits, costumes, music, art and architecture. This makes our culture even more rich and vibrant which attracts many towards us. There are communities which are at the brink of extinction, due to their inability to undergo acculturation.

For every society stability and change are both essential. The stability is required to keep its values, norms, traditions and customs and to save it from disintegration. The change is required for avoiding stagnation. Hence all members of a society must learn the established patterns of behaviour but also be ready to adapt their

established patterns of behaviour and modes of thinking to new and emerging values. If they do not learn to adapt there is a risk of conflict and stagnation. The process of stability and change are applicable to all types of societies whether they are developed or developing we find *change in our society*, for instance, towards women working in industry/ army/films, dress code for women, attitude towards persons with communicable diseases, and untouchability.

Check Your Progress 1

- Notes :** a) Write your answers in the space given below.
b) Compare your answer with those given at the end of the Unit.

1) How does education transmit culture?

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2) Why should every society undergo enculturation and acculturation in order to survive?

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3) How does education mould individuals for new, specialized roles?

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4) How does cultural heritage change?

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1.4.2 Social Change and Education

The Education Commission (1964-66) has observed "*If this change on a grand scale is to be achieved without violent revolution there is one instrument and one instrument only that can be used: education. Other agencies may help, and can indeed sometimes have a more apparent impact. But the national system of education is the only instrument that can reach all the people.*"

The life of an individual is moulded to a great extent by the society he lives in. The institutions of the society shape his mind, bring harmony in his body and help in the emergence of his personality. The influence is limited to the extent the individual's inherent nature is capable of being moulded. Each individual has his own interests, abilities, and rate of development. Society tries to achieve certain harmony in the diversities and creates a social order to which the individual is expected to submit himself. The individual, on the other hand influences the social order and through his own individual equipment tries to bring reforms in it. This process of enforcement of social order and the reforming of it through individual efforts continue in a cyclic order.

Education keeps this order moving with its two-fold function of conservatism and progressivism. Without education, either the social order perishes and there is all-round chaos as in anarchy or it becomes so stable that the individual becomes a slave to it and continues to lead a life on a beaten track. Education brings social change. But social change is vitally linked to economic change. An education which does not promote economic change very often fails to promote social change. This is the reason why indigenous education in India in the 18th and 19th century failed to bring social reforms in the country. The Indian village was having an unchanging economic order and whatever education was provided were for the promotion of traditionalism, conservatism, and orthodoxy. The society becomes static and degenerative. The economic growth leads to social change. It is education that leads to economic growth. The developments in science and technology are also dependent on education. The social change in a nation may take place because of socio-economic-political upheavals. It may begin at an unconscious level.

The life of the society through imitation may adopt some cultural patterns or a value system without being conscious that a change is being brought about in it. Such change we may refer to as changes at the unconscious level. The changes, however, do not remain at the unconscious level for a long time. They may be imitated at an unconscious level but their acceptance takes place at the conscious level and it is only at this level that the changes become universally acceptable in a group, a society or a nation.

The education in India during the British period especially with English as a medium of instruction influenced the thoughts and life styles of the people. They began to imitate the Western ways. It also created a sense of frustration about their own ways. The education thus created a frustration about the situation and also prepared them for accepting changes in their life patterns. It also enabled the individual to proceed in the direction that would bring about changes in the society at the conscious level.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Mahatma Gandhi, highly educated and enlightened Indians, made all efforts at the conscious level to bring about social changes. All these reformists felt the need of a sound education to bring about social reforms. The educational backwardness sustained and nurtured social backwardness. Gandhiji realized the unproductiveness of the prevalent education. He felt education which kept the people away from one's work and inculcated hatred for work is not worth the pursuit. A strong relationship between "hand and head" was established in his basic system of education.

The Education Commission (1964-66) has observed, “*One of the important social objectives of education is to equalize opportunity, enabling the backward or underprivileged classes and individuals to use education as a leveler for the improvement of their condition.*”

In a society if all the individuals are treated as equal, it is important that they get equal opportunities for advancement. Since education is one most important means for *vertical mobility*, it is through an exposure to education that one can aspire to achieve higher status, position and emoluments. The equality of educational opportunities will ensure rapid advancement of a nation. When all people have the opportunity to get education they will have a chance to develop their natural talents and thus enrich the society. Vertical mobility takes place whenever an individual’s occupational status changes, his education level changes, and his life style changes. It is through education that one can hope to replace the ascribed status by achieved status. Thus, education can help to realize one of the national goals of removing social inequalities.

Check Your Progress 2

- Notes :** a) Write your answers in the space given below.
b) Compare your answer with those given at the end of the Unit.

5) How does education bring about change in society?

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6) How does education help in vertical mobility?

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1.4.3 Education and Economic Development

In the present times no nation can think of social or economic development without ensuring an abundant supply of highly educated and skilled people. A nation of uneducated citizens would find itself in great difficulties even to survive. The present world is living through a technological and scientific revolution. This has necessitated that every country should have an adequate number of qualified scientists, technologists and technicians. Education in a purely agrarian economy has always been of low value as the production was considered in monetary terms. **The concept has now changed.** Agriculture in modern times is as much a concern of the scientist and technologist as that of a farmer. In the industrialized countries, the need for education at all levels began to be felt as the industries developed.

Stainslov Strumelin (1962) said, "highly qualified workers lead to high productivity of labour and increase not only their own earnings but also the social product and consequently the national income." Peter Drucker (1959) says, "productive work in today's society and economy is work that applies vision, knowledge and concepts- work that is based on the mind rather than hand". The technological revolution has created the need for scientists, technologists and technicians for a progressive country, the supply of whom at a regular rate and in adequate numbers has to be ensured through the expansion of education. Education not only produces technologists but technologically and scientifically literate persons. The impact of education on economic growth and of economic growth on education has been tremendous. The richer nations have an enriching and expanding system of education. In USA, Russia, and Denmark, the high rates of economic growth were coupled with high rates of expenditure on education.

Vaizey (1962) observes, "*As a nation grows richer it tends to increase more than proportionately its expenditure on education.*" Galbriath (1959) says, "*Education increases our productivity.*" Israel is a good example for educational investment providing high returns.

The outstanding feature of the initial Five Year plans of India was their laudable goals and objectives for facilitating educational growth at all levels in general and primary education in particular. Further, the accelerated pace at which technology institutes, agricultural universities, etc were opened immediately after independence, shows the expectations from education by a nascent nation, facing the Herculean task of taking care of millions.

Today, though all her problems have not been solved absolutely, India is a powerful and vibrant economy of the world. This has been possible because of widespread education which is being reviewed, and revised periodically. Nevertheless, there may be found many flaws in the education system in India, at the execution level. The self-reliance in terms of agriculture, technology, and expertise in large number of areas has plummeted India to a powerful position. This was possible because of widespread educational facilities. As discussed in the previous sub-unit, education trains people for specialized roles, it equips people to adapt to the changed social, technological, economic, political set-up.

Accomplishments since Independence in 1947 in terms of literacy spread of institutions and participation and equalisation of educational opportunities have been quite significant. There has been phenomenal increase in the number of educational institutions and teachers and students. The number of teachers has gone up five-fold and the number of schools three fold. Literacy rate has nearly trebled. The decennial census, 2001, saw India's literacy rate around 62%. India's economy is on the fulcrum of an ever-increasing growth curve. The Economic Survey 2005-06 estimates that the GDP will grow at 8.1 per cent. The manufacturing and the services sector have become a major driving force for the Indian economy. With both of them on a soaring growth path, one can concur that India can aim towards a nominal growth rate of 12 per cent. We can observe a phenomenal growth in economy alongside literacy. India is making gains in the areas of agriculture, industry, and construction at an unprecedented rate. For example: - There is a strong relationship between economic growth and the level of education. Kerala is the most literate state in India. A 2002 survey showed Kerala as number 3 in affluence level, and number 5 in terms of infrastructure

penetration and investment attractiveness. Today, the state's domestic product (SDP) is growing at 7 per cent, and the state government's finance department expects the SDP to grow at 7% in real terms, over the next three years.

Check Your Progress 3

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answer with those given at the end of the Unit.

7) How does the economy of a country depend on its education?

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1.4.4 Political Systems and Education

Influence of Some Political Ideologies

Karl Jaspers (1960) has written, "Nothing man does is quite without political significance".

Politics is usually associated with administration, rights and duties of the citizens, and social living of the people. We are considering the education prevalent in different political set ups like the Fascist, the Communist, and the democratic.

Fascism believes in the supremacy of the State over the individual. It is a political system which places collectivism in the form of supremacy of the state over the individual. It discards individualism. The chief purpose of education in a Fascist State is the enlightenment of the masses about the ideals exalted by the Fascist ruler. The purpose of education is to glorify the nation and prepare the people for all sacrifices for her supremacy over other nations of the world. The important task is to educate and train the elite so that the State can be administered well. Education is not considered as a birth right of all. The three functions of the school in this perspective, are to train the character, to educate the intellect, to develop the body.

The communist philosophy is the philosophy of scientific realism. The communists believe in building a classless society. They differ in their idea of freedom. The free individual as conceived by communism is considered to be really free since his freedom does not restrict the power of the State and he is free in the sense that he works for the good of all. His own individuality does not matter till his work with his fellows is for the furtherance of the interests of the State. Education is given with specific task and its success is judged on the basis of national progress and prosperity. The individual is not free to pursue his own choice of subject or career. The individual refinement is considered of value only in terms of social good.

Democracy believes in giving independence to the people but if the people are not educated and not disciplined for social good then this independence would take the form of anarchy. **Hutchins** (1953) says, "Political freedom cannot endure

unless it is accompanied by provision for the unlimited acquisition of knowledge. Peace is not likely unless there are continuous, unlimited opportunities for learning and unless men continuously avail themselves of them." For the success of democracy it is essential that each individual owns his responsibilities consciously and this will be possible when the individual's power of understanding is high and he is of good character. **Gandhiji** said, **"I hold that democracy cannot be evolved by forcible methods. The spirit of democracy cannot be imposed from without. It has to come from within."** He also said, "Swaraj is to be obtained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority." Therefore, such education is desirable which makes conversant the citizens with the democratic ideals and develops in them those qualities which are most. The education should inculcate self-realisation, human relationship, economic efficiency and civic responsibility.

The above discussion shows the emphasis laid down in different political systems. Each leads to a particular type of educational system to fulfill the principles of the political system.

Influence of Political System on Indian Education

We will attempt a brief discussion on the influence of various political situations in India on her education. Here we will look at the changes happening in Indian education due to the influence of her rulers. The discussion will deal only up to National Education Policy on 1986, in order to show how the change in political situations shaped the course of Indian education.

In the ancient period, educational policy was laid down by the religious system. There are three broad strands of education that prevailed during this period: the Vedic tradition, Buddhist educational policy, and the Jain system of education.

As the caste system got crystallized, occupations became hereditary rather than a matter of aptitude. Hence, new entrants to the society were socialized in the family; the occupational training was received from their elders by practicing. Formal education was allowed only for the upper castes. Education at the elementary level was provided by the local communities, parents, and philanthropic rulers, and the nature of education imparted consisted of certain common curricular aspects. In the Buddhist and Jain systems there were no restrictions of entry based on one's birth, as there was no caste system in these religions.

The Muslim rulers in the medieval period did not interfere with the education of the Hindus. They started their own schools in their places of worship. Education continued to be self-directed and offered through self-controlled decentralized institutions. However, emperors like Akbar and his successors encouraged the starting and maintaining of elementary schools called *Maktabs* in mosques. *Madrasas* were established as the centers of higher learning to teach Persian and the Koran. The separation of the Hindu religion from the state had a greater impact on the accessibility factor. The religion legitimized the state. With the advent of the Muslim rulers the Hindu religion lost its superior position. Consequently, the hold of the caste system on education started becoming weak. In the absence of state control and interference, all types of educational institutions continued to function under local patronage and under the supervision of religious leaders. There was

no change in the content and process of education. The clientele for education obtained schooling to carry out their traditional occupations.

Initially, the Britishers showed interest in Indian education so as to assure the powerful educated sections that were the product of the caste based social stratification. Later, when the regime established itself, it was the stratification which tried to persuade the rulers to expand the education system to ensure their participation in the governance of the masses. In between the two systems the educational system grew to balance the demands of the community and the State.

The colonial era started with the entrenchment of East India Company as a mercantile interest in the sub-continent. The Christian missionaries, who were brought by the company as an obligation, started their proselytizing activities and opened schools for the converted lower castes. The Missionary activity in education became another structural elaboration of the indigenous system.

The Company began conquering more territories and ruling over them with the protection of the British empire. The Hindu upper castes resisted the missionary activities. The company did not want to interfere in the educational spheres. **The politico-economic compulsions of the period compelled the rulers to adopt a pro-native educational system policy.** In 1781, the Calcutta Madrassa was started to conciliate the influential Muslims and Hindus. This was followed by the starting of the Benaras Sanskrit College in 1791. Right from 1797, Charles Grant, an influential statesman, was advocating that English education be introduced in India. The famous 'Macaulay's minutes' forcefully supported the cause of English education in the Indian territories, to prepare the people who could occupy the subordinate positions in the colonial government and help in administering the natives. **English became the official language in 1837. Demand for English education was created by throwing open the subordinate positions for the natives in 1844.** In 1854 Charles Grant, while supporting the educational policy of education through English language, put forward the case for education through native languages. No action was taken due to political reasons.

Till now we have seen the change of education system with minimum control from the rulers, being the privilege of some, meant only for learning the skills of the trade for the artisans, to gradually becoming the pulse of the ruling power. It slowly takes up the active role of ushering change *as desired by the governing body.*

In 1857, Indian territories came under the direct rule of the British Crown. During the same year the government of India started universities at Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. Primary education suffered neglect till 1882, when the Indian Education Commission recommended providing of funds. Thus, the management of primary education came under local self-government. This period also saw the creation of Indian Educational Services in 1896. There was a rapid growth of private schools and colleges while indigenous schools decayed and disappeared.

Under Lord Curzon (1902-1921), the policy shifted towards the improvement of quality of education. More finances were available for education. Government assumed a more active role in the field of education. There was a large scale unprecedented expansion of government-supported and government - recognised

institutions of education at all levels. But the literacy rates and enrollment were far from satisfactory.

Under Diarchy (1921-1937), the governance of education was under the legislature but the financial arrangements were with the government. Though there were conflicts, this period was marked by considerable progress. There was a widespread growth of institutions and enrollment. One important development of the period was the use of Indian languages as the medium of education at the secondary level.

The last decade of the colonial rule saw the abolishment of the Diarchy, slackening of secondary education and the expansion of higher education. The expansion of primary education was also halted.

During 1937-1939, far reaching decisions were taken by the elected provincial governments in the field of education. The new system of education proposed by Gandhiji was worked out in detail by the educationists, under the leadership of Dr. Zakir Hussain. Unfortunately for the common people of India the full-scale implementation was not on the cards, as the elected provincial governments had to resign because of the political differences with the British in the context of the outbreak of the Second World War.

The Sargeant plan: The plan had the clear-cut objective of achieving educational development in 40 years which would be comparable to the level of educational development prevailing in Britain at that time. It addressed universal compulsory education, high school, training of teachers, creation of employment bureaus, and the education of physically and mentally handicapped. It definitely shows the earnestness with which the government tried to improve the *quality of education comprehensively*, though it was criticized for many reasons.

Post-independence period: Immediately after independence, Government of India had to tackle grave problems like refugees, partition and strengthening the administration. The priority given to education is evident from the appointment of the University Education Commission under Dr. Radhakrishnan amidst the crisis – like situation in the country. The government felt the need for the improvement of the universities to produce educated manpower for administration and skilled manpower for the modernisation of the economy by harnessing new technologies.

Most of the States structured their education systems at the school level *according to the Sargent Plan*; since the Plan accepted most of the features of Basic education (Gandhiji's new education plan) and also supported a dual system of traditional primary schools and basic primary schools.

The University Education Commission (1948-1949) laid great stress on the introduction of general education throughout school and college stages. The commission clearly wanted that the school should diversify its outcomes in such a way that many would effectively participate in real life by taking up self-employment and only a few would study beyond school level.

We can see how the emphasis and the expectations from education underwent dramatic shifts. However, each shift shows the reflection of the need of the social set up at the particular time. It also depicts increase in the comprehensiveness and the refinement of the policies.

Up to the end of the Third Five Year Plan (1969), school education failed to respond to the emerging social and economic needs of India. Literacy gains were not impressive, so was the performance of the primary education sector. Though education during this period expanded in terms of enrolment, numbers of institutions and teachers and expenditure, the nation was not able to fulfill its constitutional obligation of universalising elementary education, and achieving the goal of equity and social justice through education.

The Constitution of the Education Commission (1964-1966) is considered as one of the significant landmarks in the history of Indian education. It adopted a comprehensive approach to reconstruct education and develop a blueprint for a National System of education. *The commission firmly believed that education is a powerful instrument to bring about the desired changes in Indian society more so when the country was challenged with problems of population explosion, poverty, poor economic growth, social stratification, and political turmoil.* The Commission identified modernisation as the central issue of the social context in which Indian society was situated and required education to respond to the challenges of modernisation. It believed that education should recognize the phenomenon of the explosion of knowledge and emphasized the need for developing critical and creative mental faculties through a new approach. It also felt that education should prepare individuals with open, enquiring, thinking and judging minds rather than act as a mere transmitter of knowledge. Of the many salient features of the Commission it recommended 10+2+3 pattern of education, the creation of a socially cohesive and egalitarian society, and the need for vocationalisation of higher secondary education.

We can see the change in the philosophy of the Education Commission. It has tried to address the issues of knowledge explosion, human resource development, even as early as 1964. The Commission's recommendations could not be implemented owing to lack of political will and commitment on the part of the Government.

The Policy on Education 1986 (NPE-86): The three five year plans between the years 1964 and 1985 also looked into the developmental aspects of education along with NPE-68. Many of the important recommendations of the Education Commission were either diluted or rejected when NPE-68 was evolved. The achievements in education in the four decades after Independence were not impressive. There was only 20% increase in literacy universalisation of elementary education (UEE) was a far cry growth of educational institutions was uneven; and low retention rates and large scale dropout at primary stage were causes of concern; and low financial provisions for education indicated the priority extended to education.

A status document called "Challenges of Education – A Policy Prospective" which provided a framework for the education system to meet the new challenges. It resulted in the NPE-86. It contended that the role of education is essentially to transform a static society into a vibrant one. *The policy recognized the need for creating not only access to education for all sections but also getting them involved in the process of continuing education so as to promote a learning society.*

The NPE-86 gave an unqualified priority for UEE, emphasised on improvement of facilities, universal enrolment and satisfactory levels of achievement. It adopted the dual track approach with simultaneous attention to adult literacy and primary education. It advocated a large scale and systematic programme of Non-Formal Education. It pronounced the shift from mere equalization of opportunity to education for women's equality. The Policy perceives education as an essential element for all-round development of society, to sensitise the minds for furthering the goals of socialism, secularism and democracy. It also envisages education to develop the required manpower, to promote and sustain economic development.

An important milestone was the laying down the minimum levels of learning for all stages. For the first time, pace setting schools were proposed. Navodaya schools for the rural talented children came into existence. DIET (District Institute of Educational Training) for training teachers for primary schools while teacher training colleges and SCERTs would provide continuous in-service training for secondary school teachers. As a result of the Policy, the seventh five year plan identified the thrust areas in education as (i) universal enrolment and universal retention and (ii) substantial improvement in the quality of education. Operation Blackboard (OB) was launched to implement the Policy.

We have seen the paradigm shift in education system from the time, it was supported by the patronage of kings to the time of the British Empire to the NPE-86. It reveals the situations which placed education at a critical political position. The dying away of caste based education, the prominence of English education, the efforts done by post-independent India to harness benefits from education, and to uplift the downtrodden by giving educational opportunities have all been discussed. The education system evolved to cater to the changing educational needs of the social structure.

Constitutional Provisions in India for Education

The Constitution of India has provided a large number of clauses and articles which have a direct or indirect bearing on education. The national goals of the country are enshrined in the preamble. The four-fold ideal of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity has been incorporated for the elimination of social inequalities, economic disparities and political privileges. The ideals of justice, equality, liberty, and fraternity cannot be realized unless through education an understanding among the people is created about their significance. They are the guiding principles and the base on which the future laws and regulations are framed. The new nation wanted education to serve the Constitution. The Education system is expected to become subordinate to the goals of the Indian Constitution. The three major programmes that the nation took up to meet the national objectives were:

- Democracy as a way of life
- Socialistic path to secure the lives of the citizens
- Industrialization based upon modern science and technology.

Out of the above, the first two programmes are built into the Constitution and the third emerged out of the deliberations of the political and administrative machinery that derived authority from the Constitution.

Article 45 under the Directive Principles of the State Policy provides that the 'state shall endeavour to provide within a period of 10 years from the

commencement of this Constitution for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years’.

Article 351, Article 29, Article 350-A, B are all related to the duty of the State with respect to language. While article 351 is concerned with promotion of Hindi language, Article 29 gives right to citizens to conserve and protect their language. Article 350-A states the right to provide facilities to linguistic minority groups for instruction in the mother tongue during primary stage.

Article 30 gives the right to minorities to establish the educational institution of their choice and further says that the state shall not discriminate amongst any educational institution on any grounds. Article 28 declares that no religious instruction shall be provided in an educational institution aided by the State.

The constitution provides justice in social, economic, and political spheres. Article 15 has banned all discrimination against citizens on grounds of religion, race, caste, and sex. **Article 29** has provisions to eliminate discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, and colour in any government-aided schools. Article 16 is devoted to special reservations regarding educational facilities for scheduled castes.

The Constitution gave education a very prominent role in the development of modern India. The education system was expected to build the values embedded in the constitution, promote the educational interest of the weaker sections of educationally and socially backward classes and provide resources for education to make primary education compulsory. The education system being a subordinate system was given a greater responsibility and in turn the Constitution

These constitutional provisions mentioned here have shown the efforts the State has taken to guarantee facilities for education to all, to eliminate discrimination and exploitation of weaker sections of society and ensure the democratic provisions for every one’s right to express themselves, so as to achieve the ideals enshrined in the Constitution.

Check Your Progress 4

- Notes :** a) Write your answers in the space given below.
b) Compare your answer with those given at the end of the Unit.

8) Which constitutional provisions are related to education?

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9) List the events mentioned in the discussion above, that took place during the British period in the field of education?

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10) What were the highlights of the Education Commission?

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11) How did NPE-86 tackle the staggering problems in the education system?

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1.5 LET US SUM UP

We took you down the memory lane from the pre-British period to 1986 to highlight the events that have shaped the education system of which you are a product.

In this unit, we have discussed, though briefly, the relationship between education and society. We have seen how education functions and contributes towards the up-liftment of the society. The functioning of society as a system and education as a sub-system has been discussed. We saw the shift in the emphasis of priorities in the pre-British, British and post-Independence period, in Indian education, the ideological differences and their impact on the education of a state even in pre-Christian period. We found a paradigm shift in the field of education from education as exclusive privilege to compulsory provision for primary education. The constitutional provisions for the protection of the various sections of society were also mentioned. The contributions of various Commissions, Plans before and after Independence reveals that there were spurts of visionary and well planned efforts, some of which did change the course of Indian education. Much more needs to be achieved, which has not been achieved so far due to either political situations or political lethargy. The unit does highlight the significance and emphasis laid by various Commissions on education.

It is reaffirmed that education is the only tool to fulfill the Constitutional obligations to bring about socio-economic transformation.

1.6 UNIT END EXERCISES

- 1) What are the major changes that you found in the policies towards education over the period in this discussion?
- 2) How can education in India be made more productive?

- 3) What are the reasons for the problems infesting education in spite of the various Commissions making relevant recommendations?
- 4) Compare the budget allocation for education by different states and the center for the last decade. Analyse its impact on education.
- 5) Refer the various commissions of post-independent India and find which of the recommendations have not been fully implemented.

1.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- 1) It transmits culture to the new generation and transforms the outlook of the young towards life. The process by which the young learn the traditional ways of the society is called enculturation. Through education the enculturation process is formalized.
- 2) For every society, stability and change, both are essential. The stability is required to keep its values, norms, traditions and customs and to save it from disintegration. The change is required for avoiding stagnation in it.
- 3) The educational system as an important mechanism for the selection of individuals for their future role in society. School acts as a bridge between the family and the society as a whole, preparing the child for his/her adult role.
- 4) Society undergoes change due to many reasons: political, economic, technological, and philosophical. These changes alter the cultural heritage of society.
- 5) Education prepares the individual for social changes. It initiates the social changes and gives them a direction and purpose. Education determines the nature of social changes which ought to be brought about.
- 6) Since education is one most important means for *vertical mobility*, it is through an exposure to education that one can aspire to achieve higher status, position and emoluments. Vertical mobility takes place whenever an individual's occupational status changes, and his education level changes.
- 7) Education increases our productivity. The richer nations have an enriching and expanding system of education. In USA, Russia, Denmark etc., the high rates of economic growth were coupled with high rates of expenditure on education. There has been a phenomenal increase in the number of educational institutions, and numbers of teachers and students. The number of teachers has gone up five-fold and the number of schools three fold. Literacy rate has nearly trebled. The manufacturing and the services sector have become a major driving force of the Indian economy. With both of them on a soaring growth path, one can concur that India can aim towards a nominal growth rate of 12 per cent. The Economic Survey 2005-06 estimates that the GDP will grow at 8.1 per cent.
- 8) Constitutional provisions related to education are as follows:
 - i) Article 45: State shall endeavour to provide free and compulsory education till 14 years of age.

- ii) Article 351: Promotion of Hindi Language
 - iii) Article 29: Right to conserve and protect individual's language
 - iv) Article 30: Right to minorities to establish the educational institution
 - v) Article 20: No discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, colour in any Government aided schools.
- 9) Events took place during the British period in the field of education:
- i) The Christian missionaries opened schools
 - ii) In 1791, the Banaras Sanskrit College opened
 - iii) In 1857, Government of India opened universities at Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay
 - iv) In 1902-1921, the quality of education was improved at all the levels
 - v) In 1921-1937, the use of Indian languages as the medium of education at the secondary level started.
 - vi) The Sergeant plan addressed universal compulsory education, high school, training of teachers creation of employment bureaus and the education of physical and mentally handicapped.
- 10) Highlights of the Education Commission:
- a) Education to respond to the challenges of modernization
 - b) Emphasis on developing critical and creative mental faculties through a new approach.
 - c) It recommended 10+2+3 pattern of education
 - d) The need for vocationalisation of higher secondary education.
- 11) The NPE-86 gave priority to UEE. It advocated Non-formal education, opportunity of women's education for equality and gave attention to adult literacy and primary education. Minimum level of learning (MLL) for all was set up. Navodaya schools came into existence. Teachers training programmes for primary and secondary stages were also improved.

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