Indira Gandhi National Open University
Staff Training and Research Institute of
Distance Education

MDE-416
Curriculum Development for Distance Education

Block

1

THE FIELD OF CURRICULUM

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MDE-416 : CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

Course Outline

LET US BEGIN HERE

The course on the theme of 'Curriculum Development for Distance Education' is divided into five Blocks. This is the first one. It comprises three units in all. A schematic representation of the design of the unit is given below to facilitate your access to the content presented here.

UNIT X*

X.0 Objectives

X.1 Introduction

X.2 Section 1 (Main Theme)

x.2.1 Sub-Section 1 of Section 1

x.2.2 Sub-Section 2 of Section 1

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Check Your Progress

X.3 Section 2 (Main Theme)

x.3.1 Sub-Section 1 of Section 2

x.3.2 Sub-Section 2 of

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Check Your Progress

Answers to Check Your Progress

X.n Let Us Sum Up

* 'X' stands for the serial number of the unit required.

As the scheme suggests, we have divided the units into sections for easy reading and better comprehension. Each section is indicated distinctly by bold capitals * and each sub- section by relatively smaller but bold upper and lower typeface. The significant divisions within sub-sections are in and lower typeface. The significant division within sub-sections are in still smaller but bold** upper and lower typeface so as to make it easier for you to see their place within sub-sections. For the purpose of uniformity, we have employed the same scheme of 'partitioning' in every unit throughout the course.

We begin each unit with the section 'Objectives'. It articulates briefly what we have presented in the unit, and what we expect from you once you complete working on the units.

In the last section of each unit, under the heading, ‘Let Us Sum Up’, we summaries the whole unit for purposes of recapitulation and ready reference.

*__BOLD CAPITALS__

Relatively smaller but bold

**** still smaller but bold**

Besides, we have provided self-check exercises under the caption ‘Check Your Progress’ or ‘Self-check Exercise’ at a few places in each of these unit which invariably end with possible answers to the questions set in these exercises.

What, perhaps, you would like to do is to go through the units and jot down important points as you read in the space provided in the margin. (**Broad margins in the booklets are there for you to write your notes on.** Make your notes as you work through the materials. This will help you prepare for the examination as also in assimilating the content. Besides, you will be able to save on time. Do use these margins.) This will help you prepare for the examination as also in assimilating what you have been reading in the unit, answer the self-check exercises and the assignment questions and easily identify the item(s) to be clarified.

We hope that we have given enough space for you to work on the self-check exercises. The purpose of these exercises will be served satisfactorily if you compare your answers with the possible ones given at the end of each unit after having written your answer in the blank space. **You may be tempted to have a furtive glance at the possible answer(s)**, as soon as you come across an exercise. But we do hope that you will overcome the temptation and turn to possible answers (which are not the best answers necessarily) only after you write yours.

These exercises are not meant to be submitted to us for correction or evaluation. Instead, the exercises are to function as study tools to help you keep on the right track as you read the units.

On an average, each block will have at least one or a part of one assignment. At times an assignment may expect you to work through more than one unit to prepare you responses. You have to send your assignment responses to us for assessment and comments. In all, you may have to work on one assignment per course. Assignments are sent separately, and are changed every year.

We suggest the following norms be strictly practiced while you are working through the assignments.

- Write your roll number legible as indicated in the Programme Guide.
- Before you put down anything in words, assimilate what you have read and integrate it with what you have gathered from your experience to build you answer.
- Make the best use of the block and the additional reading materials for diligently working through the assignments.

COURSE INTRODUCTION

The whole gamut of curriculum revolves around design, development delivery, its assessments and evaluation systems; here the whole schematic representation of MDE-416 represents each block as a theme. First block deals with design issues in the curriculum, the second block deals with the development of curriculum issues where the media methods are discussed adequately. Third block deals with the delivery issues of curriculum, here the learner, should focus on that what an institution design and develop curriculum is not always important but evolving an appropriate delivery strategies/models is very very important, the fourth block deals with the curriculum assessment and evaluation and the fifth block provides curriculum development various experiences focused at territory education, school education, technical and occasional education, non-formal and continuing education, material production process and media technology in education with special reference to India, especially IGNOU. All this experiences attempt to familiarize various models and how they governing our curriculum design, develop, delivery and its evaluations models in development of curriculum.

Here it is advised that all the learners who are going to the master in the field of curriculum development in the Distance Education, should always remind that the gamut of curriculum covers all the course materials of MDE Programme of study. Basic concept are provided in all the blocks of entire programme, where the learners are suggested digest/ assimilate the concept provided in all the blocks and also able to generalize with there subjective experiences in their day to day life situations. This process would lay strong foundation to theory and practice of Distance Education in general, curriculum development in distance education in particular.

BLOCK INTRODUCTION

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This purpose of this block is to provide us with introductory knowledge in the areas of basic concept of curriculum and its implications in the curriculum. We have designed the block in such a way as to focus on skill orientation/application rather than on knowledge/theory building. The crux is that this block intends to help us acquire the basic issues in the field of curriculum and development in general open and distance education in particular. As the block addresses itself to quite diverse groups of clientele it is not unlikely that much of what has been presented might sound quite familiar to some of you. For others, the block may provide things which are new or unfamiliar. However, we should state here that we have pitched the information at a level that will cater to your needs – irrespective of the category implied above. Nevertheless this block contains such relevant themes as the concepts are the basics for curriculum development. There are three units in this block focusing on curriculum the concepts where you will be acquainted with the basic issues of curriculum. In this process you will be familiarize the issues with the other units you studied in other courses. Unit 1, we have discussed in detail the meaning of and the concepts associated with curriculum. Unit 2 attempts to give us a comprehensive picture of foundations of curriculum. In unit 3, the historical growth and emerging issues and trends in distance education. Further, this unit specific the curriculum evaluation techniques most appropriate for determining the achievement of the objectives set. Besides, we suggest you to make a link with all MDE learning content wherever it is suitable to establish context, purpose and relevance to your understanding,

Mail us

At the end of this block, we have provided a feedback questionnaire. Please fill it after completion of this block and send it to us. Your feedback shall be highly useful for future revision and maintenance of the course. Also please take note of the time you devote in studying this block. May be you complete this block after 4-5 sittings. But for every sitting, kindly note the time separately so that you can categorically say how much time you took to read this block. You can send the feedback questionnaire by post or you can e-mail the same to: stride@ignou.ac.in. In the e-mail, please mark in the subject areas – FOR COURSE COORDINATOR-MDE-416. You may also contact for any difficulties related to the programme in general and MDE-416 in particular.

UNIT 1 CURRICULUM: THE CONCEPT

Structure

1.0 OBJECTIVES

After completing this Unit, you should be able to:

- explain the different interpretations of the concept curriculum;
- explain the difficulty in arriving at a definitive meaning of curriculum;
- describe the emergence of curriculum as a field of study by tracing its genesis and growth;
- examine the possible meanings of 'theory' and why curriculum theory is 'scientific';
- explain the theories of curriculum construction and development; and
- analyse future directions of curriculum theory and movement.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Make a list of possible definitions of curriculum that occur to you; and do not be surprised if it looks something like the following:

- A curriculum is an inventory of items of information, skills etc., which have to be taught to the learners.
- A curriculum is a charter or plan which dictates the educational activities in an institution.

The fact, that curriculum is a framework, or a plan that is handed over to the teachers implies that the teachers do not have an active role in its making. By deduction, one can say that the failure of a curriculum can be attributed to, among other things, the non-inclusion of teacher participation in evolving a curriculum.

This course, as you know, is an attempt to prove that an understanding of curriculum is essential in the context of planning of academic activities in distance education.

This unit introduces you to curriculum as a theory and an area of experience. Various interpretations of the term curriculum, the emergence of curriculum as a field of study and a theory, speculations on future trends are within the scope of this unit.

1.2 DEFINING CURRICULUM

Like many other terms, 'curriculum' has been, and still is, used in more than one sense. Obviously, if any two communicators do not use the term in the same sense, it is bound to lead to misunderstanding. Even those who are engaged in education and/or curriculum as professionals use this term in different ways, therefore confusion among common people or non-professionals is not unusual. Attempts have been made to fix the meaning of 'curriculum' as a technical term, but by and large, a unique commonly agreed upon definition of the term will need some more time to be arrived at.

Etymologically, the term curriculum has been derived from a Latin root which means 'race course'. The word 'race course' is suggestive of

- the course, i.e., the path; and
- the time (suggested by the prefix race) in which the path could/must be covered.

Obviously, curriculum was seen as a prescribed course(s) of studies with a beginning and end and to be covered in a prescribed time frame. However, this concept of curriculum was not precise enough to make multiple interpretations impossible. Eventually, therefore, the expression came to be interpreted in different ways.

What are these differing interpretations?

Here, we shall present five of them to give you a feel of the problems involved.

1.2.1 Meaning and Concept of Curriculum

It is difficult to give an exact and adequate definition of the term 'curriculum' because of its comprehensiveness and complexity. Some definitions are general and some others are specific in connotation. You should read carefully the

following definitions are general and some others are specific in connotation. You should read carefully the following definitions and try to comprehend the meaning and scope of each definition's suitable to your contest, purpose and relevance.

1.2.2 Define Curriculum

- "All the learning which is planned and guided by the teacher, whether it is carried on in groups or individually inside or outside the school" Kerr (1960).
- "As a systematic organization of instructional content and related activities designed to provide students with a sequence of meaningful learning experiences" Davis (1962).
- "Curriculum is the sum total of student activities which the school sponsors for the purpose of achieving its objectives" Alberty and Alberty (1959).
- "Formulation and implantation of an educational proposal to be taught and learnt within schools or other institutions and for which implementation and its efforts" (Jenkin and Shipman, 1975).
- Curriculum refers "to the total structure of ideas and activities, developed by an educational institution to meet the needs of students and to achieve desired educational aims" Derek Rowntree (1981).
- "A curriculum is all of the experiences that individual learners have in programme of education whose purpose is to achieve broad goals and related specific objectives, which is planned in terms of framework of theory and research or past and present professional practice" Glen Hass (1987).
- A curriculum is a structured series of intended learning outcomes (Johnson, 1957). This explanation emphasizes that learning outcomes and not learning experiences constitute the curriculum. These outcomes are linked with objectives.
- A curriculum is an attempt to communicate the essential principles and features of an educational concept in such a form that it is open to critical scrutiny and capable of effective translation into practice (Lawarence Stenhouse, 1975). Here, curriculum has been viewed as an attempt, an activity aimed at communication.
- A curriculum is the formulation and implementation of an educational proposal, to be taught and learnt within schools or other institutions and for which that institution accepts responsibility at three levels: its rationale, its actual implementation and its effects (Jenkin and Shipman, 1975).
- A curriculum is an organized set of formal educational and/or training intentions (David Pratt, 1980).
- A curriculum is all of the experiences that individual learners have in a programme of education whose purpose is to achieve broad goals and related specific objectives, which is planned in terms of a framework of theory and research or past and present professional practice (Glen Hass, 1987). The curriculum is thus a list of planned learning experiences offered to the students under the direction of the school, in other words, curriculum is a blueprint of experiences that have been planned for the students.

It is far more important for us to study and to understand the important aspects/ features of the concept of curriculum than to get trapped in difficult-to-understand definitions. There are six important aspects of a curriculum that we should bear in mind and these are as follows:

- The overall curriculum gamut revolves around design, developments, evolving an appropriate delivery strategy and finally undertaking Learning outcomes and system and course evaluation process. These are not detachable, having linkages and chaining process.
- A curriculum is a planned activity undertaken in an educational institution. It is a planned all learning outcome of an institution, otherwise called "thinking before doing."
- Any curriculum has four basics, viz; social forces, knowledge of human development as provided by the accepted theory/theories, the nature of learning, and the nature of knowledge and cognition.
- The goals/purposes of a curriculum are reflected in the set of educational objectives that accompany it. These objectives are the end and the given curriculum is a means to achieve them.
- A curriculum facilitates planning of instruction by teachers. You are expected to understand the social force that operates in society, various stages of human development and their peculiar characteristics. You should also understand the factors that influence the process of learning and the nature of knowledge and cognition. Due to intimate knowledge of children, and also how various educational objectives can be attained by children, teachers can plan a set of learning experiences that flow from a given curriculum. The quality and relevance of learning experiences determines the effectiveness of curriculum implementation.
- The teacher plans the same set of learning experiences for all students of the class. However learners differ in terms of the learning experiences, and their level and quality of participation**,** due to individual differences and variation in their social backgrounds Due to this, every learner has an actual curriculum which is different from the actual curricula of other learners in the same class.
- Due to the gap between the intended curriculum and the transacted curriculum as reflected by the individual learner's actual learning, the teacher's role assumes critical importance. A teacher should not only provide flexible arrangements but also meaningful alternatives in learning. These demand professional decisions from teachers in terms of the objectives, bases and criteria of the given curriculum.

1.2.3 Programme of Studies

If we ask lay people or even a practicing teacher as to what curriculum was followed at high school, the usual response we would get would be a list of subjects—English, Mathematics, History, Geography, Physics, etc. And if we asked them to further elaborate their response, these statements do not point to any goals, learning experiences, and teaching materials, teaching strategies or evaluation schemes in relation to the curriculum under consideration. The only dimension touched upon is what is technically known as 'programme of studies'.

1.2.4 Course Content

The term 'curriculum' is often misunderstood as the course of study or syllabi prescribed for a particular class or degree. In fact, it is broader than that. It includes all the activities that an educational institution can organize to provide better learning experiences to children. Such experiences include not only the classroom activities but also the social, cultural and playground activities conducted under the direction of an educational institution. The environment/ socialization or each learner also plays an important role while transmitting the 'curriculum'**.**

At times curriculum is seen as a mere list of topics or items that constitute the course of study in a particular subject within a larger 'programme of studies' which we tried to characterize in Sub-section 1.2.1.

Suppose we were asked to describe the English curriculum at the high school level, many of us might come up with something like the following:

English curriculum

i) English Texts

- Prose: "Dream Children", Lamb; "Forgetting", Lynd and so on
- Poetry: "Solitary Reaper", Wordsworth, etc.
- Drama: "Justice", Galsworthy, etc.

ii) English Grammar: Articles, Nouns, etc.

iii) English Composition: Letters, Essays, Dialogue, etc.

If there is any suggestion with regard to planning in such a list, it is only that of selection (i.e., that Drama has been selected but not the novel, and that under Poetry "Solitary Reaper" has been selected but not "Lucy Gray" and so on) and order (i.e., "Dream Children" has been placed before "Forgetting", articles before nouns and so on). This is what we could call 'course content' of the curriculum.

1.2.5 Planned Learning Experiences

Let us now view the concept of 'planned learning experiences, we shall take up the same English curriculum and analyse it further.

'English' is not just 'prose', poetry' and 'drama'. It is much more than that. It is a language which, in one sense, may be seen as consisting of four language skills—listening, reading, speaking and writing and in a different sense a means of communication. By the same logic, prose is not just "Dream Children", and "Forgetting", it is much more than that.

The 'course content' (English curriculum) described in Sub-section 1.2.4 therefore, is a mere means of bringing in those learning experiences which presumably help the learner to learn English of a level that is commensurate with the instructional level at which teaching or learning is taking place (say level 'n'). Obviously, from this point of view an educational institution (be it a school, college or university) is there to bring about changes among its students which can be done by providing the learners with appropriate directed learning experiences. And these learning experiences (which the learner goes through) must be well planned. Thus, what are significant is the planned learning experience which the course content presented in Sub-section 1.2.4 leads to and not that course content itself. In other words, we could prescribe a different course content to achieve the same goal. For example. we could prescribe "Skylark" in place of "The Solitary Reaper", "Apple Cart" in place of "Justice" and so on, and yet put the learners through the same planned learning experiences for purposes of teaching them English of level 'n'.

It is on the basis of arguments, like those presented above, that "the commonly accepted definition of curriculum …. Changed from content of courses of study and lists of subjects and courses to all the experiences which are offered to learners under the auspices or direction of the school" (Doll, 1964). In this sense, curriculum is a **blueprint of experiences** that have been planned for the learners.

1.2.6 Intended Learning Outcomes

Let us reflect upon and analyse further what has been presented in Sub-section 1.2.4.

Some curriculum specialists argue that 'learning outcomes', and not 'learning experiences,' constitute the curriculum. They say that learning experiences, unless implemented, i.e., unless students go through such experiences, remain mere lists of such experiences. When implemented, students go through those experiences by interacting among themselves, with peer groups, with the teachers and also the environment. But such interaction characterizes instruction. Let us pause for a moment here and consider the question that emerges from the previous sentence: Is 'curriculum' the same as 'instruction'? One view, quite emphatically, does not equate instruction with curriculum as the latter does not prescribe the means, i.e., the activities, materials or even the instructional content to be used in achieving the results; instead it prescribes the results of instruction, i.e., the intended learning outcomes (Johnson, 1967).

In accepting the definition of curriculum as intended learning outcomes, we have the advantage of:

i) Linking explicitly the outcomes with objectives; and

ii) Making a distinction between the basic plan and its implementation (i.e., instruction or teaching -learning transaction in the above discussion).

Going back to our earlier example in Sub-section 1.2.4, in accordance with this definition of curriculum, the English curriculum may incorporate a statement like the following:

At a particular instructional level (say level 'n') the learner, on the successful completion of the course, will be able to display and/or use purposefully all the four language skills commensurate with that level.

In such a situation, planned learning experiences, selection, ordering and presentation of the elements of course content, etc., belong to the domain of instruction and not curriculum. Let us take this point further. A curricular statement like the one given above, allows institutions, teachers and learners the freedom to select different means, to prescribe and undergo varied experiences to achieve the outcomes specified in the curriculum. Such a definition of curriculum makes it possible for different institutions to follow differing course contents and schemes of learning experiences and yet bring them together for the same end-of-term examination for certification. It needs to be noted, however, that in such cases even evaluation schemes may differ from institution to institution. In this sense everything in terms of planning, materials and activities becomes subordinate to the desired terminal learning outcomes.

Let us now look at yet another interpretation of the term 'curriculum'.

1.2.7 Plan for Action

There are thinkers who have tried to use "curriculum" as a cover term, i.e., as a broader concept, to include the concepts of 'programme of study', 'course content', 'planned learning experiences' and 'intended learning outcomes'. Put differently, they conceptualize the phenomenon called 'education' as an interplay of the following four systems:

i) teachers may be considered individual personality systems (one teacher taken as an individual) or collective group systems (taking many teachers together or taking teachers as a community) that display professional behaviour of a particular type known as teaching behaviour;

ii) learners, who as individuals or members of communities, perform activities, undergo experiences, etc., which are seen as learning behaviour;

iii) instruction, i.e., the situational contexts in which the teachers and learners bring their behaviour together called the instructional system; and

iv) the system of individuals whose behaviour put together results in a particular educational experience—these individuals may be administrators, educationists, politicians, teachers, parents, students, etc. individually, in various free combinations or limited combinations depending upon specific social situations.

In this sense, 'curriculum' is considered a 'plan for action', where 'action' refers to teaching-learning behaviour or instructional transaction and 'plan' takes care of other significant factors such as the content, its selection, teaching materials, learning experiences etc. This concept, obviously, includes the concepts of 'course content', 'learning activities or experiences', 'intended learning outcomes', and also makes room for the details regarding the teaching-learning tools to be used in instructional transactions.

1.2.8 Educative Experiences

Bobbitt (1972) defines 'curriculum' in two ways:

i) "It is the entire range of experiences, both directed and undirected, concerned in unfolding the abilities of the individual" or

ii) "It is series of consciously directed training experiences that the schools use for completing and perfecting the unfoldment of those abilities". This pair of definitions clearly acknowledges the focus of the concept of experience. In the initial statement it is the 'entire range of experience' that constitutes the curriculum in its broadest sense – it is everything that youth must do to become the kind of adults that the society desires at large. Later the shift is on the distinction between directed and undirected experiences that operate outside the educational institution. This denotes the source of common knowledge picked up by the youth in the course of everyday life.

We also have to acknowledge the likelihood of undirected educative experiences operating within the confines of schools. Cremin (1976) and Schubert (1986) extend the educative function of school to that of home and of other institutions outside the school which are likely to intervene with the planned curricular experiences.

1.2.9 Implications

We have presented different points of view on the concept of curriculum. It needs to be noted that these are only a few of the viewpoints or definitions available in the relevant literature. There may be many more, and attempts to find better and more precise definitions of curriculum have not come to an end. You may also evolve your own ideas and concepts of curriculum, and based on your subjective experiences of teaching learning processes within and outside the classroom. A new line of thought regarding whether or not we should devote our energies to a search of the correct definition of curriculum emerged during the early 1980's, when the search for such definitions was in full swing. This search culminated in 'The inclusion of the entire range of educative experiences within the purview of the concept of curriculum.'

Let us take a parallel to this line of thought from the field of natural and physical sciences—a phenomenon which is true in every circumstance need not be proved with an absolute and correct definition.

Let us elaborate this point with an example.

If a lay person asked a scientist about the true/correct nature/definition of solids with respect to the movement of particles it is made of, i.e., do the particles that constitute a solid keep moving, or are they absolutely stationary? etc., the scientist will in all probability respond by saying that it depends on the situation being dealt with by him. If he is engaged in a study of solids in contrast with liquids and gases, he may be guided by the assumption that the true nature of solids suggests that their constituent particles are stationary. However, if he is engaged in a relative study of different types of solids, then he would be guided by the fact that the constituent particles of a solid do possess movements of various types and various degrees. What does the discussion imply?

Obviously, the correctness of a concept and/or definition depends on the situation in which it is to be used. In other words, the correctness of a concept and/or definition may be assessed in terms of its function in a given situation.

In tune with this line of thought, some curriculum specialists have suggested that a vigorous search for the correct definition of curriculum is neither a productive nor a purposeful scholarly engagement; and that it might be more useful to look into the activities of curriculum making, implementation, evaluation, etc. To study these activities scholars could bank upon different definitions depending on their suitability for particular studies/investigations.

The conclusion is that it is advisable to accept that the term 'curriculum' may not have one absolute definition; instead it will vary in meaning, depending on the purpose for which it is to be used.

Having discussed five differing interpretations of the term 'curriculum' and concluded that the definition of curriculum changes depending on the context in which it is used, let us now look into the history of 'curriculum' as a field of study. Obviously, we have to be brief as our purpose is not to present elaborate details of this field of study but to suggest why there are uncertainties regarding the definition of 'curriculum', and open up paths for further discussions of the concept of 'curriculum'.

Check Your Progress 1

Notes: *a) Space is given below for your answers.*
b) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

i) Attempt an interpretation of curriculum with relation to:

a) Programme of studies and, b) course content at the post-graduate level in your own discipline.

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ii) What are the advantages of accepting the definition of curriculum as intended learning outcomes? Write your answer in 50 words.

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iii) Define curriculum as a plan for action.

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1.3 CURRICULUM MOVEMENT

In this section we shall be talking about the evolution of curriculum as a field of study and how this process of evolution has influenced the concept of curriculum from time to time.

1.3.1 Reasons for Neglect of Curriculum

The first reason why a clear concept of curriculum planning has not developed in our teachers and the public is that it has always been planned, prepared and prescribed by the expert committees of the departments of education in almost each state. The local community, teachers and parents are not involved in the process of curriculum planning as is the practice in some countries where education is publicly controlled. In fact, the basic principle of a democracy is the participation of the people in the planning and control of educational institutions.

Second, the teacher training colleges or colleges of education as they are now called have concentrated only on methodology of teaching at the cost of many other dimensions of teacher education**.** Last but not the least is the factor of complex human nature of behavior with regard to change**.** The peculiarity of human society is seen in building up a cultural heritage and in a ceaseless effort to preserve it. Sentimental regard for the past expressed in the emphasis on the subjects like history, art, language and literature resists any effort to plan curriculum in consonance with the changing times. The time concept in curriculum construction is an indispensable consideration. The society with a long cultural heritage is generally handicapped in planning a functional curriculum according to the present needs as well as the future indications. This is more so in the developing countries. The issues have remained controversial in our country. Hence a clear thinking is necessary on these fundamental issues before a clear concept of curriculum planning could be formulated.

If we can clearly identify the goals or directions for our society and the future image of our country, it will be possible for us to resolve the issues of educational planning with regard to the curriculum. If our educational system can positively answer the above questions, the curriculum education consists in planning the curriculum according to the national goals of a country. Curriculum is, in other words a function of a nation's philosophy of education. If the one is clearly formulated, the other can hardly remain unplanned or ignored.

1.3.2 Reasons for Curriculum Reform Movement

First, every country now considers education of children as 'the national investment' which will bring future returns. A amount spent on education are to be realized in terms of improvement of community life and growth of individual caliber. Hence, any waste in education is to be avoided since it is viewed as a waste of national resources.

Second, there is a movement pioneered by educational thinkers and researchers towards 'the rationalization of educational system'. It makes all the educational programmes goal-oriented and need-oriented. In other words, curriculum of the educational institutions at all the levels should be object based and meaningful. Any programme that lacks application value or does not help in developing any understandings, attitudes or skills needs to be reconsidered by the curriculum planners.

Third, there is an inevitable impact of globalization and the advancement of 'science and technology' on the educational system of our age. Every country is concerned the scientific and technological progress as well as better utilization of her natural and mineral resources. This implies that more scientists and technologists should be produced from the educational institutions and all the citizens should be equipped with scientific outlook and technical skills. Hence the school curriculum has to give due weightage to the study of sciences and the teaching methods are to be so reoriented so as to develop a scientific thinking in children. Curriculum change, based on review, is an essential component of education reform aimed at improving the quality of learning process. Such changes are determined by simultaneous evolution of global, national, local, social, political and economic realities.

1.3.3 The First Stage (1893-1938)

Though thinkers concerned with education have been interested in curriculum for centuries, the beginning of curriculum as a separate field of study is generally associated with Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776-1841), a German thinker, whose views influenced American thinking and practice towards the end of the last century. The Herbart Society, now called the National Society for the Study of Education) was founded in 1895 in America. This was around the time when John Dewey was developing his views on curriculum at the University of Chicago.

Herbart emphasized the importance of 'selection' and 'organisation' of content in his theories of teaching/learning. Under the influence of Herbart, the major concerns of curriculum specialists of this period were systematizing approaches and practices of selection and organisation of the subject matter. (Though we used the expression 'curriculum specialists' in the preceding sentence, strictly speaking no one was thought of as a curriculum specialist at that time. Curriculum did not exist as a specialisation, as we understand the expression today.)

The first book titled "The Curriculum" devoted to the theme of curriculum was published in 1918. The author of the book, Franklin Bobbitt, may, thus, be called the first curriculum specialist. He deserves this credit because his work generated a lot of interest and many other works of significance appeared following the publication of this book. He pursued his interest and published another book, entitled "How to Make a Curriculum" in 1924. In 1926, the National Society for the Study of Education devoted its year book to the theme of curriculum – "The Foundations and Technique of Curriculum Construction". Obviously the curriculum movement, which had its beginnings in the early 1890's, had become a vigorous educational movement. In 1930, various colleges and schools of education established their departments of curriculum and the establishment of such a department at Columbia University in 1937 was a major landmark in the emergence of curriculum as a field of study.

Starting under the influence of Herbart, those who got interested in curriculum addressed themselves to diverse issues, and quite often they did not agree with one another on what these issues could be. However, in the first forty-

five years of this movement, approximately the period from 1893 to 1938, the major concerns of the curriculum specialists (see Seguel: 1966) have been indentified as follows:

i) the nature of knowledge;

ii) the nature of learning;

iii) the domain and limitations of the new field of study, i.e., curriculum; and

iv) the translation of the theories and principles of curriculum into educational practice.

Since 1938, we have come a long way. During the past half-century, curriculum studies have enlarged their field of interest and their influence has become a world-wide phenomenon. Let us now look at this influence in the following sub-section.

1.3.4 The Second Stage (1939 onwards)

Curriculum studies as a discipline has been an area of active interest throughout the world. During the last fifty years, curriculum has been a dynamic field of research and the world wide activity in this field seems to have brought about a shift in the issues concerned.

Today, in general, the concerns of curriculum studies are seen to be:

i) establishing a sound relationship between the general aims and the specific objectives to make the process of teaching and learning more effective;

ii) ensuring pedagogically sound sequences of content at different levels of instruction;

iii) making the curriculum a balanced fare for the overall growth of learners (Caswell 1966).

Though these concerns do appear as the most clearly identifiable common concerns of curriculum specialists, divergence among their views and interests persists. Especially in Sheldon's statement that curriculum is the historically specific pattern of knowledge selected and organised by dominant elites. This, however, need not surprise that curriculum as a field of study is yet to reach a state of maturity, the terminology used in the literature on curriculum and the technical expressions newly introduced in it do lack precision. As indicated in the earlier section, the very definition of curriculum is no exception to this situation.

Let us now turn to the definitions presented earlier, and see how the above brief history helps us look into those definitions critically.

1.3.5 Definitions Revisited

The first and the second definitions of curriculum (see sub-section 1.2.1 and 1.2.2) emphasise selection and organisation of the information which the students are expected to acquire and master. Obviously, these definitions are embedded in the Herbartian views which formed the foundation of the curriculum movement when it was a period of exploration into the possible elements of theory and contents of curriculum studies.

With the passage of time, new experiences and experiments showed that the "situation" or "condition" under which learners meet or interact with the information (i.e., content) presented to them is as important as 'selection' and 'organisation'. This view became quite strong during the late 1940's, and remained so through the 1950's to the 1960's. This brings us to the third

definition, i.e., curriculum consists of all the experiences which are offered to learners under the auspices or direction of the school (Doll, 1964). This definition, though more comprehensive than the first two, was attacked in the early 1960's on more than one account.

Consider the following reactions to this definition:

i) Some thought it was too broad to be of any real use at the functional/ pragmatic level, as it was difficult, if not impossible, to prepare taxonomies of experience for teachers to be guided by.

ii) Some thought that it was too narrow as the social situation of the educational institution provided many more experiences which were unplanned and unintended.

For example, while at school learners learnt to spell out a word completely (planned activity) but they also learnt to differ each other (unplanned activity).

Obviously, view (i) considers the possibilities and success of translating this definition/view into effective educational practice. However view (ii) questions the very basis of this definition. The group which believes in the latter argues that it may not be unusual for a class of unfortunate students to learn less "Physics" and develop an aversion towards science subjects under the guidance of a 'bad' teacher. Such arguments raised the notion of the 'invisible' or 'hidden' curriculum.

The suggestion is that if experience is offered by the institution as the basis of curriculum then the realistic view is that "total curriculum", is made up of at least two types of curriculum: (i) the planned curriculum and (ii) the hidden curriculum. Obviously, this constitutes yet another definition of curriculum. Though broader than the third definition which we presented earlier in Sub-section 1.2.3 this definition clearly brings out the fact that it can't be functional, i.e., translatable into practice at the planning stage, for there is no way of accounting for the 'hidden curriculum'.

It is difficulties of this type that prompted curriculum specialists to suggest definitions that would not depend on illusive parameters like 'learning experiences', planned and intended or unplanned and unintended.

Check Your Progress 2

Notes: *a) Space is given below for your answers.*
b) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

i) Most of you are perhaps practicing teachers. (Even if you are not, don't worry. You have already been exposed to the Post Graduate Diploma in Distance education!) Can you describe an instance where the operation of 'hidden curriculum' caused unwanted results?

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ii) Describe hidden curriculum in about a 100 words.

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Having looked at the third definition, we shall revisit the fourth one which we presented in Sub-section 1.2.4.

The strongest proponent of this definition was Johnson (1967) who emphasised 'learning outcomes'. Johnson argues that learning experiences cannot come into existence, unless the learner interacts with his environment which includes the teacher, the peers, the institutional ethos, etc. This interaction is the teaching-learning transaction rather than the curriculum, which for Johnson is a guide for instruction (i.e., teaching and learning transaction). From this point of view, curriculum is considered a structured series of intended learning outcomes, and the other significant factors such as content, teaching materials, learning experiences and evaluation procedures are seen as the components of instructional transactions. This is clearly a 'means and ends' kind of division. In other words, Johnson believes that the concern of curriculum should be the ends, while the means belong to the domain of instruction (i.e., the teaching and learning transaction).

This distinction is seen as a significant contribution in the development of the field of study called 'curriculum'.

The weaknesses in this view, however, are:

i) that learning experiences which are the means cannot be completely divorced from learning outcomes which are the ends, the two go together in and cannot be seen as distinct entities;

ii) that accepting curriculum planning as merely limited to preparing a series of intended outcomes, we allow curriculum experts the license of ignoring those aspects of education which have, by tradition, been major concerns, e.g., content, its selection, organisation, etc.

Thus, though Johnson's views brought in useful insights, the search for a more convincing concept of curriculum continued. And the fifth definition which we presented in sub-section 1.2.5 is yet another milestone in the path which that searches has taken.

Contrary to the harsh division between means and ends suggested by Johnson (1967), Macdonald (1975) proposed curriculum as a plan for action. From this point of view curriculum is an overall plan, a blueprint that talks about the building blocks, the operations of construction and also the final outcome. And in implementing the plan, we step into the domain of instruction, i.e., teaching-learning transactions. Obviously, Macdonald presents his concept as a strong generalisation which makes room for the immediate and specific aspects that constitute instruction and also for 'planning' and 'learning outcomes'.

Let us discuss these two views of curriculum in greater detail in the following sub-section.

1.3.6 'Inert' and 'Live' Curriculum

While accepting these broad generalisations, some curriculum experts think of curriculum as a written plan (a written document), called variously the 'curriculum document' or 'inert curriculum'; others, however, would like to emphasise what they called 'operative curriculum', 'functioning' or 'live' curriculum.

The binary distinction – the 'inert' and 'live' curriculum – is based on the observations that:

i) no written plan can be implemented to its last word in practice; i.e., in a classroom situation the plan sifts through the agencies like teachers, learners, examiners, etc., and, therefore, only a diluted version of the written plan gets actualized; and

ii) in the actual classroom many unforeseen and hidden factors come into play, and thus the otherwise tangible written plan ceases to be tangible at the operational level.

Considered in this light, the curriculum document can only suggest and outline its potential as an abstraction whereas the operative, or functioning, curriculum brings forth what portion of that potential is achievable or has been achieved.

In order to reduce this gap between the curriculum document and the operative curriculum, practical steps to bring about a compromise between the two have been suggested and implemented. The crux of this compromise is that the document should prescribe specific content in a way that teachers and others involved in implementing the document see clearly what the focus or the thrust of the content is, and at the same time this prescription should be general enough to allow the selection and organisation of content in accordance with the needs of learners, their interests, their levels of understanding, the conventions of teaching, teaching styles, teacher abilities, the sensitivity of the teacher, etc.

In general, today, curriculum referred to as a **curriculum** or the **curriculum** is understood as the plan for educating learners, but there is no agreement on what the components of this plan might be. And it is because of this disagreement that we should not insist on a conclusive definition of curriculum in the present circumstances. However, there is reasonable consensus or agreement on what its concerns may be – we have presented them in the sub-section 1.3.2. These concerns point to the convergence of definitions 3, 4 and 5 (sub-sections 1.2.3, 1.2.4 and 1.2.5 respectively).

In what follows in this course, we shall use curriculum in the sense of 'a plan for educating learners'. To avoid confusion we bring in two more expressions, namely, 'syllabus' and 'course' – whereas the curriculum is a comprehensive 'plan for educating learners', "the syllabus represents the picture of a particular stage of this plan, and the courses are the tools used to achieve the objectives piecemeal by going from one stage to the next one and so on" (Das and Koul, 1985). From this point of view, syllabus pertains to a particular level of instruction, and to achieve the objectives of such a syllabus, different institutions may use different courses.

1.4 CURRICULUM THEORY

In order to talk about curriculum theory with understanding, we need to begin by dwelling upon the term 'theory' itself, unless we are clear about its meaning, nature and functions we won't reach any reasonable conclusions.

Though the available literature on the meaning and nature of 'theory' is replete with various definitions, explanations, etc., we shall build our discussion around the following views:

A scientific theory must present a logically unified framework, generally on an empirical basis.

A theory is a set or system of rules that guide or control actions of various kinds such as the one that is applicable to the work of a carpenter.

1.4.1 The Concept of Theory: Our Stand

Scientific theory (see view (i) above) seems to emphasise what is observable, i.e., objectivity, while the last one (see view (ii) above) appears to be prescriptive as it sets the rules for activities. In the field of curriculum, those thinkers who support the former view are termed 'objective/scientific', and those who support the latter are termed 'idealistic' or unscientific. Our interest in these two views lies in the fact that quite a number of curriculum specialists continue calling their theories unscientific or idealistic as if they had no implications for the practice of education. And for us it is reasonable to show that in the ultimate analysis scientific theories are also no more than mere guides to activity.

In order to do this, we turn to what are seen as the functions of a scientific theory. The functions of a scientific theory are:

i) Explanation; and

ii) prediction

Now, consider Newton's laws of motion which describe and explain the motion of bodies on the earth, and also succeed in making predictions about that motion under special conditions or circumstances. It is common knowledge that these laws have an empirical basis generally, and also a logically unified framework, (i.e., the features of a representative scientific theory). For once we believe (or let ourselves believe) that the truth about the motion of bodies has been found. But then, we find ourselves confronted by Einstein's theory of relativity, which shows that Newton's theory is only a part of the truth, that the context of Newton's laws is limited, and that these laws can be derived from the theory of relativity which belongs to a much wider context. In other words, Newton's truth is only a part of Einstein's truth, which by itself may be only a part of a yet larger truth.

Similarly, we may consider the Ptolemaic view of our universe. Ptolemy (120-180 A. D.), described and explained the geocentric universe and also quite successfully predicted the phenomena pertaining to this universe—i.e., eclipses, etc. That the earth was the centre of the universe was obviously a statement based on empirical evidence (everybody saw and believed that the planets, the sun and the moon revolved round the earth). However, Copernicus (1473-1543 A. D.) showed that what was visible was not necessarily correct—that perceptions, however evident, can lead to wrong conclusions, that it is the sun, not the earth, which is the centre of our small universe. He, too, described, explained and predicted about the same universe, but with the added advantage of simplicity and ease. Ptolemy's truth had come to light.

We can add to these examples. The point to be made is that in scientific explorations, theories are seen as objective explanations of the reality as it appears at a particular time or in a particular situation; as new data collected older theories are forced to give way to new theories which are 'truer' and 'more accurate'.

Even the above two illustrations suggest that a certain theory which pertains to a particular context does hold in that context though it may not describe or explain the whole 'truth'. Besides, even a weak theory serves as a guide for collecting more relevant data, and then for establishing relations between them to give new insights, for otherwise improvements in descriptions, explanations and predictions wouldn't be possible. When looked at in this light, even the scientific theories are no more than "a set of rules that guide or control action" which are employed in reaching closer to the ultimate 'truth'.

Besides, today the scientist is more modest, and is certain as never before, that the true nature of reality will remain an illusion as humanity, being a part of that reality, cannot comprehend it, i.e., the whole in its totality.

To sum up, a scientific theory of whatever type, remains a construct that is invented or proposed to advance human efforts. And so, as a theory describes, explains and predicts, it guides the practice of those who use it. This guided practice may take different forms, depending on who is engaged in what practice, in what situation and for what purpose.

In the above discussion we have tried to emphasise that in talking about curriculum theory, we will be guided by the view that theory is a guide to practice and in so doing we are being scientific and not idealistic as ultimately scientific theory itself is no more than a guide to practice.

This view may be reinforced in the words of Zais (1976):

"We view curriculum theory as generalized set of logically interrelated definitions, concepts, propositions, and other constructs that represent a systematic view of curriculum phenomena. The function of curriculum theory is to describe, predict, and explain curricular phenomena and to serve as a policy for the guidance of curriculum activities."

Check Your Progress 3

Notes: *a) Space is given below for your answer.*
b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of the Unit.

This question needs to be answered in three steps: each step may be written in about 50 words.

Step 1: What is a scientific theory?

Step 2: Define curriculum theory.

Step 3: Illustrate how curriculum theory is scientific.

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Step 2).....

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Step 3).....

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Having made our position clear with regard to our view of theorization in the field of curriculum we now move on to see what is available as curriculum theory today.

1.4.2 Curriculum Theory: A Perspective

Let me begin with how Beauchamp (1975) places curriculum theory in its appropriate perspective. Beauchamp's view is that all theories originate from the basic three categories of knowledge, namely

i) the humanities

ii) the natural sciences and

iii) the social sciences.

Most established disciplines may be classified under these categories. From these basic theory-areas emerge the second level of theories pertaining to applied areas—engineering, architecture, medicine, education, etc. Theories in these areas (i.e., the applied/practical areas) draw upon the theories in any one or more of the disciplines which come under the basic categories listed above. Theories in education, for example, draw upon theories in philosophy (humanities), sociology (social sciences), etc. Moving on to the third level of classification, Beauchamp suggests that the theories of education, themselves would consist of a few sub-theories and that these sub-theories would also consist of their own sub-theories, or we may call them sub-sub-theories. This last level is obviously the fourth level of classification. Keeping in mind these views of Beauchamp, we shall present a model, which gives us an understanding of the perspective in which curriculum theory may be placed. One may or may not accept the views underlying this model, but the model is an adequate base to start from. Let us now consider Fig. 1.1.

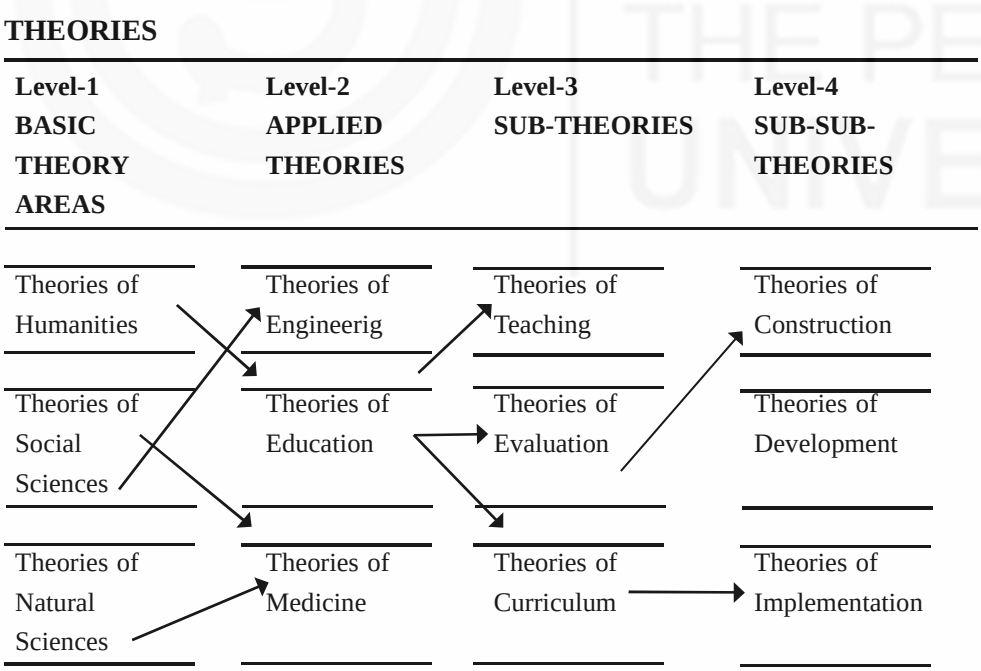

Fig.1.1: Theories and their levels (based on Beauchamp, 1975)

It should be clear from what has been presented in Fig. 1 that a curriculum theory must depend on number of other theories from diverse fields.

Obviously, it is a formidable task to come up with a 'perfect'/ 'complete' curriculum theory.

The best, curriculum specialists have been able to do so far is what is available to us in the form of models. Among models too, most are mainly of the 'graphic' type. Accordingly, we have presented Beauchamp's view about the correct

perspective of the curriculum theory with the help of the above graphic model (Fig. 1.1).

A model of this type is a means of describing the various levels and/or components of the entity that is being described, and at the same time it describes and explains the relationships between those levels and/or components (see the arrows in Fig.1.1 above). If the entity described involves processes, the model can indicate those processes as well.

As shown in the model, curriculum theory comprises at least three sub-theories—those of curriculum-construction, curriculum-development and curriculum-implementation.

Now, we shall start with the theories of curriculum construction.

1.4.3 Theories of Curriculum Construction

A brief glimpse of two theories of curriculum construction (not in their graphic form) has been presented in sub-sections 1.2.3, 1.2.4 and 1.2.5. Here, however, without going back to them, we shall present the graphic model of the eclectic theory of curriculum as conceived by Zais (1976)

The model presented by Zais (1976) pertains to curriculum construction, which concerns decision making in the areas of:

i) curriculum foundations; and

ii) curriculum components.

Under the theories of construction, we essentially talk about curriculum designs of which, the major ones are:

i) Subject-centred designs,

ii) Learner-centred designs, and

iii) Problem-centred designs.

Each of these designs has its own advantages and disadvantages, and one may favour one or the other depending on what the 'foundations' suggest. (We shall talk about curriculum foundations elaborately in Unit 2). In the context of open distance education, we think that the approach has to be eclectic as the expectations of both the policy makers and the consumers of that policy happen to be very diverse—education for remote areas, disadvantaged groups, professionals, lifelong education, disciplines, social mobility etc. In order to satisfy such diverse demands, an open distance institution has to follow an eclectic approach to course design. The implication is that depending on the nature of a particular course that needs to be prepared by such an institution, the choice could be any of the above mentioned three designs, i.e., subject-centred, learner-centred or problem-centred, individually or in any combination.

Let me briefly touch upon them in the given order.

Subject-centered design

In subject-centered designs, it is the content which forms the basis for both vertical (in terms of the sequence) and the horizontal (in terms of the subject matter presented at a given level of that sequence) structure of the curriculum. In such designs, significant curricular components like aims, learning activities, etc., are lost sight of. In the main, such a design emphasises content coverage, and consequently encourages memorization and the acquisition

of information. This design provides an easy approach to building a course, and then it is easy to administer such a design, but it pays little attention to learners' needs.

Learner-centred design

Learner-centred designs have as their basis the individual learners and their needs. Under this design, the curriculum evolves as the teacher and learner work together on the learning tasks. Obviously, the design can lead to countless variations. One of them, for example, is based on the 'experience' of learners. The experience-design is characterised by the following features:

i) Learners' own interest and needs are identified to shape the curriculum.

ii) Planning and activities are the joint responsibility of teachers and learners; and

iii) The approach usually follows problem-solving procedures.

Obviously, this is a case in which curriculum does not provide for any kind of 'preparation for life', instead it constitutes 'life' itself. The problem with this design is its loose organisation as it can neither have any horizontal nor any vertical pre-planned structure; and then comes the question of continuity. However we need to point out that in open distance education it is unusual to come across large learner collectivities who have similar needs and experiences. Quite often they are adults in various professions looking for need based courses. Besides, such institutions are expected to cater to pure 'autonomous' learners as well. As such, open distance education institutions must use this design at one or the other stage of their development.

Problem-centered designs

Problem-centered designs focus on the issues of actual life, individuals and society. Unlike the learner-centred designs, the problems are pre-planned, and yet they cater to learner' needs and experiences. As such they focus on both the content and the needs and experiences of learners. Very often this design takes the form of a core-cum-specific needs model, in which 'core' takes care of the basic content and then 'specific needs' are catered to with the help of need-based courses used as complements to the 'core' component.

Having acquainted ourselves with the theories of curriculum construction, we shall now discuss the theories of curriculum development.

Check Your Progress 4

Notes: *a) Space is given below for your answer.*
b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of the Unit.

List the three curriculum construction designs and say which design would be suitable for a distance education institution.

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1.4.4 Theories of Curriculum Development

Moving on from the theories of curriculum construction to the theories of curriculum development, implies our movement from the concerns of the decision-making process pertaining to the nature and design of the curriculum (i.e., curriculum construction) to the procedures for carrying out the construction process called 'curriculum development'. Without going into details regarding the various theories of 'curriculum development', we shall briefly touch the following two models:

Top down and Bottom up models

It is to understand the policy making process in general and policy preferences in policy making process in particular, both the approaches are very popular to understand policy formulation process in peoples governing democratic systems:

i) Top-down model; and

ii) Bottom-up model.

The first of these is differently known as 'line-staff' or 'administrative' model and the second Taba's (1962) or 'inverted' model.

Top-down model

While making policies, the needs are generated by the policy makers or research reports or by pre-conceived needs. Here the decisions are made by the top policy makers, who may be political leaders or bureaucrats without involving the lower level people or public opinion.

In the top down model, the curriculum machine gets into operation with a directive from the authorities of the institution. Following the directive, the institutional faculty prepares the outline of the curriculum with all the needed details. In certain cases, expert committees are appointed to prepare the outline of the curriculum. In case, the outline is prepared by the internal faculty, the expert group will discuss it and give it a form which is further discussed at the level of course writers (very often a group of subject specialists, some from within the institution and some from outside the institution). Once the outline is ready, course-writers prepare the units. Since a small group conceived, initiated and directed the curriculum development, its effectiveness in the classroom may be questioned. The group may be expanded and the pattern of participation and the nature of responsibility extended to include elected committees of teachers, depending on their professional competency. In short curriculum development proceeds from the top-down to the 'grass-root' or 'bottom-up' model.

Bottom-up model

In this approach, while making policies, the needs are generated by the people or through public opinion; here the decisions are made with the help of public opinion or with the participation of common people, citizens in democracy, respective organization stakeholders and by involving the lower level people or public opinion. This is most popular approach in any sovereign, democratic, republic governed states.

Under this model, the open distance institution will depend on surveys already available in various documents, or commission surveys pertaining to selected target groups. The need survey(s) focus on the target group.

Having identified these needs, the following steps will be followed:

i) formulation of specific objectives in relation to identified needs,

ii) selection of content to meet those objectives,

iii) organisation of the content in the form of study units, and

iv) selection of learning activities to accompany the 'content' to fulfill the objectives.

A word of caution

It is possible that an open distance institution (for example, IGNOU) may use the two models independently for different programmes/course, while a combination of the two approaches in certain cases cannot be ruled out.

1.5 CURRICULUM MOVEMENT: DEVELOPMENT AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

By and large, curriculum in the pre-World War I era was subject-centred, in which emphasis was on factual details. Reaching their highest point around 1925, such curricula began to lose their hold in the late 1920s. The social conditions following World War II divided the world broadly into three societies—the Communist Block, The Western Non-communist Block and the rest of the world—let us call it the Third Block. The Western Non-communist Block felt threatened by the possibility of international communism. And to counter the threat, they felt they needed highly trained personnel at all levels of human activity. This led to a shift in teaching methodology. In most cases discovery method and problem solving methods were considered better than the passive memorization method. The emphasis shifted from factual details to the learning of principles and concepts. Briefly, the emphasis shifted from knowing to understanding and application.

The emphasis on subject-centred curricula became vigorous around the 1950s when excellence in vocationalism became the guiding principle for the educational enterprise. The influence of such curricula reached it's zenith around the mid-1960s. When it was realized that the threat of the international communist movement was not that alarming after all, the student bodies and other influential groups started questioning the relevance of discipline-centred curricula. Starvation, racism, international poverty, issues of equality, liberty, self actualization, etc., brought forth the idea rather than high level specialists, good human beings were what the world needed most. Consequently, this led to an upsurge of humanistic curricula in the mid-1960s.

In general, humanistic curricula emphasise learners' needs; content related to humanistic goals and congnitive; and aesthetic and experimental learning activities. Besides, the development of the concept and practice of open and distance education has been the important feature of such curricula. Among the various strands of the humanistic curriculum the one that gets associated with open distance education may prove to be the most influential of them all in years to come.

The brief sketch of the curriculum movement that has been presented above as an example focused mainly on the trends in the developed Western non-Communist Block. You may look at your own country and see the directions curriculum developments and reforms have taken. For instance, in India what was inherited in 1947 was an educational system and curriculum design introduced by the British—a member of the Block. Subsequently, the curriculum movement in

India has been following, more or less, in the footsteps of the Western developed Block. However, there is a visible time lag between the two movements. For example, we got into open distance education in the early 1980's, more than a decade behind the West. In spite of significant institutional expansion, the system needs curricular reforms and inclusion of new and innovative curriculum areas non-existent in the conventional institutions. More recently the New Education Policy of 1985 has revitalized the thinking and the reformative activity in education. The recent reforms include: delinking degrees from jobs, promoting non-conventional curriculum designs to suit the needs of diversified groups, introduction of vocational courses in undergraduate education, curriculum reforms in 27 discipline areas, etc. besides, by the initiations of NCERT, National Curriculum framework has first time introduced and subsequently training of teachers is given much focus in the National Curriculum framework of 2006. It is a mile stone in the educational history of independent India.

1.6 LET US SUM UP

This Unit has dealt with the difficulty in defining the term 'curriculum', and said that depending on the context the term is interpreted as:

- programme of studies;
- course content;
- planned learning experience and
- intended learning outcomes

This Unit also gives you an outline of how the curriculum movement has influenced the definition of 'curriculum' at different stages and what curriculum theory is. An analysis of 'theory' is general and an argument that we need not look for a clear line of demarcation between a scientific theory and an educational theory since both of them are essentially plans or guides for action are part of this Unit.

An account of the on-going developments relating to the concept of curriculum and speculations about the future trends ends the Unit. In short, this Unit is an attempt to see 'curriculum' in a holistic perspective.

1.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

i) This answer is to be treated only as a model. We have drawn our answer from the discipline of English.

a) Programme of Studies: English : Prose

Poetry

Indian Writing in English

Shakespeare

Literary Criticism

Linguistics.

b) Course Content: a) Prose : Bacon—Collected Essays

Lamb—'Dream Children'

Lynd and son on

b) Poetry: 'The Wasteland'—
T.S. Eliot, 'Four
Quarters'—T.S. Eliot.
Confessional Poets—
Sylvia
Plath, Thom Gunn

c) Shakespeare: Tragedies and so on.

ii) a) an explicit link between outcomes and objectives.

b) a distinction between the basic plan and its implementation.

According to this view, curriculum prescribes the results of instruction.

iii) If curriculum were to be considered a plan for action, 'action' would refer to teaching-learning behaviour or instructional transaction and 'plan' would stand for other factors such as the content, its selection, teaching materials, learning experiences. This concept includes 'course content', 'learning activities or experiences', intended learning outcomes and details regarding teaching-learning tools to be used in the instructional transactions.

Check Your Progress 2

i) A classic examples of this phenomenon would be that of children learning to use taboo words and slang. On the one hand, there is peer pressure on them to learn and use these aspects of language as they are seen as a measure of covert prestige and group solidarity. On the other hand, the mainstream speech community would frown upon this as a case of flouting its norms.

ii) From a very early age, children take in overt and covert messages from families, mass media, and friends, peer gatherings and so on. Yet, the assumption has been that students are influenced only by a pre-determined school-curriculum. That a greater part of their outlook, however, is fashioned by unplanned interactions that occur outside the school is quite often forgotten. And it is this forgotten part of learning which comes under what is called the hidden curriculum.

Check Your Progress 3

Step 1: A scientific theory is a descriptive and explanatory set of basic connected assumptions or general propositions that ultimately predict or explain experience with regard to the natural world.

Step 2: Education is a practical activity aimed at educating societies. Educational theory is therefore a guide to that practice. In other words, it sets a plan for action based on a paradigm which can be improved constantly.

Step 3: Both scientific and educational theories are plans or guides for action developed out of a hypothetical paradigm, they both offer room for the incorporation of new categories to achieve a better paradigm. Therefore, we can say that educational theory is akin to scientific theory.

Check Your Progress 4

The three major designs of curriculum construction are

i) Subject-centred design;

ii) Learner-centred design; and

iii) Problem-centred design.

In a subject-centred design, generally the needs of learners etc., are paid little attention, as the emphasis is primarily on content. Conversely it is difficult to incorporate all the needs of the learners into a curriculum because of the heterogeneous student population. However, an approximation can always be achieved. Problem centred design, focuses mainly on the issues of actual life and society, yet it takes care of both content and learner-needs. As distance education institutions, by and large, focus on society and therefore the individuals, problem-centred design is suited for distance education in general. However, it is difficult to offer a final opinion on this issue, as depending on the social contact, a distance education institution may be required to design its programmes in a variety of ways.

UNIT 2 FOUNDATIONS OF CURRICULUM

Structure

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After completing this Unit, you should be able to:

- describe various philosophies and their implications for the field of curriculum;
- identify philosophical issues that need to be considered in framing a curriculum;
- describe the importance of sociology for the field of curriculum;
- explain various social and historical trends/issues that influence curriculum formulation;
- describe the importance of psychology—basic behaviours and needs—in the field of curriculum; and
- identify particular contemporary issues that should be considered while framing a curriculum.

Having set out our objectives, let us now involve ourselves in a discussion of the topics under consideration.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Having read about curriculum theory, its developments, transactions and future directions for curriculum in Unit 1, we shall now deal with the foundations of curriculum. When we develop a curriculum, we depend primarily on ideas that

stem from three major fields: philosophy, sociology (with historical overtones) and psychology. An understanding of these fields is crucial to the study of curriculum since they have traditionally been and still are considered its foundations.

Philosophy involves an inquiry into the nature and meaning of life including ideas about the nature of human beings, social values and purpose of education. One's perception of Philosophy largely influences one's view of learners and of various learning activities. A study of sociology provides, among other things, necessary clues about the characteristics of contemporary life and the future in which the learners will lead the rest of their lives. These clues help to make a curriculum socially relevant. Psychology provides an indispensable base for identifying the types of curricular arrangement that will most benefit the learner's growth and development.

In this Unit, we read about curriculum foundations in general which may be applied in the context of distance education wherever needed.

2.2 PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS

Philosophy

The word "philosophy" is derived from the Greek words 'philos (loving) and Sophia (wisdom) and means, 'love for wisdom/knowledge'. Philosophy means 'fundamental belief and conviction. Every one knowingly or un-knowingly has a philosophy of life, whether, he/she may be aware of it or not. Philosophy is a professional activity. Ex. Socrates philosophy is a personnel attitude towards life and the universe. Philosophy is a way of thinking, reflecting and inquiry about thing/issues before us. Philosophy is an attempt to gain a view of the whole. Philosophy is a logical analysis of language and classification of meaning. It is a group of problems as well as theories about the solutions of the problems.

The main divisions of the philosophy is:

Metaphysics is the record of explanations of the human mind in to the ultimate nature of man and the world. The results of an attempt to answer the question 'what is really real'. Metaphysics is essentially a venture of speculation. Epistemology is nature of the knowledge or knowledge of every thing from a particular point of view).

The tasks of philosophy

1) Speculation
2) Descriptions and analysis
3) Presentation

Based upon fundamental beliefs that arise from one's philosophy of education curricular decisions involve consideration of several topics and issues. Precisely for this reason, we consider philosophy one of the major foundation areas in curriculum. In this section, we shall explore several different philosophies of education that influence curricular decisions.

2.2.1 Education and Philosophy

Education and philosophy are both interrelated discipline one may agree or disagree all the thinking processes are bound to have philosophical roots, Identifying the nature of thought is important for an educationalist. Philosophy of education can be considered as of both sides of the same coin. The multiple ways of conceiving education coupled with the multiple

fields and approaches of philosophy make philosophy of education not easily defined. Although there is overlap, philosophy of education should not be complementary with educational theory, which is need not defined specifically by the application of philosophy to questions in education.

Epistemology (from Greek – episteme- "knowledge, science" +, "logos or theory of knowledge) is the branch of philosophy concerned with the nature and scope (limitations) of knowledge. Much of the debate in this field has focused on analyzing the nature of knowledge and how it relates to similar notions such as truth, belief and justification. It also deals with the means of production of knowledge, as well as skepticism about different knowledge claims.

2.2.2 Philosophy and Curriculum

Studying philosophy helps us deal with our own personal systems of beliefs and values, i.e., the way we perceive the world around us and how we define what is important to us. As philosophical issues have always influenced society and institutions of learning, a study of the philosophy of education in terms of curriculum development is essential. In essence, a philosophy of education influences, and to a large extent determines, our educational decisions and alternatives. Those who are responsible for curricular decisions, therefore, should be clear about what they believe. If we are unclear or confused about our own beliefs, then our curricular plans are bound to be unclear and confusing. One important step in developing a personal philosophy of education is to understand the various alternatives that others have developed over the years. Here we shall look into the following four major philosophical positions that have, hitherto, influenced curriculum development:

i) Idealism

ii) Realism

iii) Pragmatism

iv) Existentialism

i) **Idealism**

The doctrine of idealism suggests that matter is an illusion and that reality is that which exists mentally. It emphasises moral and spiritual reality as the chief explanation of the world and considers moral values absolute, timeless and universal.

If we apply this view to education, what would be the implications for the role of teachers and curriculum in education?

Obviously, teachers would act as role models of enduring values. And the school must be highly structured and ought to advocate only those ideas that demonstrate enduring values. The materials used for instruction, therefore, would centre around broad ideas particularly those contained in great works of literature and/or scriptures. Since it is based on broad ideas and concepts, idealism is not in line with the beliefs of those who equate learning with acquisition of specific facts from various disciplines.

ii) **Realism**

Proponents of realism view the world in terms of objects and matter. They believe that human behaviour is rational when it conforms to the laws of nature and is governed by social laws.

Applied to education, these ideas begin to reveal a second possible philosophy of education.

What kind of philosophy will that be?

'Realists' consider education a matter of reality rather than speculation.

The paramount responsibility of the teacher, then, is to impart to learners the knowledge about the world they live in. What scholars of various disciplines have discovered about the world constitutes this knowledge. However, like the idealists, the realists too stress that education should reflect permanent and enduring values that have been handed down through generations, but only to the extent that they do not interfere with the study of particular disciplines. Clearly, unlike the idealists who consider classics ideal subject matter for studies, the realists view the subject expert as the source and authority for determining the curriculum.

iii) **Pragmatism**

In contrast to the traditional philosophies, i.e., idealism and realism, pragmatism gives importance to change, processes and relativity, as it suggests that the value of an idea lies in its actual consequences. The actual consequences are related to those aims that focus on practical aspects in teaching and learning (Nash, 1995). According to pragmatists, learning occurs as the person engages in transacting with the environment. Basic to this interaction is the nature of change. In this sense, whatever values and ideas are upheld currently would be considered tentative since further social development must refine or change them. For instance, at a particular period of time it was generally believed that the earth was flat which was subsequently disproved through scientific research.

To consider, therefore, what is changeless (idealism) and inherited the perceived universe (realism) and to discard social and/or perceptual change is detrimental to the overall development and growth of children.

You can now visualise how pragmatism would have influenced the framing of curriculum.

Curriculum, according to the pragmatists, should be so planned that it teaches the learner how to think critically rather than what to think. Teaching should, therefore, be more exploratory in nature than explanatory. Learning takes place in an active way as learners solve problems which help them widen the horizons of their knowledge and reconstruct their experiences in consonance with the changing world.

What then might be the role of the teacher?

The role is not simply to disseminate information but to construct situations that involve both direct experience with the world of the learner and opportunities to understand these experiences.

Before we proceed further let us stop here to work out an exercise.

Check Your Progress 1

***Notes**: a) Space is given below for your answer.*
b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

'Idealism' and 'realism' emphasize values and subject matter, respectively. What does 'pragmatism' emphasize?

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Having seen three basic philosophical positions that have influenced curriculum development, let us now look at the fourth one.

iv) **Existentialism**

This doctrine emphasizes that there are no values outside human beings, and thus, suggests that human beings should have the freedom to make choices and then be responsible for the consequences of those choices.

According to this philosophy, learners should be put into a number of choice-making situations, i.e., learners should be given freedom to choose what to study. It emphasizes that education must centre on the perceptions and feelings of the individual in order to facilitate understanding of personal reactions or responses to life situations. Of primary concern in this process is the individual. Since life is based upon personal meanings, the nature of education, the existentialists would argue, should be largely determined by the learner. Individual learners should not be forced into pre-determined programmes of study.

Whatever the learner feels he/she must learn should be respected and facilitated by the system.

An existentialist curriculum, therefore, would consist of experiences and subjects that lend themselves to philosophical dialogue and acts of making choices, stressing self-expressive activities, experimentation and media that illustrate emotions and insights. The teacher, then, takes on a non directive role. The tender is viewed as a partner in the process of learning. As a professional, the teacher serves as a resource facilitating the individual's search for personal meaning rather than imposing some predetermined values or interests on learners. Existentialism has gained greater popularity in recent years. Today, many educationists talk about focusing on the individual, promoting diversity in the curriculum and emphasizing the personal needs and interests of learners. Here, perhaps, we can recall the philosophy that underlies the open distance education system. Learner-autonomy, which the existentialists seem to suggest, has been and remains the prime characteristic feature of the distance mode of teaching-learning.

Because of the explosion in knowledge and tremendous growth in information technology, the curriculum of the past seems to be obsolete. To plug the gap between the needs of the learner, the society and the curriculum content, rethinking in the area of curriculum development appears to be unavoidable. What might have been relevant in a particular situation need not necessarily always be so. In essence, social changes demand changes in the existing pattern of education. The inherent potentiality of the system of distance education enables it to accommodate and cater to these changes.

It should be clear from the above discussion that by and large, in operational terms, both pragmatism and existentialism find ample expression in open distance education.

Check Your Progress 2

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answer.
b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

How tenable is the Existentialist view of curriculum as far as learning/teaching at the school-level is concerned?

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Each of the four major philosophies just described begins with a particular view of human nature and of values and truths, and then proceeds to suggest what such a view implies for curriculum development. Before we conclude our discussion on the philosophical foundations of curriculum, we should make note of a few educational philosophies in order to reinforce what has been said so far.

2.2.3 Educational Philosophies

Although aspects of educational philosophy can be derived from the roots of idealism, realism, pragmatism and existentialism, a common approach is to provide a pattern of educational philosophies which derives from the major schools of philosophy some of which have been touched upon above. Here, we shall be looking into the following four educational philosophies for their implications in the area of curriculum development:

i) Perennialism

ii) Progressivism

iii) Essentialism, and

iv) Reconstructionism.

Let us discuss each one of these in this very order.

i) **Perennialism**

It advocates the permanency of knowledge that has stood the test of time and values that have moral and spiritual bases. The underlying idea is that education is constant, absolute and universal. Obviously, “perennialism” in education is born of “idealism” in general philosophy. The curriculum of the perennialist is subject-centered. It draws heavily on defined disciplines or logically organised bodies of content, but it emphasizes eaching/learning of languages, literature, sciences and arts.

The teacher is viewed as an authority in a particular discipline and teaching is considered an art of imparting information/knowledge and stimulating discussion.

In such a scheme of things, students are regarded immature as they lack the judgement required to determine what should be studied, and also that their interests demand little attention as far as curriculum development is concerned.

There is usually only one common curriculum for all students with little room for elective subjects. According to this point of view putting some students through an academic curriculum and others through a vocational curriculum is to deny the latter genuine equality of educational opportunity.

Such views appeal to those educators who stress intellectual meritocracy. Their emphasis is on testing students, enforcing tougher academic standards/ programmes, and on identifying and encouraging talented students.

ii) **Progressivism**

This emerged as a protest against perennialist thinking in education. It was considered a contemporary reformist movement in educational, social and political affairs during the 1920's and 30's.

According to progressivist thought, the skills and tools of learning include problem solving methods and scientific inquiry. In addition, learning experiences should include cooperative behaviour and self-discipline, both of which are important for democratic living. The curriculum, thus, was interdisciplinary in nature and the teacher was seen as a guide for students in their problem-solving and scientific projects.

Although the progressive movement in education encompassed many different theories and practices, it was united in its oppositions to the following traditional attributes and practices:

- the authoritarian teacher;
- excessive dependence on textbook methods;
- memorization of factual data and learning by excessive drilling;
- static aims and materials that reject the notion of a changing world; and
- attempts to isolate education from individual experiences and social reality.

Although the major thrust of progressive education waned in the 1950's with the advent of "essentialism", the philosophy has left its imprint on education and educational practices of today. Contemporary progressivism is expressed in several movements including those for a socially relevant curriculum, i.e., a match between subjects taught and student needs which is one of the theoretical bases of distance education.

iii) **Essentialism**

This philosophy, rooted partly in idealism and partly in realism, evolved mainly as a critique of progressive thought in education. Yet, the proponents of essentialism do not totally reject progressive methods as they do believe that education should prepare the learner to adjust to a changing society. Thus, in essentialism learning should consist in mastering the subject matter that reflects currently available knowledge in various disciplines. Teachers play a highly directive role by disseminating information to students. According to this viewpoint, the main arms of the institution (be it a school or a college) get sidetracked, when, at the expense of cognitive needs, it attempts to pay greater attention to the social and psychological problems of students.

In recent years, the essentialist position has been stated vociferously by critics who claim that educational standards softened during the 1960s and early 1970s.

The most notable achievements of the essentialists have been the widespread implementation of competency based programmes, the establishment of grade-level achievement standards, and the movement to reemphasize academic subjects in schools/colleges. In many ways, the ideas of essentialism lie behind attacks on the quality of education by the media and by local pressure groups, which includes, to a good extent, attaces on distance education.

iv) **Reconstructionism**

It views education as a means of reconstructing society. The Reconstructionists believe that as school/college is attended by virtually all youth, it must be used as a means to shape the attitudes and values of each generation. As a result, when the youth become adults they will share certain common values, and thus the society will have reshaped itself.

As for the curriculum, it must promote new social, economic and political education. The subject matter is to be used as a vehicle for studying social problems which must serve as the focus of the curriculum.

The following gives you a view of the Reconstructions in the programme of education:

- critical examination of the cultural heritage of a society as well as the entire civilization;
- scrutiny of controversial issues;
- commitment to bring about social and constructive change;
- cultivation of a planning-in-advance attitude that considers the realities of the world we live in; and
- enhancement of cultural renewal and internationalism.

Stemming from this view, reconstruction expands the field of curriculum to include intuitive, personal, mystical, linguistic, political and social systems of theorizing. In general, the curriculum advocated by reconstructionists emphasizes the social sciences—history, political science, economics, sociology, psychology and philosophy—and not the pure sciences. The thrust is on developing individual self-realization and freedom through cognitive and intellectual activities, and thus, on liberating people from the restrictions, limitations and controls of society. The idea is that we have had enough of discipline based education and narrow specialization, and that we don't need more specialists now, we need more "good" people if we want to survive. Before we proceed further, let us ask ourselves a question.

What insights do we gain from the discussion on the philosophical foundations of curriculum?

Ideas about curriculum and teaching do not arise in a vacuum. As curriculum development is heavily influenced by philosophy, those involved in such planning should be clear about contemporary, dominant philosophy. If we are unclear about our philosophy of education, our curriculum plans and teaching procedures will tend to be inconsistent and confused. This being so, we should be aware of the fact that development and awareness of a personal philosophy of education is a crucial professional responsibility. Further, we need to be constantly open to new ideas and insights that may lead to a revision or refinement of our philosophies. Our position should be that no single philosophy, old or new, should serve as the exclusive guide for making decisions about curriculum. What we, as curriculum specialists, need to do, is to adopt an eclectic approach, in which there is no emphasis on the extremes of subject matter or socio-

psychological development, excellence or quality. In essence, what we need is a prudent philosophy—one that is politically and economically feasible and that serves the needs of students and society. It is here that open distance education comes forth with its promises for the future.

2.3 SOCIOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Any discussion of curriculum should consider the social setting and its influence on curricular decisions. Social pressures influence the characteristics of students who experience the curriculum in the educational institutions which are established and maintained by society. Students live in a world larger than the college/school and learn a great deal from experiences in that part of their lives. What a learner acquires in the college/school and outside may be complementary or conflicting to each other. The latter case gives rise to the complaint that what is learned in college/school has little to do with the real world. But, in the former case the college/school may be a major factor in the improvement of society by helping young people to develop the capacity to respond intelligently to social problems. In this way, the curriculum serves not only the needs of the learner, but also the needs of society. For these reasons, in developing curricular plans, we must consider the characteristics of contemporary society as well as those that are expected to emerge in the future. Of course, curriculum planning and course-content basically depends on an analysis of the nature of society (Kelly, 1989).

Keeping these facts in view, we shall now discuss how society influences the making of curriculum.

2.3.1 Society and Education

Most of us regard education as synonymous with schooling. But, in actual fact even a society that has no formal colleges/schools still educates its young through ceremonies, rituals, stories, observation and emulation of parents, elders etc. The norms of society govern inter personal relations and produce a model personality—the attitudes, feelings and behaviour patterns most members of a society share. It also assigns specific roles to each of its members and expects them to conform to certain established behavioural patterns. Sex roles—the way boys and girls, men and women are supposed to act—provide a good example for this type of socialisation. Sex roles vary from one culture to the other, but within a given set-up they are rather well-defined. This leads us to conclude that besides the classroom-curriculum, society also plays a vital role in shaping the attitudes of the young. Clearly, global aspects of human growth and developments are accomplished partly by the structured curriculum in use in colleges/schools and partly by society. Does this mean that a curriculum should mirror current social forces?

A curriculum while reflecting contemporary social forces should also be able to respond to the dynamics of change. By implication, the curriculum should not only reflect society but also help to shape it.

2.3.2 Social Change and the Curriculum

Contemporary society is changing so swiftly that we have difficulty coping with it, adjusting ourselves to the present and preparing for the future. Contrary to this fact, our colleges/schools appear to be conservative institutions that usually lag behind the change. To make education respond to social changes, a curriculum should be framed keeping in mind, among other things, the following:

i) Growth of technology;

ii) Structure of the family; and

iii) Cultural diversity.

What we mean by each of these is discussed below.

i) **Growth of technology**

Today, the young are growing up in a world that is very different from that of a generation or two ago. Connected with this is the fact that ours is a society based on information.

In addition to the creation of new kinds of jobs, this new information-society will influence all the other aspects of the workplace. At one level, such influence will motivate societies to use computers and other information-processing devices to replace manual workers, at another, the locale of the workplace will also be affected. In agricultural and industrial phases, workers have/had to be brought to a central location where goods are/were produced. Given the availability of communications technology, this kind of centralization will no longer be necessary for every activity. One can simply work at home using micro-computers. And, increased value will be placed upon persons who can network their credentials to fill the emerging needs of the information society.

Underlying all this is a serious challenge to the ethics of work that has pervaded our society and schools/colleges. Among the values the schools/colleges have promoted are those related to the productive industrial worker—punctuality, loyalty, acceptance, appearance etc. In the decentralised information-society, workers will find themselves largely working alone, setting flexible work patterns, working hours and servicing more than one employer. Furthermore having been replaced by new technology, many will have difficulty finding new jobs because they lack certain skills. Thus, the combination of the growth of technology and of the information society may lead to a serious review of the traditional ethics of work and its place in our society. Obviously, curriculum will have to undergo a change in order to match with and capture social changes.

ii) **Structure of the family**

The family has been viewed as the basis of the complex social fabric. The picture of the family consisting of both natural parents and their children is steadily fading, replaced by a much more complicated diversity of family structures. For example, separation, divorce and childbirth without marriage have given rise to the phenomenon of single parent homes. Geographical mobility is weakening the bonds of the centrally located, extended family of grandparents, aunts, uncles and other relatives. Traditionally, while men used to go out to work, women managed the home. Now we find increasing number of families in which both the father and the mother work.

How does these influence educational institutions?

The school/college as we know it today evolved in the context of the traditional family structure. Mothers were expected to provide a stable and predictable environment for young people.

When children had problems in school/colleges, parents could be called upon to devote time and energy to support the values and efforts of the school/college. Today, these expectations are no longer certain. As the structure of family has changed, so has its role and function in relation to the school/college.

Traditionally our lives have been focussed on common social features of life

and even conformity. Today, however, people have begun to seek more diversity in life styles, seeking new pathways and alternative routes. Among the many institutions that are affected by the new wave of individualism and diversity is the school/college. The reason is that schools/colleges have served as major sources for promoting common values among youth. This new trend in life patterns and values poses serious questions in curriculum planning.

Check Your Progress 3

Notes: *a) Space is given below for your answer.*
b) Check your answer with the one provided at the end of the Unit.

Consequent upon the changing face of society, mention at least three factors that should be thought about while framing a curriculum.

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Besides the structure of the family, changes in sex roles are also becoming more and more emphatic.

Symptoms of the breakdown in sex-role stereotypes are clearly visible in many areas of life. As women assume new roles and demonstrate excellence and ability in them, some disgust or resentment on the part of those who continue to cling to old stereotypes cannot be avoided. The changing perception and reality of sex roles and this opposition to such changes will also have a tremendous impact on curriculum development.

iii) Cultural diversity

As we are moving away from "a melting-pot" society to a "salad bowl" one, the increasing trend away from a homogeneous culture towards one of diversity/ plurality is quite conspicuous.

This shift of movement can be attributed to the following phenomena:

- diversity in values and life-styles (being different is now a socially sanctioned idea);
- renewed interest in ethno-history (people have developed a new interest in their own histories and personal heritage); and
- development in telecommunications (people have been reminded of their links with cultures in other parts of the world).

Traditionally, an educational institution has been viewed as the major social agent in the "melting-pot" process. Now it is caught in an ambiguous position between its traditional role and the emerging trend towards diversity. The question as to how the curriculum should portray cultural values, then gains importance in curriculum development today.

Having reviewed the social changes and pointed to their impact on curriculum planning, we might say that the human society in general, in transition from an industrial to post industrial phase of our history though at different stages of advancement.

Identifying the general direction that the new phase will take is particularly challenging since there is no historical precedent for post-industrialism. As long as a society is dynamic, the debate over the aims of education will stir up changes. Perhaps this is good, perhaps this is what makes society viable and able to resist decay.

2.3.3 Planning for Curricular Change

If we look into the aims and priorities of education from the turn of this century onwards, we can identify links in the chain of evolution which has caused socio-educational changes. To illustrate the point, in the early twentieth century, rigorous intellectual training was considered the ultimate goal of education. However, in the second and the third decades of the century, progressive educationists insisted on broadening the scope of school-curriculum, which was purely academic, by incorporating non-academic and vocational elements in the curriculum. This priority reappeared with emphasis in the 1960s and the 1970s. This appears to hold good even, at the close of twentieth century.

What do we deduce from what we have said above?

Educational aims should be flexible and able to change in accordance with changing social needs. If a major means for survival is to catch fish, lash horses and frighten away tigers, it is natural that the school/college in this society will have a curriculum to meet these needs. Suppose the conditions change—streams dry up, horses and tigers disappear—should not the curriculum incorporate new means for survival? Unquestionably, educational aims must be relevant to the times.

What is the mechanism, then, by which we can bring in social changes so as to make the curriculum serve the needs of society?

To ensure socially relevant curriculum, for example, the panels and commissions, which formulate educational priorities, should comprise the following representative groups:

i) Students: Post secondary students are mature enough to provide appropriate inputs in developing educational aims.

ii) Parents: As parents are interested in the overall development of their children, parental inputs are necessary.

iii) Educators: Teachers, administrators and public leaders must assume responsibility in developing educational aims/priorities.

iv) Researchers: The role of the researcher or social scientist is important for providing objective data concerning issues and trends.

v) Community members: Their support in the formulation of priorities should be considered significant as they decide matters pertaining to school/college and fiscal matters, directly and indirectly.

vi) Business community: Because of its economical/political influence and interest in the outcomes of educational enterprise in terms of human resource development technology and industrial output, it needs to be represented.

vii) Political officials: They should be enlisted because, educational policy and politics, by and large, go together.

viii) Pressure groups: People show considerable impact by organising themselves into groups that promote special interests. The operation of such groups is clearly valid within the democratic process.

In this section we tried to show that social forces have always had a major impact on curriculum development. In order to prepare students for the world of tomorrow, the curriculum, while mirroring a society should also keep evaluating the ever changing social trends.

Check Your Progress 4

Notes: *a) Space is given below for your answer.*
b) Check your answer with the one provided at the end of this Unit.

List at least five social factors that influence the need for a shift in our curriculum.

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Let us now talk about yet another foundation area which helps formulate an effective curriculum.

2.4 PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

By providing a basis for understanding the teaching/learning process, educational psychology deals with how people learn. By implication, it emphasizes the need to recognise diversity among learners. However, it is also true that people share certain common characteristics. Among these are basic psychological needs which are necessary for individuals to lead a full and happy life. In this section, we shall be talking about the major learning theories and their contribution to curriculum development. Besides, we shall touch upon the basic psychological needs of individuals and reflect on their translation into curriculum.

We shall at this juncture remind ourselves that our main thrust will be on the contributions made by the theories of learning for curriculum development. Let me therefore make it clear that we are not, right now, interested in studying the theories of learning in detail, which has already been done to some extent in earlier courses on distance education.

2.4.1 Learning Theories and Curriculum

For the sake of convenience we have classified the major theories of learning into the following groups:

i) behaviorist theories which deal with various aspects of stimulus-response and reinforcement scheme;

ii) cognitivist theories which view the learner in relationship with the total environment; and

iii) phenomenology which emphasizes the affective domain of learning. Let us take up each of them in the given order and examine its contribution to curriculum development.

i) **Behaviourism and curriculum**

The behaviourist school, which represents traditional psychology, is rooted in a corresponding philosophical speculation about the nature of learning. It has particularly dominated psychology in the first half of the twentieth century. After a few decades of being in the wilderness it has recently gained currency once again with the advent of individualized education.

Without going into the details we shall touch upon the main, and characteristic features of the behaviourist school of thought.

Essentially, learning is considered a habit-formation and teaching is regarded as arranging learning experiences in such a way as to promote desirable behaviour. Further, behaviourism maintains that what is learnt in one situation can be transferred to other situations as well.

Broadly, behaviourists advocate that:

- behaviour is likely to be influenced by the conditions under which learning takes place;
- attitudes to and abilities of learning can change or improve over time through the application of proper stimuli;
- learning experiences can be designed and controlled to create desired learning;
- selective reinforcement is essential; and
- rote learning and memorization of knowledge are unnecessary.

Having thus touched upon the crux of behaviourism, we shall now turn our attention to its contribution to curriculum development. It provides the following significant guidelines.

A curriculum, according to behaviourists, should be based on the following concerns:

i) remedial measures, acquisition of skills, considerations of basic or advanced learning;

ii) well-defined, short-term and long-term objectives;

iii) appropriate instructional materials and media to suit the learner's abilities;

iv) shaping behaviour through prescribed tasks, phase by phase activities, close supervision of activities and positive reinforcement; and

v) diagnosing, assessing and reassessing the learners' needs, objectives, activities, tasks and instruction with a view to improving the curriculum.

We can observe manifestations of these guidelines in the theories, principles or trends related to:

- individualized education (and to some extent, open system of education);
- instructional design and systems;

- teacher-training techniques such as simulation teaching, microteaching, competency-performance based teacher education;
- educational technology including programmed instruction (which provides, with modifications, a base for self instructional materials in use in the distance mode of teaching/learning).

ii) **Cognitivism and curriculum**

Today most psychologists explain the phenomenon of human growth and development in cognitive, social, psychological and physical terms. They also note that learning is primarily cognitive in nature. Growth and development refer to changes in the structure and function of human characteristics. Most cognitivists believe that growth and development occur in progressive stages. One example is Piaget's (Piaget, 1950) description of cognitive development in terms of stages from birth to maturity.

Most curriculum specialists tend to show greater adherence to cognitivism than to behaviourism. This might be because

- the cognitive approach leads to logical methods for organising and interpreting learning; and
- the cognitive approach is rooted in the tradition of teaching based on subject matter.

Even contemporary behaviourists incorporate cognitive processes in their theories of learning. Because learning in schools/colleges emphasizes the cognitive domain, it follows that most educationists feel that learning is synonymous with cognitive development. As a corollary, a problem solving approach in teaching/ learning gains currency.

But, if we take an actual teaching/learning situation into consideration we tend to realise that this learning model is incomplete and that something is lost in its processes of actual transfer in the classroom. In reality, the teaching/learning process boils down to the teacher talking predominantly and students mostly responding to what is said by the teacher.

What should be of concern to the curriculum specialists?

They should be aware of the fact that a school/college should be a place where students are not afraid of asking questions, making mistakes, taking cognitive risks and playing with ideas. Further colleges/schools should be more humane places where students can explore and fulfill their human potentials. Obviously, curriculum has to play a vital role to actually realise this objective.

iii) **Phenomenology and curriculum**

Phenomenologist's point out that the way we look at ourselves is crucial for understanding our behaviour and that we respond to an organisation or pattern of stimuli and not to an isolated stimulus.

It emphasizes that learning must be explained in terms of the "wholeness" of the problem. Here you can draw a parallel with cognitivism. But what differentiates phenomenology from cognitivism is that the former stresses the affective and the latter the cognitive aspects of learning.

Since each individual has specific needs and interests related to his or her self-fulfillment and self-realisations, there cannot be a generally prescribed humanistic curriculum. Humanistic learning may enhance the mental health of the learners, harmonise personal feelings among students and teachers, and improve various aspects of human awareness among students, teachers, and curriculum

specialists, yet its processes rely mainly on personal experiences and subjective interpretations that leave them open to criticism. Therefore, there is a great need to examine and understand what is relevant in humanistic curricula.

Please note that most textbook writers tend to be cognition-oriented. However, one should propose that behaviourist components are needed for planning and developing a sound curriculum. Further, humanistic components of teaching and learning must also be incorporated into the curriculum. Let us say, therefore, that each theory of learning has something significant to contribute towards explaining various aspects of human behaviour and learning.

Check Your Progress 5

Notes: *a) Space is given below for your answer.*
b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

We talked about three groups of theories of learning. Highlight what is emphasized in each of the three.

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2.4.2 Basic Human Needs and Curriculum

Physical well-being and health are generally recognised and frequently dealt with through various programmes such as those on fitness, nutrition and health problems. Mental health needs such as those pertaining to acceptance, belonging, security and status have been widely studied but little emphasized in the area of curriculum.

In this sub-section, we shall touch upon just two points which concern the topic under consideration:

i) Self-actualization; and

ii) Developmental tasks.

Here, we shall discuss these and draw inferences as to how each one contributes to the enrichment of a curriculum.

i) **Self-actualization**

The notion of self-actualization characterises individuals' need for self-fulfillment in life by actualizing/achieving their own potential. A curriculum should therefore provide learning activities that allow students to identify themselves with those things they can do well. It should also assist them to succeed in other activities that are difficult for them. Learners are thus helped to find personal meaning in the learning experience.

Those responsible for curriculum development must pay attention to the concept of self-actualization. We all recognise the importance of school/ college and community based goals for learners. Self-actualization on the other hand includes satisfying the desire to know and understand in relation to personal needs and interest. Moreover it has been noticed that when personal purposes are ignored, learners seem to be less successful in meeting the set goals. If curricular plans reflect a balance between institutional and personal needs, the impact on both may be substantially enhanced.

ii) **Developmental tasks**

We can define a developmental task as a task which arises in relation to a certain period in the life of an individual, success in which leads to his/her happiness and to success in later tasks, while failure in it leads to unhappiness in the individual and difficulties in subsequent tasks. This fact is regarded as one of the most specific considerations in organizing tasks. The needs of individuals are governed by the stage of development and age they have reached, and also grow out of their need to respond to societal expectations. The implication is that educators/ curriculum planners should understand behaviours manifested by a learner indicating her/his readiness and need to deal with a particular developmental task. As we facilitate the learners' success in these needs/tasks, their overall success can be ensured.

Further, in developing a curriculum, the development of an environment in which learners feel genuinely secure should be ensured. When a curriculum develops such an environment, learning takes place smoothly because the needs of students and what has been provided by the curriculum are complementary to each other.

In our discussion of the psychological foundations, we dealt with the contribution made by learning theories towards curriculum and also tried to see how much more effective a curriculum may be framed if we consider the nature of basic human need while forming it.

2.5 TRENDS IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

To understand contemporary curricular problems and proposals, it is ideal that we acquaint ourselves with the history of curricular thought and practice that stretches back to antiquity. However, let us start this section with the assumption that we rarely find histories that focus exclusively on curriculum and, therefore, turn to an overview of general histories of education in an effort to get a few glimpses of the history of curriculum.

The curriculum field may be viewed as a formal area of academic inquiry, but as a basic human interest, its concerns are perennial. Parents and other members of society throughout history have wondered how best to help their young ones grow and mature. Their response to this problem constitutes an unwritten history of informal curricular thought and action. As societies became more formal and as institutions developed within them to meet specialised needs, schools/colleges evolved to help students grow more efficiently, to introduce them to the ways of their society and to help them acquire an understanding of their cultural heritage.

If we recall the earlier sections, curriculum has always been and continues to be influenced by educational philosophers, besides societal needs. In the ancient times, though a formal curriculum (of the shape it has obtained today) did not exist; young people were oriented towards meeting cultural and social demands. Depending on the influence of educational philosophies, however, curriculum-content for such orientations varied from one period to the other. Tracing the historical antecedents of curriculum may give us a framework of its

gradual growth. Especially in the 21st Century, other wise called the globalizing era, Information Communication Technologies (ICT) played an important role in imparting education with various tools, which made education seamless/ borderless. However, for our immediate purposes we shall restrict ourselves to an overview of the twentieth century curriculum and a speculation of the possible future trends in curriculum development.

2.5.1 Twentieth Century Curriculum

Early 20th century curriculum affirmed the shift in emphasis from sectarian education to liberal education. Traditionally, curriculum was confined to religion-related orientations and classics. Gradually, more and more subjects were added to the curriculum. As the focus was on mental discipline, social needs, student interest or capabilities were given little emphasis. Further, during this period, compartmentalization and not interdisciplinary subject matter was considered the norm. There was an unwillingness to recognise the values of arts, music, physical and vocational education. This was based on the theory that these subjects had little mental or disciplinary value. If we pause for a moment here and think, we shall realise that even though we offer vocational, industrial and/or technical programmes now, there is a tendency to consider traditional academic programmes superior to them.

Gradually, demands were made for curricular changes. Industrial development led a growing number of educators to question changes, as well as the authenticity of the traditional curriculum and its emphasis on mental discipline. This shift was also influenced by the scientific movement in child psychology (which focussed on the whole child and learning theories in the 1900's).

The argument that classics had no greater disciplinary or mental value than other subjects eventually appeared and meant that mental discipline (which emphasized drill and memorization) was no longer considered conducive for the overall growth and development of children. In essence, societal changes and the emerging demands therefrom; the stress on psychology and science; and the concern for social and educational reform made evident the need for a new curriculum. Thus, the aims of education went hand in hand with the particular type of society involved: conversely, the society that evolved influenced the aims of education.

Thus, the early twentieth century was a period of educational reform characterized by the following:

i) Idea of mental discipline was replaced by utilitarian modes of thought and scientific inquiry.

ii) Curriculum tended not to be compartmentalized but to be interdisciplinary.

iii) Curriculum tended not to be static but dynamic—changing with the changes in society.

iv) Needs and interest of students came to be considered of primary importance.

And now curriculum is viewed as a science with principles and methodology not just as content or subject matter.

2.5.2 Possible Future Trends

Keeping in view the prevalent political, economic and academic climate, it is not difficult for us to visualize, (of course, only to a certain extent) future trends and the influence they may have on education, particularly on curriculum development. (However, we should also confess here that such a speculation is fraught with risks that normally go with it.)

Although in this Unit we have been underlining the fact that social changes will have a vital role in determining a curriculum. If the present day growth of information is any indication the information flow will increase rapidly in the future. Clearly, the increasing flow of information negates the traditional notion of content-mastery. Students, therefore, will need to acquire critical thinking, and problem solving abilities rather than static and/or absolute knowledge and skills of factual recall.

Further, in the 21st century, the need for change will accelerate. For example, it took us more than one century to shift from an agricultural society to an industrial one. But it took hardly two decades to shift from an industrial to an information society. Let us discuss the issues related to ICT and education in brief:

2.5.3 Curriculum for ICT in Education

Education Technology is a powerful teaching learning tool in education. Introduction Interactive Communication Technologies (ICT) made education borderless and seamless. Technology facilitated different learning designs mostly self directed /regulated learning designs which suits learners needs, space and pace of learning. Historically teaching learning process undergone sea changes , which shapes the learning to suit the learning lends to meet society, market and with technology , ultimately enable techno-managerial teaching learning process to suit individually and institutionally, the whole process can be understood as paradigm shift . You have read about the paradigm shift in this programme in MDE-411, Unit-1. Paradigm shift one of the characteristic features of education in the changing world. You might have noticed that each paradigm shift is subjected to another paradigm shift. For example distance education is a paradigm shift from face to face education, again there is a paradigm shift within the distance education by introduction of technology in teaching learning process i.e. from distance education with print to multi media, from multi-media to teleconferencing, from teleconferencing system to online/virtual educational platforms'.

We have witnessing a trend where by all the models of educational approaches are going together. i.e. Behaviourlism, Cognitive, Connectionism and constructivism are going together, which is other wise called blended learning approaches to education. Each learner based on his/her context, relevance, and needs and fittest to purpose can customize his learning objectives.

ICT in curriculum is a paradigm shift in teaching and learning process, the process initially started with aiming education to meet cultural needs of the society i.e. cultural transmission from one generation to another generation which is other wise called socialization process, which occurs in an environment with the various agencies such as family, religion, culture, attitudes, customs and traditions. The aim of education is to retain cultural ethos of the society from one generation to another generation.

The aims of education further transformed from cultural to corporate needs of the society. Education became more productive process rather than mere cultural transmission. Increasing productive forces and means of production was the need and order of the 19th centaury education. The aim of education is an instrument to economic change by which social change made possible. This is further changed the due to introduction of educational technology.

Educational technology is a powerful tool to impart education to many. It is accessible, flexible and provides educational equity for all. The online/virtual educational platforms made easy to learn anywhere and anytime, otherwise seamless or borderless education. The social networks are also being used for

education and communication process. Now the experts say that e, learning is not a religion to preach but ii is one of the powerful tools to practice. So much one practices as much they familirise. Various platforms such as modules made education easy and accessible which is other wise possible education as a techno-managerial learning process to customize ones own needs.

Technology made educational process more accessible, flexible and providing education for all.The following advantages can be summed up with respect to ICT in education.

- It is well said that any meaningful communication is education, if it is written/produced in multi media it can be called open and distance education.
- The open and distance education become globalised and it is being manipulated all available technologies for teaching learning. The education in modern times becomes a new career avenues in the globalization process with the ICT interventions. .
- The improvement of communication skills is treated as central goals of ICT curriculum.
- The ICT in curriculum can broadly attempts to equip teachers with ICT competencies in their teaching learning process
- Teachers role becoming more a facilitators/coordinators rather tan totalitarian managers of knowledge.
- Language barriers and isolation can deny learners access to the wide range of digital information and resources.
- Learners physically challenged or the visually impaired needs additional support. Techno-support for teaching learning process is made easy with the ICT support..
- The impact of ICI on the overall development of all personality can be extremely significant.
- The ICT curriculum broadly attempts to equip learners with ability to negotiate a range of devices, tools, application, information and resources.
- The teacher led session aims to demonstrate techniques and process and present a context to the learning. Following this, learners engage themselves with activates, which are designed to provide adequate hands on experience.,
- In the formative assessment the portfolio attempts to capture all the learning and complements the periodic summative assessment through the course.

The only limitation of E or On line learning according to Garrison in his book Understanding of Distance Education is that the online learning is a powerful tool to practice but we do not know how such the learning styles differ from person to person but in case of ICTs, it is difficult to find that how learners have learned their styles at distance.

ICT and Curriculum

Given the dynamic nature of the field, the curricula, emphasizing the core educational purposes, are generic by design and focus on a broad exposure to technologies aimed at enhancing the creativity and imagination of the learners. Users of ICT by defining milestones and an evaluation system that allows for teachers to assess their readiness and decide their pace through the course. The requirements of the curricula are not to be hardware or software specific. Undoing the general trend of limiting software to office applications, which

are not only ill suited for educational purposes but also tend to narrow down the view of what computers and ICT can achieve, a wide range of software applications specifically designed for education are introduced. Use of proprietary software would become very expensive and make the implementation unviable. Therefore, Free and Open Source software (OER) have been suggested throughout the curricula. The use of FOSS applications will also obviate software piracy and enable customization to suit local needs.

The curricula underscore the need for internet connectivity of adequate band-width, particularly for teachers as access to the internet is no more a matter of choice. The educational potential of internet is no more a matter of choice. The educational potential of internet resources and interactions are immense. It also serves the essential purpose of connecting teachers and schools to each other and contributing to bridging of divides. The teachers' curriculum emphasizes the involvement of teachers in the creation of e-content; it's sharing with peers and its critical evaluation. Taking cognizance of parallel effort likes the National Repository of Open Education Resources, the curriculum encourages the participation of teachers in its collaborative platform to share such evaluated creations.

Guiding Principles

1) The curricula shall be generic, drawing upon the features of a wide range of technological applications and focusing on educational purposes.

2) The focus of the curricula shall be on learning to compute, which includes learning to create using a variety of hardware and software tools. ICT literacy, defined as the knowledge and ability to wield tools and devices, shall be an incidental outcome of this learning.

3) The curricula shall provide adequate opportunity for hands on learning and open ended exploration of ICT applications. Sharing of learning and critical evaluation of the learning shall be integral to the strategy.

4) A healthy ICT environment requires heightened awareness of the social, ethical and legal aspects of its use. Software piracy and plagiarism shall be explicity denounced and discouraged. Creation of original content, taking pride in the creation and duly recognizing others' contributions shall be promoted. Safe and secure use of ICT shall also be promoted.

5) The curricula shall promote the full utilization of infrastructure and resources, integrating it with the school's programme. Universal access and fostering of a sense of ownership shall be encouraged to ensure maximum impact. Innovative ways of reaching the unreached shall be promoted.

Use different software applications to enhance one's own learning – database applications, analysis of data and problem solving, computing, design, graphical and audio-visual communication; undertake research and carry out projects using web resources; use ICT for documentation and presentation; create and participate in web based networks for cooperative and collaborative learning; become aware of issue of cyber security, copyright and safe use of ICT and take necessary steps to protect oneself and ICT resources.

The Learning Strands

The learning strands seek to build capacities to handling today's and tomorrow's technologies appropriate for use in education, capitalizing on technology to master technology, managing the ICT infrastructure, using technology to surmount barriers and to acquiring to lead technology educationally.

1) Connecting with the world
   - Connecting with each other
   - Creating with ICT
   - Interacting with ICT
2) Possibilities in education
3) Reaching out and bridging divides

1) ***Connecting with the World***

ICT tools enable anytime, anywhere across to information and resources. Given the proliferation of internet connectivity, the curriculum recognizes the fact that being connected to the internet offers tremendous benefits to teachers in terms of capabilities to access information and resources of various kinds and to utilize them in their teaching-learning. Not only will these add to the range of techniques that teacher use, but also make a difference to their students learning. The ability to critically review and use the resources will be an essential input to teachers' professional development.

Become aware of the range of materials the web offers for the teachers' own learning as well resources for their teaching; critical appraisal of the information and resources; safe, productive, ethical and legal use of these resource; and protecting oneself and others from the harmful effect of the virtual medium is fundamental to every teacher's learning.

Therefore, the strand introduces teachers to the internet and its resources; using browsers and search engines; choosing appropriate sites; search and retrieval of information and resources; different kinds of websites and interactivity; navigating the web, bookmarks, subscriptions to services and products; downloading information and resources; awareness of formats and techniques; copyright and safety issues; uploading and sharing information; and transactions through internet.

2) ***Possibilities in Education***

ICT capabilities have led to a wide variety of educational applications. Software applications which extend learning, immerse students in experimentation and problem solving, make available data sets to process and retrieve information from are commonly used in education. Online resources – books, courses, media materials have become common. Interactive possibilities, individual users interacting with packaged material or groups of people interacting with each other have opened up ways in which teaching-learning is transacted.

While the glamour and novelty of the medium attracts everyone, becoming a discerning, critical user of ICT is very essential. Sugar coating of information cannot constitute enriching of experience. Learning to acquire insights into how ICT operate and impact teaching-learning, what forms of media and information can be appropriate to learning, how educational goals can become the arbiter of choices made in ICT, assessment and evaluation of ICT tools, devices, information and resources are very important, if cost effective and meaningful ICT has to be promoted. This strand therefore forms the bridge between the aspirations of the education system and the run away developments in ICT.

The strand involves exploration and experimentation with open education resources (OER) – access, use and evaluation, creation and contribution of educational resources; research and critical appraisal of the utility and

effectiveness of ICT devices and tools; familiarity with virtual environments for self-learning and teaching-learning; familiarity with the web and its range of resources; productivity tools and their meaningful use; tools and forums for planning, organizing, teaching-learning, assessment and evaluation; tools and forums for professional growth.

3) ***Reaching Out and Bridging Divides***

ICT has become available widely, overcoming geographical and social boundaries But this has not naturally ensured access to its benefits to all. ICT itself has evolved techniques – a DVD or a music player as examples of portability, forums as examples of public helplines and support, public sharing and open educational resources; a wide range of free and open source software—auguring well for improved access.

Language barriers and professional isolation can deny students and teachers access to the wide range of digital information and resources. Becoming aware of, experimenting with, participation in and creation of resources and support aimed at those denied access will help reach out and bridge the divides. Physically challenged, particularly the visually impaired and the auditorily impaired cannot access information as easily.

The theme will involve an exposure to building digital communities; understanding the need for and evolving a shared agenda; creating, sharing, and curating resources for teacher and student communities; community radio; local language tools and local content, translators and translations; subtitling video; disability and assistive technologies – screen readers for the visually impaired; audio books; talking books; collaborative possibilities – wikis, open maps, data repositories and forums.

What are the implications of these observations?

Job patterns will constantly change dramatically and so workers will be moving frequently from one job to another. Accordingly, to keep them abreast with each task/job that they take up, we will need to give them periodic training. The speed of change we have been referring to suggests not only that fields will be dynamic, but also that new ones will emerge. By implication, education and orientation will, of necessity be a lifelong process. In essence, unlike the past, we cannot consider our education complete just because we have attended schools/colleges or graduated from an educational institution. Nor will we be able to enter a job or profession and expect to remain in it for life without regular training.

Traditionally, organizations have followed hierarchical structuring with power and communication flowing in a pattern from top to bottom. Increasingly, however, centralized institutions are being replaced by smaller decentralized units. Much of the impetus for this change has come from the inability of hierarchical structures to effectively solve problems. Rigid and efficient organizations are no longer as efficacious as fluid and flexible ones in which experimentations and autonomy can thrive. Applied to education, this kind of decentralization gives recognition to an individual's need for self-determination and ownership in the decision making processes.

What are the implications of the above discussion?

In the main, there will be radical changes in the socio-academic ecology of school/college environment. Barring a few, if any, schools/colleges have so far been functioning as bastions of autocracy with little importance given to students' needs and teachers' competence. Because of the changing societal needs and greater awareness of the need for purpose-oriented

education, the needs of every individual in the school/college will have to be recognised. In other words, there will be a change in the treatment of students as a homogeneous entity. Rapid growth in information will result in the emergence, every now and then, of varied curricula for purposes of reeducation and retaining. The number of consumers will obviously be more than the programmes available. In such a situation, the mode of the teaching/ learning process cannot be the one which is prevalent now, i.e., face-to-face. Obviously, a viable alternative mode is distance education.

The International Centre for Distance Learning (ICDE), Milton Keynes, UK, has been collecting information about courses offered through distance education all over the world. In January 1997, there were 1028 institutions and 106 countries. Some 38,974 courses distributed among 11 fields of studies as given in Table 2.1.

It seems the trend of distance education courses is towards the development of life skills involving critical thinking and problem solving.

Table 2.1: Distance education courses (ICDL data base)

Sl. No.	Field of Study	No. of Courses (Jan, 97)
1.	Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences	8929
2.	Business, Services, Management, Economics	8438
3.	Education and Training	4450
4.	Applied Sciences, Technology, Computers, Environment	4432
5.	Medicine, Health, Social Welfare	3629
6.	Pure Science and Mathematics	3431
7.	Law, Law Enforcement, Regulations & Standards	1445
8.	Agriculture, Fisheries	1424
9.	Architecture, Building, Surveying, Planning	1168
10.	Broad, Multi-subject Studies, Study skills	1117
11.	Personal, Home and Family Affairs	511
	TOTAL	**38974**

Check Your Progress 6

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

We have discussed the status of 20th century curriculum and possible future trends. Please give your opinion on them.

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2.6 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, we have explored the foundations of the curriculum and touched upon future curricular trends. We emphasised that each one of the foundations is important, since it contributes ideas that are crucial in framing a curriculum.

In the discussion about philosophy, it was suggested that philosophy has a valuable place in the practical realities of school/college since one's educational philosophy largely determines one's view on curriculum.

While dealing with the social foundations, both the contemporary and the future society should be considered in developing a curriculum and kept in view. Attention should be paid to such issues as growth of technology, family structure, life styles and other aspects of society. At the same time, thought must be given to how the curriculum, developed in an industrial age, may respond to the growing diversity of the emerging post-industrial society.

The discussion of the psychological foundations has indicated that curricula can become more effective if they are based on considerations such as basic human needs and the ways for meeting them. Finally, trends in curriculum development were discussed to show that over the year curriculum has been undergoing changes under the influence of philosophical ideas and societal changes, and that open distance education is obviously the system for the future as it promises to accommodate the growing changes in individual needs, communication technology and curricular efforts to fuse them all together.

2.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

Pragmatism emphasises the need to consider social changes in curriculum development. To discard social changes and to take into account only those values which are changeless is unwise and unrealistic. Thus, pragmatism accepts knowledge as a process in which reality is constantly changing.

Check Your Progress 2

Existentialism as a philosophy has a limited possibility of application for schools/ colleges. Education in our society, and also in most other modern societies, involves institutionalised learning and socialisation which require group instruction, restrictions on individuals' behaviour and bureaucratic organisation.

Check Your Progress 3

i) Changing roles of the family

ii) Diversity in life styles

iii) Growth of technology

Check Your Progress 4

i) Growth in information and technology

ii) Changing sex roles

iii) Changing family structures and social roles

iv) Diversity in life styles

v) Cultural pluralism

Check Your Progress 5

The three types of theories which we talked about are

i) Behaviourism;

ii) Cognitivism; and

iii) Phenomenology

i) **Behaviourism:** It stresses conditioning of behaviour and altering the environment to elicit selected responses from the learner.

ii) **Cognitivism:** It emphasises that learning is affected by the environment and what is learnt in one situation can be transferred to another.

iii) **Phenomenology:** It emphasizes that human needs should be considered of prime significance while planning a curriculum.

Check Your Progress 6

Looking at the 20th century curricula it is found that, due to radical changes in socio-academic ecology of institutions i.e., school/college environment, it is impossible to cater to the needs of the growing population individually as per their choice of courses through the conventional education system. Obviously, it may be possible due to rapid growth in information and technology and the institutions existing to run the courses through distance mode of learning where different kinds of courses are available for the student population. As per the ICDE information, it is seen that there is a consistent growth of distance education programmes in all parts of the world. The trend is also seen in the life long courses i.e. in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Business, services, management and economics education and training, applied sciences, technology, computer, environment, health and medicine etc.

UNIT 3 CURRICULUM: ISSUES AND TRENDS IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

Structure

3.0 OBJECTIVES

After having gone through the unit, you should be able to:

- explain some of the important curricular issues with particular reference to distance education;
- describe the various ideological under currents that shape the curricular pattern;
- outline some important curricular trends in distance education in different societies; and
- identify crucial factors for developing curricula for non-conventional courses in the Third World countries.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

We are now familiar with differing approaches to curriculum theory, curriculum development, its implementation. We are also aware that there is/ can be no single approach to curriculum planning, implementation, etc. We suggested that different interpretations of curriculum as a concept, and various ways of building curriculum theory, emanate from the different philosophical premises on which educationists base, defend and propagate their views and theories about education in general.

Curricular issues related to distance education are many and they differ from those related to the curriculum usually designed for the face-to-face set up. Distance education curriculum, because of its inherent tendency to be innovative, faces new issues, both theoretical and practical. At the theoretical level, we need to give careful thought to the pedagogical soundness of a proposed curriculum for a particular educational programme i.e., its feasibility, its actual implementation and evaluation and at the level of practice, we sought to consider strategies and devices which are essential to make our curricula effective and successful.

Keeping this in view, in this Unit, we shall look at important issues which usually confront the curriculum developers working for distance education and indicate their implications for educational programmes offered through the distance mode. We shall also consider some of the important trends in distance education which call for new approaches to curriculum. Apart from the already existing curricula for established disciplines like Chemistry, Economics etc. there are areas such as Adult Education, Continuing Education, Workers Education, etc., which offer a variety of educational programmes through non-conventional means. By implication, distance education primarily concerns itself with the development of curriculum for new educational trends. It assumes the responsibility of altering and modifying the curricula meant for conventional academic and professional courses, with a view to facilitating the learning process of distance learners of different categories.

3.2 CURRICULAR ISSUES RELATED TO DISTANCE EDUCATION

When we discuss the curricular issues and trends we should always remember the socio-political and cultural contexts in which they are viewed, the philosophical and pedagogic bases suggested and the ideological implications they hold for us. They are necessary, if we are to approach the common curricular issues in their specific contexts and in a concrete manner. Although the curriculum for distance education has to face new issues from time to time, there are certain fundamental issues which are common to any educational programme developed at a distance teaching institution. We have taken up the following four such issues for discussion:

i) Instructional issues,

ii) Discipline-based issues,

iii) Individual-based curriculum, and

iv) Relevance-based issues.

3.2.1 Instructional Issues

Instructional issues related to curriculum for distance education can be viewed at various levels, but mainly at the theoretical and practical levels. At the theoretical level, the principles behind various theories of learning and the concept of curriculum as such influence curriculum planning. At the practical, or pragmatic, level the list of instructional issues grows increasingly lengthier as we have to consider them at various stages, such as course planning, course production, media selection, student support services, evaluation, feedback system, etc.

Let us take up the instructional issues pertaining to curriculum for distance education at the theoretical level.

Theoretical level

The major theories of learning we are familiar with are the following:

- Behaviourism,
- Cognitive Psychology, and
- Eclecticism.

As we studied in Unit 2, Block 1, our choice of methods of teaching, and our decisions about strategies to implement a given curriculum, will depend on the learning theory we follow. This is so because each learning theory differs from the other in its outlook about the relationship between man and the world, its approach to the learner as well as the teacher and the entire teaching-learning process. The curriculum planner who subscribes to a particular world-view and a theory of learning, perceives the whole process of developing, implementing, etc. of curriculum on the basis of his/her understanding of the philosophical premises of the pedagogy (science of teaching) and andragogy (art of facilitating adult learning) chosen.

Let us elaborate on this by touching upon each of the learning theories we have mentioned above.

Behaviourism: This theory was derived from the experiments conducted on animals, birds and children and operates on the principle of 'stimulus-response' though, useful in many ways in developing programmes and instructional materials. Behaviourism completely ignores the role of the human mind in the learning process. Further it relies mainly on the biological behaviour of the learner which is conditioned or manipulated by the instructor or the teacher. This theory implies that:

i) the teacher has absolute control over the learner, and

ii) it insists on observed and observable behaviour

iii) the learner does not really have a choice as to what to learn and how, since behaviour is controllable.

Cognitive psychology: Cognitive psychology, in contrast with behaviourism, places the human mind at the centre of the learning process. It implies that the learner's behaviour cannot be equated with that of an animal and the process of learning is based on conscious effort rather than a biological response to external stimuli. Since the days of the German **Gestalt** psychologists of the 1920s up to the present, developments in the cognitive approach to learning have emphasised the primacy of the mind. In other words, the learner has been consistently upheld as the most crucial element in the process of learning by educationists who advocated cognitivism. (The humanist approach too by emphasising the conscious **element** in the learning process supports the idea of developing human qualities along **with** skills in learners).

Eclecticism: The eclectic approach freely makes use of all **the** workable principles from any theory and Gagne's eight types of learning could be cited as a good example of pragmatism which avoids all conflicts and controversies that arise from conflicting philosophical positions from which different pedagogical theories contend with each other.

It may appear to be 'safe' to be a pragmatist in the sense Gagne is. But don't you think that it is better to be aware of the actual differences among various theories? This will help us approach curricular issues from a position of strength and understanding and prevent vague and naive use of borrowed theories.

In essence, we can think of two important implications these theories of learning have for curriculum development in the context of distance education. They are:

i) curriculum developers who are more inclined towards behaviourism tend to ignore the role of learners and, therefore, move towards a controlled and bureaucratic type of curriculum; and

ii) those who choose the eclectic approach, or to certain extent the cognitive approach, emphasise the need to allow the learner a degree of freedom in deciding what and how he/she wants to learn.

To reiterate, the nature of a curriculum, whether democratic or otherwise, would depend on the philosophical orientation of the curriculum developer and the institution..

Having gone through the instructional issues at the theoretical level, we shall now take up those at the pragmatic level.

Pragmatic level

At the practical, operational level, we need to consider the strategies of teaching and the support services necessary for the distance learner to learn without facing any major hurdles. While deciding on the strategies of teaching, we have to pay sufficient attention to course design, text design and the choice of media. The heaviness of the content in the package, the mode of presentation of the content, the format of the text, the audio-visual materials, etc., should be considered. Such a consideration will naturally take us to the question of media choice, whether to offer a course through only one medium or to adopt a multi-media approach will be decided in accordance with the availability of resources-financial, technological and human. Besides, the validity and educational effectiveness of the media should also be considered on the basis of sound pedagogic/andragogic reasons. Some of the questions that we should consider at the operational level before we develop and launch new courses through the distance mode are:

- What percentage of material should be given through which medium?
- What types of assignments—tutor marked or computer marked or both?
- What will be the weight of assignments in the overall assessment and the evaluation rocedure?
- What should be the turn around time in receiving assignment-responses, assessing them and returning them to the students?
- What kind of help can the tutor offer the students?
- What could be the ways and means of getting feedback from students and how effective would the feedback mechanism be?
- How often should there be face-to-face meetings between the student and the tutor?
- Are the facilities provided by study centres accessible to the student?

It is possible that each of these questions can be broken down into further smaller questions. But for our immediate purposes, we shall stop here.

Having looked into instructional issues, let us now talk about issues pertaining to disciplines. Before we do so, please work on this exercise.

Check Your Progress 1

Notes: *a) Space is given below for your answer*
b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

State in about 8 lines the basic differences between the behaviourist and cognitivist schools of thought and the electric approach.

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3.2.2 Discipline-based Issues

Curricular issues become more specific when we take up the cases of individual disciplines. Both at the theoretical and operational levels, considerations differ depending on the nature of the discipline. For example, even if we adopt the same set of principles—say the principles of behaviourism—in evolving curricula for Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences, the application of these principles shall necessarily differ from discipline to discipline. The way in which a set of behaviourist principles operate for a curriculum in Science, for instance, will be different from the way they operate in Humanities or Social Sciences.

Obviously, different considerations of curricular issues at the practical level become inevitable, because different disciplines make different kinds of demands on us. While planning the curriculum for Science, for instance, we have to start with an assessment of the basic infrastructural facilities necessary for the practice and success of science programmes. Moreover, the importance to be given to the theoretical and practical components of science subjects will be decided on the basis of a consideration of the availability of adequate laboratory facilities, scientific equipment, face-to-face contacts of students, etc. However, all these sources may not necessarily be available in every situation.

From the students' point of view, we should consider whether or not students will be in a position to utilize the infrastructural facilities even if they are available. Students may have difficulties in using them because of:

- problems in using a specific component such as home kits for conducting experiments; and
- handling newly acquired scientific equipment or using the most advanced technology and media such as computer simulations, video conferencing, etc.

Besides, students may also have difficulties in collecting, incorporating and using the needed data to develop a coherent body of knowledge and a comprehensive understanding of the subject concerned from their studies and experiments.

In the case of curricula for Humanities and Social Sciences, there may be no issues pertaining to practicals. But, here again, the very choice of curriculum

content, methods of presentation and teaching, points of view in interpreting the content chosen etc. will pose a number of pedagogical/andragogical and ideological problems. For instance, we have to approach subjects like Literature, Languages, Economies, Political Science, History, Sociology and Philosophy with a lot of flexibility and ideological tolerance, as we have to maintain a reasonable degree of objectivity. However, the least we could expect from a democratic curriculum is to make provision for presenting a variety of views on a given subject/theme. A free play of ideas and interpretations would, then, allow the students to make an informed choice among the possible approaches, interpretations, views, etc., while studying a subject. If we are aware of these issues we can easily anticipate the problems related to each discipline/subject and think of possible solutions to them in order that the effective implementation of the curriculum concerned may be ensured. Overlooking them will make even the most well intended curriculum ineffective and narrow.

We are now aware that depending on the nature and thrust of different disciplines/subjects, differing considerations have to be looked into. One major consideration, besides discipline based ones is the student for whom a course is prepared. Traditionally, the focus has been, and to certain extent, still is, on disciplines/subjects. Because, of the shift in educational emphasis globally the focus is now legitimately on the learner and this brings us to a discussion of individual-based curriculum.

3.2.3 Individual-based Issues

Because due to the change in educational thinking, learner autonomy has gained currency. And, one of the strong points of distance education is that it promises to allow individuals to choose the courses/programmes they want. The concept of independent study or learner autonomy derives its strength partly from the flexibility of the distance education curriculum itself. The curriculum for distance education therefore, has to take into account a variety of individual needs, the different learning styles and the study habits of students. It should also allow individualised learning in geographical, sociological and pedagogical/andragogical terms. In essence, distance education should allow students living in different geographical locations (e.g., urban, rural. remote areas), irrespective of their social status, to take the courses they need. Time is another important factor in this regard. The time frame envisaged for the completion of a course should be reasonably flexible so that the students who may have to disrupt their studies because of social, domestic or professional commitments can continue their studies whenever they get time to do so. However, this aspect of flexibility, as you might be aware, should not be interpreted in absolute terms.

There are sociological and pedagogical/andragogical constraints on any educational system, however, flexible it may strive to be. Flexibility of a curriculum in distance education should be interpreted only in realistic terms. It is flexible in so far as it allows the freedom to individuals to have access to educational programmes which can meet their specific needs—academic, professional or intellectual.

Let us elaborate.

Suppose there is a medical practitioner who wants to know about the latest developments in a particular branch of medicine or an economist who wants to do a course in Statistics or Mathematics. In both the cases, you can see the specific needs which are individual-based. They may not like to acquire the specific information or knowledge by joining courses which make it obligatory for them to study a certain number of topics in addition to the one which they actually want to study. The very structure of conventional curriculum prevents

isolation of specific topics or themes from the overall framework. Distance education curriculum can provide precisely this facility by isolating specific topics/areas of knowledge and offering individual courses on those areas.

For this purpose, we need to conduct surveys to identify the areas where individual based courses/programmes would be feasible. Surveys conducted on the basis of representative sampling, the findings and conclusions arrived at after the analysis of data collected will enable us to decide on the nature of needs and the possibility of developing courses to meet those needs. Individual-based curriculum should also consider the flexibility of such courses in terms of cost, logistics, etc. After deciding on the flexibility of developing an individual-based curriculum, we have to consider the objectives of the learner, their preferred learning methods and the modes of evaluation. Some may just want to get the information; others may need certification; a few would like to take the examination whenever they are ready for it. Consideration of such issues will influence the final outcome of individual-based curriculum.

Having looked into the three different curricula and their demands, we shall now talk about the last one, i.e., relevance-based issues.

3.2.4 Relevance-based Issues

Even a curriculum which was very useful and effective at one time may become absolutely irrelevant if it does not respond to the new needs of individuals and the society. The relevance and the irrelevance of curriculum, therefore, are closely related to the needs of individuals as well as the society. The truism that with the changing times, educational needs also change only emphasises the need to review, revise or change the curricula. Sometimes even the most updated and complete curriculum could also become irrelevant, if it does not suit the needs and interests of the learners. This is usually seen in the combining of diverse subjects under a single programme. Suppose you want to specialise in the area of theoretical Physics, but you are asked to do Mathematics and Chemistry too in order to gain a degree in Physics. Unless the need for a particular combination of subjects is proved valid, the curriculum because of its fixed nature may not motivate the student. In a situation where schools/colleges teach subjects which contain outdated information, curriculum becomes a bottleneck for the acquisition of knowledge. On the other hand, new curricula which are yet to gain social recognition and acceptability may end up producing students with newly acquired skills and knowledge but with no employment prospects.

Do you visualise any problem that a distance education institution may face in this regard?

Distance teaching institutions may face the following two major problems in this regard:

i) The institutions, which offer a rehash of the curricula designed for traditional institutions, will not allow any flexibility in the case of course combinations. For example, most programmes offered by distance education directorates/ departments attached to various universities in India are yet to find a solution to this problem.

ii) The institutions, because of their enthusiasm to be innovative may develop curricula for unconventional courses without realising their long-term implications. A course developed to satisfy temporary needs of a small group of people will soon invalidate the rationale as soon as students stop registering for the course. Thus possible duration or life of the course must be one of the factors to be considered in deciding on the relevance of the curriculum concerned.

Check Your Progress 2

Notes: *a) Space is given below for your answer.*
b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of the Unit.

Write a note on the need to ascertain the relevance of a curriculum in the Distance Education mode.

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3.3 CURRICULUM AND IDEOLOGY

The wide ranging discussions and debates on curriculum (concept, theory, content, etc.), and disputes on adopting particular theories of learning, the relevance and validity of offering programmes on particular themes, the motives and intentions behind the methodologies and strategies to teach the subjects concerned, etc., may, at first, leave us with a sense of bewilderment and, at times, frustration. This is so partly because of the usual human tendency to state even the simplest truth in the most abstract language and partly because of the complexity of the subject which makes the use of abstract language and new terminology unavoidable.

However, it is not difficult to see the differences among the approaches of educationists in concrete terms and seek answer(s) to the question 'why such differences?', when all the educationists concerned seem to be talking about the same subject: education! The key to the answer(s) to the problems we have identified here is to relate the theoretical and philosophical views of educationists to their concrete, material, socio-political-cultural contexts, of which education is only a part. Curricular and pedagogical issues are based on definite ideologies and world views held by educationists, although it is possible that some of the educationists may be quite unaware of them. It is in this context that a discussion on ideology in relation to curriculum becomes necessary.

3.3.1 Ideology and Education

Ideology is inevitable in life, including education. Educators may not be conscious of the ideological base in which they are being governed, but certainly ideology, as a sphere of thought, guides their actions. It therefore operates at various levels of developing and implementing curriculum.

Liberal ideology: Western democracies stick to the ideology of freedom of the individual which implicitly believes in the correctness and fairness of an individual's choice. In all spheres of life one has to face the consequences of one's choice. If you can cope with the demands of a particular course, for example, it is your individual effort and determination that ensure your success. On the contrary if you find it too difficult to complete the course or you are tied down to your domestic or social commitments and, therefore, cannot cope with the course, once again it is up to you to continue or to give up the course. In either case, you have the freedom to choose. This, in short,

is the essence of liberal ideology that has shaped the curricula of many of the distance teaching institutions of the West.

Socialist ideology: The socialist or Marxist ideology, on the other hand, holds the view that it is the overall socio-cultural environment and the political policies of the state that determine the success or failure of educational programmes. Although individual effort and determination are necessary to achieve educational goals, it is imperative on the part of society or the state to ensure basic facilities and equal opportunities so that individuals and society as a whole could benefit from education. The emphasis here is on society rather than the individual. The socialist ideology suggests that the development of each individual is dependent on the overall development of society.

Ideology of the developing countries: It seems to be difficult for the developing countries to clearly spell out their ideology. But the essential aspects of education in the developing countries show that their ideology is closer to the liberal or individualist ideology than to the socialist one. However, the terminology used by the educationists in the developing countries usually gives the impression that they are socialists. This lack of clarity about their ideology as well as their educational goals emanates from the very material reality of their position vis-a-vis the developed western, and the socialist, countries. Because of their erstwhile colonial status, the developing countries want to free themselves from the influences of the former colonisers and, therefore, look to socialist/welfare state ideology. And because of their urge to catch up with the developed countries they shape their political, economic and educational institutions on the Western models. The very choice of the educational philosophy and the mode becomes tinted ideologically, and there is no way to get away from it—other than perhaps recognizing it and understanding the implications of such an ideological choice. The impact of this crisis of ideology in the developing countries, i.e., a midway between liberalism and socialism, is nowhere felt with such clarity as in the field of education. A UNESCO report on Education The World Over States:

> "Serious anomalies appear where the educational system has been set up only recently, and is copied from foreign models-usually the case in developing countries. When they emerged from the colonial period, the Third World countries flung themselves whole-heartedly into the fight against ignorance, which they quite rightly viewed as the most important condition for lasting liberation and real development. They believed that it would be enough to snatch the instrument of technical supremacy, as it were, from the colonisers hands. They have now become aware that these models (often obsolete, even for the people who devised them), are adapted neither to their needs nor to their problems. Their investments in education have become incompatible with their financial possibilities. The production of graduates is greater than the capacity of their economics to absorb them, giving rise to unemployment among certain groups, the drawbacks of which are not confined to that of unprofitability; it also causes psychological and social damage which is so extensive that it is jeopardising the balance of society. Since it is out of the question for those concerned to give up one of their fundamental aspirations for which they have sacrificed so much, suffered and fought, an agonizing reappraisal becomes necessary (UNESCO, 1973).

Perhaps the case has been stated in a mild and non-controversial manner: In many a developing country it is not merely a 'failure' to adopt a correct model but also a failure to resolve the ideological conflicts of different control groups which shape and implement the curricula in the developing countries.

The views of liberal democracy, primitive and progressive ideologies often contend with each other. Because of their rare access to the governing bodies of educational institutions, the socialist ideologists have little say in shaping the curricula and their influence on curriculum is only marginal. The real contention is often between the first two categories: liberal ideology and primitive thinking. Quite often the liberals compromise with the feudal elements and the result is what you saw in the excerpt from the UNESCO report.

Curriculum, in the context of distance education, is influenced by ideological issues in at least four major aspects: theory, development, implementation and evaluation. Further elaboration is in order here.

3.3.2 Ideology at the Pedagogic/Andragogic Level

Every educational activity comprises a two way process; teaching and learning. Curriculum is a systematic organisation of requisite components of an educational programme. At the very beginning of the process of planning and developing a curriculum, we have to consider the wider significance of the pedagogical/andragogical, political, economic and practical aspects involved. Such a consideration has fundamental significance to the success or failure of any given curriculum.

At the pedagogic/andragogic level, the well known theories of learning influence the curriculum developers in one way or the other. Since distance education is recognised as learner-centred education, it becomes all the more important to consider the pedagogical/andragogical principles which guide the development and implementation of its curricula for its various educational purposes. Some of them which matter in this context are:

- the behaviourist approach
- the cognitive approach
- the eclectic approach
- the humanistic approach and
- the dialectical materialist approach

The first four approaches are being followed in one form or the other in curricula developed by educational institutions which place the improvement of the individual at the centre of their educational activities. The fifth one i.e., the dialectical materialist approach is supposedly followed by the developers of socialist curricula. There are enormous differences among the first four approaches in their attitudes towards teaching and learning and their emphasis on particular processes thereof. However, what is common is the ideology that governs all these four approaches.

We have already discussed the first three approaches in the earlier sections with their ideological and pedagogic implications. Here we shall discuss the implications of the last two approaches in that order.

Ideology of humanistic approach

As a reaction to the total neglect of the human mind in the learning process came the humanistic approach which places the thinking faculty of the human being, i.e., the human mind, at the centre of the learning process. The most significant contribution of humanistic approach is that it refuses to equate human behaviour with animal behaviour and recognises the ability of the human mind to question the knowledge it receives and refuses to take in what it does not want or need.

This approach effectively counters the behaviourist tendency to see learning as more a biological activity than the conscious thinking activity of the mind. However, the humanistic approach too emphasizes the individual's well-being and inter-personal relationships, over the social aspect/approach.

Ideology of dialectical materialist approach

The dialectical materialist approach or the Marxist approach looks at education as social process. At the philosophical level it recognises the existence of the objective world independent of the mind. Human beings, as historically evolved biological beings acquire learning by interacting with nature. This interaction between the objective world and the human mind is the basis of all learning. As social beings, individuals develop their mental faculties and acquires skills through interaction with other members of their society and by participating in the productive process of the society in one way or the other. The nature of education in a given period of time, in a given society, is conditioned by the prevalent mode of production.

For example, education in a feudal society is characterised by its conformity to the feudal mode of production with its support of monarchy, church, religion and a relatively stable hierarchy of social classes: the lords, the priests and artisans and the serfs. Education under modern industrial capitalism, with its free trade, free competition, free enquiry, individual freedom etc. as its goals, gives up the religious dogma, and encourages secular thinking. It introduces new disciplines of learning in place of theology, logic, rhetoric, etc., and demands acquisition of specialised skills to meet the ever increasing needs of the division of labour required by modern industry, science and technology.

It must be clear now that 'the dialectical materialist approach' to curriculum, places overall social growth and well being as the basis of the free development of individuals. While recognizing the need for specialised skills, new disciplines, etc., it also emphasises the need for a general education which would inculcate social, human and ethical values in human beings, besides imparting knowledge and skills to them. The most important aspect of this approach is that it holds that education or curriculum cannot be free from class interests in a class based society. It believes that the ideology of the ruling class dominates the curricula of any educational system, sometimes overtly, and often covertly. Thus the curriculum of the educational system of a capitalist society aims at safeguarding the interests of the capitalist class and that of socialist education aims at the well-being of the working class, which would, presumably, eventually lead to a classless society.

What are the implications of ideologies for curriculum development? We shall try to answer this question in the following subsections.

3.3.3 Implications: Ideologies and Curriculum

The ideological implications of the approaches to learning, which we have talked about in Sub-sections 3.2.1 and 3.3.2, are significant. An awareness of the ideological positions of different approaches to learning would help us place curriculum more or less clearly in the overall social context.

To create such an awareness, it is necessary that we ask questions of the following types and examine them from time to time:

- What do we mean by 'adults'? Are they grown up members of a society in general, or those who did not get education at an earlier stage?
- What sort of education and in what proportion needs to be given to them, and by what means?

- If a curriculum for women's education is called for, who would design it for which section(s) of women and with what objectives?
- If the tribal people are to be educated and brought into the 'mainstream' of national life, who should decide on their educational needs and how?

You could perhaps think of a few more questions to add to the list given.

Let us pause here for a minute while you do this exercise.

Check Your Progress 3

Notes: *a) Space is given below for your answer.*
b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

We have studied several ideologies corresponding to different curriculum approaches. Write about the ideology of the dialectical-materialist approach.

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3.4 CURRICULAR TRENDS IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

We can safely assume that curricular trends in distance education necessarily run parallel to the emerging trends in distance education. The four important developments which influenced distance education to in the 1960's were:

i) adult education,

ii) workers education,

iii) educational broadcasting and media technology, and

iv) research in the processes of teaching and learning.

The recent trends in distance education which call for new approaches to curricula include, among others, the following:

- Mass/community education,
- National development, and
- Rural development.

Having identified the trends in distance education, we shall talk about their overall impact on curriculum with reference to developed and developing countries.

3.4.1 Distance Education Curriculum: Three Worlds

Curriculum for distance education takes various shapes and assumes quite differing significance depending on the social context in which it is developed. Its forms and content are determined by national and social conditions, the

world over. Let us now briefly look at the three general trends of curriculum in distance education in the developed countries, developing countries, and the socialist countries.

Distance Education Curriculum: Developed Countries

In the UK, open education is a second chance for those adults who did not get the opportunity for higher education at the right time. Its aspiration thus is to improve the status and quality of adult education, to give education to those adults who were actually ignored, for whatever reason by formal and elitist curricula of the established educational institutions. In the USA, distance education curricula focussed on the technical and training needs of industrial workers and armed forces. Besides new curricula for the disadvantaged sections of the population like the disabled etc., received considerable attention from distance educators. The practice takes place even today.

Distance Education Curriculum: Experiences of Socialist Countries

In the socialist countries, distance education curricula took a very different turn in producing courses which could combine production, general and specialised education. Curricula for polytechnical education in the socialist countries together with the curricula for work peasants and soldiers concentrate as much on ideological and political education as on technical knowledge and skills. The harmonious development of human personality—whether one is a worker or a specialist or a student—has been the chief concern of the curricula in these countries. The relatively younger members of the socialist world such as People's Republic of China, Vietnam, Cuba and Nicaragua aspired to catch up with the developed countries of any socio-political system and, therefore, the distance education curricula in these countries gave more importance to training personnel who directly take part in economic production and scientific technological advancement. It should be a matter of great interest to see what changes may now come about in the curricula of these countries.

Distance Education Curriculum: Developing Countries

In developing countries the broad aim has been national development. This broad aim, however, implies a number of areas where new programmes/courses are to be planned and developed. Some of the areas which need unconventional curricula are:

- mass or community education;
- literacy-oriented education;
- general health education;
- women's education;
- food, nutrition and child care;
- functional education;
- tribal education;
- rural development;
- water management; and
- vocational education.

The very nature of the curricula, for it to meet even the basic requirements of educational programmes in the above-mentioned areas, pre-supposes the availability of enormous resources—human, financial, technical, etc., expertise, and above all, political will.

Keeping this in view, now, let us see in some detail how the distance education curricular trends in different social-geographical contexts have emerged or have been emerging.

Check Your Progress 4

***Notes** : a) Space is given below for your answer.*
b) Check your answer with the one given in the end of the unit.

State the broad aim of Distance Education in the third world and the basic requirement to achieve this aim.

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3.4.2 Emergence of Adult Education

Note here that for our immediate purposes we shall restrict ourselves to a discussion of adult education in the UK. Adult education in 19th century Britain was the product of the working class movements and trade union activities. Academics connected with established formal educational institutions moved out of their ivory towers to reach the educationally disadvantaged sections of the people. Naturally, they had to think of a curriculum which would be suitable to the day-to-day needs of the common people who could not have access to the elitist education which essentially aimed at perpetuating the interests of the upper class, middle class and the other privileged sections of the British society. Curriculum for adult education, thus, focussed on the economic, social and political rights of the common people in general and the workers in particular.

Adult education in Britain, despite the good intentions of and efforts by Workers' Educational Associations, Extramural Departments of universities and Local Education Authorities to make it vocational and non-formal, became in practice non-vocational and nearly formal. The extramural departments of universities attracted students mostly from the middle class and the members of the middle class opted mainly for non vocational courses like liberal arts and social sciences. The Workers' Educational Associations originally intended to take only members of workers movements but soon found themselves overwhelmed by students from the middle class. Nearly 80-90% of the courses came to be non-vocational, in the areas of drama, music, foreign languages, etc. Very few students chose vocational courses such as Car Mechanics, etc. Local Education Authorities too present a similar picture.

One reason for the failure to attract those very members of the adult community who were really in need of education could be traced to the failure of adult educators to assess their needs correctly and then evolve curricula and courses in accordance with the needs identified. The British Open University strove to make some progress in this regard, but adult education as well as life long and continuing education had to face problems arising from the inertia and the powerful vested interests of the older educational systems.

It is possible that relevent educational structures could be thought of theoretically, but the development and the implementation of new curricula for distance education usually run into difficulties mainly because of conservative ethos and the limitations of socio-political structures. The initial zeal for innovations in education dried up quickly when the privileged groups of society benefits.

The UK Open University courses were produced with a view to overcoming the constraints of the prevalent curricula in the formal system of education. The three major considerations which seemed to have influenced the Open University curricula are:

i) Age: The minimum age for a student at the Open University was fixed because students below that age might be more liable to be affected by loneliness or alienation that accompanies individualized study. Besides, by a certain age a learner could be considered mature enough to manage his/her studies.

ii) The assumed entry behaviour: The assumed entry behaviour in the case of adult learners joining degree courses could not be the same as the entry behaviour of a student who had not completed his/her school education, hence preparatory courses became necessary for the Open University students.

iii) Standard of the educational performance: The credibility of degrees/ certificates obtained by Open University students could be established only if they compared qualitatively well with the education offered by formal educational institutions. Thus, the question of standards assumed importance while framing the curricula.

Besides these three major factors, what could be the other factors which affect the curricular trends in distance education in the U.K.?

The use of educational broadcasting, efficient student support services, the credit system and the modular approach play a significant role in shaping up the curriculum there.

Curricula for the Liberal Arts, Music, Social Sciences, Sciences. Humanities, Foreign Languages, etc., that already exist either modified or redesigned in the light of the above factors. For developing curricula for entirely new courses, a lot of research is being advanced to identify and assess:

- the needs,
- the feasibility of offering courses to meet the needs identified,
- the modalities to deliver the course materials,
- methods of teaching/learning, etc., and
- evaluation procedures.

However, the development of new curricula cannot be stated in absolute terms. Although there are needs for offering socially relevant and innovative educational programmes in a number of areas within developed countries like Britain, especially to those underprivileged sections who need new educational programmes, it is not always possible to go ahead with the implementation of innovative curricula, because of reasons which are not purely educational.

In a socio-political climate which is basically conservative, the institutional policies as well as curricular approaches tend to be compromising and evolutionary in character. This is true even in the case of distance education, notwithstanding its promises and the potential to offer innovative educational

programmes to a wide range of learners with different socio-academic backgrounds. Under such circumstances, "advances have usually been made only by pragmatists, who are prepared to modify and supplement existing systems to bring them more nearly into line with what is theoretically desirable but who do so in ways that are acceptable to the establishment" (Perry, 1976).

In other words, we cannot really think of any educational change that is revolutionary, if the social climate does not warrant or encourage it. Therefore, it has to be reformatory, evolutionary and compromising in nature. As we have mentioned, this is no less true in the case of developing new curricula for distance education programmes.

3.4.3 Curricula for Workers' Education

Worker's education in the advanced capitalist countries as well as the socialist countries, has been gradually coming under the fold of distance education. In the late 19th century and the early 20th century the main focus of workers' education was to create awareness among the working class populations in Britain, United States of America and other advanced capitalist countries of the West to help them claim and ask for their economic, political and social rights. Academics of the Extramural Departments in the UK, and the intellectuals who organised Workers Educational Programmes, were concerned not merely with basic literacy but included the programmes to agitate for better working conditions, economic compensation in the events of industrial accidents or loss of employment, etc.

Obviously, the concept of class, socialism, class conflicts etc, became necessary components of the curriculum for workers' education.

After the two World Wars, the picture changed considerably. Ideas such as the 'welfare state', and of egalitarianism through peaceful, reformist measures, etc., have replaced the tendency of class conflict by class collaboration. The increasing emphasis on worker participation in the production and in the decision making process without altering economic-political structure makes it obligatory for the workers to improve their production as well as managerial skills which have to be made to match the requirements of modern technology and science. In the age of super computers and robotics, the workers have to learn the necessary skills to operate and manage highly sophisticated machinery. Moreover, the relatively better economic returns and better living conditions in advanced countries make the workers pay little attention to the earlier issues and class conflicts. The relatively easy social mobility of individuals from the working class population has helped them realize that classes can be abolished without resorting to radical means.

This conciliatory approach, in turn, influenced the design and implementation of the educational programmes for the workers. Modern concepts about skills, management and organisation are included in the curricula now. Workers are given better facilities to learn and those who complete the relevant training/ educational programmes are given incentives. In the socialist countries too, the curricula or workers' education was designed with a view to improving the overall production of the society and at the same time meeting the educational needs of the working people. In essence, education of this kind has been linked with production. Distance education curriculum encourages innovative programmes and new ways of offering them. For example, distance teaching universities such as the CRTVU in China constantly experiment and change their curricula depending upon the actual requirements of the industries and factories from where these universities get their students. In India, workers' education is one of the potential areas where distance education can play a significant role. However, at present very little has been done in this regard.

3.4.4 Curricula for Unconventional Courses

The unconventional courses in most developing and underdeveloped countries relate to basic literacy, health, women's education, vocational education, functional literacy, etc. What distinguishes the curricula for these courses from the rest of the courses offered by distance teaching universities is that the new curricula have no models. For example, if one has to talk about women's education in Arab countries, Pakistan, India and other countries, where, by and large, women have been kept out of the educational sphere for centuries, you can't really look for any significant guidance or help from the advanced countries where women's education means something very different. Because of deep rooted prejudices and crude discrimination against women, even simple literacy programmes in these countries cannot be separated from some sort of social, reformative and liberation movement.

Similarly, educational programmes meant for the poor sections of the urban as well as the rural areas cannot be separated from their economic well-being and living conditions. General education, health education, environmental awareness, etc. have to come to the adult poor only through practical demonstrations which prove the usefulness of educational programmes. However much one talks about the formal innovations in curricula, their genuineness and relevance cannot be tested until they bring about perceptible change in the lives of those who opt for such programmes.

The educational programmes prepared and practised by Paulo Freire in many Latin American countries, notably in Columbia, Brazil and Chile could go a long way in helping the curriculum developers who endeavour to develop non-conventional educational programmes in the poorer countries. The socio-academic relevance of the innovative programmes in the Third World are primarily judged by their contribution to nation building. Unlike the innovative programmes in the advanced West which usually aim at the self-development of individuals or small groups of professionals, the distance education curriculum in the Third World has to take into account the socio-economic-academic needs of millions of people who are often illiterate. It is this question of sheer numbers and the logistics involved in the implementation of any educational programme-innovative or otherwise - that throws up the biggest challenge before curriculum developers.

The experience of Pakistan in evolving and implementing the new curricula could help us to some extent in assessing the problems of developing new curricula.

The Allama lqbal Open University (AIOU) in Pakistan was established in 1975 with a view to spreading education at various levels to the different sections of the people of Pakistan. Although the AIOU sought much technical and organisational help from the British Open University, in matters of selection, planning and implementation of its curricula, the university had to depend on itself. This is so because it had to evolve new types of educational programmes for quite an unusual student clientele.

One of the primary aims of AIOU is to provide the masses of Pakistan with educational facilities from basic literacy to post-graduate levels. Accordingly, AIOU runs programmes on higher education in the existing disciplines, such as Humanities, Social Sciences, etc. Besides it has a wide range of unconventional programmes such as poultry, livestock, bank credit usage, nutrition, child care, Pakistani studies, functional literacy, vocational education, etc. The focus of the unconventional programmes is mostly on the day-to-day problems of the rural peasant population and the poor, semi-employed or unemployed people. The nature of the programmes and the methodology of teaching them suggest that in order to get educated one need not necessarily be literate.

AIOU's unconventional courses can be broadly categorised under the following three headings:

i) **General Education courses:** General education courses for the masses include two-tier functional literacy programmes—the stages being Post-literacy 1 and Post-literacy 2. Depending on the level of literacy needed to cope with a given programme, the student clientele will have to take up one of the two.

ii) **Functional Education courses:** Functional education courses are related to home, vocational and community development. Plant protection, soil problems and their remedies, tractor repairs and maintenance, improved methods of print production, computer studies, auto servicing, auto-mechanics, maintenance and repairs of refrigerators and air-conditioners, secretarial skills, etc., are some of the many subjects on which courses are being offered by the AIOU.

iii) **Other courses:** Besides, there are special educational programmes on population education, programmes for overseas Pakistanis and programmes for the handicapped.

Many of the programmes developed by the AIOU clearly indicate the potentiality of distance education in shaping new curricula in Third World countries. However, while developing new curricula we should also be cautious, lest we should overstate the merits of the programmes. We should, for example, anticipate questions raised on ideological grounds. For instance, the educational programmes developed for illiterate masses should have an objective with a time reference. They may be justified purely for reasons of exigency and must not become a justification for perpetuating illiteracy among the masses on the plea that one need not be literate in order to be educated. The contribution of these programmes to the economy and national development should be judged on the basis of the situation—economic and educational—of the masses. While recognising the potential of distance education for developing new curricula for the masses as in Pakistan and in the light of the experience of Paulo Freire in Latin America, we should also give serious thought to the elements of amelioration implicit in education.

Check Your Progress 5

Notes : *a) Space is given below for your answer.*
b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

What is the main problem in developing unconventional courses prevalent in most developing and underdeveloped countries?

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3.5 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit we have tried to give you an account of some of the essential aspects of curricular issues and trends in distance education. We have

discussed instructional issues, discipline-based issues, individual-based curriculum and relevance based issues, focusing on their significance to the development of distance education curricula. We have also attempted a critique of the ideological dimensions of education in general and their implications for distance education in particular. Finally, we have tried to show how the trends in distance education curricula in Western, as well as Socialist countries, differ from those of Third World countries in terms of their aims, form, content and strategies.

3.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

Unlike the behaviourist school of thinking, cognitive psychology emphasises that the human mind, i.e., the learner, plays a vital role in the teaching/learning process. Whereas, the eclectic approach uses principles from all the theories which synthesise towards explaining leadership, and avoid the conflicting positions of those theories.

Check Your Progress 2

A curriculum in Distance Education should be flexible enough to accommodate the changing demands as they emerge with the changing times. If it fails to do so, the curriculum ceases to be socially relevant and will eventually become redundant. The flexibility really lies in the case of course combinations and their span of life.

Check Your Progress 3

The dialectical-materialist approach lays stress on a curriculum which is independent of class influences, and aims at the overall social growth and well being of individual learners.

Check Your Progress 4

In the Third World countries, the broad aim of DE has been 'national' development which focuses importance on women's education, functional education, rural development, tribal education etc. The achievement of this aim lies in the political will of the government and the availability of resources.

Check Your Progress 5

The unconventional courses in most developing and underdeveloped countries have no model for guidance, because they have to take into account the varied socio-economic-academic needs of millions of people.

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