
UNIT 4 ECONOMICS OF EDUCATION

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4.1 INTRODUCTION

Making provisions for education involves cost. This cost may be in the form of infrastructure creation, salary of teaching staff and non-teaching employees, tuition waiver/scholarship to students and such other heads. The funds required to meet the expenditure may come from the national/international agencies. From wherever the funds are obtained, it is one of the most important preconditions for making education available, and also augmenting the quality of education provided. This unit discusses issues and provisions of funding education.

Funding determines to a large extent, the quality of education. In turn, the quality of education determines the type of jobs, promotions and perks to employees. So, in effect, funding avenues affect learners' progress and income.

Issues related to financing of education are crucial for understanding overall educational development. This unit discusses a few pivotal issues related to financing of education.

4.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you should be:

- the relevance of adequate funding for education;
- issues involved in financing education;
- various types of costs involved in education; and
- considerations in allocating funds for various heads of education.

4.3 THE RATE OF RETURNS TO EDUCATION

It is universally accepted that there is a valid (though imperfect) analogy between the expenditures incurred on education and that incurred on other productive investments. This analogy (i.e., acceptance of education as an investment) naturally suggests that education, like other productive investments, must have (i) the **returns**, (ii) the **beneficiaries** to whom the returns may accrue, and also (iii) the **method(s) to measure** the returns to investments in education.

Educational expenditures give rise to a large variety of **economic benefits**. Broadly speaking, these benefits may be grouped into two: (a) the **monetary benefits**, and (b) the **non-monetary benefits**. Similarly, the **beneficiaries** of educational investments may also be grouped into two: (a) the **private individuals**, and (b) the **society**. The economists have developed various methods to measure the returns to education. These methods are: (a) 'the residual factor' in which education plays a crucial role. This is also called as 'the third factor', (b) 'cost-benefits' ratios, (c) a calculation of 'human capital' and (d) a discounting of the additional earnings of the educated over those of the uneducated. This is alternatively called also as the 'rate of return approach'.

Now we shall study in some detail about the various types of returns to education and also about its beneficiaries. We shall limit our study only to the fourth method of measuring the returns to education, i.e. 'the rate of return approach'. Hence, what follows below has been divided into three sub-sections:

- a) returns to education,
- b) beneficiaries of the returns to education, and
- c) Measuring the returns to education through 'the rate of return approach'.

4.3.1 The Benefits or Returns of Education

It is already noted above that the contribution of education to human economic welfare may be grouped into **the monetary** and **the non-monetary benefits**. These benefits may be further classified as the **direct benefits** and the **indirect benefits**.

Still further, these may be grouped in the **private benefits** and the **social benefits** of education. The 'indirect benefits' of education may also be called by another name of 'external economies' of education.

1) Direct Benefits of Education

The direct benefits of education are those benefits of education (or returns from education) which are realized directly by the students. We may group the direct benefits of education into the following three types:

- 1) Direct returns;
 - 2) 'Financial option' returns; and
 - 3) Non-Monetary returns.
- a) **The Direct 'Financial Returns' of Education:** The direct 'financial returns' or the monetary benefit of education is reflected in the higher life-time wages or salary earned by the persons having higher educational qualifications compared to those persons having relatively lower qualifications. Various empirical studies show that with the acquisition of additional education/qualifications, the lifetime monetary or wage-earnings of individuals go up. These studies have been conducted both for the developed and developing countries. These studies have shown that the levels of aggregate or total life-time wage-earnings of persons

with different educational levels are different from each other. To put it simply, these studies have shown that there are remarkable differentials in the earnings of the persons having different levels of education. It is generally found that higher the level of one's education, higher is his/her earnings and vice-versa. Persons with lower levels of education have lower earnings. It may be noted that while estimating the earnings accruing due to education, the amount of education is measured in terms of either the completed number of *years* or *the levels* of schooling. It should also be noted that there are 'other factors' which have determining effects on the personal earnings. Some of these '*other factors*' are: age, sex, race, innate ability, social class background, family wealth, social mobility, place of residence, branch of employment, occupation, on-the-job training, informal education home, non-formal education, ambitions, motivation, efforts taken for the search of information regarding jobs with better salary and with better scope of promotions, number of hours worked, family wealth, quality of schooling, father's occupation, etc. Many of these factors are positively correlated with education and also have impacts on one's earnings. Various studies have recognized the influence of these non-educational factors and further they have tried to make suitable 'adjustments' for these factors and refine their calculations for the additional earnings attributable to education. One may safely say that at least a part, perhaps the most significant part, of the additional earnings of the better educated persons is due to their additional education. The economists of education have suggested that education first raises one's marginal productivities which in turn raise their wage-earnings.

- b) **'Financial Option' Return of Education:** We have seen that additional education gives rise to additional earnings. Such earning related benefits of education have been most talked about and measured benefits of education. But there are other benefits of education. We know that completion of a given level of education (say, graduation) creates/opens the '*option*' to obtain still further education (e.g. master's degree, etc). One is normally not permitted to pursue higher degree without the completion of the corresponding lower degree. We also know that such further education will result in still further additional earnings for the concerned individuals. Any estimation of returns to a given level of education (but ignoring the option of any additional education and resultant additional earning) will result in gross under-estimation of returns to education. According to estimates made by Weisbrod, "the option value of high-school education increased the rate of return on high school cost from 14 to 17 percent, considering only the 'monetary' returns". B.A. Weisbrod pointed out that "the value of the option to pursue additional schooling depends upon (a) the probability of its being exercised and (b) the expected value if exercised". He further said that "if the option value of education has been overlooked by the parents as it has been by economists there would be a tendency toward under investment in education".
- c) **Non-Monetary 'opportunity options':** In addition to the 'financial option' returns, there are numerous economic but non-market options that become available to the educated persons due to their acquisition of education. These will include the *direct* consumption value of learning per se, the opportunity to lead the 'full life', way-of-life options, on-the-job learning options, 'hedging' options, preparing one's own income-tax return, etc. Some of the other examples of indirect effects of education are: the relation between schooling and the savings behavior, effects of education on consumer behavior and also on the 'consumer efficiency', relation between the education and crime, relation between education and the allocation of women's time, education and fertility/family-size, education's impact of child-care and health-care.

4.3.2 Indirect or External Benefits of Education

Any investment in education gives rise to many benefits which are often not so visible and are indirect. Further, these benefits are not appropriate or captured by the parents and students making investments in one's schooling. Some such benefits of education accrue to 'other' individuals and the society at large. All such benefits (which accrue to other than those who actually make investments in education) are called as the 'external benefits' of education. It is necessary to identify and measure these external benefits. It will help us in determining the true rate of return of education. This in turn will help in attaining the 'allocative-efficiency' while making allocation of scarce economic resources between education sector and other sectors of the economy. Education system may give rise to some intended or unintended by-products. One of the by-products of education system, particularly in the elementary education, is the child care. This enables many mothers to perform other jobs, for example, to seek and to engage in productive/paid work in the job-market. In the absence of educational provision for the children, these mothers would have been forced to supervise their children themselves or to arrange for the baby-sitter. In fact, some mothers' earnings are made possible only due to the reason that children remain in school. Though difficult but it should not be impossible to measure the economic value of child-care services provided by education.

Inter-generational benefits: Education also brings some valuable benefit to children from the education of their parents by way of informal education at home, better help in school related home-work etc. Education is presumed to develop in the individuals various acceptable social values and behavior. It may inculcate in them the qualities of flexibility, adaptability, cooperation etc. The neighbors benefit from these good qualities of the educated persons staying in their neighborhood. This may be called as the neighborhood effects/benefits of education. The qualities that make the individuals good neighbors also make good colleagues at the work place. It creates a positive and conducive environment in the factories and other work places which in turn may be reflected in the higher productivity of the factory as a whole. This may be called as the employment related external benefits of the education. Further, education creates some benefits also for the society in general. Education is *supposed* to make persons more law abiding. It is presumed that educated persons will have lower tendency of indulging in criminal and unlawful activities. This will be reflected in lower requirements for law enforcement which in turn will lead to avoidance, at least lowering, of the costs of law enforcement. This type of social benefits of education may be called as the 'cost-reduction' benefits of education. There are other examples also of the social benefits. Education is presumed to promote 'equality' of opportunities in the fields of employment, various other economic and social spheres. Thus education promotes goals of socio-economic goal of equality. Education helps in improving the communication of information, functioning of political democracy. Higher education promotes research, innovations, inventions etc. In fact these are the 'joint products' of education. The national and the international communities reap the benefits of research etc.

4.3.3 Educational Expenditure is Investment

Marshall pointed out investment in education and health are better forms of investment compared to any investment in landed property, financial savings or any other material capital because investment in health and skill improvement would bring relatively more returns compared to material capital/financial savings/landed property.

It may be argued that there is a strong positive relation between education and economic growth. We know that during the Middle Ages economic progress was very slow and this slowness was partly due to a deliberate disregard of learning. During the 18th and the 19th century's education and science played crucial roles in

achieving mechanical advances and thereby in accelerating *the industrial growth* rates for various countries like Britain, Germany, France, and America. Education accelerates also the *commercial* and *agricultural growth*. Further, education has positive effects on *innovations* and *inventions* of both the machinery and method of production. Education improves workers' productivity through its effect on one's ability to adapt the mind to use its best faculties in one's job. However, it may be noted that, in addition to education, some other factors such as training, technical education, artistic studies, exchange of ideas, and traveling also play crucial roles in improving the workers' productivity. These factors like education play a positive role in acquisition of knowledge, adoption and improvement of exiting machineries, and also in the invention of the new machines. Education promotes accumulation of capital and financial savings. Further, it may be argued that education and health are themselves forms of capital accumulation and that too better ones. It is because of the fact that the investment in education and health bring relatively higher returns compared to the accumulation of physical capital. Studies have shown that there is a positive link between education and the improvement of agricultural skills, modernization and development of agriculture.

In short, educational benefits/returns are reflected in the growth of workers' marginal productivity, higher wage-earnings, progress of industry, commerce, trade, agriculture, innovations, inventions etc.

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) How does education increase 'opportunity options'?

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- 2) How can education accelerate commercial growth?

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4.4 MEASUREMENT OF RETURNS TO EDUCATION

The measurement and analysis of the "rate-of-return" to investment in education has been a major area of research for the economists of education. The economists of education have developed various models to calculate returns to investment in education which are based on the human capital framework of Garry Becker (1975) and Jacob Mincer (1974). Due to limitations of the space, we shall not go into the details of these models. However, we may point out that none of these models is satisfactory. The estimation of the rate-of-return to education based on *cross-sectional data* has been the most popular method. This method is based on the cross-sectional data relating to (a) *life-time income profiles* of groups and individuals with different levels of schooling, and (b) the *direct cost* of education as well as the *opportunity costs* of income forgone due to attending the school. Generally speaking, while estimating the return to education, the economists have taken into account either the completed number of years or the levels/stages of schooling. They have further assumed that completed years/levels of schooling accurately measure an individual's stock of human capital and his/her marginal productivity. They did not have any way to measure one's level of acquired skills. These models ignored the fact that variations

in the school's quality and/or that in the students' learning ability may cause significant differentials amongst students in terms of levels of the skills acquired by them per completed year/level of schooling. They have often also ignored the potential impact of 'innate ability' on one's probability of completion of higher levels of schooling. It is common knowledge that more able children tend to complete more years of education and also they acquire more cognitive skills per year of the schooling. There are other grounds also on which these models have been criticized. These drawbacks may vitiate the calculations and may lead to over or under estimation of returns to education. Hence the question arises whether the estimated rates of return are accurate measures of returns to education. Doubts have also been raised whether the rate of returns to additional year/level of schooling is the relevant rate of return to examine. It has been argued that, while estimating the returns to education, suitable adjustment should be made to take into account the effects of factors such as mortality, morbidity, sickness, unemployment/under-employment, natural abilities, good luck, good start in life, exceptional hard work or personal motivations/initiatives, etc.

One should take into account also the 'non-pecuniary' rewards. The non-pecuniary rewards are those non-monetary benefits which are received by the workers 'in kind'. These non-monetary rewards are in danger of being overlooked or ignored. The extra earnings due to investment in education may not be limited only up to one's age of retirement but it may accrue to an individual during the maximum possible duration of his productive life (i.e., till the date of his death). Hence, one should include the post-retirement incomes also in estimates of returns to education.

Various efforts have been made to take care of the different criticism and thus improve the estimations of returns to education. It has been realized that education is both consumption good as well as an investment good. A neglect of consumption benefit of education will lead to gross under estimation of return to education. It is argued that education may improve one's productivity not merely in activities related to his/her work place (the factory or the office), but it may also make him/her more efficient (a) in maintaining health of himself/herself and his/her family members, (b) in imparting human capital to their own children. It is argued that education may (and in fact it does) enhance one's productivity in activities performed within the household.

4.4.1 Need for an Alternative Method

Recently, economists have pointed out that there is a *need for an alternative method* for estimating the returns to education. New method should be able to take appropriate note of the impact that may be on the returns to education due to the factors like the investment in school quality, the impact of cognitive skills (not merely of schooling) on wage-earnings and also on 'non-monetary' but economically important productive activities that take place within the household (e.g., child care, fertility behavior of educated women etc.)

4.5 FINANCING OF EDUCATION

Every society from earlier times had been faced with the question: 'Who should pay for the educational programmes?' Adam Smith, in his famous book **Wealth of Nations**, wrote that the "expenses of the institutions of education...May...without injustice, be defrayed by the general contribution of the whole society. This expense, however, might perhaps with equal propriety, and even with some advantage, be defrayed altogether by those who receive the immediate benefits of such education and institutions". Alfred Marshall, in his books **Principles of Economics** (1908), and **Industry and Trade** (1919), argued that the responsibility of financing of education should be shared by three sets of people or the agencies: (a) the 'society' or State/

Government, (b) the individuals/parents, and (c) the employers. They have further argued that this sharing of educational finances should be done on the basis of three criteria: (i) the 'benefit principle' (ii) the principle of 'social justice'; and (iii) the social or 'external benefits' of education. It is suggested that the costs of education should be shared by different agents in proportion to the benefits reaped by them from given educational projects. Education benefits not only the present generation but also the future generations. Further, education gives rise to the 'direct' as well as the 'indirect' benefits. Education results in both (i) the 'private' benefits, and (ii) the 'external' or 'social' benefits. Any scientific inventions, medical discoveries etc have an economic value for the society as a whole. One may use the criterion of 'external or social benefits' to argue that the society or State should finance the education and scientific research related to R & D. the principle of 'social justice' or equity may be invoked while arguing for the State funding of education of deprived groups such as women, SC/ST, children of low-income parents. By doing so the State will promote equity and social justice by help the under- privileged to get the crucial start needed for bringing out their latent abilities, many of whom may have died unknown. It is argued that any neglect of such social justice will be harmful both for the social harmony as well as to the overall economic growth. Alfred Marshall (1890) argued that there "is no extravagance more prejudicial to the growth of national wealth than that wasteful negligence which allows genius that happens to be born of lowly parentage to expend itself in lowly work. No change would conduce so much to a rapid increase of material wealth as an improvement in our schools...which enable the clever son of a working man to rise gradually from school to school till he has the best theoretical and practical education which the age can give."

4.5.1 Agencies Financing Education

It may be noted that the governments at all the three levels, (the central, the state, and local level), contribute to financing of education. With the passage of time, a complex inter-governmental system of taxation and revenue for the financing of education has evolved. No doubt, the system and its complexities vary from country to country. Broadly speaking, the rationale for financing of education by the governments may be grouped into four categories: a) manpower development, and b) promotion of social equity, c) promotion of productivity and economic growth, nation building, d) improving quality and efficiency of educational system.

In India, the responsibility of financing and managing education has been defined by the Indian Constitution: (a) the Central list where the responsibility lies with the Central Govt., (b) the State list where the responsibilities rest with the State Governments., and (c) the con-current list where both the Central and the State Governments share the responsibilities for making provision of education.

4.5.2 Financing of Education by the Parents

We know that it is the parents who have always been the major investors in the education of their children. Given the new trend of reduction of public funding and privatization of education, particularly the higher education, the parents' share in financing of their children's education has increased and is bound to further increase substantially. The financing of children's education by the parents depends on: (a) financial resources of the parents, (b) willingness of the parents to make sacrifice for the future of their children, (c) educational background of the parents, and (d) parent's ability to distinctly 'foresee' the future.

Alfred Marshall (1890) observed: "The slender means and education of the parents, and the comparative weakness of their power of distinctly realizing the future, prevent them from investing capital in the education and training of their children." It may

be pointed out here that the modern economists of education have tended to neglect the importance of parents' ability to 'foresee the future' and over-emphasize the role of parents' financial resources in explaining the low rate of participation in education by the children of the poor and the illiterates. These days the role of parental resources has fast diminished due to the emergence of welfare States which often provide free education and also the free mid-day meals for the students of the primary schools. Is it not difficult to explain the low rates of educational participation of the under-privileged groups (the illiterates, the rural population, the poor parents, the SC/ST) simply in terms of their poverty? We feel that one may find a more satisfactory answer to this question by exploring Alfred Marshall's suggestion about the role of parents' ability of 'realizing the future.' Marshall argued that educated parents can foresee the distant future with more certainty. The uneducated parents are often unable to foresee the distant future distinctly, thus they have higher degrees of uncertainty about the future (including the future earnings due to education). Consequent upon the higher uncertainty about the future, the uneducated parents discount the likely future earnings at a higher rate of interest. This makes the discounted value of education's returns comparatively lower for them. We know that higher expected returns will induce higher investment and the lower expected returns will result in lower investment in any field, including education. Consequently, other things being the same, the uneducated parents invest less in their children's education even when they have their own financial resources and/or when the same is provided by the State/society, or the philanthropic agencies.

4.5.3 Financing of Education by Employers

The employers may finance the (i) research and development (R & D), and (ii) the education/training of their employees. This they may do for the reasons such as (a) the expected benefits, i.e., if in their own opinion they think that it will pay them to do so, (b) their ambitious character that may make them aiming at leading the race, pioneering the new art production and management, and (c) their philanthropic nature and benevolence which may make them to take a generous interest in the education and the well-being of their employees.

Check Your Progress 2

3) What determines parents' investment in children's education?

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4) What are the major reasons for governments to fund education?

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4.6 COST AND COST EFFECTIVENESS

4.6.1 The Current and the Capital Costs of Education

The costs of education may be classified as (a) the current costs, and (b) the capital cost. The current costs consists those outlays or expenditures which are incurred on *current activities*, such as payment of salaries of teachers and non-teaching staff; depreciation of buildings, equipments etc. The *capital cost*, on the other hand, consists

of outlays incurred for future. The capital costs includes expenditures incurred for developments of the infrastructures, construction of new buildings for classrooms, hostels, school-offices, laboratories, purchase of equipments, etc. Though expenditures may have been fully incurred during the current year itself, but such expenditures should not be classified under the head of the current costs unless the part or all of such expenditures are used up during the current year. In other words, it is important to see not only the period/dates when expenditures are incurred. One should also see the period during which the concerned outlays will be *used*. If the use is extended beyond the current year, the relevant outlays should be considered as the capital costs.

4.6.2 The Direct and the Indirect Costs

The *direct cost of education* consists of expenditures *explicitly* incurred by the students or their families and the educational institutions for education. The students and their families incurs expenditures on account of tuition fees, books, additional costs of hostel, boarding, school uniforms/clothing, transportation to and from school, etc. The educational institutions incur explicit expenditures on salaries of teaching and non-teaching staff, library books, capital outlay, equipments and chemicals for the laboratories. These and any other explicit expenditures on education are included in the direct costs of education. These may have been incurred either by the private individuals (students, their parents) and/or the society (educational institutions, governments).

The *indirect costs* are often called as the opportunity costs of education. The indirect costs are also called as the *imputed cost*. Unlike the direct costs, the indirect costs of education are *implicit* rather than explicit. The indirect cost of education consists of the costs of *earnings forgone* by the students. The students, instead of enrolling and attending school/college, could have taken-up a job and made some income. By attending the school, the student foregoes the income that he may have otherwise earned. While estimating the imputed value of the students' foregone earning, one should make *adjustments* for the facts that (a) students may be working part-time and hence not foregoing his/her entire potential earnings, (b) assuming the prevalence of high unemployment, the students would not have got any job at all. This would mean that the students could not have any income and the income foregone would have even been zero or much less than what it could have been if there was full employment. We shall not go into the other factors for which adjustment may be needed while calculating the imputed value of the students' foregone earnings.

In addition to the students' forgone earnings, there may be other hidden (opportunity) or indirect costs to education. For example, the "imputed rent" on school building should be included in the indirect cost of education. This is due to the fact that if the school building was not engaged in educational activities, it could have been used for some other purpose or else rented out and some rents could have earned. The society foregoes such potential rental income. Further, the imputed value of the tax exemptions enjoyed by the educational institutions should also be included in the indirect cost of education. We know that educational institutions are granted by the governments' exemptions with regard to the income-tax, sales-tax, and property-tax. Many a times, the governments supply to schools electricity, water etc. at highly subsidized rates. These tax exemptions and subsidies are not reflected in the educational budgets but these amounts to real costs to the society and tax-payers. Hence, the imputed value of the same should be considered as the indirect costs of education. However, we find that discussion about the indirect costs of education often confines itself to the issue of forgone earnings of the students. This may perhaps be due to difficulties in measuring the imputed value of these items.

The total costs of education consists both the direct costs and the indirect costs.

4.6.3 The Private Cost of Education

The private cost includes all expenditure incurred by the students/parents to meet (a) the tuition costs, (b) the non-tuition costs, and (c) earnings forgone. While estimating the tuition costs paid by the students, normally we deduct from the fees paid financial aids/scholarships etc. received by a student. In other words, only the *net* tuition costs are included in the private cost of education. In the non-tuition private costs, we include items such as books, stationery, equipments, cost of maintenance of students (lodging and boarding), and transport.

4.6.4 The Social Cost of Education

The Social cost of education is sum total of the private and the institutional cost of education. The private cost consists of net tuition costs, non-tuition costs. The institutional costs consists of both the current or operating cost and the capital costs of education borne by the schools, or society. The opportunity cost or income foregone is not included in the computation of the total social costs of education to the whole society.

4.6.5 The Unit Cost of Education

The unit cost of education is cost per unit. The unit cost is generally calculated per-student enrolled. But it may be calculated per graduated student, per-course, and per-institution. It is arrived by dividing the total costs of education by the total number of, say, students. The total costs of education consists of the sum total of all the expenditures incurred by the students/parents and that incurred by the institutions/government/society. It takes in account all expenditures incurred towards salaries of teaching and non-teaching staff, amortized cost of buildings, equipments, and other materials of an educational institution; household cost of students on books, stationery, living in hostels, and cost of foregone earnings. To put it simply, the unit cost of education consist of the three major components:

- a) Institutional costs (capital costs, equipment cost, and operating costs)
- b) Students costs (tuition and other fees, cost of books, equipments & stationery, extra costs of maintenance, income foregone.

The unit costs analysis helps us in ensuring the optimum utilization of resources and also in deciding the optimum size of educational institution. It may be used also as a criterion for studying and improving the internal external efficiency of resources invested in educational institutes. It helps in working out financial allocations and costing of education. By helping us in measuring the cost of education, it helps in studying the returns to education and productivity of the process.

4.7 THE INTERNAL AND THE EXTERNAL EFFICIENCY OF EDUCATION

The internal and external efficiency of the school system can be described in the following manner:

4.7.1 Internal Efficiency of Education

Internal efficiency of the school system covers the study of the problems relating to wastage and stagnation; drop-outs; utilization of school buildings and equipment; conservation, development, distribution and utilization of teaching and non-teaching manpower in school system; pupil-teacher ratio; teacher salaries; management; nature of schools; utilization of library facilities; length of schooling; time utilization by pupils; location of schools; and re-enrolment trends.

4.7.2 External Efficiency of Education

As the study of internal efficiency deals with qualitative aspects of the internal working of the school system, the external efficiency of the system indicates coordination between the school stage, educational sector and economic and higher educational sectors. It has got both quantitative and qualitative aspects. In terms of quantity, it attempts to measure how far the system produces the required numbers of pupils needed for the remaining sectors. The qualitative aspect of the system tries to show whether the educational sector is producing the type of output needed according to the present and future needs of the economy. It may even involve the study of utilization aspects of the output of the educational institutions when the products of educational institutions get settled in employment. A study of 'after-education wastage' in the form of increasing average waiting period for employment seekers, under-utilization of those employed, etc., will be of immense use in the study of unit cost of education.

Check Your Progress 3

5) What is known as the 'current costs' of education?

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6) What is the 'unit cost of education'?

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4.8 LET'S SUM UP

After going through the unit you would have realized that 'economics of education' involves a large number of issues. The issues may not be just of arranging finances and spending the budget but beyond the simple income-expenditure issues. As stakeholders and as individuals interested in the system of education, we believe you would have enjoyed reading and understanding how financing decisions can help or hinder the benefits of education.

It is the State responsibility to arrange for education of all without prejudice but the State's decision can also be influenced by the ideology and other considerations. Such issues have been touched upon and would be dealt with the following units of this block.

4.9 REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS

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UNIT 5 POLITICAL ECONOMY OF EDUCATION

Structure

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- 5.8 References and Suggested Readings

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Education is now part of the human rights dialogue. The twentieth century saw human rights accepted world wide as a guiding principle towards creating a foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. This unit provides a concise overview and analysis of the nature and scope of the right to education both nationally and internationally. As international forces have played an important role in influencing educational policies and programmes in the context of this right, we briefly examine the various forms of commitments adopted by the international community over the past half century, their legal status and implications. The right to basic education is further examined in the context of India. Deficiencies in its implementation are discussed under the sections 'Planned development of education' and 'Public expenditure.' The issue related to 'Politics of Education' is discussed in the next unit. It also outlines the future tasks and challenges that lie ahead towards translating the intent of the 'right to education' into meaningful reality in the country.

5.2 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- understand international concerns and broad issues in the human rights dialogue in education;
- analyze the nature and scope of the right to education both nationally and internationally;
- assess the implications and status of Constitutional Provisions within India in granting its people the right to education; and
- identify factors responsible for non-accomplishment of the right to free and compulsory elementary education.

5.3 RIGHT TO EDUCATION: LEGAL STATUS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

As education is now part of the Human Rights dialogue, in this section, we briefly examine the various forms of commitments adopted by the international community over the past half century, their legal status and implications.

5.3.1 International Laws and Provisions

UDHR: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948 has historic importance in setting out standards of achievement in human rights. The international community's commitment to implement the rights and freedoms set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has over the years taken various forms ranging from international treaties to internationally agreed Programmes and Frameworks of Action. Those relating to the right to education are of particular concern in this unit.

Right to Education: The right to education is spelled out in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) [Box 1]. As spelled out in three distinct paragraphs, the right to education has several different facets, both quantitative and qualitative. The first paragraph deals with access to education, the second with the content, notion and purposes of education, and the third affirms the prior right of parents to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children. The issues concerning its implementation are to a considerable extent bound up with questions of interpretations. Much discussion and debate had been needed to get from the first draft of this Article prepared by the Secretariat to the final text adopted by the General Assembly. India was one of the States ratifying the principles set out in the UDHR.

Box 1: The Right to Education

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

- 1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and Professional education shall be made generally available and Higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
- 2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
- 3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Source: Universal Declaration of Human Rights Adopted and Proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations on the 10th Day of December 1948. Final Authorized Text. New York. United Nations. 1950.

Forms of Commitment and their Legal Status: Since the UDHR was proclaimed, its principles have inspired a great number of internationally agreed normative texts of all kinds. The most important are the multilateral treaties. The UDHR is an internationally endorsed statement of principles and does not have the force of law. It is not a treaty. Its principles needed to be transformed into treaty provisions to establish legal obligations on the part of each ratifying State. This was undertaken in

two *International Covenants* prepared after the Declaration was adopted. These were: (i) The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and (ii) The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The preparation of the Covenants was a much longer process undertaken over a period of eighteen years. The two Covenants were adopted by the United Nation's General Assembly in 1966, but another ten years were to pass before a sufficient number of States (thirty five) had ratified them to bring them into force, i.e. make them legally binding on the ratifying States. *The Covenants together provide a comprehensive coverage of the rights and freedoms set out in the Universal Declaration.* The right to education is dealt with in Articles 13 and 14 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and is also mentioned in Article 18(4) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The latter affirms the 'liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions,' as stated in paragraph 3 of Article 13 of the ICESCR.

Besides Covenants, a large number of other international treaties were adopted over the years in regard to specific rights, or special aspects of some or all of the rights (e.g. Elimination of all forms of discrimination among women. Those directly relating to education are outlined in Box 2.

Box 2: International Treaties Directly Relating to Education

The five international treaties relating directly to education are:

- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)
- Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960)
- Protocol instituting a Conciliation and Good Offices Commission to be Responsible for Seeking the Settlement of any Disputes which may arise between States Parties to the Convention against Discrimination in Education (1962)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and
- Convention on Technical and Vocational Education (1989).

In addition, education is referred to in certain other international treaties, notably the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), as well as in several regional treaties.

Other forms of commitment to implementation of the right to education, as mentioned above, include *recommendations* of international conferences of States, *Declarations* and *Programmes of Action* adopted by inter-governmental conferences, or by 'mixed' conferences composed of representatives of governments, international organizations and civil society. While these do not have the legally binding force of treaties, recommendations are normally adopted by consensus on the understanding that States will make best efforts to implement their provisions. Sometimes (as in case of 'mixed' Conferences, Declarations and Frameworks of Actions), they provide an additional impulse to implementation of previous, formally agreed commitments when their provisions substantially overlap with existing treaties and recommendations. At the same time they have more flexibility for introducing concepts that are not directly expressed by existing treaties and Recommendations, e.g. 'meeting basic learning needs' as will be seen below. Of special significance particularly in the area of elementary education, besides the Universal Declaration and the two Covenants, are the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the World Conference on Education for All, commonly referred to as the Jomtien Conference (1990).

5.3.2 Shifts in Emphasis

Since the Universal Declaration was proclaimed, many general questions were raised about the right to education- education's purposes, notion, duration, approaches and content, and about the assessment of progress towards its implementation. These have formed part of successive debates and commitments that have been agreed to by the international community. The international community in its various normative texts has emphasized different facets of the right to education at different times, sometimes resulting in emergence of new concepts such as 'basic education', 'lifelong education,' 'lifelong learning,' and 'learning needs' that are not mentioned in the UDHR. Words such as 'free' and 'compulsory'; and 'fundamental' and 'elementary' education, have been debated in questions dealing with access to education at various stages (i.e. till which stage should education remain free and compulsory; should the focus be on children or adults?). When the UDHR was drawn up, only a minority of the world's young people had access to any kind of formal education. Thus the emphasis was primarily on making education available to all. In the post-Jomtien perspective of Education for All, however, implementation of the right to education became less a question of 'access to education' as such than one of access to 'relevant learning opportunities' i.e. learning opportunities for everyone-children, youth and adults-to satisfy their basic learning needs.

Despite the shifting emphasis, it is felt that the 'learning-centered' way of looking at education is consistent with the original vision of Article 26 of the UDHR. It was the original intent of the UDHR that all young people should complete an education that would satisfy what today are called their 'basic learning needs' and not just an education that would satisfy what might happen to be called 'elementary.' This is the position taken by the Framework for Action adopted by the World Conference on Education for All.

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) What does the 'right to education' include?

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- 2) What different forms of commitment to implementation of the right exist in the international community?

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5.4 BASIC EDUCATION AS A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT

Most of the nations of the world today have accepted their obligation to provide 'free' and 'compulsory' education at least at the elementary stages to their citizens. However, the terms 'basic', 'compulsory', 'primary', 'elementary' have different connotations in different countries. These need to be understood within the specific contexts of their countries.

5.4.1 Concepts of Basic, Free and Compulsory Education

Basic and Elementary education: Basic education as we have seen above is not limited to a specific stage or level of education but refers to 'education of all'—children, youth, and adults. Even the notion of 'elementary' education in the UDHR was not intended to refer to any particular stage or level in the system of formal education as is generally understood. It broadly meant an education that would give children a good start in life.

The notion of 'compulsory' education also differed for States since the UDHR was adopted. (States here refer to countries ratifying the UDHR). In countries where compulsory education was well established till the first level or stage of formal schooling (as in the case of Belgium, parts of Canada, Finland, and the then Federal Republic of Germany, Switzerland, and the former USSR by the mid-1950s), there were compulsions to lengthen the duration. Developing countries—mostly of Africa and Asia—where compulsory education was not already established, or existed in name only, there were pressures both for wider access to primary schooling as such and for better opportunities to complete it.

'Free education' implied that it was obligatory for the States to provide for the education of its people. However, the extent of 'compulsory free education' was to be defined by the States as per their capacity and the prevailing educational situation. It was also recognized that there was an obvious limit in every country beyond which education cannot be made compulsory without at the same time offending the very idea of education as a 'right.' In majority of the countries today, the duration of compulsory education extends into secondary education. However, there are countries where even primary education (defined as extending up to grade VIII in most countries) is not universally provided. Thus while targets were being reset at the World Conference on Education for All, there was a clear understanding among the countries that the targets related to universal access to, and completion of, *primary education, or whatever higher level of education was considered as 'basic'* for achievement by the year 2000. In the case of India, the notion of 'compulsory' education extends up to the 'elementary stage' i.e. the primary (constituting of grades I to V) and the upper primary (constituting of the grades VI to VIII).

5.4.2 The Case of India: Legal Status and Implications

Provisions in the Constitution: International laws, conferences and recommendations apart, provisions within the Indian Constitution itself exist to give the people of India the right to education. The scheme of the Constitution for realizing the socio-economic agenda of the country comprises of both justifiable Fundamental Rights as well as the non-justifiable Directive Principles. These form respectively part III and part IV of the Indian Constitution. The influence of the UDHR can be seen in the formulation of India's Constitution although attempts to make the right to free and compulsory education in the country began a little more than a century ago. (The Indian leaders first demanded provision for mass education and Compulsory Education Acts in 1882 after the Compulsory Education Act was passed in Britain in 1870 resulting in a number of Compulsory Education Acts passed by different states prior to Independence).

Influence of the UDHR: The influence of the UDHR in framing India's Constitution is reflected in the formulation of Fundamental Rights (part III) and the Directive Principles of State Policy (part IV of the Constitution). Most of the civic and political rights are guaranteed under the Indian Constitution as Fundamental Rights. For example, Article 21, provides for right to dignity, health and free education up to 14 years as part of 'protection of life and personal liberty'; Article 29 provides for 'cultural and educational rights of minorities'; and Article 30 provides for 'right of

minorities to establish and administer educational institutions'. However, most of economic, social and cultural rights are included as part of the non-justifiable Directive Principles of State Policy. Some of these Directive Principles relate to the right to work and to education, provision of free and compulsory education, promotion of educational and economic interests of the S.C., S.T. and other weaker sections, and the like. The 'right to free education' is elaborated in Article 45 of the Directive Principles. The 'State,' which in our context includes the government and Parliament of India, government and legislature of the states, and all local and other authorities within the country, is enjoined to 'apply these principles in making laws.' Thus, the Constitution, through the Directive Principles, makes a forceful *appeal* to the various Indian States to work towards assuring these rights through the process of governance but clearly states that any court cannot enforce them.

Implications of Directive Principles: The reason why the Directive Principles were left by the founding fathers as non-enforceable was to give the government's sufficient latitude to implement them. The concept was not one of justifiability at the instance of individuals in court of law, but of enforceability by the State which means that the State must 'recognize' and 'take steps,' by adopting 'legislative' or other measures for the 'full realization' and 'to the maximum of the State's available resources' both 'individually' and through 'international assistance and co-operation' as clarified in one of the recent reports of the Law Ministry. These are the words actually used by the ICESCR and have been the subject matter of voluminous literature. These rights are described as 'entitlements' of the people and give rise to 'obligations' and 'duties' on the part of the State parties. The provision of 'compulsory education' as in Article 45 is thus intended to be included as obligation for the State to provide adequate schooling opportunities for its children. As a consequence, many Indian state governments during the past fifty years, enforced compulsory education and passed Primary Education Acts to make education free and compulsory for their children. (For example, between the period 1947 to 1962, 19 Primary/Basic/Elementary Education Acts were passed some of which were revisions of State Acts passed earlier during the post-Independence period. Some of the State Acts were later revised and introduced during the past three decades).

It is important to note that the provision of compulsory education is not intended to penalize parents for not sending their children to school due to reasons of poverty and underdevelopment as originally visualized by the UDHR. However, this is an aspect that is least understood and much debated in literature.

5.4.3 Commitments to Implementation of the Constitutional Directive

Article 45: Article 45 of the Directive Principles envisages provision of free and compulsory education for children. "*The State shall Endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years.*" Subsequent national documents and reports over the past five decades or so continued to highlight the importance of the goal which remained largely unattained despite many schemes and programmes initiated during the various five year plans of the country. The 1968 National Policy on Education provided for 'free' elementary education. The National Policy on Education (1986) emphasized two aspects of the new thrust in elementary education: (a) universal enrolment and universal retention of children up to 14 years of age, and (b) substantial improvement in the quality of education. In addition, there have been specific amendments to the Constitution, as can be seen in 42nd, 73rd, 74th, and 83rd and 86th Amendment Acts. While the 42nd Amendment was made in 1976, the latter four are recent, largely post-Jomtien, as a consequence of interest and debate generated in the country during the decade of the nineties. These amendments to the Constitution pertain to provisions to enable education being included in the Concurrent List (42nd), devolution of powers to local bodies

(73rd and 74th) and making elementary education a Fundamental Right formally from its present status of Directive Principles (83rd and 86th). The last amendment notified in December 2002 is to be followed by a Central Legislation to operationalise the Fundamental Right.

Questions that need to be explored: While the 86th Amendment to the Constitution is considered as one of the significant measures for achieving the goals of Education for All, it might be relevant to ask why the new legislation is needed when we had so many provisions within the Constitutions and so many state legislations in place. Were the ideals and norms set forth in the Indian Constitution not fully implemented? Did we fail to accord adequate priority and resources to the implementation of this goal? The answers to these questions can be derived from an analysis of the planned approach of the central and state governments. As we all know, more than fifty years have passed since the country decided to follow the path of planned development and set the goal of universal provision of elementary education. Despite various efforts made through national plans and schemes, the situation in providing universal elementary education remains far from satisfactory. This is acknowledged even in our various national plan documents and reports. The country has so far gone through ten national five-year plans and several annual plans. The tenth five-year plan (2002-07) has just completed and we are in the process of deciding on the allocations for various sectors in the 11th Plan. The allocations in the 11th Plan is much more impressive than the previous Plans. For example, in the 11th Plan for the Higher and Technical education, the allocation is of Rs. 84943 crores whereas it was 9500 crores (and the actual expenditure was Rs. 8500 crores only) in the 10th Plan.

A brief review of the planned development of education and analysis of public expenditure on education over the past five decades is provided in the following sections to understand the reasons for non accomplishment of the goal on the one hand and the magnitude and immensity of the problem on the other. The analysis reveals a lack of will and commitment on part of the central and state governments to initiate the necessary steps and make the necessary investment in the sector of elementary education especially during the first four decades that followed the first five-year plan of the country.

Check Your Progress 2

- 3) How can the terms 'basic', 'compulsory', 'free', 'primary' and 'elementary' education be defined? What do these terms imply in the context of India?

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- 4) What is the implication of Directive Principles of the Constitution for the Indian states? Explain in the context of Article 45.

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5.5 PLANNED DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION

5.5.1 Overview of Developments

Declining Emphasis: The country launched its First five-year plan in 1951. The plan gave high priority to the goal set in the Constitutional Directive through its all round programme for development under the National Extension and Community Projects Movement. However, education and social development, which received a prominent place in the community development programmes, received a setback in the successive plans in terms of overall priority and allocation of resources. The Second five-year plan (1955-61), which was based on the famous *Mahalanobis* model, supported the development of the large-scale industrial sector. As it recognized that manpower resources were at the base of all developmental programmes, major efforts were directed towards building up of high level scientific and technical manpower. Basic education, which was largely confined to the rural areas, continued to suffer for a lack of trained teachers. The Third plan (1961-66) sought to extend the programme of basic education to urban areas in order to 'identify the problem clearly.' The review of ten years of achievement for outlining the approach to the third five-year plan showed that in respect of basic education, the process had not advanced very far. "The educational aims of community development (and other sectors such as health and other social welfare programmes) were the most difficult to realize..." The subsequent five-year plans reiterated their intentions towards providing primary/elementary education to all children in the age-group 6-14. The target date for achieving universal elementary education kept shifting from 1960 to 1972, then to 1976.

Revival of Interest: While a National Policy on Education that was formulated in 1968 following the recommendations of the Kothari Commission (1964-66), had emphasized provision of 'free' elementary education up to grade eight; it was only in the Seventh (1985-90) and Eighth (1992-97) plans that the focus on education became sharper. The New Policy on Education (1986) reaffirmed its resolve to ensure universal elementary education. Both national and international developments in the mid-eighties and early nineties helped lay the ground for a special thrust towards universal primary education. *The NPE 1986 again revised the date for universalizing elementary education.* Realizing the difficulty of achieving the target of universal elementary education in one go, it set 1990 as the target year for universalizing primary education up to grade five and 1995 for elementary education up to grade eight. However, no detailed action plan existed for achieving the targets until 1992 when considerable international interest was witnessed in the development of primary education in India.

Faulty Planning: In the overall analysis, 'Indian plans seemed to have failed to exploit the full potentialities of growth and development as a result of self-creating constraints arising from faulty planning...' In the words of an economist and planner, who was also an Advisor to the Planning Commission, '.....India's perspective plans were hardly plans of action; there had been no sound perspective plan for the development of the strategic and critical elements relating to the task of development. There had been no plan of action in the field of education and infrastructure to create facilities ahead of demand in an integrated manner.' In words of Prof Amartya Sen, 'the goal has been regularly reiterated without any effective steps being taken to reach it.'

Developments in the Nineties: Various developments in the 1990's led to an active collaboration of an unprecedented nature between the government of India, state governments and external donors on one hand and private and non- governmental sector on the other. The World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien (1990) emphasized the need for making international funds available for primary education

to the developing world. In 1992, India became a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child passed in 1989. Subsequently, the decade witnessed the initiation of many internationally aided programmes such as the Bihar Education Programme, *Lok Jumbish*, and *Shiksha Karmi (second phase)*, *Shikshak Samakhya*, UP Basic Education Programme, District Primary Education Programme, and *Janshala*. The Ninth plan (1997-2002) came out with the highest priority attached to the attainment of this goal. The strategies included amendment to the Constitution, decentralization of planning, supervision and management through local bodies at district, block and local levels, social mobilization of local communities, convergence of different schemes of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE), and revision of the scheme alternative and innovative education. There is also strong evidence to suggest that policy reforms of the nineties through projects supported by the external donors resulted in improving access, retention and quality. However, the accomplishments were substantial only in relation to the prevailing situation in the country at the time of initiation of the projects. About half the states and districts still remained untouched by any primary education reforms.

5.5.2 Current Status: Achievements and Failures

Lack of Facilities still Remain: The current status no doubt reflects an impressive increase in the number of primary and upper primary schools from a mere 2.10 *lakhs* in 1950-51 to 8.40 *lakhs* in 1999-2000. The total number of teachers increased to 3 million by the year 2000. With the availability of alternative schooling facilities, the enrolments at the elementary level also showed an increase from 22 million in 1951 to about 155 million in 2000. However, the expansion of the elementary education system has not been adequate to attain the Constitutional goal. More than 100,000 habitations in the country are still without any schooling facilities. A large number of sanctioned posts of teachers in various states remain unfilled. The access to upper primary schools for the primary school-leavers continues to be low. In spite of consistent efforts, a large number of children continue to remain outside the school system, without an access to either formal or alternative system of education. The NFHS-II Survey (1999) indicated that while 79% of 6-14 age group children were attending school, about 42 million children were still out-of-school. The enrolment targets set in the Ninth as well as the Tenth Plan could not be achieved. As per the present indications the impressive target of additional enrolment of 29 million children from un-reached segments of the population could not be achieved. Those outside the school system have been identified as mostly SC/ST girls, working children, disabled children, urban deprived and children in difficult groups especially in the educationally backward pockets. Overall, universal provision of schooling opportunities has suffered.

Apart from this, there are concerns about the overall retention of children admitted to various grades. Achievements at the end of the Ninth plan revealed considerable improvement in drop out rates, yet a large percent of the upper primary school children drop out before completing the relevant stages of education. The internal efficiency of elementary education thus leaves much to be desired. Overall trends indicate that less than half the cohort enrolling in grade I is able to reach grade V and less than a third reach grade eight. Thus, while much improvement took place over the past five decades, despite the proclaimed national priority, the state governments have not been able to guarantee adequately equipped facilities and qualified teachers for all children within an acceptable distance of each child's home. The quality of education also leaves much to be desired.

5.5.3 The Focus of Tenth Plan (2002-2007)

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan: The Central government now plans to achieve UEE goals through the implementation of the national scheme of *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)*. The framework document elaborates the broad parameters for providing central

assistance to the states and sets out an outer time limit to the achievement of the goals. Providing universal access to primary education by 2007 and to universal elementary education by 2010 have been set as goals in the national scheme of *Sarva Shiksha Abhyan* and the Tenth five year plan. The Tenth Plan recognizes community based planning processes as essential elements of planning and management, and encourages partnerships with NGOs and civil society in formulating and executing the programme interventions. Thus the level of effort will have to be indeed high, both quantitatively and qualitatively, if the stipulated targets are to be achieved in a serious manner. Quantitatively, as projections made by the Working Group for the Tenth plan indicate, the country will need enrolment to grow at almost twice to thrice the level of current effort to bring children back to school and retain them there. Growth rate of 2.5% and 6% will be required respectively for primary and upper primary enrolments as against the rates of 1.7 and 2.5% (during 2003-03). Qualitatively, it will require improvements in the planning and management systems and processes at various levels- state, district, and sub-district.

What is needed: This requires a strong commitment of the government (state and central) towards providing the required political will and financial resources to implement the right to free and compulsory education of a satisfactory quality. However, past experience shows that while there have been several lacunae in planning and implementation of this right in the past, one of the main reasons has also been the lack of adequate resources to education on one hand and on elementary education vis-à-vis other competing sub-sectors of education (such as secondary, higher, technical, etc) on the other. The right to education has suffered on account of low priority accorded to education in the overall allocation of resources whether at the level of the state or the centre. The following section analyses the position of resource availability during the past five year plans of the country.

Check Your Progress 3

- 5) Identify the three phases of commitment towards implementation of the goal set in constitutional directive through the Five Year Plans.

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- 6) What developments led to renewal of interest in the nineties?

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5.6 PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION

By measure of any indicator, the share of education in overall public expenditure has remained low over the past half century. In this section, we discuss the low priority given to education with respect to two indicators; share of education in Gross National Product (GNP), and its relative share in different five-year plans. The analysis in intra-sectoral allocation of resources indicates the low priority accorded to elementary education.

5.6.1 Share of Education in Overall Expenditure

Share in GNP: There is no doubt that public expenditure on education as in all other developmental sectors has increased over the past five decades in nominal terms. However, it continues to form an extremely low proportion of the Gross National Product (GNP) of the country. Presently, 3.6% of GNP is invested in education, which is significantly below the required levels. Since 1968, the various national plans and documents have reiterated the goal of setting apart 6% of the GNP for education as recommended by the Kothari Commission as requirements for the education sector. For the first time we find an impressive allocation in the 11th Plan.

Share of Education in Five Year Plans: Although in absolute terms the 'plan' allocation for education increased substantially during various five-year plans, the share of education shows a declining trend from 7.9% in the First five-year plan to 2.7% in the Sixth plan. The favorable period for elementary education ended with the First five-year plan. The declining trend was reversed during the Seventh and the Eighth plans with respectively 3.5% and 4.5% of overall plan outlays allocated to education. The Ninth and Tenth Plans once again reflect a favorable trend yet resources are insufficient to meet the growing demands of the sector of education. With the impressive allocation in the 11th Plan, we may witness a rapid change in the situation.

5.6.2 Share of Elementary Education and Requirements for UEE

Intra-sectoral Allocation of Resources: The intra-sectoral allocation of resources during the past plan periods shows a lopsided emphasis on elementary education. While the First five year plan allocated more than half its total outlay for education (to the extent of 56%) on elementary education, the share declined to 35% in the second plan and gradually to 30% in the Sixth plan. During this period, the allocations for secondary and university education increased substantially. For example, the allocation to secondary education increased from 13% in the First plan to 19% in the Second and 25% in the Sixth plan. Similarly, allocations to university education increased from less than one-tenth in the First plan to one-fourth of the total allocations for education during the Fourth plan. Even though social returns on primary education are known to be higher, government spending was biased in favor of higher and technical education.

Allocations to the elementary sub-sector increased during the Seventh and the Eighth plans to 37 and 47% respectively. However, the overall plan allocations for the elementary sub-sector never reached the priority reflected during the first five- year plan. As some authors believe, had the country continued to maintain the pattern of intra-sectoral allocation of resources in education sector adopted in the First plan, universalization of elementary education would have been an easy task, if not already accomplished by now. The lack of will to commit adequate resources on the part of the states is also reflected from the fact that the state shares on education remained stagnant at about 19 to 20% of their respective overall outlays during the past five decades. Their dependence on the central funds (through the centrally sponsored schemes) has consistently increased over the past five-year plans, particularly during the Ninth and the Tenth plans where international funding has also played an important role.

Financial Requirements and Implications: The Expert Group constituted by the Government of India to estimate the financial requirements for making elementary education a fundamental right projected a total requirement of Rs. 136, 000 crores for the children of age group 6-14 over a period of ten years. Based on assumptions of the rates of growth of the economy, the Commission saw the possibility of making 6% of the GNP available for the education sector. The projections also included assumptions on critical minimum inputs that needed to be provided for universal

provision of schooling facilities as well as for universal retention and provision of quality education in schools. Among others it provided for various incentives for children of families 'below the poverty line'. The Working Group for the Tenth Plan estimated a requirement of Rs. 82, 000 crores for the expansion of elementary education during the plan period based on financial norms adopted for SSA. The group reiterated the possibility and necessity of allocating 6% of the GNP to education so that financial needs of elementary education and of other sectors of education can be met. Thus, unless overall allocation of educational resources increases to the levels projected, the current momentum would be difficult to sustain as the needs of the elementary sector would always be competing against the growing demands of secondary, higher and other sub-sectors as increased proportions for one would necessarily be at the cost of others.

How Free 'Free' Education is: There is another aspect that needs to be reviewed while assessing the financial implications for universal elementary education. Despite the growing commitment and emphasis, the current position remains far from satisfactory in making education 'free' for all children, especially for those belonging to the poorer sections of society. While 14 states and 4 union territories have made education 'free' and 'compulsory' by passing the compulsory education acts, it is a well-known fact that elementary education today is neither free nor compulsory. There is no doubt that as per their norms, all state governments have abolished tuition fees in government and government-aided schools up to the upper primary level. But poor parents continue to incur large proportions of their incomes on education of their children. High costs of schooling and inadequate resources on part of the states to finance essential provisions for children (uniform, text books, transport, incidental expenses) are found to act as major deterrents to universal enrolment and retention of children, specially of those belonging to economically poorer and socially backward households. States' commitment to free education will need to remain undiluted and 'free education' cannot continue to be interpreted merely as 'free tuition.' This will have further implication for the states as it requires strengthening of capacities in micro financing and management of resources at local levels.

Check Your Progress 4

- 7) List your arguments for inadequate priority accorded to education, particularly elementary education during the past five decades of planned development in the country.

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- 8) Is elementary education actually 'free'? If not, how can it be made free?

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5.7 LET'S SUM UP

We began with the vision and concerns of the international community towards implementing the right to education. In this connection, we examined the rights and freedoms set out in the UDHR, different forms of commitments that followed and the shifting emphasis towards 'learning centered' way of looking at education. This was followed by a discussion on concepts of basic, free and compulsory education as they need to be understood in the different countries' specific contexts. In India the notion of compulsory education extends up to eight years of elementary education as reflected in the goal of universal primary education.

The case of India was discussed in the sections that followed. The discussion began with an examination of the provisions made in the Constitution to give the people the right to education. These as we saw, consist of both justifiable fundamental rights and non-justifiable Directive Principles. Thereafter the implications of Directive principles were discussed in the context of Article 45 whereby the State is obliged to provide adequate schooling facilities and education of a satisfactory quality for its children. However, as we saw, the states have by and large failed to fulfill their Constitutional obligation. A brief review of the planned development of education and analysis of public expenditure on education was provided to identify the factors responsible for non accomplishment of the Constitutional goal and understand the complexity of the tasks involved in its fulfillment. The analysis revealed a lack of will on part of the State to accord the required priority in investment of resources and create an enabling environment with appropriate planning and implementation processes and mechanisms. The last section examined the dynamics of federal-state relations leading to a discussion on the need for further central legislation to enforce the right to education. The discussion was concluded by identifying tasks that lie ahead in responding to the challenges in translating intentions into meaningful reality.

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UNIT 6 EDUCATION POLICY, DECISION MAKING AND POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES OF EDUCATION

Structure

- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Objectives
- 6.3 Nature and Scope
- 6.4 Policy Making
- 6.5 Policy Levels
 - 6.5.1 Global Policies
 - 6.5.2 Policies at the International Level
 - 6.5.3 Policies at National Level
 - 6.5.4 Policies at the Institutional Level
- 6.6 Politics of Education
- 6.7 Education Policy in India
 - 6.7.1 New Education Policy - 1986
- 6.8 Let's Sum Up

6.1 INTRODUCTION

You must have heard the story of three pigs, who decided to build a house for themselves. One of them made his house with straw, the second with wood and the third with brick and mortar. The first one completed his house in one week, the second one took a month to complete but the third one took more than six months. As the news of pigs' new flats spread the wolf came trying to find if he could sneak in and have some good meat. The wolf had no problem in entering the straw hut. He caught the first pig and ate him up. Then he went to the second hut made of wood. He had to make some effort but he succeeded in entering the wooden hut as well. But in spite of all efforts he could not enter the brick hut. This was secured from all sides and made after planning and hard labour. This story has great lesson for each one of us and also for national planners. To develop a strong and secure nation, we need to plan and develop our policies and institutions to withstand unforeseen situations.

This unit aims at giving you an insight into the steps through which educational policies are formulated and then effected, evaluated and redesigned to make education more responsive to the needs of a particular society.

The aims of education policy and decisions include:

- The development of each individual to the fullest potential,
- Education is a method of transmission of social norms and values. This is also sometimes seen as a form of social control, and
- The education system serves the industrial process and the economy by producing a trained workforce, and by providing child minding services.

A cursory look at the development of education system proves beyond doubt that education primarily is a process of planning and a political activity. There are two major areas which have been targeted – the content of education (i.e. the curriculum) and the finance of education. It has been realized that education transforms minds and so it is important to control the content of education.

Another major issue, which has been highlighted in recent past is the quality of education provided to various groups and sections of society. It has been mentioned by many from various quarters that if education is a process of transformation then the quality of education will automatically predetermine the level of transformation of the learners.

Education is being offered by various agencies (government and non-government) through different modes namely face-to-face, distance, etc. The objectives and motives of education influences the process and outcome. In this unit, we shall discuss the process of planning and reaching education to various sections of society and also discuss the issues, which influence and affect them. This unit considers the notion of educational planning as a tool for making the education sector grow and function more effectively and the various issues which influence policy making.

6.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you should be in a position to:

- understand the meaning and importance of education policy;
- understand the concept of decision making in education;
- appreciate the relationship between society and political perspectives of education; and
- know how politics of the nation influences the process of planning and implementation.

6.3 NATURE AND SCOPE

Educational policy or legislation is directly related to an ideal educational standard or model such as that which suits manpower requirements of the economy. It can be easily noted that education policy is determined by various inherent factors such as socio-economic changes. A framework of educational policy analysis involves a process in which various stakeholders analyse, generate, implement, assess and redesign policies. This is referred to as educational **Policy cycle**. It is defined as a tool used in the analysis of a policy item development. It involves the following steps:

- *Problem identification*,
- *Policy formation* to deal with the identified problem,
- *Decision-making* targeting the identified problem,
- *Implementation* i.e. the realization of an application, or execution of the plan,
- *Analysis and evaluation* of a policy to continue or terminate.

The field of education all over the world has been characterized by shifting positions largely influenced by the local micro economic changes and other regional priorities. Since Independence, decision making within the education sector has passed through various phases. Soon after Independence, the Government of India appointed University Education Commissions in 1948 (**Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Commission**). At the time of Independence, the literacy rate of India stood at 16.1 per cent (1951 census) while women education was badly neglected. Education received good attention after independence. Radhakrishnan Commission report (1949) led to the reorganization of India's educational system.

The social universe in which we live is faced with fundamental problems like the formation, circulation, and utilization of knowledge. Every society is today characterized

by both the accumulation of capital and knowledge. The exercise of knowledge production and accumulation cannot be dissociated from the overall mechanism of planning within any society. Knowledge production and accumulation has often been identified with schooling, though its scope extends far beyond this to include intellectual and social development of the individual and society. Education is considered as an instrument of social policy, in the sense not only of policies for welfare but also as policies intended to deal with the structure of society. Educational policies emphasize that educational aims have to be in accordance with local circumstances and goals such as to secure accessibility, equality, democracy, quality, publicity, transparency and cooperation within the education sector. Education and its institutions are set up to operate under a variety of conditions within national and international settings.

A country's education system has been seen as a means of bringing about social change. It cannot be considered in isolation from other key public policies such as for labor market and social policies. Moreover, education also concerns closer connections with the health, science, and environmental policy areas. These concerns are closely related. Fundamental to building better links between education and other policy areas is the education sector's capacity to clearly articulate its objectives, to demonstrate how these are inter-related with wider social and economic developments, and to identify and implement cost-effective policies and programmes.

Definitions

There exists a wide range of variation among scholars on the nature and scope of education policy. However, an education policy may be defined as:

- i) A process through which any society handles an educational problem. It includes a society's expressed intentions and official enactments as well as its consistent patterns of activity and inactivity in the area of education.
- ii) The process by which governments (society) translate their educational vision into programmes and activities to deliver outcomes i.e. desired changes in the real world.
- iii) An explicit or implicit single decision or group of decisions that may set out directives for guiding future decisions, initiate or retard action, or guide implementation of previous decisions.

Policy, therefore, is a course of action rather than the everyday decisions or actions, perceived by analysts. Understanding the general idea of governmental policy practices designed to encourage expected social behavior is more important in getting on with the task of identifying processes involved and the emerging policies. Policy-making is concerned with educational decisions in the area of conflict resolution and/or resource allocation. It would involve establishing the educational system, selection of leadership, laying out the course of action and defining how to administer educational affairs.

Educational Policy will therefore deal with the expected outcome of the organization, or government. It is intended to affect the 'real' world, by guiding the decisions that are made. Whether they are formally written or not, most organizations have well identified policies.

Political Dimensions

Government decisions with regard to education is bound to be influenced by the ideology of the party in power and their promises made the manifesto and the election campaign. Even though manifestoes as well as promises made during election process have very little bearing on the government decisions but in some countries the manifesto has much more significance and is the guiding force of the governments.

In India most of the political parties have been promising raising the budget allocation for education to 6 per cent but no party after coming to power fulfilled this promise. The 11th Plan for the first time has provided adequate funds for education. If money is not available for constructing school buildings, paying salary to teachers and other facilities then some or the other sector will have to be given priority at the cost of other sectors.

Ever since Independence higher education (HE) has been given priority over other sectors. It needs to be discussed why, of the four sectors, Primary, Secondary and Higher Secondary, and Research the government decided to spend the maximum on the Higher Education sector. Initially primary sector had got some attention but soon the focus shifted to secondary and then to higher education. It may be argued that if children do not go to primary school their chances of going to secondary and HE is ruled out. It has been argued since Independence by academics and intellectuals that the government should put utmost effort to provide every child decent facility at reasonable distance for pursuing primary education. But we do not find any commendable policy or programme of the government till the early 1990's.

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) What do we mean by an education policy?

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- 2) Identify any three conditions that may lead to a change in education policy.

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6.4 POLICY MAKING

Policy making involves certain basic steps laid down with an objective of meeting certain needs of the society. It involves recognizing and defining a problem, securing government attention to consider it together with the institutions concerned, effecting policy choices and finally assessing its impact on the society.

Social problem → government action → impact on society

Recognizing and defining a problem is a crucial stage in the policy making process. A section of the society needs to recognize a situation as not favourable for its welfare. A situation could be existing in the society, but unless the society is aware of it, sees it as 'wrong' and is ready to change it, we cannot say that it pre-empts government policy. It is only when a situation is considered as a challenge by the society, can it be placed forward as an agenda for action and change. Another feature of policy making is that the problem has to come to the notice of the government. A problem affecting the society may be subverted by a government action/decision. Each educational institution picks and chooses specific problems for government consideration. It is the duty of those affected by policy to bring it to the notice of the government. Implementation process involves refining the general nature of policy

into specific details giving shape and direction to policy. The specific details here may include need for new government organizations such as officers, offices and agencies to carry out policy.

6.5 POLICY LEVELS

In a globalised world, policy initiatives have diverse origins and impact on various levels such as global/international, national, regional and institutional. As the name suggests global policies affect different regions of the world in different ways i.e. policies emanating from international organizations influence international business but they also influence national legislations, institutions and staff of each country. It is however, the national policies that have the most direct impact on educational matters while it is the institution's policies that affect the working of an institution.

6.5.1 Global Policies

Let us begin by taking the example of the recent developments in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). ICT has influenced policies at the global/international level. The wide use of technologies can lead to shift in education provision i.e. providing education to a larger number of learners spread over a wider region even across national boundaries. Providing education on-line and through radio and television sets can and in fact already posing a challenge to national policies. The need to harness technologies into education has caused a major shift in other sectors such as economics. It has fuelled hopes for mass higher continuing education and training systems. Mass education tends to reduce public costs as it charges fees on working students (i.e. in-service teachers) and by generating economies of scale through the use of shared learning material. A good teacher, for example, can reach his/her lecture to all parts of the country at the same time using the radio / TV as media. Such an arrangement tend to be of higher quality, and more related to the needs of the society. Policies developed to secure accessibility, equality, democracy, quality, publicity, transparency and cooperation within the education system must be seen as important guidelines for the provision of education. These regulations are essential and not to be removed for the sake of globalizing education. At the global level therefore, policymaking should aim at utilization of existing and new technological possibilities such as print, radio, TV and the Internet. The issues in this case and may be in all decision making can be to:

- Reduce the cost of education,
- Increase access to education,
- Improve the quality of education and training,
- Making available all options for education

6.5.2 Policies at the International Level

The nature and effects of globalization has both direct and indirect consequences on national and institutional policies. There are international policies aimed at education and the use of new technologies, which are being promoted by world bodies such as World Bank, UNESCO, and SAARC. Such institutional bodies provide authority, incentives and resources that persuade countries and organization to adopt international resolutions. For example, the World Bank has supported various developing countries attempting to reform their education system through the provision of infrastructure. Equally, there are international agencies and professional associations specifically concerned with promotion and supporting various educational policies.

6.5.3 Policies at National Level

The constitution of the country concerned and the government policies have a direct relationship with the education sector. Government policy can for example, encourage learners to study through distance education by putting both the conventional and the distance modes as equal. Government legislation and policy decisions also tend to initiate national development as in India where IGNOU has been assigned the roles of offering distance mode courses besides monitoring and augmenting the quality of distance education in the country. A country's political and legal system also determine the scope of education policy. For example, it could be enshrined in the constitution (Acts, Regulations, Statutes, Charters and Policy Proclamations.) Policy at the national level would deal with corporations, businesses, non-government organizations, charities and foundations. Such institutions would be required to initiate and create educational institutions within the framework of national laws and regulations. At the national level, a policy defines the requirements for various operations, such as whether conventional or distance education, status, institutions and programmes allowed financing and staffing, how it will be monitored and how quality aspect would be taken care of.

6.5.4 Policies at the Institutional Level

Policies and national legislations have direct effect upon the activities of institutions. Educational institutions, however, have a degree of autonomy and self-determination as to what policies to adopt regarding mode of learning and the way to operate within this mode. Institutions have detailed policies and regulations for admission range of courses, use of media, qualifications, staff, etc. Conventional universities may be faced with the choice to impart a part of its programmes through distance education and a national policy may encourage them to do so. This would then require the conventional institutions to develop their own policies for the introduction and operation of distances and consider modifications to existing policies. In the life of an educational institution, hundreds of decisions are made each day. The jurisdiction of institutions is bound by employee contracts, Board of Education policies, and national, state and local laws. These factors place restrictions on the decision-making authority of staff and parent groups.

Check Your Progress 2

- 3) Mention the levels of policy making?

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- 4) Mention the effect of any international policy on your institution.

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As is evident from the discussion in Unit 5, the national goal of Universal Elementary Education has still not been reached. Guarantee of Education for All remains an objective with the target date being pushed forward after every review and in every successive five year plan of the country. The right to free and compulsory education has not been accorded the required priority especially during the first four decades of planned development of the country. And as the current position reflects, the current goals of SSA also require a very strong financial commitment on part of the central, state and local governments. It requires a strong political will at the level of the implementing states to initiate the necessary actions for improving the planning and management machinery and systems.

Dynamics of Educational Reform and Policy: As we noticed in the first section, there is no dearth of Constitutional provisions and laws and state legislations to make education free and compulsory. There is no doubt, however, that these obligations have been violated. 'There has been a chronic dereliction of duty on part of the State' as observed by VR Krishna Iyer, Former Chief Justice of India. We also noticed the inclusion of 73rd, 74th, 83rd and 86th Constitutional Amendments and a further need for central legislation. The questions that need to be asked now are: What are these amendments and how do they affect the implementation of the right to education? Why in the first place was the need felt to shift the Constitutional right from Part IV (Directive Principle) of the Constitution to Part III (Fundamental Right)? Why the passing of 93rd Amendment Bill was required that led to the 86th Amendment to the Constitution? Why is there a further need for central legislation? What further tasks lie ahead to actually translate them into practice and achieve the desired goals of universal elementary education?

The Context of Concurrency: In order to answer the above questions, we need to examine the dynamics of educational reform and policy; i.e. the relationship between the economy and the State, the federal-state relations in education, and the related topic of policy formulation in Indian states in the national context; in essence, the dynamics of policy formulation and implementation in the context of concurrency in education. This is examined briefly in this concluding section in the context of the right to education, particularly, the right to free and compulsory elementary education in India.

Recent Developments: Most of the earlier State Acts in force for compulsory education were drafted in the 1960s and were applicable to that period. As we have seen in the foregoing sections, there have been many developments since then including amendments to the Constitution. Recent debates of the past decade, including international treaties and forums, and the emergence of the civil society in India, also led to many changes in the system in which these acts were to be implemented. International interest in funding primary education was getting clearly evident. National and international pressures led to many educational reforms in the country as the 'State' had failed to realize its targeted goals of universal elementary education. It was no coincidence that the Plan of Action (1992) was formulated at the time when pressures on account of Jomtien Conference were high and India became a signatory to the UN's Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 accepting among others, the clause of 'compulsory' primary education. The POA and the Revised National Policy on Education (1992) talked of creating enabling conditions for decentralised planning and management for achieving the goals of UEE. As a consequence, further reforms were initiated for implementing it in a serious manner.

Decentralisation and Compulsory Education Act : The 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution made soon after the POA and the revision to the NPE (1992),

provided for decentralization of power and responsibility to a third tier of *Panchayati Raj* to ensure effective implementation of plans at local levels. But the devolution of power from the state to the local authorities was much slower than expected with the effect that the reforms at the state level suffered. Moreover, the 'Compulsory Acts' of states by themselves did not make education compulsory; they could only 'enable the local authorities to do so.' The Acts also did not cover the entire states but could apply only to a 'local area' for which schemes had to be prepared and approved. As the powers existed with the respective states, there were also the fears that the entire responsibility could be transferred to the local authorities without creating the enabling conditions. Also, there were half the states that had not passed any such compulsory education laws. Despite the fact that education became a concurrent subject in 1976, it was only state legislations that existed. Statutory powers were needed by the Centre to play its role effectively.

Central Enforcement Required: Thus while discussions were on in 1997 for the passing of 83rd Amendment Bill, the Departmental Parliamentary Standing Committee returned the Bill for redrafting and for accommodating some of its recommendations as "it was not in the favour of leaving much to the states." "There existed no central legislation to give effect to the state laws", it felt, and recommended the framing of one. Thus while revised Bill in the form of 93rd Amendment Bill was passed in both the Houses of the Parliament and the 86th Amendment to the Constitution notified in 2002, making education a 'fundamental right', there still remained the question of a central legislation to make it fully justiciable. As education is a concurrent subject, it is now possible for the Union Government to pass a central legislation on the subject, which will give it the power to enforce the right in its real sense. The Act now extends this right to the early childhood education age-group as well and has provided for introduction of a new fundamental duty for parents or guardians for the education of their children.

Political Mileage: There is another reason why the right to education needs to move to part III of the Constitution. The experience of governance in India and its states also shows that both fundamental rights and directive principles have been used as political tools. The fundamental rights, however, are justiciable, Directive Principles are not so, and while on a number of occasions citizens and courts have intervened to uphold them, there have also been instances where even the courts have failed them. A review of such cases reveals that in case of the Directive Principles, it has been mostly political mileage, which determines which of the principles get addressed through governance. For instance Article 46 has been implemented with a fair amount of seriousness through the policy of reservations for scheduled castes, tribes and other backward castes/classes because it is the most powerful tool for success in India's electoral politics. But Articles 41 and 45, which deal with social security (right to education & to work); and right to free and compulsory education have been addressed only marginally. The 86th Amendment to the Constitution and the possibility of a central legislation have raised many hopes though they also provide a pointer to the many tasks that need to be accomplished for successful implementation of the right.

Positive Signals: On the positive side, apart from the 86th Amendment to the Constitution, a central legislation would demonstrate the necessary political will to achieve universal elementary education and literacy and send the right signals to the international community and donors. In addition, it would provide an opportunity to bring about effective devolution and decentralisation of authority in the wake of 73rd and 74th Amendment Acts, and to commit the required financial resources at various levels of implementation. It would also have a positive impact on the eradication of child labour. The expected legislation would also provide for specific obligations of the child, the parents, local bodies and the state governments, which if norms are established, could be enforced by community pressures rather than bureaucratic control and penalty.

Challenges: On the side of the challenges, there is need for the states and the centre to not only increase public expenditure on education for providing additional schools, teachers and other necessary infrastructure and processes for improving the quality of elementary education, but also to introduce measures to mitigate the costs of school attendance (costs other than tuition fee, including the opportunity costs of educating children) which could be perceived as high by many parents. The desirability of enacting a law cannot be without its challenges. There are many more tasks that need to be carried out by the respective states and the centre that will need to be planned simultaneously while the legislation is framed. Some of these include the following:

What kind of enforcement machinery be installed by states so that coercion is not resorted to but state recognizes its obligations to provide facilitative environment? This will involve installing efficient monitoring systems.

If a school of 'satisfactory quality' is to be provided, how is it going to be defined? This needs to be defined in no unambiguous terms.

How will classroom learning be assessed to ensure successful completion of elementary education? As such, there are no public examinations in many of the states until the 10th standard Board exams. While there are many attempts to change textbooks and adopt activity based and child centred pedagogic practices, reforms related to evaluation of pupils' learning are still at a very preliminary stage. There would be a need for installing a dynamic and responsive curriculum. This has many implications.

What would be the obligation of private schools? How will the private sector be regulated? This is a completely untouched area.

How would the obligation and duty of parents be defined? When would coercion, if at all, be necessary in order to prevent misuse of power by the authorities?

These are some of the questions, which will need to be necessarily answered and translated in terms of concrete action plans, if the Indian State is serious about implementing the right to free and compulsory elementary education. Many more would be added to the list when seen in the context of education (including other levels) as a fundamental right.

6.7 EDUCATION POLICY IN INDIA

India has a long tradition of education starting from the GURUKUL system in ancient India when education was considered a matter of personal concern. Ancient education was aimed at the training of the mind and acquisition of knowledge. Three basic processes involved in the education system were Sravana, Manana and Nidhyasana. 'Sravana' was concerned with 'shrutis' knowledge passed orally from one generation to the other. In the second stage 'Manana', learners were expected to think about what they had learnt, making their own inferences and assimilating the lesson taught. The 'Sravana' stage allowed the learners to comprehend the truth and its relevance to the society. Education was mostly for Brahmins and Kshatriyas, including women, while other castes were expected to learn family trade from parents. Education amongst Hindu families served the needs of Brahmin families. However during the Mogul period, education, like that of the Hindus, favored the rich rather than being based on equality of educational opportunities. Little emphasis was placed on the development and prioritization of scientific education and research. The various education commissions have therefore emphasized the need to eradicate the backlog of illiteracy and provide adult education to all.

It was the **Lakshmana Swamy Mudaliar Commission** of 1953 which made the school a centre for teaching-learning cum activity centre. On the basis of Mudaliar Commission report, the aim of Secondary Education shifted to producing ideal democratic citizens by emphasizing the all round development of the learners. Later in 1966, the Kothari Commission or the National Education Commission which was appointed in 1964 felt the need for a uniform educational structure in India. The Kothari commission gave priority to vocational, technical, engineering, agricultural and science education. A major shift in India's education policy was in 1986 when the New Education Policy (NEP) and its later modification into the Programme of Action (1992) targeted all children up to 14 years with quality educational provision before the start of the 21 Century.

6.7.1 New Education Policy - 1986

Independence India gave much importance to elementary education which saw the enrolment in elementary schools increasing from 42.6 per cent in 1951 to 94.9 per cent in 1999. Greater emphasis was also placed on secondary education, higher education and universities.

A major shift in education occurred in 1986 when Rajiv Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, announced a new education policy referred to as the National Policy on Education (NPE), which was intended to prepare India for the challenges of 21st century. The NEP emphasized the need for change stating that 'Education in India stands at the crossroads today. Neither normal linear expansion nor the existing pace and nature of improvement can meet the needs of the situation.

An assessment of the 1968 policy showed that the earlier goals had largely been achieved in that a larger part of the country's rural population was within a kilometer of schooling facilities, most states had adopted the 10+2+3 education structure, and science and mathematics had also been effectively prioritized. However, financial and organizational support for the education system was lacking and was creating problems of in-access and inequality in the education system. Equally important was the need to address the problems such as:

- Erosion of political and social life
- The goals of secularism, socialism, democracy and professional ethics were under increasing strain

The NEP was therefore intended to raise education standards and increase access to education. It was equally expected to safeguard the values of secularism, socialism and equality that had been promoted as ideals since Independence. Both state and central government were to seek financial support from the private sector to complement government funds. The central government was to enforce 'the national and integrative character of education by to maintain quality and standards'.

Under the NEP, the state government determined the curriculum of study while the central government committed itself to financing a portion of development expenditure.

The main thrust of NEP, 1986 was the promotion of privatization and the continued emphasis on secularism and science. It further identified equality of education in India as increasingly being a problem, and developed several initiatives to correct the imbalance such as:

- **Operation Blackboard (1987-8)** that aimed at improving the human and physical resources available in primary schools.
- **Restructuring and Reorganization of Teacher Education (1987)** which created a resource for the continuous upgrading of teachers' knowledge and competence.

- **Minimum Levels of Learning, 1991** that laid down levels of achievement at various stages and gave emphasis to revised textbooks.
- **National Programme on Nutritional Support to Primary Education (1995)** provided cooked meal every day for children in classes 1–5 of all government, government-aided and local body schools.
- **District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)(1993)** that emphasized on decentralized planning and management, improved teaching and learning materials, and school effectiveness.
- **Movement to Educate All (2000)** aimed to achieve universal primary education by 2010 through micro planning and school-mapping exercises.
- **Fundamental Right (2001) as provided for in the Indian Constitution**, involved the provision of free and compulsory education as a basic right for children aged between 6 and 14 years.

The NEP also targeted the marginalized groups such as disabled children, and provided special incentives targeting the parents within scheduled castes and scheduled.

The NEP was re-examined in 1992, when some targets were recast and some re-formulations were undertaken in relation to adult and elementary education. The 1992 re- examination of NEP laid emphasis was on the expansion of secondary education, while the focus on education for minorities and women continued to be a priority. It equally gave importance to the development of non-formal education through a centrally sponsored scheme to educate school dropouts, working children and children from areas without schools.

Check Your Progress 3

- 5) Mention the major policy initiatives contained in NEP?

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6.8 LET'S SUM UP

The social and educational progress in India after 1947 has been characterized by tremendous social change. A good example is the caste hierarchy that is being eliminated to pave the way for social mobility. At present nearly all countries are facing fundamental reforms in the field of Educational policy, particularly towards:

- A more relevant system of education that is responsive to the national needs and
- Introduction of a new, more flexible system that is more inclusive.

We have also noted that educational reforms also assume revision of the educational content according to worldwide developments. Policy at the international level, which happens irrespective of the will of states and individuals, has rather increased the sphere of interstate, intercultural relations. A person appears in new surroundings more frequently, which demands such social skills as communication, collaboration, and getting his/her bearings in new situations. We have also observed that the existing social-economic difficulties, poverty, unemployment, polarization of the society, and

the high rate of migration have created an atmosphere of tension and intolerance within society, which no doubt has its negative impact also on school life. We need to acknowledge that though India is in danger of not reaching its educational goal is not the same thing as accepting it as a foregone conclusion. India should take education policies on several fronts, which, taken together, could help achieve the 2015 education goal and thereby unlock the substantial, undiscovered development potential of much of India's population. For this to occur, however, India's policymakers at both the national and regional level need to focus on how to ensure that poor and disadvantaged people and those from remote regions complete good education, and to amplify the relevance and quality of university and technical education. The cost of this improved delivery of education must be affordable for both government and households. Educational policy requires great political will and the allocation of scarce public finances is required for its implementation. But as the experience of other countries shows us, difficult does not mean impossible. Examples of how other countries have grasped the challenge of education for their population shows that with the requisite mobilization of political will and economic support, countries could undertake transformation of their social and economic fortunes.