
UNIT 7 SCHOOL AS A SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Structure

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7.1 INTRODUCTION

The term 'school' — and its equivalent in all European languages — has its origin in a Greek word meaning leisure or recreation. In pre-industrial societies, schooling was available only to a handful of people who had the time and the money available to pursue it. Religious leaders or priests were most of the times the only literate groups, using their knowledge to read and interpret sacred texts. Another reason why so few were able to read was that all texts had to be laboriously copied by hand, and so were in short supply and expensive. Printing, an invention, which came to Europe from China, changed the situation. The increasing use of written material in many diverse spheres of life led to higher levels of literacy. Education in its modern form, involving the instruction of the pupils within specially constructed school premises, gradually began to emerge. Yet most of the population continued to have no schooling whatsoever until the first few decades of the nineteenth century, when in the European countries and the United States systems of primary school began to be established.

In this unit, we will learn about school as a social system and study the structure and organization of the school system.

7.2 OBJECTIVES

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

- define what a system is and spell out the various characteristics that make the school a system;
- describe the social structure of schools in terms of elementary and secondary schools, giving a description of the school class;
- state the functions of school as a system; and
- explain the structure and organization of school with the defining characteristics of school as organization and the principles of authority.

7.3 SCHOOL AS A SOCIAL SYSTEM

School may be described as a system of positions and roles. A system is an entity consisting of parts, which are interrelated and interdependent, whereby a change in one part would bring about a relative change in other parts or the parts are so structurally related to each other that a change in one part affects the others. From a functionalist perspective, school may be seen as a system, that is, as a set of interconnected parts which together form a whole. In particular they are understood with reference to the contribution they make to the system as a whole. A system is thus any structured or patterned relationship between any number of elements where this system forms a whole or unity. So a school as a system would consist of patterned relationship between its various positions, having a part-whole relationship.

Functional analysis focuses on the question as to how social systems are maintained. In a School, it is through role allocation and performance that the system is accomplished and maintained. This brings us to the structure of the school. The structure of the school is the formal arrangement of its parts, i.e. formal arrangement of the positions. Therefore, there are social positions of the student, and members of the teaching and non-teaching staff in the school. Each of these positions has a role to play, thus there is the role of the teacher, that of the student, of the headmaster and so on. Structure of a system like a school permits us to understand the notion of continuity.

When we view school as a social system, as Willard Waller does in his *Sociology of Teaching*, we analyze the social roles involved in the formal and informal social structure of educational organizations. While presenting a description of the norms governing social behaviour in the school, Waller emphasizes that schools contain two cultural systems, which are frequently in conflict with one another: the normative system of the student and that of the educator, with the set of social relationships that exist between the student and that of the educator being in a constant state of "perilous equilibrium", with the authority structure that invests power in the professional educators, the stabilizing force in the relationship. It has been recognized that the source of many of the strains and tensions to which the incumbents of the educational positions are exposed must be sought in the relationship of the school to other social systems in its external environment, such as the family, the road traffic, and various economic, religious and political organizations.

The early meaning of the term 'school' was not tied to a building. Even as late as the early eighteenth century England, the term 'school' did not necessarily indicate that a special building existed, but referred to the group within which the process of schooling occurred and which particularly at times when teachers were dissuaded from teaching by the king or the State they met in a succession of different places.

That part of education which is undertaken in formal organizations, especially for those up to the age of eighteen, can strictly be referred to as schooling. It is a method of education, a process of learning and management of socially approved knowledge which involves an approved curriculum and pedagogy. The age of entry and of leaving school and therefore of compulsory schooling, under formal schooling systems, are legally specified. For instance, in the United Kingdom, they are 5 and 16, but these ages and the duration vary between societies. The divisions of schooling have come to be divided by age into primary age, that is, 5 to 11 of 12 years of age, secondary, that is, 11 or 12 to 18 years of age. Until the UK, Education Act of 1944, the system was divided by status into Elementary Schools, which catered for the whole age range up to 18, but were less well-equipped and of lower status, and the Secondary Schools, catering mainly for those over 11 years, which were better equipped and of higher status. A similar division still exists in some other European countries.

7.3.1 Social Structure and Functioning of the School

School constitutes a socialization system of great importance. It has the formal responsibility of imparting knowledge in those disciplines which are most central to adult functioning in the society. As Talcott Parsons says, the elementary school is the primary social environment in the latency phase of child development and the secondary school serves in this capacity during the adolescent phase.

This brings us to the systematic analysis of the differences in social structure between the elementary and the secondary school and the impact of these differences on the process of socialization.

7.3.2 Elementary School

In the elementary school, pupils of similar age are brought together under one teacher usually a female. Usually, in an elementary school one teacher works with the same group of children for the entire school year. At the elementary grade level, there are several classrooms in most schools at the same grade level with multiple teachers, as opposed to a single teacher in the same class. Generally the elementary school is staffed now-a-days by females but an increasing proportion of elementary school principals are still men.

All advanced industrial societies have universal compulsory schooling at the primary stage. Their curricula is designed to equip the whole population with the three R's – reading, writing and simple computation, or the understanding of basic literacy and numeracy in preparation for possible entry to more specialized education at the secondary stage. Elementary schools are at the same time the major agencies of socialization into groups beyond family. According to Talcott Parsons, the American primary school weans children from complete reliance on the moral assumptions of particularism and diffuseness, which are characteristics of kin relations and inculcates acceptance of universalism and specificity as the essential basis of role playing in a differentiated industrial economy. He says that the elementary school phase is concerned with the internalization in children of motivation to achievement, and the selection of persons on the basis of differential capacity for achievement. The focus is on *level* of capacity.

In the secondary school phase, on the other hand, says Parsons, the focus is on *differentiation* of qualitative types of achievement. As in the elementary school, this differentiation cross-cuts sex roles.

7.3.3 Secondary School

Secondary schools are structurally very different from elementary schools. Each child participates in a number of classes and must attempt to adjust to a number of teachers of both sexes, as well as to a much larger number of students. The student is given the opportunity to participate in a wider and more complex network of social relationships. He/she is supposed to be taught skills and given knowledge that will allow him/her to function successfully in the several positions that he/she will occupy as an adult in the society.

Everywhere educational expansion takes place as a result of economic demand for trained scientific and professional manpower and growing political demand for equality of educational opportunity. The systems of education vary enormously throughout the world. For example, in the former Soviet Union, the school system was centrally organized to meet estimated demands for labour through selective technical education;

incorporating both political indoctrination and a fusing of school and work at the secondary level in order to foster loyalty to Soviet society and its political and social ideology. In much of Europe, the organization of education still preserves its traditional form, reflecting the demands of the class system for schooling according to social origin and as preparation for a particular social position. Secondary schools are differentiated with a minority offering curricula that prepare pupils for entry to higher education. Entry to skilled trade in most European countries is accomplished by some form of apprenticeship or learnership system within the industry. However, the trend is towards transferring industrial training to technical schools and colleges, along either American or former Soviet lines.

Secondary schooling developed in the United States from a movement to Americanize large numbers of immigrants and to raise the educational and social levels of new and growing communities. At the same time, in many countries there has generally been opposition to the integrated extension of compulsory common schooling. In Europe and many of its Asian and African colonial or former colonial territories, the problem is to develop comprehensive types of secondary education out of systems of separate schools with unequal social prestige, which were designed historically for different social classes. Attempts in this direction have met with erratic success. In former Czechoslovakia, former Yugoslavia and elsewhere in the Eastern Europe during Communist days, the break with tradition has been sharp. There is also a strong movement in Scandinavia in favour of "Comprehensive Schools". In these schools, all school age children are compulsorily given various types of training within the same institution. In France and Britain there are weaker movements in favour of such schools.

From an understanding of secondary school, let us now focus our attention to school class.

Check Your Progress 1

1) What is a Single Teacher School?

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2) Where did School System initially develop and for what purpose?

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7.3.4 The Indian System

In the Indian context schooling developed around individuals who had acquired knowledge through personal efforts or by sitting at the feet of the learned. They were

largely known as the 'Pandit' or the learned. However, the counterpart who was the followers of Islam was known as the 'Maulvi'. Young learners, in small groups went to their homes for private tuition. The practice was widespread.

The corpus of pedagogic transaction was also mostly religious texts and objective moral education besides the language and mathematics. Specialized or higher education also largely followed the same pattern.

During the British Rule the system became more formalized accommodating large number of aspirants. The present system in India is only a replica of the British system with minor improvements to make it more suitable to the participants and fulfilling Indian needs and aspirations.

7.3.5 School Class

School class is a type of learning situation. It is a method by which schools function as organizations by grouping their pupils according to various pedagogic principles. As Talcott Parsons says, it may be regarded as the focal socializing agency. Learning or socialization in school class involves a clear distinction between two groups: the pupils, and the professionals like teachers, instructors, or lecturers who are charged with the responsibility of providing education, that is the prescribed curriculum. Some of the most important insights into class interaction have come from the tradition of Emile Durkheim, notably through the work of Basil Bernstein, emphasizing the cognitive impact of the hidden, as opposed to the visible, curriculum and pedagogy of the classroom. Influenced by symbolic interactionism, ethnographic studies have emphasized the roles and moral careers of both teachers and pupils. Both groups create meanings about what is going on, for instance, when pupil conformity is negotiated in exchange of relaxation of the demands of the official curriculum; or when self-fulfilling labels are attached to pupils and become the source of fixed behaviours and attainment. An attempt has been made by sociologists to analyze the relation between such micro-processes and the reproduction of function power on a macro level. Functionalists like Talcott Parsons have pointed out to the progressive shift in classroom dynamics from the particularism of the elementary years, which supposedly mirrors the child's family, to the universalism of the later stages, which anticipates the labour market and employment, in contrast to recent Marxist writing in the United States and Britain, which have drawn on to the range of historical, statistical and ethnographic data. Such writings have claimed that classroom learning is mainly significant in socializing a docile labour-force for capitalist industry.

So far the structure of the school has been described. Let us now see what kind of function or contribution it makes to the society.

7.3.6 Functions of School

Any system is expected to serve a function, i.e. making its contribution to the larger whole. Each society faces an interplay between the normative and behaviour patterns. The school has the function to make a deliberate attempt to maintain the normative and action patterns of society by influencing its new entrants. It thus has to play the role of a referee in maintaining values while facing the realities of actual behavior. School as a formal social system has external relations and internal patterns that condition the educational process, which has a particular part to play in the educational division of labour. Its place in the institutional web affects the status of the organization and its members. Society tends to judge schools by the yardstick of how its main tasks relate with its status system. For instance, "vocational" secondary schools that lead to the low-status occupations everywhere, labour under the stigma that affects the recruitment and morale of the teachers and the self-conception and ambition of students, as compared to the "academic" secondary schools leading to high status

occupations. It is virtually an iron law of the school status that a similarity of esteem cannot be achieved by schools performing different educational and social tasks. For instance, in systems of specialized secondary schools, like the tripartite structure in England, the difficulties of school esteem turn some educators and lay men toward the more comprehensive forms of school organization, which group curricular streams within a common school order. This is to avoid the status degradation of a good share of teachers and the students.

School is a part of a wider organization, in the sense it is connected both to the education office of the local authority, which supervises its activities, and to the Department of Education which periodically inspects it. Consequently, it has been argued, the role of the school teachers in the school is severely restricted, as they cannot teach precisely what they wish to teach or in the way they would like to teach, as a result of which they are less free as professionals. As far as teachers are concerned, the concept of role set in this context is relevant to their positions. Role-set, as described by Robert Merton, for any social position is a "complement of role relationships in which persons are involved", and he illustrates this with reference to the school teacher who by virtue of his/her position has roles to play in relation to the pupils, colleagues, head teacher, parents, members of the school board, his professional association, and so forth. There is a great possibility of conflict in such a role-set, because what the parents feel should constitute the education of the child is not necessarily what the school board considers it should be, with the head teacher having his/her own views, so may be the case with the professional association and other organizations; finally, the teacher, too, has his/her opinions. Merton, in this connection, says: "It raises the general problem of identifying the social mechanisms which serve to articulate the expectations of those in the role-set so that the occupant of a status is confronted with less conflict than would obtain if these mechanisms were not at work".

As mentioned earlier, the school has many relationships with persons and organizations in the wider society and the school teacher has to try to reconcile influences bearing upon him from inside and outside the four walls of the school. On the whole, one would see the school as community-oriented, for both children and teachers live in the same community, meeting during school hours, which are working hours and there are vacations of some length when the school is dispersed. In the school and within the classroom this wider society is represented and indeed in the classroom the models of roles, of various kinds, played outside in the wider community are held up before the children. They may include occupational roles like that of a scientist, clerk, bus driver, engineer and the like whereas other models refer to familial roles, neighborhood roles, citizenship, and so forth. All schools perform this function although the actual content will vary from one country to another, and from one culture to another. Besides, the school classroom is a situation where a child not only learns about adult roles but learns also how to perform them. The three R's are imparted to the child, as are also minor manual skills like drawing, craft or making things in wood or metal, cloth or wool.

7.3.7 School-Child Relations

As far as the role structures of the school child is concerned, one significant feature is his/her relationship with the school staff. He/she will probably have one teacher, when he/she is an infant in primary school, who will teach him/her everything he/she has to learn at that age; but he/she will move from one classroom to another in a junior school, although he/she may have one which is his/her base. This moving from one classroom to another, means a change of subject and teacher, for at this stage in his/her school career his/her teachers specialize in particular subjects, and this of course continues and becomes even more marked as the child proceeds up the educational ladder. The manner adopted by a teacher, his/her style and method, may

vary from one person to another but it is difficult to say which kind of manner on the part of the teacher is most successful. Some teachers are popular but it is possible that they may be less effective as compared to less popular ones. The variation in style and method is considerable and this represents variation in role-playing.

The complex processes of interaction between the teacher and the pupil becomes evident in the findings where it was found out that children of the primary school, who were aware of their teacher's feelings had a higher estimate of themselves, a better school achievement and, according to the teacher, were better behaved in class. It was also found that usually the teacher who wins the confidence and admiration of the class is the most successful, though one cannot generalize with confidence on this issue. But it is clear that it is in the quality easy flow of interaction between the teacher and the pupil where the answer lies as to how learning may be communicated and enquiry stimulated. At the same time, it has to be remembered that communication and stimulation in the classroom depend mostly on the type of language used in the classroom. The studies carried out by Bernstein into the relationship of social class and linguistic development is highly relevant to this topic which you will study in detail in Unit-14. There are, in short, certain formal relationships defined by norms relating to the interaction of pupils and teachers within the structure of the school class and school itself. It will be helpful to study the role of informal relationships of a kind that stem from the personality and methods of the teacher and the social background of the children besides the kind of linguistic expression they are used to.

Now let us examine school from a different angle: that of being an organization. In the following section we shall be looking at this organization with reference to theories of organization and then go on to describe the salient features of school as an organization, and finally, look into the principles of authority.

Check Your Progress 2

3) What does 'Particularism' mean?

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4) Mention the major role-relations in a school community?

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7.4 STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION OF A SCHOOL

7.4.1 Introduction

The study of school as an organization has its place in sociology of education mainly as an application of theories of organization. The school, in such theories, is treated as a self-contained system of social relationships. The link to the wider network of

social relationships of which any organization must be a part is then treated in terms of boundary maintenance, functional exchange, or the distinction between internal structure and external environment, it is argued. At the societal level, organization of the school is studied in relation to the functional relations of the school and other institutional structures of the society like the economy, the polity, religion and kinship. The social structure and functioning of a school is studied at descending levels of generality. It will have a formal constitution defining the distribution of roles within it, the allocation of resources and disciplinary powers, and the content and method of teaching. There will also be an informal pattern of power, influence and communication and a characteristic value system. Initially, the formal arrangements are meant to pursue defined ends; however within them arise spontaneous friendships, loyalties, habits of work, and routines of communication that may support or subvert, but that will in any case modify and complicate the functioning of the formal system.

The structure and culture of a school is shaped in an important way by outside influences while partly deriving from the logic of teaching and learning situation. Persons who enter this organization bring along with them their expectations and assumptions about their own rights and obligations. Therefore, the family, neighborhood, class, and ethnic environment of pupils bring them to school with varying attitudes toward their educational experience.

There is a differentiation of roles induced by the work activities in the internal structure of the organization of the school. This means administration becomes separated from teaching and because of the need for coordination, a hierarchy of administrative levels comes into being. As knowledge proliferates teaching itself becomes more specialized. There comes into picture, a non-teaching counselor, to take up the responsibility of advising and counselling the students. Bureaucratization of relations, with responsibilities and jurisdictions formally circumscribed and rules formally elaborated to perform decisions for maximum fairness and dependability takes place as the role structure of the school becomes more complicated.

7.4.2 Defining Characteristics of School as an Organization

Though it is recognized to some extent that school systems have many features in common with other types of organization, there is little acknowledgement that they are also strikingly different in many ways. The focus in this section would be on three aspects of formal organizational structure of public schools, the incumbents of positions at different levels in educational organization being school board members, school administrators, teachers, and students.

- a) An important defining characteristic of school systems relates to their organizational objective or goal. When it comes to the interpretation of the formal purpose of most organizations, there is little controversy. For example, the organizational goal of a business – to produce goods or services for a profit – is hardly a subject of debate but in the case of the organizational objective of a public-school system, the situation is different. This is because, “to educate” is an ambiguous and largely meaningless statement unless the content and the purposes of education are specified. This has reference to such aspects as to whether the public schools should or should not inculcate moral values; whether they should place greater emphasis on the emotional, the social, or the intellectual development of the child; whether they should encourage the student to question or accept the *status quo* – each of these is a value question on which there may be conflicting points of view and outside the educational systems. This suggests that value conflicts may be a basic source of strain for incumbents of educational positions and may exert an important influence on the functioning of organizations.

When there is vagueness in the formal educational objective of the school, it leads us to question the types of relationship pattern between the administrators and teachers and among teachers that tend to produce similar views on educational goals. In this context one needs to understand the kind of impact this may have on the functioning of the schools in the context of differential views on school objectives held by school personnel, on the one hand, and key formal and informal leaders of the community, on the other.

- b) Another defining feature of the school relates to the social environment in which the goal of the school is accomplished. Most adults in the labour force work in and have to adapt to an adult work situation. But in the school, teachers function primarily in a youth culture and in comparison to most workers at least at the lower echelons, who are in close contact with a small group of their colleagues as they carry out their tasks, most teachers are isolated from their fellow teachers during the greater part of the day.
- c) Though its functionaries are primarily professionals, the formal control of the school system is in the hands of the laymen – this is yet another defining characteristic of schools. The school board is the major structural link between schools and the community. It is a small group usually comprising three to ten individuals, elected usually by the community, which serves as an intermediary between the citizens and the professional educators. Its responsibility is to establish school policies, and the formal control of the local public educational system is in its hands wherein it has the formal right to hire and fire school personnel, determine the size of the school budget, and make most of the major decisions affecting the functioning of the organization. A school superintendent is appointed by the school board members to advise them, to carry out their decisions, and to administer the day-to-day functioning of the schools. The school superintendent may give greater primacy to the professional or to the executive-officer aspect of his position, operating on the basis of an internal or an external orientation to his/her job. That is, he/she may view his/her major responsibility as supervising the internal operations of the school system or as developing strong bonds between the schools and the community. When it comes to issues like teacher salaries, his/her orientation may reflect primary identification with his/her superordinates which is the school board or with his subordinates, that is the staff, or it may reflect a definition of his/her job as a negotiator between conflict groups in the organization. Depending on the pressures to which he/she is exposed, he/she may adopt a moralistic or an expediency orientation to the expectations.

7.4.3. Principles of Authority

Three principles of authority are distinguished by Burton Clark in the control of schools: *public trusteeship*, *bureaucracy* and *colleagueship*. Public trust is the dominant form through which control is exercised by a lay body representing state, community, religious, and other interests. This type of control is common in both state and private schools. The formal position of the internal administration of the school is subordinate to the policy of the lay governors in the public trust but in practice, the line between policy and administration is often difficult to determine.

Collegiate type presupposes the equal sharing of power and responsibility of peers.

Typically, bureaucratic organization may be found in large and internally differentiated groups that aim at producing a specified and standardized "product". It is correspondingly viable in schools that concentrate on instruction rather than education and standardize their product by regular examinations. But where the relationship between teachers and students involve character training, there must be an element of particularism that cannot be bureaucratized.

The weight of bureaucracy varies among schools. It depends on the exercise of other forms of influence, especially the collegial authority of faculties, and on the informal counter pressures of faculty and student subcultures. Bureaucratization of schools also depends on whether the large school is a unitary organization or a federation of quasi-independent clusters of faculty and students. Organizational structure may possibly have strong and lasting effects on individual character. Personal identity is hard to establish especially in the modern fast changing world, and the campus is one of the critical locales of identity formation. But large mass campus will disturb and weaken identity processes, if identity is dependent on personal relations. Therefore, growing impersonality in schools has greater social consequence than impersonality in all other types of organizations.

With the rise of cities and commerce, bureaucracy became a method for organizing social relationships between members of society in modern times, with its emphasis on rational and legal restrictions on behavior, whereby the social structure became 'educative' in the sense of changing personalities. It was Max Weber who pointed towards the rational-legal characteristics of modern organizations as a major source of contributor of this trend, describing an 'ideal-type' or perfect refinement of a rational social organization. According to Weber a bureaucracy is a rational arrangement of 'offices' providing certain means for administration and control of the office-holders' actions. In the bureaucracy officials enter expecting security, specialization, salary and seniority based upon achievement and examinations. The rights, duties and the qualifications of the official will be carefully defined so that he is replaceable with a minimum of upheaval to the smooth running of the organization. There would be hierarchically arranged offices to facilitate demarcation of responsibility and promotion according to ability. Impersonality and uniformity are the intended consequences of these arrangements for the achievement of the goals of the participants. The whole arrangement is specifically designed to minimize the personal idiosyncracies and irrationality of the officials and as Weber described it, it is 'dehumanized'. This description raises serious doubts about its relevance to education – it can fit either a school or a national system only in certain superficial ways.

7.4.4 Bureaucratization of Schools

Nevertheless, the bureaucratization of schools results not only from the growing number of students being served by the individual schools and school systems but also from the greater degree of specialization required especially within a technologically complex society.

Weber's five basic characteristics of bureaucracy are evident in the vast majority of schools at all levels, whether primary, secondary or even college level. They are as follows:

- a) **Division of Labor:** To teach particular age levels of students and specific subjects, specialized experts are employed. Instructors are now employed by public schools whose sole responsibility is to work with children who have learning disabilities or physical impairments.
- b) **Hierarchy of Authority:** In this case, each employee of a school system is responsible to a higher authority. For example, teachers must report to the principals and assistant principals and may sometimes also be supervised by departmental heads. Principals are accountable to a superintendent of schools, and the superintendent position hinges on decisions taken by the board of education. Even the students are ranked according to their grade and within clubs and organizations.

- c) **Written Rules and Regulations:** Conformity to numerous rules and regulations by teachers and administrators in the performance of their duties is one of the defining characteristics of bureaucratization of schools.
- d) **Impersonality:** As class sizes increase at schools, face-to-face interaction decreases whereby teachers experience difficulties in giving personal attention to each student.
- e) **Employment Based on Technical Qualifications:** The teachers are hired on the basis of professional competence and expertise. Written personnel policies dictate promotions. People who excel may be granted lifelong job security.

So far certain special characteristics of the school as an organization have been stressed. However, school systems are viewed as belonging to a general class of bureaucratic organizations.

Like industrial firms, school systems can be differentiated on the basis of size and complexity of organizational structure. For instance, in small school systems, the line of communication between the principal and the superintendent is direct and short. But in large ones, there is a complex organizational structure intermediate between the formal leader of the entire school system and the formal leader of a single school within the system.

Moreover, school systems of the same size may be characterized by variant organizational structures. For example, some large school systems operate on a decentralized organizational basis. In this case, each school principal is given a great deal of autonomy in selecting staff members, textbooks, and the courses of study to be offered in contrast to other large school systems which may operate on a highly centralized basis. Such structural variability among school systems inclines towards the impact of differential organizational principles on school functioning.

Then there is the unified Vs. the non-unified school district which is yet another aspect of the variant organizational models of school structure. In the unified school district the responsibilities of the school board and its superintendent include the elementary school, the high school, and junior college program for a particular geographical area. In the non-unified district, their responsibilities are limited to one phase of the public educational program – for example, the elementary schools or the high schools – in a particular locality.

So far we are referring to variability in bureaucratic structure among educational systems in one society. But there are basic differences in the general organizational structure of public education in different societies. In American society, for example, in contrast to most other Western societies, control of the public schools is not in the hands of federal government but in the hands of local school boards which operate under the authority of state law and there is no American equivalent to the Ministry of Education found in many other Western societies. Besides, the American organization of public education is based on a single-track school system, a system under which all children tend to follow the same pattern through high school, regardless of their abilities and interests. But most European educational systems are based on a multiple-track system. This means, after completing elementary school, European children are usually routed to specialized vocational high schools or to schools that prepare them for admission to the universities.

Check Your Progress 3

- 5) Which school organization is a link between the school and the community?

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- 6) Explain collegiateship?

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7.5 LET'S SUM UP

Every society has its own sub-systems which together help a society to fulfill its commitments and obligations towards its citizens. School is a major sub-system of every society. It reflects the ideals and processes to further refine its understanding and processes. This unit has tried to explain how schools function within a social system of the society of which they are part and also develop their own processes. The unit also delineates the roles and relations of individuals in a society and a school, where social processes like 'bureaucracy' has got transformed. You as a creative reader can take up other areas of school system for your study and examination.

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UNIT 8 SCHOOLING AS A SOCIO-CULTURAL PROCESS

Structure

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- 8.2 Objectives
- 8.3 Socio-cultural Processes and Schooling
 - 8.3.1 Society, Culture and Knowledge
 - 8.3.2 Schooling and Socio-cultural Processes
- 8.4 Theoretical Frameworks to Understand Schooling as a Socio-cultural Process
 - 8.4.1 Structural Functionalism
 - 8.4.2 New Sociology of Education
 - 8.4.3 Social and Cultural Reproduction
 - 8.4.4 Accommodation and Resistance
 - 8.4.5 Feminist Theories
- 8.5 Schooling as a Socio-Cultural Process: Some Examples
- 8.6 Let's Sum Up
- 8.7 References and Suggested Readings

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Social and psychological studies have shown that individual and social factors play a role in the schooling of children. In this unit we will focus on the social factors which define the schooling experience. The unit gives an overview of the different interrelationships between socio-cultural processes and schooling. We will examine the ways in which socio-cultural factors influence schooling, and the different theoretical frameworks to understand this interaction. By schooling we mean in this unit the entire social experience of the child in school.

8.2 OBJECTIVES

At the end of the unit, you should be able to:

- describe/explain different theoretical perspectives on schooling as a socio-cultural process;
- discuss the nature of interaction between socio-cultural processes and the schooling experience;
- discuss how the social identity of the learner is implicated in his/her schooling experience; and
- discuss how schooling functions to simultaneously create continuities and disjunctions in socialisation.

8.3 SOCIO-CULTURAL PROCESSES AND SCHOOLING

To understand schooling as a socio-cultural process, we need to question how knowledge is related to society and culture. The following sections examine the relationships between society, culture and knowledge. An understanding of these relationships helps us to examine how schools act as sites for socialization of children into understanding their social world.

8.3.1 Society, Culture and Knowledge

Social Organization and Social Reproduction

No society can be considered homogenous. Social organization at the level of family, community, region and even nation is diverse and complex. It is also marked by inequalities across social class, caste and gender. The scenario is further complicated by other social variables like race, religion, ethnicity and location. We know from research conducted in different societies that these factors determine and influence social and political relations within society. How social classes or certain powerful sections continue to remain so through several generations is related to the relative social and political power wielded by these sections. Social organization is thus significant to social, political and economic reproduction in society.

Cultural Context and Knowledge

Culture is a predominant feature of human societies. There are different definitions of culture, but common to all definitions is that culture provides a terrain, a kind of map, of possible meanings with which to make sense of the world. Mediating the messages we receive around us – the sign systems within any society – are the meanings attached to them through experience. As social actors, we make meaning of these symbolic resources, be it language, visual representations, verbal communications, gestures, etc. through our previous encounters with them and importantly, through the contexts of these encounters. The status of an individual in any society – whether ascribed or chosen – is one factor, which influences how symbols are related to social structure. A child, for instance, has a definite place in any society, and her/his position, the way adults relate to her/him is not uniform across cultures and societies, or across time. Childhood is socially and historically constructed. The way in which children were socialized in nineteenth century Britain, for example, was very different from the socialization of children in India; likewise, the socialization of children in rural areas in India is different from that of urban children. These distinctions are important when one thinks of schooling and education, which are modern institutions of socialization of the young.

Knowledge is related to the socio-cultural context in a critical way. To take just one example, tribal children learn about the various environmental signals associated with the onset of rain (like movements of certain insects, flowering of plants, etc.) from immersion in a context which has an enormous fund of communal knowledge about the environment. This knowledge is critical to survival. Much of this knowledge is learned through the social processes of 'informal' learning. Yet, the knowledge gained from these informal processes is not considered valuable enough to be included in what children learn in school. In fact, at times, the image of the social world in textbooks provides a picture of reality quite contradictory to the experience of children outside of school.

The social distribution of power in any society is determined by what knowledge counts as being 'relevant'; and it is those sections that are in relative positions of power in any society who can access this knowledge with relatively less effort. While this is also true of non-literate societies to some extent (although we will not deal with this here), it is far more evident in modern societies where literacy has assumed an instrumental status in social and economic mobility.

8.3.2 Schooling and Socio-cultural Processes

Schools are sites of secondary socialization. Children come to school with a distinct social experience, with a repertoire of cultural 'resources'. Predominant among these resources are those which have to do with language, but we should understand that there are other forms of knowledge which children also bring to the social setting of

the school, gathered through the rich and extensive experience of socialization within family and community.

What is taught as part of the official curriculum of schools can be far removed from the social experience of the child. Yet, since schooling tends to view students within a homogenising framework, knowledge sought to be imparted in schools tends to be undifferentiated and uniform. This, as Kumar (1989) points out, can act to reinforce notions of 'backwardness', especially for children from marginalized and disempowered sections of society. In India, if local adaptations are to be made at all, they are usually in the form of modifications to socio-cultural contexts at the state level, which are not necessarily inclusive or sensitive to the cultural histories of disadvantaged sections in different regions of the state.

Schooling is necessarily framed by a set of normative 'ideals' which characterise the 'educated person'. These ideals are socially and historically constituted, and tend to project the belief structures of those sections which are dominant in society. A given school seeks to transmit a set of specific skills to students as well as a framework of moral character and conduct. Bernstein (1977) calls these the 'instrumental' and 'expressive' orders respectively.

Schools are not isolated, socially-blind institutions; as inherently *social* institutions they respond to, maintain, create, reinforce, and also have the potential to contradict socio-cultural processes in wider society. Aspects of the physical environment of the school, its location, the selection of social knowledge which goes into textbooks (the 'overt' and 'hidden' curriculum), classroom transactions, teachers' attitudes, beliefs, values, their language and classroom practice, peer interactions – these are some of the socio-cultural contexts and processes which are intrinsic to schooling.

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Differentiate between Competition and Collaboration?

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- 2) Define Social Stereotype.

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8.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS TO UNDERSTAND SCHOOLING AS A SOCIO-CULTURAL PROCESS

An important question to ask is whether schooling involves only 'transmission' of a selected body of knowledge (which is rooted in the social, economic and political structures of domination and control in society), or whether this knowledge is 'co-constructed' by students through the lens of their social experience outside the school.

Let us try and understand the ideas of 'transmission' and 'co-construction'. Transmission involves a 'knower' and one who has to be taught, or the student/learner. The student is assumed to be a 'tabula rasa', a clean slate, which has to be written over with knowledge, which is typically characterized by 'facts'. Implicit in the transmission model is power - the power of the teacher who knows, and the powerlessness of the student, who does not have knowledge. In the transmission model, learning is unidirectional, from teacher to student. There are given texts which embody the knowledge to be learned, which is considered to be objective and value-neutral. The constructivist position places the learner at the centre of learning—her/his knowledge experiences are given primacy, and the role of the teacher is more of an animator or facilitator. Subjectivity is given importance and knowledge is not considered objective and free of values.

The role of schooling in the subordination of emotion to so-called rationality, leading children to adopt a technological rather than affective/emotional approach to view the social world, and their consequent dehumanization has been pointed out by several thinkers. Some important thinkers who have contributed to the criticism of schools as socio-cultural agencies are Ivan Illich, Paulo Freire, John Holt and Jonathan Kozol. Freire's critique of what he termed the 'banking' model of education which intensified the disempowerment of poor marginalized sections of society led him to address the issue of an emancipatory pedagogy. Illich's belief that de-schooling would bring about a more humane society has had a profound influence on educational practitioners. In his book *Deschooling Society* (1970), Illich says:

Many students, especially those who are poor, intuitively know what the schools do for them. They school them to confuse process and substance... The pupil is [thereby] "schooled" to confuse teaching with learning, grade advancement with education, a diploma with competence, and fluency with the ability to say something new. His [sic] imagination is "schooled" to accept service in place of value.... Health, learning, dignity, independence, and creative endeavour are defined as little more than the performance of the institutions which claim to serve these ends...

Deschooling Society (1973: 9)

Sociologists of education have examined schooling from different perspectives, such as how schools socialise the young into norms, the reproduction of social and economic relations in society and also how schools respond to and produce distinct social identities of learners. Central to the various strands of thinking on schooling as a socio-cultural process is the critical relationship between how we think of schooling as a socialising institution and its potential for how we conceptualise social change. In other words, does schooling encompass the potential to contest and alter oppressive structures in society? In this section, we will look at some of the important theoretical frameworks within the sociology of education which inform our understanding of the interactions between socio-cultural processes and schooling.

8.4.1 Structural Functionalism

A dominant paradigm within the sociology of education has been **structural functionalism**, which emphasizes institutional forms and consensual relationships (Parsons: 1959). This perspective provides a view of society as a system tending towards equilibrium, performing required functions of enculturation within contexts where cultural values are consensually shared. The functionalist view of schools playing an essential role in enculturating the young into accepted social norms has dominated sociological studies of education. However, the functionalist framework does not provide us with adequate answers to the question why certain norms are considered valuable or who sets these norms. For example, obedience, discipline and deference to authority (on the part of students), which are considered norms, has led to the concept of 'deviance' as a problem. However, these norms may be questioned when education is viewed within a constructivist framework which welcomes the child's active participation in the construction of knowledge. The assumption that cultural values can be shared without any social conflict also inhibits adequate explanation of these questions. The search for placing greater emphasis on the influence of human action and conflict on aspects of social relations lay behind the development of other theories, informed by social interactionism, phenomenology, Marxist and Weberian analysis, cultural historiography and existentialist philosophy. In opposition to functionalism, many of these theories placed social conflict, over consensus, at their centre.

8.4.2 New Sociology of Education

The 'new sociology of education' that emerged with *Knowledge and Control* (Young, 1971) registered the shortcomings in viewing teachers and students as carriers of social roles, and drew on phenomenological traditions in sociology to expose the social construction and transmission of curricular knowledge. As Young stated in his introduction to the book: 'the primary aim...is to open up some alternative directions for sociological enquiry in education' (p.2), and that the 'major focus of the sociology of education becomes an enquiry into the social organisation of knowledge in educational institutions' (p.3). The emergence of the 'new' sociology brought in to focus the role that interpretative approaches, rather than functionalist ones, could play in the understanding of school processes. Drawing on a variety of frameworks, interpretative approaches are characterised by 1) an opposition to structural functionalism; 2) a view of individuals as creators of meanings; 3) a focus on the assumptions underlying social order, together with the treatment of social categories as problematic; 4) a distrust of quantification and the use of 'objective' categories and 5) a focus on the transmission and acquisition of interpretative procedures (Bernstein: 1977).

A significant contribution to interpretative sociology comes from Goffman's dramaturgical sociological perspective in anthropological research. In this he uses the idea of 'performance' in social situations, in which participants intersubjectively construct a collective meaning of the situation which involves 'not so much a real agreement as to what exists but rather a real agreement as to whose claims concerning what issues will be temporarily honoured' (Goffman: 1971:23).

Symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology, two important strands within interpretative sociology, have had a significant impact on studies of schooling. By linking human action with modes of linguistic and cultural expression and placing emphasis on the role of human subjectivity, interactionism and ethnomethodology enable an 'internal' perspective on the educational 'subject' and her/his community, as well as the dynamics of knowing in their relationship.

School-based research within the interpretative framework has examined the ways by which those involved in education construct, define and manage their everyday world.

The organization of schools, ideologies of teachers, and the nature of school knowledge are given emphasis in such research. Keddie's (1971) study on classroom knowledge, for example, examined the categories used to understand student failure in a streamed classroom. She showed that categories like 'low/high ability' and 'deviance', although apparently consensually maintained, are played out in interactional contexts in the classroom between teachers and students and among students, and linked to the unequal distribution of power.

Check Your Progress 2

3) What is Co-construction model of teaching?

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4) What does the new sociology say about School Process?

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8.4.3 Social and Cultural Reproduction

Marxist theories, with their emphasis on class relations, strongly influenced studies of education. Bowels and Gintis (1976), for example, tried to examine the role played by schooling in capitalist society. They looked at the relationship between the capitalist economy and schooling, and how the latter helped to reproduce class relations within capitalism by placing children into class-specific occupations in the capitalist economy. **Neo-Marxist frameworks** challenged the idea of students as passive recipients of an overarching economic agenda through schooling, and attempted to look at the linkages between everyday school practices and the larger structures of power engendering several significant interpretations.

Also, moving beyond phenomenological description and analysis of social processes within schooling, neo-Marxist frameworks examine the role that institutions and structures which embody power in the social, economic and political spheres play in the organisation of schooling, social relations within the school, constructions of school knowledge, and the identity of social actors or factors within the context of schooling. In contrast to earlier phenomenological and ethnomethodological studies, which attempted to show how reality was sustained by participants at the micro-level, the larger economic and political *context* of construction of knowledge are prominent in these frameworks.

The major theories addressing the place of education in the reproduction of values in society were those of **social and cultural reproduction**. Although these theories cast a radically new frame within which to analyse schooling and school knowledge, they have been critiqued on several counts. Social reproduction theorists like Althusser

(1971) and Bowles and Gintis (1976) addressed quite specifically the reproduction, through schooling, of the structures and social relations of capitalist society. Althusser viewed schooling as an 'ideological state apparatus', embodying ideology materially (in the form of rituals, practices and social processes), and representations that structure the consciousness of students. The 'correspondence principle' of Bowles and Gintis draws parallels between the hierarchically structured patterns of values, norms and skills that characterise the work force in capitalist society and the dynamics of classrooms. Although this work was the first to highlight the importance of the 'hidden curriculum' in reproducing social relations through schooling, it has been critiqued for a variety of reasons, primarily because of its deterministic approach to complex social realities. Bowles' and Gintis' work, while pathbreaking, has been criticised for overdetermining the influence of economic factors on schooling (see Apple,1982).

Cultural reproduction theorists such as Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) and Bernstein(1977, 1985) freed the idea of reproduction from the confines of a deterministic Marxist framework by introducing key concepts which made a considerable contribution to the study of curriculum. '**Cultural capital**' and '**habitus**' were central to Bourdieu and Passeron's framework. By 'cultural capital', Bourdieu refers to the different sets of linguistic and cultural competencies that individuals inherit by way of the class-located boundaries of their families. A child inherits from her/his family those sets of meanings, qualities of style, modes of thinking, and types of disposition that are accorded a certain social value and status as a result of what the dominant class or classes label as the most valued . Habitus relates to those 'subjective dispositions which reflect a class-based social grammar of taste, knowledge and behaviours inscribed permanently in the body schema and the schemes of thought of each developing person' (Bourdieu and Passeron:1977:15). These dispositions structure social experiences which reproduce the same objective structures.

A theory of cultural transmission was the central point of Bernstein's analysis of education and the role it plays in the reproduction of class relationships. According to Bernstein, schools embody an **educational code** which structures the school experience and plays an important part in organising the manner in which authority and power are mediated through all aspects of school experience. The dominant educational code consists of a *collection code* and an *integrated code*, whose meanings are directly related to the concepts of **classification** and **framing**. Classification refers to the relationships- the strength or weakness in the construction and maintenance of the boundaries that exist - between different categories, contents and so on. Framing refers to the 'degree of control teacher and pupil possess over selection, organisation, pacing and timing of the knowledge transmitted and received in the pedagogical relationship' (Bernstein:1977:89). These concepts can be strong or weak in different combinations, which in turn define the dominant educational code of the pedagogical relationship. The collection code refers to strong classification and framing whereas the integrated code is characterised by weak classification and framing. The integrated code contains more possibility for progressive ideology.

8.4.4 Accommodation and Resistance

Cultural reproduction theories have been critiqued for their over-emphasis on class as a social category, and not adequately allowing in their conceptual framework the possibilities for conflict and contradiction. The perspective of schools as institutions with 'relative autonomy' comes from the Gramscian notion of **hegemony**. Gramsci (1971:57-8), moving away from a deterministic conception of the state, viewed it as a terrain of continuing conflicts and contradictions. The Gramscian perspective enables not only an understanding of ideological transmission, but also resistance to dominant (hegemonic) ideologies, by developing what he terms a 'contradictory consciousness'. Ideology, according to Gramsci, is not a system of ideas but a 'condition that is

implicitly manifest in art, in law, in economic activity and in all manifestations of individual and collective life' (Hall: 1988:55), a 'mental framework... which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, define, figure out and render intelligible the way society works' (Hall: 1996: 26).

One criticism of the traditional reproduction model has been that it takes a far too flat view of individual and collective ability to contest enforcement of norms. Where does the 'agency' of social actors— the ability to adapt and accept, question, contest and change transmitted knowledge – fit into an understanding of schooling as a socio-cultural process? Individual and collective processes of **accommodation and resistance** to dominant ideologies found expression in several researches in education in the 70s and 80s, chiefly in Britain and the United States. Using ethnographic methods, these studies captured the nuanced complexity of resistance in classrooms and schools. Willis's *Learning to Labour* (1977) explored the school experiences of working class youth's resistance to dominant ideologies of schooling which emphasised mental labour and gentility. In this path-breaking study, he showed how these young 'lads' constructed a counter-culture based on their own social experiences of being working class. In doing this, they 'resisted' the dominant cultural code of gentility (calling the eager students who unquestioningly accepted what teachers taught as 'earholes') and also *produced* themselves as working-class. Willis's path-breaking work shifted the theoretical emphasis from cultural reproduction to *cultural production*.

We can perhaps think of equivalent situations in the Indian context. For example, in coeducational schools, girls are often upheld as being ideal students due to their supposed docility which makes them 'fit' the image of the obedient, non-disruptive student in the classroom. Girls accommodate to this ideology, but also resist it using subtle and subversive tactics, like stitching, drawing, etc. which do not disturb the equilibrium of the class room but which could also be considered 'disruptive' to learning (Bhattacharjee, 1999).

8.4.5 Feminist Theories

In the Euro-American context, feminist scholarship on schooling and curriculum has followed two distinct traditions. Liberal feminist approaches, while documenting gender discrimination in textbooks and school practices, did not place their findings within an analysis of society and the economy. Socialist feminists, on the other hand, make the primary assumption that schooling is connected to class structure and the economy (capitalist), and that capitalism and patriarchy are related and mutually reinforcing. Within the latter, there have been severe critiques of traditional Marxist theory, basically directed towards its emphasis on class analysis, which tends to make gender invisible. Moreover, feminist critiques of the theories of social and cultural reproduction have largely been addressed to the manner in which gender is seen as *subordinate* to class. By not addressing women as productive agents, there is an assumption of the fixity of gender roles. Although critical feminist theorists have borrowed key concepts from reproduction theories, these concepts have been re-worked into new formulations which give primacy to women's experience and address their subordination. Macdonald (1980) for example, extends Bernstein's concept of 'code' to the construction of dominant gender codes in schools— patterns of practices that construct gender in everyday school life.

Resistance theories which embody these possibilities, have also been used in feminist educational research. Key works are by McRobbie (1978) and Anyon (1980,1983). McRobbie, in an ethnographic study, showed how working-class girls resisted the dominant ideology of the educated woman, through displays of 'unacceptable' femininity. Anyon examined the hidden curriculum of work in four schools differentiated by the socio-economic class of students. Her study showed that the girls both resisted and accommodated to dominant norms in ways that mirrored their class positions.

By shifting the focus from class as a sole determining factor in the development of consciousness and a unitary explanatory variable, as well as questioning the economy as the only site where educational conflicts have meaning, feminist theorising has enabled the identification of other absences in educational theory and research, such as race and ethnicity, and enlarged the arena of conflict to the cultural and political, and to both public and private spheres.

The theoretical formulations outlined above provide us frameworks within which to examine the ways in which schooling acts as a socio-cultural process. Schools act to socialise students, by the ways in which they mirror the social, economic and political realities outside of the school through selection of knowledge, and everyday practices and social relations. On the other hand, within schools, students themselves also construct knowledge about the social world. Within specific sociohistorical contexts, we can see that different meanings are produced within schooling processes.

Check Your Progress 3

5) What is the significance of critical pedagogy?

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6) What was the major finding of Anyon's work?

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8.5 SCHOOLING AS A SOCIO-CULTURAL PROCESS: SOME EXAMPLES

In the above section we looked at the various frameworks by which we can understand how schooling can be seen in socio-cultural context. We have briefly addressed the role played by official knowledge and patterns of interaction which characterise schooling as a socio-cultural process. We now turn to the ways in which socio-cultural processes influence schooling.

Some factors intrinsic to the schooling experience which carry the imprint of socio-cultural influences are:

- Content of textbooks (selection of material, language used, representations of different communities, genders, etc.)
- Aspects of the physical and social organization of the school such as seating patterns, task assignment by teachers, etc. (Can you think of some other ways?)
- The ways in which behaviour is perceived, monitored and controlled.

- Teachers' expectations, systems of rewards and punishments, labeling patterns, verbal and non-verbal communication.

By way of example, let us look at the category of gender. We know that girls in the Indian context are socialized within a classical patriarchal framework which emphasizes submission to authority, acceptance and adherence to norms based on gender inequality and an awareness of their supposedly innate inferiority, both biological and cultural. Schooling acts to reinforce these forms, through a range of processes. The official knowledge of textbooks often render women invisible or portrays them in stereotyped roles. Teachers, whose own value structures may mirror the larger social view of gender, are likely to reinforce gender distinctions through their verbal and non-verbal communication patterns and practices in different interactional contexts within the school – the classroom, common spaces like assembly halls and playgrounds, etc. The way routines are structured in the school also reflect gender difference. For example, it is often observed in Indian schools that girls are responsible for cleaning up the premises, while boys are sent for outside tasks. Many studies have shown how adult gender stereotypes model traditional gender role behaviour in the classroom. For example, boys take up more 'teacher time', since they tend to be seen as more 'disruptive'. There is differential focus on boys for misconduct, remediation or other forms of behavioural control. Male teachers tend to adopt a more authoritarian and instrumental teaching style, whereas female teachers use a more supportive and expressive style. Children also tend to engage in social interactions in the school which reflect their gendered socialization. The relationship of gender discrimination within schooling to larger socio-cultural processes has been documented in various studies. What is important to note, however, is that these processes will vary by the location and type of school, the background of children and teachers, etc. In other words, it is difficult to examine gender issues in schooling without looking at class, caste, religion and ethnicity.

Patterns of social discrimination can be insidious and subtle. Documented experiences of Dalit children in schools show that socio-cultural taboos associated with purity pollution affect social transactions in schools. The schooling experience of dalit children exemplifies the ways in which external factors impact education. In the rural context, Dalits are predominantly poor and landless labourers. Studies have shown how discrimination operates on Dalit children through a range of factors. The location of a school in a village, for example, sends out a clear message about who gets included in local institutions of formal education. Villages are usually structured on caste and community lines. Dalit bastis are usually located at some distance from upper caste habitations— often on the periphery of the village. Children from these communities have to walk the distance to the schools which are usually located in the upper-caste regions of the village. This acts as a disincentive for communities which are oppressed socially in the village setting. Once in school, the organization of the classroom, where Dalit children often are made to sit separately from upper caste children and treated as polluting (a carry over from social relations outside of the school and predominantly upper caste teachers' beliefs and classroom practices). Dalit children are dissuaded (if not prevented) from using common water glasses in schools, and there are often different glasses reserved for them.

Tribal hamlets are located in sparsely populated areas, with low provision of schooling facilities. The medium of instruction and language used within schools is not the local language familiar to children, leading many to drop out of school. The self-image that children acquire has a lot to do with the way they are socialised in school through the curriculum. Kumar (1989) makes the point that scheduled caste children are caught in a circle of underdevelopment as textbooks and teachers deny their own histories and memories of community pride through the absence and sometimes even denigration of their contexts. A classic example of official knowledge insidiously

undermining tribal identity is a question found in a textbook: Where are adivasis found ? (as against where do they live) (cited in Rampal, 2002).

What we have outlined for the categories of gender, caste and ethnicity also apply to other social categories. Schooling reflects the world views of dominant sections (in the case of India, upper caste/class, Hindu, urban, male). Nonetheless, we must also remember that schooling offers a space for struggle and resistance to the dominance (and oppression) of these groups, and opportunities for action to empower marginalized sections. Significant examples in the Indian context are the growth of early nationalist consciousness under colonial rule, the emergence of a distinct Dalit consciousness under Phule and later Ambedkar, and women asserting their right to education.

8.6 LET'S SUM UP

Schooling carries the imprint of wider social relations. Schooling acts to enculturate but also tends to reinforce discrimination and inequality. At the same time, as sites of cultural production, schooling also has the potential to create resistance to dominance and oppression.

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UNIT 9 TEACHER AS AN EDUCATIONAL INPUT

Structure

- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Objectives
- 9.3 Teacher as an Instructional Input
- 9.4 Teacher and Curriculum
 - 9.4.1 Curriculum Planning
 - 9.4.2 Curriculum Transaction
 - 9.4.3 Evaluation
- 9.5 Teacher as Mentor
- 9.6 Teacher and Community
- 9.7 Teacher as State Apparatus
- 9.8 Let's Sum Up
- 9.9 Unit End Exercises
- 9.10 References and Suggested Readings

9.1 INTRODUCTION

School as a social organization situates in a socio-cultural context. School is a system designed by the society for educating and shaping the life of the young. They spend a considerable time in school. Schools are expected to train them for a better life. Teachers are the main agents for making this goal happen. Teacher takes upon various roles to serve this purpose. An attempt is made in this unit to identify and analyze the different functions performed and the role played by teachers in school. The changing role of teachers is discussed in a historical perspective. The discussion centres around instruction, curriculum, professionalism, mentoring and community with respect to teacher role. The discussion mainly focuses on 'what is the role of teachers?' and 'why should they play the 'expected' role?'

As there are varied roles and expectations from teachers there cannot be just one definition assigned to teachers. In sections below you may come across various definitions of a teacher depending upon the tasks he/she performs. They may seem contradictory but they all together contribute to the understanding of the professional roles of teachers.

9.2 OBJECTIVES

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

- discuss the changing role of a school teacher in historical perspective;
- explain the importance of teachers as instructional input;
- discuss the role of teachers in curriculum planning, transaction and evaluation;
- analyze the significance of mentoring as an important function of a teacher;
- discuss the functions of teacher as a professional;
- discuss the role of teacher in bringing about social change;
- discuss the functioning of school teachers in the context of State control; and
- appreciate the managing role of a teacher.

9.3 TEACHER AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL INPUT

The first image that comes to mind on thinking of teachers is that of the classroom teachers. Essentially teacher is identified with his/her classroom teaching. Knowledge in organized form is imparted to students in schools. Here, teacher functions as an instructional input. When we consider teacher as an instructional input, there is also the presumption that the teacher is in a position to impart knowledge. This implies that the teacher has a fund of knowledge and considerable experience at a level different from that of the students. As M.S.Gore (1967) noted, the instructional processes operate with the assumption that the teacher is ahead of his/her pupil in the pursuit of knowledge and that he/she can effectively guide the pupil. This notion brings in an element of distance and authority in the teacher-pupil relationship. This sense of distance and authority exists when teacher is the only source of knowledge. But if knowledge is available and accessible beyond the teacher and classroom, the teacher's word loses the ring of finality.

Today, knowledge is available and accessible to anyone who pursues it. It means teacher is no more the only custodian of knowledge. Therefore, in instructional processes, teacher is one of the sources of knowledge.

A teacher is invariably associated with instruction. Instruction as we know, takes place in a controlled environment leading to prespecified learning outcomes. That way instruction based learning is different from learning which is a result of interactivity with environment informally, incidentally or in an unorganized fashion. Here, the pre-specified learning outcome is determined or planned by the teacher. In order to achieve the prespecified learning outcome, the teacher organizes the learning activities/experiences.

As an instructional input the teacher has the following major concerns:

- Formulating the instructional objectives;
- Organizing learning experiences to achieve the instructional objectives; and
- Judging, if the instructional objectives are achieved.

At the input stage, the teacher decides upon instructional objectives and plans teaching-learning and evaluation strategies and activities to achieve these objectives. At the process stage, the teacher implements instructional strategies and guides the children through the process of learning. This is the stage where the teacher anticipates the realization of the instructional objectives. At the output stage, the teacher evaluates the learning outcomes to examine if the predecided instructional objectives have been achieved.

The teacher organizes the learning experiences keeping in mind the cognitive, affective and psychomotor development of the pupil. The overall development of the pupil is kept in mind while formulating the instructional objectives as well as evaluating learning outcomes. Evaluation of learning outcomes gives feedback to the teachers. This feedback helps the teacher on two counts. One, the teacher gets feedback on individual pupil's learning strengths and weaknesses. Another, the feedback helps the teacher to consider different teaching strategies for effective learning.

9.4 TEACHER AND CURRICULUM

You have studied in detail the meaning of curriculum, the types of curriculum and the steps and stages involved in the planning and development of a curriculum. In this section, we will discuss the role of teachers in curriculum planning and developmental transaction and evaluation.

Before colonial rule began, school education in India was not a well organized activity as we see today. There were village schools, where a single teacher taught a small group of students mostly from the same village. These village school teachers often taught a multi-grade class. In some cases, school education was family exclusive, that means the family appointed a teacher to educate its children. In all these cases, the teacher had a great deal of autonomy to choose the content to be taught. The teacher also enjoyed the freedom to decide how to teach the content. With the advent of colonial rule and colonial education, this situation underwent a drastic change. In essence, the school teacher's role began shrinking under the colonial rule. As Krishna Kumar (1991) pointed out:

Once the colonial administration had established an education system by mid-nineteenth century, the teacher could no longer decide on his own or on the basis of convention what to teach and how to teach. Tradition lost its hold when prescribed syllabi and text books came into being.

9.4.1 Curriculum Planning

Let's discuss the role of school teachers in the planning and development of curriculum and preparation of textbooks. Today, in our country, we have a highly structured education system. At the national level, the National Council for Educational Research and Training sets up a committee for developing a National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for schools. Textbooks are prepared on the basis of the National Curriculum Framework. There are two State agencies involved in the preparation of textbooks, the NCERT at the national level and the State Councils as its counterpart in States. Some private agencies and NGOs have also prepared textbooks.

Now, coming to our point of discussion, what is the role of a school teacher in the development of the National Curriculum Framework and the preparation of textbooks? The draft of the National Curriculum Framework is said to be debated among interested parties that include school teachers and students. But in practice, no systematic attempt has been made to involve school teachers on a large scale in such debates. Text book writing also happens more or less the same way. The point I am trying to make is that there is no large scale participation by school teachers either in curriculum development or text book writing. Yet for most school teachers in India, the text book is the curriculum and syllabi. It is true, a prescribed textbook and syllabi take away the autonomy of the school teacher. Given the context, how does a school teacher enrich the educational input he/she brings to the classroom? A teacher must critically examine the content to be taught and then place it in social context. This will enable the teacher to incorporate local knowledge, experience and wisdom to the prescribed content and organizing the learning experience in the social context of the pupil. Teachers should consider textbooks as a broad framework and look beyond them for what to be taught. Under the bureaucratically controlled education system, textbooks become the curriculum for teachers.

In the year 2005, a new Curriculum Framework was brought out by the NCERT. This document is a definite departure from the previous documents. In the 2005 NCF more emphasis has been placed on incorporating local content. In the social science and humanities especially language, the content provided is in the form of teaching points expected to provide trigger points for further debate and discussion and accordingly evaluation is also expected to be different from before.

9.4.2 Curriculum Transaction

We have already discussed one of the most familiar and visible roles a teacher plays, in the instructional input. I have mentioned earlier that schooling as an organized activity was very much a colonial and post-colonial phenomena. Under the state

controlled school education system, individual teacher lost the freedom to choose and select what to be taught. However, teachers still have the autonomy to critically examine and challenge the prescribed curriculum and textbooks and play the role of a social pressure group. Curriculum transaction was another aspect where teacher role had to be redefined under organized school education.

As Krishna Kumar (1991) pointed out, it was not only that the teacher lost his/her autonomy with regard to what to teach but also the teacher lost autonomy with regard to pedagogy.

The syllabus and textbooks determined not only what had to be taught, but also the time within which the teaching had to be completed. This meant the teacher could no longer pace his pedagogy to suit his pupils.

The syllabus and textbooks tell the teacher what to do, how to do and within what time frame to accomplish each task. This meant that the teacher's activity was being controlled by forces external to the social context and time within which the teacher, student and school were placed. This also implied that the teacher was incapable of making pedagogical decisions. The State may try hard to influence the curriculum and curriculum transaction but it may not always happen that way. Schools and teachers as State functionaries are under tremendous pressure from the State at times to act in a particular manner. Even then, teachers are known for resistance against extreme ideological indoctrination. As Michael Apple (1986) has noted:

Thus the 'mere' fact that the state wishes to find 'more efficient' ways to organize teaching does not guarantee that this will be acted upon by teachers who have a long history of work practices and self-organisation once the doors to their rooms are closed.

Teachers may not have the autonomy to choose what to teach. But a great deal of autonomy can be exercised by the teachers in transacting the curriculum, in spite of the external agency control. How a teacher transacts the curriculum is as important or more so as the content of the curriculum. About human learning, Jerome Bruner (1996) says, it is best when it is participatory, proactive, collaborative and given over to constructing meanings rather than receiving them. Emphasizing the pivotal role of the teacher he says:

Learning in its full complexity involves the creation and negotiation of meaning in a larger culture, and the teacher is the vicar of the culture at large. You cannot teacher-proof a curriculum any more than you can parent-proof a family.

The Brazilian educationist Paulo Freire (1998) considered the function of education as developing critical consciousness. He said

We wanted a literacy programme which would be an introduction to the democratisation of culture, a programme with men as its subjects rather than as patient recipients, a programme which itself would be an act of creation, capable of releasing other creative acts, and in which students would develop the impatience and vivacity which characterize search and invention.

Both Bruner and Freire emphasize the process of learning as participative and meaning constructing rather than receiving. Once again reference need to be made to the NCF 2005 where crucial departure has been suggested in the process of curriculum transaction.

Aronowits and Giroux (1986) argue that as transformative intellectuals the task of the teacher is to help students develop a deep and abiding faith in the struggle to

overcome injustices and to change themselves. That teachers must utilize forms of pedagogy that treat students as critical agents, problematizes knowledge, utilizes dialogue, and makes knowledge meaningful, critical and ultimately emancipatory.

The above discussion suggests that the teacher's role in curriculum transaction is not the transmission of ideas into the minds of the pupils to be received passively. In fact the teacher's role is to help the pupils to use the tools of 'meaning making', reality construction and developing a critical vernacular that deals with problems experienced in daily life.

9.4.3 Evaluation

We have already discussed the erosion of teacher role in the context of 'what to teach?' and 'how to teach?'. Yet, another role, the teacher had to redefine under the colonial system of education was his/her role as an evaluator.

Before the colonial system of education, the teacher decided when to terminate the studentship. Under the new system of education, a predesigned, structured system of examination came into existence. The teacher lost the autonomy to decide 'what', 'when' and 'how' to evaluate. Termination of studentship was predecided irrespective of the pace of learning of individual pupil.

Today, in most schools, teacher-made tests are used for two purposes. They are formative testing and summative testing. We have discussed in the section, 'Teacher as instructional input', that teacher formulates instructional objectives. Testing and evaluation are conducted to determine if the instructional objectives are achieved. The teacher also uses test and evaluation as a feedback mechanism to improve teaching strategies.

There are two terminal level examinations in schools. In these two examinations teacher-made tests are not used. The 'what', 'when' and 'how' of these examinations are decided by external agencies. In other type of teacher-made tests evaluation is conducted in the school itself. The teacher decides what to evaluate and how to evaluate. As we have discussed earlier, the 'what' and 'how' to evaluate are based on the instructional objectives and the process of teaching-learning to realize these objectives. Accordingly, it is important that appropriate evaluation techniques are used for evaluating the teaching-learning process and instructional objectives. Based on the evaluation, the teacher makes value judgment on the performance of the pupil and the effectiveness of one's own teaching.

We have examined three aspects of curriculum and teacher's role. We have discussed that 'what' and 'how' of the curriculum are highly structured and externally controlled. The bureaucratic control in school education changed the role perception of school teaching.

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Define 'Classroom Transaction'.

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- 2) Define the Teacher's role as a Facilitator.

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- 3) Learner Participation in Pedagogic Process.

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9.5 TEACHER AS MENTOR

Planning and executing the best teaching learning strategy in a classroom is associated with good teaching. Children in school are in their formative years. At this stage, a teacher's role extends beyond good teaching and the good teacher image. Along with good teaching, mentoring is also necessary. This was pointed out in the UNESCO Report (1996), *Learning: The Treasure Within*, although the word mentoring is not mentioned:

It is at an early stage of basic education that the principal attitudes towards learning as well as the self-image of the learner are formed. The role of the teacher at this stage is crucial. The greater the handicaps the children coming to school have to overcome – in terms of poverty, difficult social environment or physical impairments – the greater the demands on the teacher. He or she, to be effective, must draw upon a broad range of teaching skills, as well as on the human qualities of empathy, patience and humility, as a compliment to authority.

While a good teacher knows all about the best teaching-learning strategies, a good mentor knows how to help students to set their goals and achieve them. Mentoring provides supportive environment to pupils to pursue their goals. Teacher-mentors help their pupils to build on their strengths and give moral and emotional support to overcome weaknesses and failures. Children coming from different socio-cultural, economic and family, background bring their own 'cultural capital' to the classroom. So, their needs are also different from each other.

Mentoring is not an organized activity in school. It is different from guidance and counselling, which is an organized activity. Guidance and counselling are done systematically in sessions. There is no such systematic approach a teacher-mentor adopts in mentoring. It is an ongoing process. Mentors have an inquiring and pleasant disposition that makes them approachable to students. The inquiring nature of the mentors make them reach out to students in difficulty. An effective mentor has strong interpersonal skills. They are non-judgmental in approach and have high level of empathy. They win the trust of students due to these qualities. They have excellent observational skills that help them to reach out to pupils and offer them constructive

feedback. They are patient listeners and never exercise authority to talk down to pupils. They exude warmth in their interaction with students. As the UNESCO Report pointed out, a teacher must have all these qualities along with best teaching skills for helping the students to realize their potential and achieve their goals.

9.6 TEACHER AND COMMUNITY

The Education Commission (1964-66) emphasized the role of education as the instrument of change. The report of the commission begins with the following statement:

The destiny of India is being shaped in her classrooms.

If education is a tool for change, then teachers undoubtedly are the agents to promote that change. School and teachers play a pivotal role in bringing about social change in the community. They lead the community in breaking the cultural barriers of illiteracy among women and socially disadvantaged group in the community. Schools sometimes collaborate with other government agencies to fight primary health problems by developing awareness among the students who take the good health message home. One of the primary responsibilities of the teacher is of promoting rational thinking among community members. Teachers must make efforts to participate in community activities and encourage the members to take socially progressive measures. The UNESCO Report (1996), *Learning: The Treasure Within*, discussed the role of teachers in achieving community goals:

Ways can be found for improving the performance and motivation of teachers in relationship they establish with local authorities. When teachers are themselves part of the community where they teach, their involvement is more clearly defined. They are more sensitive and responsive to the needs of their communities and better able to work towards community goals. Strengthening the links between the school and the community is therefore one of the most important ways of ensuring that the school is able to grow in symbiosis with its milieu.

Teachers must work with the community towards upholding our constitutional values of democracy, secularism, social justice, elimination of poverty and eradication of illiteracy. Schools as State apparatus are often used as portals of cultural reproduction by powers of dominance. Teachers as State functionaries, here, come under pressure to become agents of reproduction of the culture of the dominant group, therefore, maintaining the status quo of the dominant group. However, the role of the teacher is to write and rewrite the script of social change ensuring new socialization and social mobility. For such social change activism, a teacher must recognize and appreciate the knowledge generated by the marginal group, that is giving voice to the group from the periphery. A teacher who is an agent of social change, starts this process in the classroom by giving the learners voice, helping them to find their voice and making classroom process participatory.

Check Your Progress 2

- 4) List out any three educational activities you would like to carry out in the local community.

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9.7 TEACHER AS STATE APPARATUS

Before State control in school education began, the teacher received remuneration from the parents of the pupils, in kind or in cash. When school education came under the control of the State, the school teacher became a functionary of the State, working for a salary. Teaching became part of government service and teachers began to be considered as State apparatus by powers of dominance. Teachers have been summoned for State duties that have nothing to do with their profession and often at the cost of academic responsibilities and obligations but in recent past the judiciary has objected to such practices and also has forbidden State from deploying teachers for such duties. It is a common practice that teachers are asked to attend to electoral and census duties. This was a testimony to the status accorded to the school teacher's job as one of low ranking, that they can be asked to do a range of duties. This also meant, the State did not consider the school teacher's job as a specialized one. Teachers were also expected to carry out administrative duties in school. Their duties included admission, keeping records, distributing text books, sometimes fetching textbooks or any other material under any government scheme, for example, mid-day meal and such other jobs. In brief, the role definition of the school teacher underwent drastic change and the teacher became a State apparatus under the State control. Although, different Commissions have upheld the importance of the social status of teachers. For example, the Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) said:

We have already referred to the importance of the teacher's social status. There is a growing feeling that the lead in this matter should be taken by persons in high public positions who should show special recognition of the status and dignity of teachers and treat them not on the basis of their salary and economic status but on the importance of the nation-building work that is entrusted to them. ... They must also be consulted in all important matters pertaining to education so as to strengthen their sense of professional responsibility.

About the social status and morale of the teachers, the Education Commission (1964-66) noted:

The efficiency of the teaching profession and its contribution to national development in general and educational improvement in particular, will depend largely on its social status and morale.

In spite of the recommendations of Commissions from time to time, school teachers, even today, are treated as government servants at the disposal of bureaucracy.

9.8 LET'S SUM UP

Traditional role of teachers changed drastically with the advent of colonial education in India. School education came under the control of bureaucracy. More organized and structured school education came into existence. As a result, pre-designed curriculum, syllabi and textbooks began to play a central role in school education. Under the circumstances, teachers lost their autonomy and freedom to choose 'what to teach' and 'how to teach'. Examination also became an impersonal exercise to accommodate the structural functioning of school education. Under the bureaucratic system of school education, teachers were needed only for their expertise in teaching not for curriculum development or decision-making. Matters did not change even after independence. The bureaucratic control in school education continued. Teachers do not play any major role in curriculum planning and development. Textbook development by and large still remains a centralized activity where teachers do not play a major role, although both curriculum transaction and evaluation are influenced by the textbooks. However, teachers need not confine their role to 'covering' the

textbooks. Instead, through curriculum transaction, teachers must help students to use tools for meaning making and constructing reality. Teachers as professionals must constantly upgrade knowledge and skills and keep abreast with the new and changing world order. As instructional input, teacher organizes various learning experiences for the students. For effective learning, teacher plans and executes different instructional strategies. As mentors, teachers provide support environment to individual students and facilitate and help them to realize their potential and achieve goals. Teachers play a crucial role in the social process of change. Working with the community, teachers influence the process of change. They help and support the community in challenging and questioning retrograde practices and stereo-types and making way for change and a new social order.

9.9 UNIT END EXERCISES

- 1) Select a textbook of your choice. Critically examine the content and suggest what improvements can be made in terms of content, methodology and evaluation.
- 2) Conduct a survey in the local community and find out the areas in which educational intervention is needed for bringing about social change. Discuss and work out a detailed plan with local community authorities.
- 3) Discuss the importance of advanced training in teaching profession. How can Teachers' Association promote advanced training among school teachers?

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UNIT 10 TEACHING PROFESSION

Structure

- 10.1 Introduction
- 10.2 Objectives
- 10.3 Locating Education
 - 10.3.1 Major Components of Education
- 10.4 Defining Profession
- 10.5 Education Structures
- 10.6 Understand Education vis-à-vis Levels
 - 10.6.1 Teaching to Infants
 - 10.6.2 Teaching School Children
 - 10.6.3 Creating Learning Experience
 - 10.6.4 Teaching at Tertiary Level
 - 10.6.5 Open Distance Learning
- 10.7 Let's Sum Up
- 10.8 References and Suggested Readings

10.1 INTRODUCTION

The whole area of education from the pre-school to the doctoral level is generally covered under the definition of education. When we talk of teaching profession we have in mind all those who are involved in the process of teaching across various levels of education. As we discuss it will be realized that the competencies and expectations required from personnel involved in imparting education to various learner groups across levels would be different. At one level, it may be that more of skills are required rather than knowledge of a particular discipline, but at a different level more of discipline knowledge and less of skill in imparting education may be required.

As learners interested in the teaching profession you must be interested in knowing how teaching profession evolved and how are the roles defined for various professionals imparting education to various groups. In this unit, we will discuss some of the issues involving teaching profession.

10.2 OBJECTIVES

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

- explain the similarities and differences between teachers at different levels and sectors and expectations from them;
- define roles and responsibilities of teaching professionals at various levels of education; and
- explain the relationship between socio-economic developments and objectives of education.

10.3 LOCATING EDUCATION

Children have a natural tendency to learn. At the very young age, therefore, they have to be provided opportunities to play with materials and situations; and enable them to learn. At this stage learning is more of socialization through experiences in

family and other surroundings. This process of learning and education starts even before schooling begins. Later, when stages of education are created through schooling, more organized education is carried out. In the present schooling it is guided by the framework of curriculum which largely determines the role of teachers, and the skills and competencies required on their part to perform effectively.

Teacher's role may take different forms at various stages of education as the abilities of child develop as age increases. Knowledge of such development stages of children which the discipline of Psychology provides, help the teacher to understand children's growing abilities across age. This understanding is relevant for deciding preparation of teachers at various stages, and also systemic requirements for organizing education process.

Systemic requirements in education are of varied kind like planning, teacher preparation programmes, evaluation and assessment, management and organizational structures and community support.

In addition to the knowledge of psychology as mentioned above knowledge of other disciplines like philosophy, sociology, political process, economic conditions and social and cultural aspects are necessary to understand the domain of education, its process and more importantly its significance for society.

This requires knowledge of different areas as mentioned earlier. Of course, it has to be select disciplinary knowledge which facilitates understanding of education. For understanding education, it is necessary to recognize that education is futuristic. It aims at developing individuals and thereby transform society. In other words education seeks to identify human aspirations and lasting values in society. It is these determinants that decide what form education should take. Thus, the 'vision' of education and its development becomes a necessity to conceptualize education and its processes.

10.3.1 Major Components of Education

Education has primarily two main segments; one is: vision of education and its development; this should reflect the kind of people we like to have in the future society and what form the society should have tomorrow. Thus, vision of education and its development visualizes the social transformation of present society. Such a vision of education needs to be visualized and conceptualized collectively; and not individually.

The second segment of education is the process of education. This is the operational part of education of which teaching-learning is central. For organizing teaching-learning process, the role of teacher and participation of students is crucial. The role of teacher in this process is determined by the 'developmental considerations' that are visualized in the vision of education. For this purpose the teacher has to act as a professional to recognize his role as a facilitator of learning. The teacher has to create such teaching situations that the learner (student) participate in the process of teaching-learning in a way that he/she can create meaning of the situation and thereby learn. This should be an experience for the student, such that he/she feels that he/she is creating a meaning from this experience. In that sense, he/she is put to the path of learning through his/her own participatory efforts. Success of the teacher in making the student see a meaning in teaching is 'teaching profession' in which the teacher facilitates learning rather than transmitting knowledge to the student.

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) What qualifies one to be called a 'professional'?

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2) What is the 'vision' of education?

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3) What is the objective of teaching Psychology to teachers?

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10.4 DEFINING PROFESSION

Professionals require some sort of specialized knowledge and also skills which the group of people must possess to qualify them as distinctly different from others. Such knowledge/skills may depend on the type of activities they are required to perform. Such people who do not possess such specialized knowledge/skills would not be able to perform the expected job with refinement and expected levels of outcome. Normally, engineers, doctors, teachers, managers are called professionals. Now if we look at the definition we have given above of profession and contrast them with the job requirement and expectation of the professionals we have mentioned it can clearly be understood that the engineers, doctors, teachers, managers possess some specialized knowledge which will be a must for performing their tasks in a professional manner.

To look at more precisely at teachers teaching at the pre-primary or primary level we will find that they may engage the children for the given time but if he/she is not properly trained and qualified to manage children of this age group, he/she may not be able to inculcate the levels of learning, expected of such children in a given period of time. Quite often, it may not be very simple or easy to find the outcome to define professionals because those with knowledge and experiences may also be able to do similar job but in the long run perhaps the learners may not be able to conduct themselves in the manner expected of graduates of that system.

It may now be clearly understood that professionals are those who have specialized knowledge to carry out the assignment in a skilled manner with the expected levels of outcome. The professionals may acquire the relevant and desired knowledge and skills from more than one area but the consolidated outcome would clearly be of a different nature from all the areas from where the professional acquired knowledge. To explain it further it may be said that the sum total of information acquire by professionals from various areas would be much larger than the total information acquired by them in terms of performance. This speaks of their potential to deal with varied tasks and challenges with confidence and competence. That is why they are called professionals.

Check Your Progress 2

4) Why is education known as a process of change?

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5) How are concepts and theories of sociology relevant to education?

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6) What is 'Pedagogical knowledge'?

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10.5 EDUCATION STRUCTURES

Presently in India, as is the case of most other countries, education is organized in stages: Pre-School education, elementary, secondary and higher secondary and higher education (tertiary). At all these stages, there is a network of educational institutions which provide 'schooling' to learner groups. The substance and the process of schooling, are determined in the light of certain 'normative' dimensions and other aspects of development. And, by nature 'schooling; or education as such is society specific; and it evolves through time depending upon development needs, emerging individual aspirations and numerous factors and conditions that obtain in the society.

It may be helpful if we present some specific reference in the context our country, as to how:

- i) Education was largely through socialization in the family and the community. Even occupational skills and other attributes of social and personal life were acquired by individuals through socialization.
- ii) Also education got associated with factors like caste system, religion, economic status of family, etc.,
- iii) Gradually education spread to wider sections of society; yet it remained confined to private initiatives by individuals. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, education acquired a more structured form with its organization.

- iv) And, now we find it in the form of network of educational institutions at various stages of education.
- v) Attempts to universalize education has been aspired for a long time. Of late, the State has been entrusted the responsibility of reaching education to all through legislation known as the 'Right to Education Act'.

Moreover, education is provided not only in the form described above, from pre-school through secondary stage to higher education, which learners receive as formal education. There are other channels of education or schooling like distance education, open learning systems and other forms of non-formal education. These alternative channels of education have brought in several other structures of education. These structures have introduced greater flexibility in the organization of education in terms of its availability and other conditions like age of the learner and attendance in class room by him/her to entitle him/her to receive instruction and certification. We will discuss the Open Distance Learning (ODL) in detail in the following sections.

Also, due to developmental needs of individuals in their personal life and work situations, education has become more differentiated process and pursuit.

These characterizations of education have significantly shifted the focus of determining the substance of education, its structures and organization towards wider considerations that emerge from factors that operate at societal level. That is how, sociology as science of society has become a dominant area of knowledge in social science that contributes to understanding of education and its processes in socially relevant ways.

It is for the perspective outlines above with which education is to be viewed, that the concepts and theories in sociology become relevant knowledge components in education. However, for proper placement of these and their utilization in studies of pedagogy and education in general, it may be relevant to consider the following:

- i) Concepts in sociology, viz., equality, equity, acculturation, organizational structures etc are relevant; and they help in deconstructing educational situations and conditions therein. Similarly, theories of sociology offer explanations to educational process at macro level. These provide a broader framework in which micro situations in education can be viewed and conceptualized, and thus understood.
- ii) It is with the help of knowledge in sociology we recognize that learning 'mind' must not be separated from experience. Theoretical need is to connect thought, action, feelings and belief systems of the learners. Knowledge that emerges from this perspective is pedagogical knowledge. This offers a framework to view pedagogical process in a context of 'situated' learning. Such knowledge emerges when multiple knowledge components are meaningfully connected. In this endeavor sociological knowledge components are of great relevance. In that sense these are basic or foundational to knowledge in education. However, knowledge has a local as well as global character. '**Acculturation**' through education has been discussed in detail in Unit 6 already.
- iii) It is for the knowledge context in education delineated under (i) and (ii) above 'sociology of knowledge' as an area of study has emerged distinctly. It helps us to understand the relationship between 'thought' and 'society'. The knowledge components in this area are of significance to understand educational situations and their processes.
- iv) However, we need to recognize that knowledge in sociology is just one component that informs educational practice and its understanding. There are several other knowledge components that informs practice in education and

even pave the way for innovative practices to reconstruct education and its processes. Such knowledge components are drawn from psychology, epistemology, normative studies, political and economic consideration, etc. All these and many more knowledge considerations are brought to bear upon educational situations and their structures to view them collectively. It is such a collective understanding that is knowledge in education. Thus, it needs to be emphasized in instructional material that sociological knowledge like any other disciplinary knowledge component has its due role in generating knowledge in education. But it is only a part of the latter, and therefore limited.

- v) As a corollary of what is stated under (iv) above, theories relevant to education, are to be integrated with practice in education and collective conceptualization sought. In that sense endeavour of education needs to be taken with education perspective to offer meaningful understanding of 'actions' decision and process creations in education.

Further, it is due to this integral relationship between theory and practice, education is not unidirectional; instead it is bidirectional. While theories can be useful to reconstruct practice, practice in education can also help reconstructing theor-(ies). All studies in education, thus, have to be made in multidisciplinary framework which is determined by educational perspective of which 'action' is central.

- vi) Knowledge from sociology offers explanation and understanding of social phenomena related to education occurring at macro level. They provide framework for understanding educational process as it operates at micro level. Sociological concepts and theories, therefore, have to be rendered further to provide emerging 'implications' to understand educational practices and theories since sociology does not directly provide knowledge in education. Never needs to be recognized that 'implications' are important educationally as they provide conceptual support towards understanding educational process. But they must not be taken to be 'complete knowledge' in education. Knowledge in education is composite and collective of which sociological knowledge related to educational process is just a part, though quite relevant.
- vii) Education as an area of study has wide domain which has varied forms of knowledge and understanding. They manifest as knowledge, skills and insights. Their composite operation provides education an 'integrated domain of knowledge'.

10.6 UNDERSTAND EDUCATION VIS-À-VIS LEVELS

Let us first try to understand how similar or different is teaching at various levels of education. As has been often mentioned teaching to pre-school, primary, elementary, secondary, senior secondary or at the tertiary level and further than that supervising, research will definitely required different skills and competencies in the teachers. However, if we closely look at the process, it will be found that there is something common across sectors and levels of teaching. This commonality makes the profession of teaching cohesive group of professionals.

10.6.1 Teaching to Infants

We may begin by looking closely at the teachers who are involved in teaching/minding, pre-school/early school children. To our understanding such professionals may perhaps be required to understand child psychology and learning behaviour more than knowledge of any particular discipline and/or area. As young children at this stage explore the outside world and very quickly try to understand the system

and accordingly develop their own systems. They are perhaps more keen observers than grown ups.

In the earliest stage of child - called infant, there is no schooling as such. Yet, due to his natural tendency to learn, the child starts learning from environment with which he/she interacts innately. This learning is natural on learner's part. But others around him/her, namely, family members particularly mother, and other community members start their efforts to mould the child's learning towards chosen behaviour. This preference of behavior is determined largely by traditions of social life and other cultural practices. Thus, the child in his early stage starts learning naturally; yet he/she is molded to learn social practices by the family members and others. This process of making the learner acquire social behaviour and pick up relevant skills and practices, is educative in nature. It may be noted here that though the child starts with natural learning, the child is exposed to social learning from the earliest stage. The child, thus, in his/her early age receives education - 'socially preferred behaviour', through 'socialization'. In this process of education, created through socialization by mother and other caretakers of the child perform teaching role. This form of education is pre-school education. In this sense, this education is different from other forms of education provided through 'schooling'.

Let us try to understand this concept further. Young children' as we normally say are 'clean slate' and any script can be written on their slate. They keenly watch adults and quickly imbibe what adults do. Let us take the example of language. When children are born they are not able to speak any language but within no time they develop some sort of language to convey to their mother the message of hunger, uncomfortable feeling and so on. Soon they form other habits and develop a system of their own. The teacher at this stage perhaps requires in teachers more than anything else very refined habits to present a role model before children. Children would automatically internalize the habits and information the teachers present to them. This may not be considered teaching by some if we go by the process at higher level but this is also teaching keeping the learner group and expected output from the learners.

10.6.2 Teaching School Children

Later, education is provided in a more formal and organized way through 'schooling'. For this purpose 'schooling systems' have been created. There are visible in the form of schools - primary and upper primary (both together called elementary education), secondary and higher secondary, and higher education (also called tertiary). School systems are organized generally according to age levels of learners. While this is physical indicator, there are other criteria which determine the levels of education at these levels. These relate to mental development stages of children as their age increases; knowledge and skill development with increasing awareness and understanding; and social and cultural awareness, and formulation of their own ideas by learners. The school systems have been organized in consideration to the developmental stages of children and other purposive dimensions of their behavioural and competence related learning. It is these considerations that determined the formulation of the systems as well as their operational aspects, the systemic organization.

Also, the levels or stage of education thus created have certain differences and the similarities in terms of learner development, purposive aims of education, and the systemic roles and challenges faced in education process which have been briefly stated in the sections to follow. These are intended to lead to explication of professional aspect of educative process and its varied dimensions need conceptualization and understanding of professionalism required on the part of teachers to play their pedagogical role at different levels of education. Teaching profession may be viewed

in two main contexts. One relates to the curricular inputs to be provided to students through teaching. This refers to the suitability of curriculum at each stage of education. Second context of teaching profession relates to how the curricular inputs at each stage be dealt with through teaching-learning. This refers to the pedagogic inputs and the process of teaching learning created. The major concern here is to offer such pedagogic inputs that are most suitable to create teaching-learning environment for the stage of education. For this purpose, it is essential that those in teaching profession, namely, teachers should possess conceptual understanding of pedagogical approach and the potential of the inputting into teaching learning. Towards this understanding the teachers are provided pre-service teacher training; through which they are provided conceptual understanding of teaching – learning; role of the teacher therein; and learner participation in learning. This conceptual (theoretical) understanding is to be developed simultaneously with pedagogic experiences in real conditions. Such a process is expected to prepare a teacher in the making as a professional who has developed composite understanding of pedagogy; and, he/she is able to take pedagogic action decisions, and create appropriate situations to engage the learners to participate in the teaching-learning process. Through such engagements, the learners (students) should be able to make meaning of experiences they participate in.

This should result in learning which is his own creation as he engaged in relevant experiences, and made meaning from those. It is this outcome of 'meaningful experience' that is 'learning'.

10.6.3 Creating Learning Experience

It may be recognized here that such an understanding of pedagogical process is interdisciplinary in nature. For greater understanding of this interdisciplinary process, a few observations under the following section may be relevant.

'Learning' is an individual attribute. The student learns everything individually. Also, as stated earlier the child has natural tendency to learn. However, the learning abilities of the child increase with age. Piaget's theory of cognitive development in children from infant to adult is distinctly identified in four universal and consecutive stages:

- Sensory motor; at this stage between 0-2 years of age the child experiences his own world through senses and movement.
- At 2-7 years of age, the child is in pre-operational stage; has not mastered the ability of mental operations.
- At 7-11, the child learns concrete operations; learns best through hands – on 'discovery learning' while working with tangible objects.
- During 11 years of age to adulthood the child is able to think abstractly; develops hypothetical thinking skills such as induction and deduction abilities. He/she is able to solve problems and engage in complex thinking.

The theory of cognitive development in children clearly suggest the nature of abilities and the level of cognition at which learning activities can be pitched in pedagogical process for different age levels. Obviously it helps in organizing education process. Those in teaching profession need to understand the mental development stages of children, and utilize these development attributes in theme for organizing pedagogical process to ensure visioned development in them.

It needs to be appreciated here that Piaget's cognitive theory is formulated on psychological premises mainly. However, the pedagogical premises also require other considerations as well. One important consideration is that of 'social process' which brings in the social components.

Vygotsky viewed thinking as a characteristic not only of the child but of the child-in-social activities. He introduced the 'Zone of proximal development'. He suggests that the learner's meaning making is influenced by social context. Thus, it becomes necessary to see 'schooling' with a significant role to create the social context. This role is mainly performed by the teacher who facilitates cognitive learning by appropriate use of mental representations and problem-solving abilities. This needs to be practiced by the teacher through the use of information resources including inputs from other individuals. However, it needs to be appreciated that cognitive learning of this type will be developed in the children at appropriate stage when 'problem solving' and 'thinking about thinking' abilities are developed in them. It is for these features of pedagogy, that the professionals in teaching need to understand teaching learning on the part of learners (students) in the context of individual behaviour as well as social and cultural context; and, these be major considerations to determine his (teacher) role of facilitating learning.

It may be appreciated from what is discussed in earlier points, that the curriculum structures and the pedagogical activities and other engagements at different stages are determined by the very abilities of the students at the level of education, and the teachers' role that should facilitate student's learning. In this connection a few more observations are made below. Hopefully, these would help you to view knowledge and awareness, and skills and competence, as well as value orientation as objectives of teaching which are placed in the perspective of education and its epistemological context.

- i) At the pre-school stage, children are provided opportunities, mainly in the form of play-way activities, which nourish their natural tendency to learn about whatever is around them. The mother, and others in the family act as promoter of child's learning and developmental growth. In a way the child at this stage is cared more for his physical and mental growth through senses and movements. The caretaker has to sensitise about the child's developmental stage, and accordingly he/she has to organize his activities such that the child is helped.
- ii) At elementary stage the child is prepared for mental operations and discovery learning. In this context, it may be noted that our teacher preparation programmes do not show sufficient sensitivity to make distinction between teaching at middle stage (upper primary) and secondary. Teaching community should be prepared to organize pedagogical process distinctly at two stages mentioned above.

At secondary stage, children are offered varied courses compulsorily. The whole purpose is to develop children in respect of knowledge and other competence in such a way that they get a wider context of knowledge and awareness. This is expected to prepare the child to develop his mental potential in a wider context.

In contrast to this wider context of knowledge at the higher secondary stage the knowledge and other competencies are provided through teaching in a more specialized way. Disciplinary knowledge and its learning are the main concerns pedagogically.

These distinctions are clearly made in the curricula. However, this distinction and pedagogical sensitivity for this purpose is not reflected through teacher training programmes. In fact there is a common training programme for teachers at middle school stage, secondary and higher secondary stage. Teaching profession programmes should take care of such academic differences in knowledge components; and the teacher preparation programmes be developed with corresponding changes. Such an approach may prepare more competent and effective teaching professionals.

At Higher Education stage, the approach to pedagogical attempts have to be still different for the following features of knowledge and competencies. The studies at higher education are specialized no doubt. Teaching has to ensure it. For this purpose more attempts have to be made for engaging students in self-efforts with a view to enabling them in sharpening their view of knowledge. Activities like those which would make them 'think about thinking', reflect about knowledge, and seeking connectivity's in knowledge domains in varied disciplines and other areas.

For such purpose, it may be a good idea to review teaching programmes and assess the teaching potential of current programmes for teachers. In fact, at present there is no pre-service programmes for teachers at tertiary levels. These are in-service programme for teacher development. Review for such assessment, perhaps should involve the teachers who organize these programmes and those who have participated in them.

10.6.5 Open Distance Learning

As discussed earlier, education has been organized at different levels - from Primary-Upper Primary Secondary, Higher Secondary, to the Tertiary. These stages of education have been organized according to age levels of children. Also, education at all these stages have been organized as formal systems for which regular full-time attendance in school has been obligatory on the part of students and teachers. In fact, there has been a belief that the children could learn and be educated only under direct supervision by the teachers; and the knowledge be transmitted to them by the teachers personally.

However, as the demand for education increased innovative ideas which could generate alternative system for providing education became a felt need in India specially after Independence (1947). Such a devised system was 'correspondence' education. Written Learning Material was sent to the students by post. Students could read that and attempt to learn through self-efforts. Additional help was provided by the organizing agency to arrange lecture, discussion and other assistance like library facility. The correspondence Education System though instituted in 1960's, remained questionable for its organitional viability and pedagogy quality. Main reasons for this suspect systemic components were: one, traditional mode of imparting education to which both students and guardians were used to for long; second reason was the quality of resources that were available to run the system particularly to meet the learning requirements. These requirements for providing appropriate learning environment following measures were effected to evolve the system in progressive developmental ways:

- Correspondence courses were started in universities first.
- Select courses like humanities were offered initially.
- Policy documents like NPE and Planning Commission emphasized increased use of educational technologies.
- Most significantly, correspondence system of education received serious attention to assess its potential and social relevance. Reviews of these evolving systems of education and other development research scrutiny of this system resulted into creation of discourse which led to deliberations at various levels.

Gradually the correspondence education systems were turned into Open and Distance Learning system. To support the ODL system national level institutions like the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), State Open Universities, Institutions to promote use of technology in teaching-learning became continuous and sustained endeavor to develop education in India. Concurrently, corresponding efforts were

made to develop open learning systems for school education. This endeavor started with Open School in 1979 as part of Central Board of Secondary Education. Gradually, the system developed through a nation wide network of institutions, namely, National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and the counter parts of State Level Open Schools.

Now the Open and Distance Education Systems is spread out nation wide with coverage of all stages of education. Against this background, it may be relevant to make a few observations which have significance in respect of teaching-profession in the context of national development.

- i) Learners in ODL systems are comparatively older than those in formal system. Mostly they are adults. Therefore, teaching-profession for the learners in ODL has to be viewed mainly in the context of 'adult learning for developing and offering learning inputs to learners'.
- ii) Learners in ODL are already either employed or looking for the same. The main purpose of their education is their own development in terms of work skills and competence. The curriculum and teaching profession in ODL therefore should be geared to life related and work oriented skills and their utilization aiming at competence development.

Also, the learners in ODL have comparatively greater perceptual understanding due to their age and experience, of their problems of life and living in social and cultural contexts. The role of the Teaching-professionals' or tutors and other personnel in this system accordingly is different to the traditional system..

- iii) The curricular and pedagogic features in ODL system as above observations would suggest are geared to competence development as required in individual's life situations. Also, this system more directly addresses to macro level social issues like 'learning society' to promote national development.

This system (ODL) is more directly concerned with these issues of national and social development. Therefore, this system should develop its own teaching-profession personnel' and their role with its own standards and criteria rather than comparing ODL system with systems of formal education. It may be recalled that such comparisons were made initially (1970s) to prove the worth of open system. Now, it is not required. On the contrary such a comparison may hinder development of ODL.

Check Your Progress 3

- 7) What is most important in creating a teaching learning environment?

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- 8) What considerations should determine teacher's roles?

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- 9) What components do you think should comprise pre-service training of teachers at tertiary level?

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10.7 LET'S SUM UP

People belonging to various areas where specialized knowledge and skills are required are known as professionals. These professionals in turn, through personal interaction and demonstration develop in new entrants to the profession similar skills. In the teaching profession, major expectations are understanding of the learning capabilities of learners with different backgrounds which affect their abilities and also behaviour.

The teacher also has the added responsibility of changing the society with the future in mind. Most often, individuals as well as societies like to maintain status-quo but it is the job of the teaching professionals to keep striving for change, rather change for the better. In the process of change teaching professionals have to face challenges of varied types - academic and organization for which they have to be prepared.

At times the personal understanding of teachers may not match with the law of the land. In such situations teachers have to strike a balance between personal understanding and national agenda. However, teaching profession is full of challenges and responsibilities, as discussed in this unit.

10.8 REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS

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UNIT 11 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION

Structure

- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Objectives
- 11.3 Understanding Community Participation
 - 11.3.1 Defining 'Community'
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 - 11.4.4 Village Education Committees (VEC) and Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
- 11.5 Problems and Issues
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11.1 INTRODUCTION

Education is a social process. The participation of a community or a social group in the education process is a precondition. The idea of community participation in education is not new to the Indian society. Since the very early days, schools in the forms of 'pathshalas' and 'madrasas' emerged as community institutions. The society transmitted its knowledge and skills through these institutions. However with growing formalization and governmentalization of education, the linkage between community and school has weakened leading to widening gap. The gap became very wide when modern formal education in the form of schools was established externally by the British colonial administration without any involvement of local community members. The community participation in modern formal education, therefore, has been main concern for the policy makers in the post independence period. National educational policies have been formulated recommending active involvement of local community members in the functioning of educational institutions. For example, the National Policy on Education (1986) recommended the establishment of an appropriate institutional framework at the district and sub-district levels, such as, District Board of Education and Village Education Committees (VEC) for greater involvement of local community members in the management of elementary education. Furthermore the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments have entrusted roles and responsibilities to the Panchayati Raj bodies in management and control of elementary education at local level.

This Unit deals with the concept and practice of community participation in education. As indicated in the structure of the unit; first, it explains the concepts of 'Community' and 'Participation' independently before analyzing the overall theme of community participation in education. After providing conceptual background, the unit identifies certain major community structures, which have been created especially for ensuring community involvement in the functioning of schools. The unit also critically examines their functions. At the end, the unit raises certain contemporary problems and issues relating to community participation in education, which can be scanned through different perspectives and theoretical frameworks.

11.2 OBJECTIVES

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

- define community and identify community structures in social cultural contexts;
- develop an understanding of the role of community in education; and
- analyze the problems and issues related to community participation in education.

Let's begin our discussion by trying to understand the very concept of community participation in our social context.

11.3 UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Before we analyze and examine community participation in education, it is crucial to understand the meaning of the terms 'community' and 'participation', as both the terms are in popular and varied use without specific meaning attached to them. In the following section, we would try to define the two terms.

11.3.1 Defining 'Community'

The term 'community' has been used in various ways with a lot of arbitrariness. They use it to denote a group of people occupying a geographical area. But not all the social groups can be termed as 'community'. When individuals live together in a common territory, have the feeling of mutuality, develop organized interaction among them, it is called the community spirit. The community is a social group characterized by the community spirit. The examples are a village, a town, a city etc. The community, therefore, is an expression of the unity of common life of a group of people. In other words, the life of members of a community is wholly lived in it and there is very little they need to share with outside.

Some of the early sociologists such as Tonnies (1887), Durkheim (1893), Redfield (1955) and MacIver (1937) who have made important contribution in developing understanding of the concept of 'community', have highlighted the features by using typologies or dichotomizing 'pre-industrial and industrial' 'rural and urban' 'primary and secondary' etc.

Community	Association	
<i>Gemeinshaft</i>	<i>Gessellschaft</i>	(Tonnies)
Mechanical Solidarity	Organic Solidarity	(Durkheim)
Primary	Secondary	(Cooley)

The sociologists have characterized 'community' as little, distinctive, harmonious, homogeneous and self-sufficient in comparison to other groups. The typologies continue to dominate in highlighting the main features of community. The typologies indicated, although useful in highlighting features, are simplistic and do not show the nature and extent of diversity in different types of communities which may be found in our real life.

The use of the term '**community**' for homogenous, harmonious and self-contained social group is often criticized as construct of conservation ideology. To several social scientists, even the pre-modern communities were neither homogenous nor harmonious. In the present context, the community is obviously not a homogenous community in absolute sense. The features indicated in the above typologies should be seen more in terms of degree rather than as absolute categories. The nature and

extent of homogenous and harmonious character of the community would vary from one social group to another.

The conceptualization of community in the Indian social context in the forms of villages and group life has been influenced by the categorization practised during the colonial period. In the post-Independence development discourse, the community as a concept has assumed a central place. The government while pursuing its planned development, implemented the Community Development Programme (CDP) whereby the concept of community was applied to the village. The village as 'imagined community' (as harmonious and egalitarian) under this programme never became a reality. In fact community reinforced the division and hierarchy around which the villages were traditionally organized. In recent decades, there has been revival of focusing the rural community for development programmes under the overall decentralization agenda. The shift is from community development to community participation in development. The latter is much more limited and less ambitious than the former. The main purpose behind the initiative is to cover those who have been left out of development. The participatory approach therefore is consensual, does not address the issue of empowerment properly. The concept of community, thus, has been changing as per the needs of development and administration whereby the communities are reduced to a group of beneficiaries, stake holders or target populations in the framework of their projects. Therefore for understanding community, it is essential to identify the context within which it is to be analyzed.

11.3.2 Community Participation

Like 'community', the term '**participation**' is also used in different ways. In simple terms, by participation we mean 'taking part in' or 'involvement of people' in any meaningful activity. The term 'participation' should be viewed as context specific expression based on the degree of involvement of people, to bring certain changes with the basic objective of involvement of people, to bring certain systemic changes with the basic objective of bringing forth development and improvement in the quality of life of the participants. The involvement could be for health, education, social security etc (Govinda et al, 2003). The UN described community participation as 'the creation of opportunities to enable members of a community and the larger society to actively contribute to and influence the development process to share equitably in the fruits of development.' The definition does not answer questions as to 'who participates?' 'what participation does it entail?' and 'how can it be promoted?'. The UN Economic and Social Council Resolution (1929) states that 'participation requires the voluntary and democratic involvement of the people in a) contribution to the development efforts, b) sharing equitably in the benefits derived from and, decision making in respect of setting goals, formulating policies and planning and implementation of economic and social development programmes.' The characterization of participation can be summarized as involving a) people or groups b) adherence to certain set of rules, customs and tradition and c) empowerment and adjustments between individual and group behaviour.

The notion of participation can be approached from different theoretical perspectives. According to the Functionalist Perspective adhered by the state and espoused by the politicians and administrators, participation means taking part passively in consultations planning, execution and benefit sharing. In this case, participation is primarily based on the notion of service and that it can be effectively rendered with the help of government. This participation is done formally by setting up of committees and bodies for village level participation and bringing about co-operation between village level functionaries of government and also non-government functionaries. According to Marxist or Conflict perspective, state's authority is coercive and oppressive in nature and therefore cannot be conducive to any participation from the community. Mobilization and participation of the masses is often perceived as a threat by the

state, as the state acts in the interests of the upper ruling class. According to it, proper community participation will emerge automatically with communalism, once the oppressive and the repressive influence of the state is removed. Furthermore according to Interactive Perspective, participation occurs when people participate in joint analysis, which leads to action plans and the strengthening of existing institution or formation of local institutions on their terms. The groups take control or ownership over local decisions and people have a stake in maintaining structures and practices. People participate by taking initiatives independent of external institutions to change the existing system.

From the above discussion, diversity in the concept and practice of community participation may be highlighted in the following ways:

- a) *Participation can be both passive and active:* In passive participation, people participate by being told what is going to happen or has already happened. For example, participation may be used to explain very rudimentary levels of consultation between agency staff and community members. Such consultative process does not concede any sharing in decision making and professionals are under no obligation to take on board peoples' lives. People participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to projects, which can involve the development or promotion of externally initiated social organization. On the other hand, people may actively participate by providing information, decision making, planning and execution and various other activities.
- b) *Participation can be legislated or self-mobilized:* Following constitutional provision, several participatory structures have been created to promote various forms of participation. For example, the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments have recommended for setting up of local bodies and for their involvement in providing educational and other services. On the other hand, sometimes people participate by taking initiatives on their own, independent of any external system or change agents. A number of movements or self-help initiatives would fall under this category.
- c) *Participation by providing information or material contribution:* Further, sometimes people participate by providing information (such as in research) and do not have the opportunity to influence the proceedings as the findings of the research are neither shared nor checked for accuracy. On the other hand, community contribution in the forms of labour, cash or kind is also indicative of the community participation. In various programmes, community contribution is sought in the form of matching grants.

11.4 COMMUNITY STRUCTURES AND FUNCTIONS IN EDUCATION

The community participation in education can be understood properly by examining the existing community structures and their functions in education. In the post Independent India, there have been constant efforts in terms of new policies and programmes for promoting community involvement in education including literacy. In this case, the Constitution of India has played an important role in providing direction and guidelines for seeking community involvement in education. The following sub-sections of this unit specify the constitutional provision and policy measures and examine important grassroots level community structures and their functions.

11.4.1 Policy Framework for Community Participation in Education

The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts have envisaged introduction of democratically elected bodies at the district, sub-district and panchayat levels. The Acts also provide for adequate representation of women, Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST). The 11th Schedule of the Constitution among other things entrusts the Panchayat bodies with the responsibility of looking after 'education including primary and secondary school, technical training and vocational education, adult and non-formal education, library and cultural activities.' Following the Constitutional Amendment Acts, it has been made mandatory for the states to constitute, through legislation, elected local self government at district and sub-district levels in both rural and urban areas, to plan and administer development activities in their respective jurisdictions. Consequently the states have taken legislative actions to constitute Panchayat structures as local elected government bodies and have initiated decentralization of governance with respect to education, health and infrastructure.

The National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 and Programme of Action (POA) revised in 1992 have emphasized the importance of decentralizing planning and management of education at all levels and people's participation in education. In pursuance of the Policy and Programme of Action, the state governments have taken steps to set up structures for decentralized planning and management. It is expected that as part of the decentralization, local communities through appropriate bodies would get involved in improving the functioning of schools. The formation of Village Education Committee (VEC) and various other participatory structures and their involvement in education is a result of the constitutional commitment and policy recommendations.

11.4.2 Relationship between Panchayati Raj Institution and Community Structures

As explained above, the Constitution (73rd and 74th Amendment) Act 1992 has accorded statutory status to local self-government known as Panchayati Raj system and has entrusted it with the tasks of looking after primary and secondary education. The CABE Committee on Decentralized Management of Education suggested constitution of Village Education Committee (VEC) at the village level and the Panchayat Standing Committees on education at intermediate and district levels. The committee delineated the roles and functions, organizational and administrative support for VECs and preparation and training requirement for them. The states have formulated guidelines for formation and involvement of the VECs in elementary education with adequate representation to the *Panchayat* bodies. Since the VEC is considered to be an integral part of the overall *Panchayat* administration of elementary education as envisaged under the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, it is important to understand the linkage between Panchayat institutions and VECs in terms of the following:

- Representation of the Panchayat members in VEC and other community fora;
- Roles and functions performed by the Panchayat members in primary education;
- Statutory provisions and actualization; and
- Networking of Panchayat and other governmental/non-governmental bodies.

11.4.3 Community Structures in Education

Community participation has been translated into reality with the creation of various grassroot level structures such as, Village Education Committees (VEC), School Management Committee (SMC), Mother Teacher Association (MTA), Parent Teacher Association (PTA), Mothers Associations and Women Motivator Group (WVG). For understanding community structures and their functions in depth, we would concentrate on analysis of VEC and PTA in the context of:

- Nature and composition of the community fora (VEC, SMC, etc.),
- Formation processes involved,
- Areas and extent of their operation, and
- Roles and responsibilities.

Under various educational programmes such as District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), added emphasis has been given to the formation and involvement of VECs and PTAs in elementary education with specific roles and functions. The VECs and PTAs are the school level community structures set up mainly for improving the functioning of schools. They have representation from both the school and the village community. Although VECs and PTAs have been set up for the schools in all the states, one may notice variation across different states in their nature and composition, roles and responsibilities, etc.

11.4.4 Village Education Committees (VEC) and Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

Village Education Committee is a village/habitation level body set up through government order entrusted with responsibilities of administering educational programmes and looking after schools or other educational institutions at the village level. The committee usually has average 10 to 15 members with representation from the women, the disadvantaged groups such as SC and ST, elected panchayat members, head teacher and others. The nature and composition of the state varies from state to state, as each state has formulated its guideline for setting up such committees. This is also considered as one of the sub-committee under Panchayat system. The CABE Committee highlighted some of the functions of the VEC as follows:

- generation and sustenance of awareness among the village community ensuring participation of all segments of population;
- developing teacher/instructor and community partnership to oversee and manage the effective and regular functioning of the schools and centres; and
- vesting it with appropriate statutory and financial authority.

Some of the centrally sponsored programmes such as the DPEP and SSA have specified its roles and functions and have sought greater involvement in planning and implementing the programmes. Some of the functions currently being performed by the VEC under SSA are as follows:

- ensuring enrolment of all the children in the age group of 6 to 14 years;
- monitoring school activities for retention and providing good quality education;
- paying special attention to the educational needs of the girls and other disadvantaged groups;
- to improve facilities in the school, e.g. compound wall, new classrooms, toilet facilities, repair and maintenance etc; and on the whole
- to involve community with the school.

Thus at the village level, VEC is a community organization which assesses the requirements of elementary education and necessary schooling facilities required in the village. It identifies problems and works out solutions so as to be able to chalk out a feasible plan for the village. Village/habitation being the smallest unit of micro-planning, the VEC has an important role in preparing educational plan and universalizing elementary education.

Like VECs, for ensuring co-operation of the parents of the children attending the school, PTAs have been formed. In some states, alongside the PTAs, Mother Teacher Association (MTA) has also been formed to seek co-operation of the mothers of the children attending the school. This is a smaller body as its membership is confined to the parents of enrolled children only. This also gives adequate representation to the disadvantaged groups and looks after the functioning of the schools. Some of the functions performed by the PTA/MTAs are as follows:

- assisting the teachers in conducting school activities;
- helping the teachers in conducting door to door survey work;
- assisting the teachers in pursuing the parents of un-enrolled children for sending them to school; and
- providing feedback to the teachers about educational progress of their children.

Besides, in some states (such as Madhya Pradesh) the PTAs have been assigned larger responsibilities for example construction of school buildings/classrooms, repair and maintenance, etc.

On the whole, the VECs, PTAs and various other community structures have been created to forge and strengthen linkage between the community and the school. The states have been conducting orientation and training for the members of these bodies for performing their tasks efficiently and effectively. With the help of the orientation programmes, the VEC members have been able to conduct activities such as, micro planning, construction of school buildings and classrooms, day to day monitoring of school activities, repair and maintenance of school buildings, students' and teachers' attendance, etc. The recent educational programmes have emphasized the role of VEC, PTA and other such bodies, which draw membership from both the school and the community. However the effectiveness of the VEC depends upon the awareness and motivation of the members and technical and resource support provided to them.

11.5 PROBLEMS AND ISSUES

The communities in India are at different stages of socio-economic development and educational attainment. Despite over five decades of planned development, so far only 65.38 per cent population of India is literate and around half of the female population remain illiterate even today (2001 Census). The elementary education in India is characterized by incidence of low enrolment and high dropout rate. Besides, quality remains a major issue at all levels of education. However the nature and extent of the problem varies from state to state, region to region and from community to community. Due to differential socio-economic background, the communities respond to education and developmental programmes differentially. The problems and issues relating to differential community participation in education can be explained in terms of the following:

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

The nature and extent of community participation depends upon the level of awareness among the communities. A large number of communities, which are socially disadvantaged and economically backward, have indifferent and apathetic attitude towards modern formal education. These groups need to be awakened and motivated for education. For mobilizing these communities, several strategies have been

formulated and implemented under different programmes. However, the implementation of mobilization activities does not automatically lead to community participation. For community participation, it is necessary that participatory structures be created, as have been done through formation of Village Education Committees (VEC), PTA/MTA, SMCs etc. It is to be noted again that mere formation and functioning of these local level bodies does not ensure community participation. It is the community ownership in which decision-making is entrusted to the community members; one may visualize proper community participation. The following sections will, therefore, analyze different issues related to different forms of community participation.

11.5.1 Community Mobilization and Participation

In order to promote environment-building activities, initiatives such as *Kala jatha*, *Nukkad natak*, *Bal mela* etc. have been made. Besides, for media campaigns to enhance community participation, the states have followed various mobilizing activities including radio and TV programmes, production of video and audio cassettes, printing of newsletters and pamphlets, etc. for disseminating information about benefits of education. Besides micro-planning was also undertaken for mobilization as well as promoting intensive interaction and participation among the community members. Teachers and community members trained for this purpose took up micro-planning in the form of activities such as social and resource mapping, identification of out-of-school children, development of a village education register, village education plan etc in different states under DPEP and SSA. Besides, local culture and tradition along with institutionalized structures have been used in various forms for optimizing the impact of mobilization strategies. The advocacy campaigns used localized themes/contexts. Moreover the programmes also modified the nature and scale of mobilization, keeping in mind their requirements. For example, the Total Literacy Campaigns (TLC) relied more on environment building through *kala jathas* than other modes.

The mobilization campaigns on the whole, are imbued with the goal of ensuring the efficient delivery of welfare inputs. The activities are mainly target oriented, intended for the poor and disadvantaged. Under the community mobilization process, although the communities are visualized as both the provider and consumer, in reality it is the state, which dictates what is to be provided as per its own guidelines. The community members have little say in deciding what are provided to them in terms of educational inputs. The mobilization strategies that follow the functionalist perspective do not take radical posture with regard to injustices related to the existing social order. One may notice such cases, if we examine the nature and extent of state sponsored advocacy campaigns. Some of the states such as Kerala, West Bengal did choose radical form of advocacy campaigns, and achieved success in eliciting active participation in initial years. The current trend is not very encouraging. The soft agenda followed in their campaigns hardly induce the communities for active involvement in educational development. The campaigns are getting routinized and monotonous. The mobilization initiative will achieve only partial success, unless it is linked to the systemic issues.

11.5.2 Community Participation and Empowerment

The analysis of community participation in education would remain incomplete, if we do not relate it to the question of 'community empowerment'. Does 'community participation' ensure community empowerment? Will empowerment of the local political bodies ensure genuine representation of the traditionally excluded community? In recent years, there has been a shift in the debate on community involvement in education from participation to empowerment. Mere participation does not necessarily lead to community empowerment. It is also argued that community participation is a means to community empowerment. That is, when people are entrusted with roles and responsibilities within participatory structures, it is assumed that such participation

would become the means of empowerment. Panchayati Raj could be viewed as a mechanism for promoting such involvement of people with community interests.

The notion of empowerment is integral to the concept of participatory development. Here community participation implies participation of the disempowered, which would include those who have not had access as a community. The participation provides opportunities for power sharing and distribution of resources. In this case, the state has an important role to play for protection of interests of the poor and disadvantaged. It is often pointed out that the current practice of community participation in education through VEC and PTA does not address the issue of empowerment adequately, as the local bodies reflect the local power structure. The panchayats are no longer community institutions, they are political bodies dominated by party interests (Acharya, 2002). The electoral process has brought forth the political interests to the fore. The analysis of the process of decision-making with regard to devolving money and power in these participatory structures explains the case. While emphasizing the need for community empowerment, Raina (2003) explains that

....though participation must begin at the local level with communities, a project cannot end there. Whether we would like it or not, the state continues to be a major player, and we want it to be a major player if education is to be universalized or sustained livelihoods for the vast majority of poor have to be ensured. Local empowering action perhaps requires a strong state, particularly in times when the dominant market mechanisms can marginalize the poor further without state-mediated safeguards. If the community participation is to advocate the social empowerment of the poor, it must also, therefore, advocate their political empowerment.

11.5.3 Decentralization and Community Participation

Decentralization of educational governance is one of the major strategies for inducing greater community involvement in education. According to 73rd and 74th Amendments of the Indian Constitution, the panchayats have been entrusted with the responsibility of implementing compulsory and free elementary education. Panchayat system, therefore, is the main framework through which decentralization of educational governance is currently being pursued. The basic question arises whether simply handing over basic education to Panchayat bodies will ensure popular participation. The Kerala experience, which involved integrated efforts of the Panchayat system and NGOs in achieving universal literacy and elementary education is an encouraging example of the decentralization initiative. However at other places, the strategy has been partially effective or not effective at all. One of the main reasons has been its halfhearted implementation. It is often argued that panchayat system does not alter the power base at local level, in fact it becomes part of the existing power structure. In many states, panchayats have become party panchayats, even though formally elected by the people (Acharya, 2002). The political interference of the parties has destroyed the village solidarity. The spirit of spontaneity has given way to structured and pre-determined participation.

The community participation in education has a close linkage with decentralization, as so far most of the participation discourse currently centre around it. It is often contended that community participation and empowerment will emerge from decentralization of educational governance. Although panchayat system has not been able to play effective role, this does not mean that the decentralization in education has failed. Decentralization can be of different types; a) deconcentration, b) devolution and c) delegation. Most of the decentralization measures which have been implemented are either in the category of deconcentration or delegation of roles and responsibilities. There are rare cases where devolution of money and power has taken place. The careful examination of the decentralization through panchayat system would explain the case. Not much financial and administrative powers have been given to the

panchayat bodies. Furthermore VEC-PRI interface, which was recommended by the new education policy and constitutional amendments, has yet to take definite shape and perform effective role in universalizing and improving quality of elementary education. Education being classified under the Concurrent List it is left to states in formulating policy and programmes.

11.6 LET'S SUM UP

From the above analysis it follows that the community participation in education is much deeper than usually assumed. Although the concept of community participation in education is not new to Indian society, the current and emerging forms of community participation in education demands a separate analysis as provided in this unit. The unit explains the nature and diversity of the concept of community participation in education. The participation can be viewed along a spectrum with passive participation at one end and self-mobilization at the other. Passive participation is where the people are told what to do. On the other hand, self-mobilization is where the local people are in total command (Kumar, 2002). Participation can be treated both as means and end. It becomes means when opportunities are created for people to get involved and later become empowered. In certain cases, participation becomes end in itself, when people participate in particular activities mechanically and in ritualistic manner.

The community participation in education in India can be termed mostly as legislated participation, as people's participation are being promoted through constitutional provisions and programme guidelines. Following Constitutional Amendments, there have been concerted efforts on the part of central and state governments to decentralize educational governance through Panchayat Raj institutions. The VECs with representation from both the school and community have been formed. These bodies are getting strengthened under educational programmes such as, DPEP and SSA. However, the community participation process in education is at the nascent stage and has a long way to go. The current practice of community participation is limited in comparison to community development programmes implemented during the initial phase of post Independence period. The main objective of participatory development is to increase the involvement of socially and economically marginalized people in making decisions regarding their own lives. The assumption is that participatory approach empowers people with the skills and confidence to analyze their situation, reach consensus, make decisions and take action, so as to improve their circumstances. The community participation in education is also intended to focus on the disadvantaged and needy people.

11.7 REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS

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