

Unit 5

Education, Knowledge and Power

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Learning Objectives

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

- relationship existing between knowledge and power;
- political, economic and cultural influences on education; and
- cultural and economic reproduction of inequality.

5.1 Introduction

The concept of an educated person is socially and historically determined. The characteristics of an educated individual may vary from one time period and from one social milieu to another. A person considered educated in one time period and in a particular society will be different from the other one. There is a possibility that the most learned person in one society may be counted among the ignorant persons in some other society. For Mannheim (see Kumar 1992), not just the characteristics and attributes of an educated man, but even the aims of education can also be grasped historically. This is despite the fact that common sense suggests that the aims of education would be unchanging. Mannheim points out that the educational aims are shaped by history and that they are known to change from one society to another and from one period to another. John Eggleston (see Kumar 1992) draws an important distinction between the 'received' and the 'dynamic' perspective on curriculum. The 'received' perspective has an *a priori* view of knowledge, and does not question the legitimacy and the authenticity of knowledge while the 'dynamic' perspective negates the commonsensical unchallenging understanding of education in favouring all forms of knowledge.

This unit is based on the premise that categories like education, knowledge and truth cannot be treated as unchanging. Rather, they depend on the social context. In the course of the unit, you will come to appreciate how the delineation of these categories changes according to the power structure prevalent in society. The important question here is not what should be taught to children so that they qualify to be called educated. Studies that do not consider curricular knowledge to be neutral fall under the purview of the sociology of knowledge. In the sociology of knowledge, to understand why a particular kind of knowledge is considered relevant in the syllabus as compared to the other one, social scientists look at the interests that are served by its inclusion. They also see the social group deriving benefit from the inclusion of a particular form of knowledge. Here we seek to unravel the economic, political and cultural reasons to provide sociological understanding of knowledge. This unit provides a sociological understanding of 'knowledge' and 'power'. Some of the crucial questions at this juncture are why in a particular society a specific kind of knowledge is considered worth acquiring? Why certain kinds of knowledge are selected while other kinds of knowledge are eliminated? What are the principles of this selection and elimination, and who decides

which knowledge deserves more representation in the texts? To develop a fuller understanding of the issue, we will look at the political nature of education, and how educational institutions play an active role in perpetuating inequality in society.

5.2 Content of Education: What is Worth Knowing?

Sociology of education does not deal with the idea of 'truth' or 'true knowledge' as there is nothing like true, absolute, eternal knowledge which remains the same in all time periods and in all the societies. It deals with what is perceived as knowledge in a given social milieu. At the outset, Krishna Kumar (1992) raises the basic question of what counts as knowledge. What is the knowledge that is considered to be worthwhile, enough to be imparted through educational curriculum? For him, the knowledge that is imparted through school texts is not naturally sacrosanct, for it acquires importance because of prevailing power structures. It is pertinent to note that whatever counts as knowledge in a particular social milieu is through an act of deliberation. The process of treating one kind of knowledge as valid and worth acquiring at the expense of some other kind of knowledge is not a natural or rational one, neither is it determined by the intrinsic worth of that knowledge. The process of selection of one kind of knowledge and the elimination of another kind is consciously done in order to favour one section of the society at the expense of other. As Kumar (1992:8) puts, "What counts as knowledge is a reconstruction, based on the selection made under given social circumstances". The process of selection does not happen in a vacuum, but takes place in a social context, for the benefit of one group. The knowledge and the education which constitute the curriculum in schools are constructed by a few educated elites.

The two important processes through which a particular kind of knowledge is assigned importance are selection and representation. Out of the total body of knowledge only a part is selected for dissemination. The selection of this portion of knowledge is contingent on social processes and social relations. It is largely guided by the power structure of society. The knowledge that we finally get cannot be seen as irrespective of the social, political and economic facets of society. When we study knowledge in the context of these social, political and economic realms, only then can we understand the intricate relationship between power and knowledge.

The knowledge that is identified as 'valid' depends on the power dynamics. Economic opportunities play a determining role in defining knowledge and skills. The production of certain knowledge is not an inadvertent educational process. It is a part of the process of gaining wider control exercised on the masses. The Indian Civil Service in the twentieth century, for instance, was a product of a colonial project. Similarly, the emphasis on English and science served as a means for colonizing India. The British used education to colonize Indians under the pretext of civilizing them. This project of civilizing and controlling the masses continued even after Independence. For Kumar, before Independence, 'enlightened outsiders' were controlling natives, while after Independence 'educated Indians' were controlling their own masses. The system of education is known to operate under the influence of the economy, politics and culture and then determines which knowledge is worth disseminating out of all.

We have already made the point that in our educational curriculum the selection of any particular knowledge is not based on its intrinsic worth. Educational institutions cannot be seen as a neutral, secluded enterprise of society. There are various economic, political, and cultural reasons because of which particular forms of knowledge are selected. Economic factors determine the utility of knowledge in the present day. Knowledge itself plays an important role in the

economy of society. It stands between the family and the job market. It prepares and equips students to secure economic rewards. As the economic rewards that come in life are largely dependent on these educational institutions, social meanings, cultural capital and technical knowledge are differentially distributed by the educational institutions regardless of their ostensible democratic mission. The knowledge which is likely to provide well-paying jobs is always in high demand. Such technical knowledge is often highly inaccessible also. It becomes difficult for common people to be in command of the specialized knowledge and skill set. The privileged and the inaccessible nature of these jobs is maintained deliberately by the dominant segments of society. This legitimates, authenticates, and naturalizes the power of a few over the large mass. People having these skills and command over such knowledge finally get higher jobs that further increases their power. It is through this knowledge that they maintain their power in society. On this basis it can be established that the nature and distribution of knowledge indicates the availability of opportunities in society. The knowledge as well as the linguistic and cultural competencies of the elite are associated with highly paid and inaccessible jobs. It is important to study what knowledge is being accorded high status in our society and its cultural and economic implications. Certain knowledge is inaccessible and, because of this, schooling becomes effective in generating and perpetuating inequality.

5.3 Perpetuation of Inequality through Education

Education seems to promise a bright future, widen horizons and ensure mobility. The common sense understanding of schools perceives them as democratic, liberal institutions, committed to make social progress. It would be fallacious to assume that the school curriculum imparts neutral knowledge. Education enhances the inequalities existing in an already unequal and stratified society. Education as we have mentioned earlier is entrenched in the wider web of social and political relations that guide it. The sociology of education looks at the relationship of education with the economic, political and cultural power. It unravels the power politics and various contestations that occur in the field of education. Apple (2004) argues that close relationship exists among those who have economic, political and cultural power in the society and the ways and means in which education is thought about, organized and evaluated.

Apple (2004) and others challenge the following basic assumptions of education processes: (i) the selection processes are neutral; (ii) schools actually focus on the 'ability'; and (iii) schools teach technical curricular skills and impart information to all students unequivocally so that they all stand an equal chance to compete for economic rewards. They uphold that the wider aim of schooling is not the dissemination of the same kinds of skills to everyone. Educational processes lead to the perpetuation of the unequal social order existing in society. Apple (2004:60) remarks, "Schools have a history and that they are linked through their everyday practices to other powerful institutions in ways that are often hidden and complex." Schools, therefore, cannot be taken in isolation, having their own existence, working for the upliftment of people. Schools are situated in the larger context and are influenced by other powerful institutions in society. The educational institutions are caught up in a nexus of other institutions, that are political, economic, and cultural, and the nature of these institutions is unequal. Schools are related to these powerful institutions because of which "they generate structural inequalities of power and access to resources" (Apple 2004:61). Inequalities are reinforced and reproduced through the educational curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluative activities. The dispositions and the attitudes that are developed among students are not neutral. Rather, they are selected, represented, and organized in accordance with the powerful institutions of that historical time period. These are the effective mechanisms of social control.

The distribution of power in society between various social groups determines the distribution of knowledge. Apple (2004) raises an important question, 'Whose knowledge is of most worth?' For him the question, 'what knowledge is of most worth?' is related with 'whose knowledge?' and 'whose culture?' Radical thinkers like Apple assert that the knowledge and the skills associated with the dominant groups acquire greater significance than those of the subordinate groups. The representation of knowledge in the educational curriculum is clearly biased.

Education is used as a means through which power is exercised. Dominant groups of society use education to exercise their control. The biased selection of knowledge followed by the deliberate representation favours the powerful sections of society which ensures the subtle control of masses through the educational curriculum. Such control happens in the area of education that makes the power of the dominant groups legitimate and extremely difficult to challenge. Kumar (1992:2) refers this as 'quiet, civilized dynamic dominance.' Education becomes the agency for maintaining social hierarchies in society. The dominant social groups of society sustain and further perpetuate their power by making their knowledge and skills highly exclusive. It becomes the prerogative of only a few elite people to possess such highly privileged knowledge. This becomes the major means for dominant groups of society to maintain their power.

Apple (2004) suggests that certain knowledge, especially the most prestigious one in schools, can have some linkages with economic reproduction. These linkages are unraveled when we go back to our original questions of what is worth knowing and whose knowledge does our educational institutions disseminate? The 'policing' actions of the powerful decide which knowledge and which academic enquiry could be considered legitimate. They control or sift knowledge before it is made available to the masses. The knowledge which is finally disseminated and received by the people gets the approval of the dominant and serves their interests. The dominant sections of the society decide what is taken as knowledge and determine its accessibility to the masses. Apple (2004:34) quotes Fischer in mentioning that high status knowledge 'is by definition scarce, and its scarcity is inextricably linked to its instrumentality.' It is the command of the powerful minority over this knowledge which then works to further entrench its high status, and its association with the high paying jobs. We can say that the educational institutions 'process' knowledge.

Schools give the impression that the mastery over technical knowledge and certain skills are imparted to everyone. In reality, however, educational institutions only guarantee that a specified number of students are selected for higher levels of education, and in doing so contribute to the optimization of technical knowledge needed by the economy. The people belonging to lower socio-economic strata of society are poor, and politically and culturally disenfranchised. The kind of education children of this section of society receive is completely different from the kind of education that the children of the elite section receive. The schools and the curriculum subordinate the interests of the exploited in favour of the interests of dominant classes Apple's observations suggest that schools teach different dispositions and values to different school populations. If the particular student population is from a professional and managerial class of people then the schools and their curriculum revolves around flexibility, choice, inquiry, etc. On the other hand if they belong to semi-skilled or unskilled working population then the education revolves around punctuality, neatness, habit formation, and so on. The present economic arrangements are formulated in the manner that they require some people to remain unskilled and poor. Schools make this easy by way of imparting cultural and economic values and dispositions in a differentiated manner.

Box 5.1: Education as Cultural Imperialism

"In the mercantile period of European imperialism (1500 to about 1780), formal schooling both at home and abroad was restricted almost entirely to children of the wealthy. It was consumed by an aristocracy whose children did not need it to maintain positions of power and wealth, and it was invested in by a merchant class to enable its children to become professionals and bureaucrats. Schooling for the poor - When it existed at all - was usually religious training for conversion or moral maintenance. But even in this period, formal schooling in some places helped the European to colonize the native. In Brazil, the Jesuits formed communities with schools to turn nomadic Indians into plantation labour; in Peru another group of Jesuits helped Inca nobility become intermediaries between the Spanish Vice royalty and the former Inca subjects; the schooled nobility were made responsible for assigning Indian labor to the Spanish mines and plantations and for collecting taxes. Similarly, in India, the British East India Company created Moslem colleges to elicit the cooperation of the Moslem elite. These colleges were then used to develop an elite loyal to European Values and norms.

Aside from these important exceptions, however, formal schooling was not used to incorporate people into the economic structure until capitalism began to dominate the economy. As the capitalist organization of work created a need for a new kind of society in Europe (particularly England) - a society organized around factories, shifts, wage structures, and work organized by others - schooling served to preserve the moral fabric of this society and to socialize children into it. Thus, as feudal organization broke down in Europe and later, Latin America, an institution was needed to hold things together under new and disruptive conditions. Missionaries and the Catholic Church first provided schooling for the poor, and later were aided by the state" (Carnoy 1985: 210).

In India, the capitalist period witnessed a pattern of schooling which prepared the people to fit into British bureaucratic structures and in so doing gear the economy and trade in order to promote the interests of the British. Interestingly, when the British and the French occupied West Africa, the pattern of schooling prepared Africans for roles that were determined by economic relations between the two metropolises. The metropolis industrialists discouraged industrialization yet schooling (i) served as a means of controlling societal change; and (ii) provided the moral and social guideline to the people who aspired to emulate the administrators. Historical evidence suggests that on the one hand schooling in the colonies was directed to maintain colonial structures while on the other; schooling was used as an agency for colonizing people in the United States. What is more important is to note that these methods and experiences were returned to the now independent Third World (see Carnoy 1985).

In India we can see the differences in the quality of education. All the children do not get the privilege of getting quality education. The schools can be divided into two major categories— state managed schools, and privately managed schools. The former seem to be meant for the masses, while the latter for the privileged class who can afford to pay for the good education. The co-existence of the two parallel streams of schools ensures that the masses operate in a different world than the elites. From the beginning, the children of the better off live separately from the children of the poor. This ensures that the privileged, exclusive education should be the right of a few while the masses are rendered to make their own destiny. The educated elite class maintains a comfortable paradox. On the one hand, it avows the equality-oriented ideology of our education system, while on the other it tends to protect its dominant position in society. Education plays a key role in helping

them perpetuate the current inequalities in society while maintaining the liberal facade. The apt ideology of 'equality of opportunity' is used in the Indian context for perpetuating the silent, subtle suppression.

It may be stated that the distribution, selection and transmission of knowledge are always guided by power structures. Bernstein (1979) stresses that the way a society selects, classifies, distributes, transmits and evaluates educational knowledge it considers to be public, reflects both the distribution of power and the principles of social control. The parameters for measuring performance, and how performance is understood in a society, also confirm that education favours the dominant sections of society. Bernstein and Young explain that 'structuring of knowledge and symbol in our educational institutions is intimately related to the principles of social and cultural control in a society' (see Apple 2004:2). The competition based on meritocracy seems to be impartial and fair. We measure persons by their ability to generate wealth. Those who fail to do generate and accrue wealth are naturally and easily condemned to be of lower worth. Through various agencies, especially education, this has become part of our mundane thought. This common sense knowledge mystifies and naturalizes the exploitative relationship between the dominant and the subjugated groups of society. Educational institutions go hand in hand with the other economic, political and cultural forces, and provide mechanisms through which power is maintained.

Reflection and Action 5.1

Discuss the role of education in social control of the masses.

5.4 Cultural and Economic Reproduction

Education becomes the site for the reproduction and production of power relations in society. Education becomes a tool to dominate, to impose ideas, meanings and practices on people in a civilized, democratic way. This kind of oppression is subtle and is not undemocratic. Through education the dominant sections of society hegemonize the common sense making exploitation appear natural. Apple asserts that education and differential cultural, economic, and political power should be seen as closely connected with each other. The educational policies and practices are the result of struggles by powerful groups to legitimize their knowledge and their viewpoint. This authenticates the pattern of social mobility and increases their power in society.

Based on a study of the schooling in American society, Bowles and Gintis (see Apple 2004) stress the economic role of educational institutions. They mention that educational institutions play a paramount role in reproducing the division of labour in society, sustaining class divisions. For this reason Apple (2004) explores the relationship between economic and cultural domination because of which inequality in society is reproduced. He mentions that one of the important ways through which dominant groups are able to exert their power is through the control of the governmental mechanisms that grant official legitimacy to particular groups' knowledge. One such way is through the process of state textbook adoption. Textbooks are an important medium for exercising control as they embody dominant ideologies. In textbooks knowledge continues to be inherently ideological as it reproduces the culture of dominant class and perpetuates the established patterns of social order and social inequality. These biased textbooks allow the hegemony of dominant groups to continue, and the hierarchical social order is preserved. Timothy Scrase in his examination of the textbooks of West Bengal finds that the texts and the images are ideologically biased. He places the characters and the stories on the dimensions of time and space, and finds that while upper caste occupations are identified more with the present, those of the lower castes are related with the past. This reinforces the notion of lower castes' closeness with technological

backwardness and social irrelevance. The children of the lower castes are disadvantaged as their own cultural experiences are denied the legitimation of being real and valued knowledge. Texts either do not represent the experiences of lower caste people and if they do represent, then it is in a distorted form. Whenever the lower castes have attempted to challenge the established hierarchical order, they have been demeaned and ridiculed on ideological and cultural grounds. Dominant groups use knowledge in a way that no voices other than their own are represented. If they get represented, then only in a feeble, inadequate or distorted way, which gives them a negative appeal. This is a civilized, dynamic form of assertion through which the dominant ideology continues to perpetuate its domination.

Box 5.2: Banking Concept of Education

“Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiques and ‘makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the ‘banking’ concept of education in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filling, and storing the deposits... pp. 45-46.

The more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result in their intervention in the world as transformers of that world. The more completely they accept the passive role imposed on them, the more they tend simply to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them.

The capacity of banking education to minimize or annul the students’ creative power and to stimulate their credulity serves the interests of the oppressors, who care neither to have the world revealed nor to see it transformed. The oppressors use their ‘humanitarianism’ to preserve a profitable situation. Thus they react almost instinctively against any experiment in education which stimulates the critical faculties and is not content with a partial view of reality but is always seeking out the ties which link one point to another and one problem to another” pp 47 (Freire 1972).

The schools disseminate certain forms of knowledge through which people can be controlled. They not just control people, but they also control meaning. Both of them influence each other. Schools disseminate ‘legitimate knowledge’, the knowledge of specific groups, under the illusion of belonging to everyone. Just the fact that the particular knowledge is provided and distributed by the school gives legitimacy to that knowledge and to that particular group also which feels close to that knowledge. In this way it becomes easy to control people by controlling meaning. The group getting substantial representation in the curriculum should have the political and economic power to make their knowledge, their life-world, and their world-view into ‘knowledge for all’. Culture and cultural capital are also used for this and cannot be seen as apolitical entities. Therefore, power and culture are interwoven and mutually influence each other so that both economic power and cultural power give better agencies for social control.

Foucault provides an analysis of knowledge and finds the complex relationship existing between forms of knowledge and relations of power. He finds a circular relationship between the systems of power and regimes of knowledge. Through knowledge, control is exercised and order is imposed. This is the dialectic of knowledge and control. John Fiske also shares the same critical Foucauldian thought. For him, “Knowledge is never neutral, it never exists in an empiricist, objective relationship to the real. Knowledge is power, and the circulation of knowledge is part of the social distribution of power” (from Apple 2000:143).

The education and power linkage becomes vivid when the deliberate selection and organization of knowledge is studied critically. Selective tradition, ideology and hegemony are three critical terms used by Apple (2004) for his analysis. Let us understand these terms here. The deliberate selection of knowledge in any text allows social control and social inequality to continue. Williams calls this selection as 'selective tradition', and defines it as, 'someone's selection, someone's vision of legitimate knowledge and culture, one that in the process of enfranchising one group's cultural capital disenfranchises another's.' Through the process of 'selective tradition,' educational curriculum acts as agents of both cultural and ideological control. It legitimates, naturalizes and authenticates the culture and knowledge of the dominant groups.

Ideology refers to the system of ideas, beliefs, or values about the social reality. But this is a simplistic way of understanding it. Marx explains ideology as a form of false consciousness which distorts one's picture of social reality and serves the interests of the dominant classes in a society. It provides a justification of their vested interests and gives them a liberal ostensible appearance. To understand what ideology is, one has to investigate what is considered to be legitimate knowledge in specific institutions at specific historical moments. For Apple (2004:43) "The overt and covert knowledge found within school settings, and the principles of selection, organization, and evaluation of this knowledge, are value governed selections from a much larger universe of possible knowledge and selection principles". Hence whatever schools teach as accurate knowledge and as representing collective tradition is, in effect, the life world of only a few. Through the overt and the hidden curricula it is the meanings and the life worlds of the dominant in society which are being collected and distributed. Not all groups' visions and meanings are represented, and this becomes possible through ideology.

Hegemony saturates our consciousness so that the educational, economic and social reality we see and interact with seems to be the only one. It refers to those organized assemblage of meanings, values and actions that are adhered to in the course of life. It is through hegemony that the control over people, resources becomes smooth. For Williams (from Apple 2004:4), schools become agents of cultural and ideological hegemony. Education may be viewed as a hegemonic form, because its ideological saturation permeates our lived experience, and enables them to believe they are neutral participants in the neutral instrumentation of schooling. On the contrary they serve the economic and ideological interests of the popular and elite culture.

Young (see Apple 2004) mentions that schools not only 'process people' they 'process knowledge' as well. The educational institutions, among others, play the most important role in disseminating the dominant culture and in legitimizing, and naturalizing power. They shape people's attitudes and ideas and prepare them in a way that they see no alternative to the meanings, cultures and interpretations provided by the educational institutions. Schools disseminate both, formal knowledge as well as the linguistic and social competencies, differentially to different students based on their power in society. These competencies are equally required today to get higher salaried and higher status jobs. The knowledge which gets selected and organized in the curriculum pertains to both economic property and symbolic property, i.e. cultural capital. Schools play an active role in preserving and distributing both of them. Bourdieu treats cultural capital as economic capital. Just as the people who are endowed with economic capital do better, those who hold cultural capital are at an advantage. Cultural capital is unequally distributed and is dependent on the division of labour in society. The selection process occurring in society largely depends on the cultural capital. He argues that it is through the seemingly neutral process of selection and instruction that filtering and the divisions of students begin from their early years. Schools take the cultural capital, the

habitus of the middle class, as natural and employ it on all the children. However, "by taking all children as equal, while implicitly favouring those who have already acquired the linguistic and social competencies to handle middle-class culture, schools take as natural what is essentially a social gift, i.e. cultural capital" (Apple 2004:31). Cultural capital then becomes an effective filtering device in the reproduction of a hierarchical society. Apple (2004:48) writes, "Just as there is a social distribution of cultural capital in society, so too is there a social distribution of knowledge within classrooms."

Educational institutions contribute to inequality by differentially distributing specific kinds of knowledge to different social groups. They 'process' people in accordance with their economic and cultural capital and increase societal inequality. Hidden curriculum is 'the tacit teaching to students of norms, values, and dispositions that goes on simply by their living in and coping with the institutional expectations and routines of schools day in and day out for a number of years' (Apple 2004:13). It maintains the ideological hegemony of the dominant classes in society. During the socialization process the child internalizes the rules required to govern the social order. This ideological saturation starts very early in one's life. Apple makes the point that the economically rooted norms and dispositions are actually taught in institutions of cultural preservation and distribution like schools.

Young explains that there is 'a dialectical relationship between access to power and the opportunity to legitimize certain dominant categories, and processes by which the availability of such categories to some groups enables them to assert power and control over others' (from Apple 2004:30). Inequality in society is sustained and propagated by the 'transmission' of a particular kind of culture. Educational institutions play an important role in cultural and economic reproduction. Educational institutions play a pertinent role as they have a major role in legitimizing and accepting inequalities, and in maintaining hegemony. The way economic capital is unequally distributed holds true for cultural capital also. Schools distribute this cultural capital, and become an important agent in providing legitimacy to categories and forms of knowledge. It is fallacious to assume school curriculum imparts neutral knowledge. Legitimate knowledge is the result of complex power relations and struggles among class, caste, gender and religious groups. Apple (2000:144) writes 'Thus, education and power are terms of an indissoluble couplet.' Texts cannot be treated as a simple conglomeration of facts that are presented in a systematically printed form. The controversy over 'legitimate knowledge' or 'official knowledge' in the school texts center around what is to be included or excluded in the text.

In the educational curriculum, the knowledge being counted as valid gets that status through a conscious process of selection. The processes that make any knowledge valid are selection, representation, distribution and reception and are influenced by the economy, politics and culture. It is through these processes only that inequality is perpetuated in society. A complex relationship exists between educational policy and practice and the relations of domination and exploitation of the larger society. It is important to understand the contradictory power relationships that exist at the site of education to assert and to reassert dominant groups' meanings, their representations and their voices.

Williams finds educational institutions making incorporation possible that plays a significant role in maintaining and perpetuating inequality in society. He explains, "The educational institutions are usually the main agencies of transmission of an effective dominant culture, and this is now a major economic and cultural activity...the selective tradition: that which, within the terms of an effective dominant culture, is always passed off as 'the tradition,' the

significant past. But always the selectivity is the point; the way in which from a whole possible area of past and present, certain meanings and practices are neglected and excluded. The more crucial point is here that some of these meanings are reinterpreted, diluted, or put into forms which support or at least do not contradict other elements within the effective dominant culture” (see Apple 2004:5). This ensures total incorporation in the unequal social order. He rightly depicts the role of hegemony, because of which the role of educational institutions in reproducing the inequalities goes unchallenged. The reaction is neutral or it supports the mainstream tradition as the ruling ideology is not imposed. If only the dominant culture has been represented then overcoming it, challenging it must have been easy. Williams points out that meanings and forms are reinterpreted to suit the dominant culture, thereby leaving no room for resistance to spring up. The resistance is this process if co-opted.

We need to understand that the processes through which perspectives and ideas of one group are given more value than the other(s) make the former group more powerful than the latter. This politics of knowledge, Apple (2000) avers, is the politics of compromises. Dominant sections of society do not use physical force, or direct impositions to make their world view legitimate. They assert their power by co-opting the different and the divergent views in the educational curriculum, though subsequently it favours their section of the society only. For instance the educational curriculum does not omit the knowledge of the dominated sections, as that can make the exploitation clear. The curriculum reflects them also but in a feeble way, disenfranchising them or positioning them under the patronage of the powerful sections. Education, for this reason, is a powerful medium as it legitimizes and naturalizes the power. These compromises give it a democratic façade, thereby increasing its authenticity, and they occur at the level of political and ideological discourse. The knowledge that is taught in schools, the pedagogic practices that teachers adopt, the teaching-learning processes that happen in class, the curriculum are a few sites of struggle. Constant struggle for voices, representations happen over curriculum, teaching and policy. They are the result of various political, cultural and economic activities, struggles and compromises. The textbooks, when studied critically, reflect the priorities of various groups. They signify the selection and organization of knowledge. These educational processes are always the results of such compromises where dominant groups in order to maintain their dominance take the concerns of the less powerful. This becomes an effective strategy of co-opting the dissident voices so that the cultural and economic reproduction of inequality continues.

Reflection and Action 5.2

‘Education is subservient to the political system.’ Discuss.

5.5 Conclusion

In this Unit we have made the point that what happens inside the educational institutions is intricately linked to economic, social, and ideological structures outside it. The educational institutions, their policies and the processes are connected to specific economic and political structures. By serving the interests of the dominant sections of society they contribute to the societal inequality and also help these sections in maintaining the social order in their favour. They are able to do that through formal knowledge as well as the dispositions (i.e. cultural capital) that are learned in such institutions. This ‘formal corpus of school knowledge’ becomes a form of social and economic control. Through the overt and the hidden curricula, schools play an important role in selecting, preserving, and fostering the conceptions of competence, ideological norms, dos and don’ts, status of knowledge and values. Control over knowledge

increases the ideological dominance of one group over another. We have made the point that knowledge is constructed and it reproduces the status quo. The knowledge is used to legitimize the operation of power in society.

5.6 Further Reading

Apple, Michael W. 2004. *Ideology and Curriculum*. Routledge

Fieire, P. 1972. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. England: Penguin Books

Kumar, Krishna. 1992. *What is Worth Teaching?* New Delhi: Orient Longman



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Unit 6

Education, Nation-building, State and Ideology

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Learning Objectives

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

- process of education as a means for ideological indoctrination;
- role of education in the nation building agenda and how the latter is used as an ideology to control the masses; and
- ideological use of education in India and in other countries.

6.1 Introduction

Education plays an important role in legitimizing control of the dominant sections of society. In the earlier unit we looked at certain theoretical concepts in the context of ideological domination. In this unit we will see how education is used by the state or by the dominant sections of society to assert their power. Education takes care of secondary socialization, and for this reason it seems to provide a platform for the fulfilment of important tasks like character building, value education, citizenship training, patriotism and so on. These tasks help the state to perpetuate unequal social order through the ideology of nation building. This unit explores how nation-building ideology is fostered by the state to cater to the vested interests of the dominant sections. Any claim that the education system as an apolitical category is fallacious. Education is used to serve political ends. We will discuss this aspect here and place it in a wider perspective in the next unit. In this unit we will explore how the freedom struggle narrative is interpreted to construe the categories of the 'other' and the 'self'.

6.2 Education and Nation-building

Apple (2000) suggests that the role of history is extremely important in developing ideological control. The control over history helps the dominant sections to control the masses by using the ideology of nation building. The state attempts to use education as a tool to exercise its control over people. The dominant sections are involved in the process of defining official, legitimate knowledge. From the events in the past that constitute history, certain sections are eliminated, while others are selected to suit the vested interests of the dominant sections. This ideological control over education decides the way the younger generation is made to perceive the present. The teaching of history particularly in the present day when there is increasing awareness of the role of education in imposing control over the masses is a matter of controversies and many political debates. The curriculum and teaching of the discipline of history is often a matter of concern. How history is taught, and what are the topics included in the curriculum, are crucial issues. Modern

nation states place a heavy responsibility on the historian who is assigned the task of writing for the young. Political leaders and the elites perceive education as a means of imparting a strong sense of national identity to the young. Education plays a pertinent role not just during nation making, but also in sustaining this concept. This control decides and defines the category of the 'other' and the relationships with the 'other.'

The role of education assumes significance in the broader framework of building national identity and citizenship. Its role becomes more paramount in the post-colonial period of nation building and in carving out 'good citizens'. The national education policies, curriculum, textbooks, pedagogy construct the 'nation', inculcate the feelings of patriotism, delineate the characteristics of 'good citizen', and inculcate the spirit of character building. The official knowledge imparted in the schools is in accordance to the wider national goals. For these wider national aims, education becomes important. One of the most important tasks of the education system is to develop in the students a strong sense of national pride, and to make them feel a part of the larger national community. According to Thapan (2003), 'school is a primary institution through which values and norms are constituted as well as reproduced. The schooling processes are related to power and social control. In the national discourses, there are normative definitions of 'right' values and morals, and the forms of ideal citizenship. Education plays a critical role in making these meaningful to the students and drawing up a plan for their incorporation in their lives. These 'right' values, norms, and ideal citizenship are embedded in national cultures and they are reproduced through state and other institutions in society. The school is one such institution of the state that defines this national discourse. In schools the notions of citizenship are constituted in the normative definitions of citizenship.

Box 6.1: Colonialism, Imperialism, Indigenism

"In the postwar world, Western nations embarked on a program of assistance and influence in the rest of the world while independent national elites proceeded to build their nations and develop education for this goal. The mission of modernization and economic growth was reflected, in Western intellectual institutions, particularly in the area of comparative studies program as well in the comparative study of education. Thus, comparative education, international education and development education developed associations and connections with a mission of identifying educational practices that would promote development in accordance with the strategy and goals that the developed modernizing nations considered appropriate and that the leadership of the ex-colonies also appears to adopt. Even scholars from these nations were not free from this stance. In fact, the entire theory of modernization has supported this attitude of externally sponsored change. The study of the relationship of formal education to economic growth in historical and comparative of the relation of education to indexes of modernization and development are examples"(Shukla 1985: 253-254).

This takes place through the print material in the form of textbooks as well as through everyday practices within schools. In school the 'self' is constructed in relation to the nation in terms of the components of citizenship and nation building. Schools do that in highly demarcated and strictly maintained boundaries; with an 'abhorrence of mixed categories, blurred identities and intolerance of ambiguity' (Saigol, 2003, quoted in Thapan). This results in the construction of pure and unambiguous social categories. It is through such categories that the nation-building endeavour is carried out. Ali (2002) presents this perspective in the context of the Pakistani history primarily because the history of Pakistan seeks to homogenize the culture, traditions, social and religious life of the people in favour of the ruling class and the political attempts

towards centralization. This affects the non-Muslim religious minorities since they get excluded from the mainstream of history. Moreover, any attempt to assert the historical identity of a region is disparaged. Thapan explains that this takes the place through 'habitus' (to use the term Bourdieu proposed) and through the processes of social reproduction in society. Historically, the same national project could also be seen in the colonialist discourse on educating natives as well as in nationalist interventions in educational practice. The 'citizen' is one who valorizes national honor. The emphasis of the educational discourse remains on the honour, integrity, purity, and above all on the dignity of the nation.

Ali (2002) upholds that in order to rule over the present, it is important to have control over the past, as that legitimizes the domination. History serves as an important medium to authenticate, and to naturalize the ruling power. Most of the oppressive regimes have moulded history to serve their vested interests to justify their inhuman acts. The dominant powers can be states, churches, and political parties, private interests, which own media, schools or other such institutions. The dominant powers of society exercise their control through these mediums. They all use history to authenticate their regime. Rulers, in the past glorified their achievements by manipulating history. Similarly, in the modern nation states, rulers reconstruct history to assert their authority and domination. Ali (2000) quotes the following words of Eric Hobsbawn, 'History as inspiration and ideology has a built-in tendency to become a self-justifying myth. Nothing is a more dangerous blindfold than this, as the history of modern nations and nationalism demonstrates'. In the newly developed nation states like India and Pakistan, colonial history is invoked to rule the country, and to sustain the ideology of the nation state. Political leaders struggle to assume the status of freedom fighters and assert and reassert their role in helping India achieve independence. They eulogize their own role in the freedom struggle and then use it to legitimise their power and domination after independence. For this reason the concepts of 'freedom struggle' and 'war of liberation' are commonly made use of. Their sacrifices have been the dominant theme in the history writing of both the nations. In both the nations, the role of these freedom fighters is highly eulogized in order to give them the right to rule the newly formed nations.

Reflection and Action 6.1

Do you think education has a significant role to play in nation-building?
Discuss with other learners at the study centre.

6.3 Nation-building in India

In post-colonial societies like India, the nation, national identity, and nationhood are constructed around colonial history. The period of colonialism and the colonial exploitation accompanying it become the mega narratives to define our national identity. During the colonial as well as the post-colonial time there were institutions and policies to transform the 'natives' into 'citizens'. During the freedom struggle this 'citizenship building' exercise became necessary for attaining freedom.

For Kumar (2001) nation-building assumes a dominant position among the aims of children's education. History is central to the maintenance as well as the creation of a modern nation state. Its role is pertinent in the process of nation-building. The pedagogic and learner centered perspectives take a subservient position to the nation building project. History faces more strain of teaching about nation-building than other subjects. The process and prospects of inculcation of national consciousness becomes paramount in history. In the Indian case, knowledge of the freedom struggle plays a key role in socializing the younger generation into attitudes and beliefs that are upheld

nationally. In the schools, their mindset is prepared in a pre-defined way. Kumar examined the rival ideologies of nationalism into which schools attempt to socialize the young, and in doing so he depicted the ways in which history is used for indoctrination of specific ideologies. Kumar emphasizes the processes of selection and representation to understand the nation building project of the state. For Kumar, it is important to see how things are represented to design the young mind. Our education system serves the wider national objective of nation building, and for this reason from a very early age, children are socialized into national legacies. Education from the early stages is deliberately used to pursue the nation-building agenda. Knowledge of the past is an important medium that ensures acculturation, socialization and framing the national identity of the future generation. It is for this reason that schools take on the ideological role. The knowledge of the past becomes pertinent for a construction like nation-states. The anti-colonial movement as well as the freedom struggle play a key role in socializing younger generations into loyal citizens. The socialization through the formal learning at school plays a pertinent role as the latter 'leads to the formation of socially articulated knowledge' (Kumar 2001:15). The past plays an important role in shaping people's attitudes and behaviours. It can, therefore, be said with confidence that the 'representations of the past serve as mental maps in shaping their responses to present-day situations' (Kumar 2001:15). Kumar explains the way the freedom struggle is used for consolidating the nation-states of India and Pakistan. Though the narratives of both the countries were the same, yet they have been projected differently.

The systems of education deliberately cultivates the characteristics of loyal citizens in children. The curriculum, pedagogy and the entire education system are geared towards socializing the young into an approved national past. The national past, taken as the main discourse by the education system, is approved by the state. The state is the guiding force first for nation building and then for its sustenance. The school uses the officially approved knowledge of the nation's past to inspire children to fulfill their roles as obedient citizens. History plays a major role in fashioning young minds into the roles of the citizens. Kumar (2001) explains how both the nations understand the same event of partition in different light because of their nation-building project.

Both India and Pakistan faced 1947 independence, followed by the partition, yet their perception of it varies. India looks at 1947 as a great achievement which followed arduous struggle (though, because of partition it was also accompanied by a terrible sense of loss and sadness) while Pakistan treats 1947 as the formal beginning of its nation-state. The same event of partition is understood in a different light. Indian texts treat 1919 to 1947 as 'Gandhian era' of the Indian nationalist struggle as Gandhi transformed the nature of this movement. Gandhi's personality, activities, and ideology are highlighted in this part. Indian textbooks represent his personality and ideas. Children are informed about his principles of non-violence and truth.

Kumar deduces that the way knowledge about the past is selected, reconstructed and represented in the textbooks for school children depicts how a common past acquires distinct versions under two systems of education. The process and perception of nation-building in India and Pakistan differs considerably. These issues depict the relationship between national ideology and textbooks. The pursuit of nation-building is turned into an ideology and education is seen as the primary instrument for propagating it. The ideology of nation building became the most important goal of the education system. As Kumar puts it, after independence the heuristic methods of teaching, emphasizing the child's freedom to negotiate meaning were not given any weight. All education commissions underscored nation-building as an important objective that even downplayed the ideology of manual work proposed by Gandhi. The wider aim was supposed to be of nation-building, and all the

other cultural, educational or economic facets were sidelined to fulfill it. The 'nation-building' symbolized national development. In history textbooks, the decision to mention a name or an event or to overlook it is guided by this paramount national ideology. In Kumar's words, it reflects the 'politics of memory'. The difference between the Indian and the Pakistani understanding of the freedom struggle is essentially in the choice of the events they mention. Certain details and certain events are given more space and time in one story, while the same ones can be ignored in the other. This tendency, which Kumar refers to as 'politics of mention', increases in the coverage of events that took place in the last seventeen years (1930-47) of the struggle. The ideology of nation-building in the last decades becomes more compelling in both the Indian and the Pakistani textbooks. Though the attainment of freedom is common to both the nations, yet its understanding varies. As Kumar puts it, in the Indian case the story would explain *why* India was divided, while the Pakistani story would explain *how* the division was made to happen. It is because of their nation-building ideology that the same bodies of facts are presented differently in the two nations. Both the nation states want to foster nationalism with the help of education. Education carries the heavy burden of nation-building project on its shoulders. Their task is to celebrate the struggle and the eventual triumph of secularism. Partition was a trouble for them as it signified religious separatism too. For this reason they marginalize this period of nationalist struggle. In the Indian case, the narrative of the freedom struggle as well as the history itself comes to an end in 1947. It only talks of some events associated with the Independence, which includes the making of the constitution, the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, integration of the princely states and the beginning of Five-Year plans. For Pakistan, partition signifies the birth or creation of the new state. The 'freedom' implied not just freedom from the British, but also the creation of Pakistan. It symbolizes the genesis of Pakistan.

History is seen as a means for ideological indoctrination. Through the study of the past the earlier animosities are kept alive and are fostered. In India, the narrative of freedom basically revolves around the tension between 'secular' and 'communal' forces. This tension becomes relevant to define India's national identity and its secular nature. History cannot be simply understood as the memory of the past as the politics of mention always operates and guides it. 'Memory of the past is not about reality; rather it represents a reconstruction of past reality in ways that nourish the self' (Kumar 2001:241). In India, the debate on history textbooks focused on the distinction between secular and communal perspectives. This politics of history allows ideological indoctrination to become the purpose of discussing the past.

The idea of the nation state, national language, and national culture favours the dominant culture and does not represent minority cultures. They remain suppressed in this national politics. Surely, the citizenship status is also given importance by the nation state, and becomes important for the sustenance of nation-building project. The feeling of patriotism is important in citizens for the concept of nation-state to exist. This nation state exists on the idea of the homogenous citizenship. This homogenization, however, subjugates the minority culture and their rights. The minority culture and the minority rights are sacrificed for the national honor and integrity. For Mahajan (1999), the nation state enfolds the culture of the dominant sections and devalues and marginalizes minority cultures. The minority cultures exist on the fringes of national political life, which largely believe in the liberal ideal of homogenous citizenship. The minority community is culturally marginalized within the liberal nation states. The homogenizing tendencies of the state do not favour all the cultures, and are in consonance only with the powerful sections of the society. Mahajan makes the point that the minorities are disadvantaged in the context of the nation state, and the nation-building project. The educational policies, educational structure, educational curriculum and pedagogy play an active role

in this ideological control over people. The state attempts to unite the diverse groups within its territory to evolve a national culture. This national culture is manifested in various forms. The nation state adopts a national language, interprets its history, specifies certain kinds of academic curricula, identifies the medium of instruction, declares public holidays, selects national heroes, and adopts certain rituals for ceremonial occasions as symbols of its national identity. In all these processes certain kinds of selection, representation and sustenance of the national symbols happen. This national culture, which the state tries to inculcate in all its citizens, is not entirely neutral. It tends to express the culture of the dominant community. The minority culture is not expressed in the national ethos. More than that it marginalizes them in the public arena and devalues their cultural practices. Therefore, the policies and the practices of the nation- building project result in the gradual erosion and disintegration of minorities' culture, and only favours the dominant culture. The equal rights of political participation (or the citizenship status) have not dismantled the structure of dominance and subordination in society. 'Assimilation' into the national mainstream distances them from the culture of their own community. It devalues their culture. To secure a job, for instance, one has to master the national language. In our country, in certain instances, communities are marginalized, as a small but dominant minority controls national resources. It is the new minority of modern and modernizing elites which exercises hegemony over national life, which disadvantages large sections of the population, not by devaluing their culture, but by denying them equal opportunity and access to the available resources. It is not just the cultural identity which is at stake, but more than that it is the social and economic disadvantage which they face. The project of nation- building never wants minority identities to go against the prevalent idea of national identity. The 'national identity' expresses itself in the political-cultural ethos of the majority, which remains shrouded in the nation-state's macro-ideology of modernization and development.

Reflection and Action 6.2

Discuss how the state intervenes in the process of nation-building in India.

6.4 Nation-building in other Countries

When education is directed to a definite and preconceived end, it is amenable to indoctrination. Education can be too purposeful in such cases. The curriculum reflects the order of interests in any given society. In a theocratic society, for instance, first priority is accorded to religious studies; in a democratic state, the focus is on consolidating ideas about citizenship. Nazism and communism have also used education to mould the minds of the youth to cater to political interests. Nazism employed education to implant in the German youth the cult of racial superiority, of military discipline, of unquestioning obedience, and of devotion to Hitler. To achieve this objective, it controlled all the cultural and educational forces, like science, philosophy, religion, press, literature, music, art, and all other means through which youth is moulded. In the same vein, the cultural and educational development which requires independent thought and imagination was discouraged. It muffled all those forces that did not reiterate the theme of the class struggle and the proletarian revolution (Scheffler 1958: 23). That's why for him 'one will say that geography and mathematics are by nature non-political'. Such may be the case, but also the contrary. Their teaching can do good or harm. From the elevation of his chair, certain words, an interaction, an allusion, a judgement, a bit of statistics, coming from the professor suffice to produce a political effect. That is why a professor of mathematics could play a political role and could be a fascist.

Napoleon (see Kilpatrick 1963) explicitly states his educational aims, 'My principal aim in the establishment of a teaching body is to have means for directing political and moral opinions.' Out of all the political questions he considered education to be of the highest importance. Certain attitudes were built in these Napoleonic schools' unquestioning acceptance of Napoleon as emperor, honour to him and the complete willingness to serve him. Everything was authoritative in these schools and regulated by the central government. 'From childhood on' they would be told what to think. Napoleon recognized the role of education in controlling the masses. Education can be effectively used to silence the resistance and in naturalizing the control.

Education plays a pertinent role in the growth of modern nationalism, which then is instrumentally used by revolutionary totalitarian regimes. The Nazi regime in Germany used the ideology of nationalism to authenticate its oppressive and totalitarian regime. Here, we can understand the processes through which Soviet citizens acquired their political values, attitudes, perceptions and sentiments. The Soviet man who emerged after the Bolshevik revolution was a different man and the national values and the project of nation-building was given supreme importance during that time. The one major process through which the political socialization of Soviet people happened was through the educational system. Soviet educational system took deliberate steps to create a 'new man.' The 'new Soviet man' whom the Soviet Educational System was supposed to produce was not merely a 'civic man' and an 'industrial man' but also a 'totalitarian man.' This led to political cohesiveness and consolidated the political system, which then made sure that the total power is concentrated in the hands of the Communist party. The Soviet rulers' unswerving support and blind adherence lies with the 'all embracing, action oriented ideology - 'Marxism-Leninism.' This ideology legitimated the steps of the Communist party. The party attempted to establish a totalitarian political culture - an all-inclusive, monolithic, and homogenous political culture characterized by values, beliefs, attitudes, and sentiments which foster absolute devotion to the Communist party. The educational processes also encouraged undeviating adherence to the principles of the party line, and absolute obedience and devotion to the directives of the party leadership.

The common curriculum, the single pattern of school organization as well as the uniform curriculum existed in the USSR. This guaranteed that all the students were exposed to the same educational experiences. The common curriculum led to the politicization of the entire curriculum. Social science was responsible for the major indoctrination. The supreme task of the curriculum was to inculcate 'Soviet patriotism.' According to Soviet educators of this time, children progress most easily to the feeling of love for their motherland, their fatherland, and their state through a feeling of love for the leaders of the Soviet people-Lenin and Stalin. This makes them associate with the concrete images of Lenin and Stalin, the party of communists. The history textbooks and the primary school song books were designed to convince students that everywhere, in all spheres of science and art, industry and agriculture, in the works of peace and the battlefields, the Soviet people march in the forefront of other nations and have created values which are unequalled anywhere in the world. Primary school readers were replete with the tales of the careers of political leaders, brave soldiers and famous scientists. The way these "biographies" have been written, it exemplifies right conduct and inspires reverence. The Nazi regime in Germany and the communist regime in the USSR depicted the role of education in socializing the young in the political ideology of the ruling community. The ideology of nation, nation building and nationalism was used to control the masses and to legitimize the control.

Box 6.2: Education and the New International Order

“The question also arises whether a world order of parity and equity among nations is not also crucially dependent on internal equity and equality within nations or nation-states, as it is among classes and regional and ethnic units for example, castes and tribes. The educational correlates of the strengthening of national identities in the context of domination by international elites, by national elites, and by the masses of people themselves and the struggles and conflicts of social classes, regions, and nations deserve examination in as much as these are reflected in or related to questions of educational structure, process, content and distribution” (Shukla 1985: 249).

6.5 Conclusion

This unit has explained that education cannot be seen as an apolitical category. It should be seen as a highly charged category. The dominant groups of society use education as a tool for indoctrinating masses, and this indoctrination makes their rule possible. Education is an important institution in the hands of the state, and state uses it to legitimize its control. The state uses the ideology of nation building or the development agenda to control the masses. This makes the civilized control of people possible as ideology blinds them. This unit depicted this by throwing light on various nation-states and their nation building projects. The ideology of nation building and nationalism acts as an active force in controlling minorities in a civilized democratic way. This nation-building agenda favours the dominant groups, and homogenizes masses.

6.6 Further Reading

Apple, Michael W. 2000. *Official Knowledge*. Routledge and Kegan Paul

Kumar, Krishna. 2001. *Prejudice and Pride*. Penguin

Thapan, Meenakshi. 2003. Pedagogy and the Future Citizen. *Economic and Political Weekly* April 12-18

Unit 7

Politics of Educational Curriculum

Contents

- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Concept and Perspectives on Curriculum Planning
- 7.3 Educational Curriculum and the Politics of Domination
- 7.4 National Curriculum Framework
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- 7.6 Conclusion
- 7.7 Further Reading

Learning Objectives

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

- inextricable link between educational curriculum and politics;
- play of politics and power in colonial education; and
- critical issues in women's education as a means of empowerment.

7.1 Introduction

In the previous units we have read that education and ideology are interrelated with each other. The educational curriculum is not designed just by keeping the child in mind. Several societal, cultural, economic, and political reasons play active roles in shaping the curriculum. Since knowledge defines the identity of a nation to a large extent, education comes to constitute an important part of the political agenda. It is used as an effective tool of indoctrinating people with all that helps political regimes to fulfill their specific political ends.

We begin this unit with a broad overview of major theoretical approaches to the understanding of curriculum from a sociological perspective, then go on to explore how colonialists used education as a means to consolidate their power and exercise control over people. Thereafter, we will delve into the politics of language and medium of instruction on the one hand and the interrelationship between education and politics in a comparative framework on the other.

7.2 Concept and Perspectives on Curriculum Planning

In its original sense, 'curriculum' refers to, 'running' or 'race course'. The term 'course' is derived from the Latin verb *currere*, which means 'to run'. Curriculum, therefore, provides a structure to students and guides them in the process of instruction. "The etymological metaphor can be extended to designate not only a race course but also a journey, expedition, or even privilege" (*Encyclopedia of Educational Research* 1982). The term curriculum should be distinguished from syllabus. Curriculum denotes not just the mere content of a particular subject or area of a study, but the total programme of an educational institution. The curriculum delineates the overall rationale of the educational programme of an institution (Kelly 1982). The concept of the curriculum is present though implicitly in the earliest educational programmes of civilized societies, but curriculum as a field of systematic enquiry emerged only during the early 1920s. Kliebard (1982) identifies the year 1918 as the junction when "curriculum emerged as a self conscious field of study."

Stenhouse (1975:5) defines curriculum as “the means by which the experience of attempting to put an educational proposal into practice is made publicly available. It involves both content and method, and in its widest application takes account of the problem of implementation in the institutions of the educational system.” He suggests that a curriculum should provide a basis for planning a course, studying it empirically and justifying its very basis. According to Rohit Dhankar (2000), a good curriculum framework should be a system of most basic principles and assumptions, capable of providing a rational basis for curricular choices. Curricular choices are not limited to just what should be taught, but indicate choices regarding how to teach, under what conditions, by whom, with what teaching aids, how the evaluation should be carried out, and so on. In other words, the spectrum of choices define what schools should be doing and how. Often, curricular decisions have to do with the choice of knowledge, values, and/or skills to be included or excluded from the programme of education. Alternatively, they relate with the method of developing these abilities in children.

It is important to understand that there are two necessary and complementary ways of looking at the curriculum framework which Posner terms as curriculum development technique and a curriculum conscience. The curriculum development technique is also known as the Technical Production Perspective which refers to the expertise in developing a curriculum, and getting to know its technical and procedural aspects. Curriculum Conscience or the Critical Perspective refers to the ability to identify the assumptions underlying the curriculum, i.e., what is being taken for granted, and its critical understanding comes under curriculum conscience (Posner 1998).

a) Technical Production Perspective

The technical production perspective provides a view of rationality in curriculum planning and outlines the techniques which the curriculum planner should keep in mind while formulating the curriculum. Ralph Tyler uses the technical production perspective. Its prevailing influence on the entire curriculum understanding cannot be sidelined. It is important to note that till date most of the theoretical work on the curriculum revolves around the framework that he developed. Tyler’s work addresses the steps which one should follow while making a curriculum. The four steps suggested by him deal with (i) the selection of the educational purposes; (ii) the determination of experiences; (iii) the organization of experiences; and (iv) the provision for evaluation. Hilda Taba (1962) refines the Tylerian approach, and further subdivides Tyler’s four planning steps. Taba accepts the basic assumption that curriculum planning is a technical or scientific process rather than being a political matter. She favours a systematic, objective, scientific, and research-oriented approach to curriculum development. She too lays stress on objectivity and considers it pertinent for curriculum development. Curriculum designs are to be in accordance with the verifiable consequence on learning or to their contribution to educational objectives. Like Tyler, Taba accepts the assumption that learning is the ultimate purpose of schooling. She focuses on the selection and organization of learning experiences, with emphasis on the learning outcomes and learning objectives in her evaluation approach. Her approach is more prescriptive than Tyler’s procedure of curriculum planning.

Posner (1998) critically looks at the Tylerian framework and finds that schooling is assumed to be a process the main purpose of which is to promote or produce learning. Tyler speaks of students as learners. He treats objectives as desirable learning outcomes. The evaluation of the school’s process is solely measured by the achievement test scores. Tyler also distinguishes between educational goals and non-educational goals by determining if they could be attributed to learning. The framework also defines curriculum in terms of intended learning outcome. Schooling is, therefore, reduced to a production system in which individual learning outcomes are the primary product.

Tyler's framework evinces a scientific approach towards curriculum planning. It is seen as an enterprise in which the planner objectively and scientifically develops the means necessary to produce the desired learning outcomes. He gives no space to personal biases and prejudices and looks at it in a neutral way. He adheres to means-end reasoning and sees the entire process of curriculum planning as embodying rational decisions that are devoid of the personal reflection of the planners. The entire process is seen in a mechanical mode and the scientific inclination of his work is evident in his rationale and in the questions that are posited.

This perspective of curriculum development is found unacceptable on several counts, more so because it negates the complex forms of personal and mental development. Educational objectives are more than the behavioral objectives of intended learning outcomes. This instrumental approach to knowledge and education is largely debunked as it espouses the passive model of the man. In the words of Stenhouse (1975:4) the behavioral, instrumental perception defines the curriculum as, "all of the planned experiences provided by the school to assist the pupils in attaining the designated learning outcomes to the best of their abilities". He found this behavioral objective definition of the curriculum extremely problematic, and suggested that meaningful curriculum seeks to communicate the essential principles and features of an educational proposal in such a form that it is open to critical scrutiny and is capable of effective translation into practice.

b) Critical Perspective

The dominant technical production perspective was put into question by the critical perspective. This perspective takes a more critical approach and questions the authority of experts in curriculum planning. The idea of the value-free curriculum decision is given up in this approach. Hence, it also undermines the technical production assumption that curriculum development involves a purely technical, scientific and rational process. Rather, curriculum development is seen as a political and ideological matter. Underlying this framework is the view that "power, knowledge, ideology, and schooling are linked in ever changing patterns of complexity" (see Beyer and Apple 1998: 194).

7.3 Educational Curriculum and the Politics of Domination

The whole issue of politics of educational curriculum is rooted in the critical appropriation of the culture of those who dominate the people who are dominated. The former seek to deplore and treat as inferior the culture and knowledge system of the latter. One of the means through which the people who are dominated begin to treat their own culture as inferior is the educational curriculum. When this happens, it becomes easy to dominate them completely and strengthen one's own position. This aspect of education may be better understood in the light of the fact that dominant groups often use the educational curriculum as a channel through which the nature and extent of their dominance is communicated while the representation of others is largely enfeebled. Many of us are aware that the charge of designing and executing the curriculum is often in the hands the bureaucracy of education which itself is controlled by the state and political groups. It is, therefore, only natural that the educational curriculum serves the interests of the section of influential group of people.

From a traditional standpoint, schools were treated as places where instructions were imparted by the teachers to the students. They were sites for transmission of knowledge of importance to the existing society. What clearly escaped attention was the viewpoint that schools were also sites of

contestation among different cultural and economic groups. This somewhat simplistic conception of school education in general and educational curriculum in particular was challenged by new sociology of education which emerged forcefully in England and the United States some time in the 1970s. Radical critics argued that knowledge imparted in schools could be best understood as representing dominant culture. This is made possible through processes of selective emphases and exclusions. We know that there are different kinds of schools serving different sections of people in society. Some cater to the elite and the privileged, others cater to the middle class, while yet others cater to the poor and the disempowered. There are also some schools (eg., Delhi Tamil Education Association i.e. DTEA schools) that are established with the purpose of integrating cultural knowledge with school curriculum. It is commonly felt that children from schools for the elite, and the influential, develop cognitive skills and perspective that equips them better and privileged to succeed in life.

Box 7.1: The New Sociology of Education

“Against the claim that schools were only instructional sites, radical critics pointed to the transmission and reproduction of a dominant culture in schools, with its selective ordering and privileging of specific forms of languages, modes of reasoning, social relations, and cultural forms and experiences. In this view, culture was linked to power and to the imposition of a specific set of ruling class codes and experiences. Moreover, school culture functioned not only to confirm and privilege students from the dominant classes but also through exclusion and insult to discredit the histories, experiences, and dreams of subordinate groups. Finally, against the assertion made by traditional educators that schools were relatively neutral instructions, radical critics illuminated the way in which the state, through its selective grants, certification policies, and legal powers, shaped school practice in the interest of capitalist rationality” (Giroux 1985: XV).

The dominant culture gets repeatedly reproduced through specific social practices and texts in which the voices of the oppressed are silenced. Those who hold power are the ones who decide what kind of knowledge is worthwhile enough to be passed on to future generation. Naturally, this entails giving importance to knowledge of certain groups at the cost of others. As students of the sociology of education we need to look into the content of curriculum, social relations between and among teachers and students rigorously. Also, we need to understand how specific ideologies are perpetuated through the curriculum (see Freire 1985, Apple 1990). Is there no hope for the dominated and oppressed? Will their voices never be heard? The working class, research communities, women's groups and others do possess the potential to develop a critical perspective and to identify the oppression and domination of a group of people. This would lead to the production and dissemination of knowledge that has a bearing on the needs of the people and in doing so resist and counteract cultural manipulation in favour of decentralization of control.

a) Colonial Education in India

All kinds of knowledge cannot be considered worth imparting. Political and economic considerations determine the validity or appropriateness of any knowledge. It is this validity of knowledge that decides its inclusion or omission from the curriculum framework. Educational aims have a historical character, and they change over time. Kumar (2005) effectively points out the ideological roots of colonial education. Education helped the British in dominating Indians ideologically, which strengthened colonial rule. He explains that by the beginning of the nineteenth century, the British Empire had almost won this part of the continent. The main objective then became empire building. The colony was

to be maintained so that it could generate profits for long. In this light the reformist and the educationist attempts came into light. The colony was won with force and coercion, but the long-term sustenance required social order and peace. Education was supposed to replace coercion with socialization since education was an important socializing agent that would turn natives into loyal citizens of the British state.

In colonial India, education provided the great moral agenda of colonialism. The colonial state saw itself as the protector of the 'ignorant masses' given to emotional and irrational behaviour. The colonialists felt that the only effective way of controlling the passions and irrationality among Indians was rationality and scientific reasoning which could be imparted through education. In doing so, the colonialists were able to entrench their position and exercise greater control over the masses.

Box 7.2 : Bombay Report of 1844

“One of the main duties of Government in modern times is to protect one class of its subjects, the weak, the unwary, the helpless, in one word the large majority, from the unprincipled few, and the remedy, acknowledged to be the most available one, is to inspire the bulk of the population with the desire, and to afford them the means, of acquiring as much exact knowledge as possible on the various subjects and idea...” (Kumar 2005 :34).

English administrators of the mid-nineteenth century answered the question of what is worth teaching in terms of their limited understanding of and interest in Indian culture and the local knowledge. Macaulay in his Minutes of 1835 states this ethnocentric attitude in the following words, “a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia” (cited from Young 1935). Macaulay’s Minutes also pronounced that any kind of spending on Sanskrit and Arabic learning would be a dead loss. The Minutes stated, “What we spend on the Arabic and Sanskrit colleges is not merely a dead loss to the cause of truth; it is bounty-money paid to raise up champions of error. It goes to form a nest, not merely of helpless place-hunters, but of bigots prompted alike by passion and by interest to raise a cry against every useful scheme of education”. On the above grounds we can say that the colonial education strengthened its hold by systematic rejection of indigenous knowledge and replacing it with knowledge as well as the culture of the colonialists themselves. In 1835, the Governor-General William Bentinck, agreed with Macaulay’s Minutes and wrote, “the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India,” thus promoting and establishing a permanent position for the use of the English language in Indian educational institutions (Young 1935).

During the early nineteenth century, the East India Company took steps to establish an education system in India. Some of the major decisions taken were the following:

- 1) the new system would be governed by a bureaucracy at every stage from primary schooling onwards, and in all aspects including the structure of syllabi, the content of textbooks, and teacher training;
- 2) the new system would aim at acculturating Indian children and youth in European attitudes and perceptions, and at imparting to them the skills required for working in the colonial administration, particularly at its middle and lower rungs;
- 3) the teaching of English and its use as medium of instruction would be a means of this acculturation and training;

- 4) indigenous schools would have to conform to the syllabus and textbooks prescribed by the colonial government if they wanted to seek government aid;
- 5) impersonal, centralized examinations would be used to assess students' eligibility for promotion and to select candidates for scholarships (Kumar 2004: 25 -26).

This kind of colonial set up ensured that the people at large consumed the knowledge provided by the ruler that would thwart their initiative and confidence to generate knowledge.

Kumar (2004, 2005) presents the argument that the text-book centered character of education in India is related to the historical circumstances under which India's present education system developed. The completely bureaucratized, mechanistic education system that they introduced reinforced culturally what colonial policies were aiming to achieve economically. Education involved training in unproductive skills and socialization in colonial perceptions. Furthermore, the colonial pedagogy, and education continued even after colonial rule. After independence, the education system continues to be based on the colonial policies of examinations and the prescriptions of textbooks. Colonial rule still plays a significant role in deciding what should be considered valid in school knowledge. Kumar asserts that a link exists between the selection of school knowledge that was made under colonial rule and present day pedagogy and curricula. In colonial India the job of deciding, selecting and shaping school knowledge was performed by the 'enlightened outsiders'. In independent India this role is taken up by educated Indians. They have become the 'enlightened outsiders' to the masses. Our educational curriculum is delinked from the people's knowledge and skills primarily because these were considered deficient and worthless by colonialists. The colonialists felt that the introduction of education based on colonial culture and value system was of little use to the people of India. What happened in the process was the widening of the gap between school curriculum and the ethos and home environment of the learner. In the present day too, education continues to play an ameliorative role and remains widely separated from the lived lives of people.

Reflection and Action 7.1

Discuss the role of education in colonial times.

b) Politics of Language

Language is more than a means of communication. The issue of language is highly charged and political. This section will elaborate on the politics that was involved in the Hindi-Urdu divide and the reasons for their adoption in the educational curriculum. The reason for the adoption of Hindi as the language of the future nation was a political question and has been a controversial one. This question has been surrounded by the politics of the freedom struggle, and this gradually was also associated with the idea of nation making. By the mid-nineteenth century two 'distinct' languages had begun to be associated with two 'communities', namely, Hindus and Muslims. By the twentieth century both the communities identified themselves with their own language. They created and used Hindi-Urdu divide to maintain their distinctive nature.

Kumar (2005) makes the point that it was not until the end of the nineteenth century that any writer of Hindi wrote in a style entirely devoid of Urdu. Both the languages were inextricably linked. The differentiation between Hindi and Urdu got deepened as the two languages got increasingly associated with Hinduism and Islam, and were largely used for political ends. It was in the

twentieth century that both the writers had prejudices against each other. Organizations like Arya Samaj took steps to develop the self-perception of the Hindu community with the Hindi language. In the 1920s this Hindi-Hindu association was gaining strength. Formal Hindi, which was developing in this time devoid of Urdu, was the vehicle of upper caste intellectuals. This language was also being used for educational purposes. The use of Hindustani (a mixture of Hindi and Urdu), was referred to as the language of the 'bazaar' or of the common masses, which could not fulfill the requirements of a national language. Though the works of Premchand and Gandhi favoured Hindustani over Sanskritized Hindi works, their arguments were rejected on the grounds that a language like Hindustani would not be able to carry out the important task of nation-building.

Language was getting associated with the politics of nation making. This movement for Sanskritized Hindi was against the use of Hindustani which was spoken by ordinary people. This Sanskritized Hindi was considered as a medium of serious discourse, as it was not amenable to the common people. It was the language of the educated elite people. For the ideology of nation-building they used their own language and suppressed the minority cultures and their dialects. The earlier unit explained how the language of the dominant group is given higher importance by shrouding the control exercised by language under the ideology of nation-building. Urdu, as distinct from the Sanskritized Hindi, became a symbol for Muslims and for the Pakistan also (Kumar 2005).

The politics of the freedom struggle can be seen in the politics of language that got perpetuated through school education. Kumar points out that this divide between Sanskritized Hindi and Urdu strengthened the reproductive role of education. We are aware of the role of education in maintaining and in further perpetuating inequality in society. The politics of the freedom struggle was also assuring this reproductive function of education through language. All children cannot learn and cannot feel comfortable in the school environment and in the school curriculum that relies heavily on Sanskritized Hindi. Only the children of the upper castes would be able to reap the benefits of this kind of education system because in their homes too they speak the same language. This preference for formal Hindi subsided the importance of other regional languages like Awadhi, Bundelkhandi, Chhatisgarhi, Bhojpuri and several others. It is important to note that the 'new' Hindi did not just alienate the Urdu speaking community but also those who communicated in other dialects of the Hindi language. It restricted the fruits of education to a few and so facilitated political control over the masses. The language to be used in the educational curriculum has not much to do with the learner-centered approach. The decisions on educational questions like what to teach, and in which language to teach is devoid of the learner. It is the politics that decides on such educational issues and not a learner (Kumar 2005).

Reflection and Action 7.2

Do you think education should be imparted in regional languages? Discuss with your co-learners at the study centre.

c) Women's Education

We are aware of the socializing role of education. Education works as a deep socializing agent and has indelible effects on young minds and personality. This section asserts how girls' education became an instrument in the hands of awakened men and served their ideology. Women's education, its relevance,

and its curriculum reflect the inextricable link with politics. Women's education is always considered instrumental in serving certain political objectives. In the Indian context, women's education found specific relevance during colonial period, and one witnessed the setting up of institutions of learning for women and girls by the social reformers and the British government. In this section we will critically look at women's education in colonial times and discuss the perspective of the NCF on women's education.

Kumar (2004, 2005) asserts that the nature and content of female education was a matter of grave concern in the late nineteenth century. Modern education that was getting prevalent at that time was causing anxiety among the Indians. On the contrary, the modern education for men was not the cause of concern. Modern education aspired to weaken the forces of oppressive institutions like patriarchy. National leaders as well as social reformers felt that modern education to girls would be a great threat to the fabric of Indian society. The other widespread fear was that the educated, modern women would not be devoted towards their family responsibilities, and would try to be equal to men. Instead of being able to question, women's education was designed to suit the patriarchal ideology. He points that special provision was being made for subjects and items of knowledge appropriate in view of a girl's future role as wife and mother. The curriculum was decided on the logic of appropriateness of knowledge for girls. This reflected the image of home as the primary space for a woman and the family as the essential arena for the exercise of her talent. The knowledge and skills that seemed to be relevant were cooking, music, painting, needlework and first aid.

Kumar (2005) mentions that the 'awakened' men of the late nineteenth century were remarkably conservative in their attitudes towards modern education for women. Girls' education designed by them ensured that patriarchy and the hierarchy in gender relations continue. The curriculum imparted to women was designed in accordance with the interests of males and the patriarchal institutions. The selection of the knowledge and skills like the introduction of cooking and sewing in schools for girls served the patriarchal ideology and restricted the arena of women to the home only. Education, instead of emancipating women, became the tool of maintaining the hierarchy of gender relations. Education was used to socialize girls to become diligent wives and devoted mothers when they grew up.

Chatterjee (1989) looks at the issue of women's education more critically. For him, in colonial India, culture was conceptualized in two realms – the material and the spiritual. Western civilization was powerful in the material sphere, which includes science, technology, and modern methods of statecraft. Through these tools European countries subjugated non-European people and imposed their domination. The nationalist ideology believed that to overcome this domination, the colonized people must learn superior techniques of organizing material life. But this did not imply the imitation of the West in every aspect of life as that would blur the distinction between the West and the East. The Eastern identity in that situation would be completely dissolved and the national culture would be threatened. The Indian nationalist believed that the spiritual domain of the East was superior to the West and the former needed to emulate the latter only in the material sphere. The nationalist ideology identified the need to develop the material techniques of modern civilization and at the same time retain and strengthen the distinctive spiritual vigour of the national culture. He superimposes the material/spiritual dichotomy on gender roles. On that basis, the outside material world was perceived to be the domain of men, while women represented home and the spiritual self. The nationalist ideology felt that though the European people challenged and dominated the non-Europeans because of their (former) superior material power, it failed to colonize

the inner identity of the East, which is the superior, distinctive, spiritual culture of the East. The national struggle felt the crucial need of protecting, preserving and strengthening the spiritual essence. The education of women was selected and modified to suit the nationalist ideology, as the latter believed that women symbolize this spiritual self of the nation.

There was no denial of the fact that India had to catch up with the West, and to achieve that the women of the nation were to be urgently educated. But this education should seethe with traditional and national values, and should not be left to the alien colonial state or the missionaries. Women's education was considered very pertinent for the freedom struggle. Hence it can be said that the nature and content of women's education were highly regulated against modernized education. It was felt that by imparting modern education to women, India would loose its 'distinctiveness' as a nation, which had to be 'created' in the first place, and then had to be 'sustained' through women's education. Men were imparted the role of being contenders for modernity and modernization, and so to take hold of the public domain to fight the white, modern, technocratic counterpart, while women were supposed to be the savior of the tradition and of Indian values. Therefore, national leaders and social reformers conceded on the relevance of education for women, but completely sanctioned the unregulated, western education for them (Bhog 2002).

Tracing women's education, Bhattacharya (2001) writes that there would be a time when natives would realize the benefit of female education as a means to rise in civilization and to advance social happiness and progress. They would understand that women had as much right to exercise and enjoy all the rights, privileges, and duties of this world as men. It is clear that women's education was not so much an end as it was a means to an end - the betterment of the family and the nation. Women's role was reduced the raising sons for the nation. Kumar (2005) points out that the reformers viewed education as the 'means of women's upliftment.' Very few awakened people saw the relevance of education in providing new avenues and a new place to women. Ramabai, for example, was a scholar of high repute, who worked towards women's emancipation, and was against the conservative, patriarchal structure of India. Her conceptualization of education was different from the majority of social reformers and nationalists of that time. She advocated modern education to all the women, as only that could ensure women's liberation from the clutches of patriarchy. The major task that education was supposed to perform was to give women a new self-identity, rather than uplifting her status. It is important for us to note that what needed to be taught to women was not decided by keeping the woman, her aspirations, and her needs in mind. Rather they were decided by having the broader and larger category of nation at the center. It may be concluded that women's education in colonial times suited the nationalist and the patriarchal ideology.

7.4 National Curriculum Framework

Till the year 1976 the Indian Constitution allowed the State Governments to take decisions on all matters pertaining to school education, including the design and development of the curriculum. All the educational matters were within the jurisdiction of the State. The Centre could only provide guidance to the States on policy issues. In 1976 the Constitution was amended to include education in the Concurrent List. For the first time in 1986 the country as a whole had a uniform National Policy on Education. The National Policy on Education (1986) entrusted NCERT with the responsibility of developing the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) and review the framework at frequent intervals. Since then, NCERT has taken the initiatives of designing the NCF at intermitent intervals.

The framers of NCF 2000 operated under the assumption that Indians do not recognize the greatness of their glorious past. They pin responsibility for this on those who ruled the country, and made it bereft of its own culture. The NCF laments that though Indian children know about Newton, most of them are ignorant about the contribution of Aryabhata. They do know about computer, but are not aware of the advent of the concept of zero (*shunya*) or the decimal system. The alien rulers did not allow knowledge which related to the country's own ethos, reality, culture and people to be imparted through educational curriculum because they thought that the indigenous knowledge and practices were deficient. Here, reference is made to alien rulers and not to the British specifically. Therefore, it refers to the primordial past which was dominated by the Mughals and then by the British. The NCF 2000 can be questioned on its stand on vocational education. It gives importance to vocational education, but does not make it uniform for the entire society. The NCF 2005 accepts that, work education and vocational education are an integral component of our school education system and that work experience can develop an understanding of facts and principles involved in various forms of work and inculcate a positive attitude towards work. Work experience is treated as purposive and meaningful work organized as an integral part of the learning process. Therefore, we can say that it also aims to work towards merging the gap between mental and manual labor. But the paradox in the above objectives comes when the NCF 2000 segregates vocational education from the mainstream academic stream. The framework widens the gap between the two by introducing separate vocational and academic streams after class X.

The NCF mentions that the vocational stream is designed for the socially disadvantaged groups such as women, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and physically challenged people. Instead of providing equality of opportunity through a uniform pattern of education, NCF 2000 further introduced class divisions into education and further rigidified division of labor. Vocational education was used to widen the gap between the haves and the have nots. The NCF 2000 worked on the assumption that for the majority of students, the higher secondary stage may be the end of their formal education. They could be trained to be part of the world of work, and so should be imparted vocational education. This section of society was not compliant with the education system, and so witnessed higher dropout rate. The NCF provide a solution to this problem by restricting them to vocational education to become efficient workers. There was an equally explicit assumption that the future leadership would emerge from the academic stream, from those who went to the tertiary stage of education (Rajesh 2002). The following two excerpts from the NCF 2000 explain this clearly:

- i) "For the majority of students the higher secondary stage may prove terminal. For them, it would serve as a doorway to life and, more importantly, to the world of work" (pp. 63).
- ii) While the top leadership would be provided by a small minority, to be groomed at the tertiary level, in every department of life. The second or intermediate level of leadership on a much wider scale would have to be provided by the products of the higher secondary stage. They are expected to make a meaningful contribution to our developmental efforts in agriculture, industry, business and various other social services" (pp. 64).

This division in the academic and vocational streams perpetuates the divisions in society, as one section of society is prepared to take up a vocation and make an earning to support oneself and the family while the other section would plan and participate in the development process of the nation. This division, in essence, trains the dominant section of society to rule the rest, and be the future leaders. It envisages different education for the two streams, and instead of putting in steps to narrow the gap between the vocational and

the academic stream, it turns them into two watertight compartments. Rajesh (2002) questions the intention of the NCF in promoting the dual and unequal system. The objectives and the expectations from both the streams are completely different. The academic and vocational distinction crops up from the already existing social divisions in society, and further perpetuates future job divisions. Those who are destined to get vocational education will fit the blue-collar work force, while those who will be endowed with academic training will do white-collar job. The NCF 2004 was intended to build a cohesive society based on pillars of relevance, equity and excellence with thrust on inculcating sense of patriotism and nationalism. This could be achieved by integrating indigenous knowledge and recognizing the contribution of India toward world civilizations and meeting the challenges of information and communication technology (ICT) and globalization squarely. This called for (i) decentralizing the process of curriculum development; ii) providing knowledge about all religions and values at all stages of school education; iii) ensuring the inclusion of learners with various challenges in the mainstream, and mobilizing the resources for achieving the educational goals of the country; iv) confirming the availability of pre-school education to all children in the country and prohibiting formal teaching and testing of different subjects at this end; and v) integrating art-education, health and physical education, and work education into the module of 'art of healthy and productive living' at the primary stage itself. More importantly it recommends available strong vocational stream for enhancing employment opportunities and entrepreneurship at the higher secondary stage. The education system can be made more effective when suitable implementation strategies for the orientation, participation and accountability of teachers, parents, community and managers of the system are adopted.

The National Curriculum Framework 2005 seeks to provide a framework within which teachers and schools can choose and plan experiences that they think children should have. In order to realise educational objectives, the curriculum be conceptualised as a structure which articulates required experiences. For this it addresses some basic questions: (a) What educational purposes should the schools seek to achieve? (b) What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to achieve these purposes? (c) How can these educational experiences be meaningfully organised? and (d) How do we ensure that these educational purposes are indeed being accomplished? NCF 2005 reviewed the NCF 2004, and on that basis proposed five guiding principles for curriculum development: connecting knowledge to life outside the school; ensuring that learning shifts away from rote methods; enriching the curriculum so that it goes beyond textbooks; making examinations more flexible and integrating them with classroom life; nurturing an overriding identity informed by caring concerns within the democratic polity of the country.

Box 7.3: Salient Features of National Curriculum Framework, 2005

- strengthening a national system of education in a pluralistic society
- reducing the curriculum load based on insights provided in 'Learning Without Burden'. It ensures that, quality education is provided to all children which calls for reorientation in our perception of learners and learning
- this sites is on learner engagement for construction of knowledge and fostering creativity
- connecting knowledge across disciplinary boundaries to provide a broader frame for insightful construction of knowledge
- the activities for developing critical perspectives on socio-cultural realities need to find space in curricular practices

- wherein, local knowledge and children's experiences are essential components of textbooks and pedagogic practices
- a renewed effort needs be made to implement the three-language formula
- ability to think logically, formulate and handle abstractions rather than 'knowledge' of mathematics (formals and mechanical procedures)
- science teaching should engage the learner in acquiring methods and processes that will nurture their curiosity and creativity, particularly in relation to the environment
- social science content needs to focus on conceptual understanding
- interdisciplinary approaches, promoting key national concerns such as gender equality, justice, human rights and sensitivity to marginalized groups and minorities
- civics should be recast as political science, and significance of history as a shaping influence on the child's conception of the past and civic identity should be recognized
- school curricula from the pre-primary to senior secondary stages needs to be reconstructed to realize the pedagogic potential of work as a pedagogic medium in knowledge acquisition, developing values and multiple-skill formation
- peace-oriented values should be promoted in all subjects
- it is desirable to evolve a common school system to ensure comparable quality in different regions of the country and also ensure that when children of different background study together, it improves the overall quality of learning and enrich the school ethos
- *panchayat raj* system should be strengthened by evolving a mechanism to regulate the functioning of parallel bodies at the village level so that democratic participation in development can be realized
- reducing stress and enhancing success in examination necessitate a shift from content-based testing to problem-solving and understanding
- development of syllabi, textbooks and teaching-learning resources could be carried out in a decentralized and participatory manner involving teachers, experts from universities, NGOs and teachers' organizations.

7.5 Education and Politics: Comparative Perspective

The influence of politics on education is not just restricted to the Indian context, but can be seen in other countries also. Now we will reflect on the comparative perspective by taking up the Communist Regime of the USSR, and the Nazi regime of Germany. The Soviet Union that emerged after Russian Revolution of 1917 had the communist agenda, and it relied heavily on education to solve its political, economic, and moral problems. All their policies had the aim of Communism, and the educational institutions were to play a leading role in this. Soviet education was riddled with the problem of ideological and moral training. The Soviet system generated deep political loyalty, particularly among the young people, and this can be ascribed to the operation of the schools. The political training given in the schools and universities was designed to foster these virtues among the young people. Great emphasis was placed on raising a new Soviet citizen, and various elements in the character of this new man were supposed to be honesty, courtesy, sexual morality, vigorous intellectual and physical activity. The education system was geared towards these goals (Noah 1965). The Communist regimes needed to facilitate the

ideological indoctrination of the masses, and to establish the supremacy of Russian culture as the only true socialist culture. Communists felt that education could solve their political, economic and moral problems. Shimoniak observes that the Communists realized that the only way to stay in power was to educate their own intelligentsia, their own leaders and their own children. It is for this reason that in the communist regimes, China or (earlier) USSR, the number of schools was increased (Shimoniak 1970).

The Nazis, in Germany, also gave particular attention to education. They completely controlled the German educational system, and private schools were taken over. They were thus determined to mould the new generation to accept Nazi principles. When the Nazis seized power in 1933, they applied their totalitarian principles to all aspects of the German education system. The Nazi authorities had a definitive approach to education. They treated the student as an object and education was not seen as leading to personal and intellectual development, but rather as preparing children to serve the new National Socialist state. Education was not to inspire intellectual thought or cause children to question and seek answers to complicated issues. The schools were designed to mould children and get them to unquestioningly accept the Nazi doctrine. The goal under the Nazis was to consciously shape pupils on National Socialist principles.

The curriculum laid great emphasis on racial science, often termed "racial hygiene". Racial education became an important part of the curriculum. It was presented formally as well as worked into many other curricula materials. Pseudo-scientific works were taught as scientific fact. Racial science was not only introduced as part of biology courses, but was presented to children in one form or another at virtually every grade level. Children learned in school that not only were Aryans superior, but they alone produced civilizations of any cultural importance. Other races were seen as inferior. Jews were depicted as an actual threat to Aryans because they were believed to carry genetic diseases that could be transmitted to Aryans. The Nazi ideology and physical-military training became other important aspects of the school program. A new Nazi curriculum was introduced to promote a new German consciousness. Only teaching material that promoted the spirit of the new Germany was encouraged while material that contradicted German feelings or paralyzed energies necessary for self-assertion was rejected. Teachers were encouraged to teach "right" attitudes or "character". Unlike knowledge which involved intellectual thought, their education involved "feeling" which the Nazis cultivated. The emotional acceptance of the racist, xenophobic nationalist outlook was seen as a prerequisite to character building. The Nazi Party sought to create a religious cult with the various pledges and prayers that they developed for children. Songs and pledges were developed to reinforce the idea of commitment to and sacrifice, even death for the German nation and its Fuhrer-Adolf Hitler. Every lesson had to begin with the "Hail Hitler" salute. Songs were written to the tune of church hymns with words praising Hitler and the German nation.

The Nazis organized mass burnings of books written by Jews or expressing objectionable ideas. Almost all books by Jewish authors were destroyed, and this included both school textbooks and children's literature. This censorship extended to newspapers, magazines, and books. The Nazis used schoolbooks for propaganda purposes, and they also introduced major chauvinist, racist themes in children's books. Children's literature in the Third Reich was geared towards teaching them the evils of the Jewish race. The Nazis also sought to instill the need for physical activity to strengthen and harden the children for life—the boys for the military and the girls for motherhood. Because of this predilection towards ideological indoctrination, academic standards declined. History was one of the subjects most significantly revised after the control of the Nazis over German schools became complete. History books were written describing the degeneration of the world by the mixing of blood.

The foregoing account depicts the attention educational processes have gained. Schools are seen as the chosen instrument to nullify any kind of undesirable legacies of the past. In the Communist regimes schools are seen as a major instrument for building the New Communist Man. Though the same function is attached in other nations also, but in a communist or a fascist regime this function becomes highly significant (Noah 1986).

7.6 Conclusion

The educational curriculum cannot be seen as operating in isolation, as a neutral category. It would be fallacious to assume that the processes involved in curriculum planning are rational. They are influenced by the wider political, cultural and economic domains. Education can be an effective tool to perpetuate and further entrench their power in the society. Education has served different ideologies. This unit and the earlier unit have depicted how education can be used for nation building and to serve the political interests of the ruling regime. This unit has only taken instances from the school curriculum to depict the politics involved in the educational curriculum. Therefore we can say that schools teach what counts as knowledge, and for Kumar (2004:8) “what counts as knowledge is a reconstruction, based on the selection made under given social conditions. Out of the total body of available knowledge, only a part of it can be treated as worthy of being passed on to the next generation”. The process (of curriculum planning) involves creation, codification, distribution and reception, and it takes place under the shaping influence of the economy, politics and culture. The knowledge that is available in schools for distribution is related to the overall classification of knowledge and power in society.

7.7 Further Reading

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