

Unit 14

Education: Pluralism and Multiculturalism

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Learning Objectives

This unit introduces you to the emerging facets of multicultural education. After reading this unit you should be able to:

- explain the various dimensions of multicultural education;
- discuss the features of a multicultural society and its interface with the multicultural education; and
- analyse the goals and strategies of education in multicultural societies

14.1 Introduction

In this changing world multiculturalism has emerged as a contemporary social reality. To address the educational need of these societies educationist have developed a distinctive perspective known as multiculturalism in education. Multicultural societies like those of America, Britain, Australia and many others have introduced these perspectives in their education system.

In this unit, we have discussed the meaning and dimensions of a multicultural society. The essential approaches to multiculturalism, namely the process of assimilation; cultural pluralism, melting pot, the ideology of cultural choice, etc., are widely discussed. A multicultural society needs different educational approaches. To know the specific educational needs of these societies and to cater to them, we have discussed in this unit the goal and strategies of multicultural education. We have also presented a case study of multicultural education from Australia. This unit altogether will help you to understand the emerging dimensions, goals, strategies and practices of multicultural education.

14.2 Culture, Society and Multiculturalism

Before we proceed further in discussing multicultural education, it is imperative that we must clarify the concept of culture sociologically.

Understanding Culture and Society

You must have studied at the graduate level (ESO-01/11 of BDP) in detail the concepts and various elements of culture. Let us briefly discuss culture again. In the layman's sense culture is perceived in relative term. Some individuals or groups are considered more cultured than the rest. It wrongly conceptualizes culture as it locates social groups or categories in a hierarchical order and does not take into consideration several properties of culture as available from within. In a sociological sense, understanding each one of us both as an individual and as a member of a group belonging to a culture is important.

Cultures may be different from each other, not superior or inferior to each other. We possess culture as members of a group. To us culture is those shared values, norms, behaviour patterns, customs, traditions, art, music, artifacts, etc., which we inherit as members of society and transmit to the next generation. It is not to be understood that these shared values, traditions, norms, customs, art, music, artifacts, behaviour, etc., are static. Rather, all these undergo several changes in the process of interaction with other cultures, and in the processes of transmission and inheritance.

Box 14.1: What is culture?

It is a way of life or a cherished worldview of a group in society. To E.B. Tylor "Culture in its ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Tylor 1889).

To the UNESCO.... "Culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, life styles, ways of living together, value systems traditions and beliefs" (<http://portal.unesco.org>)

It is essential that all members of a group for its survival and functioning accept culturally patterned ways of behaviour. Thus culture conditions, forecasts and attach subjective meaning to the behaviour of the members of a group. Human beings have to satisfy various psychological and biological needs. These needs are satisfied mostly by culturally determined ways. Thus culture makes the behaviour patterns of one group very specific and different from those of others. However, the specificity and differences are not to be understood at all as contradictory or oppositional to the rest. Rather, in a fast changing communicative society these can widely be regarded as plural manifestation of cultural richness. In many societies there are groups who are distinct from each other in terms of their cultural practices. These groups are indeed the subcultures of large societies and are distinctive by their racial, caste, ethnic, linguistic, class, occupational, gender and religious orientations.

In many large societies while there is coexistence of significant number of sub-cultures because of geographical vastness, new subcultures are added to these with arrival of immigrant groups in these societies. In societies with ancient historical tradition social fabrics are interwoven with plural traditions taken from various subculture. Now let us understand multicultural societies,

Box 14.2

In dealing with immigrant groups and their cultures, there are several approaches taken by the nation-states:

Monoculturalism: In Europe, culture is very closely linked to nationalism, thus government policy is to assimilate immigrants.

Melting Pot: In the United States, the traditional view has been one of a melting pot where all the immigrant cultures are mixed and amalgamated without state intervention.

Multiculturalism: The policy that facilitates immigrants and others to preserve their cultures with the different cultures interacting peacefully within one nation.

The way nation states treat immigrant cultures rarely falls neatly into one or another of the above approaches. The degree of difference with the host culture (i.e., "foreignness"), the number of immigrants, attitudes of

the resident population, the type of government policies that are enacted and the effectiveness of those policies all make it difficult to generalize about the effects. Similarly with other subcultures within a society, attitudes of mainstream population and communications between various cultural groups play a major role in determining outcomes. The study of cultures within a society is complex and research must take into account a myriad of variables (<http://en.wikipedia.org>)

Multicultural Societies

The post-Second World War period has been conspicuously marked by the triumph of liberal democracies and multiculturalism. While on the one hand there has been a resurgence of people's movements against the totalitarian, theocratic and colonial regions, there have also been the articulation of multiple identities within these societies. The proliferation of Black Civil Rights, students, women's, religious, minority rights, indigenous people, etc. movements across the globe have paved the way for the emergence of multiculturalism in the following forms:

- The mosaic of a multicultural society is formed with a long historical process of immigration of a sizeable number of people in these societies in reference and thereafter developing a process of sharing of cultural values, norms, and traditions among all the members of society. The sense of tolerance and respect for each other's culture form the basis of a multicultural society.
- As in every society, in multicultural societies too there are certain groups of people who are relegated to the margin of the society - socially, economically, culturally and politically. These marginalized groups are deprived of several choices and avenues for upward mobility. At times they form an oppositional sub-culture. Since long the marginalized groups have been struggling for their cultural identity and equal rights in a multicultural society; for example ethnic and religious minorities may assert their cultural rights.
- Multicultural societies provide the social, political and economic space for the articulation of views of all ethnic and religious groups and for the assertion of their cultural rights.
- It is important that many of these cultural identities are inclusive and are constructed criss-crossing the boundaries of many of the pre-existing cultural identities. For example, the migrant groups have members from all racial, ethnic, religious, occupational, etc., groups.

Even though these multi-cultural identities are locally manifested and contextualised they have wider and at times global connectivity. For example the Black women of America are globally linked through the network of international women's movement.

Reflection and Action 14.1

What do you understand by culture? Discuss a few elements of culture, which can be used from the viewpoint of multiculturalism in education.

14.3 Cultural Diversities in Multicultural Education

Multicultural education views cultural diversities from a distinctive perspective. Let us examine how cultural diversities are being viewed in this approach to education:

- a) Multiculturalism in education recognizes that every learner belongs to a culture, which produces a distinctive pattern of behaviour, life-style, identity, feeling and thinking.

- b) No culture is inferior or superior to other cultures. However, as culture shapes the worldview, people tend to evaluate and judge the rest of the world through their nurtured worldview. It may at times solicit feelings of superiority over any other cultures and produce inability to view other cultures as equally viable alternatives for organizing reality. Ultimately it may contribute to ethno-centrism. However by over-coming one's ethnocentric view of the world one can begin to respect other cultures and even learn to function comfortably in more than one cultural group (Gollnick, and Chinn 1990: 10). Here education plays a big role in overcoming these limitations in a multicultural society.
- c) Many elements of one culture are shared by members of other culture.
- d) Culture is learned and shared. Here enculturation and socialization are important processes to learn how to act in society. Multicultural education facilitates these processes of learning and sharing.
- e) Culture is an adaptation and has been developed to accommodate several environmental and technological conditions. This process of adaptation has been integrated in multicultural education.
- f) Culture and several cultural practices undergo changes along with the changes in the technological and communicative arrangements in society.
- g) Over the centuries human societies have become interdependent. There have been the needs to understand other cultures in their own terms and not in terms of one's own cultural belief. In a plural society no one can relegate others to an inferior status in cultural term. Thus there have been the inter-cultural processes of learning and experiencing another culture so that one would know what it is like to be a member of another culture and to view the world from that point of view.
- h) Human beings have the capacity to be multicultural, to feel comfortable and to communicate effectively with the people of diverse cultural backgrounds. Scholars are of the view that a multicultural educational programme can help students to expand their cultural competencies to include those required to function effectively in other cultures in which they are not members (ibid).

As we have already discussed the significances of cultural diversities in multicultural education, let us underline the important dimensions of multicultural education in the following section.

14.4 Dimensions of Multicultural Education

In general, educational institutions are the meeting points of people from diverse economic, social and cultural backgrounds. In a rapidly changing society these diversities, which are manifested precisely in the form of race, religion and ethnicity, are both challenges and opportunities for the educators to initiate curriculum to integrate the micro-perspective of local communities with broad educational orientation of the state and society. This educational orientation in essence helps to make the students realize that (a) in spite of cultural differences, individuals across cultures have many similarities, (b) everyone has the desire and capacity to learn from each others culture, (c) we have the desire to share values, moves, norms and traditions, and (d) through interaction with various cultures we become respectful and tolerant to plural existence in the society. In this context multicultural education is viewed as "an educational strategy in which students from diverse cultural backgrounds are viewed as positive and essential in developing classroom instruction and school environment. It is designed to support and extend the concepts of culture, cultural pluralism and equity into the formal school setting (ibid). In multi-cultural education cultural diversities are valued resources.

Democratic value is another aspect of multicultural education. According to Christine Bennett (1990) “multicultural education is an approach to teaching and learning that is based upon democratic values and beliefs and seeks to foster cultural pluralism within culturally diverse societies and in an interdependent world”. To him cultural pluralism is an ideal state of societal conditions characterized by equity and mutual respect among existing cultural groups. In contrast to the cultural assimilation or the melting pot images where ethnic minorities are expected to give up their traditions and to blend in or be absorbed by the host society or dominant culture, in a pluralistic society members of ethnic groups are permitted to retain their cultural ways, as long as they conform to those practices deemed necessary for harmonious coexistence with the society as a whole (1990:11). To him there are four distinctive, at times overlapping, aspects of multicultural education. It is a movement, a curriculum, a process and a commitment. Let us elaborate these further.

- a) It is a movement to achieve equality of educational opportunity and equity among all groups irrespective of ethnic, social, gender, class, etc., backgrounds. It therefore aims to transform the total learning environment.
- b) The system of education develops a curriculum which is integrated and multicultural in essence. This curriculum approach of multicultural education develops knowledge and understanding about cultural differences, the history and contribution of all the ethnic groups in the nations as well as in various civilizations in the past. It also aims to integrate multi-ethnic and global perspectives with the monoethnic ones.
- c) It is a continuous process whereby people become multicultural in perceiving, evaluating, believing and doing without rejecting their own cultural values and identities.
- d) It is a commitment to combat racism and other form of discrimination through the development of appropriate knowledge and skill.

The concept of multicultural society has always been valued in democracy. It is now realized that in the globalized world multicultural education is essential for academic excellence and equity, existence of multiethnic society, existence of interdependent world and for the promotion of equity and democratic values (Bennett 1990:11-17).

Reflection and Action 14.2

Examine the main features of multicultural education. Do you think it is significant to promote multicultural education in the contemporary society? Why?

14.5 Why is Multicultural Education Essential?

There are several reasons why multicultural education is a necessity in a the contemporary globalised world. Educationists like Bennett (1990) are of the view that multicultural education is essential for academic excellence and equity, and for the existence of a multiethnic society, the existence of an interdependent world and for the promotion of democratic values in the contemporary world. Let us elaborate some of arguments:

- a) The principle of equity in education endeavours to ensure equal educational opportunities for the entire student community to express the fullest potential. Students can achieve excellence in an educational system, which is impartial in nature. The ideal of achieving educational excellence “involves concerns about ethnic groups that have been consistently cut off from equal access to a good education”. This approach recognizes that the potential for excellence is available across ethnic groups and it builds knowledge about various ethnic groups and integrates them into the curriculum.

- b) Plural societies have distinctive complexities in terms of varied cultural practices which are reflected in the patterns of socialization, food habits, behaviour patterns, dress, adherence to particular values, norms, etc. Multicultural education is very sensitive to these needs and is equipped accordingly. By recognizing these pluralities, multicultural education strikes a balance between cultural assimilation and cultural separatism or segregation.
- c) Human societies have been facing some common concerns like destruction of the ozone layer, environmental pollution, poverty, overpopulation, nuclear arms, famine and hunger, AIDS, etc. The globalization process has accentuated these concerns. A cross-cultural understanding is essential for finding solutions to these problems. Multicultural education provides a platform for the articulation of common concerns.
- d) A nation's commitment to the values of equity and democracy is widely reflected in its commitment to human rights, social justice and respect for alternative life choices. Multicultural education provides the space and platform to inculcate these values and helps to overcome the barriers in achieving the democratic values of equity (Bennett, 1990: 15-16).

Reflection and Action 14.3

Is terrorism a common concern in the contemporary society? How can a common concern against terrorism be articulated through multicultural education?

Hence the goals of multicultural education, according to Gollnich and Chinn (1990) are to:

- promote the strength and value of cultural diversity,
- promote human rights and respect for those who are different from others,
- acquire knowledge of the historical and social realities of the society in order to understand racism, sexism, poverty etc.,
- support alternative life choices for people,
- promote social justice and equality for all people, and
- promote equity in the distribution of power and income among groups

14.6 Approaches to Multiculturalism

This is an age of multiculturalism. Here cultural pluralism is a reality now. Several approaches have emerged over the years to address this issue. In the following section we shall be highlighting a few of them.

a) Assimilation

Cultural assimilation is an important process of integration of the sub-cultures in the cultural mosaic of the multicultural society. In a multicultural society, according to Gordon (1964), the process of assimilation would go through the stages whereby the new cultural group/migrant cultural group would (i) change its cultural patterns to those of the dominant groups, (ii) develop large scale primary group relationships with the dominant group; (iii) intermarry fully with the dominant groups, (iv) lose its sense of peoplehood as separate from the dominant group; (v) encounter no discrimination; (vi) encounter no prejudiced attitudes; and (vii) not raise any issues that would involve values and power conflict with the dominant group. Herein he also talks of acculturation i.e. cultural assimilation in which the dominated groups have adopted the cultural patterns of the dominant group. In the American context the following two perspectives of assimilation are frequently suggested: Anglo conformity and the melting pot. The Anglo-conformity theory demanded the complete

renunciation of the immigrant's ancestral culture in favour of the behaviour and values of the Anglo-Saxon core group (cf Gollnik and Chinn 1990). In melting pot perspective, ethnic minorities are expected to give up their traditions and to blend in or be absorbed by the host society or dominant culture.

b) Cultural Pluralism

Cultural Pluralism is also a distinctive perspective designed in the context of America. According to Gordon (1964) cultural pluralism often calls for the maintenance of enough sub-societal separation to guarantee the continuance of the ethnic cultural tradition and the existence of the group, without at the same time interfering with the carrying out of standard responsibilities to the general American civil life. However disagreement remains on this issue as to whether an individual should be allowed to choose freely whether to remain within the confines of his birthright community enclave (Pratte 1979 cf: Gollnick and Chinn 1990).

c) Ideology of Voluntary Cultural Choice

Many scholars have pointed out that cultural pluralism has seen an individual in terms of a parochial identity related to ethnicity etc. rather than an autonomous identity. Here Newman (1973) emphasized the need to create a social environment in which groups and individuals may choose voluntarily the identity they wish to play out. As individual choice and mobility across cultural groups increases, the social and cultural barriers are likely to decrease. He has the belief that increasingly we will move towards an open society in which cultural background may influence who an individual is; but become irrelevant in public interaction (Gollmick and Chinn 1990).

Reflection and Action 14.4

In your opinion what should an ideal approach to deal with multiculturalism in a plural society?

14.7 Multicultural Education: Goals and Strategies

In a multicultural set up it is essential that the educators should be aware of the cultural background of the students for positively using the cultural diversities in the educational processes. In multicultural education cultural diversities are recognized as varied resources rather than problems. As strategy to serve the above mentioned goals the following steps are very often discussed:

i) Sensitivity and criticality for multicultural content in the text book:

Both the text book writers and the teachers are required to be sensitive to multiculturalism and to develop logical criticality on the text to identify and thereafter eliminate bias and stereotypes which are projected about a community/group either unconsciously or deliberately. There are several forms of biases available in the text which can be depicted in some of the following forms:

- Invisibility of a group in the illustration and example in a majority dominated society is always taken as the national expression of a text. Thus illustrations are quite often derived from the majority groups. Thus the minorities remain unprojected or under- projected.
- Stereotyping some groups by way of assigning them specific ascribed roles and status.
- Selectivity and imbalances in interpreting the status of marginalized groups from the perspective of the dominant ones. "Such biases prevent all students, both from the dominant and the subordinate groups, male and female – from realizing the complexity of historical and contemporary situations and developments".

- Very often text book depicts unrealistic social reality in order to take the status quo as its position. Controversial topics are glossed over and discussion on social movements, dissent, sex-education, divorce etc. are avoided. Issues and realities of the lives of the subordinate and marginalized are avoided in the text book.
- Though the aspects of lives of the subordinate groups are seldom integrated in the text, there is a tendency to present these aspects as fragmented and isolated topics in text. This approach suggests that the experiences of these segments of population are interesting ones: and are the integral parts of the contemporary and historical experiences. These contemporary and historical experiences of the subordinate groups are to be integrated in the text.
- Linguistic bias though minimized but yet to be eradicated from the text. Till now gender bias continues in most of the text books. All these biases, which are prevalent in one form or the other, are required to be eliminated from the text.

Box.14.3: Practice of Multicultural Education: An Illustration

Most of the liberal democracies of the world like the USA, the UK, Canada, Australia have accepted the policy of multicultural education in view of the prevalent cultural diversities in these countries. The provincial governments of these countries have formulated a distinctive policy of multicultural education. In this context the Multicultural Education policy of New South Wales (NSW) of Australia can be cited as an illustration.

- Multicultural education supports a vision of NSW as a community which values and benefits from its cultural and linguistic diversity to fully realise its social, cultural and economic potential. NSW has evolved a distinctive Cultural Diversity and Community Relations Policy for multicultural education in schools. Its policy statements delineate the following:
- Community harmony is promoted through school policies and practices, which counter racism and intolerance and develop understanding of cultural, linguistic and religious differences.
- Schools will provide teaching and learning programs that enable students from all cultures and communities to identify themselves as Australians within a democratic multicultural society and to develop the knowledge, skills and values for participation as active citizens.
- Schools will ensure inclusive teaching practices, which recognise and value the backgrounds and cultures of all students and promote an open and tolerant attitude towards different cultures, religions and worldviews.
- Students who are learning English as a second language are provided with appropriate support to develop their English language and literacy skills so that they are able to fully participate in schooling and achieve equitable educational outcomes.
- Schools will provide specific teaching and learning programs to support the particular learning needs of targeted students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Schools will promote positive community relations through effective communication with parents and community members from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and by encouraging their participation in the life of the school.

The Principles of Multiculturalism provide the framework for the implementation of the Cultural Diversity and Community Relations Policy:

- All individuals in New South Wales should have the greatest possible opportunity to contribute to, and participate in all aspects of public life in which they may legally participate.
- All individuals and institutions should respect and make provision for the culture, language and religion of others within an Australian legal and institutional framework where English is the common language.
- All individuals should have the greatest possible opportunity to make use of and participate in relevant activities and programs provided or administered by the Government of New South Wales.
- All institutions of New South Wales should recognise the linguistic and cultural assets in the population of New South Wales as a valuable resource and promote this resource to maximise the development of the State.

ii) **Development of Multicultural Curriculum:** It is important that the educators must be aware of these biases in order to develop multi cultural curriculum. They are also required to integrate the following in the multicultural texts

- a) **Achievement:** It is often suggested that in a multicultural context the educator must carefully select illustrations, analogies, and allegories from the experience of different ethnic and cultural groups to demonstrate or extricate the meaning of academic concepts and principles (Gay c.f Gollnick and Chinn 1990). It is also suggested that teachers who are sensitive to the experiences of students from different cultural background can make those students feel as much a part of the class as those from the dominant culture (Ibid). It is important that achievements made by the members of various subcultures in music, arts, sports, academics, politics etc. be adequately projected in the text.
- b) **Student's voice:** Examples from student's life experiences are essential components of multi-cultural education. Here teachers develop regular dialogue with the students and their voice can be understood as the voice of their community. Their life experiences can help all students and the teacher to consider alternative ways of thinking and doing.
- c) **Communication:** In order to increase the involvement of the students in the learning process of multicultural education teachers are to use oral and non-verbal communication patterns. To overcome the problem of differences between the cultural background of the teacher and the learner, "the teachers are to redirect the interaction to primarily use the kind of interaction that work most effectively with the students. The teachers are to be sensitive to these situations and needs of the students and can "begin to teach students how to interact effectively with which they are most uncomfortable".
- d) **Learning and Teaching Style:** Socialization process plays an important role in inculcating individual differences in teaching and learning styles. However, they are not the indicators of general learning ability. In multicultural education, to serve the students effectively the teacher must develop instructional strategies, which are compatible both to the teacher and the learner.
- e) **Formal Curriculum:** In multicultural education the educators take affirmative steps to ensure that cultural diversity is integrated throughout the curriculum. It promotes student's exposure to the richness of multicultural history and contemporary cultural fabric built with the contribution of all the cultures. It makes a critical examination

of contemporary and historical issues from the multicultural point of view and an extra planning to make curriculum and instruction multicultural. It is important that when micro-cultures are introduced in the curriculum, they are included not in subordinate, but in positive roles and status. Readings are selected by the authors from various cultural background to allow the students to understand the perspective of other cultural groups and how those perspectives differ from their own because of different experiences. In this pedagogy teachers also help students understand “the relationship of power and knowledge by comparing classical and contemporary writings in the subject being taught”.

- f) **Hidden Curriculum:** One must understand that hidden curriculum is not taught formally. There are rather parts of values and norms which underground the formal curriculum. These have deep impact both on the teacher and the students. These are located in the way students are being raised in the school and colleges, they are praised and evaluated, being socialized and in the power relationship within the educational institutions. The hidden curriculum prepares the students in view of the prevailing power relations in society. In multicultural education “a first step is to recognize that it exists and provides lessons that are probably more important than the academic curriculum. Developing a more democratic classroom would help in overcoming the power inequities that exist. Multicultural education values students’ curiosity and encourages it. It evaluates teacher’s interactions with students to ensure that teachers are actually supporting learning than preventing it” (Ibid).
- g) **Critical Thinking:** Being able to think critically and to teach students to think criticality is essential for a democratic society. Multi-cultural education, as it deals with social cultural reality, would widen the space to develop critically on the structured causes of oppression and inequality based on caste, class, race, gender, ethnicity, age, etc., in society.
- h) **Lived Realities:** In multicultural education the educator must know the communities, their cultural values and identities in order to develop the curriculum and instruction for the students. It does suggest that the teacher must know the sentiments of the community before introducing concepts, which may be foreign and unacceptable. Thus the teachers in the plural realities of the society.
- i) **Community Resource:** The community is a repository of knowledge and this knowledge is to be extensively used with all sensitivity for learning and teaching purposes. In the classroom, resources of all the communities are included may it be the start story, poems, technology being used, speakers, leaders, etc.

Reflection and Action 14.5

What do you understand by multicultural curriculum? What are the things that need to be taken care of while developing a multicultural curriculum?

14.8 Conclusion

It has long been realized that notwithstanding differences, there are several similarities among cultures and that through interaction members of various cultures become respectful and tolerant to each other. These realizations have altogether formed the foundation stone of multicultural societies. In this unit, we have discussed some of the essential features of multicultural society and thereafter the need for the formulation of alternative strategies for the educational well being of the members of multi-cultural societies. Why is a

multicultural education necessary? What are the approaches to multiculturalism? What should be the goals and strategies of multicultural education? Answers to all these questions are discussed in this unit. It is pointed out that in a multicultural curriculum student voices from diverse cultural background, their communication skills, their diverse learning style, critical thinking are considered to be essential. It has been widely highlighted in this unit that cultural diversities are not liabilities but national resources.

14.9 Further Reading

Gollnick, D.M. and Chinn, P.C. 1990. *Multicultural Education in a Pluralistic Society*. Mernil Publishing Company: London

Bennett, C. 1990. *Comprehensive Multicultural Education: Theory and Practice*. Ellyn and Bacon: London



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UNIT 15

Education in SAARC Countries:

Case Studies-I

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Learning Objectives

This unit aims to:

- appraise the education scenario in SAARC countries;
- explain economic and educational development in SAARC countries;
- discuss country wise educational development in these countries; and
- explain educational reforms and strategies adopted by the government of SAARC countries.

15.1 Introduction

In the previous Unit 14, you have already studied the issues of pluralism, and multiculturalism in education. The geo-political region of SAARC represents a varied context of pluralism and multiculturalism. In this unit, we shall apprise you with the economic and social scenario of SAARC region and discuss strategies adopted by the governments of the SAARC countries for education as well as educational reforms in their respective countries.

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established when its Charter was formally adopted on December 8, 1985 by the heads of Government of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka – the seven South Asian countries. It aims to accelerate the process of economic and social development in these countries.

These countries have many common historical, geographical, climatic and socio-economic features and also common disadvantages of educational backwardness. In recent years there has been a considerable expansion of educational opportunities and significant scientific and technological advance in the region. However, there are disparities between and within SAARC countries in terms of urban and rural, gender, class and ethnic consideration.

The South Asian economies have grown at an average growth rate of more than 5 per cent over the last 20 years. However, about 40 per cent of the people of this region still live below the poverty line. It also represents 40 per cent of the world's non-literate population. Only two-thirds of the total number school-age children enrol in schools, and more than 40 per cent of them drop out before reaching the fifth grade. Thus, the fraction of children who are able to continue up to fifth grade (completing primary education) is rather low. Sri Lanka and Bhutan however, are able to maintain their enrolment at about 90% - pretty close to China's numbers, Nepal's is above 75%, Bangladesh's is at 65% while India's is at less than 60%. This is a reflection, in India at least, inefficiency of literacy programs (where children are superficially exposed to

some form of reading and writing rather than a sustained effort at providing these basic skills to children). (<http://www.thesouthasian.org/archives>). Hence, these countries, which comprise one-sixth of the world's population face many challenges of economic development in general and educational development in particular. The challenge is enormous, where the world's lowest per capita income of \$ 309 exist in this regions (Rampal, A. 2000).

15.2 Education Scenario in SARRC Countries

The educational programme has been provided through government, non-government agencies, i.e., NGO communities, and the private sector of the SAARC countries. For instance, in Nepal schools are being transferred by the government to communities for day-to-day management. In Bangladesh NGOs play an important role in providing primary education, and the government subsidizes an almost fully privately managed secondary education system. Three million children do not have access to primary education in Bangladesh, while in Pakistan the number is probably closer to eight million. India accounts for one fourth of the world's 104 million out of school children. It leads to social debt accumulated in a low adult literacy rate with a large number of children out of school and high incidence of school dropouts.

Of the total population in the SAARC region, 75.18 per cent is in India followed by Pakistan (11.04%), and Bangladesh (10.46%) respectively. The Rest of the countries have less than 2 per cent of the population each as shown in Table 1. Enrolment rates at primary level in all these countries have risen rapidly between 1990-2000. Enrolment rate at the secondary level was significantly lower, but has shown a substantial increase recently. For example, in Bangladesh net enrolment rates at the secondary level have risen from 16 to 32 per cent between 1999-2000. In India, gross secondary enrolment rates have risen from 40 to 50 per cent over the same period. In Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives gender parity has also been improved at the secondary level. At the tertiary level, enrolment rates in the region have increased by 10 per cent. These countries are having high dropout and repetition rates and lowest rates of completion of education at the primary level in the world. Of all the students who start the primary education, less than 10 % complete it and go to the secondary education. Moreover, those who complete their education perform poorly in their respective examination. For instance, in Bangladesh and India only less than 40 per cent of students pass 10th and 12th standard examination.

Table 15.1: Population, Literacy and Public Expenditure on Education in SAARC Countries

Countries	Population ¹ In 2005 in thousands	Per centage to total South Asian Countries	Per centage of adult illiterate (age +15 years) population (2000)	Public expenditure on Education as % of GNP (2000)
Bangladesh	152592	10.46	59.2	2.5
Bhutan	2392	0.16	40.0	5.2
India	1096917	75.18	44.2	4.1
Maldives	337	0.02	56.0	3.7
Nepal	26289	1.80	58.6	3.4
Pakistan	161151	11.04	56.7	1.8
Sri Lanka	19367	1.33	8.4	3.1

1. <http://esa.un.org/unup>; <http://devdata.worldbank.org/edstats/summary>

15.3 State of Education in Different SAARC Countries

SAARC countries are focusing on attaining the targets specified in the Millennium Development Goal by 2015. These goals provide tangible benchmarks for measuring progress in eight areas, with a target date for most of them of 2015. These goals are presented in the following box:

Millennium Development Goals	
Goal 1	Eradicate extreme number of poverty. Lowering the proportion of people living on less than \$ 1 a day and having malnutrition.
Goal 2	Achieve universal primary education. Ensuring that all children are able to complete primary education.
Goal 3	Promote gender equality and empower women. Eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary schooling, preferably by 2005 and no later than 2015.
Goal 4	Reduce child mortality. Cutting the under-five death rate by two thirds.
Goal 5	Improve maternal health. Reducing the maternal mortality rate by three-quarters.
Goal 6	Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. Halting and beginning to reverse HIV/AIDS and other diseases.
Goal 7	Ensure environmental stability. Cutting by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation.
Goal 8	Develop a global partnership for development. Reforming aid and trade with special treatment for the poorest countries.

Source: *Human Development Report 2005* (<http://www.undp.org>).

In the forthcoming discussion, we shall apprise you with the current economic and education scenario of each of the countries of SAARC and government strategies to achieve its target related to education.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh ranks as one of the poorest nations of the world. The economy of Bangladesh is underdeveloped and depends almost entirely on agriculture. About half of its GDP is generated through service sector despite the fact that two-thirds of its people are employed in the agriculture sector. About 82 per cent of the people of Bangladesh live in rural areas. The per capita gross national income was US \$ 440 in 2004. The annual growth rate in Bangladesh has 6 per cent in 2005.

For decades Bangladesh has remained educationally backward even though a section of the population is highly educated. Education was mainly reserved for the rich people under British rule. The language of transaction was English as schools were run by religious nuns and British people. After British rule, Bangladesh came under Pakistani regime as the state of East Pakistan. During the Pakistani era along with Bengali, Urdu also became the medium of instruction. Bangladesh became an independent nation in 1971.

In Bangladesh, the literacy rate is low and there is a significant disparity between female and male literacy rates. Only about 30 per cent of all Bangladeshis can read and write. However, with the government and NGOs' intervention in recent years, literacy rate has been going up. The education system is divided into 4 levels— Primary (from grades 1 to 5), Secondary (from grades 6 to 10), Higher Secondary (grades 11 and 12) and tertiary. Alongside

national educating system, English medium education is also provided by some private enterprises. There is also Madrasa system which emphasizes Arabic medium Islam-based education. This system is supervised by the Madrasa Board of the country

The Government spent 2.4 per cent of GDP on education during 2003. The adult literacy rate was 41.1 per cent in 2003 in the country. The gross enrolment ratio was 95.9 per cent at the primary level, 47.5 per cent at the secondary level and 6.2 per cent at the tertiary level in 2003. On the other hand, the net enrolment ratio was 84 per cent at the primary level and 44.5 per cent at the secondary level. The completion rate was 73.3 per cent at the primary level in 2003. The ratio of students to teachers was 55.7 per cent at the primary level during the same year. Bangladesh has about 31,700 elementary and high schools and about 300 colleges and technical schools. The University of Dhaka is the nation's largest university. Dhaka is also the home of the Jahangirnagar University and Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology. Other universities are in Chittagong, Mymensing (Agricultural University), Khulna (Shahjalal Science and Technology University), Rajshahi and Sylhat. There is an Open University in Dhaka.

Reflection and Action 15.1

On the basis of experience gained from this unit, what according to you, may be the right approach to consider for achieving education for all (EFA) in your country?

Bhutan

Bhutan is one of the smallest and least developed economies. The primary sector (agriculture and forestry), provides the main source of livelihood for more than 90% of the population. The secondary (industrial) sector is technologically backward. However, the natural beauty of Bhutan attracts the attention of a large number of tourists there. Very recently modern education, social development, and environment programs are underway with support from multilateral development organizations. The per capita gross national income was US \$ 590, 720 and 760 during 2002, 2003 and 2004 respectively. The annual growth rate was 7 per cent in 2002 and 2003, and 5 per cent in 2004.

Bhutan adopts a 7 years primary followed by 4 years of secondary education leading to tertiary education. At present, about 87% of students, reaching the end of primary (grade VI) continue to the next level of education, while others repeat and a few drop out. Students have to appear at the National Examination at the end of the class VIII, X and XII. At the end the higher secondary education students enroll at the only undergraduate college in the country and go to other countries for high studies. Bhutan has a national curriculum. A major policy shift in recent times is to make secondary education more relevant by introducing a basic skills training programme in the form of clubs and introducing career counseling or orient youth to the world of work. Before the introduction of modern education, the only form of education provided in Bhutan was monastic education. At present, Bhutan has 433 schools, with enrolment 135,987. Girl students' enrolment at the primary level is 48.4%. The emerging trends indicate that the girls are outnumbering the boys in some of the urban schools. One of the main policy objectives is to enhance the quality of education in order to achieve competency in language, communication skills and mathematics comparable to international standards. Information and communication technology has been incorporated into the school curriculum (<http://www.lbe.unesco.org>).

The country spent 5.2 per cent of GDP on education in 2000. The completion rate was 45.6 per cent at the primary level in 2003 and students reaching at grade 5 were 91 per cent in 2000. The ratio of students to teachers was

37.9 per cent at primary level and 33.6 per cent at the secondary level in 2003. The country has shown improvement in the last couple of years.

India

The Indian economy encompasses rural people, modern agriculture, handicrafts and a wide range of modern industries and services. The service sector has shown phenomenal growth in recent years, even though more than 52% of the workforce is engaged in agriculture. The per capita gross national income was US \$ 620 during 2004. The annual growth rate was 7 per cent during 2004-05 (www.finmin.nic.in).

India has achieved phenomenal educational development since independence. India's expenditure on education as a per centage of GDP increased from 0.64 per cent in 1951 to 4.11 per cent in 2000-01. However, the national goals of universal elementary education and total eradication of illiteracy have still remained a distant dream. India spent 4.1 per cent of GDP on education during 2002 but about 40 per cent of its adult population still remains to be made literate.

The adult literacy rate (age 15+) was 61.3% in 2003. Gross enrolment ratio (GER) has increased from 32.1 per cent in 1950-51 to 82.5 per cent in 2002-03. The rate of increase in GER for girls has been higher than that of boys as presented in Table 2. The rates of drop out have decreased from 64.9 per cent in 1960-61 to 40.7 per cent 2000-01 in primary classes. Similarly, the rate of dropouts, which was 78.3 per cent in 1960-61, has come down to 53.7 per cent in 2000-01 in the upper primary classes.

Table 15.2 : Gross Enrolment Ratio during 1950-51 and 2002-03

Level	1950-51			2002-03		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Primary (I-V)	60.6	24.8	42.6	97.5	93.1	95.4
Secondary (VI-VIII)	20.6	4.6	12.7	65.3	56.6	61.0
Elementary (I-VIII)	46.4	17.7	32.1	85.4	79.3	82.5

Source: Annual Report 2005, MHRD

In India, the literacy rate has increased in 2001 to 64.8 per cent from 52.21 per cent in 1991. Significantly the growth rate of literacy was more in rural areas than in urban areas. Again the female literacy rate increased (14.41%) more than male literacy rate (11.17%) during the same period. Moreover, the number of non-literate population declined from 328.88 million in 1991 to 304 million in 2001. There has been considerable increase in the growth of educational institutions also. During the last 5 decades the number of primary schools increased by three times, while the upper primary schools and higher secondary schools increased by 15 and 17 times respectively. The number of colleges for general education and professional education increased by about 21 and 11 times respectively, while the number of universities increased by 9 times during the same period.

In the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07), the Government of India initiated various steps towards achieving education for all. During this period along with *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)*, other schemes have been introduced, which include:

- National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL),
- Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education (EGS & AIE),

- District Primary Education Programme (DPEP),
- National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE), known as the Mid-Day Meal Scheme
- Strengthening of Teacher Education,
- *Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)*, and
- *Mahila Samakhya*.

SSA is a time-bound mission, with the objectives of ensuring Universalisation of Elementary Education and bridging gender and social gaps by the year 2010. The Government of India recently opened 66,147 elementary schools, constructed 17,454 new elementary school buildings and 33,777 additional classrooms and appointed 310,506 additional teachers under SSA scheme in 2004-05. NPEGEL is an important component of SSA and it provides additional support for girls' education in educationally backward blocks by way of girl-child friendly schools, stationery, uniforms etc., for elementary education of under privileged/disadvantage girls. EGS and AIE is another important component of SSA, which is specially designed to provide access to elementary education to children in school-less habitations and out of school children. Elementary education has been provided to 856.7 thousands children under this scheme during 2004-05. DPEP was launched in 1994 in 42 districts of seven states with the aim of providing access to primary education for all children, reducing primary dropouts rates to less than 10 per cent, increasing learning achievements of primary school students by at least 25 per cent and reducing gender and social gaps to less than 5 per cent. The programme is now implemented in 272 districts of 18 states and it is now continuing in 129 districts of 9 States. KGBV scheme was launched in August 2004 with the aim of setting up 750 residential schools at elementary level for girls belonging predominately Backward Blocks (EBBs), where female literacy was below the national average and gender gap in literacy was more than the national average. Government has approved 662 KGBVs during 2004-05. Value of EFA Developed Index (EDI), developed by UNESCO, has improved in the case of India from 0.658 in 2003 to 0.696 in 2004 (www.education.nic.in). The educational policies of India will be dealt in detail in Unit No. 18 of this Block.

Maldives

Tourism industry is the backbone of Maldives' economy. It accounts for 20 per cent of GDP and more than 60 per cent of the Maldives' foreign exchange receipts. 90 per cent of government tax revenue comes from import duties and tourism-related taxes. Fishing is the second leading sector. Agriculture and manufacturing continue to play a lesser role in the economy, constrained by the limited availability of cultivable land and the shortage of domestic labor. Industry, which consists mainly of garment production, boat building, and handicrafts, accounts for about 18% of GDP. The per capita gross national income was US \$ 2350 in 2003.

The country spent 3.7 per cent of GDP on education in 2000. The adult literacy rate (age 15 +) was 97.2 per cent in 2003. The duration of education consists of 7 years for primary level and 5 years for secondary level. The gross enrolment ratio was 101.3 per cent at the primary level, 48.5 per cent at the secondary level and 10.0 per cent at the tertiary level in 2003. The net enrolment ratio was 92.4 per cent at the primary level and 51.4 per cent at the secondary level during the same year. The ratio of students to teachers was 20.0 per cent at the primary level and 15.0 per cent at the secondary level.

Higher education in Maldives is provided by the Maldives College of Higher Education (MCHHE), College of Islamic Studies (CIS) and Centre for Continuing Education (CCE). Many students pursue higher education and training overseas. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), is the government

agency responsible for facilitating the growth of higher education and training and to provide policy and logistical guidance to the sector in Maldives. At present, 2600 students are enrolled in certificate, diploma and degree programmes in these institutions. Private sector participation in higher and continuing education is growing. Presently, eighty-six private institutions are registered with the Government. It is estimated that about 3000 students would be enrolled with these institutions in the near future.

The Maldives Accreditation Board (MAB) of the DHET manages the Maldives National Qualifications Framework (MNQF). This Framework consists of 11 levels of qualifications including Certificate I, Certificate II, Certificate III, Advanced Certificate, Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree and Doctoral Degree. MNQF sets out minimum entry requirements, credit hours and credit points for each of the 11 qualifications. All qualifications issued by MCHE and private institutions must fit into the requirements of one of the 11 qualifications of MNQF. MNQF provides a coherent framework that facilitates quality improvement, quality assurance, and private sector participation in post-secondary education. (<http://www.aparnet.org>)

Nepal

The economy of Nepal is one of the poorest and least developed in the world. About 40 per cent of its population lives below the poverty line. Agriculture is the mainstay of the economy, providing a livelihood to over 80% of the population and accounting for 40% of GDP. Industrial activity mainly involves the processing of agriculture production including jute, sugarcane, tobacco and grain. The small size of the economy, technological backwardness, remoteness, its landlocked geographical location, civil strife, and vulnerability to natural disasters are the characteristics of economy of the Nepal. The per capita income was US \$ 230, 240 and 260 during 2002, 2003 and 2004. The annual growth rate was -1 per cent, 3 per cent and 4 per cent during the same period.

The country spent 3.4 per cent of its GDP on education in 2000. The adult literacy rate (Age 15+) was 44 per cent in 2003. The duration of education was 5 years for completing primary level, and 7 years for secondary level. The gross enrolment ratio was 119.3 per cent at the primary level, 45 per cent at the secondary level and 5.3 per cent at the tertiary level in 2003. The completion rate was 78.1 per cent at the primary level and 64.9 per cent at the secondary level during the same year. The ratio of students to teachers was 35.7 per cent at the primary level and 34.7 per cent at the secondary level (www.moe.gov.np). Nepal has also formulated its priorities towards achievement of its target i.e. 'education for all'. Some of them are:

- to eradicate illiteracy by the end of the 12th five year plan;
- to expand National Literacy Campaign gradually in all the 75 districts. Priority to low literacy rate geographical locations;
- to reduce gap between male and female literacy rate. Priority to women, girls and other disadvantaged groups in promotion of literacy. Undertake appropriate advocacy and motivational measures;
- to strengthen mechanisms for co-ordination among GOs/NGOs/INGOs at different levels (grassroots level to national level). Mobilize more NGOs/INGOs to launch national literacy;
- to provide basic education; equivalency programmes;
- special literacy classes for prisoners in the jails;
- to emphasize on gender sensitivity in literacy classes (<http://www.aacu.or.jp>)

Pakistan

Pakistan is an underdeveloped country and has low levels of foreign investment. The Government of Pakistan has made macro economic reforms during the last couple of years. The country has raised development spending from 2 per cent of GDP in the 1990s to 4 per cent in 2003, which was essential for reversing the broad underdevelopment of its social sector. The per capita income was US \$ 600 in 2004. The annual growth rate was 6 per cent during the same period.

Since independence, attempts have been made by the governments to relate the education system to the needs and aspirations of the country. The 1973 Constitution made it mandatory for the state to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of backward areas, remove illiteracy and provide free and compulsory secondary education within minimum possible period, make technical and professional education generally available and higher education equally accessible to all. The country spent 1.8 per cent of GDP on education in 2000. The adult literacy rate (age 15+) was 41.5% in 2000. The duration of education was 5 years for primary level, 7 years for secondary level and 5 years for compulsory schooling. The gross enrolment ratio was 68.5 per cent at the primary level, 22.5 per cent at the secondary level and 2.8 per cent at the tertiary level in 2003. The net enrolment ratio was 59.1 per cent at the primary level in 2000. The ratio of students to teachers was 40.4 per cent at the primary level in 2003.

Presently country is facing major challenges due to low literacy rate particularly for rural females, inadequate access, high dropout rate, teacher absenteeism, shortage of trained and qualified teachers, poor management and infrastructure, lack of physical facilities, low operating budget, outdated and irrelevant curricula, and political interference. The government has designed Education Sector Reforms (ESRs) on the long-term perspective of National Education Policy, 1998-2010 and ten-year Perspective Development Plan, 2001-2011. The targeted groups for EFA goals include disadvantaged communities emphasizing the needs of out-of-school children particularly girls and illiterate girls and women.

The prime objectives of Education Sector Reforms are (a) universalization of primary education and adult literacy; (b) mainstreaming Madarasas to diversify employment opportunities for the graduates; (c) strengthening the quality of education through better teachers, upgraded training options, curriculum and textbook reforms, and competency based examination system; (d) improving the relevance of education – introducing a third stream of gender and area specific technical and vocational education at secondary level with innovative approaches for students' counselling; and setting up mono-technic/polytechnics at District and Tehsil levels.

Some of the major achievements of ESRs program up to 30th June 2002 are: 10,000 schools rehabilitated and 2000 NFBE schools opened and 6000 Adult Literacy Centers established, Technical Stream introduced in 50 secondary schools during 2001-02, 385 science labs constructed, First women's polytechnic established at Quetta, revised/updated National Curriculum & Textbooks for Class I to XII and National Educational Assessment System (NEAS) launched (www.moe.gov.pk).

Sri Lanka

Sri Lankan economy revolves on food processing, textiles, food and beverages, tele-communications, and insurance and banking sector. GDP grew at an average annual growth rate of 5.5 per cent in the early 1990s. The economy rebounded in 1997-2000 with average growth of 5.3 per cent, but saw the first contraction in the country's history, – 1.4 per cent in 2001, due to combination of power

shortages, then several budgetary problems etc. Growth recovered to 4 per cent in 2002 and 6 per cent in 2003 and 2004. The per capita income was US \$, 1010 in 2004.

The present educational system in Sri Lanka derived from the British educational system, which was introduced by the British colonial masters in the 19th century. The British colonial government established colleges for boys and girls separately. These colleges consisted of primary schools, lower secondary schools and higher secondary schools. In 1938, education in Government schools was made free of charge as a consequence of the Universal Franchise granted in 1931. Many Government schools called *Maha Vidyalayas* were started in all parts of the country. The medium of education of these institutions was either Sinhala or Tamil.

The Government of Sri Lanka spent 3.1 per cent of GDP on education in 2000. The adult literacy rate (age 15 +) was 92.1 per cent in 2003. The duration of education consists of 5 years for primary level, 8 years for secondary level. The gross enrolment ratio was 110.5 per cent at the primary level, 86.5 per cent at the secondary level in 2003. The primary completion rate was 98.1 per cent in 2000. The ratio of students to teachers was 23.4 per cent at the primary level in 2003. At present, some of the priorities of Government of Sri Lanka are:

- to provide compulsory education to all children between the ages of 5-14 years;
- to provide educational opportunities for those who have failed to enter the formal education system or those who have dropped out;
- to prepare alternative structures through non-formal education for continuing education.

Reflection and Action 15.2

What have been the major concerns of educational reforms in SAARC countries?

15.4 Education in SARRC Countries: An Overview

The above case studies have given an idea of the educational development and governments efforts for educational reforms in SAARC countries. Despite their efforts, issues like poverty, women's education, dropouts and scarcity of funds for providing education for all still exist in this region. The *Human Development Report in South Asia, 2003* underlines the issue of employment which raises concern about the current patterns of economic growth and trade, the systems of education and training, the protection of the rights of all workers including women and children, and the global trading rules as they impact on food and livelihood security of the poor people.

The SAARC countries face the common problem of women's education. In developing countries as a whole, there has been an appreciable increase in female literacy in the past two decades. In the Arab States female literacy increased by more than two-thirds. In East Asia female literacy is 83%, and in Latin America and the Caribbean it is 87%. In South Asia it is only 55 per cent. This is the only region in the world where women are far outnumbered by men (94 women for 100 men in South Asia as compared to global ratio of 106 women to 100 men (Rampal, A, 2000). The Governments of these countries initiated different project to achieve its target to some extent. For example, BRAC project in Bangladesh, Lok Jumbish and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in India and Bunyad in Pakistan. These programmes have successfully achieved their targets especially in girls' education.

In addition to women's education, child education is another problem in this region. Despite of fact that child labor has been legally banned in all South Asian countries, child labor problems still exist and the region has the largest number of working children in the world. Several efforts are now being made to make education accessible to children in all these countries.

All countries in the region are committed to providing education for all. The formal system alone cannot meet the growing demand for education in this region. On the other hand, countries in this region share a common heritage, background and also a common set of problems. There is a great deal of commonality in the curriculum, educational organisation, learning material, examination, and certification at school level. There is also the possibility of duplication of efforts diverting considerable amounts of money which could otherwise be saved to support the rather poorly financed educational system in this region. In order to realize education for all, we must find a mechanism of dispensing education to such a large number. The formal system alone cannot meet this growing demand for education. Therefore, Open and Distance Learning System has been initiated in this region, which is providing education through Open Universities, Dual Mode of teaching institutions and Open Schools. Distance education is now an essential feature of the national education systems of these countries in South Asia. Open universities are already established in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

Maldives will be going to setting up a new virtual university for small states of the Commonwealth. The proposed university would be based on collaboration through a consortium of existing education providers. Developed and piloted by a Commonwealth of Learning (COL)-led consortium of South Asian open universities, the Commonwealth executive master of business administration/ master of public administration programme began enrolling students in Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka in January 2002 and in Pakistan in 2003. The Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC) assisted with funding the course development (www.col.org).

Another problem is the need for a highly skilled and qualified workforce in SAARC countries for high growth rates and to compete in today's globalizing world markets. Hence, the need of the hour is also to improve and expand secondary and tertiary education in addition to primary level education. India is in the process of developing strategies and interventions aimed at enhancing the effectiveness and quality of tertiary education in this region. Recently, India's Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, proposed to set up a South Asian University in his speech at Dhaka (Bangladesh) on November 12, 2005 during 13th SAARC Summit. His argument was that South Asia was "at the progressive of scientific and technological research and in the front ranks of the knowledge society across the world". With the right facilities and environment, South Asian scholars could combine to create "a centre of excellence" with world-class facilities and faculty and produce research "in the service of human advancement". India, he said, would be willing to make "a major contribution" towards the setting up of the university and indeed would be willing to host it. The Indian Prime Minister's vision has two crucial parts to it. The first is the idea that the university should concentrate on the progressive areas of science and technology. The second is that it would primarily be an institution devoted to research, which suggests that it would be a post-graduate university. It has two purposes. On the one hand, it could, given the right mix of subjects and people, truly contribute to the advancement of knowledge. In this sense it would be a contribution to the welfare of the region and indeed to the world. On the other hand, a South Asian university could play a role in bringing the peoples of the region closer together and softening their suspicions and fears of each other. In doing so, it would give life to the notion of peace and conflict management that are at the heart of SAARC. However, there are a great many political, procedural, hiring, funding, legal, and academic matters that need to be thought about in the setting up of a South Asian university (MIT 2005).

15.5 Conclusion

In this unit, we have discussed the education scenario and issues related to literacy rate, gross enrolment ratio, dropout, women education, child labor and demand for skilled labor in SAARC countries. We have also discussed the initiative of the government of each country and of international agencies like World Bank, UNESCO and COL for education reforms in these countries and perspective plans towards providing education for all.

15.6 Further Reading

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Unit 16

Education in Europe: Case Studies-II

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Learning Objectives

This unit aims to analyse:

- educational development in Europe in historical vis a vis present context;
- educational reforms by European Union;
- case study of selected countries in historical context; and
- present educational scenario in South-eastern Europe

16.1 Introduction

In the previous Unit 15, you have studied education in SAARC countries. In this unit, we shall apprise you of the educational system of European countries. An attempt has been made to give case studies of a few European countries in a brief historical as well as present educational development context. The last part of this unit shall apprise you of the present educational scenario of South- Eastern Europe.

16.2 Demographic Profile of Europe

Europe is the 6th largest continent and has 46 countries and assorted dependencies and territories. In exacting geographic definition, Europe is really not a continent, but part of the peninsula of Eurasia which includes all of Europe and Asia. Turkey and the Russian Federation (*Russia*) are considered a part of both Asia and Europe. In the year 2000, the total population of Europe was 729.3 million, of whom 306.6 million were in Eastern Europe, 93.7 million in North Europe. 144.8 million in Southern Europe, and 184 million in Western Europe. The annual rate of population growth in Europe declined from 0.44% to 0.16% between 1985-1990 and 1990-1995 and is projected to reduce to 0.03% during 1995-2000. The population decline trend is parallel to the increase in the average age of the population. The proportion of population in 65+ age group is increasing from 11.9% in 1985 to 19.8% in 2025 (projected), but the proportion of population in 0-14 age group is decreasing from 21.3% to 16.3% during the same period. Rural population is remarkably decreasing in Europe from 207.3 million in 1985 and 192.8 million in 1995 to 128.4 million in 2025 (projected) (<http://www.unhabitat.org>).

16.3 Education in Europe

Primary and Secondary Education

Education in Europe has both deep roots and great diversity. In 1976, education ministers first decided to set up an information network, as the basis for better understanding of educational policies and structures in the then nine-

nation European Community. This reflected the principle that the particular character of education systems in the Member States should be fully respected, while coordinated interaction between education training and employment systems should be improved. Eurydice, the information network on education in Europe, was formally launched in 1980.

All countries emphasise the crucial importance of developing the skills needed for the knowledge based economy and society, and for economic competitiveness. In relation to social inclusion, all countries indicate that access and the employability of target groups are defining components of their policy. Many countries and in particular those where levels of spending on education and training are comparatively low, emphasise that financial constraints limit their capacity to implement all necessary policies. Most of the countries highlight that in their education and training policies economic and social objectives are mutually supportive. On the other hand, other countries argued that if the economic and employment agenda is successful, the social goals can be addressed more readily. These issues are particularly relevant to the discussion on the European social model.

About 10% of adults in Europe, aged 25-64 takes part in lifelong learning, representing some progress since 2000, with significant variations between countries. The need to increase participation rates in further learning remains a major challenge for Europe, particularly in the southern European countries and the new Member States of the European Union. Low rates are an obstacle to increasing labour force participation, and are therefore, costly to the economy and society as a whole. About 16% of the young people (age group 18-24 years) leaves school early in 25 European Union countries. There was continuous improvement in recent years in reducing the share.

Nearly 20% of 15 year-olds continue to have serious difficulty with reading? literacy, reflecting no progress since 2000 against the EU benchmark of reducing the share by one fifth. 77% of 18-24 year-olds complete upper-secondary education, still far from the Europe Union benchmark of 85%, despite good progress in some countries. The high number of young people leaving school without a basic level of qualifications and competences are a worrying signal that initial education systems are not always providing the necessary foundations for lifelong learning. This concern is also reflected in the new Lisbon integrated guidelines and in the European Youth Pact.

In some countries vocational education and training (VET) has a positive image, for example, Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark and Finland owing to such factors as having a dual system i.e. alternative training, double qualifications and recent measures in favour of access to higher education. It is still too often the case, however, that vocational pathways are less attractive than academic ones. On the other hand, a large majority of countries express concern about the needs of low skilled people, currently numbering almost 80 million in the Union, highlighting the importance of labour force participation and the role of VET systems as a key means of ensuring social inclusion.

The share of young population (aged 20-24 years) who has completed upper-secondary education has improved in 2004. The highest per centage (91%) of people who completed upper secondary education was from the Czech Republic and the lowest (48%) were from Malta (48%) and Portugal (49%). Public spending on education as a per centage of GDP is increasing in nearly all EU countries (EU average: 4.9% in 2000, 5.2% in 2002). This rising trend is a promising sign that Governments consider public expenditure in education to be a priority. Nonetheless there are large variations between countries, ranging from 4% to 8% of GDP. Many countries are stimulating private investment from individual and households, particularly in areas where there are high private rates of return. On the other hand, there is little evidence of an overall increase in

employer investment in continuing training. The available data show, differences in spending levels between countries. Denmark and Sweden spend over 7.5% of GDP on education, while some countries spend less than 4% of GDP.

Tertiary Education

Tertiary education plays a central role in the development of both human beings and modern societies as it enhances social, cultural and economic development, active citizenship and ethical values. At European level, education in general and higher education in particular are not subjects of a common European policy.

However, according to Article 149 of the Treaty of Amsterdam, the Community shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States, through a wide range of actions, such as promoting the mobility of citizens, designing joint study programmes, establishing networks, exchanging information or teaching languages of the European Union. The Treaty also contains a commitment to promote life-long learning for all citizens of the Union. Therefore, the Community has a complementary role to play: to add a European dimension to education, to help to develop quality education and to encourage life-long learning. All the recent European summits (from Lisbon 2000 on) underlined the contribution of education in setting up the European knowledge society.

The main tool for putting this ambition into practice is the SOCRATES programmes which contains an action specifically focused on Higher Education. It supports and encourages exchange of students and teachers, the launching of joint study programmes or intensive courses, pan-European thematic networks and other measures aiming at the development of a European dimension in higher education. The second phase of the Socrates Programme will end in 2006 and Socrates will be replaced by new educational programmes. In terms of quality assurance in higher education, a European network was set up in 1999 following a pilot-project and a recommendation adopted in 1999. In 2003, the Commission adopted two major communications on the future of Higher Education in Europe:

- Investing efficiently in education and training – an imperative for Europe, and
- The role of the universities in the Europe of knowledge.

At the same time, the higher education sector and institutions are fully involved in the European initiatives presently on-going in the field of e-learning in the area of Lifelong Learning as well as in the European Year of Languages (2001). Moreover, in 1999, Ministries from 29 European countries signed the Bologna Declaration, which aims at the establishment of a European area of higher education by the end of this decade. This area should facilitate mobility of people, transparency and recognition of qualification, quality and European dimension in higher education, attractiveness of European institutions for third country students.

The total public and private investment in higher education in European Union in 2001 was 1.28% of GDP, compared to 2.5% in Canada and 3.25% in the USA. The three highest spending European Union countries were Denmark (2.8%), Sweden (2.3%) and Finland (2.1%).

In the above section, you have studied about the European educational system which consists of 25 European countries. In the forthcoming section, we shall give a brief history and current educational development of selected countries in Europe. If you are interested in details of the historical educational development of these countries then you may visit web site i.e. www.eurydice.org

16.4 Educational Scenario in Some European Countries

Belgium

The Education in Belgium was being offered for three different communities i.e. French, German and Dutch speaking communities. After the social movements at the end of the nineteen sixties, there was an innovation in Belgium. This innovation was presented as being mainly a means of achieving real democratisation of education with the aim to make access to higher and even general academic education easier for the less-favoured children too. Within the scope of the first innovation it was possible to create an inter-age group (5-8) with the aim to smoothen up the transition between pre-school education and primary school. The law of July 19, 1971 established a new type of secondary education: reformed secondary education system. In the first two years of secondary education the splitting-up in different courses or sections was replaced by a two years. The law passed on May 19, 1914 prescribed compulsory school attendance for all children between the ages of 6 and 12 and decided that the utmost age of compulsory attendance had to be increased gradually to 13 and then to 14. However this law was only implemented after the First World War. In 1970 pupils ended their school-career at an average age of 15 years 8 months. The law of June 29, 1983 fixed the end of compulsory (full-time and part-time) school attendance at the age of 18 (12 years in school). This reform aimed at a guarantee for better qualification of young people to enable them as a result to have an easier access to professional life. As this law delayed the beginning of professional life, it helped as it were to reduce the constantly increasing number of unemployed young people.

In 1830, when Belgium became independent, there were three state universities Ghent, Leuven, and Liege. The law of 1835 on higher education acknowledged two free universities and two state universities. In the 19th century, all universities and colleges of higher education with an academic level were French speaking as was the public for which these schools were meant, i.e., the upper classes. Since the 1960s, higher education outside university has grown much more than university education. At present a reform of higher education is taking place. This reforms has to be seen in the light of the Bologna declaration, signed in 1999 by the Ministers of Education of 29 European countries. The declaration intends to create a European educational area in to order to bring more unity in European education. On April 4, 2003 the Flemish government approved the Decree on these structuring of higher education.

Bulgaria

The Bulgarian educational system has rich history. The Bulgarian people have established and preserved deep-seated and intransient educational traditions throughout their 13-century existence as a state; they have maintained and developed the Cyrillic alphabet, created by the Cyril and Metodius brothers as early as the 9th century, and reached the "golden age of Bulgarian literature and culture" in the 10th century, when Kliment Ohridski established the first Bulgarian school. Bulgarian people have preserved their love of learning and education through the years of the Ottoman rule. Cell schools were established in the 18th - 19th century, which were either monastery schools or public schools where the nature of the former was predominantly religious and public schools provided pupils with secular knowledge.

Public schools were established on a larger scale at the end of the 18th century, and especially in the 30s and 40s of the 19th century, known as "new Bulgarian" schools, which were described in detail in the records of the schools in Samokov, Koprivshitzta, etc. The state educational system was established after 1978.

which was also the time when the first school laws were dated. The first educational law, "Provisional Bylaws of Public Community Centers", was adopted in August 1978 and the Elementary School Act in Eastern Roumelia was adopted in December 1880 and promulgated in February 1881. The above laws recognized the democratic principles applied to school establishment and running. At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the educational system underwent rapid development.

During the period 1990-2004, a number of democratic changes have been brought about both in society as a whole and in the educational system in particular. A new Education Act was adopted (1991), which is still in force in the educational system, and Bulgarian legislation underwent serious changes. School education in the Republic of Bulgaria is compulsory up to the age of 16. It begins at the age of seven, when children are enrolled as first-grade pupils. Children at the age of six can also be enrolled as first-grade pupils, if their physical and mental behaviour, in the judgment of their parents or trustees, allows it. Since the 2003/2004 school year, children's training in preparatory groups with kindergartens or preparatory classes to schools has become compulsory as their parents or trustees are exempt from payment of fees. The compulsory education up to the age of 16 may be completed in a private school, which has been established pursuant to the National Education Act and is authorized to issue valid certificates for completed class or acquired professional qualification as well as diplomas for completed secondary education. The student has the right to complete his education in a state, municipal or private school chosen by him. By the age of 16 he is obliged to study in any of the various types of schools, private included.

Higher education in Bulgaria originated in the late 19th century after the liberation of Bulgaria from Ottoman yoke in order to satisfy the cultural, economic and political necessities of the young state. The first Bulgarian university was opened in Sofia with priorities in applying the legal system, the state administration and the schools with qualified specialists. The oldest university in Bulgaria started its activities with three faculties: Faculty of Law, Physical and Mathematical Faculty, and Historical and Philological Faculty. The deep social and economic transformations in the country inevitably had their impact on education as a whole, and, in particular, on higher education. This transition is related to creation of private higher education; introduction of new subjects and areas of knowledge taking into account the necessities of society; "opening" of higher schools to international partnership and cooperation with European universities and institutions; reinstatement of university autonomy; limited financial independence and high responsibility for the quality of educational services offered. By signing the Bologna declaration (1999), Bulgaria takes the challenge to participate actively in the building of a European Higher Education Area and a common European market of labour and research. At present this network includes 51 public higher schools, of them 42 universities and specialised higher schools, 41 colleges within the structure of the higher schools, and 9 independent colleges.

Czech Republic

Czechoslovakia was established in 1918. Since then one major issue to tackle was the creation of a uniform education system, bringing into line the cultural standards in the three different parts of the country: the Czech lands, Slovakia and Transcarpathian Ukraine. A large number of laws were passed between 1919 and 1923, the most important being the so-called "Small School Act" of June 1922. This Act left the structure of Czech education unchanged and imposed this structure on Slovakia but not on Transcarpathian Ukraine. The post-war orientation of education was determined by the cataclysmic events of 1948. The School Act of April 1948 stipulating the basic principles of comprehensive education nationalised the education system as a whole and

eliminated the influence of the Church. Basic education lasting nine years was compulsory, uniform and free of charge. The law also provided for support hours for socially disadvantaged children and non-compulsory education in the form of leisure time activities, which at the same time performed a social function. Basic education was preceded by a non-compulsory *matežská škola*. After basic education, which was divided into a 1st and a 2nd stage, there were schools of the "third stage" - *gymnázia* (upper secondary general schools) and *odborné školy* (vocational and technical schools) - and then higher education institutions.

In 2000 an amendment to the School Act was passed that relaxed admission requirements for upper secondary schools. Other changes of the School Act are related to the state administration reform in 2000. The Concept of the State Information Policy in Education was approved by the government in April 2000 and was implemented progressively over the next 5 years. In developing it the Ministry of Education took into account the European documents, *Learning in the Information Society* (1996) and *e-Learning -Designing Tomorrow's Education* (2000).

Czech higher education dates back six hundred years. In 1348 Emperor Charles IV founded a university in Prague which is the oldest academic institution in Central Europe. It is now called Charles University. In 1573 a university was established in Olomouc (Moravia). The beginnings of technical education go back to 1717 when the Czech Corporative Engineer School was set up in Prague (later on the Czech Technical University). After several years of experience it was realised that some matters needed new legal regulations. After a large debate the Higher Education Act was passed in April 1998 and it came into force on 1 July 1998. However, most of its provisions came into effect on 1 January 1999. This new law changed the status of existing state higher education institutions (with the exception of military and police ones) into public ones, all property used so far was transferred into their possession. The law further distinguished the higher education institutions of university and non-university types, enabled the establishment of private higher education institutions and strengthened the responsibilities of the Accreditation Commission. By 2004 it was amended eight times. The amendments specified the responsibilities of higher education institutions in relation to their assets, with the aim of facilitating multi-source funding. It changed the duration of Master's study following on from Bachelor's study (previously 2-3 years and now 1-3 years), it made it possible to study for a Master's degree at non-university higher education institutions and it allowed the cross-crediting of lifelong education courses after entry to regular higher education study.

Germany

Even in the early post-war years, conflicting decisions were taken in the three western occupation zones in Germany and in the Soviet zone regarding the political foundations of the education system. The *Länder* formed in 1946 in the west built on the federalism of the German Empire (1871-1918) and the Weimar Republic (1919-1933) in constitutional terms. The *Grundgesetz* of 1949 (Basic Law) stipulates that the traditional federal order be continued in the areas of education, science and culture.

With the foundation of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in 1949, the German Central Administration for National Education was transformed into the Ministry of National Education, which was responsible for schools and institutions of higher education. The 1965 law on the standard socialist education system then formed the conclusion to a process of development which had commenced in the 1950s and which continued to determine the GDR education system until the end of the 1980s without being reformed to any significant extent.

The development of German unity in the education system since 1990 shows different picture. Since the unification of the two states in Germany, a central task of educational policy has been the reorganisation of the school system on the basis of relevant agreements of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs, as well as the reform of higher education in the Länder in eastern Germany. In the German education system, fundamental changes have been initiated under which special importance is attached to the various efforts for quality assurance and quality development.

In the 1960s, there was a lively public debate in the Federal Republic of Germany on pre-school education and children's transition into primary education. There were detailed discussions of the extent to which, through compensatory measures, educational opportunities for children from disadvantaged socio-cultural backgrounds could be improved on their entrance into primary education, and whether it would be useful to bring forward the start of compulsory schooling from 5 to 6 years of age. The Federation and the Länder then carried out an extensive programme of pilot projects, which was backed up by scientific support. In the end, however, the start of compulsory schooling was not brought forward. Yet the lively public debate served to heighten awareness of the importance of pre-school education, and from the 1960s onwards the pace of Kindergarten expansion was stepped up. In 1960, Kindergarten places were available for only one third of 3 to 6 year-olds in Germany. This had increased to around 90% in 1998.

In 1959 these compulsory eight-year schools were transformed into polytechnical high schools. As at the beginning of the 1991/92 school year, the Polytechnische Oberschulen were abolished and the differentiated system of secondary education was introduced in the Länder of eastern Germany. Based on the Education Acts, School Administration Acts and Compulsory Schooling Acts of the German Länder the school regulations known as Schulordnungen for schools providing general and vocational education contain detailed regulations covering the content of the courses as well as the leaving certificates and entitlements obtainable on completion of lower and upper secondary education.

Higher education in the GDR evolved under completely different conditions. It was based on a unitary and centrally controlled concept in the service of Marxist-Leninist party ideology and committed to serving the ends of a planned economy (supplying cadres). Higher education there did not see unchecked expansion: the enrolment figures peaked in 1972 after the universities had been opened expressly for the sons and daughters of workers and peasants in the first years after the war and distance learning courses had been introduced to reach many working people.

In 1989, following the peaceful revolution in the GDR, a number of reforms in higher education were launched there even before its unification with West Germany, viz. higher education came within the remit of the newly established Länder, the autonomy of institutions of higher education was restored along with freedom of research and teaching, ideologically encumbered faculties were overhauled, and wider access to the Science Council was given a mandate to examine the state of non-university research and draw up recommendations for a reorganisation of higher education. As part of this reorganisation, some institutions of higher education were closed or integrated into universities, new faculties were set up in the fields of law, economics and business and social sciences.

Hungary

The present educational system of Hungary crystallised in the 17th and 18th centuries. Hungarian public education has been undergoing continuous reforms, some of which sometimes worked against the previous one. Reforms concentrated mainly on the content of education, but the issue of

decentralising and democratising the entire public education system always lingered in the background. The process was triggered by Act I of 1985 on public education that set out to implement a structure built on the professional independence of institutions of teaching and education to replace the previous, rigidly centralised education system. That move firstly opened the door on alternative pedagogical views in school practice, and, secondly, it invited the elaboration of schooling/education concepts more in line with local needs.

In harmony with the government programme, and the tasks arising from accession to EU, the Minister of Education decided to embark on a comprehensive modernisation, and development programme. Preparatory efforts to create a new Act on Tertiary education, were elaborated, then implementing the various elements of the Hungarian Universities Programme were undertaken. The Campus Hungary Association was founded with the participation of 40 institutions in February 2004, enjoying the support of the Hungarian Ministry of Education. The commissioned Hungarian Scholarship Board created the database for the use of Hungarian Higher Education Institutions and foreign HE students and organized the framework of the Association. The most important aim of this organization was to create publicity of Hungarian Higher Education abroad and to motivate Hungarian institutions to launch more courses in foreign languages.

Portugal

In 1996, the Ministry of Education, Portugal in partnership with the then Ministry of Labour and Social Security and the Ministry of Equipment, Planning and Territorial Administration, introduced the Programme for the Expansion and Development of Pre-school Education, with the aim of consolidating what were previously uncoordinated efforts and to making proposals for the effective enlargement and expansion of the network, in a partnership between public and private initiative, developing pedagogic intervention proposals at syllabus and teacher training level, as well as promoting and monitoring the launch of innovation, training and research programmes. In March 2005 the XVII Constitutional Government came into office, whose programme makes changes in order to provide quality education for all, progressively making pre-school education available to all children of the appropriate age.

The first Portuguese university was founded by royal decree in 1920, issued by King Dinis, although there had been two large mediaeval-style religious schools in Coimbra and Alcobaca since the twelfth century. At the close of 1979, what until then had been known as short duration higher education, became known as ensino superior politécnico, and polytechnic colleges were set up to co-exist with the universities. Between the second half of the eighties and the beginning of the nineties, this growth exceeded 50% in both state and private and co-operative teaching. By the early nineties there were 152 state and 81 private schools of higher education.

The new Education Act, approved by parliament, contained Lisbon Strategy guidelines and the underlying principles of the Bologna Declaration, those worth being highlighting are:

- The alteration to the access system for higher education;
- The strengthening of the principle of equality among the various sub-systems of higher education in accordance with the value of educational, scientific and cultural projects;
- Growth of quality in education, research and experimentation;
- Demand for quality for the attribution of degrees regarding the merit of the institution;
- The reorganisation of the higher education system via the achievement of the objectives of the Bologna Declaration; and
- The alterations to the Finance Act.

The reformulation of the School Social Action policy in higher education is being prepared. The following structural questions regarding higher education are also being debated:

- Restructuring the academic degree system in three stages, in the implementation of Bologna Process;
- Administration of higher education institutions;
- Improving the access system to higher education and the subsequent passage to higher education institutions;
- Autonomy and regulation with the implications for the different stakeholders;
- Reformulation and growth of scientific research;
- Revision of the higher level assessment and accreditation system of competencies; and
- Conjugation of formal qualifications with non-formal ones, from a lifelong learning perspective.

United Kingdom

In Northern Ireland there was no statutory requirement for the provision of nursery education. However, government initiatives in the late 1990s set targets to provide additional government funded part-time pre-school places in a range of settings. During the 2003/04 school year, free (part-time) places were available for all children in their immediate pre-school year whose parents wanted them.

In England and Wales, the main aims of these strategies were to raise the quality of care, and to make childcare more affordable and more accessible by increasing places and improving information. The childcare strategy in Northern Ireland focused on the principles of inclusion, social justice, quality, affordability, flexibility, accessibility and partnership. Early years development and childcare partnerships in England and Wales and pre-school education development plans in Northern Ireland were subsequently set up to implement the strategies.

In September 2000, the foundation stage of education, which is based on six key areas of learning known as the early learning goals, was introduced in England. This is a distinct stage of education for children from the age of three until the end of the primary school reception class (usually aged five) and has now become a statutory part of the National Curriculum under the Education Act 2002. During the foundation stage, the overwhelming majority of children attend some form of pre-school or nursery education, either full- or part-time. Only a few children remain at home during the foundation stage, first attending school at the beginning of Year 1 (aged five+).

Elementary education provided by voluntary bodies became increasingly widespread throughout the nineteenth century. The Elementary Education Act, 1870 provided for the creation of School Boards, which could set up new 'board schools' in areas where existing voluntary provision was insufficient. This marked a significant turning-point in state participation in education. The Education Act (Northern Ireland), 1947 introduced legislation similar to the 1944 Education Act in England and Wales. Important reforms were introduced by the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986, the Education (NI) Order 1987, the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989, the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1993, the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996, the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 and the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998.

There has recently been widespread consultation on the future of education for 14- to 19-year-olds in England and Wales, and for post-primary education in Northern Ireland. In England, a new government strategy document of the Department of Education and Skills (DfES 2003) proposes changes to the current system.

The Government's White Paper, 'The Future of Higher Education', published in January 2003, set out the Government's strategy for the reform of higher education in England, as well as a number of measures which affect the rest of the United Kingdom. In July 2004 the Higher Education Act, 2004 was passed which legislated for the proposals in the White Paper. The Act introduces a new graduate contribution scheme under which universities in England will be allowed to seek a contribution of between £0 and £3,000 per year for each course. Students will be able to defer their contribution until after graduation, when payments will be through the tax system, linked to ability to pay. These changes will be implemented from 2005.

Recent Changes

The Leadership Foundation for Higher Education was launched in March 2004 to identify and meet key management and leadership needs across the higher education sector, build an elite group of professional leaders and managers, and develop good practice in leadership and management. An Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), or student ombudsman, was set up in January 2005 to consider student complaints in England and Wales. In 2003 a new Research Forum was set up, designed to strengthen the dialogue between government ministers and the higher education sector on research. This forum will enable the Government Ministerial group promoting research reform to exchange ideas on the key issues of the link between teaching and research, and developing greater research collaboration (<http://www.eurydice.org>).

Box 16.1: Multi Cultural Education in Britain

In 1981 a Committee chaired by Lord Swan was constituted to enquire into the education of the ethnic minority pupils. The committee in its report stressed need for the re-education of the majority society so as to lay the foundations for a genuinely pluralist society. The report pointed out that the majority society is not even considering the need for a multi-cultural education as they think that their society is one of mono-cultural. In order to provide "Education for All" the Committee made certain recommendations, such as:

- Britain is a multiracial and multicultural society and all pupils must be enabled to understand what this means.
- This challenge cannot be left to the separate independent initiatives of the Local Education Authorities and schools. Only those with experience of substantial numbers of ethnic minority pupils have attempted to tackle it, though the issues affect all schools and pupils.
- Education has to be about something more than the reinforcement of the beliefs, values and identity, which each child brings to the school.
- It is necessary to combat racism, to attack inherited myths and stereotypes and the ways they are embodied in institutional practice.
- Multicultural understanding has to permeate all aspects of a school's work. It is not a separate topic that can be welded on to existing practices.
- Only in this way can schools begin to offer anything approaching equality of opportunity for all pupils, which it must be the aspirations of the education system to provide.

Source: Abraham 1989

16.5 Recent Trends of Funding of Education in Europe

The funding of education is always a debateable issue all over the world. At present, the financing and management of school resources are debateable

issue on the future of compulsory education in Europe. In some countries, decentralisation policy is adopted. For instance, in the five Nordic countries, plus U.K., Bulgaria, Lithuania and Poland decentralisation of financing to the local authorities is very extensive, since they are in charge of funding school staff, operational and capital resources. The same applies to Hungary and Slovenia but in these two countries schools are also provided with funds for these resources from other public bodies. The financing of resources is almost entirely, the responsibility of the Community in the French Community of Belgium, in the case of schools administered by the Community authorities, and grant-aided private education, and in the Flemish Community in the case of all schools.

For many countries funding remains a key challenge and an obstacle to implementing the modern agenda. Several new Member States are aiming to tackle this issue by establishing partnerships with universities abroad for the provision of joint degrees. Many European countries made efforts to provide higher education to learners who belong to lower socio-economic backgrounds. This has been initiated for increasing the participation levels in higher education. Recently Open Universities are getting popularity for continuing professional development by using distance and blended learning and ICT-based learning approaches.

16.6 Education in South Eastern Europe

Although the countries of Southeastern Europe— Romania, Bulgaria, and Moldova— have been independent democracies since the 1991 fall of the Soviet Union, each has had problems transitioning from a centrally-planned economic system to a market-based economy. Both Bulgaria and Romania were significantly affected by the economic embargo placed on Yugoslavia in the 1990s, suffering billions of dollars in losses due to disrupted trade, transport, and investment. (<http://www.eia.doe.gov>)

At present, South-Eastern Europe (SEE) shows commonality in the challenges and problems in education. There is low GDP for education, low teacher salaries, child poverty and overloaded curricula. The regional diversity is too great. Like in other regions, the education system can be evaluated in terms of four main characteristics: availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability. (<http://devdata.worldbank.org>)

The Balkan peninsula in South East Europe is one of the world's most complex areas in terms of ethnicity, language and religion. Nation states mean less, generally speaking, than ethnic allegiances that cross borders: there are Albanians in Macedonia, Macedonians in Bulgaria, Croats in Bosnia, and Serbs in Croatia – the mix is often uneasy, and in recent times has been explosive (e.g. Kosovo, Bosnia). This regional diversity does not apply only to languages, religion and ethnicity – it permeates the entire geo-political history of SEE, preceding even the division of the Eastern and the Western Roman Empire.

Various studies conducted on “The Right to Education” show that some problems are common across the region i.e. low share of GDP for education; low teacher salaries; child poverty; overloaded curricula; deteriorating material base etc., but that there are no common solutions to these problems. After World War II, all SEE countries changed their education systems, mostly due to Soviet influence. The most common aims were the elimination of illiteracy and the extension of basic education from 4 to 8 years. Undeniably, the new systems were highly ideological. At least three distinctive types emerged: the Albanian, the Soviet and the Yugoslavian. Four year technical schools became common, while vocational education and training 13 were linked to the socialist industrial complex, organised differently in each of the three types.

All SEE countries have reached a level where access to basic education is not the main issue, but quality elementary education for all - including rural children, children of minorities, children with special needs, and children who are socially or emotionally at-risk - is the real task.

General upper secondary education today seems to occupy a better position than vocational education and training, in most SEE countries. The term "tertiary education" deserves more attention and debate. Mostly, a traditional model of university education is still in force. Unfortunately, this only sharpens questions of access, equity, and quality. Adult education and life-long learning seem to be under-valued. High unemployment and a completely altered structure of industry demand the development of a labour force that has different, broader work skills. *Teachers' education and development* need radical modernisation, both in its pre-service and in-service forms. The entire region needs modern institutions in this area. Education to be delivered through Open and Distance learning is the answer to all problems.

16.7 Conclusion

The analysis of the education system of Europe shows that education has a similar role to play in all countries. Educational systems are not traditional unchangeable structures. They need flexible changes in economic and social conditions. That is why educational system cannot be analysed without taking these conditions into account. In all the case studies of each country mentioned in this unit the educational systems have passed through fundamental changes during reforms. The aims of the reforms achieved were same i.e.,

- to make the relationship between educational and employment systems closer and more consistent;
- to make the preparation of the young graduates correspond to changing social requirements;
- to develop personal skills among youth;
- to contribute to increasing personal opportunity for social mobility.

The relationship between social requirements and the abilities of the educational system to satisfy them, naturally leads to the permanent outdistance of the requirements. At the same time, substantial differences among the educational system of the various countries could be found.

We have made an effort in this unit to provide you with a broad-brush treatment of the development of education in Europe. It is not possible to apprise you with the educational system of each country in a single unit because of their differences in cultural and sociological nature. Since, the unit is on 'Education in Europe', we have focussed our attention on the issues of managing the transformation of a dysfunctional education system into dynamic and vibrant of social change for development.

16.8 Further Reading

Masahiro Tanaka, 2005. *The Cross-Cultural Transfer of Educational Concepts and Practices: A Comparative Study*. Oxford: