
UNIT 26 EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

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26.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- discuss the concept of education;
- describe the aims of education;
- highlight the contemporary concerns and challenges to education; and
- examine the role of education in generating awareness.

26.1 INTRODUCTION

The term education is comprehensive. It has a wide scope that includes in its ambit, the 'individual' as well as 'society'. It also includes the development of all aspects of the personality of an individual, i.e., cognitive, emotional, spiritual, moral, aesthetic, social and physical.

Today there are several areas of concern confronting the field of education. For instance providing education to the deprived sections, building human resources through education, development of values, etc. These issues are the challenges that have to be overcome in order to attain the goals of education.

Education is a life long process that generates awareness about one's own self as well as the environment. This is a liberating voice that brings forth progress for the individual as well as the society. In this Unit, our attempt is to provide you with an understanding of the concept of education, and its contemporary concerns and challenges.

26.2 CONCEPT AND AIMS OF EDUCATION

Almost everyday we come across the term 'Education'. But you may wonder 'what does the term actually mean?' In this Section we shall first discuss the concept of education and then move on to aims and concerns in the subsequent Sections. Education is as old as human civilisation. Its scope is so wide that it is

debatable if there can be any **fixed** parameters within which the concept of education can be bound. **According** to the pragmatists, the concept of education is dynamic. It changes with the changing needs of a society. But the idealists feel that education should be **based** on absolute values and ideals.

Etymologically, the word education is derived **from** two Latin words, 'educare' and 'educere', 'Educare' means bringing up or nourishing a child. 'Educere' means drawing out or bringing forth the potential within an individual (Bhatia and Narang, 1996).

In ancient India, education was considered to be the means for gaining knowledge, becoming a righteous person and finally attaining salvation. **Kautilya** said that education should develop character and **patriotism**. Thus the social dimension was added to the concept of education. It was no longer meant for the **upliftment** of only the individual.

Swami **Vivekananda** considered that education leads to the manifestation of the divine potential already existing in human beings. Thus the **function** of education is not merely to fill up an individual's mind with information but to draw out and develop the inherent potential.

Western philosophers have **defined** education in various ways. According to **Plato**, education develops in the body and soul of the individual all the beauty and **perfection** which he is capable of, while **Aristotle** felt that education develops **one's faculty** so that **s/he** is able to contemplate the supreme birth, beauty and goodness. Thus we can infer that education is not limited to cognitive growth. It is **comprehensive** and encompasses physical, cognitive, emotional, social, aesthetic, moral and spiritual growth.

The modern concept of education is considered to be a tool for development of the individual and the society. According to Indian Education Commission (**IEC, 1964-66**), education is a **powerful** instrument of social, economic and cultural transformation. Delors in his report, *Learning: the Treasure Within (1996)* said that education is primarily an exceptional means of bringing about personal development and building relationships among individual groups and nations. The four pillars according to Delors, on which education is based are:

- 1) **Learning to Be:** It is a considerable departure from conventional educational thinking and deals with the concept of life long education. For leading a life of quality, life long education is essential.
- 2) **Learning to Know:** Education is not merely the process of acquiring knowledge and skills but it is a preparation to acquire them.
- 3) **Learning to Do:** Through education one not **only acquires** the abilities to take up an occupation but also develops the right attitude towards work.
- 4) **Learning to Live Together:** Education develops respect for pluralism, understanding and peace.

Now a days the concept of life long education is gaining popularity. It is being realised that education is not limited to that imparted by formal agencies of education. Unlike **formal** education, non-formal education is flexible and open to people of different age groups and geographical areas. It is **offered** usually by the