
UNIT 2 MANAGEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS

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2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the first Unit, we presented an overview of the basic principles and practices associated with the profession of management in general. Management, as we noted, evolved into a profession during the middle of the 20th century, and during much of its professional evolution, it was perceived to be associated primarily with business. Peter Drucker's distinction between administration and management in 1970 clinches this perception. According to him, while administration is generally the field for non-business organisations, management focuses mainly on business that involves enterprise, risk-taking, selling to maximise profits and the organisational efforts needed to do all these, and do them efficiently. However, as the sweep and scope of the management profession extended over new areas, specialisation in management studies also began to emerge. Notable among the special areas in management are marketing, finance, human resources and operations.

Education management is a relatively new area of specialisation that developed strongly in the United States. Remember, unlike most other countries in the world, education in the United States of America is largely in the private sector. The initial offerings of educational management (administration) programmes relied heavily on the concepts and practices relevant to business settings. In the U.K., the Institute of Education of the University of London was the first to launch a specialised course in educational management in the 1960s. During the 1970s and 1980s, interest

in the field grew in the Commonwealth and Europe. The Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration and Management (CCEAM) was founded in 1970 and over 40 countries became its members. The European Forum on Educational Administration (EFEA) was established in 1976 with 20 members.

Attention to issues in education management is rapidly growing. There are several reasons for this growing interest. In the first place, resources for education are progressively shrinking. Secondly, education itself is spreading phenomenally; it is no more the privilege of a few. Today, education is universal, with societies aiming at universal primary education for all children across the world by 2015; that is the objective of the UNESCO's initiative of Education For All (EFA) that has also been incorporated into the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted by the international community represented by the United Nations. Education does not, and will not, end with primary or basic education; it will proceed to secondary and tertiary stages. Most of the developed countries have already reached enrolment ratios of 50% or more of their eligible population in tertiary education; the developing countries are engaged in serious efforts to register double-digit figures in their tertiary education enrolment ratios. Such is the expansion that has to be organised, managed and successfully sustained. And the efforts worldwide demand new initiatives at resource generation, establishment and maintenance of schools, colleges and universities, and recruitment and training of teachers.

And with this massive expansion, a host of other issues need to be considered as well; strategic choices, action plans, collaboration and networking, performance appraisals, leadership and human resource management, budgeting and financial control, and so on. You will see that all these are just the issues that concern management in general. Your acquaintance with the functions and processes of management gained from the study of unit 1 will help you explore the ways in which management of educational systems assumes significance and the importance of studying them in depth. We shall now proceed to do just that.

2.2 OBJECTIVES

On completion of this Unit, you should be able to:

- *identify* the significant features of the education system and its organisation;
- *analyse* the various components that constitute the system of education in a country;
- *discuss* the relationships among Governments, their agencies and the institutions;
- *explain* the structure of education and the relationship among the various elements in that structure; and
- *analyse* and identify the specific issues that are relevant to the management of education.

2.3 UNDERSTANDING THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AND ITS ORGANISATION

In the previous unit, we discussed in some detail the system concept. While doing so, we mentioned university as an example of a system and

considered the several sub-systems that constitute the university, which itself is a complex organisation. However, university is just one element in a much larger system that is education with multiple layers of authority, organisational structures and complex relationships. For example, the education system comprises typically the governments at the apex, the regulatory agencies set up by them, the educational institutions (schools, colleges, universities) and not the least, parents' associations, professional organisations and many other interest groups that have a stake in education. It is this highly complex and multi-dimensional universe that we call the education system. We shall try to take a close look at this unique system in this unit.

2.3.1 Education as a Social System

Education is a people-oriented activity. It is not just about getting children and young adolescents together and getting them to accept common values shaped in the past. It is also about trying to find answers to questions like the reason and purpose of living together, and equipping everyone with the ability to participate effectively in shaping the future of the society of which they are a part. It is the responsibility of the education system to prepare everyone to perform this social role. As societies become more and more complex, people's participation in common enterprises goes far beyond the conventional political decision in electing their governments; it extends to shaping and developing social institutions and organisations as well. The major role of education then is to prepare people for active participation in the life of their communities.

It is now widely recognised that the goal of development should be human welfare and not merely economic growth measured in terms of GDP and per capita income. The indicators of development are to be reckoned also in terms of health, nutrition, access to drinking water, education and the environment. Equity, equality between social groups and between the sexes and the degree of participation in the processes of development itself are just as significant. In this broader perspective, one of the principal functions of education is to prepare humanity to take control of its own development. It must enable all people without exception to take their destiny into their own hands and contribute to the progress of the society.

Education systems cannot, however, continue indefinitely to meet all the demands made on them, and these demands are only growing constantly. They are called upon to provide the same educational opportunities to all, and to respond to all demands made on them. Inevitably, resource allocation becomes a crucial factor in determining the paradigm of development, and the distribution of resources should clearly reflect each society's choices of models of economic, social and cultural development.

In the developing countries, while shortage of resources is a major constraint in making choices, developed countries also face the dilemma of balancing different options in resource allocation for education, as for instance, provision of equal opportunities or removal of the mismatch between supply and demand in the labour market. In both cases, the pressure of these demands falls largely upon public authorities and the policy-makers who are often faced with conflicting interests; industry demands more and more skills and competence; science wants funds for research and higher education that produces young researchers; the humanities and the social sciences want support for better general education; parents look for more high-quality education; the disadvantaged social groups want more

opportunities to pursue education; and all these, in turn, require a better supply of good teachers. The issue is not one of just making a choice; each of these demands is based on the legitimate expectations that it is one of education's basic functions. Choices in education, therefore, concern the whole of society and require democratic debates and decisions.

2.3.2 Education and the Government

The basic feature of education as a social system that deeply affects the lives of all people inevitably brings into focus the role of governments in the management of education. It is not just the allocation of resources alone; as we have seen in the previous section, there is a whole range of issues on which choices in education depend. Who else can consider all these issues in the broader perspective of a nation's interests? No one else, but the government.

Most governments frame a national policy on education. Often, these policies are framed after extensive debates in which all major sections of the society are involved. Such policies also provide for periodic review and renewal, and the basis for education reforms in most countries is the thrust given in their national policies. Generally, the overall framework that most national policies provide will cover:

- Teaching and curriculum (subjects to be taught, compulsory and optional subjects, contents of courses, national core curriculum which might be a model only in some cases, examinations at the institutional and national levels, etc.);
- Staff (qualification prescribed centrally by law or determined by institutions on the basis of models or guidelines, recruitment and training of teachers, their conditions of service, and so on);
- Educational structure (levels and stages of education, standards of attainment at each stage, mobility from one stage to another, organisation of institutions at each level, etc.);
- Concerns of access, costs and quality (widening access requires expansion involving high costs, improvements in quality pushes costs, and lowering costs compromises quality; an equilibrium between these conflicting concerns is what a policy should seek to establish);
- Performance assessment and review (performance audit of institutions, organisational systems, content and processes of education, review of policies and changes in direction, etc.);
- Resources (finance, budgeting, grants, sources of finance, management patterns, fees and other resources, international collaboration, etc.).

The government's job is not over with the enunciation of a policy. It has to see that the policy is implemented. In several cases, it might require the enactment of laws and also the establishment of necessary instruments. Since governments cannot be expected to run all educational institutions directly, legislations would provide for the necessary regulatory framework within which both the public and private sector will function in the field of education.

The role played by the governments will vary depending upon how national governance is structured. The organisation of the educational system could be completely centralised, or decentralised, or a mixture of both. Countries with a federal structure have a largely decentralised system in which states

perform most of the policy, planning and regulatory functions. In a fully centralised system, as in the erstwhile Eastern Europe, the system is run by a central authority. France too has a centralised system of education, and it is said that a School Inspector, looking at his/her watch, could say: “at the present moment, in every school from Cannes to Lille, they are teaching quadratic equations”. In decentralised systems, local self-governments play a major responsibility, especially in the establishment, management and maintenance of schools. At the levels of higher education, the picture is quite different; governments, both federal and state, come in a big way. The stakes are high, the costs are heavy and the responsibilities are huge. We shall now turn to the roles and responsibilities of governments in education and how they go about playing their roles.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Space is given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

How the national educational policies are usually formulated? Answer in about 30 words.

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2.3.3 The Government and its Agencies

We have seen how significant is the government’s role in education, and how this role is more visible in higher education. But, before we move to the role of governments in higher education, let us take a brief look at the ways in which the school system in many countries are influenced, shaped and ‘managed’ by government policies and actions.

Traditionally, governments have played a major role in establishing and maintaining schools in their countries. Their major role was provision of the resources, and with it, over periods of time, came the responsibilities for defining a minimum standard of learning outcomes, a standard national curriculum, minimum qualifications and competence required of teachers and such other common concerns. Most countries followed a fairly strong control over their education systems; establishing schools, appointing teachers, managing the school system, making arrangements for holding examinations and awarding qualifications, and so on. While these practices are still in vogue in most developing countries, there have been major efforts at reforms and changes in the ways in which school systems are organised and managed in Europe and America. The thrust of these reforms is decentralisation and deregulation leading to greater school autonomy.

Peter Karstanje (1999) distinguishes three different models of decentralisation and deregulation:

- A centralised and regulated regime – in this case, the government, usually the central government, or, in countries that have a federal structure such as Germany, the regional authorities, regulate almost every aspect of educational institutions, and in so doing, has a central

influence on what happens in schools. This is the case in France, Germany, Italy and many East European countries.

- A moderate level of centralisation and regulation is found in countries where the national government partially regulates the educational institutions. In such cases, the national governments may, for example, strongly emphasise certain fields of interest and be inclined to designate any other areas as falling under the responsibility of the school. In these cases, while financial and staffing policies might be within the domain of national governments, matters relating to curriculum, teaching, school organisation, etc. might be left to the schools to determine. In such cases, local councils or regional authorities have a higher level of authority in regulating the affairs of educational institutions.
- A higher degree of decentralisation and deregulation where the national governments provide the resources with little or no conditions relating to their use is very uncommon. The reason is that governments have to account for the use of public funds and this role implies a certain degree of regulatory interventions. In countries like England and Netherlands, responsibilities have undergone a partial shift from the government to the educational institutions. The national government fulfils its responsibility by carrying out quality inspections by requiring schools to combine a solid system of internal quality checks with a national quality monitoring system run by government inspectors (in Netherlands) or by private inspectors (in England).

You will notice that governments play a crucial role in the school systems across most countries. Ministries of Education, Education Directorates, Regional and District Education Officers, local authorities (local self-governments like municipalities), and school inspectors are all part of the vast regulatory networks that governments have put in place to fulfil their responsibility for oversight of the school systems.

A very common instrument that you will find in most countries is the Board of Education that prescribes the courses and their content, holds the examinations and certifies the outcome. The schools are mostly engaged in teaching what the Boards prescribe though they have the freedom to engage students in multiple ways to make sure that their physical and intellectual development is ensured and that they grow up adequately prepared to shoulder major responsibilities in life. Further, all educational provision needs certain infrastructure. While buildings, equipment, books and teachers can be assembled by the managements, there are more to the school system than the physical infrastructure. For instance, schools need teachers; you cannot expect every management to recruit and train them. It is not just one-time training. Supply of qualified teachers has to be ensured on a continuing basis for the growth of the system and its sustainability. Then, there is the question of a common curriculum, core content, setting the minimum standards for the learning outcome, and so on. All these go beyond the domain of individual schools, and a national authority like the government steps in.

When it comes to higher education, there are fewer examples of Governments running universities directly though they provide nearly all the resources that the universities require. This is primarily because universities have traditionally been known to be self-governing institutions, and any involvement of governments in their functioning was perceived to be compromising their autonomy. In fact, the notion of autonomy is often invoked to keep governments at a distance from universities. And

governments too accepted the strength of the argument that they should not be seen to be running universities. In U.K. for instance, the concept of a buffer between the government and the universities led to the establishment of the University Grants Committee as an intermediate instrument between government and universities for all purposes that included funding, planning (including control) and indeed all communication. Over the years, this agency has gone through a great deal of metamorphosis and is currently operating in the form of funding councils on a regional basis. There is also a Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in U.K. that reviews the quality of teaching in British universities. The QAA system, in some ways, has imposed on the Universities some external pressures and controls leading to tensions arising from the risks of a compliance culture that undermines autonomy.

In India, besides the University Grants Commission (UGC) that is responsible for the coordinated development of the university system there is an All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) that is charged with similar responsibilities in the field of technical education and a National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) that is responsible for ensuring the quality and standards of training for school teachers..

These are not the only agencies. As education systems get more and more complex, and with the need for greater specialisation in a range of areas, levels and constituencies across the whole spectrum of education, the governments set up many more agencies, many of them as statutory bodies, to deal with the areas of concern assigned to them. We have seen the establishment of agencies like the Councils for Vocational Education and Agencies or Associations for the development and standard setting in several fields of professional education like architecture, management, medicine, law, and so on. It has to be admitted that not all these professional bodies across all countries are the creation of governments; many among them have come up as non-government agencies at the initiative of the professions themselves. Irrespective of who set them up, these agencies perform a critical function; they validate the programmes offered by the universities by accepting them as adequate preparation for entry in to the profession concerned.

In more recent times, with the rapid growth of institutions of higher education, and the equally rapid rise in enrolments across the world, the stakeholder interests have also gone up. With participation rates in higher education growing fast in most countries, crossing the 50% mark in the developed countries, and the developing nations making all efforts to catch up, questions are also being raised about the quality and value of what many universities and colleges offer. Governments provide the resources to the universities; in other words, the tax payers finance the universities. As parents, all people are interested in satisfying themselves that what they spend their money on is spent wisely. Governments, on their part, are keen that the investments they make from public funds are for good causes, and that those investments are best utilised. In other words, universities are called upon to remain accountable for the use of the resources placed at their disposal, and provide adequate and credible information about their performance on all fronts.

These questions and concerns gave rise in recent decades to the emergence across the world of new instruments and mechanisms to establish and maintain the quality of teaching and research as well as programmes and courses. In fact, quality of education has now emerged as a special area for

studies and research and have contributed a vast body of literature on what constitutes quality, how it is assured across a spectrum of institutions, programmes and research efforts. There are in many countries what are known as Quality Assurance Councils, or by other names, whose functions are to examine the quality of teaching and research in their universities and make their findings known to the public (we mentioned the QAA in U.K. a little earlier). These Councils have developed elaborate criteria to assess the performance of each institution or its programmes as well as its teaching and research. These initiatives have gradually led to the emergence of mechanisms for accreditation of institutions and, in some cases, to the rating of the institutions as well. For example, for some years now the British universities are rated based on their performance in teaching and research, giving out the message that universities cannot take their place for granted on the basis of past performance, and that they have to earn their place through continuing efforts. These ratings help students and their parents in the choice of institutions, programmes and courses. It is important to note that one of these criteria is the standing of the qualifications in the job market and its acceptability for future employment. Surely, it is something that most people would be interested in knowing.

Two other issues that bring governments directly on the education scene need to be mentioned here. First is the recognition of qualifications for employment. In the past, students from several countries moved to the well known universities in Europe and America for higher education. This situation has dramatically changed during the last half century or so. Most of the former colonies are now independent nations. All of them have their own schools, colleges and universities. Yet, there is considerable student movement from the developing countries to the west and among developing countries themselves. Naturally, questions arise whether the qualifications obtained from country A are accepted for jobs in country B. This question attracted serious debates across the globe. Discussions were held bilaterally between countries and multilaterally among nations under the auspices of international organisations like the UNESCO. Today, there are protocols signed between countries according mutual recognitions to qualifications obtained from institutions within their countries. The international initiatives taken by UNESCO have led to the formulations of international conventions on recognition of qualifications on regional basis that member countries can ratify. Either way, these treaties and conventions are in the domain of governments.

The second is a more recent trend of increasing commercialisation of education. Not just within countries, but internationally too, the high cost of education, especially higher education, has offered opportunities for a high-profit business in education. Not all the enterprises entering the education business are driven by the desire to promote education; they are driven by profit motive. They attract students with lucrative offers, collect huge amounts of fees, and later, turn out to be no more than fly-by-night operators. Governments have a duty and the responsibility to protect the interests of their students and ensure that they do not fall victim to unscrupulous education entrepreneurs. Governments are engaged in enacting laws to prevent such malpractices by insisting that the credentials of the institutions be made known and/or they obtain permission from the national regulators to operate in their jurisdiction. We shall return to this issue shortly.

It is also true that in the last three decades or so, the cost of education has gone up enormously. Parents and students want to know whether it is

worthwhile to spend so much money and time on what the institutions offer. In other words, the emergence of the element of market in education has forced this issue on institutions. They are now called upon to “sell” their products (academic programmes) and satisfy the potential consumers that their investments are safe and worthwhile. This is a new dimension in education and we shall turn to this issue later.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Space is given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

i) What is the basic difference in the role of governments in school education and in higher education? Answer in about 50 words.

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ii) What are the functions of quality assurance councils in various countries? Answer in about 40 words.

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2.3.4 Governments and University Autonomy

Universities are the institutions that create, preserve and disseminate knowledge. They are the intellectual guardians of the society. They produce men and women who can reflect on contemporary issues of concern to society and humanity in general, scientists, engineers and technologists who come out with great discoveries and inventions as also the ways in which people make sense of new knowledge and its applications, and doctors and lawyers who help healthy and orderly growth and progress of societies. They are also the institutions that provide the knowledge, skills and competence that people need to engage themselves in different occupations, produce goods and services and create wealth. Unlike schools that provide the foundation for good education, higher education institutions affect people and shape their lives more directly and immediately.

Though this discussion encompasses all higher education institutions, we shall use the term ‘university’ more for its symbolic value than its substance. The modern university, for more than its 800-year history, has owed allegiance to someone. Universities always needed patrons, be they the king or the church, merchants or philanthropists for their funding. The patrons always expected something in return, political policies or religious doctrines, trading policies and patterns or philosophical values that underpin charity. For universities, however, this was a small price to pay as they cherished the freedom that enabled them to challenge state power and even support and encourage opposing ideologies and doctrines.

The world after World War II was quite different. The challenges of reconstruction and development demanded that Governments assume the role of the chief patron of universities. In return they expected universities to become useful instruments of national purposes. That was the dawn of a new era of government-university relationship.

The freedom of the university to run its own affairs without direction or influence from any level of government is the core of what came to be known as autonomy. It works at two levels: first, academic autonomy that assures the right of universities to decide what to teach and how, and to determine the areas for research investigations and studies as well as their right to publish their findings from research; and second, the influences exercised by governments by asserting its legislative authority and executive power in deciding major issues like membership of Councils, appointment of Vice-Chancellor, and so on. The exercise of such influences is now a matter of routine in many countries; the only difference is the degree of state control and influence. With the massive expansion of higher education in the recent decades, and the very high costs involved in the maintenance of universities, governments that fund universities started asking questions. Do the universities deliver what they promise; when performance should count in every other sphere, why should higher education be an exception; and how quality of learning could be assessed to establish benchmarks for comparing and motivating better performance? And with this came other questions: are the governments aiming at controlling universities, and influencing them?

There have been studies conducted into the extent and quality of government influences on universities in several countries. A 1997 study conducted by Carnegie Foundation for Advancement of Teaching (CFAT) on assessment of scholarship and evaluation of faculty found that of the 12 countries surveyed, Korea had the most influence of governments followed in that order by Australia, Mexico, Japan, Netherlands, Hong Kong, Brazil, USA, Russia, Israel, Sweden and Chile. On the question whether governments should define the purposes and policies for higher education, the response varied in degrees; the most positive among them was Russia followed by Korea, Hong Kong, Sweden, Brazil, Chile, the Netherlands, Mexico, Israel, Australia, Japan and the USA. On the question whether governments should have, and do play, this role, Korea was placed high in terms of positive response, followed by Russia and Sweden (high on should and low on do), Mexico (should not have, but actually do), Israel, Japan and USA (low on both) and the rest more or less equal on both (Glassick, and others;1997).

Another study conducted about the same time by the Commonwealth Higher Education Management Services (CHEMS) looked at the degree of state influence on Commonwealth universities in terms of the more innocuous 'state supervision' to the more intrusive 'state control'. The study found that the governments in the Caribbean were the least intrusive, those in Canada, Britain, Australia and New Zealand were moderate and those in Africa and Asia were the most intrusive (Richardson and Fielden, 1997).

A third study sponsored by the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs of the government of Australia and conducted by the Australian National University in 1998 explored the issue further (Don Anderson and Richard Johnson, 1998). They examined the issue of autonomy in relation to the roles of Government on a number of issues

ranging from staff (appointment, promotion and terms and conditions of service) to academic standards (degree standards, quality audits, accreditation), curriculum and teaching, governance (councils, academic boards, student associations) and organisation and finance (funding, operating and capital grants, non-government funding, and accountability arrangements). The findings were interesting: almost 80% of the respondents felt that government interventions were not unreasonable. Countries that felt the interventions slightly excessive included France, Sweden, UK, New Zealand, Japan and Sri Lanka. Most of the respondents agreed that governments had the legal authority to intervene and the degree of intervention varied from high to low on different issues. For example, government influence was high on administration and finance as well as academic standards (quality audits and accreditation), it was very low on governance (councils and their memberships) and curriculum and teaching (www.magna.charta.org).

The developing countries generally view and use universities as instruments contributing to national cohesion and plans for economic and social development. For most of them, the modern university, far from being 'outside' government, is a product of government and has to serve its purpose as many other constituencies of governments do. Conventional academic freedom has to be confined within boundaries set by government and the university management.

So, where does it leave universities and their autonomy? The Australian National University study provides a clue. According to that study, in the 20 countries across the world that were surveyed, government influence was perceived to be high in Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Indochina, China, Singapore, South Africa and France, while it was low in the U.K., Canada, Ireland, USA, Germany and Japan. In the remaining 7 countries, namely, Netherlands, Sweden, Russia, Italy, Australia, New Zealand and Thailand, the degree of influence varied; it was neither too high, nor too low. But influence was there. The message is loud and clear. Irrespective of the stages of development, the long history, traditions and the ideals of freedom and autonomy enjoyed by universities through centuries, in today's context, governments are major players in higher education, and they do influence the functioning of universities in varying degrees.

What does it mean to education policy-makers, planners and managers? Governments are major partners, and they can no longer be wished away. They are part of the environment within which universities have to operate; it will be idle to assume that academic freedom and autonomy are absolute.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: i) Space is given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

What do you understand from the studies conducted on the influence of governments on the university autonomy and academic freedom? Answer in about 50 words.

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2.3.5 Education and the Market

We shall now turn to another interesting development: entry of the market in education. Market is a major factor in the environment that influences all economic decisions. To the extent that educational provision is also a function of the interplay of demand and supply, education cannot be seen to be beyond the realm of market. Historically, education has been conceived as an endeavour designed to promote the well-being of any society, not driven by considerations of profit, creation of wealth for the providers and not the least, exploitation of the people by any means. Therefore, the market dimension of education has remained outside the scope of discussions on educational policies and programmes. It was taken for granted that the responsibility for making provision for the education of the people rested squarely on the shoulders of the government. Since the state provided nearly all the funding for education, and since what the state did was not influenced by commercial considerations, there was no question of the market entering the scheme of educational provision.

However, during the 1970s and 1980s, certain political economists, like Hayek (1973) and Friedman (1980), began the advocacy of a socio-political philosophy which argued that market forces were the most appropriate instruments for the allocation of resources and structuring of choices in all aspects of human endeavour, including social and educational policy. This view was later articulated as a set of organisational principles for public sector institutions by Harris (1980) and Scruton (1984). The basic tenets of their argument were:

- Individuals have the absolute liberty to make choices on the basis of their own self-interest;
- Such freedom to choose cannot be subjected to any constraint by others; and
- It is this unfettered freedom that is manifested in the everyday spending of the individuals.

In the USA, where most of the well known universities are established and managed by private Trusts and Foundations, university management on corporate governance patterns has been the norm. Most of them have huge endowments; they invest in, and run businesses; own real estate that they build and rent; and engage in large business operations to raise their resources. In most of Europe and in other parts of the world, education primarily remained the responsibility of governments. In the 1980s, however, winds of change began to appear in the U.K. In the context of escalating costs, and the increasing demand for educational facilities not just from domestic students, but from other countries as well, questions began to be raised on several economic issues in education. These included:

- Should government continue to subsidise education for all students?
- Should the universities not recover the cost of education from the students?
- Why should the British Government subsidise the education of overseas students?
- So much tax payers' money goes into universities. Are they accountable? Is there any transparency about what they do?
- How about issues like productivity and performance audit?

- How can the university managements be restructured to make principles of accountability, mobilisation of extra-budgetary resources, etc. part of the management processes?

Discussions on these issues eventually led to restructuring the systems of management and funding of the British universities. The traditions of the “Liberal” university soon gave way to corporate governance models and funding on the basis of costing and bidding. These changes more akin to market operations became the guiding principles for the determinant in the formulation of policies and programmes of education in the U.K. Since the late 1980s, a series of legislation in the U.K. for the implementation of the education policy have sought to create and sustain an education market. Most of these laws focus on making educational institutions accountable, providing the public with information about their performance on which they could make judgements and generally emphasising the principle that “value for money” is the basis of educational spending.

This was followed by another development. The World Trade Organisation, in their endless rounds of discussions, came out with the idea that education is a service industry. The protagonists of this theory argued that as in other industries, there was movement of capital, people, and services across borders in education and, therefore, it qualified to be classified as a trading industry. This proposal is still on the table and members of the WTO are still to accept the proposal.

The phenomenal growth of open learning and distance education with the help of information and communication technologies (ICT) across the world in the last 2-3 decades opened up the opportunities for cross-border education. While it has helped nationals of many developing countries to pursue programmes of education offered by some of the best universities in the world without leaving the shores of their own countries, rampant corrupt practices also entered the global education business. What came to be known as franchises and licences for conducting business in the name of foreign universities and collecting huge amounts of money from unsuspecting students in many countries became a common practice. As we noted earlier, in many countries, governments had to intervene with regulatory measures to deal with these commercial practices.

Will education go the ways of the market? There is no evidence yet to suggest it will. It may yet adopt and accept some of the best practices from the world of business and commerce; it may also accept some of the best practices from corporate governance models. It may remain a service, but it is quite unlikely that it will become pure commerce.

2.3.6 Educational Institutions

In this unit, we have been discussing the management of education systems. The canvas is too large; the players are too many. The range and variety of issues are too complex to make any simplistic assumptions about the environment in which education systems across the world operate. Our effort so far has been to bring on the table some of the important features of the environment in which education systems operate for a better understanding of the issues and concerns confronting those responsible for making policies and preparing plans for any component of this vast system. For a better appreciation of the vastness of this complexity, let us say that what we have discussed so far are the features of education as a Meta system. But it is not here that real action lies.

You will recall that we mentioned in the previous unit that organisations are its people, teachers and students, in education. In what we discussed so far, we did not find any role for them; at the Meta system level, teachers and students have little or no role to play in management. The core of the education system is, however, the very large number of schools, colleges, universities and a large variety of other institutions. Each one of them is a complex organisation in itself performing a variety of functions. These institutions, perhaps several thousands of them within each country, have their own organisation and management structures that comprise various bodies (Governing Councils, Academic Councils, Boards of Studies, Committees, etc.) and personnel (Presidents, Vice-Chancellors, Deans, Heads of Departments, Principals, head Teachers, and so on).

Normally, when one speaks about education management, it is the management of these institutions that one is likely to have in focus. To the extent that education is a service rendered to the people, it is the providers (institutions) that are likely to be in public limelight. One should not therefore be surprised that the blame for all that goes wrong with education is placed squarely at the door of the people in these institutions, especially the teachers and the administrators. The fact however is that they have to perform under enormous constraints mostly of the environment comprising the legal, systemic and financial frameworks within which they operate. They have little or no say in influencing or modifying these environmental constraints; they are expected only to work within them. We shall come to institutional management in greater detail in the next unit.

Having identified the broad constituents that comprise the larger education system, we shall, in the later part of this course, examine in greater detail the roles and responsibilities as well as the functions and processes associated with each one of them in the management of education. These discussions would be, where appropriate, in the context of detailed case studies of specific institutions, or examination of the general principles and practices relevant to the management of education.

Check Your Progress 4

Note: i) Space is given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

What do you understand by meta system in education? Answer in about 40 words.

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2.4 THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AND ITS STRUCTURE

You will recall that while discussing the system concept in Unit 1, we noticed that a system is the aggregate of several inter-related components called sub-systems. In our example of a university, we identified several sub-systems that comprise the university as a system. When we looked at

the organisation of education, we saw that it consisted of several large systems, each of which has a number of components and also complex organisational structures. From this point of view, it will be appropriate to look at the organisation of education as a three-tiered structure as explained below:

- A Meta system operating mainly at the national level, managed by the central/federal government and concerned with such issues as the national policy, legislation, resource provision, etc.;
- A Mega system functioning primarily in the sphere of execution of the national policy and including various agencies established for managing (planning, coordinating, regulating and evaluating) specific areas of education (university education, technical and professional education, teacher education, and so on) committed to their charge;
- The institutional system concerned with prescribing courses, appointing teachers, admitting students, imparting instruction, evaluating students, and managing finances and administration (schools, colleges, universities and such other institutions).

This broad overview of the design of the education system will provide you with some understanding to appreciate its structure. Generally, the education system in a country is organised on the basis of levels (or stages) of education, each of which is identified with a specified level of attainment. These stages are basic education (encompassing primary education/elementary education), secondary education (general education, vocational education) and post-secondary education (higher education and all forms of professional and technical education). It needs to be emphasised here that the pattern of organisation as mentioned above is not absolutely uniform across the world, and there could be any number of variations depending upon where the margins of one stage ends and another begins. By and large, however, this broad classification seems to be the global pattern. We shall now look at this structure of the education system.

2.4.1 Basic Education

Basic education is defined as the initial education covering children from the age of 3 to 12 or 14. This stage would cover pre-school education, primary education of 5 years and up to 3 more years of general education (in some countries, the post-primary stage of 3 years is also called the middle school). It is at this stage that sparks of creativity spring to life and access to knowledge becomes a reality. This stage also provides the opportunities to acquire the instruments for future development of the faculties of reason and imagination, of judgement and sense of responsibility, and of inquisitiveness and desire for learning. It is at this stage that the cognitive and affective skills are developed through the transmission of the essential body of knowledge to children. "The basic learning needs comprise both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy, and problem solving) and the basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning" (World Declaration on Education for All, Art.I, Para-I, Jomtien Conference, UNESCO 1990).

Universalisation of basic education involves tremendous responsibilities for the management (usually the public authorities and governments in particular). These would include:

- Making basic education compulsory for every child;
- Providing infrastructure like school buildings and other facilities;
- Recruitment of teachers and their training;
- Removing all obstacles to children's attendance in schools;
- Special provision for enrolment and retention of girls specially in societies which prevent girls' participation in out-of-home activities;
- Appointment of more women teachers;
- Provision of schooling within reasonable distances;
- Adapting school timing to take care of family duties;
- Provision of school meals.

2.4.2 Secondary Education

Secondary education is that stage of initial education at which young people should be able to decide their future in the light of their own tastes and aptitudes, and acquire the abilities that would make for a successful adult life. It is regarded as the threshold to social and economic advancement. And yet, it is this stage of education that attracts the strongest criticisms, against its iniquitous characters, absence of openness and generally against its inability to prepare young students for the world of work or for higher education. There are also concerns expressed over the relevance of its content, and its indifference to developing attitudes and values.

While basic education is concerned with the common needs of all the people, secondary education will have to address the issue of differentiation in talents. Besides dealing with certain core elements like language, science and general education, the stage of secondary education has to cultivate a scientific temper in the people, and prepare them for use of science and technology in enriching life and ensuring sustainable development. Secondary school curricula have to help students acquire the tools for dealing with new technologies in the technology-dominated world of tomorrow and foster among them the aptitudes for managing conflict and violence as well as the creativity and empathy necessary for participation in social development.

The academic content of secondary education courses should prepare them to pursue higher education, and also equip those who fail to make it to colleges and universities, for life and work. This will call for diversification of course structure and incorporation of work experience in the curricula. Preparation of teachers is an important element in the organisation and management of secondary education.

2.4.3 Higher Education

The functions of higher education are generally the advancement and dissemination of knowledge through research, teaching and extension/continuing education. These functions have a direct bearing on development. The higher education institutions provide tomorrow's leaders in business, industry, politics, science and technology as well as teaching.

Higher education in recent years has been under severe pressure. The relevance of what is taught, the growing mismatch between education and employment, the constraints in providing wider access, existing rigidities in the structures and processes, the preoccupation with the concern of passing

the examination rather than learning, and not the least, the efficiency of many institutions of higher education have all come under close public scrutiny.

The most significant among these concerns in recent times has been the shrinking resource base for higher education across the world. While public funding of education up to the secondary level is more or less universally accepted, the principle that higher education should pay for itself is strongly being canvassed in many countries. Raising resources for higher education through non-governmental sources has become an issue of lively debate in many countries.

These concerns have also brought to limelight the inevitability of significant reforms in higher education which is increasingly being sought by a bewildering variety of learner groups. In fact, the emergence of lifelong education, and the inescapable need for updating the knowledge of adults at work have all significantly added to the complexity of the problems confronting higher education. The development of distance education is substantially a response to these challenges.

2.4.4 Technical and Professional Education

Unlike primary (basic), secondary and tertiary (higher) education, technical and professional education is not a separate stage in a time sequence in the progression of education. For all practical purposes, technical/professional education is a component of the larger system of post-secondary (tertiary) education. Professional education, nevertheless, is regarded as a distinct category in the structure of education because of the significant differences in their objectives and emphasis which require, from the organisational perspective, a great deal more of coordination and networking with various professional bodies as well as employing sectors. The major difference in professional education, in other words, is its focus on theory-practice integration that goes beyond traditional teaching and involves hands-on experience in the application of knowledge in various fields.

Check Your Progress 5

Note: i) Space is given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

i) What should be the emphasis at secondary stage of education to make the students cope with future challenges? Answer in about 40 words.

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ii) What are the major factors that bring pressure on higher education? Answer in about 40 words.

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2.5 MANAGEMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE QUESTION OF QUALITY

The foregoing discussion would have given you an idea about the organisation and structure of the educational system in a country. Depending upon the size and complexity, three levels of organisational structure in education can clearly be discerned. First, at the micro-level, there is the educational institution. Second, at the sectoral level, (primary, secondary, or higher education), there are agencies charged with the responsibility of managing and regulating the growth and development of each sector. And finally, there is the apex level, the government that lays down the policy and allocates the resources.

We have seen from Unit 1, that all organisational systems function in a planned and coordinated manner to achieve their objectives. This is true of education too. The objectives may vary depending upon the level at which the management is operating. For example, at the apex level, the objectives are significantly different from those at the institutional level. Nevertheless, the functions would more or less be identical though the processes might vary.

In this section, we propose to take up only those management issues that concern the system at the apex level. We will have occasion to discuss these issues in the context of the organisation of the higher education system in general, and universities in particular, in Block 2 of this course.

2.5.1 Planning and Coordination

The objective of education is human development. It is the state that has to make provision for it. Since resources are limited, it becomes necessary to balance the demands from each sector of development (education is only one such sector, there are other equally important sectors, namely, health, agriculture, communications, transport and so on) and also within the sector of education itself. For instance, governments cannot afford to earmark all the resources for higher education and nothing for primary education. This balancing of resource allocation presupposes a reasonably strong and rational planning process at the government level.

A major element of this process is the drawing up of priorities. For instance, while universalisation of elementary education is necessarily a high priority item on the agenda, provision of secondary education might concentrate more on strengthening the existing facilities and improving their quality. Higher education might focus only on those areas that are critical for national development, and training of teachers for the school system. This ordering of priorities will be based on the perceptions of the government.

Having determined the priorities, the next step would be to allocate the resources. Since resources for public spending are never adequate, there would still be more balancing act to do. If the experience of the developing countries is any indication, provision for the infrastructure in education (school buildings, laboratories, libraries, science equipment) gets a lower priority than payment of salary of teachers and administrative staff. On an average, while the developed countries spend 6% or more of their gross domestic product (GDP) on education, in most developing countries, it is about 3% or less. Soon enough, huge backlogs in the provision of infrastructure for education would pose serious problems for its quality and

standards requiring special efforts, including international assistance, to reorganise and consolidate the system.

From the national perspective, it is also necessary to ensure educational development in terms of fulfilling certain social objectives. For instance, provision of equal opportunities, special attention to the education of socially disadvantaged sections, women, those living in remote and backward regions are all matters of concern in educational planning. We had made a mention of some of these concerns while talking about elementary education.

A great deal of coordination of efforts is essential at the national level if a national planning process has to be established. In a large and decentralised system, for example, there are several agencies involved in the development of education (we mentioned most of them in the previous section). It is necessary to ensure that efforts at all these levels synchronise to ensure that objectives do not lose focus, resources are optimally utilised, and efficiency is ensured.

2.5.2 Organisation and Control

Though organisation and control are significant elements in the processes of management, education has a special feature. Perhaps, in no other organised endeavour, is there so much of autonomy at every level as in education. The individual teacher is independent; he/she does not function on the basis of a hierarchy of functions or authority. He/she enjoys considerable freedom in deciding what he/she teaches and how (subject, of course, to the limitations imposed by curricular frameworks). The concept of academic freedom pervades the governance of institutions as well. Most of them are self-governed. Their governance structures generally ensure that they are able to function in an atmosphere free from the pulls and pressures of their environment.

It is in recognition of this principle of autonomy, and the need to protect educational institutions (universities in particular) from day-to-day dealings with the government that several agencies came to be established. For instance, the erstwhile University Grants Committee in the UK when set up was conceived as a “buffer” between the government and the universities. Over a period of time, however, most of these agencies began to exercise greater control over the affairs of the universities, and the consequent tensions continue to strain the relationships between them (we have discussed this issue in detail earlier).

You will recall that we discussed the influence of the market on education. In that context, we also mentioned the principle of ‘value for money’ in respect of public funding. The enforcement of this principle has assumed several forms. Performance audit and assessment, accreditation and rating, expert reviews and evaluation, etc., have all been evolved to exercise and retain some control over the functioning of the education system by the governments.

2.5.3 Accountability

In its simplest form, accountability is the principle that persons or groups entrusted with the performance of any function or task should also remain responsible for what they do or do not do. In other words, owning up of the success or failure of a specific function or task by the concerned person or group is what accountability implies. It follows that while success would

get rewarded, failure should get punished. In public systems, however, this principle does not operate in that manner. Success seldom gets rewarded; after all, that is what is expected of them, and that is what they are paid for. Since success is not rewarded, failures do not get punished either. There could always be exceptions to this rule; people are sometimes forced out of their offices or otherwise proceeded against according to law.

In recent times, public systems across the world have come under close scrutiny. Questions are being raised about their efficiency, about their responsiveness, and about their ways of functioning. It is not unusual to hear accusations of waste, inefficiency, over-staffing, low productivity, unreasonable compensation, freeloading and so on against the management of public systems. As a result, some fundamental changes not just in policies and practices, but also in the overall culture underlying public administration models in most countries are becoming evident. In several cases, there is noticeable movement towards rational corporate management techniques that emphasise accounting, auditing, accountability, performance assessment systems, etc. It is not surprising, therefore, that concerns about efficiency, cost-cutting, performance audit and accountability that reflect the dominant social and political values also find their echoes in the environment in which modern universities function.

As we noted elsewhere, universities have long cherished the freedom that they have always enjoyed. Freedom to think, to reflect, to create and to innovate is the bedrock of academic excellence. The purists argue that imposition of constraints like efficiency, productivity and performance criteria is alien to this culture of academic freedom. The counterargument is that universities as social systems have to establish that they provide access to the students, help them study and graduate in reasonable time, and what they study is worth the investments in time and money, and so on. Universities have come to understand these concerns; they are willing to go some way, they are not against remaining answerable, but are still not wholly convinced that they need to be controlled.

The accountability of the educational system and the people managing it at various levels is the function of the performance of the system itself. It is not merely the efficiency of the system in terms of its input-output relationship, but its effectiveness in fulfilling its objectives. The parameters of this effectiveness could vary from the literacy levels of the population to the highest levels of achievements in science and technology, and overall human development. The effectiveness of the education system is generally measured in terms of enrolments, inclusiveness in admission policies, retention, drop-out rates, standing of graduates in the labour market, migration among institutions and, not the least, by the ratio of recruitment by transnational enterprises.

2.5.4 The Issue of Quality

The quality issue in education is both technical and ethical. The technical issue of quality in education is concerned with its products (levels of learning attainments, ratio of educated people at various levels to the total population, proportion of educated women, pass ratios, employment status of graduates, and so on) and its processes (teaching methods and practices, provision of learning resources, training of teachers, objectivity and reliability of the examination system and so on). The ethical issue of quality of education is concerned with the values and attitudes that the system seeks to promote and develop as well as the ethos and culture in which it operates.

There are many definitions of quality; “fitness for the purpose” is, perhaps, the simplest among them. What complicates the question of quality is: how do you determine the quality of any object? Well, we said determine; and that involves assessment. How does one assess the quality of education? Through evaluation? By establishing performance indicators? As we noted in the previous section, requirements of public accountability involves assessment of performance in terms of several pre-determined criteria leading to the judgement – good, bad or indifferent – in terms of the values (ideologies that underpin public sector reforms) represented by the indicators mandated and monitored by governments. A serious criticism against such externally imposed quality assessment mechanisms is that educational institutions are burdened with the responsibility for producing the indicators without any concern for the specific nature of the ways in which educational systems function. In the event, accountability is just a show of holding universities answerable to just a few questions that in no way leads to improvements in their performance.

As we discussed earlier in this unit, the import of market operations in to the education system in the recent past introduced an element of competition among universities. The systems of ranking, relating funding policies and volumes to the ranking of institutions and perceptions of high quality associated with high ranking, and so on, have contributed to consequences in which education management systems conform more to corporate management styles and practices. Planning, forecasting, costing, unit cost per student, per course, per subject, per graduate, and so on, have all become part of the modern university management practice that was once known for its collegiality, discussion and debates and participatory decision-making systems even if they involved delayed decisions, and sometimes, no decisions at all.

Check Your Progress 6

Note: i) Space is given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

i) Balancing of resource allocation among various levels of education needs prioritisation in the planning process. Explain with example? Answer in about 50 words.

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ii) What do you understand by technical and ethical issue of quality in education? Answer in about 40 words.

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2.6 LET US SUM UP

What we have tried to present to you in this unit is a synoptic view of the organisation and structure of the education system. We have looked at the major constituents of the system, the roles they play, and the interrelationships among them. While discussing these relationships, we have taken note of the significance of the role and influence of governments, not just in making national policies, but in the management of the national system of education, directly and indirectly, and in varying degrees. As for the structure of the system itself, we have seen the hierarchy of structures, and the main objectives of each of them. From this analytical perspective of the system and its structure, we proceeded to look at the management issues at the apex level of the system. In this process, we have also tried to identify the issues of management that are common to all organised systems and those that are unique to education. We have concluded this discussion with a mention of the intangibles that might defy the established notions of management and control.

2.7 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

National policies on education are usually formulated by governments after extensive consultations with all major sections of society – industry, trade, commerce, the professions and civil society. Generally, these policies cover a range of issues from structures, content and processes, access, costs and quality, etc.

Check Your Progress 2

- i) The school systems constitute a significant component of the social infrastructure of any society. The governments, therefore, assume the responsibility for the creation and development of this infrastructure as well as its maintenance. At the level of higher education, governments provide the resources and leave it to the universities to manage the functions of developing programs of teaching and research, maintaining their quality and institutional governance, with the governments engaged only in broad supervisory responsibilities.
- ii) With higher education becoming mass education and its costs constantly escalating, governments were called upon to ensure that universities served the purpose for which they were set up. These efforts led to the establishment of quality assurance mechanisms and performance rating, etc. that provided the public with some confidence that the money they invested in higher education was worthwhile.

Check Your Progress 3

Governments do play a significant role in the supervision and control of universities. This role ranges from a more intrusive involvement in matters like appointments of key personnel and staff policies to more calibrated non-intrusive influences like quality assessment, performance rating, etc.

Check Your Progress 4

The expression “meta system” was used to describe the macro-management dimensions of education as a system. At the Meta system level, governments and their agencies influence education through

legislation, policy directions, funding patterns, etc., without getting into the details of institutional governance and conduct of academic programmes. The larger environment that determines the relationship between the government and the university, between education and the market, etc., are at the core of the Meta system of education. Teachers and students have no role to play in the management of education at the Meta system level.

Check Your Progress 5

- i) The emphasis at the secondary stage of education is on the learning of certain core elements like languages, science and social studies as well as on the cultivation of a scientific temper and preparation of students for the use of science and technology. It is also the stage that initiates students in the development of aptitudes for managing conflicts and violence, and foster creativity and empathy for participation in social development.
- ii) Higher education is under tremendous pressure for several reasons. For most people, higher education is the means to improve their earning capacity and lead a better life. However, there is considerable mismatch between education and employment because the academic offerings do not always equip students with the knowledge and skills that the job markets are looking for. The increasing demand for higher education, together with the constant pressure to ensure relevance for their programmes brings higher education institutions under tremendous strain. The existing rigidities in the structures and processes as well as the resource constraints contribute further to inefficiencies and pressure for reforms.

Check Your Progress 6

- i) When resources are limited, and the demand from different sectors is high, those responsible for planning (resource allocation) have to determine the relative priorities among various sectors. In education, planners have to settle the relative priorities among basic education, secondary education and higher education for allocating the available resources. For example, in societies that have low literacy rates, basic education would be a priority while those with good school systems would consider higher education a priority sector as it would ensure adequate supply of teachers and human capital for sustained developmental initiatives.
- ii) The two dimensions of the quality issue in education are the technical aspects concerned with the teaching-learning processes and the ethical aspects concerned with the outcomes of those processes. The technical issues cover the teaching methods and practices, provision of learning resources, training of teachers, reliability of the examination system, etc. The ethical concerns have to do with the values and attitudes that the system seeks to promote.