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# UNIT 10 PROCESSES OF EDUCATION

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## 10.0 OBJECTIVES

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On going through this lesson you should be able to:

- explain the differences between education and learning processes;
- describe various techniques of education such as formal and non-formal;
- analyse the historical shifts in the system of education in India; and
- narrate the extent of unequal distribution of educational opportunities in society.

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## 10.1 INTRODUCTION

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In the earlier units (Units 8&9) of this block we have introduced you with the nature and agencies of socialisation. In the earlier Units educational institutions have been pointed out to be the important agencies of socialisation. In the forthcoming two units we shall be discussing with you the processes of and the features of educational institutions in India.

In this unit we will explore the meaning of education and its usefulness to us throughout our life. It specifically, focuses upon the formal and non-formal aspects of the educational system. It describes the history and the development of modern education system in India. It also explains the inequality inherent in the system of education; in women's education, and discusses the problem of illiteracy. Problem of education and employment has also been dealt with. The unit, in fact, presents a broad picture of the educational process in the context of Indian society.

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## 10.2 MEANING OF EDUCATION

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As you sit down to study and understand the pages of this lesson you are participating in the organised system of education. Presumably you chose to be educated in this manner because you had either left school early and not pursued a college degree or had studied some other subject. These reasons, which may appear to you simple and straight forward, can often be

the result of several factors. Before we go into an examination of these factors, it is necessary to see how this form of education is different from others.

To start with, what do we mean by education? The dictionary meaning stresses “systematic instruction” for the “development of character and of mental powers.” The words systematic instruction are of significance implying an organised way of conveying specific meanings or symbols. Instruction is a process where by the learner acquires knowledge from the teacher, which has been processed and graded according to the age and intelligence levels of the average student. When a student goes to school, college or university, he or she is participating in the **formal system of education**. In your case, you do not have before you a teacher; instead what you are reading now seeks to provide to you relevant information in a comprehensive manner so that you do not feel the need for a person to interpret and explain the material being presented. Nonetheless, the information has been provided to you, and you cannot really exercise choices on what comprises your course and what does not. This is where there is an important difference between education and learning.

### 10.2.1 Life-long Learning and Education

You have probably heard of the phrase ‘life-long learning’: this means that your capacity or ability to learn is not limited to a specific phase of your life. Every experience can be a potential learning experience; however, unlike education, it is not necessarily imparted through any specific agency like the school. For instance, you can learn about people and perhaps the variety of occupation available to them when you wander through a shopping complex. Similarly you can learn about the caste system. In fact, your learning experiences are essentially enriching and perhaps only something which you alone can appreciate. On the other hand, education in a specific area is something you share in common with a larger group; participation in it is based on a system, an ordering of various topics in a range of subjects or disciplines, and finally an assessment or evaluation by the teacher, or a test which you would have to send in for evaluation. Education is not random and sporadic as learning may be, but it is regular and regulated. To put it briefly, education involves learning but all learning is not education, in the sense in which we are now using the terms. The renowned sociologists Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons believed that the school class, teacher and the entire school-oriented learning process would help in the integration of the child in society. In fact, the school was essential for the child’s proper adjustment. However, as we shall see, they did not seem to take into account the social class differences among children and how these created difficulties in adjustment to school.

#### Activity 1

There are two situations. 1st. A young girl is doing an experiment in a laboratory along with her other class-mates and her teacher supervising them.

2nd. A young girl is learning to knit a sweater from her mother along with her two friends.

Out of these two activities which one is education and which one is learning and why? Write a note of one page on this and share it with other students at your study centre.

### 10.2.2 Formal and Non-formal Education

Education can be formal or non-formal, be directly transmitted by the teacher or through a prepared text such as this one. In reading this text, you are now participating in the technique of education known as distance-learning. Here your instructional material as well as proposals for projects, additional reading and other related activities are conveyed to you through the written word, and perhaps the radio, and visual media such as TV and Video programmes. You are aiming for a degree in sociology; using the same technique of distance learning, a busy professional may take time off to get packaged information on art history or the restoration of art pieces. This can be done through the written word as well as through audio-visual modes. This would not be a part of his or her formal training as a lawyer or doctor but something that he or she may nonetheless have a deep interest in. While a degree or diploma might not follow, the person concerned would have acquired a certain degree of relevant information in an area quite unrelated to that in which he or she is formally qualified. Thus distance learning, can be used to train for a formal degree as well as to increase one’s knowledge

in a range of topics. While in some cases evaluations are important and essential, in others this may not be the case.

Similarly, the non-formal stream in our educational system also aims to give relevant information without necessarily involving assessments, tests and so on. However, there is an important difference in the content as well as the methods of distance teaching and those of non-formal education. In India, non-formal education has had as its target group those section of the population who, due to poverty and/or other related factors, have not been able to participate in formal education. In other words they have either not gone to school or have left or dropped out at an early age. The aim of this programme is to provide functional literacy to those who are left out of the formal educational system. The typical target groups are children from under-privileged categories such as the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as well as those living in urban slums and remote rural areas. As we shall see, girls form a substantial proportion of those out of school. However, a variety of socio-economic problems limit their participation even in non-formal classes.

A major programme entitled Non-Formal Education was launched in India in 1975/76 for those in the age group of 15-25 years. The object of this, as also of the later National Adult Education Programmes (NAEP), was to provide “meaningful education” to deprived groups. The NAEP which was initiated in April 1979 was to reach out to 10 crores illiterates, particularly in the age group of 15 to 35 years. The curricula, borrowed from Mahatma Gandhi’s *nai talim* or basic education, stressed on learning through the acquisition of a skill. In addition, the programme was to pay attention to the specific needs of the target group which included, apart from the relevance of the course material, flexibility in timing, duration and location of the courses. The aim of these programmes which lie outside the formal educational system, in combination with the latter, is to combat the problem of rampant illiteracy: even after forty years of independence and well over a century and a half since the first school was started in India, only 50 per cent of the population is literate. Of the illiterates, more than half are women and girls. However, some inroad has been made to eradicate rampant illiteracy in India, in general as well as amongst the special target groups like the scheduled castes/scheduled tribes; women etc. As per the provisional figures of 2001 Census (India 2003: pp. 78-79: GOI) during the decade 1991-2001, there has been unprecedented progress in the field of literacy. For the first time since Independence, the absolute number of illiterates declined by over 31.9 million. A significant milestone reached during this period is that while the 7 plus age-groups of population increased by 171.6 million persons during 1991-2001, 203.6 million additional persons became literate during this decade. It should be now clear to you then that the process of education is linked not only to the availability of resources but also to a variety of other socio-economic factors as well. This is equally applicable in the case of formal and informal education, whether imparted directly in a classroom, or through a text book, a radio broadcast or a class on how to take care of cattle and other livestock.

#### Box 10.01

In order to make the Non-formal Education scheme (NFE) a more viable alternative to formal education it has been revised as Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovation Education (EGS and AIE). The revised scheme is to cover all the unreserved habitations throughout the country where there are no learning centres within a radius of one kilometer and is a part of an overall national programme framework for universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE), the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). This revised scheme was made operational w.e.f. 1 April, 2001 with enhanced cost details. It has become part of the sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) w.e.f. 1 April 2002. (India 2003: pp. 78-100: GOI)

### 10.3 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN INDIA

If we look briefly at the beginnings of education we find that in India its history can be traced to the *guru-shishya parampara* or tradition of a personalised teaching by the *guru*. While much of this interaction was based on the rich oral tradition, it later became based on the understanding and interpretation of text which discussed anything from the techniques of

warfare to personal ethics. Necessarily such an education was limited to a tiny minority, usually young men from the upper castes and privileged social groups. Sparing a child for a life of prolonged education was possible only among the more affluent. Access to literacy was a closely-guarded secret, and the owners of this privileged knowledge, usually Brahmins among the Hindus, were held in great esteem and treated with reverence. By the end of the eighteenth century, the situation started changing gradually. With the growth of urban areas, newer occupations and groups learning became more wide spread. This was the basis for the indigenous primary school or pathshala which soon came into being in a number of homes.

In the early nineteenth century the British rulers turned their attention to the education of Indians: expanding trade, commerce, business as well as the bureaucracy required local participation, at least at the lower levels. Prior to the introduction of the Western-style schools, a well-knit network of pathshalas existed in large parts of the country. These primary schools were established by the landed and trading elite's with the specific purpose of training the next generation for definite roles and functions. Each pathshala had a male teacher and the average number of students was a little less than 10. Boys normally began their education when they were about 8 years old, and continued for four to six years. That teaching in the pathshala was structured according to very specific rules of pedagogy and discipline. This is evident from a number of descriptions available in the writings of this time.

**Check Your Progress 1**

- Note:** a) Use the space below for your answer  
b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Explain what is meant by education. Use about five lines

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2) What is the distinction between education and learning? Use about five lines.

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3) What is formal education and informal education? Use about five lines.

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4) Write a note on the education system in India. use about five lines.

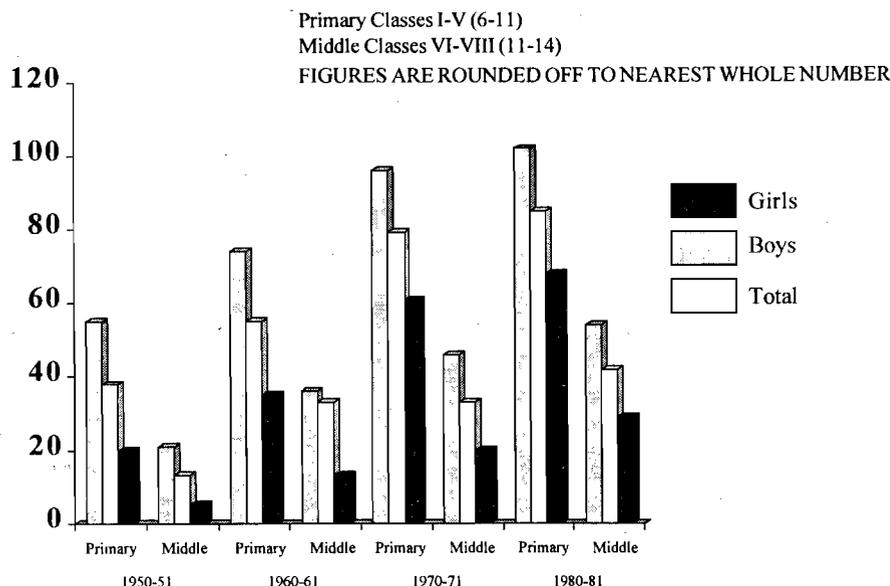
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## 10.4 EDUCATION AND INEQUALITY

We find that when the British left India, there was a well-established network of formal educational institutions; further, there had been some headway in non-formal education as well. Yet, a look at the bar chart will make it clear that as yet, there are large sections of the population which have not been affected by the agencies of education. On the one hand, we have a fast-growing sector which can compete with the best professionals in the world, on the other, there is the expanding population of illiterates and non-school-goers.

**Bar Chart: 1**

Enrolment at Elementary Stage as Percentage of the Population in the Corresponding Age-Group



There are other Third World Countries which share our problem of illiteracy. In the so-called developed world, the problem is not of illiteracy, but a search for alternatives to the formal school and attempts to create greater equality in access to educational opportunities are important issues. In countries such as the USA, UK, and even the Netherlands, the presence of immigrant group with a substantial percentage of first generation learners, as well as a relative lack of resources among sections of the local population, has made increasingly relevant, the debate on the equality of educational opportunities.

### 10.4.1 Expansion of Education

During the last few decades, the view that educational institution should play a more active role in bringing about greater equality among individuals, has led to considerable educational expansion. It has also resulted in various interpretations of the notion of equality and its relationship with education. Before we proceed further, it is necessary to have a workable definition of equality in the context of education. Does it imply equal education for all, or does it mean equal opportunity to be educated? For, as it has been pointed out, there is a world of difference between the equal right to education, and the right to equal education. A commitment to equal education for all is based on the assumption that every one is exactly alike. This clearly is not the case. In an unequal society like ours, equality of opportunity means equal opportunity to try for education. In the West, where most of the debates on equality of educational opportunity have originated, the preoccupation is more with differences in the kind of education received rather than with the question of access to the facility itself.

In most developed countries raised questions which relate increasingly to what happens to children who have access to the assorted educational bread basket. Can everyone expect to have a piece of bread which, in relation to another, is of the same size and quality? Or will some, because of certain advantages, be able to stake a claim for a bigger and better slice? To put it more sharply, once within the system, the distribution of bread is determined by causes which may have nothing to do with the basket itself. There are factors which work in favour of some children and against others. This is manifested in a higher rate of drop out, and

unsatisfactory performance in school, among those from socially and economically under privileged groups; the better quality bread goes to those with inherent advantages. By 'drop out' we mean the phenomenon whereby children – or adults – leave a school or a literacy class before its completion. This is due to a variety of reasons. When we began this lesson we asked you to think about why you may have opted for this kind of education rather than the conventional college degree. We also drew your attention to the fact that substantial percentage of the Indian school-going population leaves school or college without finishing. Unlike you, they do not, or cannot, look for alternatives. We shall now look briefly at some of the reasons why individuals cannot or do not stay on to be educated.

### 10.4.2 Findings on Education

In the nineteen fifties, the work of some British social scientists established that the working class child was disadvantaged in relation to its middle class peers. It has been shown that environmental and socio-economic factors determine the child's ability to adjust to a largely middle-class school ethos. Other sociologists came to the conclusion that differences in family background account for more differences in achievement than school background. The stage was set for state intervention as Britain launched its programmes for the identification of Educational Priority areas (EPS), and the USA started Project Head start. Briefly, both aimed at providing disadvantaged children in selected geographical pockets, with special teaching capsules, psychological enrichment programmes and stress on extra and co-curricular activities. Started earlier in India, our policy of reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, had the same goal in mind: to enable the under-privileged needed some extra help so that they have a fair chance to compete against the privileged students. By the end of the nineteen sixties it was quite clear that such concessions were not sufficient to cope with an increasingly unequal situation. Further, there was a growing feeling that educational institutions themselves worked against the integration of the child. In the rest of this unit we shall briefly examine empirical data from India, which show us how family background hamper educational progress. In the next unit, we will attempt to discuss these in the light of the functioning of institutions.

#### Check Your Progress 2

- Note:** a) Use the space below for your answer  
 b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

- 1) Write a note on education and inequality. Use about five lines.

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## 10.5 WOMEN'S EDUCATION

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It is the relatively lower enrolment of girls which accounts for the overall low enrolment rate. However, these facts only tell us a part of the story: even if all girls were in school in 1990, it is equally important to keep track of where they are in 1995: are they still in school or are they back at work in the fields or at home? For instance, in 1975-76, 66-1 per cent of girls in the age group 6 to 11 years were enrolled in primary school classes. Most of them were in class I; if we look at the corresponding 1980/81 figures, namely at the time when these girls should have been going into class VI, the enrolment figure in this class had dropped to 29.1 per cent. In other words, before primary school is complete, over 50 per cent of girls leave the system. Latest figures made available by the government, reiterate that out of the 10 girls who join class I, barely 2 reach class VIII. Most of those who leave or do not join at all, are from among the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, and from among the urban and rural poor. Relatively far fewer Muslim girls are in schools.

But this dismal picture of literacy in India has however, begun, to change. As per the provisional figures of census 2001 there were 562.01 million literate persons in the country

and 3/4 of the male population and more than half of the female population are literate. The female literacy rate has increased by 14.87 percentage point (from 39.3% to 54.16%) as against 11.72% (from 64.3% to 75.8%) in case of males. Also, the gap between male-female literacy rate has decreased from 28.84 in 1991 census to 21.70 percentage point in 2001.

### 10.5.1 Schooling and Literacy

It has been pointed out that in order to be meaningful, a minimum of four to five years of schooling is essential so as to ensure that recipients do not lapse back into illiteracy. However, in a situation where 44 million children comprise the child labour force, and every third household has an earning child, national educational goals have to contend with individual strategies for survival. Sociologists as well as economists and educational planners have been concerned with finding ways to explain, as well as resolve this crisis. It has been clearly established that the high opportunity cost of education in relation to the poverty of families, makes schooling unattractive. The returns on education which normally takes a few years at school are low. Being in school means foregoing, or at any rate, limiting participation in paid work. When families live at the subsistence level, the costs in real terms are too high, and schooling is perceived as a poor investment which provides no definite access to better employment.

A number of studies in urban slums have borne out that formal schooling has a marginal role to play in the lives of girls. A recent Delhi study of Balmikis a sub-caste of the North Indian Bhangis or sweepers, found that as girls were expected to combine housework and traditional employment with marriage, schooling was found to be of little consequence. Almost 75 per cent of mothers whose sons were being educated, wanted them to complete school, while 50 per cent with daughters, admitted that their girls had not studied beyond class III. They left school because they had secured jobs, were married off or were needed to help with the housework, look after a younger sibling and so on. Also see Table I, showing the reasons for low enrolment of girls as reported by headmaster and teachers.

**Table I: Reasons for Low Enrolment of Girls as Reported by Headmasters and Teachers**

<i>Reasons</i>	<i>Percentage (%) of Headmasters</i>	<i>Responses from Teachers</i>
Economic Backwardness	49	61
Girls engage in domestic/gainful activities	45	37
Indifference/apathy of parents	41	49
Another School nearby	16	7
Social backwardness	14	12
Social backwardness	10	15
Inadequate teaching aids/craft/class equipment/ lack of playgrounds	4	6
Schools at a distance/communication difficulty	—	—
No separate girls' schools	1	7

### 10.5.2 Question of Illiteracy

In a Bombay slum it was found that illiteracy was three times higher since migrant population were prepared to send their daughters for only a few years to primary school, but hoped that their sons would finish school. As you know, competition for jobs of all kinds is becoming more and more intense. Coupled with the urbanisation process, we have a situation where young men from families with little or no education among the older generation, eagerly flock to classes and courses of various kinds whether one hopes to become a bus conductor, office clerk, or join the civil service, certificates, diplomas and degrees are valuable assets. This increased competitiveness also means that when resources are scarce, families will be more eager to spend them on a son, the traditional bread-winner, than on a daughter. Nonetheless across socio-economic classes and religious and ethnic groups, we find that more and more girls are participating in formal and non-formal methods of education. Among the growing middle classes an educated daughter is an asset. Often, their earnings are crucial for the well-being of the family.

For the bulk of Indian women however, the question, whether or not to work, is of no relevance: for generations, working class women have toiled in the fields, tended cattle, cooked meals for a large family, helped in building roads and so on. It is also among these groups that the indifference to education for girls is the greatest. Early marriage and restraints on the girls who are nearing puberty, reinforce this indifference. In the last two units, you have been introduced to the concept of socialisation; you are therefore familiar with how the family socialises boys and girls differently. When young girls perform deftly the job of stacking together large piles of firewood or make cow dung cakes of the right size and consistency, we know that they have learnt these skills at their mother's side. They do not need to go to school so as to help their families. The process of socialisation takes care of these functions. This is also true of the socialisation of young boys who go in to traditional occupations or are apprenticed early in occupations such as the match-stick making, lock-making and glass bangle industries.

### Activity 2

In your family identify 3 women of different generations (such as, your Grandmother, mother, sister) and find out from them what level of education they have had (if at all). What were the reasons for them to dropout. Write a report of one page on "Women's Education in India" based on your findings. Share it with other students and discuss with your Academic Counsellor at your study centre.

### 10.5.3 Education and Employment

Thus, when poor families send their daughters to school, they rarely do so with hopes of better employment prospects: while it would be incorrect on our part to ignore the fact that there is a growing consciousness regarding the benefits of schooling, we should also be aware of the fact that education means different things to different groups. When a share cropper decided to send his six year old girl to the village school he probably does so because others in the village have sent their girls to school. Further, in a society where there is substantial violence against women there is a feeling that if a girl can read and write, she can at least communicate with her family after marriage. This creates a sense of security in the minds of many a parent, troubled by thoughts of their daughter's future. Of greater relevance to policy makers, however, is the view that the school can act as a care-taker for a few hours in the day: in a situation where institutionalised child care facilities are so woefully inadequate, policy planners are now thinking of ways by which the school can be made more attractive to older children as well. Mid-day meals, attaching a balwadi or creche to the primary school, as well as involving health workers in the process of education, are some of the measures being considered.

Thus, the process of making school more attractive to groups which have so far been indifferent, if not hostile, is not always easy. When such efforts have to contend with institutions and individuals who are not themselves convinced of the need to integrate children from varying backgrounds, the problems are magnified.

The fast growing higher education sector which caters to only a small segment of the population, absorbs almost as much, by way of resources, as the primary education sector meant for a much larger section of Indian society. In one way or another, most societies are faced with this issue of the demands of the few versus the needs of the many. Put in another way, quality, and therefore elite education, has to co-exist with mass education. The point at issue of course is whether enough attention is being devoted to strategies for making primary education more relevant, and hence popular. While there is no single crisis affecting Indian education as a whole there are many problem areas in each sector. It is nonetheless true that the issues arising out of the problem of privilege are of paramount importance. Inequalities of access to vital resources necessary for survival, render irrelevant and peripheral city-based discussions on how to increase educational enrolments. In the next unit we shall look at the internal workings of the educational system; this may help to understand better how the school or the text-book has also internalised the values of a hierarchical society. We shall also examine some proposed solutions on how to overcome the problems of illiteracy as well as the more general question, is the school relevant anymore?

**Check Your Progress 3**

- Note: a) Use the space below for your answer  
 b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.
- 1) Write a note on women’s education. Use about five lines.

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- 2) Discuss the question of schooling and illiteracy. Use about five lines.

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**10.6 LET US SUM UP**

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We have seen in this unit how education implies a particular system of imparting knowledge. We have seen that this can be done both in formal and informal ways. We have mentioned in this unit how the system of education in India developed. The unit also informed us clearly on the development of education including that meant for women. More is being done to expand education, however, the situation today is much better than ever before.

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**10.7 FURTHER READINGS**

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- 1) Mckee, James B., 1974, Sociology: The Study of Society Holt, Rinehart and Winston New York.
- 2) Worsley, Peter, 1987, The New Introduction Sociology Penguin Books Ltd.. Middlesex.

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**10.8 KEY WORDS**

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- Education** : Teaching given through a specific organised system e.g. school and college.
- Formal** : Where there is a clear cut organisation following specific rules.
- Inequality** : When there is a lack of balance in distribution of rewards of money, benefit of education etc.
- Literacy** : Ability to read, write and comprehend in any language.
- Nai Talim** : Basic Education

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**10.9 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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**Check Your Progress 1**

- 1) Education has been defined as ‘systematic instruction’ for the “development of character and of mental powers”. Instruction refers to a process where by the learner acquires knowledge from the teacher. This knowledge has been processed and graded according to the age and intelligence levels of the average student.
- 2) The distinction between education and learning is that education is conducted in a formal organised system like school, college or university. In this system the teacher

organises the activity of the student. Learning process is one where knowledge is acquired informally without the need of a teacher. It is not time bound and can be life long.

- 3) Formal education is directly transmitted by the teacher in an organised and structured system. It leads to the acquisition of a formal degree or diploma. In comparison, non-formal education inspite of providing relevant information does not necessarily involves assessments, tests, etc. It imparts information through unconventional means such as use of songs, story-telling, etc.
- 4) The educational system in India can be traced back to the guru-shishya parampara or tradition of a personalised teaching by the guru. Later the understanding and interpretation of the religious texts became the basis of education. It was, thereby, confined to a minority of elite's who were generally the Brahmins. At the end of eighteenth century growth of urban area lead to the development of indigenus primary school or pathshala. In the early nineteenth century, the British rulers introduced Western style schools and expanded the field of learning trade, commerce, business, as well as, bu-reaucracy.

#### **Check Your Progress 2**

- 1) It has been universally accepted that educational institutions should play a more active role in bringing about greater equality amongst individuals. However, there is a difference between equal right to education and the right to equal education. A commitment to equal education for all is based on the assumption that everyone is alike. This is not the case. In an unequal society like ours, equality of opportunity means equal opportunity to try for education

#### **Check Your Progress 3**

- 1) The enrolment of girls in schools is very low in India. Even those who go to school are seldom able to complete even their primary education. Girls are the major dropouts in schools due to certain socio-economic reasons. They are required to learn household jobs and help in the care of younger siblings.
- 2) It is essential to have a minimum of four to five years of schooling. This is to ensure that the recipient of this schooling does not lapse back into illiteracy. The function of schooling is different for different class and section of people. Amongst the poorer section the rate of drop outs from school is very high. This is because very little immediate reward is perceived by them in remaining in school. Going to school means foregoing paid work or being available at home.