

CHAPTER 4

THE STRUCTURE AND SHAPING FACTORS OF EDUCATION SYSTEMS

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By the end of this chapter the students should be able to

- Identify five factors that influence education systems in the world.
- Explain in details at least three factors that have determined education system in your country.
- Describe the structure of the education system of your country

THE EDUCATION SYSTEM: DEFINITION AND CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

An education system can be defined as a structure for the provision of effective teaching to meet the education needs of a group of people (target group) in a specific territory. Subsequently the key concepts of this definition will be clarified:

- **Structure:** a structure is a functional set of components, ie a set of components each fulfilling a function, contributing to the

functioning of the structure as a whole. To the components of the education system will be returned to later in the chapter

- **Effective teaching:** This refers to planned activities to bring about the learning of desired knowledge and attitudes.
- **Education needs:** This refers to needs that could be satisfied by education
- **Target group:** A group of people with similar educational needs. The education needs of that target group determine the nature and content of the specific education system
- **Territory:** An area with specific/determined boundaries.

TYPES OF EDUCATION SYSTEMS

On the basis of the size of the target group a distinction could be made between a national education system and a mini-education system.

The national education system is the public structure consisting of state or state-recognised agencies responsible for providing in the education needs of all the inhabitants of a particular state, such as Kenya, France or Belgium. The national education system can therefore be defined as the structure for effective teaching through which the education needs of all the inhabitants of a particular state are provided for and provided by public providers (state or state-appointed agencies).

The national education system is not the only type of structure with the task of providing education to a specific group of people. An example of another kind of system is the different private school system which exists in almost every country in the world. The aim of this private school system is to provide at least the minimum level of education that is provided by the national education system and to add additional education services to serve the education needs of specific groups which are not served by the national education system. The private school system of the Roman Catholic Church in different countries or the private school systems of different evangelical groups in the United States of America are good examples. Another example is the different private school systems of particular minority groups in different countries, such as the German private schools in South Africa or the Jewish schools across the world.

In the vocational (training) many examples also exist of structures tasked with providing effective training serve the training needs of a specific target group. These examples exist in both the public (governmental) and private sector. In the public sector the army could be taken as an example, providing training to its personnel. In almost every state ministry there are structures in place to train personnel. The same applies to the private sector of industry and commerce. Therefore, besides the national education system, mini-education and mini-training systems exist.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM: COMPONENTS AND ELEMENTS

It has been stated above that the education system is a *structure* and that a structure refers to a functional set of components, ie a set of components each fulfilling a function, contributing to the functioning of the structure as a whole.

The education system consists of the following four components:

- Education system policy
- Education system administration
- Structure for teaching
- Support services

Each of these components consists of a number of elements. Subsequently the components and their elements will be explained.

COMPONENT: EDUCATION SYSTEM POLICY

The term *education system policy* could be defined as a statement of intent of the way in which the identified educational needs of the target group are to be served. The education policy has a binding nature and implies the realisation of the decisions in terms of the structure of an education system which has to be created, the facilities that have to be provided, the services to be delivered and the activities to be executed. The education policy, therefore, represents the basis, the starting point

for the establishment of the education system to meet the education needs of the target group.

The education system policy consists of the following elements:

- Vision
- Mission
- Goals, aims and objectives
- Format

VISION:

The vision is a concise statement of the final ideal striven towards by a particular education system. The vision is a concise statement of the anticipated direction of a particular education system as well as of the quality of services to be provided. The vision should cover the following:

- the philosophical basis of the education system
- the type and quality of educational services to be provided
- which learners will be catered for in that education system
- which teachers will be responsible for providing the educational services.

MISSION:

The mission can be described as the ideal characteristics of the particular education system. The mission can be compared to a working document in which the characteristics to which a particular education strives are being given. The mission determines the boundaries within which an education system should function and therefore the mission serves an invaluable purpose for the evaluation of the structure, functioning and services of a particular education system. The mission is an expansion of the vision and should provide answers to the following questions:

- which services should be provided ?
- who is responsible for the provision of the services ?

- why should the services be provided ?
- how should the services be provided ?

The mission is usually given in more general religious, social, philosophical, economical and political terms. The expectations of the target group regarding the comprehensive development of the students are also usually included in the mission.

GOALS, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

UNESCO (as quoted by Holmes, 1979: 10) defines these concepts as follows:

Education goals: The ends set explicitly or implicitly by a society for the education system it maintains, expressed at times in broad political, cultural and economic terms (e.g. citizenship, democracy, group unity)

Education aims: The expression of the direction given to all or part of the system of education by educators and thus a formulation of educational goals at a greater level of specification

Education objectives: Intended or expected results of the education process.

FORMAT OF EDUCATION SYSTEM POLICY

The education system policy can be presented in a variety of formats. These can include for example legislation, government notices, or regulations of the ministry of education.

EDUCATION SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION

The component education system administration indicates the administrative structure through which the functionaries and personnel in the education system are organised, as well as the work by means of which the education system functions. Through the education administration the education policy is on the one hand determined, and on the other hand, implemented.

The responsibilities of the agencies and/or functionaries which constitute the administrative structure are threefold. Firstly, they are responsible for (one or more of) the formulation, adoption and implementation of the education system policy. The administrative structure should therefore be arranged in such a way that the relative responsibility of each agency and functionary is clear with regard to the formulation, adoption and implementation of the education system on the different levels as well as in the different components of the education system. The relationships between the different agencies and functionaries, as well as the lines of communication, should be clearly stipulated.

A second responsibility of the agencies and functionaries is that of consultation with the target group, especially the different interest groups in the target group. Specific agencies and functionaries at different levels, responsible for consultation, should be identified, the methods of consultation should be stipulated and the authority of the results of the consultation should be determined.

The third important responsibility of agencies and functionaries in the administrative structure is collection and distribution of the necessary finances. Although all the agencies and functionaries are responsible for the economic expenditure of money, specific agencies and functionaries should be entrusted with the responsibility of budgeting. Sound economic systems should be used and again lines of communication and consultation should be established.

STRUCTURE FOR TEACHING

The structure for teaching (with regard to a national education system) refers to the structural combination of all educational institutions at all four levels of education, namely pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary levels, and also the possibility of student movement within and between different educational institutions.

When describing the structure for teaching, the following elements should be included:

Element: Education/training levels:

With regard to the national education system, four levels of education are usually distinguished, namely the pre-primary, primary, secondary

and tertiary levels. Each of these has its own purpose and can be distinguished from the others.

The pre-primary level of education is often of a voluntary nature, although in especially the developed countries it is a growing project and in an increasing number of these countries part of the cycle of compulsory schooling. The educational objectives usually include the following: intellectual development, social adaptation, development of motor skills and the cultivation of good habits. In spite of these specific objectives, it is not accomplished by means of formal education, but by means of informal education in which play is an important part. The value of pre-primary education is generally recognised as making the child school-ready and determining the child's success and progress in primary school.

In the national education system primary education is usually referred to as that part of education which equips the student with the basic knowledge, skills and attitudes, so that he can ensure a place for himself in society and be ready for further education. Primary education is therefore the minimum level of education which is necessary in order to reach basic literacy. Primary education usually is of six to eight years of duration and is usually compulsory.

Secondary education is a further development of primary education. Secondary education is usually characterised by a more in-depth awareness of specific knowledge, attitudes and abilities needed for fulfilling a vocation in life. Secondary is further characterised by a larger degree of differentiation than primary education. In most national education systems secondary education is (at least the lower rungs thereof) also compulsory and typically is four to six years of duration.

Tertiary education usually indicates a type of education for which successful graduation from secondary education is a prerequisite; and is meant for advanced education for a specific occupation, usually one of the professions.

Element: Educational institutions:

Educational institutions usually refer to the various institutions at the different levels of education which are intended for education. Every education system is characterised by its own type/set of educational institutions.

Element: Curricula and differentiation:

Curricula represent the different education courses or education programmes by means of which the educational needs of the target groups are provided for. The curricula are usually arranged at the various levels in such a way that the vertical and horizontal movement (streaming through) of the students are made possible by the structure of the education/training programmes.

The following differentiation possibilities should be provided for in the structure of the education/training programmes:

- Individual differentiation: As far as possible, each individual should be given the opportunity to develop according to his own cognitive and physical abilities, as well as his own individual potential and interest
- Cultural differentiation: Education has to recognise cultural differences. Existing cultural experiences, especially language differences, should be taken into account in the structure for education/training programmes

Element: students:

In planning the structure of education, heed should be paid to the quantity and quality of the students. Attention should be paid to the following:

- the distribution of the students over the different levels, institutions and programmes
- the geographical distribution and settlement patterns of the learners

Element: Teachers:

As in the case of the students, the structure of teaching of teaching should also be concerned with the quality and quantity of teachers. Heed should be paid to the following:

- the training opportunities and facilities available to teachers
- the academic and professional qualifications of teachers

- the number of teachers in each of the different levels of education, school phases, subjects and institutions
- the student-teacher ratio, and
- the condition of service and the remuneration of teachers.

Element: Language of learning and teaching:

Education always takes place through the medium of a language. The medium of instruction should ideally be the mother tongue in order to ensure maximum achievement, especially at the lower levels of education. Teaching through the medium of the mother tongue or first language is considered to be pedagogically sound. The education structure should take cognisance of the following:

- the language used in the different courses/programmes and curricula
- the language proficiency of the students
- the language proficiency of the teachers.

Element: physical facilities:

Education and training should take place in a specific physical space. This is usually a lecture hall, a classroom, a laboratory, a gymnasium, etc. When planning an education system, attention should be given to:

- the availability of the necessary facilities
- the distribution of facilities
- the use of available facilities and the costs of the capital and maintenance outlays with regard to physical facilities.

COMPONENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Support services as a component of the education system can be defined as the specialised non-educational services needed to improve the quality and effectiveness of the educational activities. To identify those support services which are needed on a specific time or on a continuing basis, three aspects of the education activity should be

taken into consideration, namely the teachers, the student and the teaching activities.

Element: Support services to the teacher:

With regard to the teachers the different problems which might impede his efficiency in the execution of his work should be addressed by means of the provision of specialised services. Typical problems which might arise include, for example, personal and personality problems (e.g. stress, health problems), socio-economic problems (e.g. money shortages, low status, party political affiliations, etc.), job-related problems (e.g. salaries, promotion, etc.), environmental problems (the existence of typical community problems such as poverty, drug abuse and crime) and professional problems (e.g. curriculum problems, teaching method problems, evaluation problems).

The following are typical examples of support services to teachers:

- subject advisory services
- education research services
- communication services
- teacher associations.

Element: Support services to teaching activities:

By focusing on the teaching activities and structures necessary for effective teaching, support services can be identified to improve the teaching activities and to improve the functioning of the individual structures involved with teaching. In the first case services such as curriculum services, professional methodology services, media services and evaluation services come to the fore, while in the second case services like management consultants and architectural services with regard to for example the physical aspects could be named.

Typical examples are:

- the education media service
- examination service

Element: Support services to students:

Thirdly, the focus of support services should be placed on the student. Typical problems which can hamper the learning effectiveness of the learner are personal and personality problems, for example, psychological or physical problems which may necessitate either medical or psychological services. The socio-economic situation may necessitate feeding schemes of student transport services.

The following are typical examples of support services to students:

- educational support to students with special needs, career counselling services, speech therapy and occupational therapy services
- school transport service
- school music service
- medical and dental service
- accommodation of students.

The support services are usually offered by specialists in their own particular area. The services offered differ from one education system to the other and in developed countries are more varied than in developing countries.

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE EDUCATION SYSTEM OF A COUNTRY

The national education has no incidental structure, but the structure has been shaped by society, by societal factors.

One of the purposes of comparative education is to develop general statements about the forces and factors that influences development of education systems. There are certain similarities among the factors that determine and shape systems of education to be the way they are in the continents of the world. Europe, 1945-1990, for example suffered a major division based on polarized ideologies such that Eastern political ideology (communism socialism) is different from that of the Western (Democratic). However, it has a common heritage of Roman-Christian education that both have at present a shared experience of industry and society.

Africa as a continent is characterized by common needs, associated with under development and a shared history of European colonization

North America shares a common heritage of democratic principles while South America shares cohesion linked to common cultural origins and similar kinds of social-economics development. Asia, however, has major cultural divisions especially those related to religious obligations and is also affected by different kinds of historical and external interventions. It has different levels of economic development with some countries very poor while others very rich.

The specific societal factors that determine and shape system of education to the way they are include:

- i. Economic factors
- ii. Social-cultural
- iii. Political
- iv. Climatic and geographical conditions
- v. Colonialism, Racism and foreign domination
- vi. Religions
- vii. Historical

Economic factors

The level and rate of economic development of a country, which is, amongst others, based on the level of industrialization, determines the decline or advancement of education. These determine for example the affordability for providing free education to all or the institution of free, compulsory, universal primary education. For example, industrialized and highly urbanized countries with high levels of income, such as Japan, China, USA, Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand, Italy and Germany, have universal free and universal compulsory elementary education has been achieved. Even secondary education is free. The newly industrialized countries have middle levels of income. These include Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Taiwan and South Korea. Here, universal primary education is nearly achieved. The third world countries have low income. They primarily rely on agriculture. These include Pakistan, Latin America and most African

countries. In these countries, universal primary education has not been achieved. Even in those countries where there is universal free and compulsory primary education, problems of non-enrolment, school dropout and low completion rates are inevitable. On the other hand, in those countries where this policy (compulsory primary education) has been achieved, especially in developed countries, there are strict prohibitions of non-enrolments, school dropouts and low completion rates such that the parents of those pupils who do not enroll their children are charged accordingly in law courts. As a result of this there are large numbers enrolled in primary schools as well as high completion rates.

Socio-cultural factors

School systems reflect the social patterns prevailing in any particular country. Education reforms reflect changing needs of and aspirations of a dynamic society. For example, after independence most African countries had to Africanize their systems of education so as to meet needs of the African societies. Customs, traditions, beliefs and local developments affect the education system in a country. All these factors affect the curriculum and influence educational development. Some schools of thought have divided these factors into three categories. One of them is universal features, which all the people in a country do in the same way, speaking the same languages and holding the same ideas of political and religion institutions and the same or similar standard of polite conduct. The second type of things are specialties within a nation or the people such as specialized vocational skills and training which make for division of labour in a society and the accepted ideas about class and social position within that culture. The third type of thing are the alternatives which are those things about which individuals exercise their own personal choice, such as making use of inventions and other new ways of doing things.

Another aspect in this factor is language. It has implications for education in terms of medium of instruction. Depending on whether one or several languages are used in most of the communities it has implications on the cost of education system and national unity. For example it is cheaper to train teachers with only one language as a medium of instruction compared to where more than one language is used. In Africa it would be difficult and expensive because of the many

different languages that exist and all are used as medium of instruction. In case a country has one language or an accepted language without intricate dialect, the organization of education systems becomes quite simple as in the case of England and USA. In the countries where national unity is quite strong the system of education is not much affected even with two or three languages are spoken in that country as in Switzerland where three languages are spoken and also in Wales where two languages are spoken.

On the other hand, in countries like India where a good number of languages are spoken and written, the organization of the system of schools becomes quite problematic. For example in India there are fourteen main languages and hundreds of dialects and the incidence of illiteracy is quite high. The British were able to deal with the problem of language by using English as the main language of instruction. Even after independence though efforts were being made to popularize Hindi as link language, yet it is not accepted to a good number of people. Certain state languages such as Tamil, Bengali and Punjabi are so popular with their people that they are reluctant to accept Hindi as their first language, so much so that in certain areas English is preferred to Hindi. In Canada, the province of Quebec uses mainly French while the other provinces use mainly English as a medium of instruction. This can be traced though the historical factors where by those who settled in Quebec province were immigrants from France while the other provinces were settled by people mostly from Britain and other countries of Europe.

The same problem of language has also been evidenced in Cameroon. The western Cameroon uses English while the Eastern sides use French. This was as a result of the defeat of Germany and subsequent occupation of their colonies by France and Britain. This problem has persisted even after independence where people in the two regions have adamantly refused to accept the language used by the other region in their education system.

Political factors

This influences the kind and amount of education given. This is because it determines the policies governing education in terms of curriculum offered and the type of education for masses. It also affects the existence of the either democratic or undemocratic systems of

education. Political regimes existing in different countries across the world have also affected education systems for example socialist/communist regimes existing in countries such as China, Afghanistan and Cuba have highly centralized systems of government that is authoritarian. The government controls all aspects of education. They use education to achieve ideological mobilization e.g. use of education system to socialize people as it was done in Tanzania, China, Cuba.

On the other hand, parliamentary/democratic/capitalist regimes, which existed in countries such as USA and Britain, have made notable efforts to ensure democratic participation in education. They allow fair allocation of resources. They also tend to have decentralized systems of education where federal government has little influence over schools.

The political parties in power countries influence the allocation of education resources to different systems e.g. the labour party in the United Kingdom promoted development and decentralization of education. In Kenya the NARC government implemented the free primary education in 2003.

Climatic and geographical conditions

The climatic and geographical conditions of an area may affect the school entering age. For example areas which are too cold or have long distances between home and school children, have to delay schooling. In the arctic region, (Scandinavian countries) where temperatures are extremely cold children of Eskimos have to wait until such time when they are able to resist respiratory diseases such as pneumonia.

Consequently, some countries in the northern temperature zones start their compulsory schools attendance one or two years later because of the severity of the climatic conditions.

On the other hand, maritime climate influence the education system as far as vacation are concerned. Schools take vacations during cold winter and also during hot summers. This is particularly seen in North America and many countries in Europe. Climatic conditions also influence educational activities. The hot climatic conditions experienced in arid and semi-arid areas of tropical zones influence activities in systems of education. However, learning takes place during morning

hours when it is cool. At times in the afternoon, when it is hot, very little leaving takes place because of excessive heat.

The geographical conditions of a place influences the distribution of population in a county and the functions of systems of education. For example, Australia has the second largest desert in the world. The population is either congested in urban areas or widely scattered in countryside. Therefore Australia has two systems of education one for the urban areas and another for rural areas. In urban areas there are big and well equipped schools with adequate facilities. In Scandinavian countries, because of extreme temperatures, there are not early childhood education departments in some schools. This has also been the case with children in Norway and other Scandinavian countries where children start schooling at the age of seven.

On the other hand, the long distance between the school and home makes the pupils tired and weak, thus they have to wait until they attain an age, which they are strong enough to walk long distance to and from school.

The climate will also affect educational year calendars. For example in North Eastern Kenya children start their programmes when the temperatures are conducive for study. Similarly the hot weathers will affect the architectural designs and structure of schools. This adds to the cost of building these structures if they are in cold climates where heating is required. The long distance will determine the existence of either day or boarding schools i.e. if the distance is long, children cannot travel to and from school everyday thus they board. The distance as well affect attendance of schools by pupils and also affects safety especially to girls.

In areas where there are distinct seasons of winter and summer the school holidays are synchronized such that the holiday fall during winter. In Kenya the holidays have been determined by seasons whereby in order to reduce dropping out during the planting season. Qualified teachers and administrative personnel are sparsely provided in rural areas, schools are small with one teacher to teach up to forty students. Farms are far from the nearest schools and daily attendance of school is difficult. It is difficult for the families to educate their children. The central government is responsible for their administration and financing. The government also provides the means and

organization of correspondence, tuition and travelling teachers. Most students receive education through correspondence and occasional visits by travelling inspectors seasons the April holiday corresponds with this season in most parts of Kenya. Lastly the economy of a country corresponds with the geographical location of the country i.e. African countries are poor while Europe and North America are rich.

COLONIALISM, RACISM AND FOREIGN DOMINATION

This has led to existence of alien education systems, philosophy and institutional management policy. The education systems are modelled alongside the foreign countries or colonialist education systems. For example, French colonized countries like Senegal and Algeria have modelled their education system along French education systems (Francophone) while British colonized countries like Kenya, Uganda has modelled their education system along British education (Anglophone) model. Racist education system was provided in those countries, which were dominated by foreign powers, as was in South Africa during the colonial period. During this period the education provided to the Europeans, Asians and Africans was different from each other. Colonialism and foreign domination have led to the dependence of the colonized countries. In this case the ex-colonies depends on the former colonial masters for donations geared to education development. This has greatly affected the culture of the dominated countries.

RELIGIOUS FACTORS

The religious factor affects the mutual educational co-operation. For example in the case of the revolution in Russia, Muslims minority groups in South Asia were against the education of women. When the missionaries started educational reform some of them were assassinated. In areas where new schools were established, children came to them with strange symbols on their faces inscribed in blood and could not be persuaded to wash them off because they were placed there by spiritual doctors. In pure Islamic government like of Pakistan, the education system has been given stronger Islamic orientation.

Religion is one factor that has influenced education more than any other single factor throughout the middle ages the church was the same agent which supplied the schools and kept the flame of culture and civilization burning. With the rise of national system of education, the hold of the church on the children has gone quite weak in India, USA, France and Australia. The schools supported by the state in these countries are secular in nature and no religious teaching is permitted during school hours. However, in England and Holland, denominational schools aided by the government may become a definite part of the national education system. The Education Act of 1994 laid down that in England, in the schools controlled by the state the schoolwork should continue with a religious devotion and also that religious instructions should be definite form of the curriculum. This is no doubt done on the basis of an agreed syllabus, which is denominational and provides exceptions to those whose parents do not want their children to attend. China was an exception in that religion was banned in schools and was considered a reactionary influence associated with capitalism.

In Africa the missionaries played an important part in the establishment of education system their home models and transplanted them in the colonies where they settled. Their influence where the missionaries did not start schools has lagged behind in education. For example, in Kenya the missionaries settled in high potential areas and ignored the marginal areas. The marginal areas have lagged behind in educational provision compared to the high potential areas.

HISTORICAL FACTORS

The colonial legacy in Africa has been a major factor in the provision of education. The colonies have adopted education systems their colonial masters. This has continued to affect the education system in those countries up to present.

On the other hand crises of wars, epidemics, hunger, strikes, influenced of post political figures have also influenced the education systems. In Europe, Belgium has been a victim of repeated wars. France Napoleon Bonaparte helped to create the strong centralized and departmentalized system that hold even to day. He reconstructed the University and created the "lycee" for secondary education but left the education

of the masses to the churches. The colonization of Africa has left an imprint on the continent that has greatly shaped the education system in various countries.

ACTIVITY

- i. Outline five determinants of education systems in the world.
- ii. Discuss how the political and economic factors have influenced the development of education system in developing and developed countries.
- iii. Describe the structure of the education system of your country.

REFERENCE

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