

Chapter 1

Adult and Continuing Education In India: An Overview

Introduction

Education is a life long process. It is a unique investment for the present and the future. It brings fullness and richness to man's life. It acts as an instrument for generating socio- economic growth. It is a powerful tool for social change. It is a vehicle for acquiring knowledge and skills. It has the capacity to conscience and empower the people. It makes the people to become critical and active participants in the process of liberating themselves from ignorance, misery, degradation, injustice, exploitation, inequalities and economic and social evils.' It is a weapon in the hands of the masses to wrest their emancipation from oppressors and exploiters. It ultimately helps them to secure social and economic justice. It assures political liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship, equality of status and opportunity, and fraternity - assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation guaranteed in our constitution.

Education, according to Swami Vivekananda, is not the amount of information that is put into the brain and runs riot there, undigested all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated fine ideas and made them your life and character, you have more information than a man who has got by heart a whole library.²

Education is the root cause of progress and development. It helps man and society to think and act according to the needs. Mahatma Gandhi, said, "by education I mean, all-round drawing out of the best in child and man, body, mind and spirit".

The primary purpose of education is the liberation of man from the socio-economic and political bondages. It has to enable man to throw off the impediments to freedom, which restrict his full physical and mental development. It is thus a matter of attitude and skill.³

Types of Education

The process of education can be classified into three major categories. They are formal, non-formal and informal education.

Formal Education: Formal Education is consciously and deliberately planned for the modification of behavior with a particular end in view. It is undertaken in schools or institutions, specially established and maintained for this purpose. It therefore takes the form of schooling, tuition and instruction.⁴

The main drawbacks of the formal system of education are: (i) it has validity only in a given time frame; (ii) the curriculum is traditional, unscientific, theoretical, academic and not objective-based; (iii) it neglects moral and spiritual values; (iv) it is narrow and one-sided because it does tilt towards the development of the individuals; (v) the importance given to technical and vocational subjects is not in accordance with the needs and interests of pupils; (vi) it is rigid in many respects like age of admission, curriculum, syllabus, text books, time-table, methods of teaching, qualifications and training of teachers, examinations, certification etc; and (vii) it is hierarchically structured and chronologically arranged and institutionalized.

Paulo Freire refers the 'formal system' as the banking system. The main transaction is the act of transferring information from the teachers' head and depositing it in the students' heads. The teacher is thus the depositor and the students the depositories.³

Non-Formal Education: Non-Formal Education is the 'organized provision of learning opportunities outside the formal school system, covering a person's lifetime. It is programmed to meet a specific need. It is flexible, problem-oriented, environment-centred, life-based and learner-oriented. It is diversified in content and method. It is non-authoritarian.

Being problem-oriented, non-formal system of education facilitates in solving the individual and community problems. It can be linked with local socio-economic and political needs. It aims to promote betterment of community life. It is open to young and old men and women. It stresses the development of learning opportunities of all types for the masses.

It embraces much more than the conventional academic skills and subject matter. It includes the acquisition of occupational, household skills, development of aesthetic appreciation and analytical code of thinking, the inculcation of attitudes, values and aspirations and the assimilation of pertinent knowledge and information of any sort. It can take place on the job with families in a home, in discussion group under a tree, in community centres, places of worship or clinics. It covers several aspects to meet different purposes. It need not necessarily be linked to the formal school system. However, it can complement the formal system of education courses offered by open universities and distance education centres. Adult Education, Continuing Education and Extra mural work are different forms of non-formal education.

Informal Education: Informal education is a phenomenon, which stands for the aggregate of incidental, unplanned and unstructured educational influences that consciously and unconsciously impinge on the individual and affect his attitudes and understanding.

The individual learns all the time, from every event and from every experience. If a person is curious enough, then he can learn more and assimilate more in a faster way. This may sometimes leads to behavioral change. The type of education, received through informal way is called informal education. This is a continuous process from birth to death of an individual. This is also known as indirect or accidental or incidental education.

It is truly a life long process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experiences and the educative influences and resources from environment, from family and neighbors, from work and play, from the market place, from the library and from the mass media.

Adult Education

Adult education includes the entire body of educational processes, whatever the content, level or method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities, as well as apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adult by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications, or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behavior in the personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development.

The concept of 'adult education' has undergone changes through ages. The literary meaning of adult education implies educational facilities to the adults who could not undergo a regular course of formal education during their school ages.⁶

According to Bryson (1936)⁷, adult education is all activities with an educational purpose carried on by people in the ordinary business of life who use only a part of their time and energy to acquire intellectual equipment towards solving short term and long term problems.

According to Encyclopedia America (vol.1), adult education includes all experiences that help mature men and women to acquire new knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes, interests or values.^K

Adult education does not mean only literacy, it also means the awareness about their surroundings, problems, rights and duties. It is non-formal and meant for adults in the age group 15 and above. It is life long continuing education and life oriented. It aims at bringing about a positive and a definite change in the knowledge skill and attitude of the people. It is need based and dynamic in nature. It emphasizes more on experiential learning and is multi- disciplinary in nature. The concept of adult education has now emerged from mere adult literacy to 'man making' where the emphasis is not only on physical, intellectual, social, economic and aesthetic aspects but also on moral and spiritual aspects in order to make the individual educated and cultured in the true sense.

Adult education thus consists of all those forms of education that treat the student participants as adults- capable, experienced, responsible, mature and balanced people.

History of Adult Education in India

Adult education is famous for its ancient cultural heritage, studded with the philosophical contribution by thinkers, saints and sages. It is very difficult to trace the beginning of education in ancient India, but it is believed that Indian education extended from 2000 BC to 1200 AD. Various educational systems

were developed in terms of social and philosophic relevance. The saints, sages, storytellers and folk-artists use variety of methods, mostly oral, for these purposes. The primary objective was to educate people by making them conscious of their moral and social obligations.¹⁾

The education system of ancient India can be divided as follows

- © Vedic Period: 2000 B.C - 1000 B.C
- © Upanishad Period: 1000 B.C - 200 B.C
- © Dhannasastric Period: 200 B.C - 500 A.D
- © Puranic Period 500: A.D - 1200 A.D

During the Vedic period education was imparted through the word of mouth and was concentrated mostly among the upper classes. During Upanishad Period skills began to be imparted in addition to philosophical education. The Dhannasastric period witnessed the development of art, literature, mathematics and theatre and Sanskrit had become a classical language. But then, the language of popular communication was Prakrit.

The Puranic period (Buddhist Period) saw the establishment of the universities of Nalanda and Vikramshilla. The language was Pali. The students lived in the teacher's house, which was known as 'Gurukula'. Teachers taught the pupil everything they knew. In some parts, the 'Gurukulas' were also known as 'ashramas'. The education was liberal as well as vocational and technical.

Education in medieval India

With the beginning of the medieval period, Muslim system of education found its way in India. The Muslims had two types of institutions-Maktabas and Madrassas. The Maktaba, which corresponded to Hindu elementary school, was generally attached to a mosque. The Madrassa, which corresponded to Hindu

Pathshala, was an institution of higher learning, which prepared men for professions. Libraries were also opened in this period. Under the Tuglak dynasty, Muslim education made considerable progress.

During the period of Akbar, education made much headway. Residential colleges were started for postgraduate studies in different arts and sciences, and a popular system of education was introduced. Both Hindu and Muslim educational institutions flourished side by side.

Educational system during both the Hindu and the Muslim periods was confined to a small percentage of the population although in theory it was available to all those who were keen to have it. In brief, the Gurukulas, Mutts, Ashrams, Pathsalas, Muktabas and Madrassas were not only educational centres for children and adolescents but also for adults (the rich and the poor, the king and the commoner) who could turn to the Guru (teacher) for guidance and advice and getting the kind of education they needed.

Adult Education During the British Period

The earliest definite figures in respect of literacy in India are available in the report of William Adam. According to him, the literacy rate in India in 1836-37 was about 6 percent.¹⁰ The English rulers had little concern for the education of adults. The emergence of night schools in England in the wake of industrial revolution, however, had an impact in India. In every British Indian Province, some financial provision was made for giving grant to night schools. The Indian Education Commission (1882-83) recognized that the adults needed further education for their economic betterment and strongly recommended extension of this programme in all provinces as such schools had chances of success.

With the introduction of diarchy, popular interest in franchise and mass education increased. The co-operative movement (1918-36), which was gaining strength, also provided an invaluable base for starting adult literacy classes. Besides, a vast number of Jawans who returned from World War -1 brought enlightenment and consciousness with them. These factors acted as catalytic agents rousing the masses to new level of awareness. As a result, there was a spurt in the adult education activities and instead of an enterprising few, a much larger mass was eager to acquire the ability to understand what was happening around them. ¹¹

The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) in its fourth meeting in December 1938, appointed an Adult Education Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Syed Mahmud, the then Education Minister of Bihar. The committee stressed the importance of adult literacy, need for training of literacy teachers, motivation of adults, use of audio-visual media in teaching and efforts for retention of literacy and continuing education.

Gandhiji considered illiteracy as a sin and shame and demanded solving the same at the earliest through concerted efforts. He suggested in his constructive programme two forms of education viz. Basic Education and Adult Education. Basic education, he said, links the children to all that is best and lasting in India. It develops both the body and the mind, and keeps the child rooted to the soil with a glorious vision of the future.¹²

Speaking on adult education he said: “My adult education means,..... true political education of the adult by word of mouth”.¹³ His primary concern was political freedom and hence he emphasized the political education. However he along with his fellow freedom fighters Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr. Zakir Hussain emphasized teaching of 3 R s viz. reading, writing and arithmetic to the

adults. As a result of these attempts the percentage of literacy rose from 6.7 in 1901 to 16.6 in 1951.

Adult Education After Independence

An important responsibility of a democratic government is to educate its citizens for a better living. The education given to them must be related to their daily life. It must be related to the economic development of the people. It should provide the manpower at all levels to increase output, by training people in needed skills. An effective, planned educational programme, in relation to the life of participants, can make desirable changes in them.

After independence the national government realized the need to educate the adults so as to enable them to understand their rights and responsibilities and to participate meaningfully in the developmental programmes of the country.

The investment in education therefore was given much emphasis and importance. The budget allocation for education during the first five year plan was 153 crores. It steadily increased to Rs. 19600 in eight five year plans. Increased investment in education has brought a remarkable change in literacy percentage of the country. The literacy rate was only 16.65 percentages in 1951. This has risen to 65.36 percent in 2001, four-fold increase over a period 50 years. Female literacy, which was around 8 percent in 1951, has risen to 55 percent - around seven-times increase during the same period.

It is not the investment in education alone that is responsible for sharp increase in the literacy level of the country. Special attention attached to adult education also played a key role in improving the literacy level of the population. The Government of India felt that it was not possible to effectively tackle the

problems of illiteracy through formal education alone as there was vast chunk of population outside the field of formal education. Further, a vast majority of the illiterate population was from poorer sections of the community, which could be reached only through non-formal adult education. That was why, the Government of India enhanced the budget allocation for adult education in the country. The proportion of budget allocation for adult education to total investment in education has steadily gone up though there were fluctuations in between plan periods. During the 8th plan period the allocation for adult education was around 10 percent of the allocation for education. (See table 1.1).

Table 1.1
Budgetary Provision of **Adult** Education in Five-year Plans¹⁴

Five-Year Plans (in crores)	Budget for Education (in crores)	Budget for Adult Education (in crores)	Percentage of allocation for Adult Education
1951 - 56	153.00	5.00	3.27
1956 - 61	273.00	4.00	1.43
1961 - 66	589.00	3.50	0.59
1969 - 74	786.00	4.50	0.57
1974 - 79	912.00	18.00	0.98
1980 - 85	2530.00	224.00	8.85
1985 - 90	7633.00	470.00	6.15
1992 - 97	19600.00	1848.00	9.42
1997 - 02	N.A	-	-
2002- 07	N.A	2000.00	-

Table 1.2
Literacy in India After Independence * (in percentage)

Year	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
Male	24.95	34.44	39.51	46.74	63.09	75.85
Female	7.93	12.95	18.44	24.88	39.04	54.16
Average	16.65	24.00	29.45	36.17	52.11	65.38

* Source: 1. Rahi A.L., Adult Education, Trends and issues, Ambala Cantt: The Indian Publishers, 1994.
2. Census Report - 2001,

Major Adult Education programmes

The Government of India realizing the need to educate the vast number of illiterate adults introduced special programmes in the sphere of adult education. A brief description of each of the programmes is given, as it would provide a backdrop for the study.

Social Education

The main attention of the Government and the leaders after independence was focussed on the problem of rehabilitation of refugees. The idea of developing an appropriate adult education programme for the refugees as well as on- refugees continued to be the concern of officials and non-officials in the early years of freedom. The Indian Adult Education Association (IAEA), a non-governmental organization of professional adult educators took up the task of reviewing the role of adult education and reinterpreting its function in a democratic set up in their annual conference held in Rewa in December 1947. It was observed that 'adult education must aim at enabling the common man to live a richer life in all its aspects- social, economic, cultural and moral' and for the first time, the social aspect of adult education was emphasized by the professional adult educators.

The recommendations of IAEA were taken up by the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), Government of India, which appointed a sub-committee in 1948 under the chairmanship of Mohan Lai Saxena, the then Minister for Relief and Rehabilitation, Govt, of India to work out a detailed scheme for adult education and literacy. The committee, which felt the need for giving a new orientation to the scheme of adult education laid greater emphasis on the social aspect and coined the term social education. Defining the objectives and operational details of the programme of social education, the committee set a target of 50 percent literacy among 12-45 age group within a period of five years.

The recommendations were accepted by the CABE with minor modifications in 1949 and launched social education programme in India in 1950s. Sri Maulana Azad, the then Minister for Education, who took special interest in the problem, earmarked a sum of Rs. 1 crore for the programme.

The concept of social education was introduced by the Govt, of India' in all the states. Different programmes were organized with the support of teachers and other literate persons in village schools, youth clubs, mahila mandals, voluntary organizations and community centres. With the introduction of Community Development programme in 1952, social education became part of the process of community development.

The social education is a comprehensive programme of community upliftment through community action. The main objective was to educate the common man to understand the rights and duties of a citizen, to improve his productive capacity and to enable him to lead a fuller and richer life. It was also expected to impart training in skills, which are necessary for building up groups, qualified and willing to use the available resources in the community for the good of all. Its role was to help people identify their problems and solve them.

An important function was to prepare the people to subordinate their personal interest to the interest of their group, community and country. Greatest good of the greatest number was its main goal.¹⁵

Social Education Organizers (one male and one female) were appointed at block level and a chief Social Education Organizer was appointed at project level to implement the programme. The male and the female Social Education Organizer worked under the administrative control of the Block Development Officer.

Social education classes were organized for ten months. As part of this, literacy centres, community centres, libraries and janatha colleges were started all over the country. Literacy drives were undertaken. Cultural and recreational activities were promoted. Exhibitions were organized. Radio listening groups were formed. However the programme did not make a dent in rural areas. The programme had benefited only 0.3 percent. The main reason for the poor performance was that the key grassroots level workers and Social Education Organizers were overburdened with diverse but immense responsibilities, and they failed to cope up with the demands specially in the absence of suitable literature, expert guidance and adequate research support.

Gram Shikshan Mohim

A Movement “Grama Shikshan Mohim” was started in 1959 in Satara District of Maharashtra and extended to all districts of the state within a period of two years (1961-63). 10 lakhs adults in the age of 14 years and above were made literate. It clearly enhanced the literacy rate in Maharashtra. The literacy rate which was 34.2 percent in 1961, increased to 44.9 percent in 1971. But, the survey carried out later by the Planning Commission made it clear that there was a widespread relapse of the adults into illiteracy, which was attributed to the lack of well-organized follow- up services. ¹⁶

Farmer's Education and Functional Literacy

The concept of functional literacy emerged during 1960s. A series of international and national events during 1950s paved the way for its emergence. The World Conference of Education Ministers on 'Eradication of illiteracy', held in Tehran (1965) defined functional literacy with greater precision. It discussed in detail the close link between literacy and social and economic progress.¹⁷

The concept of functional literacy was translated into action when the UNESCO designed the experimental World Literacy Programme, which provided an opportunity for India to develop Farmers Training and Functional Literacy Project (FTFLP). The project had three components viz. (i) farmers training (ii) functional literacy and (iii) farm broadcasting. Under each, a number of activities were undertaken.

The FFLP was implemented in the year 1967-68. The major objectives of the programme were to provide a well organized functional literacy programme for illiterate/semi literate farmers in the High Yielding Varieties Programme (HYVP) districts, which would enable them to obtain both literacy and Strategic agricultural skills and information of immediate use to themselves and to the country.

Three ministries, viz, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and Ministry of Education and Culture jointly undertook the FTFL project. The unique feature of the project was its integrated three-dimensional approach. The programme implemented exclusively through official channels though succeeded in developing skills and disseminating knowledge of improved agricultural practices, among farmers, had certain limitations. The beneficiaries were mostly from relatively well-off and

enterprising farmers who were desirous of introducing new agricultural practices. The programme touched only the fringe of the problem leaving the mass of the illiterate marginal farmers and landless agricultural workers outside its scope.

The phase of functional literacy witnessed the establishment of National Board of Adult Education (NBAE) in 1969, and Directorate of Adult Education (D.A.E) in 1971. The Directorate of Adult Education identified 65 Schemes / Programmes in different departments of Govt, of India, which has substantial component of non-formal education. Some of the significant schemes were Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Nehru Yuvak Kendra and Shramik Vidyapeeth.

National Adult Education Programme (NAEP)

An ambitious adult education programme was launched on October 2, 1978 with the objective of providing adult education to ten crore adults in the age-group 15-35 within five years. This nation-wide programme sought to enable majority of our active citizens to play a positive role in bringing about social, economic and cultural changes so that social justice and equity could be achieved.^{1X}

The conceptual framework of National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) was made concrete with its emphasis on the following three main objectives:¹⁹

- ® imparting literacy skills to persons belonging to the economically and socially deprived sections of the society.
- ® creating an awareness in helping them to overcome their helplessness and to achieve self reliance; and
- ® raising their functional capabilities in their occupation and skills of management to their own advantage as a group.

A review committee, under the Chairmanship of Dr.D.S. Kothari was appointed in October 1979 to review the working of the NAEP and to recommend changes for better implementation. The major recommendations of the committee are (i) in the plans of national development, along with universalisation of primary education, adult education should receive the highest priority, (ii) All illiterate persons of the age group of 15 to 35 should be covered in the shortest time possible by a programme of adult education, (iii) State and district plans of adult education should be prepared, (iv)Emphasis should be on participation of women, scheduled caste, scheduled tribe, and physically handicapped, (v) National Board of Adult Education (NBAE) and State Boards of Adult Education (SBAE) should be established and (vi) Steps should be taken to produce literature needed for post literacy and continuing education.

The committee expressed its great satisfaction on the coverage of 2.17 millions adults in 1978-79 against the target of 1.5millions adults and coverage of 3.6 millions in 1979-80, against the target of 4.5 millions.

Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP)

Farmer's Functional Literacy Programme (FFLP) was renamed and reshaped as Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP) by the Govt, of India immediately after the launching of NAEP. RFLP mainly aimed at all rural illiterates and it has a wider coverage of the rural population, which included farmers also.

The programme was organized by the State Education Departments in some states and in some others by the Rural Development Department. Adult Education Centres were started in rural areas. Thirty learners were expected to participate in a RFLP centre under the guidance of an instructor. There was a district level Adult Education Board at the revenue district level, in which experts from the University, representatives of the people and other social agencies and officials

concerned of the programme were included. The local committee was a supporting body at local level to promote the programme, in which officials from the block office, learners, local representatives etc. were included. The instructor was the convener of the local committee.

Supervisors were appointed by the government to supervise the field centres. Certain developmental programme implemented through the block office were linked with the RFLP. The total duration of the centre was ten months, within this time limit an adult illiterate was helped to become functionally literate. When one batch was over, usually the centre would be shifted to some other area, where there was a need and the one, which was complete, transferred to a continuing education centre. The programme was continued when total literacy campaigns started in the country.

The New **20-point** programme of the Govt, of India

This programme as a part of the sixth Five Year Plan, aimed at the socio-economic development of the people. Item number 16 of the programme lays special attention on the eradication of illiteracy among adults especially in the age group 15-35, with the help of voluntary organizations and university and college students.²⁰

Non-formal education for adults had been given priority in the sixth plan, in view of its potential for immediate impact in raising the level of productivity and improving the economy. Post literacy and Continuing Education Programme would accompany the programme through a network of rural libraries as well as instructional provisions in the mass media.

Mass Programme for Functional Literacy (MPFL)

Mass Programme for Functional Literacy (.MPFL) was introduced on 1st May 1986, to give a boost to adult education work. It aimed at involving two lakhs students to work about 150 hours within 3-4 months on purely voluntary basis. It was really a people's programme ensuring community support and assistance. It also aimed at involvement of teachers for eradication of illiteracy. Mass movement is a unified attempt by a large number of individuals to effect social change by working as a group. Teachers and students of universities, colleges and schools, workers of trade unions, panchayat raj agencies and voluntary agencies were involved in the programme.

The main features of the mass programme for functional literacy were : (i) reorganization of the existing programmes to introduce flexibility and other measures for greater effectiveness; (ii) application of science and technology; and (iii) establish linkage between education and the developmental programmes, a distinct slant in favour of women's equality and take all measures in pursuance of this resolve.

The basic idea behind the mass programme was voluntarism with the slogan "Each One Teach One". The voluntary effort was expected to mobilize through college and university students in the national movement for the eradication of illiteracy. Each volunteer was expected to teach one or /one to five illiterate learners with the help of a 'Literacy Kit' within 150 hours of literacy teaching. Mainly NSS Volunteers and NCC cadets were engaged in this programme. Smaller groups of illiterate population could be covered through this approach.

Jana Shikshan Nilayams (JSNs)

With a view to preventing the relapse of neo- literates into illiteracy and ensuring that the basic literacy skills acquired by them are reinforced, retained

and applied in day to day life situations, National Literacy Mission envisaged institutionalization of post literacy and continuing education arrangements through setting up of Jana Shikshan Nilayams (JSNs) throughout the country.

The Jana Shikshan Nilayams or public education centres were set up for self-directed continuing education in the perspective of life long learning through library service, newspapers for neo-literates, charcha-mandals (discussion groups) and such other activities.²¹ This also included skill development programmes for personal, social and occupational development. The important functions of a JSN included conduct of evening class for 3-4 hours once a week for upgradation of literacy and numeracy skills, providing library facilities with provision of books on developmental programmes and other subjects useful in day to day life, providing reading room with provision of wall papers and newspapers appropriate for adult learners, informative journals and developmental literatures, organization of short duration training programmes, conduct of Charcha Mandals, sports and other adventurous activities and serving as a window for disseminating information on various developmental programmes and issues of national concern.

A JSN was set up for every 4-5 villages to cover a population of about 5000 people. The intension behind establishing JSN all over the country in a phased manner was to institutionalize the post-literacy and continuing education programme and cover various activities at one nodal centre.

The scheme of post literacy (PL) and continuing education (CE), was formulated at a time when the adult education programme all over the country were being implemented on a centre-based approach called Rural Functional Literacy Programme under the over- arching policy framework of the National Adult Education Programme, 1978. The JSNs were designated to cater to the needs of neo-literates emerging from the adult education centres and to the continuing education centres.

National Literacy Mission (NLM)

The Govt. of India has identified eradication of illiteracy as one of the national missions with a view to applying technology and scientific research for the benefit of the deprived sections of society. The 'Technology Mission for Eradication of Illiteracy' now known as the 'National Literacy Mission' (NLM) was drawn up in 1988 as a comprehensive central programme in the field of adult education. The NLM concentrate on 15-35 age group, which is crucial for country's development.

The NLM²² hoped to impart functional literacy to 80 million illiterate persons by 1995 (30 million by 1990, 50 millions by 1995). The crucial factors for the success of the NLM were national commitment, motivation of learners and teachers, mass mobilization, people's involvement, techno-pedagogic inputs, efficient management and monitoring.

The NLM sought to correct both the distortions and imbalances of the earlier programmes with a view to converting it from a government-funded government-controlled programme to a "people's programme" or "peoples' movement"²³ Total Literacy Programme' started in the state of Kerala and other parts of the country with the assistance of NLM was a total success. Mechanism for post-literacy and continuing education, particularly through establishment of continuing education centres and better use of existing institutional facilities, have been created throughout the country.

The National Literacy Mission is governed by a three-tier administrative and management structure. It is the apex body supported by the Directorate of Adult Education (DAE) at the national level. State-level activities are planned, directed and monitored by the State Literacy Mission, which are supported by the State Directorates of Adult Education and State Resource Centres (SRCs).

District Saksharatha Samithies (Zilla Saksharatha Samithy), a district level agency plans, implements and monitors literacy programmes at grass root level. The NLM also draws on the resources of many support organizations for its various activities. State Resource Centres provide training and prepare teaching /learning materials. The Jan Shikshan Sansthans provide vocational and skill improvement training. The Bharath Gyan Vigyan Samithi and other NGOs are closely associated with programme implementation at the field level. Three major programmes undertaken under NLM are:

- ® Total Literacy Campaign
- © Post literacy programme
- © Continuing Education programme.

Essential features of these programmes are discussed below.

Total Literacy Campaigns

The total literacy campaign model is now accepted as the dominant strategy for eradication of adult illiteracy in India. These campaigns are area-specific, time-bound, volunteer-based, cost-effective and outcome-oriented. The thrust is on attainment of functional literacy through prescribed forms of literacy and numeracy. The learner is the focal point in the entire process and measurement of learning outcome is continuous, informal, participatory and non-threatening. The campaigns are implemented through district level literacy committees in which a number of individuals and organizations work together. It is delivered through volunteers without any expectation of reward or incentive. To enable every learner to achieve measurable levels of literacy, the new pedagogy known as “Improved Pace and Content of Learning (IPCL)”, has been translated in the shape of a set of multigraded and integrated teaching/learning materials and training.

Post Literacy Campaigns

Post literacy is considered as a 'bridge' between primary schooling and its equivalent and further study. Learning skills acquired by neo-literates during the short span on the literacy campaign are at best fragile. The aim of the National Literacy Mission's Post Literacy Programme is to consolidate the basic literacy skills of speaking, reading, writing, numeracy and problem solving and at the same time, transform these learners into an educated 'whole person' who is a productive socio-economic asset to the community.²⁴

The NLM has designed a two-year post literacy campaign, to be implemented in a mission mode. In fact, it has laid a great deal of emphasis on the planning and launching of post literacy campaign phase. In keeping with its aims, the mission has formulated and circulated broad guidelines for implementation of post literacy campaigns. The basic elements are:

- ® identification of learning needs of neo-literates.
- ® provision of learning opportunities to meet the needs
- ® creating a socio-economic, political and cultural ambience to sustain the learning environment.

Post-literacy learning strategies as developed by National Literacy Mission envisage the provision of learning opportunities both in structured and unstructured situation. Structured situation refers to organized learning where primers or graded textual material as well as suitably designed supplementary reading books for neo-literates are given. Unstructured situation refers to widely differing literacy abilities necessitating the provision of a wide range of learning materials

Post literacy campaigns have done well in ensuring a successful transition of neo-literates from guided learning to self-learning and finally to life long learning. The campaigns implemented so far have covered considerable ground and the cumulative experience has yielded valuable insights for the planning of post-literacy programmes and the shaping of continuing education strategies.

Continuing Education Programmes

Continuing education is regarded as any education which adults voluntarily undertake, and it is for literate youth and adults; it responsive to needs and wants; it includes experiences provided by all education sub-sectors; and it can be defined in terms of opportunity to engage in life-long learning.²⁵

Continuing education, stresses the unity of the concept of education, both child and adult. It continues throughout life though the phrase has come to have at least two other rather narrower meanings: all education for adults returning to the educational system, and (somewhat narrower still) professional vocationally oriented training programmes at an advanced level for adults who have already received a good deal of education.

The impact of literacy and adult education programmes clearly shows that in the future, skill development and increased economic opportunity must form one of the major components of initiations in this area. The challenge before the National Literacy Mission is to create a continuing education system for the mass upsurge of the literacy campaigns. A continuous and life long learning process is also planned.

The continuing education scheme is postulated on the principles of:

- ® treating basic literacy, post-literacy and continuing education as one sustained, coherent learning process.

- © establishing a responsive and alternative structure for life long learning
- © responding to the needs of all sections of society.
- ® learning not to be seen as a function of alphabets, but as all modes of human capacity building.
- ® addressing the socio-economic situation of the community to provide infrastructure for larger development initiatives.

Thus, the scheme of continuing education taken up in a district after it has completed the total literacy and post literacy phases makes the learners aware of the power and significance of education. They realize that education is the agency for improving their lives and they tend to find ways to use their literacy skills in their everyday life to make it more meaningful and rewarding. The continuing education scheme is therefore, multi faceted and enjoys supreme flexibility to allow grass roots community participation and managerial initiative.

Establishment of Continuing Education Centres (CECs) and Nodal Continuing Education Centres (NCECs) are the principal modes of implementing continuing education programmes. The centres follow an area-specific, community-based approach. The scheme envisages one CEC for each village to serve a population of about 1500 to 2000 people. Eight to ten such centres form a cluster in which one of them acts as the nodal CEC.

Full time facilitators named Preraks, who are drawn from the community itself, run the centres. Assistant Preraks have also been entrusted to each centre. The continuing education centre serves as:

- library and reading room.
- teaching-learning centre for continuing education programmes.
- vocational training centre.
- extension centre for facilities of other development departments.

- © discussion forum for sharing ideas and solving problems.
- © a composite information window for the community.
- ® cultural Centre.
- © sports and recreation centre.

The CECs, including the nodal one, are set up in consultation with the user community and its programme is designed to meet their demands. The stress on imparting literacy skills to non-literates is sustained. Various development departments, technical institutions and professional groups provide inputs needed by the programme. State Resource Centres, Jan Shikshan Sansthan join hands by giving the necessary resource and training support. Besides establishing CECs, the scheme also undertakes the following programmes.

Equivalency Programme: It is designed as an alternative education programme equivalent to existing formal, general or vocational education.

Income-Generating Programme: Under this, the participants acquire or upgrade their vocational skills and take up income generating activities.

Quality of Life Improvement Programme: It aims to equip learners and the community with essential knowledge, attitude values and skill to raise their standard of living.

Individual Interest **Promotion Programme:** It provides opportunities for learners to participate and learn about their individuality and chosen social, cultural, spiritual, health, physical and artistic interests.

The continuing education scheme is visualized as a mechanism for integrated human resource development. Well-organized and coordinated infrastructure for continuing education can advance the course of literacy in India leading to the emergence of a learning society.

Conclusion

Education plays an indispensable and indisputable role in the development of a nation. There is a direct and definite positive correlation between education and development. A country with a vast chunk of the population remains as illiterates cannot flourish in any of its domain of development. Realizing the paramount significance of education, the Government of India made sincere and honest attempts to promote education in rural as well as in urban areas. The government did realize that a real learning society cannot be created through formal education system alone because a vast majority of the rural population especially the women and other weaker section of the community were illiterate. Hence the Government initiated various measures to promote literacy for those who could not undergo education through formal system and for those who dropped out of formal system due to socio-economic and cultural compulsions. Various measures initiated by the government of India in the form of programmes, schemes, projects and mission have made a discernible impact on the literacy status of the country. An important component in the current initiative is promotion of continuing education programmes. The purpose of the programme is to sustain the various measures initiated over a period of time and to channelise the newly gained potentials of the adults towards sustainable socio- economic development. The present study is an attempt to examine the performance of the continuing education programmes in Kerala.

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