



Adult Education in India

Selected Papers

Edited by
C J Daswani and S Y Shah

ABOUT THE BOOK

Adult Education has always been a major focus of UNESCO's educational agenda. Over the years, UNESCO has been associated with a number of programmes of the Government of India, and various NGOs in the field of adult literacy.

This collection of research articles on Indian Adult Education is an attempt at bringing together a wide variety of scholarly papers that have already been published in numerous research journals.

The articles cover both macro and micro perspectives of adult education in India in its historical, philosophical and sociological dimensions.

The book is structured in five parts, each with a different focus. Part I includes papers on the philosophical and historical perspective of the development of adult education in India. Part II includes papers on adult education policy. Papers in Part III focus on the implementation and impact of the Total Literacy Campaigns in various states in India. Papers in Part IV discuss the strategies of post literacy and continuing education. Part V has papers that analyse the two crucial issues of gender and development.

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FOREWORD

Adult Education has always been a major focus of UNESCO's educational agenda. Right from its inception UNESCO has supported programmes of adult education every where, especially in India where adult literacy and adult education have been an essential component of educational planning and policy. Over the years, UNESCO has been associated with a number of programmes of the Government of India, and various NGOs in the field of adult literacy. Every year UNESCO has lent support to and participated in the International Literacy Day celebrations organized by National literacy mission. As a part of these celebrations UNESCO has supported the publication of various specially commissioned collections of articles on adult literacy.

While supporting these activities, we in UNESCO have been aware of the huge volume of research and publication of scholarly papers in adult education in India over the past five decades. Unfortunately, these research papers are scattered in numerous journals, both Indian and international, making it difficult for scholars to access them. Therefore, when it was suggested that UNESCO, New Delhi should support the publication of a book of readings in Indian Adult Education, I had no hesitation in doing so. Once the idea of putting together a collection of learned articles was accepted, a number of discussions on the modalities were held. The task of carrying out the project was assigned to Professor C.J. Daswani, UNESCO Consultant, who with the assistance of Dr. S.Y. Shah of Jawaharlal Nehru University, has put together this volume.

I was able to discuss the progress of the project with the editors at several stages. I am aware that they had to sift through almost 1500 published articles on adult education, and by a careful process of review they were able to select twenty representative articles which have been included in this volume.

The selected papers cover a wide range of issues in adult education in India. Quite appropriately, the first article examines the question of adult literacy within the Gandhian framework. It is evident that concern with adult education in India pre-dates some of the more recent programmes and strategies. It is widely recognized that the Total Literacy Campaign model of the National Literacy Mission has contributed to an enhanced awareness about the centrality of adult education. The current concern about post-literacy and continuing education is a natural progression from basic adult literacy to adult education. It is therefore significant that two sections in the book deal with the programmes of total literacy, post-literacy and continuing education. Some of the papers also reflect concern with issues of gender and development in the context of adult

education. A number of case studies on the actual Total Literacy Campaigns in various states provide a rich variety of experiences. In all, the selected papers truly reflect the breadth and depth of scholarly research in Indian Adult Education. Eighteen of the papers included in this volume are by Indian Scholars. Only two are by foreign scholars who have researched in this area and are experts in their own right. To my mind this reflects the interest that Indian Adult Education has engendered amongst social scientists in India and elsewhere.

I am confident that this publication will not only prove to be a valuable addition to the publications on Indian Adult Education, it will also lead present and future scholars to look for other invaluable sources of earlier insights in this important field of enquiry. I am also confident that this publication will prove to be of value for scholars outside India who are engaged in the area of adult education

UNESCO is very happy to have been able to support the publication of this volume, of course, the views and opinions expressed in the articles are not necessarily the same as those of UNESCO.

I am grateful to Professor C.J. Daswani and Dr S.Y. Shah for having edited this volume. I also wish to record my gratitude to the contributors who have granted permission to include their articles in this volume

I am specially grateful that the book is being released on 8 September 2000, on the occasion of the International Literacy Day by His Excellency Shri Krishna Kant, Vice President of India.

Professor Moegiadi
Director and Representative
UNESCO
New Delhi

PREFACE

This collection of research articles on Indian Adult Education is an attempt at bringing together a wide variety of scholarly papers that have already been published in numerous research journals. The papers were selected in a systematic manner. To begin with, almost all the articles (about 1500) on adult education in India, published during 1950~2000 in different national and international journals and research publications were scanned. Most of these 1500 articles were found in journals like *Indian Journal of Adult Education*, *Economic and Political Weekly*, *Journal of Educational Planning and Administration*, *Adult Education and Development*, *International Review of Education*, *Journal of Education and Social Change*, *Convergence*, etc. From these articles 220 were selected for further review. These short-listed articles were read and re-read several times. The final choice of the 20 articles included in the collection was guided by several considerations such as theme, in-depth analysis, and contribution to knowledge base of adult education in India. The final list of articles, therefore, covers both macro and micro perspectives of adult education in India in its historical, philosophical and sociological dimensions.

Notwithstanding the large number of articles that have been published, there is a dearth of scholarly publications in the field of adult education in India. Although the programmes of adult education have multiplied in the last fifty years, not many social scientists seem to have showed much interest in the field until the 1980s. During the 1950s and 1960s, adult education in India was limited to short term projects. During these years there were no universities or academic institutions involved in teaching or research in adult education. Not only did this hamper the development of adult education as an independent discipline in institutions of higher learning, it also delayed the onset of serious academic research and publications.

The National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) launched in 1978 resulted in greatly increased activity in adult education, which also provided a boost to academic aspects of adult education. In the early years of 1980s a large number of project reports, evaluation studies, and general articles were published. However, not many of these articles were scholarly in the strictest sense of the term. The majority of them were written by field workers and programme coordinators and published in the *Indian Journal of Adult Education*. Although rich in grassroots experiences and insights, these articles lacked interdisciplinary perspective and academic rigour.

In the wake of the NAEP, the Government of India encouraged the partici-

pation of academic institutions in the evaluation of the adult education programmes. As a result of this, several social scientists began to take interest in adult education, researching and publishing their findings on adult education in social science journals. At the same time a number of Indian universities initiated programmes in adult education and established departments of adult education, leading to a greater output of research and publications. The 1980s and 1990s saw the publication of a large number of research articles published by well-known social scientists. This volume includes a number of articles that were published during the last two decades of the twentieth century.

This book is structured in five parts, each with a different focus. Part I includes papers on the philosophical and historical perspective of the development of adult education in India. Part II includes papers on adult education policy and planning. Papers in Part III focus on the implementation and impact of the Total Literacy Campaigns in various states in India. Papers in Part IV discuss the strategies of post literacy and continuing education, Part V has papers that analyse the two crucial issues of gender and development.

This volume is basically designed as a representative book of readings in Indian Adult Education, providing an overview of the more critical facets of research in adult education in India. Any selection of this nature is naturally limited by constraints of space, therefore many other outstanding papers could not be included in this volume. If the present volume enthruses the readers to look further for research in Indian adult education, our purpose will have been served.

We are grateful to Professor Moegiadi, Director and Representative, UNESCO, New Delhi for having encouraged and supported the publication of this book.

C.J. Daswani

S.Y. Shah

PART I

**PHILOSOPHICAL & HISTORICAL
PERSPECTIVE**

1. Against Modernity: Gandhi and Adult Education*

Tom Steele and Richard Taylor

Since independence in 1947, Indian adult education has been dominated by an ideology of modernization. Inspired by western socialist ideas, Nehru and his successors have seen education as one of the key tools for transforming a backward, illiterate and predominantly rural society into a modern, industrial and materially productive national state. The main Indian educational perspectives of importance came from Gandhi and Tagore. Although ultimately unsuccessful, Gandhi's educational programme and arguments remain of considerable importance, for two interrelated reasons. Gandhi's general influence was so important a factor - symbolically as much as actually - in the course of Indian independence that his views on any aspect of Indian society are of interest. Second, because of Gandhi's coherent and in some respects extreme anti-colonialism, his educational philosophy is a part of a general ideological position which was fundamentally opposed to the culture, structures and practices of British colonial rule.

Gandhi's ideas on adult education cannot be separated from his ideas on education as a whole. Gandhi viewed education in a holistic way, in the sense that he saw educational theory and practice as central to the life or death struggle of India (and other subject, colonial peoples) against western industrial civilization. He was opposed root and branch to the values embodied in and proselytized by mainstream western society as he argued in his most important writing on education, *Hind Swaraj*, in 1906 (Gandhi 1944 [1906]). But Gandhi also pragmatically advocated the need for retaining practical elements of western education. For example, Brown (1989:91) notes that as late as 1908, 'he argued that an English education including study of English and the Sciences, was essential in the contemporary world. Without it they would be crippled and backward.' Education was viewed by Nehru and the nationalists primarily as vocational training in order to provide an increasingly skilled work-force to facilitate greater industrial progress and thus material welfare. This was anathema to Gandhi. He was opposed on fundamental philosophical grounds to

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western capitalism's culture of selfish, individualistic materialism. For him, the machine culture of industrial capitalism was the enemy of everything of value in human existence. This western culture threatened to destroy human spirituality and distract humanity from its rightful concerns of truth-seeking and communal, non-violent and harmonious social living. Gandhi was thus implacably opposed to developing an education system in India that was geared to replicating western 'progress'. As Krishna Kumar has put it, Gandhi located the 'problem of education in (the) dialectic ... of man versus machine' (Kumar 1989:591).

The British system had created a rift between the educated elite, which was largely urban, and the massive rural population. One result was that the educated villagers left the rural areas and went to work in the towns as clerks or other functionaries. Villages were thus systematically deprived of their potential leadership cadres. In the end, the net effect of the British education system was the creation of an army of clerks whose only function was to administer the continuation of colonial ruling structures. It was hierarchical and elitist, and top heavy with higher education at the expense of primary education.

Nor was this Gandhi's only criticism. He also rejected the abstract and arts basis of western education. For Gandhi the real business of education was 'learning how to control the senses, and acquiring an ethical basis to life. Character-building, not the acquisition of a foreign language or irrelevant knowledge, was the need for India's millions' (Kumar 1989:591). Although Gandhi did not develop his campaign for Basic Education programmes until the late 1930s (see below), the elements of his approach to education were clear by the end of the first decade of the 20th century. Education, both for children and for adults, should concentrate upon 'character-training rather than accumulation of knowledge, vernaculars as opposed to English, and learning through practical skills rather than book-based study' (Kumar 1989:592).

It was Gandhi's conviction that the Congress movement was dominated by western-orientated, socialist, modernizing politicians that led him to give a new and urgent priority to education based upon rural India. Only through grass-roots reconstruction in the villages could a viable, independent and free India be created. Gandhi believed that the key to India's future lay in the villages, in rural India, and not in the towns.

The Wardha Scheme.

Gandhi's system of Basic Education was outlined at the Wardha National Education Conference of 1937:

1. There should be free compulsory education for seven years of all children on a national scale.
2. The medium of instruction should be the mother tongue.
3. The education should centre on manual and productive work and all other abilities to be taught should be related to the central handicraft.
4. The education should be self-financing through the production of some necessary material item like *khadi* which could pay the cost of the teacher and materials.

The Wardha conference was a direct response to the India Act of 1935, which, although not inaugurated until 1937, transferred substantial governmental power to eight of India's eleven provinces. Gandhi saw this as the opportunity to reconstruct the British imported educational system which had served the Indian people so poorly. Thus it was a consciously anti-imperialist strategy which anathematized, rhetorically at least, 'western' educational aims. Gandhi proposed that in the place of the British primary and secondary stratifications of education there should be one continuous schooling of at least seven years which should be called 'Basic' education. Whatever else followed would be based on this foundation. Gandhi believed that the artificial divisions imposed by the British system of primary and secondary education were both socially and personally divisive. Not only did secondary education depend on a rough division of children by social class but it broke the organic continuity of learning for the children themselves. He proposed that Basic Education should therefore be both universal and continuous.

Education should be clearly related to the needs of Indian independence and autonomy, to recognize her cultural difference from the West and the importance of maintaining the traditional practices of everyday Indian life. But Gandhi did not intend this to be a purely functional exercise in creating the efficiency state beloved of both Communist and western industrialized countries and insisted instead on inspiring the system with spiritual value. Central to this was the doctrine of non-violence:

If we want to eliminate communal strife, and international strife, we must start with foundations pure and strong by rearing our younger generation on the education I have adumbrated. The plan springs out of non-violence.... We have to make our boys true representatives of our culture, our civilization, of the true genius of our nation. Europe is no example to us. It plans its programmes in terms of violence because it believes in violence. I would be the last to minimize the achievements of Russia, but the whole structure is based on force and violence. If India had resolved to eschew violence, this system of education becomes an integral part of the discipline. (Quoted in Shrimali 1949:84).

This clear signalling of educational value in the shape of non-violence underlined the importance of Gandhi for maintaining Indian independence of all political systems based on violence and thus claimed a kind of non-religious secular spirituality. The aims of education were to promote a society based on common interest and equality inspired by the values of solidarity, democracy and non-doctrinal learning.

Though opposed diametrically to Bolshevized Marxism, Gandhi nevertheless believed in the centrality of labour to the process of self-knowledge and understanding (although he may well have relied more on Ruskin than Marx for this understanding). Basic Education placed the learning of a craft at the centre of the system and stressed the importance of common productivity. Zakir Hussain, who chaired the drafting committee, noted that the scheme was above all designed to produce workers, but not workers as mere extensions of the machine. He proposed that education should produce workers who looked upon all kinds of useful work as honourable and who desired to be self-sufficient rather than dependent on society or the state for a living. 'Thus the new scheme which we are advocating will aim at giving the citizens of the future a keen sense of personal worth, dignity and efficiency and the desire for self improvement and social service in a co-operative community' (Shrimali 1949:87-88). Hussain saw Basic Education as based on a triadic relation between the physical and social environment in which craft work was pivotal, so that through the reflexive learning of a craft the student would begin to grasp the relations between himself and the broader social world.

Gandhi who also believed that British arts education was positively harmful in that it bore no relation to lived experience, insisted that all learning was to be related to experience rather than based on abstract principles. Information or ideas which bore no relation to personal experience were useless and quickly forgotten. Mechanical rote learning was equally useless. Instead, the curriculum should be problem-centered and should encompass the actual personal and social difficulties the child would meet in everyday life, enabling him or her to react intelligently to new conditions. The curriculum laid stress on self-activity in the belief that unless the child was gripped by the learning project and its outcome he/she would not accept the enterprise as his/her own. Stimulated in this way, the child would develop the spirit of scientific inquiry. It may be important to note here that Gandhi was not opposed to this aspect of scientificity, which encouraged intelligent activity on the part of the student rather than passive assimilation of information, although he was opposed to the uses to which scientific inquiry had been put by the British and other imperialist nations.

Similarly, Gandhi was not opposed to the idea of social progress as such and saw it as a goal. However, he did not encourage competitive individualism, another unpleasant imperialist import, and instead insisted that genuine social

progress had to be based on co-operative action which thus became a curricular emphasis.

Gandhi's Model of Basic Education

Basic Education was to contain a number of major curricular elements: craft learning, mother-tongue tuition, maths, social studies, general science and music and drama. Craft learning was to be the primary element upon which everything else hinged. Moreover, it had to be a basic craft which should equip a child with a means for independent occupation and depended upon the social and geographical context. Clearly, spinning and the production of *khadi* would be taught in cotton-growing areas, fruit and vegetable growing in producing areas, pottery in clay areas, carpentry in the forests and agricultural cultivation in appropriate areas. The craft had to be appropriate to the child's environment. However, it was crucial that the craft should not be taught in a mechanical fashion as a series of physical movements unrelated to intellectual application. 'The teaching of the craft should, Gandhi argued:

... be a medium of education not just vocational training. Craft teaching ... should be the means of intellectual training A carpenter teaches me carpentry. I shall learn it mechanically from him and as a result I shall know the use of various tools but that will hardly develop my intellect. But if the same thing is taught to me by someone who has taken a scientific training in carpentry, he will stimulate my intellect too. Not only shall I then have become an expert carpenter, but also an engineer. For, the expert will have taught me the mathematics, also told me the difference between different kinds of timber, the place where they come from, giving me thus a knowledge of geography and also a little of agriculture. (Quoted in Shrimali 1949:97).

There were very good reasons why the mother tongue would replace English as the medium for instruction. The neglect of local languages by the British had the effect of increasingly alienating Indians from their own culture. Gandhi regarded the mother tongue as a reservoir of the accumulated hopes and aspirations as well as the wisdom of the people. Learning it would inspire pride in the historic achievement of the people and in their traditions and culture. Thus it would have an important place on the curriculum. It was proposed that Hindustani should replace English as the language of administration and government.

Pride in traditional culture was to be complemented by a third element of the curriculum, social studies, which aimed to make Indians aware of the injustice and privilege inherent in many of the old ways. They would concen-

trate on the non-violent solution to these problems in the context of learning about democracy and citizenship. Emphasis would be laid on the ideals of love, truth and justice, co-operative endeavor, national solidarity and the equality of the brotherhood of man. Nationalism would also be celebrated and encouraged but in a non-arrogant and non-exclusive way so as not to encourage sentiments of xenophobia and intolerance of foreigners. Within social studies, geography would also be taught but again in a reflexive way so as to encourage an ecological understanding of, and relationship with, the land. Civics, too, would be taught, though not with the intention of people being encouraged to become the passive servants of the state, but rather instilling the notion of citizenship, involving human and democratic rights. Schools should as far as possible echo the new republic by becoming self-governing institutions with democratically elected parliaments. There would be no religious instruction of any kind, this being seen as a private matter.

General science and maths were also curricular elements in Gandhi's schema. The same reflexivity applied there too and the emphasis would be on experiment and faith in the scientific method as a way of discovering the truth. The curriculum would contain elements of nature study, botany, zoology, physiology, hygiene, physical culture and chemistry, all of which would be taught in relation to the basic craft and the everyday needs of the child.

Thus, in summary, the scheme proposed by Gandhi at Wardha was one which gave education a purposively social orientation which aimed at developing children as citizens of a society based on non-violence and co-operation. It was also a profoundly practical education which focused unashamedly on the needs of the emergent independent India. Gandhi believed that Beauty would follow Truth: 'Whatever is useful to the starving millions is beautiful to my mind. Let us give today the vital things of life, and all the graces and ornaments of life will follow' (Quoted in Shrimali 1949:108).

Pedagogically, it stressed the value of work disciplines and the importance of students being given real work in a school context which would give them a sense of reality. Work would make them purposeful and develop habits of critical enquiry. Work was thought to develop moral qualities of self-discipline, co-operative activity, endurance of hardship and the value of order. Not the least value of work was that it would provide an income for the child's family who might not otherwise agree to sending children to school. Privileged classes would learn the value of labor while the mass of the people would learn increased control through understanding. For Gandhi, the use of craft training and work formed the foundation of education. They would be 'the spearhead of a silent social revolution fraught with the most far-reaching consequences. It will provide a healthy and moral basis of relationship between the city and the village and thus go a long way towards eradicating some of the worst evils

of the present social insecurity and poisoned relationship between the classes And all this would be accomplished without the horrors of a bloody class war' (Shrimali 1949:114).

Craft work was central and everything else should be built up round a scientific understanding of the craft. The student would get a good general education from what the hands and mind come into contact with. The craft need not necessarily be spinning, though Gandhi thought of this as the pre-eminent craft, but whatever it was it should be chosen for its educational potential.

Thus, what on the surface appeared to be a functionalist, vocation-orientated training was actually conceived by Gandhi as being the instrument of social transformation. How far this could have been the case, history was not, however, allowed to divulge, because ultimately it conflicted with the plans of the nationalists.

The first Basic experimental school was founded at Sevagram in Autumn 1938 under Gandhi's supervision. The children would learn about nature from nature, about cotton production, spinning and cloth making, responsibility for equipment, cleanliness and practical hygiene, arithmetic from counting threads, and reading and writing. Gandhi insisted on no distinction between caste or creed, no competition and co-educational learning. There were also to be dyeing and weaving, carpentry to make equipment, maths and geometry for accounts and scientific principles of spinning. Vegetables were to be grown for the community and education given in food and diets. At Sevagram the course for teachers lasted nine months in which they had to master spinning and Hindustani. The school was run as a democratic body with ministers elected from the students at monthly elections. Self-expression was encouraged through painting and dancing and the great festivals of all religions were celebrated with village people joining in. Through the Kasturba Trust (named after Gandhi's wife) the education of women was emphasized: this included maternity and childcare, personal care and family maintenance. The aim was to draw together all work into a multipurpose co-operative society. Through this, Gandhi envisaged a return to true intelligence and the establishment of societies based on truth and non-violence (*ahimsa*).

An important element of Gandhi's Basic Education scheme was his insistence that all developments should be self-supporting financially, and autonomous. There were, as always with Gandhi, practical reasons for this: a poor society like India could not afford to resource, from the public purse, the huge programme he envisaged. However, there was also a less obvious ideological reason: Gandhi was deeply opposed to state financing and thus state control of education. One of the guiding political principles of Gandhi's life generally was opposition to the coercive state, and an assertion of decentralized, autonomous and free political structures. In many senses Gandhi was an anarchist; hence

his admiration for Tolstoy, for example (Kumar 1989:591-596). For Gandhi, truth and non-violence were the essential values, and dependence upon the state negated both. He adhered to the anarchist precept that 'war is the health of the state'. A state system of education was thus a contradiction of Gandhi's view of education.

As Kumar has noted (Kumar 1989:592) Gandhi's idea of productive schools was clearly based upon his South African experience, where he had established Phoenix Farm in 1904 and Tolstoy Farm in 1910. It would be a mistake, however, to see Gandhi as wholly anti-western in his educational views. There is, in fact, a close correlation between Gandhi's ideological position and that of western romantic, anti-industrial, humanist and libertarian thinkers: Ruskin, Tolstoy, Carpenter and Dewey, for example, Gandhi often acknowledged his debt to Ruskin in particular:

The thought expressed in these letters (Ruskin's letters to the working men of the West Riding, published as Unto This Last) are beautiful and resemble some of our own ideas, so much so that an outsider would think that the ideas which I set forth in my writings and which we try to put into practice in the Ashram, I had stolen from these letters of Ruskin. (Gandhi 1959-84:242)

Both Dewey and Gandhi were products of early capitalist developmental and both believed in the small-scale rural community, composed of 'industrious, self-respecting and generous' citizens (Gandhi 1959-84:593). Kumar also argues that Gandhi's proposal reads like a plea 'for delaying the growth of capitalism, for buying time to strengthen the capacities of men and women to live with machines'.

Surprisingly, like Dewey, Gandhi advocated a secular pedagogy. Despite the centrality of religion to Gandhi's perspective he felt that 'religions as they are taught and practiced today lead to conflict rather than unity' (Gandhi 1979:20). For Gandhi, the role of the teacher was that of a spiritual guru (rather than professional educator) who would convey the basic truths of all religions.

Nehru's Critique of Gandhi's Educational Scheme

Basic education was criticized by the Congress Party's National Planning Committee under Nehru, and by the industrialists (whom it increasingly represented). The subcommittee showed great reluctance in moving from the existing system to Basic Education. They objected to the emphasis on vocation and child labour, and offered instead:

A broad liberal curriculum for elementary education, and expansion of facilities for technical education. Financial responsibility for compulsory primary education was assigned to be that of the state. This was indeed the staple diet of modernist thought, compared to which Gandhian ideas looked obsolete and conservative. In contrast to Gandhi's Utopia of village republics enjoying considerable autonomy but offering a modest standard of life dependent on rudimentary production processes, the modernist Utopia featured a strong centralized state responsible for building an industrial infrastructure in order to ensure a high standard of living for all. (Kumar 1989:595)

In the *Discovery of India* (Nehru 1960 [1946]) Nehru almost paraphrases Gandhi's argument about the centrality of crafts to education but for 'craft' he substitutes 'machine'. He begins by agreeing with the basic principle that a craft or manual activity stimulates a child's mind but then proceeds to challenge the main economic assumption of Basic Education without ever identifying it.

There was a fundamental ideological difference between Nehru and the nationalists, and Gandhi. As argued earlier, Gandhi, whilst not anti-western, was wholly opposed to the industrial capitalist society. 'It is difficult to measure the harm that Manchester has done to us: the more we indulge our passions the more unbridled they become' (quoted in Chatterjee 1986:87). Gandhi rejected not only the *politics* of western imperial power: he rejected also the system of social production that the West had developed.

The key factor was industrialization which he believed would inevitably lead to the exploitation of the villages. Gandhi criticized Nehru for believing that mere socialization of industry would solve the problems. Evil was inherent in industry. The villages therefore had to become self-contained and produce their own small-scale manufacturers. For Gandhi, *khadi* was the only sound economic proposition for India.

In governmental terms, Gandhi proposed popular sovereignty over representative democracy. Political power should be dissolved into the collective moral will, a kind of 'enlightened anarchy', though this comes close to enlightened despotism on occasion. 'The utopia is Ramarajya, a patriarchy in which the ruler by his moral quality and habitual adherence to truth, always expresses the collective will' (Chatterjee 1986:92).

Gandhi also opposed the manner of British rule. He believed that the secularization of education had made a fetish of the knowledge of letters which had exaggerated and rationalized social inequalities. Moreover, payment for mental labour was in itself immoral since bodily sustenance should come from bodily labour, and the division between mental and physical labour should be abolished.

What then, was Gandhi's unique contribution? He was certainly not within the mainstream of Indian (or general Third World) nationalism. But he was no 'mere' peasant intellectual either: his objections to western industrialism were not simple anti-colonial Luddism. Still less was Gandhi a replica of the post-Enlightenment Romanticism of Western Europe, although he adopted its critique of industrialism. Gandhi's unique combination; of non-violent nationalist politics with a genuine and deep spirituality, constructed an ideology and a social movement which acted as the critical catalyst for mobilizing a mass movement for independence. The problem for the nationalist leadership (Nehru et al.) was that they were almost without exception members of a small, western-educated *and* orientated, vanguard or elite, with no real point of contact with the rural masses of India. Through Gandhi the nationalists were able to mobilize *and absorb* the masses. His effect was to mobilize the masses and articulate their grievances, without giving them access to actual political power. Chatterjee provides a detailed and sophisticated elaboration of these linkages (Chatterjee 1986).

Gandhi's Incorporation into the Nationalist Agenda

By reconciling populist aspirations with the new bourgeois nationalist constitutional order, Gandhi provided for the first time an ideology for including the whole people within the political nation. He both challenged the fundamentals of nationalist thought through his attack on western civilization and yet inserted his political perspective within the process of nationalist politics. There is a fundamental incompatibility between the utopianism of the moral conception and the realities of power. It created a national framework of politics in which the peasants were mobilized but did not participate, and of a national state from which they were distanced.

Using Gramscian language, Chatterjee, in his study of this relationship, described Gandhi's nationalist politics as the 'moment of manoeuvre'. The next stage was the 'moment of arrival', which Chatterjee ascribed to Nehru and what he called 'the passive revolution'. An historical compromise was made between the dominant and subaltern classes. After 1932, when Nehru reacted against the stand Gandhi took on behalf of the harijans, nationalism became situated in the domain of state ideology. The discourse was then about the process of effectively governing the state rather than satisfying popular aspirations. The autonomy of the state became the central organizing principle and its legitimizing principle was social justice. The old colonial framework was seen as antiquated and incapable of delivery. Modernity required new institutions with primacy given to economic affairs, whereas the colonial state was outmoded because it could not assume a centralized co-ordinating role.

Nehru denied any essential split between East and West and argued that the only difference was the fact of industrial society (which the West had developed first, for historical reasons). India's subsequent backwardness was because colonialism had interrupted its normal historical development, which would have led to an industrial and materially prosperous society.

Nehru believed, however, that India could and should adopt humanism and the scientific spirit from the West - precisely what Gandhi was sceptical about - and he saw socialism as the most advanced expression of the rationalism of the European Enlightenment. The need for industrialization was paramount, for without it poverty would be eradicated and the political foundations of national independence would be threatened. This could only be done by a sovereign, non-colonial state. He dismissed Gandhi's small scale as economically unrealistic; what was wanted was bigness and big business. For Nehru the nation-state lay at the heart of nationalism and had to embrace the whole people with equal citizenship irrespective of sex, language, caste, wealth or education.

For both men, therefore, education was seen as an essential ideological tool. For Gandhi, it was the key, through his Basic Education programme, for creating a decentralized alternative to the modernizing, western-orientated society which India was fast threatening to become. And for Nehru, education, conceived as vocational, technological training, was a key means of bringing about the modernization he and the nationalists thought was essential.

Chatterjee argues that Nehru found Gandhi 'incomprehensible' because he acted on emotive impulse and appeared to be able effortlessly and intuitively to sense the mass mind, while Nehru and the nationalist politicians were powerless. Although he found Gandhi's economic and social ideas obsolete and in general reactionary, Gandhi had shaken up India more than any other revolutionary before him. He was literally 'a magician'. Nehru incorporated Gandhi's 'truth' into the nationalist project while rejecting his metaphysics and language. Nehru found the ideas in *Hind Swaraj* an 'utterly wrong and harmful doctrine' (Chatterjee 1986:157), Gandhi was a philosophical anarchist whose ideas were functional in arousing the masses but useless for creating the new state. As Chatterjee has commented:

The relentless thrust of its (the new nationalist leadership) rationalist thematic turned the Gandhian intervention into a mere interlude in the unfolding of the real history of the nation. (Chatterjee 1986: 157)

So Gandhi was incorporated into the new nationalism as if he did not represent an absolute alternative to it. No longer in need of magicians the new nationalism emphasized expertise. The new state would stand above conflicting interests and dispassionately judge with the technical expertise at its command.

For good reasons, given India's potential for religious and communistic conflict, Nehru and the nationalist movement tried to create a secular, technocratic state, embodying the best elements of the Fabian, centralist socialist ideology within whose framework they had been reared politically in the West.

How does this ideological conflict appear, about half a century on? There can be no doubt that India has developed - educationally, socially and politically - broadly along the lines envisaged by Nehru and the nationalists. In almost all spheres, Gandhi's visions of a future India have not materialized. As far as education is concerned, the 'new values inculcated through mass education ... in form and content reflect Western values and practices in a way which would have horrified Gandhi who had formulated such distinctive and Indian plans for Basic Education (Brown 1989:391).

Modern India has problems as grave as any faced at the time of independence. Violence, communalism, and economic and social dislocation have soured the nationalist dream. And Bombay, undoubtedly the most westernized and modern of Indian cities, also has some of the greatest disparities of wealth, some of the most abject poverty (and the most depressing general ambience) of all the great Indian urban centres.

Gandhi's Achievement

In retrospect, Gandhi's insistence upon non-violent and spiritual values as the foundations of the new India seem eminently sane. His Basic Education programme certainly had its reactionary side: the authoritarian role of the teacher/guru (a tendency towards authoritarianism is a charge that can be levelled at Gandhi generally); the determined exclusion of abstract and particularly (western) scientific knowledge; and the eccentricity of his almost obsessive concentration upon village crafts (especially the symbolic concern with spinning). All these are tangible and weighty criticisms. And yet Gandhi was essentially far more of a radical than a reactionary, in educational as in other spheres. The *values* he exposed were socialist - though he was implacably opposed both to socialist, certainly Marxist, *methods* of conflict and violence, and to the socialist assumptions of industrialization and economic, consumerist growth. Again, who is to say in the light of the sorry history of both Stalinist communism and milk-and-water capitalist social democracy, that he was wrong? His critique of state control of education is positive and libertarian, while not being simply individualistic. It prevents education being used as a vehicle for party or state ideology while at the same time asserting communistic values and social relevance. The continuing appeal of Gandhi and Gandhian philosophy to both East and West lies precisely in his espousal of the pure, idealistic values

which underlie both religion and socialism, and in his equally vehement rejection of the increasingly materialist criteria of both eastern and western society.

It is mistaken, though, to try to analyse Gandhi in predominantly political terms. He was not primarily a political activist, still less a political theorist. He was 'fundamentally a man of vision and action, who asked many of the profoundest questions that face humankind as it struggles to live in community. It was this confrontation out of a real humanity which marks his stature and makes his struggles and glimpses of truth of enduring significance' (Brown 1989:394). Whether his specific blueprint for Basic Education is, or ever was, viable or even desirable, is moot point. But adult educators, East and West, will continue to identify with at least some aspects of his reassertion of the fundamentally humanistic bases of adult education's objectives.

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2. Contributions of Frank Laubach to the Development of Adult Education in India (1935-70)*

S.Y. Shah

Dr. Frank C. Laubach (1884-1970) was a unique adult educator who went on "literacy safaris"¹ to 105 countries with the primary aim of making the world literate. He worked with the people of all regions, religions and races; and developed literacy primers in 315 languages and dialects.² It has been estimated that he was instrumental in making 60-100 million people literate³ mainly through his method - 'Each One Teach One' which still continues as an important technique of teaching illiterates in several countries including India. Apart from being directly or indirectly responsible for setting up a number of organizations for the promotion of adult literacy, he had also provided financial and professional support to a number of institutions and individuals in different countries. Not only did he initiate basic literacy programme in several developing countries but also pleaded for the cause of literacy with a number of statesmen. He advocated literacy for development and world peace, and in literacy he saw the panacea for all the ills and hence he had dedicated his life to the cause of literacy.

His work was well received and much appreciated by all during his life time and he received honorary doctoral degrees from eight universities and fifteen citations from different countries including India in 1953.⁴ He wrote forty important books on adult education, Christian religion, world politics and culture⁵ and co-authored literacy primers in more than 300 languages. His post literacy reader *Anand the Wiseman* which he developed in India has been adopted in a number of languages. Twice nominated for Nobel Prize,⁶ Laubach has been rated as an "educator extraordinary"⁷ and a "teacher of millions."⁸

The extensive work of Laubach has been extremely well documented. Apart from being a prolific writer, Laubach had meticulously kept the copies of all his correspondence, speeches, notes and diaries and his collection is one of the largest in the field of adult education. It includes materials related to adult

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education in different countries, correspondence with world leaders, socio-political profiles of several regions and a number of books, pamphlets and articles on a variety of themes. The collection is preserved at George Arent's Research Library for Special Collection at Syracuse University and is systematically classified and catalogued.⁹ There are 432 boxes of published and unpublished materials, 10 cartons of audio-visual materials, 6 scrap books and ledgers. Of these 58, boxes contain a variety of materials related to various facets of adult education in India during 1935-70.¹⁰ It includes Laubach's correspondence and discussions with eminent Indian leaders, viz., Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rabindra Nath Tagore, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Humayun Kabir, Prem Kirpal, S.R. Bhagwat, a number of leading Christian missionaries and adult educators, notes and observations on various ongoing adult education programmes and agencies in India. It has been observed that, though his collection has been open to scholars since 1972 and 31 scholars have already used it, no scholar from India has made use of it nor has any body else worked on the role of Laubach in India.¹¹

For a variety of reasons the contributions of Laubach to the development of Indian adult education remain unknown to most of the adult educators. It may be either due to the ignorance of scholars about the source materials or their disinterest in the subject. It is surprising that notwithstanding the continuation of 'Each One Teach One' method in India even today,¹² there is not much awareness about its originator, or any literature available on him. There is hardly any mention of him in the extant literature on history of adult education in India.¹³ The absence of studies on Laubach's work in India seems to have given some scope to a section of adult educators in the country not only to undermine his contributions but also to discuss him either as a Christian missionary who worked in India for the propagation of Christian ideals, or as an American official who aimed at the promotion of foreign interest in India. What was the motive of Laubach? And what was his contribution to the field of adult education in India? How did the state and public react to him? This paper attempts to answer these questions in the light of the study of Laubach collection as well as interviews held with some of the contemporaries and colleagues of Laubach in the USA and India.

Role of Laubach in India

Laubach came to India in 1935 and continued to be associated with the development of adult education in the country till his death in 1970. His professional ties with India falls into three distinct phases. First phase (1935-1947) - when India was a British Colony and Laubach worked primarily as a

Christian missionary; second phase (1948-55) - when India had emerged as an independent country and Laubach worked basically as a US Consultant to Government of India; third phases- (1956-1970) - when Laubach continued his association with Indian adult education mainly as representative of a non-Governmental organisation-Laubach Literacy And Mission Fund. During his thirty-five years of association with India, he made ten visits to the country and played an important role in laying the foundation of Indian adult education. It is said that in spite of his involvement in adult education programmes in 105 countries, Laubach's "heart was always in India for she (India) challenged him to do something big by solving her massive problem of illiteracy and Laubach liked challenges and doing things on a big scale."¹⁴ India also stimulated his thinking by providing several methodological choices in teaching adults and Laubach was never satisfied with any one method he had developed.¹⁵

First Phase of Laubach's Work in Colonial India (1935-47)

The literacy situation in India at the time of Laubach's arrival was dismal. According to 1931 Census only 8 per cent of Indian population was literate; while the literacy rate among men was 14 per cent, it was only 2 among women. With the exception of the Princely States, viz., Cochin (33.7%), Travencore (29%) and Baroda (21%), all other states in India had very low literacy rates.¹⁶ With the exception of the state supported adult literacy campaign launched by the Government of Punjab in 1921, there were no other concerted efforts towards liquidation of illiteracy in the country.¹⁷ However, there were a number of night schools and adult educators, viz., Mr. S.G. Danial and Ms. Devasahayam in Madras Presidency, Professor S.R. Bhagwat in Poona, Mr. Gijubhai Bhadeka in Bhavnagar, Dr. J.J. Lucas in Allahabad, Dr. J.H. Laurence in Manipur, who were actively involved in teaching illiterates through different methods such as alphabet, story, key words, etc.¹⁸ Besides, political leaders like Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi, Rajendra Prasad etc., were actively involved in conscientising the masses and political workers through their speeches and organization of night schools. Adult education as an instrument of social transformation had developed very strongly during that period.¹⁹ On the other hand, there were innumerable night schools set up by local bodies, philanthropists, and missionaries, which followed the methods and materials of formal primary schools. Generally, their curriculum was an abridged version of formal schools, and was covered in two years. These night schools were quite popular among the masses of urban areas as indicated by their increase in numbers over the years.²⁰

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the Christian mission-

aries of British India were actively involved in literacy programme as they wanted the members of their church to read the Bible. Since the bulk of the converts to christianity were illiterates, literacy had become an important concern among Indian missionaries. Though most of them were teaching illiterates with great missionary zeal, they had observed that it took almost three years to make an illiterate adult literate. They realized that an illiterate church meant "Church without Bible, weak and in danger"²¹ and hence were keen to develop a quick method of teaching. It was at this juncture that an Indian Missionary, Dr. Mason Olcott came to know of Laubach's pioneering literacy methodology when he visited the Philippines in 1934.²² Simultaneously, more missionaries of India read about Laubach's work in the missionary journals. Although a number of Indian missionaries wrote to Laubach, the "most contagious enthusiasm was shown by Dr. Samuel T. Meyer and Miss Minnie K. Shultz."²³ In January 1935, when Laubach responded to their invitation it marked the beginning of a new era in Indian adult education in which he played a crucial role.

During the first phase of his association with India, Laubach concentrated on developing literacy primers in different Indian languages viz., Marathi, Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Kanarese, Santali, Urdu, Gujarati, Oriya, Gurumukhi and Panjabhi; training of literacy workers and conducting literacy conferences. During 1935-39, Laubach made four annual visits to India and on each occasion travelled extensively throughout the country spending about a week or two in each place where he developed literacy primers with the help of local people. Invariably, he tried out the lessons by teaching the illiterates in the evenings.

Laubach had noticed that India had a rich tradition of learning and already certain literacy experts were experimenting in different methods of teaching. Laubach was greatly influenced by Professor S.R. Bhagwat's method of teaching a letter by making a story about its shape. But he observed that the method was time consuming and not easily adaptable in other languages. Taking a clue from Bhagwat, Laubach developed a new method of teaching the alphabet through pictures, words and syllables.

In his approach to teaching, Laubach was very flexible and he recommended different methods that were found to be effective in teaching various languages. If he the adopted key word method in Hindi and Marathi, he switched over to story method in Tamil and Telugu. Laubach always worked with groups of interested people and discussed each issue in detail both with specialists and with local leaders. He viewed literacy to be a national concern and hence sought the comments of important national leaders like Gandhi, Nehru, C. Rajagopalachari, Rabindranath Tagore about the literacy material and methods.²⁴ His contacts with the eminent leaders gave respectability as well as acceptability to his programme. He kept a very high profile, addressing innumerable conferences which were invariably attended by the local dignitaries

and hence attracted large crowds who listened to his inspiring talks in which he categorically stressed the importance of literacy. Thus, through team work at grass- roots level, taking the leadership into confidence through briefing, seeking the cooperation of all those interested in literacy, and inspiring public speeches, Laubach contributed a great deal in building up the literacy climate in the entire country. His chief contribution to India during 1930s had been "to goad her on to efforts tireless and unsatisfied, until at last the solution was found."²⁵

The socio-political developments in India during 1937-1939 also favoured the literacy work of Laubach. In seven provinces of British India, Indian National congress Party had come into power after the provincial elections and the eradication of illiteracy was one of the top priority programmes of the party.²⁶ Since most of the congress leaders were already familiar with the literacy work of Laubach, they had extended full cooperation to him. He received both political patronage and official support. He had the satisfaction of witnessing the success of his efforts. While leaving India he wrote in his diary that "the foundations were being laid for a literacy programme in India."²⁷

The tempo of the literacy programme in India was, however, slowed down due to the outbreak of the Second World War and the downfall of the Congress Ministries in 1939. While World War II had kept Laubach confined to America, the Indian missionaries, specially the Secretary of the National Christian council, Miss Ruth Ure, took over the reins and urged the "Christian forces to perform the essential task of literacy"²⁸ and thereby keep the flag of literacy flying. The American Lutheran Church of Andhra had passed a resolution that every Christian should promote literacy as a part of evangelical effort.²⁹ In view of these initiatives, fourteen Christian councils of Adult Education had come up in Orissa, Madras, Andhra, Lucknow, Central provinces, Bihar, Gujarat, Assam and by 1942 they had prepared and published a variety of primers, post-literacy materials, charts, etc.³⁰ The colonial rulers in India did not pay much attention to literacy though the Seargent Report of 1944 had viewed literacy as a Governmental activity.³¹ The entire attention of the Indian leadership was focussed on the struggle for independence. Hence the literacy programme dwindled into insignificance during the 1940s.

Second Phase of Laubach's Work (1948-55)

With the emergence of India as an independent democratic country, literacy became an important concern of the Government of India. Since the congress leadership under Mahatma Gandhi had already identified literacy as a priority programme of the party as early as 1937, it was taken up with renewed vigour

when they came into power after independence. In 1948, the Government of India appointed a committee under Mohan Lal Saxena to suggest a suitable adult education programme for the country.³² Although the committee recommended a suitable social education programme, there was a dearth of specialised training institutions and experts to implement the programme successfully. Having thrown out the British, India had started looking towards America and was eager to develop democratic institutions on the American pattern. Since Russia had achieved literacy in a communist set up, Americans were keen to assist India achieve literacy through "Noncoercive and democratic manner".³³ As the Indian leaders were already familiar with the work of Laubach, they had sought his technical advice in conducting a nation wide literacy campaign.³⁴ Laubach visited different parts of India in March 1949³⁵ and studied the social education programme and also made detailed suggestions to the Government of India for launching a campaign. Due to the shortage of funds and infrastructure, the campaign was not launched.

In the course of his three week visit to Madras, Calcutta, Nagpur, Delhi and Amritsar, Laubach addressed twelve adult education conferences and helped several regional literacy teams to revise their earlier primers in Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Hindi. Besides, he also trained fifty people in the preparation of post-literacy materials and worked out a plan for a weekly digest for the neoliterate.³⁶ By meeting the top officials of the government of India as well officials in different states, and reiterating the importance of literacy in the discussions, Laubach gave a boost to the newly conceived social education programme. His inspiring addresses to the public did generate a great deal of interest and enthusiasm among them for literacy work. Laubach had a rare ability to motivate the masses by appealing to their sentiments like patriotism. To quote: "In the bosom of India are resources sufficient to change poverty into abundance if we can learn how to utilise these resources for the welfare of mankind ... I believe that there is enough patriotism now in India for every person who has learned to read, to teach somebody else at home at a convenient hour. If the literate people will regard themselves as soldiers in a vast campaign against India's enemy number one, you can get India taught... The greatest interest of Indian Government to liquidate illiteracy presents the Christians... an opportunity to reveal their passion to help other people..."³⁷

Laubach made very significant and substantial contribution to Indian Adult Education during 1952-53 when he worked as a US Consultant to Government of India. In this capacity he was expected to provide technical advice and guidance to Indian adult educators in the development of literacy materials and methods, impart training to literacy workers and develop a five year plan for making India literate.³⁸ Laubach worked with a team which consisted of his wife (Effa Laubach), Mrs Welthy Fisher, Mrs. Betty Mooney, Miss June Dohse, Mr.

Richard Cortright, Mr. and Mrs. Phil Gray. The team travelled extensively in India, conducted a series of training programmes for literacy workers,³⁹ and developed primers and graded materials in eleven languages, viz., Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Oriya, Bengali, Assamese and Punjabi.⁴⁰ The basic contribution of Laubach was the development of a popular book for the neoliterate - *Anand, The Wiseman*, which was adopted in different languages in India and abroad. The book had forty chapters and each chapter dealt with a theme related to health, agriculture, animal husbandry, culture, etc.⁴¹ Besides, Laubach also took initiative in the establishment of three centres for literacy journalism at Hislop College (Nagpur), Isabella Thoburn College (Lucknow), and Agricultural Institute (Allahabad) and helped in the establishment of five social education centres in India for the training of village level workers. Laubach also conducted a series of training programmes for literacy workers. As desired by the Government of India, Laubach also prepared a five year plan for the eradication of illiteracy which emphasised the need for quality materials, suitable training strategies and central coordination.⁴² The plan was accepted by the Government of India 'in principle'. In a series of letters and reports, Laubach has lucidly narrated his experience of literacy work in India. These letters and reports include several photographs which depict the participation of eminent Indian leaders like Nehru in the literacy programme.⁴³

It was observed that with the exception of Hindi, the literacy materials developed by Laubach team in regional languages were priced very high and not properly distributed or published.⁴⁴ With the departure of Laubach (after the conclusion of his contract with Government of India), there was nobody of his stature to goad different state level agencies to make use of the literacy materials. Since one of his colleagues, Wealthy Fisher, had stayed back in India to establish the Literacy House at Lucknow, the Hindi materials were put to maximum use through the institution. Hindi being the official language, the Government of India subsidised the printing of Hindi primers and also gave wide publicity.

Third Phase of Laubach's Work in India (1956-1970)

Laubach had made a clear demarcation of his role as an official literacy expert vis-a-vis a literacy evangelist. While he worked six days a week for the promotion of literacy among Indians in general, on the seventh day (Sunday) he "opened the doors for literacy evangelists among the churches." Though not personally involved in proselytisation, Laubach's inspiring sermons seem to have motivated many a Christian missionary to practice "Each One Teach One and Win One for Christ."⁴⁵ While Gandhi and Nehru had welcomed Christian missionaries and sought their cooperation in literacy programme, they had cautioned them to keep off conversions. Unlike Laubach, most of the Christian

missionaries in India failed to read the signs of the changing times and hence by 1955 the Government of India had to "put a curb on the flow of foreign missionaries."⁴⁷

The activities of a section of Christian missionaries and the association of a large number of Americans with the work of Literacy House and Asia Foundation, had created considerable 'restlessness' among a group of Indians who began to protest.⁴⁸ They branded all the missionaries and Americans as anti-India and hence when Laubach wished to return to India to resume his literacy activities, some of his Indian colleagues discouraged him.⁴⁹ Yet, Laubach was keen to follow up his work in India and explore the possibilities of further strengthening of the literacy journalism courses at Nagpur and Lucknow.⁵⁰ In 1956, he made a short visit to India and discussed the possibilities of starting a new Literacy House in South India on the pattern of Lucknow Literacy House with the leaders of South Indian Adult Education Association.⁵¹

By mid 1950s there was a change in the nature of Laubach's involvement with adult education in India. It was mainly due to his involvement with the establishment of a non-Government organisation - Laubach Literacy And Mission Fund in 1955 for the world wide promotion of literacy activities. Since then, he began to concentrate his efforts in different parts of the world. Besides, the new policy of Government of India of encouraging Indian nationals to take over missionary work within the country also dissuaded Laubach from actively involving himself with adult education in India. However, he continued to provide professional and financial support to Indian adult educators and adult education institutions from outside. Since he adopted the policy of "having nationals instead of American doing the work"⁵², when Dr. A.K. John, an adult educator trained in the US set up an adult education centre in Kerala in 1958, Laubach extended financial support to him through the Laubach Literacy Fund, which continues its support even today.⁵³ In subsequent years, Laubach Literacy Fund also collaborated with Bengal Social Service League in the preparation of literacy materials and sponsored Miss Fern Edwards to train literacy teachers in Calcutta.⁵⁴ Laubach was also instrumental in providing a grant (US \$ 10,000) towards the building fund of Indian Adult Education Association and helping a number of Indians, viz., Eapen, Shashi, Kumar Dethe, George Prasad, Ammini, etc., to acquire training in literacy journalism at Syracuse University.⁵⁵

During 1960s Laubach made the last two trips to India primarily to provide professional support to Dr. A.K. John's social education centre at Karthicappally in Kerala, and Bengal Social Service League in Calcutta. Moreover, he met the top officials of Government of India, viz., Dr. P.N. Kirpal, Dr. L.K. Jha and Mr. A.K. Khosla and explored the possibilities of utilising a portion of PL 480 funds for the expansion of Indian adult education programme. The details of his visit have been recorded in a number of audio-tapes, photos, and films.⁵⁶

The Concern for India : Some Attractions

Laubach's involvement with adult education in India, though it had declined over the years, continued uninterrupted till his death in 1970. But neither his interest in India nor his commitment to literacy in the country decreased. In fact, a variety of factors and forces sustained his interest in India. He had developed great admiration for several Indians. He was immensely impressed by the personality and philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi. In Gandhi's simplicity he saw Christ. To quote Laubach : "I believe that Jesus Christ left his heart in Gandhi and in Gandhian followers as truly as Christ in the best Christian missionaries. It seems to me that we ought to love and work with those self sacrificing people."⁵⁷

When Laubach met Gandhi during his first visit to India in 1935 and discussed the importance of universal literacy, he had become fully convinced of the need for the liquidation of illiteracy in India.⁵⁸ Laubach was also fascinated by the profound educational philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore whose face reminded him of Moses and he wrote in his diary: "God! What is man's best gift to mankind? To be beautiful soul - That is what I learned as I looked upon the face of Tagore and listened to him. His beautiful face reminds me of Moses."⁵⁹

The compassionate work of Vinoba Bhave among the poor and landless workers greatly appealed to Laubach and he devoted a full chapter on Gandhi and Bhave, in his famous book - *The World Is A Learning Compassion*. In fact, "he lost his heart to India,"⁶⁰ when he came across very dedicated and diligent missionaries and literacy workers whose company and cooperation stimulated him to continue his literacy work.

The size of the country and its backwardness and immense scope for evangelical work were added attractions to Laubach. Though he recognised literacy as an integral part of mission work and considered "literacy to be the world's largest door to evangelism", in India, he was probably more concerned with humanitarian aspect of literacy work. He wrote: "Reach down with compassion and lift these people out of their illiteracy or they will reach up with hate and probably destroy us and themselves."⁶¹

He also shared the predominant American fear of Communism in 1950s. He believed that if Americans did not help the newly emerging democratic countries like India in making a success of democracy, solving the critical problems like illiteracy and poverty through democratic process and institutions perhaps, Indians might lose faith in democracy and opt for communism.⁶² Since the two neighbouring countries of India (China and Russia) had succeeded in liquidating illiteracy under communist regimes, Laubach was eager to prove that a huge country like India could achieve literacy in a "democratic and non-

coercive manner".⁶³ In one of his papers, he gave expression to his fear: "There are two races in which everyone... is a contestant. The first race is between literacy and the world's growing population... literacy is losing the race with population... But there is another race which we are losing... This is the race with communist mass education."⁶⁴

Laubach was very keen to protect India from becoming communist because of her geographic location and size among the Asian countries. He had cautioned the American Government that "we dare not lose India if we expect to help Asia live in peace".⁶⁵ He believed that if India opts for communism, it could tilt the balance in Asia because of her huge population and size and hence it would be essential to retain the democratic character of the country. This seems to be one of the reasons for his support to the adult education programme in Kerala and Bengal, the two strong holds of communism in India. In his endeavour in making India literate, he was aiming at winning a battle of ideology between communism and democracy. To quote Laubach, "In India we are fighting the most crucial battle of ideologies anywhere in the world." He strongly felt that if the adult education programme in India failed, the masses might go communist in the next general election,⁶⁶ and hence, Laubach mobilised all his resources to the cause of literacy. His writings and speeches during 1950s and 60s show that one of his important concern was to integrate literacy as a key component of American Foreign Policy so as to ensure the state support and financial backup for the literacy programme in developing countries. Laubach's efforts, though publicised the issue of literacy and its importance among the American politicians and press, did not lead to any tangible policy formulation. If Laubach had built up a strong network of adult educators and developed literacy as a mass movement, perhaps a strong pressure group would have come up to argue the case for literacy. Laubach had commitment but no political patronage. Being a lone crusador against illiteracy, his efforts created only ripples in the backwaters of American politics and policy.

In promoting democracy in India, Laubach had a deeper motive. He firmly believed that "when India is safe for democracy, she is nearer to christianity."⁶⁷ However, he did not aim at making India Christian. Since Laubach never stayed at one place for more than a week or two and had followed a hectic schedule of travel, literacy workshops and conferences, it would have been difficult for him to engage in the actual process of proselytisation which needs sustained efforts and close contact with the masses. Laubach was too restless and busy an adult educator to have stayed at one place for long. He wished that people should think of Christianity in terms of a loving service rather than a doctrine. To quote: "We do not want to be thought of as enemies of any other religion but as lover of men".⁶⁸ To him literacy was an important avenue of service. In taking up the cause of literacy, he believed that he was carrying out the Will

of God and hence there was total dedication.⁶⁹ It seems that his concepts of christianity and literacy were interlinked and reflected a broader concern for the values like love and service to humanity.

Major Accomplishments

Laubach was one of the first few adult educators who focussed on the art of teaching illiterate adults. During the early 1930's when there was practically no research on andragogy, Laubach had categorically emphasised the difference between teaching children and adults and had written extensively on the psychology of illiterate adults and technique of handling them. To Laubach, the practical process of teaching an adult was as important as the process of building a house.⁷⁰ He believed that if the illiterates were taught in a proper manner, it would be a delightful process both for students and teachers. He never believed in the formal evaluation of learners. According to Laubach, the best test was the successful teaching of an illiterate by a neoliterate.⁷¹ His writings on the teaching of adults which have stood the test of time are relevant even today. One of the reasons for his interest in adult learning may be traced due to his close ties with Edward L. Thorndike, a Professor of Education at Columbia University, who was actively involved in developing learning theories. In fact, Thorndike had written the preface to Laubach's book, *Towards a Literate World*.

Laubach loved teaching illiterate adults and he often stated that he was prepared to forego his food and teach adults as it gave him more satisfaction.⁷² He never believed in the perfection of any one method. By continuously experimenting in different methods of teaching adults, Laubach emphasised the need for improving the methods to suit the changing clientele and their socio-economic background. In his essays on 'Each One Teach One' Laubach has spelt out the details of teaching adults.⁷³ He always stressed the importance of treating the illiterates like "kings and queens" and according them due respect as "equals" and talking to them in soft voice". He stated that "people like a whisper more than a shout. When a youngman makes love successfully, he whispers in his sweethearts ear. He never shouts, if he hopes to win the fair lady. No more will you win your student if you hurt his ears."⁷⁴

As Laubach was convinced that half the battle for literacy depended upon the preparation of suitable literature,⁷⁵ he devoted a great deal of time to the task. He was fascinated by the method of Rabindranath Tagore of using the common words and popular idioms in the literature.⁷⁶ Citing the example of Tagore, Laubach persuaded the literacy workers to survey their local area, identify the common words and prepare a word list prior to the development of primers and graded reading materials.

The development of materials was always undertaken in groups. Apart from Laubach, the group consisted of local literacy workers, linguists, an artist and an expert in writing in simple language. To start with, Laubach familiarised himself with the alphabets, vowels and consonants of a particular language in which the primer was to be developed. Depending upon the special characteristics of the language, Laubach tried to reduce the number of letters if there were too many, and grouped them into 4 or 5 families. Subsequently, with the help of local people, Laubach identified 3 or 4 key words which were known to maximum number of people in the area and in which the different consonants are used. Since a primer consisted of 10-12 lessons, Laubach developed each lesson in the form of a chart depicting a picture, word and syllable. A particular letter is taught through the association of a known picture of an object whose name began with that particular letter. For example, to teach the letter 's', the word 'snake' and its picture were used. Most of the pictures were selected keeping in view the shape of the letter. In the absence of a suitable picture, the artist prepared a sketch resembling the shape of the alphabet and selected a relevant word.

From experiments and experience, Laubach had found that an illiterate person could easily learn a new word if it was repeated five times. He found that on an average, while an illiterate person could master six new words within half an hour, a neo-literate could learn ten new words if they were taught with due emphasis on phonetics, word and syllable.⁷⁷ Laubach adopted different methods in different languages. While in Hindi and Marathi, he adopted the alphabet method, in Tamil and Telugu he switched over to story method. In the preparation of post-literacy materials, Laubach emphasised the need for providing locally relevant and useful information to the learners through the lessons. In his widely acclaimed book for the neoliterate - *Anand, The Wiseman*, Laubach has provided an example of imparting useful knowledge related to health, agriculture, community, etc., through the story of a character - Anand.

The materials developed by Laubach in Hindi were in use till 1963, when the Literacy House at Lucknow replaced them with a new set of primers. In other languages, Laubach materials are being used only in a limited manner, either by some Christian missionaries or Laubach Literacy centre in Kerala. Some of the scholars have criticised Laubach materials as "mechanical" and "repetitive".⁷⁸ However, defending his methods and materials, Laubach stated: "People who do not teach illiterates themselves sometimes criticise our stories for not being interesting enough. They ask why we do not have a plot. The answer is this: The one great objective of the student is to learn to read as quickly as possible. If he can read without the help, he gets a tremendous thrill and he does not need any exciting story to add to thrill. If on the other hand, he finds the page difficult, his difficulty will destroy all sense of excitement. Have

you ever tried to read a joke in a foreign language which you knew imperfectly?... *Interest must never be attempted at the expense of simplicity.*"⁷⁹ (Italics added).

One of the significant achievements of Laubach was the demonstration that his method worked. The materials developed by him served as a model to some and even stimulated others to take up material preparation. Laubach observed that one thing India needed above all was 'faith to believe it could become literate', and he believed that he succeeded in that respect.⁸⁰ Through his inspiring speeches and writings Laubach kept the flag of literacy flying in India. He was instrumental in setting up the Departments of Journalism at Osmania and Nagpur Universities where special courses were introduced in literacy journalism.⁸¹ Besides playing a key role in setting up five institutions for the training of literacy workers in different parts of India during the early 1950s, Laubach mooted the idea of a national centre for the training of literacy workers and encouraged his colleague Welthy Fisher to pursue the idea which later blossomed into the Literacy House at Lucknow.

Laubach was one of the most innovative and enterprising adult educators of the twentieth century. As a prolific writer of primers, efficient trainer of literacy workers, effective mobiliser of resources, and successful builder of literacy organizations, Laubach had adopted a holistic approach to solve the problem of illiteracy around the world. Literacy was always the top priority programme for him. He believed that "since adults are deciding the fate of the world at present", their education need to be given top priority.⁸² He had tremendous faith in the intrinsic strength of literacy in solving the problems of hunger and poverty. Hence he declared an all round war against illiteracy and tapped all possible resources from religious, philanthropic, secular and governmental organisations. His aim being universal literacy, he spread his tentacles in all possible directions. He "scattered the seeds of literacy and goodwill far and wide... He has been too busy sowing to worry much about whether all the seeds took root. Some fell on rocky sand and some among thorns; but the seed that fell into good soil has begun to yield the harvest."⁸³ Being the first international adult educator who 'showed the way',⁸⁴ Laubach drew the attention of the world to the cause of literacy.⁸⁵ Laubach had the "deep satisfaction of watching literacy unfolding around the world" during his life time.⁸⁶

Literacy for self-reliance, literacy for equality, literacy for dignity seem to be the three cardinal points of Laubach's adult education philosophy and programme. In a steady and sincere manner, he pursued his mission till the end of his life. When he died, there was an incomplete script on his typewriter which indicated his belief in educating the masses for self-reliance. It read as follows: "We cannot feed all the hungry people of the world. But we can teach them to feed themselves."⁸⁷

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Grateful acknowledgements are due to Syracuse University Kellogg Project which funded the study and to Dr. Robert S. Laubach, Son of Dr. Frank Laubach who kindly granted permission to quote extensively from his fathers papers.

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- 2 *Ibid.* For a list of languages in which Laubach developed primers, see Laubach Collection, Box Nos. 248 and 259 (George Arent's Research Library for special collections at Syracuse University. Since the entire Laubach collection is located at Syracuse, and no other collections are used in this study, the location of the Laubach Collection will not be cited again.)
- 3 Mason, D.E., Frank C. Laubach: *Teacher of millions*. Minneapolis : T.S. Denison Company Inc. 1967, p. 83.
- 4 For details see Folder No. 7, Biography, in Laubach Collection Box No. 368: and folder on Frank Laubach, who is who *Ibid* Box No. 139.
- 5 For a list of books see Frank C. Laubach: *A Comprehensive Bibliography*, compiled by Ann. L. Wiley, Syracuse: New Readers Press, 1973.
- 6 For details see File on Nobel Peace Prize Nominations 1964-69 in Laubach Collection Box No. 369.
- 7 See notes by Mason, D.E. dated October 1964, in *Ibid.*, Box No. 302.
- 8 *Ibid.*
- 9 For details see Papers on Frank C. Laubach and documents of Laubach Literacy Inc. Compiled by Deborah R. Chmaj and Menbera Wolder, Syracuse: Bird Library, 1974; Also see the Additional inventory of Laubach collection, compiled by Bird Library, 1990 (Typescript).
- 10 For details of the contents of different boxes: see Shah, S.Y. (Ed.) *Foundations of Indian adult Education : Selections from the writing of Frank Laubach*, New Delhi, Jawaharlal Nehru University, 1990, 232-237.
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- 12 Though the present method of "Each One Teach One" differs from the original methods advocated by Laubach mainly in terms of the contents of the primer, method of teaching and evaluation, the basic idea remains the same.
- 13 For example, there is no mention of Laubach in the following books on the history of adult education in India. Dutta, S.C. *History of Adult Education in India*, New Delhi: Indian Adult Education Association, 1987. Singh, S. *History of Adult*

- Education during British period*, New Delhi : Indian Adult Education Association, 1957. In the list of the articles published in the Indian Journal of Adult Education during the last fifty years, there is not a single article on Laubach: See, Sachdeva, J.L. and Dua S. (Compiled). *Fifty Years of Indian Journal of Adult Education articles and their authors*, New Delhi : Indian Adult Education Association, 1990.
- 14 Based on the discussion held with Dr. Robert F. Caswell, Director of Laubach Literacy International, on 17 April, 1990, at his office in Syracuse.
- 15 *Ibid*
- 16 For details see *Census in India 1931*. Vol. I, Part-I, Delhi : Publications Division, 1933, pp. 324-326.
- 17 Singh, S. *History of Adult Education*, p. 51.
- 18 For details see Laubach, F.C. *India shall be literate*, Jubbulpore: Mission Press, 1940, pp. 13-18.
- 19 See Handa, M.L. "Adult education and social transformation : A political analysis of some aspects of India's adult education programme (1950-1980)". Toronto: International Council of Adult Education, 1980, p. 9.
- 20 For details see Singh S. *History of Adult Education*, pp. 50-55.
- 21 Ure, R. India aspires to democracy. Folder on India in *Laubach Collection* Box No.139, p. 23.
- 22 Laubach, F.C. Manuscript of a foreign readingbook, p. IV, In *Laubach Collection*, Box No. 122. For details of Laubach's work in Philippines see Shah (Ed) *Indian adult education*, pp. 11-17.
- 23 See letter from Rev. B.P. Hivale to Laubach January 15, 1936. In *Laubach Collection* Box No. 2, See also Laubach, Manuscript of a foreign reading book, p.IV.
- 24 On this point see his discussion with Gandhi and letter from Nehru, in Shah *Indian adult education*, Part - II and Part -III.
- 25 See "Report on adventures in the campaign for literacy in India (1936-37), in *Laubach Collection* Box No. 246, p. 8.
- 26 For an idea of Congress ideology and the role of the Congress Party in literacy campaign see Shah, S.Y., Study of mass literacy campaign in Bihar, 1938-89, *Journal of Education And Social Change*, Vol. III, No. 1, 1989.
- 27 See Laubach, F.C. *Learning the vocabulary of God: A spiritual diary*, Tennessee: The Gospel Press, 1956, p. 85.
- 28 See Ure, R. India's Literacy ablaze. In *Laubach Collection* Box No. 247, p. 1.
- 29 Project overseas: India, in *Ibid*.
- 30 For details see Report of the Secretary of the National Christian Council submitted to the World Literacy Committee. In *Ibid.*, Box No. 110.

- 31 *Report of post-war-educational development in India, 1944*, Delhi : Manager Publication, 1944, pp. 46-52.
- 32 Shah, S.Y. (Ed), *A source book on adult education*, New Delhi : Directorate of Adult Education, 1989, pp. 18-19.
- 33 Audio taped interview with Dr. Prem Kirpal (Former Secretary, Ministry of Education, Government of India) held on January 30, 1989 at New Delhi.
- 34 See "Plan For Nation wide Literacy Drive" in *Laubach Collection*, Box No. 119.
- 35 The details of his visit are given in letter Nos. 3 and 4, published in For Eastern News of the Committee on World Literacy And Christian Literature. In *Laubach Collection*, Box No. 116.
- 36 *Ibid.*
- 37 Laubach's speech delivered on 26th March, 1949, India 1949-56. In *Ibid*, Box No.119.
- 38 See letter from Frank C. Laubach in World Literacy Newsletter, June, 1952, Vol. VI, No. 4.
- 39 See, Report of the Laubach Literacy Team, March 14-April 16, 1953. In *Laubach Collection*, Box No. 119, See also Mooney, E. Training Centres for Teachers, directors and writers, *Ibid.*, pp. 65-73.
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- 46 On this point see "Literacy as evangelism", *Ibid* Box No. 114.
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- 51 Laubach's letter to Paul Means, February 11, 1956, *Ibid*.
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- 55 See Laubach's correspondence with S.C. Dutta and others, *Ibid*, Box No. 80, 82, 84.
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- 60 Laubach, *India shall be literate*, p. 235.
- 61 Laubach, F.C. *Each One Teach One Essays in Laubach Collection*, Box. No. 113, p. 5.
- 62 See Laubach's address, September 27, 1957, Laubach Essays, II, *Ibid*, pp.8-10.
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3. Fifty Years of Indian Adult Education Association*

J.C. Saxena

Indian Adult Education Association is a national level voluntary organisation dedicated to the promotion of adult/non-formal education in the country. Starting in a small way, by a band of dedicated men and women of vision, a little over 50 years ago, the Association has been and continues to be, a pioneering institution in the field of adult education.

The Association owes its origin to the foresight and organised attempts of a few enlightened individuals who derived their inspiration from universities/associations abroad and found, in the organisation of the then existing sporadic attempts of various agencies and individuals in the sphere of eradicating illiteracy, a fertile ground for the development of an adult education movement in India. These pioneers founded the adult education society in 1937 to investigate the problems of adult education in and around Delhi, to explore methods of solving it and to extend adult education work throughout the country. At that time the education movement in India had begun to make rapid strides with the assumption of office by the popular Ministries in the Provinces under the Government of India Act, 1935. Though a few adult education agencies like the Bombay Presidency Adult Education Association, South Indian Adult Education Association and Bengal Adult Education Association had been formed to co-ordinate and extend adult education work in their respective areas, the need for a central organisation with branches/associates in different Provinces and States was increasingly felt to help in evolving suitable methods and techniques by experiment and research to act as a clearing house of ideas, information and experience, to co-ordinate adult education activities carried on in different parts of the country and above all to direct uniform progressive policy for the proper development of the adult education movement in India. At the request of some of its very active members, the Indian Adult Education Society took the initiative in organising the first Adult Education Conference in Delhi in March 1938 to confer and explore the possibility of bringing into being a Central organisation. A professional committee was set up in December 1939 when the second All

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India Adult Education Conference was held in Bhagalpur (Bihar) under the Presidentship of Dr. R.P. Masani from Bombay. It was at this session that the constitution of the central organisation was presented and finally adopted unanimously by the delegates to this Conference. Thus the Indian Adult Education Association was formally inaugurated as the Central organisation with the following aims and objects:

- a) To spread knowledge among the people of India on all subjects related to their all round development, welfare and culture in a popular and attractive manner through suitable agencies.
- b) To initiate, wherever necessary, adult education activities in co-operation with various organisations and individuals interested in the work and to encourage and co-ordinate local efforts and organisations engaged in promoting the cause of adult education.
- c) To serve as "Clearing House" for exchange of ideas, information and advice concerning adult education in the different states of India.
- d) To cooperate with movements aiming at the removal of illiteracy and ignorance and promotion of the civic, economic and cultural interests of the people.
- e) To serve as a connecting link for inter-state cooperation and coordination.
- f) To prepare and supply, if necessary, slides, charts, films, booklets, suitable literature etc., and to undertake the publication bulletins and journals.
- g) To arrange public lectures, demonstrations, seminars, etc., for furthering the objectives of the Association.
- h) To organise Indian Adult Education Conference and other meetings in furthering the objects.
- i) To persuade the Universities and other educational bodies in the country to take up adult education work and to do all other acts that are incidental to the fulfilment of the above mentioned aims and objects of the Association.

Sometimes people judge the success or failure of the Association by the slow progress of literacy in India and the increasing number of illiterates due to rise in population and heavy drop-outs from Primary schools. They often forget that the objectives of the Association continue to remain very broad. At no time the Association has the means or the manpower, to eradicate illiteracy from the country. It only focused attention to this grave problem through seminars and conferences. It maintained that programmes of basic education for children and

adult education should be undertaken throughout the country as they are mutually reinforcing and can lead to universal literacy in our country. The very first national seminar organised by the Association at Jabalpur in 1950 discussed problems of organisation and techniques for liquidation of illiteracy.

The Association continues to lend its support to official and unofficial agencies in order to cooperate with movements aiming at the removal of illiteracy as stated in the objectives of the Association.

When we judge the growth of an organisation a glance at the 'numbers' becomes inevitable. Table below will indicate the all round expansion of IAEA during the last 25 years :

Sl.No.	At the time of	Institutional Members	Life Members
1.	Silver Jubilee (1964)	79	60
2.	Golden Jubilee (1989)	225	815

The Association has engaged itself in organising Conferences, Zonal Conferences, Round Table discussions, Seminars and Workshops which have yielded a wealth of ideas for the benefit of the policy makers and planners and the implementors of the programmes in the country. Earlier, the main function of the Association was to mobilise public opinion in favour of adult education. After independence its main function was to help government formulate policies, programmes, of adult education, to coordinate the activities of the agencies and workers, official and non-official in the field, to act as a clearing house of ideas and information. This role of the Association was recognised in the following words in the First Five Year Plan (1951-56) Document: "A common national platform where the various agencies can meet at intervals for mutual discussion - so necessary for evolving a common outlook and securing coordination of different agencies - is provided by the Indian Adult Education Association".

On this occasion, we remember with gratitude the leadership provided and services rendered by great stalwarts in the earlier years of the Association. Some of the prominent among them were, Dr. Zakir Husain (Vice-President of the Association for a number of terms), Dr. R.P. Masani, Prof. N.G. Ranga, Dr. Amar Nath Jha, Dr. S.R. Ranganathan, Shri K.G. Saiyidain, Shri R.M. Chetsingh, Shri J.C. Mathur, Dr. V.S. Jha, Prof. A.N. Basu, Prof. M. Mujeeb, Shri S.R. Kidwai, Shri V.S. Mathur and Shri S.C. Dutta, Dr. Mohan Sinha Mehta provided dynamic leadership during his Presidentship of 16 years (1958-74). The present premises of the Association was built during 1958-61 through his guidance and Shri S.C. Dutta's efforts as General Secretary. Dr. Mehta was responsible for setting up the first department of Adult Education in the Rajasthan University, Jaipur of which he was the Vice-Chancellor. He convened the Conference of Vice-Chan-

cellors of Indian Universities, in Bhopal in 1965 where Dr. Mehta and Dr. V.K.R.V. Rao guided the deliberations of the conference and mobilised Universities for Adult Education. Later, I.A.E.A. was responsible for the setting up of Indian University Association for Continuing Education (I.U.A.C.E.) of which Dr. M.S. Mehta and Shri S.C. Dutta became the President and Hony. Secretary respectively. The Association rose to great heights under the inspiring leadership of Dr. Malcolm S. Adiseshiah who became President after Dr. M.S. Mehta. During six years of his Presidentship Dr. Adiseshiah built valuable foreign contacts. We remember with gratitude the valuable services rendered to the Association by Dr. S.C. Dutta during his Secretaryship (1956-78), Treasurership (1984-86) and Presidentship (1987). He was connected in one capacity or the other with the Association right from the beginning till his death on Dec. 4, 1987. It may be stated here that all subsequent Presidents/Secretaries/Treasurers and Members of the Executive Committee have drawn inspiration from these stalwarts and served the Association to the best of their ability. The Association's membership and activities increased immensely in 1980's.

The Pioneering Role of IAEA

In the early days, the Association strove to create public opinion on the need for a public policy on adult education and to mobilise support from the Government and other public institutions for the movement. Today, with adult education recognised as an essential process of national reconstruction, the Association is concerned with making that process purposeful and effective. The Adult Education movement in the country began as a part of the nation's struggle for freedom. It now forms as part of the nation's quest to give that freedom meaning and significance. The people in India are now in the process of learning to find through Adult Education, their well being and happiness.

The Indian Adult Education Association made several representations to the Central and State Governments for the constitution of National Board of Adult Education and its counterparts in the States. At long last, the Association succeeded when then Ministry of Education at the Centre constituted a separate National Board of Adult Education representing several ministries and departments from the Centre and States, important educationists, social workers including the President of the Indian Adult Education Association.

The efforts made by the Indian Adult Education Association right from its inception, for the appointment of separate functionaries in the Department of Education, for looking after programmes of adult education, were not conceded at first but later provided a token staff - first at the Centre and then in some States. It was heartening to note that when National Adult Education Pro-

gramme was launched in 1978, adequate administrative structures were built at the State, district and project levels.

Some of the leaders of Indian Adult Education Association were drawn from the ranks of workers' organisations and therefore, they emphasised workers education. Consequently several programmes of workers were carried out in the 1940s and 1950s. An important Seminar was organised by the IAEA in 1956 in Calcutta to examine the whole gamut of workers' education. It included a recommendation to the Government of India for setting up an agency for workers' education in the country. Consequently a Central Board for Workers' Education was set up the Ministry of Labour and the Indian Adult Education Association has been represented on this Board right from its inception. The Central Board for Workers' Education is now a large organisation with its zonal and regional offices and unit level organisations. It has also got an Indian Institute of Workers' Education located in Bombay which organises training programmes round the year.

Annual Conferences and Seminars

The Association has organised 41 Annual Conferences and about four dozen national level seminars and a large number of Regional Seminars. These Conferences and Seminars attracted the participation of administrators, academicians, social workers, field workers, drawn from the Governments at the Centre and the States, trade unions and voluntary organisations, universities and colleges. These Conferences and Seminars provided a forum for exchange of ideas and information and pooling of experiences. These also helped in clarifying new ideas and most often their recommendations helped in policy formulation and guided the field workers in the implementation and organisation of adult education programme.

The Conferences provided leadership and new concepts in this newly developing field of education called the oldest as well as the newest form of education.

Publications

In pursuance of the objectives of the Association, the Association brings out an English Journal of Adult Education, which was earlier monthly but made quarterly in 1987, a monthly called "Proudh Shiksha" in Hindi, a monthly Newsletter in English and a Hindi monthly "Jago Aur Jagao" for the benefit of new literates. "Jago aur Jagao" was initially started with assistance from UNESCO.

These Journals held a record in continuity because the morality rate of education journals and particularly journals of adult education is very high all over the world. It is a matter of great satisfaction that the Indian Journal of Adult Education has been making its appearance regularly during the last 50 years. It is mailed out to over 80 countries in the world.

The Association has brought out many books in English and Hindi for the benefit of practitioners of adult education and field workers. Many of the UNESCO publications were translated into Hindi in order to make available to field workers, the results of studies made by UNESCO experts.

Projects

The Association has undertaken a number of experiments and pilot projects. Several training programmes were organised from 1948-1951 for social education workers in rural as well as urban educational areas. The syllabus of social education workers, training courses of the earlier community development programme were mostly drawn upon this experience. Later the Association in collaboration with International Federation of Workers Educational Associations (IFWEA) and with the financial assistance from UNESCO organised a training course for workers' education in 1960-61. With the financial assistance provided by the Central Board for Workers Education (CBWE) the Association has been organising workshops and seminars regularly for the benefit of workers. From time to time, the Association organised literacy centres on experimental basis. It is launching 100 literacy centres, 80 for women and 20 for men in a resettlement colony, Himmatpuri in East Delhi this month.

Correspondence Courses

The Association organised correspondence courses for workers in Hindi. For the benefit of workers, courses on "Collective Bargaining" and "Trade Unionism" consisting of 24 lessons each were organised.

Condensed Courses for Women

In the past, the Association conducted Condensed Courses for Adult Women with the help of the Central Social Welfare Board. At present also the Association is conducting a project "Awareness Camps for Women" with assistance from Central Social Welfare Board.

Training

The Association accorded a high priority to training programmes for various types of functionaries engaged in adult education. The Association obtained

the cooperation of experts from the ranks of its own members, Official and non-official agencies to do this job. These training programmes were conducted in Delhi and several other places in India. The Association also organised training workshops for writers to prepare appropriate literature for the neo-literates. With the advent of National Adult Education Programme, the size and dimension of these training programmes increased. Further impetus was given to this activity of the Association by the ASPBAE co-operation received during 1985-87. The Indian Adult Education Association is grateful to its members - both individual and institutional who helped it in carrying out these training programme in different parts of India including tribal and hilly areas. Most of these training programmes are area-specific and group-specific and participatory in nature.

Research

The Association has undertaken a number of research studies some on its own and a few with the collaboration of other agencies. Some of the researches were evaluative and others were survey-type. The Association in collaboration with the research, training and production centre of the Jamia Millia Islamia carried out a research study on Adult Schools. With the financial support of UNESCO, the Association conducted jointly with Jamia Millia Islamia two studies on Literature for Neo-Literates in Hindi and two on Mobile Exhibition Literature for new reading public. The Association carried out a study on the impact of television in collaboration with the National Fundamental Education Centre (which later became the Directorate of Adult Education, Government of India), A Study on Rural Leadership was conducted and survey of libraries in Punjab and Himachal Pradesh was undertaken. The Association carried out an evaluation of social education work in Delhi in 1957-58. A survey of cultural organisations in South East Asia was also undertaken on behalf of UNESCO. The Association brought out a directory of social education organisations in 1948 and later in 1958-59. Several Research Studies were undertaken during 1960-80. In 1982-83, the Association carried out two important researches:

1. Review of Research in adult education which includes a study of the M.Ed., M.Phil., and Ph.D., dissertations on the subject of Adult Education in Indian Universities, also gives future trends of Research; and
2. Reading needs and interests of Neo-literates and the levels of literacy achievement.

These studies were carried out with the help of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, West Germany.

In honour of our late President, Dr. Mohan Sinha Mehta, a research fellowship was instituted in 1986. It is awarded every year to an individual to carry out a research project. Two such projects have been completed.

Cooperation with others

The Association from its very inception has been cooperating with agencies - both official and non-official in the task of promoting and developing suitable adult education programmes and policies. Representatives of the Association and its leading members have been connected with various Governmental Committees and have drawn up plans for adult education in the country. The members of this Association have served with distinction on the Central Advisory Board of Education and its Standing committee on Social Education, the Panel for Social Education set up by the Planning Commission, Central Board for Workers' Education set up by the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Television committee set up by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the National Advisory Committee on Public cooperation set up by Planning Commission and Social Education Committee of Union Territory of Delhi set up by the then Ministry of Education. Some of the office-bearers and prominent members of the Association have presided over the working groups on adult education set up for Five Year Plans by the Planning commission while many of them have been members of such groups.

The Association was actively involved in the establishment of India Literacy Board (Lucknow) in 1954. The then President of our Association, Dr. Amarnatha Jha was its first Chairman and the then Hony. General Secretary, Shri S.C. Dutta had been a member of the Board and its Executive Committee for a long time. A former President of the Association Dr. M.S. Mehta was elected Vice-Chairman of the India Literacy Board which runs the Literacy House founded by Mrs. Welthy H. Fisher. Several State departments of education/adult education, Universities and Colleges and voluntary organisations are institutional members of the Association. Institutions like Gujarat Vidyapeeth, Bombay City Social Education Committee, Bengal Social Service League, Karnataka State Adult Education Council, S.R.C. Jamia Millia, Rajasthan Vidyapeeth and a host of other university departments of adult and continuing education and extension are our members. We are very proud of them for their good record of service in the cause of adult education, at the grass-root level. The Association has fostered the growth of State Associations and Regional Institutions for Adult Education, many of which are remaking a valuable contribution to the adult education movement in the country.

Literacy Awards

The Indian Adult Education Association instituted the "Nehru Literacy Award (N.L.A.)" in 1968 for outstanding contribution towards the promotion and development of literacy among men and women in India. In 1987, the Association instituted "Tagore Literacy Award" for outstanding work in the promotion of literacy among women. So far 20 Nehru Literacy Awards have been given - 18 to individuals, who rendered outstanding services to the cause of literacy in India and two to voluntary organisations with a record of literacy efforts. So far two Tagore Literacy Awards have been given. These are selected from a panel of names recommended for the purpose by the members of the Association, the State Education and Development Departments and voluntary organisations or institutions in the field of adult education and adult literacy. The selection of the awardee is made on a yearly basis by a committee consisting of Chairman and four members appointed by the Executive Committee of the Indian Adult Education Association. The awards are made for (i) literacy work among adults; (ii) follow-up work for neo-literates; (iii) continuing education work; and (iv) organizational/supervisory work. These awards are announced on the International Literacy Day i.e. September 8 every year.

Dr. Zakir Husain Memorial Lecture

The Association organises Dr. Zakir Husain Memorial Lecture every year to commemorate his distinguished services to the cause of education and enlightenment and his close and intimate relationship with the Indian Adult Education Association. Dr. Zakir Husain Memorial Lecture is delivered at the request of the Association by an eminent educationist on the occasion of the annual conference of the Association. So far 17 lectures in the series have been delivered.

International contacts

The Association has built up fairly extensive international contacts. It is affiliated with the International Federation of Workers' Educational Associations (IFWEA), International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), Asian south Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE). We are proud of the role of our two former Presidents, Dr. Malcolm S. Adiseshiah and late Dr. S.C. Dutta in the formation of I.C.A.E. and A.S.P.B.A.E. respectively. Both of them were the founding Presidents of these two important international organisations. We

are happy to welcome representatives of I.C.A.E. and A.S.P.B.A.E. who are present today with us. The Association continues to maintain contacts and exchange of information with World Education Inc., New York, Adult Education Association of U.S.A., Canadian Association of Adult Education, German Adult Education Association, Australian Association of Adult Education, New Zealand Adult Education Council, Social Education of Japan, the World Confederation of Organisations of Teaching Professions and African Adult Education Association, Commonwealth Association for Education and Training of Adults and a number of agencies and institutions in other parts of the world. The Association in collaboration with South Gujarat University organised a Conference of Adult Educators from Commonwealth countries at Ukai Dam (Gujarat) in 1987, which led to the formation of the Commonwealth Association for Education and Training of Adults (GAETA). The Association readily agreed to collaborate with UNESCO in the launching of International Literacy Year in 1990. When I.C.A.E. set up the International Task Force on Literacy in Canada, they set up a Regional Office in South Asia which accounts for the greatest share of illiterates of the world. The Association at the request of Dr. Budd Hall, Secretary General, I.C.A.E. offered space in its own premises to I.T.F.L. office in the region. All possible help and support is being extended to I.C.A.E., A.S.P.B.A.E./I.T.F.L. and other agencies in the promotion of the common objectives of eliminating illiteracy and expanding knowledge, understanding, cooperation and goodwill. The Association received guidance and support from UNESCO right from its inception. Several projects were carried out with support from UNESCO.

Introspection

At a meeting of members of the Association from Delhi convened by us on 24th April, 1989, a valuable suggestion was made about setting up a small group of 5 or 6 eminent members of the Association to examine in depth our achievements and failures in the past 50 years and to suggest new goals and approaches for the coming decades so that the Association fulfils the tasks undertaken by it. Action has been initiated in this regard.

At the time of our Golden Jubilee, we find ourselves at the cross-roads of history. We face the challenge of poverty and illiteracy. Our first concern today is to make India literate and use literacy as an effective tool for social and economic transformation. The implementation of current anti-poverty programmes will be considerably assisted if people become literate. Also the consolidation of newly acquired literacy will keep the people above the poverty line once they come above it.

On this historic occasion, the Indian Adult Education Association dedicates itself to serve the people of our country in the great tasks of -

- i) achieving universal functional literacy
- ii) promoting life-long continuing adult education,
- iii) moving towards the goal of achieving learning society,
- iv) assisting all anti-poverty programmes and ensuring that the benefits reach the people for whom these are meant,
- v) raising the social and economic status of the people, particularly of women, and weaker sections of society, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes,
- vi) improving general awareness, upgrading skills and general well-being of the people,
- vii) promoting,
 - scientific temper
 - national integration
 - conservation of environment
 - women's equility
 - observance of small family norms
 - international understanding

The Indian Adult Education Association, after 50 years of devoted service to the cause of adult education and adult literacy in India, can be proud of its past accomplishment and can move forward into the future with even more vigour and optimism.

PART II
POLICY AND PLANNING

4. A Policy Analysis of Adult Literacy Education in India: Across the Two National Policy Reviews of 1968 and 1986*

H.S. Bhola

Justifications for a policy analysis of adult literacy education¹ in India are not hard to find. In countries where large proportions of populations have never been to school, adult education will be the only education available to many.² Thus, adult education can serve distributive justice. On the other hand, adult education, at its best, is directly related to learner needs and is immediately usable in resocializing individuals and transforming communities. Therefore, it is possible to assert that adult literacy and adult education are inherently progressive, even radical.

Definition and Method

Policy is more than a statement of principles or a set of rules and regulations. While policy must be principled, and does seek to regulate through rule-making, its essential nature is distributive. Policy is the instrument of power of governing elite for directing and harnessing social power for preferred social outcomes. Indeed, policy making is involved if, and only if, there is an intent on the part of policy makers to bring about a new and preferred distribution of economic, status and power goods (and consequently, of educational goods) among social groups and classes. Of course, the policy intent can sometimes be phony and the future preferred may be no more than a perpetuation of the status quo.³

If the nature of policy is distributive, then the definition of policy analysis is an examination of the desirability and the feasibility of a policy's distributive intent.⁴ The desirability question is ideological, focussed on the justness of intended distributions. The feasibility question is technological, focussed on the practicalities of implementation.

Technology, as broadly interpreted, has two dimensions: institutional capac-

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ity and professional competence. The question for institutional analysis⁵ is this: Are the institutions, as existing or as envisaged, likely to have the capacity and resources to implement the policy intent? Professional analysis will involve questions of how well available professional knowledge is being utilized in the conception, design, and implementation of policy.

Policy analysis exercises can take place at the front end, that is, as the policy is being formulated. Or, these analyses may be conducted during or at the end of a policy cycle. (See Table 1) Ideally, policy analysis should be a continuous process that takes place throughout the life-cycle of a particular policy initiative.

TABLE -1

Components of the process of policy analysis

	At the front end cycle	During the process of implementation	At the end of the policy cycle
I.	Ideological Analysis		
II.	Technological Analysis:		
	(a) Institutional Capacity		
	(b) Professional Competence		

A Policy Analytic Model of Adult Literacy Education for Development

There is a dialectical relationship between policy and the political culture which proclaims that particular policy. First, the political culture sets the limits within which policy making will take place. Then, the policy as formulated, in the process of its implementation, will redefine the "living" political culture and thereby change the context of freedom and constraints imposed on future policy initiatives. Social change results from this dialectic between policy and thereby changes the context of freedom and constraints imposed on future policy initiatives. Sometimes the change is progressive, at other times it is regressive. It is almost always incremental.⁶

The political culture, as defined by the triangle of the economic, the social and the political, determines what kind of a development model will be selected by the policy elite within that culture. The choice is, of course, not deterministic in the absolute sense, but has to be congenial. In turn, the selected developmental model makes congenial choices of educational strategies.⁷ (See Table 2)

TABLE -2

A policy analytic model of adult literacy education for development

Development Strategy/Model

Evolutionary	Reformist	Revolutionary
Motivational- -developmental model	Incremental -developmental model	Structural-developmental model

Educational Approaches

<i>General goals</i>	<i>General Goals</i>	<i>General Goals</i>
Transmission of cultural values	Social reproduction with built-in mobility	Transformation of culture and technology
Adult education as charity	Adult education as ameliorative	Adult education as integrative

<i>Literacy</i>	<i>Literacy</i>	<i>Literacy</i>
projects for the professionalization of labour	programmes for reform under State guidance	campaigns for transfor- mation of existing political relation-ships.

Viewed vertically, the countries that emphasise individual motivations in their development strategies, are likely to use education as an instrument in the transmission of cultural values, are likely to look at adult education as an act of charity and justify literacy work in small projects within economic units by way of the professionalization of labour. Countries following the incremental-developmental model are likely to be using their educational system for social reproduction with some built-in mobility, will look at their adult education programmes as ameliorative, that is, second chance education, and will develop national or regional literacy programmes under effective state control. Finally, revolutionary societies will use developmental models that seek to destroy existing structures, are likely to use education for the transformation of both culture and technology, will use adult education to integrate all those "standing outside politics" into the political system, and will prefer the mass campaigns approach for literacy promotion.⁸ Once again, however, membership in these clusters should be seen as most probable rather than deterministic. The rela-

tionships between and among these various categories will have to be dialectical for social change to occur at all.

The Case of India

History and politics together can provide the context for understanding India's policies of adult literacy education and their performance in the past and the present.

Sandeep provides a useful cultural perspective.⁹ The Indian people, he points out, have fully internalized the hierarchical social relationships preached in the *Rigveda*, *Bhagavadgita* and *Manusmriti*; and over the centuries, have institutionalised these relationships within the Indian caste system. In more recent Indian history, under the British, the hierarchical caste relationships had been further reinforced and rationalized to the advantage of dominant upper classes. In India today, casteism is alive and well. As a result, the Indian people feel absolutely disoriented to the new values of democracy, socialism, and secularism enshrined in the Constitution. Indeed, attempts at demythification of old values through adult education is often seen by them as anti-religious.

Indian politics since Independence in 1947 has been conservative, not progressive. Myrdal characterized the Indian liberation wars as "an upper-class protest movement" despite Mahatma Gandhi's appeal to the masses.¹⁰ The success of the Indian Independence movement, according to Myrdal, did not lead to transfer of power to the people but to the urban Western-educated elite in coalition with landlords, merchants and moneylenders of rural India. India under Nehru (1947-64) had all the apurtenances of democracy, but in reality it was democracy from the above. Conditions may have indeed worsened. In a more recent piece of political analysis, Das saw democracy in India being practices by all means other than democratic.¹¹ The political elite had combined the invocation of grand principles with the practice of realpolitik at its lowest. The politics of confrontation had taken the place of the politics of participation. Political support was crafted through manipulation not through education and motivation of people.

The Indian economy continues to be marked by duality and disparity. More than half the population lives below the poverty line defined by the Government of India as annual family income of Rs.6,000 (about US \$465) in 1986. India is an economy of scarcities, with a concomitant "morality of scarcities." Ends are sought to be achieved by whatever means. Consequently, the social fabric of India is under tremendous tension. Casteism, communalism, and provincialism are rampant. Violence is increasing in the society.

Yet, development is on the political agenda. As in most other Third World

countries, development is an important source of legitimization for the new governing elite. The ideology of modernization is essentially Western and capitalist¹² with a healthy dose of central planning.¹³ The development model of choice is the motivational - developmental model as socio-economic change is first legislated and then subverted. The underlying theme is gradualism - prosperity filtering from the entrepreneur to the disadvantaged, slowly and without conflict.

From the foregoing, some anticipations can be built about policies of "education for development" in India. The present culture and politics of India allow an educational policy that is functionalist in being able to provide the necessary manpower for keeping the system going, and populist in being able to win the popularity contest at election time. This means greater investments in higher education and proportionally less in constitutionally mandated universalisation of elementary education. This means development of some elite centres of education for the privileged surrounded by a sea of sub-mediocrity, Notwithstanding the rhetoric of a learning society, adult education in such a scenario can be anticipated to have the role only of amelioration and pacification. It will have to be a sector of more rhetoric and less reality. It will have populist objectives and petty resource allocations. And even what is given by the state will mostly be captured by the agents of the state and by the vested interests at all the various levels of the adult education system.

Yet, we suggest, that the adult education policies to be presented and analysed below, be approached with a sense of realism rather than of cynicism. The dialectic between tradition and modernity, between power and powerlessness, between prosperity and penury, between rhetoric and reality, and between progressive action and subversion of gains, is by no means frozen. There is both scope and hope for change within these set of conditions. Adult education does and can have a role to play in India's future, if the intelligentsia would play a progressive and activist role in influencing the dialectic.

Forerunners to the New Policy of Adult Education

Education of adults had been a cultural tradition in India for centuries but it was contact with the British that gave adult education in India its new identity. By 1917, adult education had been incorporated in the struggle for independence.¹⁴ Ironically, it was after Independence that adult education lost ground as the government sought to train high level manpower for the modernization of the economy. Figures for expenditures incurred on adult education¹⁵ tell the story (Table-3).

TABLE -3
Expenditure on Adult Education
(in millions of Rupees)

<i>Plan I</i> 1951-56	<i>Plan II</i> 1956-61	<i>Plan III</i> 1961-66	<i>Plan IV</i> 1969-74	<i>Plan V</i> 1974-79
50 (3.5)	40 (1.6)	20 (0.3)	59 (0.1)	326 (0.3)

Note : Figures in parentheses are percentage of total allocations to education.

The Education Commission Report and The National Policy Resolution of 1968

While resources for adult education were scarce, expert reports and resolutions were not. The most compelling theme of the 1964-66 Education Commission Report was the equalization of educational opportunity¹⁶. The report sought to prick the conscience of the national by pointing out that some twenty years after independence in 1947, adult literacy was still around 28.6 per cent; and the universalization of elementary education upto age 14 years mandated to be achieved by 1960 was yet far away. The commissioners asked for the universalization of elementary education by 1986. They also asked for a serious attack on illiteracy using a combination of the selective and the mass approach that would mobilize all men and women available in the country, including teachers and students. The report suggested the establishment of a National Board of Adult Education to provide national focus and direction to literacy work and asked that voluntary agencies be enabled to undertake literacy work whenever possible.

The National Policy Resolution of 1968, in accepting the recommendations of the 1964-66 *Education Commission Report*, agreed that adult education was essential not only for accelerating programme of production, especially in agriculture, but also in quickening, the tempo of national development in general. Adult education was necessary for people's participation in the working of democratic institutions, for national integration and for realizing the ideal of a socialistic pattern of society¹⁷. The first important initiative in adult education promotion in India had, however, to wait until 1978.

NAEP: An Event of Great Significance between the Two National Policy Reviews

It is impossible to discuss the new adult education policy of 1986 without reference to the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP), launched in

1978¹⁸. For the first time in the history of India, adult education was put on the educational agenda of the nation and thereby made central to the development approach that would be pursued.

Adult education was defined as literacy, functionality and conscientization. In a country that was 65 per cent illiterate as the NAEP was being formulated, adult literacy had to be a core component of an adult education programme. Functionality would teach practical skills to improve productivity. The third, and the most important component from the point of view of a policy analyst was conscientisation. The poor and the disadvantaged - scheduled tribes and scheduled castes, and women - had to be made critically aware of their condition and organised to transform it.

NAEP used generative targeting of population to be covered. The initial focus would be on the age group 15-35 years - the one hundred million, supposedly the most active, in productive processes of the nation. The NAEP was easily the most sophisticated planning exercise, and created a potentially effective infrastructure to guide, administer and deliver adult education services to the people. During the two years of NAEP, 1978-80, a network of organisations came into being that would compare favourably with the infrastructure of the formal school system. At the centre, a National Board of Adult Education was established and the Directorate of Adult Education and State Resource Centres (SRC's). These SRC's would produce need-based instructional materials in regional and subregional languages for learners and teachers; provide training to functionaries at various levels; provide technical assistance to individuals and organisations requiring such assistance; and conduct applied research and evaluation and monitoring at the State level.

At the district level, there would be District Adult Education Officers, with their District Resource Centres. Finally, there would be Project Officers at the Block level looking after learner centres in the villages. There would be one teacher for 30 learners; one supervisor for 30 teachers; one project officer for 10 supervisors; and with around 100 villages to each Block, all the 500,000 villages of India would be covered by the NAEP.

The NAEP, even though, a government initiated programme did try to make it a people's programme. Voluntary agencies would play an important part as also the universities. As many as 30,000 voluntary agencies and 5,000 universities and colleges were sought to be drawn into the programme. Strangely enough, and perhaps for crass political reasons, the Government kept out political parties and their mass organisations of women, youth workers and peasants; all-India cultural, religious and youth organisations; and federations and associations of teachers, and employees in trades and industries.

Evaluation of the NAEP

Whatever was under the government's control got done, more or less¹⁹. Whatever required mobilisation of the people did not always get done. Structures did get established; but functions were not always performed effectively. Among the three instructional functions, literacy (as the technology of codification and decodification) did best, followed, by functionality. Conscientisation and critical awareness did not come either to learners or their teachers.

There was the expected scramble for jobs within the system and the expected nepotism and siphoning off of the resources by vested interests. Yet, during 1978-80, some 130,000 literacy centres may have been active, where some 3,640,000 adults were enrolled in classes to last ten months. At the least, ten per cent of those enrolled learned to read and write. Thirty thousand functionaries - instructors, supervisors and writers of books and primers - were trained. Some 3,000 literacy and post-literacy texts and materials were published, though the decentralisation in the production of materials did not always work. A start was made with monitoring and evaluation²⁰.

From NAEP to AEP

The new Government that came to power in 1980 proceeded to tinker with the NAEP and claim ownership²¹. The NAEP was reviewed by a specially established national committee²² and a "new" programme, called AEP²³ was promulgated as part of the 20-point programme for the removal of poverty.

The programme stayed with old curriculum content and promised to serve the same constituencies identified by NAEP - weaker sections of the society, women, scheduled tribes and scheduled castes. The AEP would stay with age group 15-35 years, but would adjust the target for completion by five years from 1985 to 1990. The infrastructure established under the NAEP would be retained.

There were some important changes that should interest a policy analyst. The adult education programme became a government programme and the burden of funding and implementation was divided between the centre and the states. That would also shift the blame for failure to the states. A large allocation of Rs.1,280 million was made on adult education during the Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85), but only Rs.600 million was to come from the centre. The other Rs.680 million was to come from the states - a somewhat uncertain prospect.

The Government of India threw most of the voluntary associations out of the AEP, claiming that most of them had politicised their work; and, worse, had made corrupt use of the government grants received. Instead, more was demanded from students. Altogether no more than 20-30 per cent of the pro-

gramme was to be undertaken outside the government. However, it was hoped that voluntary associations would be able to contribute considerably to the programme through innovations and adaptations which it was said could only occur within such institutional settings.

Finally, an attempt was made to introduce "realism" in the teaching-learning process. Ten months were not enough to teach literacy, functionality and awareness. Now it would be a three year programme in three phases:

Phase 1 of about 300-350 hours spread over a year to include basic literacy, general education with emphasis on health and family planning, functional programme relating to learners vocations, and familiarity with laws and policies affecting the learners.

Phase 2 of about 150 hours spread over a year to reinforce literacy skills and its use to daily life. This phase would include appreciation of science in relation to one's environment, components of geography, history and country's cultural heritage, etc. It would also contribute to the improvement in vocational skills.

Phase 3 of about 100 hours spread over a year to achieve reasonable degree of self-reliance.

While apparently it all made good sense, the new schedule would postpone results from literacy programme even further than before and would effectively achieve "the schooling" of adult literacy and thereby remove any possibility of its becoming a popular movement.

The Second Educational Policy Review

When the present Government came to power, the new Prime Minister was expected to perform miracles in healing the nation and taking it forward to prosperity. There were, of course, promises to serve the poor and to defend the weak. But there was never any expectations of any move towards popular change for a new society. The only thing new was the new rhetoric of technology to move into the twenty first century. Entrepreneurial India had to take charge and produce the wealth for all to share. Education, of course, would provide the training for entrepreneurship and the opportunity for social mobility.

Why a New Educational Policy ?

There were reasons other than educational for the 1986 educational policy review. The government needed to create an impression of moving quickly along new directions and needed support and legitimization from the public. But the Indian education was indeed in need of repair. There were within the system

contradictory demands for expansion and relevance. An honest attempt was indeed necessary to gear the educational system for a unified India whose integrity was in danger on the eve of the twenty-first century.

Numbers tell the story of the educational inheritance of the present Government at the Centre. While all figures do not relate to the particular year of ascendance to power, nor do all of the statistics relate to the same year, yet they do present a useful context for speculation of the possible and the probable in regard to the role of education for development in India.

In 1987, India was estimated to have a population of 780 million²⁴. By the year 2000 it would be the most populous country in the world with a population of one billion people, knocking off China from that position.

Estimates for 1985 showed an adult literacy rate of 43.5 (57.2 for Males and 25.2 for Females) among those 15 years of age and older. Universalisation of primary education remained a dream. In 1983, gross enrolment ratio for primary education was 90 (105 for Males and 73 for Females). Net enrolment rates will of course be much lower. Secondary gross enrolment ratio for 1983 was 34. Percentage enrolled in technical and vocational education in 1975 (no later figures are available) was a mere 0.7. Education claimed 9.6 per cent of the public expenditure (1981 figures) and 3.2 per cent of the GNP (1982 figures). Both formal and non-formal adult education needed fixing.

The Focus of the New Education Policy

The first shot was fired by the new Prime Minister in his first national broadcast on January 1985. There were three themes on his mind: national unity and integration and a work ethic; qualitative inputs in education reflecting technological advances and organic linkages of education with productive forces in all the different sectors; and an effective operational strategy to “germinate and radiate excellence and quality in education through certain nodal points like Central Schools or by the establishment of pace-setting schools in each district.”

The Ministry of Education of the Government of India followed up on the Prime Minister’s broadcast with elaborating and defining the *Challenge of Education*²⁵. The 1968 Education Policy, it said, had been both imaginative and purposeful in its thrusts. Desired improvements had not, however, materialized. Because neither the resources nor the measures for restructuring the system were put in place. This is what the new policy would seek to address.

People’s Participation in the Policy Review

The Ministry sought to involve all the various stakeholders in the review of the educational policy. Various constituencies of citizens, students, teachers

and educators, journalists, business, politicians, and others were asked to send in their comments. State governments provided their reviews of the policy document on the basis of state, district, subregional, and block level seminars and discussions²⁵. It is difficult to say how the process actually worked and how the inputs from the public once received were systematically fed back into the process of decision-making.

Adult Literacy Education under the New Educational Policy of 1986

The main thrust of the new educational policy seems to be efficiency, not equity. The general mode is technocratic. Adult education and adult literacy are parts of the new policy initiative, but are by no means central to the plan for the Indian future.

The New Alphabet Soup : NPAE

The newest alphabet soup is NPAE (National Programme of Adult Education), but the soup looks, smells and tastes the same. There is indeed a remarkable continuity between the old policy of adult education and the new. Summary statement relating to adult education included in the 1986 policy statement deserves to be quoted in full²⁷.

Adult Education

4.10 Our ancient scriptures define education as that which liberates—i.e. provides the instruments for liberation from ignorance and oppression. In the modern world, it would naturally include the ability to read and write, since that is the main instrument of learning. Hence crucial importance of adult education, including adult literacy.

4.11 The critical development issue today is the continuous upgradation of skills so as to produce manpower resources of the kind and the number required by the society. Since participation by beneficiaries in the developmental programmes is of crucial importance, systematic programmes of adult education linked with national goals such as alleviation of poverty, national integration, environmental conservation, energisation of the cultural creativity of the people, observance of the small family norm, promotion of women's equality, etc. will be organised in the existing programmes, reviewed and strengthened.

4.12 *The whole Nation must pledge itself to eradication of illiteracy, particularly in the 15-35 age group. The Central and State Governments, political parties and their mass organisations, the mass media and educational institutions must commit themselves to mass literacy programmes of diverse nature. It will also have to involve on a large scale teachers, students, youth, voluntary agencies, employers, etc. Concerted efforts will be made to harness various research agencies to improve the pedagogical aspects of adult literacy. The mass literacy programmes would include, in addition to literacy, functional knowledge and skills, and also awareness among learners about the socio-economic reality and the possibility to change it.*

4.13 *A vast programme of adult and continuing education will be implemented through various ways and channels, including -*

- (a) establishment of centres in rural areas for continuing education;*
- (b) worker's education through the employers, trade unions and concerned agencies of government;*
- (c) post-secondary education institutions;*
- (d) wider promotion of books, libraries and reading rooms;*
- (e) use of radio, TV and films, as mass and group learning media;*
- (f) creation of learners' groups and organisations;*
- (g) programmes of distance learning;*
- (h) organizing assistance in self-learning; and*
- (i) organising need and interest based vocational training programmes.*

The above statement is quite complete and comprehensive. Only a few of the themes need to be further expanded to set up a discussion for analysis.

The Programme of Action published by the government postpones the time targets²⁸. The 100 million adults between the ages of 15-35 would now wait until 1995 to become fully literate: 40 million of them to be covered by 1990 and another 60 million by 1995. The constituencies of the NPAE have not changed, however. There is the promise of affirmative action in adult education on behalf of women, scheduled castes and tribes and other disadvantaged minorities.

In terms of the curricular content of the adult education programme, the trinity of literacy, functionality and critical awareness remains. The phrase "critical awareness" is preferred over "conscientization" and critical awareness itself is expanded to include awareness of the "the national goals, of develop-

ment programmes, and for liberation from oppression." National integration must be taught "through insistence on observance of secular, scientific and moral values," thereby contributing to democratic and socialist ideals.

There is unabashed belief in the magic of technology. There is promise for the "application of science and technology, and pedagogical research for improving the pace and environment of learning." The eradication of illiteracy is thus seen as a two-pronged "Technical and Societal Mission." In pursuance of the Mission, effort will be made to (i) improve the physical environment, power supply and the illumination etc. of the Adult Education Centres; (ii) facilitate and expedite preparation, printing, distribution of topical and relevant learning materials and learning aids on a decentralised basis; (iii) enrich the process of learning with audio-visual materials by enlarging the range of Television and Radio broadcasts and also by developing cheaper and sturdier equipment; (iv) reduce the time-lag between pedagogic research and the assimilation of its results in the teaching-learning processes; and (v) create inter-active environment between the electronic teaching devices and the learners."

In addition to the existing infrastructures, there is the promise to create "dynamic management structures to cope with the target envisioned." Chinese democratic centralism will appear in the Indian version; there will be a centralised policy framework and direction combined with decentralisation of the planning and implementation process and functional autonomy. There will be clear delineation of responsibility to enforce operational accountability; and mechanism for ensuring the effective participation of both functionaries, community leaders and beneficiaries in planning and day-to-day implementation of the programme at the grassroot level.

The critical level in the management will remain to be the Project, "an administratively viable and functionally autonomous field agency with complete responsibility for eradication of illiteracy and the organisation of continuing education programmes in a compact area." The critical operational unit would remain to be the Adult Education Centre (AEC) organised at the village or mohalla level.

The national initiatives and resources will be well integrated with decision making networks at the state level through the establishment of special commissions and executive committees. The district, tehsil and thana level administrative machinery will be involved in NPAE to ensure support for "awareness-oriented adult education programmes."

Management information systems (MIS's) will be developed at all appropriate levels and special evaluation studies undertaken whenever necessary. "Maximum attention will be paid to the subject of learner evaluation - the purpose being to ensure that all adult learners attain a level in literacy and numeracy which would enable them to continue learning in a self-reliant man-

ner.” Evaluation of awareness will be conducted through participatory methods. Internal evaluation will be complemented with external evaluation.

Partners in Implementation

NPAE is seen as a cooperative endeavour between the central government and the states with full involvement of the community and the functionaries concerned. At the same time, political parties and mass organisations of workers, peasants, women, youth and students, the entire system of educational institutions, the mass media, and the development departments that must utilize services of adult education will be expected to play the appropriate role in achieving the objectives of NPAE. Voluntary agencies and social activist groups will be welcome to collaborate as long as they can run programmes in conformity with the objectives of the NPAE.

Building on What is There

NPAE will build upon what already exists through reorganisation, coordination, and extension of efforts. The already existing programmes of Rural Functional Literacy Projects (RFLP) and State Adult Education Programmes (SAEP) will be given greater flexibility in project structure; encouraged to use spoken languages of the learner; conduct better training of functionaries; increase number of women instructors; decentralize the supervisory system; and assure continuity of programmes in the field.

Existing programmes of workers education will be brought into greater conformity with NPAE. The Central Board of Workers Education will take up programmes of literacy and workers education; and invite much greater involvement of trade unions. Shramik Vidyapeeths (Workers Institutes) will pay greater attention to rural workers, women workers, prevention of child labour and workers' productivity. The NPAE will, of course, be more than a simple reorganisation of already existing programmes. There will be a massive additional effort in the form of launching of a mass literacy programme.

Mass Functional Literacy Programme

The mass functional literacy programme would mobilise the energies of the country's youth, teachers, workers and peasants. Students would be required to undertake literacy as “study service” - “specific projects taken up as part of work experience and social/national service, which would be reflected in the

students' final result sheets." Incentives would also be provided at the institutional level to universities, colleges, higher secondary schools, and secondary schools, for eradicating illiteracy from a well-defined area. Trade unions, Panchayati Raj agencies and other representative organisations of people will be encouraged to undertake literacy work; and, of course, individuals will be asked to make personal commitment through voluntary service.

Linkages with Development Agencies and Programmes

An important theme in the new programme is the establishment of linkages between adult education work and development departments. A literacy component- the Functional Literacy of Women (FLOW) - will be introduced into the ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services) as in all other programmes for women, scheduled castes and tribes. Literacy will also be introduced into all labour welfare programmes, and employers will be required, if necessary by law, to organise literacy and skill development programmes for all their employees. At another level of coordination, special literacy primers and other reading materials will be developed for the beneficiaries of programmes such as IRDP (Integrated Rural Development Programme).

The summary statement on policy of adult literacy education reproduced above lists the components of a massive continuing education programme to help learners to continue with their formal education or to obtain further capacitation in skills.

An Analysis of the New Education Policy

The distributive intents of the policy of adult literacy education as stated in the new policy documents remain laudable. Attention continues to be focussed on the weaker sections of the Indian polity - women, scheduled castes and tribes and other minorities with a history of abuse and exploitation abetted by the culture. There is no revolutionary fervor, but interest in gradual reform seems to be there.

The content of adult education also remains justifiable: literacy for independent learning; skills development for more productive participation in the economy; and awareness of ones own social condition. One should note the cooling of the rhetoric of liberation and empowerment in the 1986 policy statement as compared with the NAEP document of 1979; and the expansion of the definition of awareness to include awareness of government's development programmes.

The institutional infrastructure for the implementation of the programme,

inherited from NAEP/AEP may have been somewhat strengthened by greater preoccupation with more effective management. However, the locus of control seems to be shifting further towards the centre. A greater articulation of centre-state relationships is envisaged. The centre is to retain the control of direction and leadership while states, districts and voluntary associations (if and when involved), groups of activists and communities will implement the national vision. To put the best face on this move, it could be seen as the Indian version of Chinese "democratic centralism."

Voluntary associations, which during 1978-79 are supposed (and known) to have made irresponsible use of the role and resources provided to them, continue to be in disfavour. They are to be allowed no more than 20 per cent of the total coverage and that too under strict accountability. On the other hand, considerably greater stock is put into educational institutions and students in universities, colleges and higher secondary schools. This trust in schools and students may be misplaced since the curriculum organisation in Indian education is absolutely incompatible with service to the communities outside the schools and because of the middle class orientation and socialisation of the schooled in India. As a consequence, the NPAE begins to look more and more like the burden of bureaucracy.

A grassroot institution at the community level is proposed in the form of Jana Shikshan Nilayams (JSN's) - learning resource centres to serve clusters of villages. While conceptually unexceptional, it is felt by some that rural folks, especially women, are unlikely to walk to another village to make use of the JSN's facilities and resources and that following the school-community route would have been a much better idea.

There is indication that policy makers and planners are aware of the need for making institutional interfaces and networks between and among the institutions of adult education and those of development extension. However, all the necessary mechanisms seem to be lacking and those existing seem to lack the necessary strength.

The target of a 100 million between the ages of 15-35 years remains. The target date, however, has slipped further. Under the NAEP it was 1985; under AEP it was 1990. Now under NPAE it is 1995. Significantly, funds provided for the programme may not be commensurate with requirements. As Tarlok Singh, an eminent member of the Planning Commission, now retired, comments, in spite of all the rhetoric, government's own commitment to adult literacy remains unconvincing; and allocation of funds insufficient.²⁹ Prem Kirpal, former Secretary, Union Ministry of Education and Dr. D.D. Tewari, one-time President of the Indian Adult Education Association also have similar misgivings about implementation of the programme which Tewari found lacking in "the thrill of people's involvement, the courage of conviction and appreciative

support of the field workers or teachers by and large.”

To sum, in the calculus of ideology and technology of the NPAE, the technology is quite all right, but the ideology is not. There is a lack of political commitment. If anything, the political climate has worsened for the NPAE as a government programme. India is going through a period when the social consensus is breaking down³⁰. While the prognosis is not good for NPAE as “a government programme”, that does not mean that no literacy work is possible in India today. Indeed, the institutionalisation of adult literacy education since the initiative of 1978 will ensure continuation of literacy work at some level, howsoever, minimal. The present political conditions, if anything, open up new opportunities for non-governmental programmes undertaken on the initiative of people themselves. The role of the intelligentsia and of activist groups in adult literacy promotion at this moment in Indian history is as important as it is unlikely.

References:

- 1 The phrase “adult literacy education” has been used in the paper to cover both “adult literacy” and “adult education.” All of the three descriptors will be used in the body of the paper as appropriate.
- 2 According to the latest available statistics for India, more than 70 percent of the population above 25 years of age had never been inside a school. Refer, *Education in Asia and the Pacific : Statistical Indicators 1987*. (A political chart). Bangkok, Thailand : Unesco Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, 1987. For world statistics on education, see *Statistical Yearbook, 1986*. Paris : Unesco, 1986.
- 3 Bhola, H.S. The design of (educational) policy : Directing and harnessing social power for social outcomes. *Viewpoints*, 1975, 51(3), 1-16.
- 4 The methodology of social sciences has undergone a significant paradigm shift during the last twenty-five years or more. The pretensions to making “policy analysis” into an objective enterprise and an exact science have been abandoned. See House, P.W. *The Art of Public Policy Analysis*. Beverly Hills : Sage, 1982. The new paradigms of social sciences are discussed in Reason, P. and Rowan, J. (Eds.). *Human Inquiry : A Source Book of New Paradigm Research*. New York : Willey, 1981.
- 5 A considerable body of literature has become available on the subject of institution-building that also includes some discussion on institutional analysis. See Blase, M.G. *Institution-building : A Sourcebook*. (Revised edition) Columbia : University of Missouri Press, 1985.
- 6 Braybrook, D, and Lindblom, C.E. *A Strategy of Decision : Policy Evaluation as a Social Process*. New York : The Free Press, 1963.

- 7 The essential conceptual structure of this model was first presented in Bhola, H.S. *Campaigning for Literacy : Eight National Experiences of the Twentieth Century, with a Memorandum to Decision-makers*. Paris : Unesco, 1984, 196-199. An intermediate version of the model appeared in Bhola, H.S. "The politics of adult literacy : An international perspective". *Journal of Reading*, April 1988.
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- 11 Das, A.N. De-politicisation of politics : Democracy by other means. *India Tribune* (Chicago), December 26, 1987.
- 12 Inkeles, A. and Smith, D.H. *Becoming Modern : Individual Change in Six Developing Countries*. Cambridge : Harvard University Press, 1974.
- 13 The planning process was taken up in earnest in India with the establishment of the Planning Commission in 1950 by the Central Cabinet. The first Five Year Plan began in 1951/1952. See *Statistical Outline of India* 1982. Bombay : Tata Services, Department of Economics and Statistics, 1982, p. 178, for the years covered by the successive plans until the end of the Sixth Five Year Plan in 1984-85. The Seventh Five Year Plan is now under implementation. See *Seventh Five Year Plan 1985-90*. (Vol. I and Vol. II) New Delhi : Planning Commission, Government of India, 1985.
- 14 Singh, S. *History of Adult Education During British Period*. Delhi : Indian Adult Education Association, 1957.
- 15 *Report of the Review Committee on the National Adult Education Programme*. New Delhi : Ministry of Education and Culture, Government of India, 1980.
- 16 *Report of the Education Commission (1964-66) : Education and National Development*. New Delhi : Ministry of Education, Government of India, 1966.
- 17 Quoted from *Seventh Five Year Plan*, 1985-90. Vol. II, p.252.
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- 23 *Adult Education Programme: Policy Perspective and Strategies for Implementation.* New Delhi: Ministry of Education and Culture, Government of India, 1983.
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- 26 Some 10,000 responses seem to have been received and analysed and published for limited circulation by the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi under the general title: *Towards Restructuring Indian Education*. Some of the material read for the purposes of this review included: *Citizens Perceptions* (Vol. I and Vol. II), 1985; *A Viewpoint of the Press*, 1986; and *Perceptions from States*, 1986.
- 27 *National Policy on Education –1986*. New Delhi: Department of Education Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, May, 1986.
- 28 *National Policy on Education – 1986: Programme of Action*. Chapter on Adult Education Reproduced in Directorate of Adult Education, Government of India, *Newsletter*, X(4), pp 8-15, April, 1987.
- 29 Observations by Tarlok Singh, Dr. D.D. Tiwari and Prem Kripal reported here were made at the Round Table on Implementation of Adult Education Programme under the New Education Policy convened by the Indian Adult Education Programme Association, New Delhi, January 30-31, 1987, reported in the *Indian Journal of Adult Education*, 48(1), January-March, 1987.
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5. India : Adult Education - the Legislative and Policy Environment*

Ila Patel

The Indian education system is financed predominantly by the central (federal) and state governments. Educational statistics reveal the story of the expansion of the formal educational system which, it was assumed, would alleviate the problem of illiteracy. With the phenomenal expansion of the formal educational system, the literacy rate has also increased from 16.67 per cent in 1951 to 52.1 per cent in 1991 (Table 1).

Table -1
Progress of literacy in India (1901-1991)

Year	Literacy rates (percentage)		
	Person	Male	Female
1901	5.35	9.83	0.60
1911	5.92	10.56	1.05
1921	7.16	12.21	1.81
1931	9.50	15.59	2.93
1941	16.10	24.90	7.30
1951	16.67	24.95	7.93
1961	24.02	34.44	12.95
1971	29.45	39.45	18.69
1981 *	36.23	46.89	24.82
1991	52.10	63.90	39.40

* Excludes Assam where the 1981 Census was not held.

* Excludes Jammu and Kashmir where the 1991 Census was not held. Literacy rates for 1991 are based on the estimated population aged 7 years and above.

Source: Ministry of Human Resource Development (1988:7) and Prem Chand (1992:5).

* *International Review of Education*, Vol.42, No. 1-3, 1996, pp. 75-96.

However, huge numbers of people have remained unschooled and without access to organized forms of learning. The absolute number of illiterates has increased from 300 million in 1951 to 332.29 million in 1991 (see Table 2 for recent statistics). In addition, a substantial proportion of the school-age population drop out after elementary or secondary education and join the labour force. The educational level of the labour force is very low (see Table 3) in rural as well as urban areas. Against this background of the dismal educational situation of school-age children, adults and workers, what efforts are made by the Indian state to educate them?

Table-2**The Magnitude of Illiteracy in India (1981-91)**

Year	Area	Number of illiterates* (in millions)		
		Male	Female	Total
1981**	All	305.31	122.40	182.91
		(56.4)	(43.6)	(70.2)
	Rural	262.36	106.03	156.33
		(64.0)	(50.4)	(78.3)
	Urban	42.95	16.37	26.58
		(32.8)	(23.3)	(43.7)
1991+	All	332.29	130.15	202.14
		(47.9)	(36.1)	(60.6)
	Rural	287.82	114.51	173.31
		(55.8)	(43.0)	(69.4)
	Urban	44.47	15.64	28.83
		(25.0)	(16.7)	(34.3)

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage to the corresponding population.

* The number of illiterates for 1981 and 1991 includes the population aged 7 years and above.

** Excludes Assam where the 1981 Census was not held.

+ Excludes Jammu and Kashmir, where the 1991 Census was not held. The number of illiterates for 1991 is based on the estimated population aged 7 years and above.

Source: Prem Chand (1992-5)

Table -3
Educational Composition of the Labour Force (1987-88)

Educational level	Rural		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Illiterate	48.3	82.3	19.6	51.8
Up to primary	29.6	12.0	30.5	19.0
Middle	11.6	3.2	16.4	7.3
Secondary	8.4	2.0	21.8	12.3
Higher education	2.1	0.4	11.7	9.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100

Figures relate to the percentage of the population aged 15 years and above. Figures are computed from the data of the 27th, 32nd, 38th and 43rd rounds of the National Sample Survey Organisation.

Source : Institute of Applied Manpower Research (1994: 102 and 104).

Within the broader context of educational planning and the system of general education, adult education is not a priority sub-sector. Concerted and systematic efforts have not yet been made to develop the system of adult education and training to meet the growing social demand for education. Nevertheless, the formulation of the National Policy on Education in 1986 in response to the changes in India's development approach marked a new phase in the history of adult education policy. In the context of fiscal constraints and growing demand for skilled labour for the market economy, adult education has received some attention in the new educational policy.

Historical context of adult education policies

The changing policy environment for adult education in India in recent years is set in the historical context of shifting educational priorities in response to the changing nature of the Indian state and its development approach. In the Indian context, adult education in general deals narrowly with adult literacy education. Hence, the focus of discussion in this section is on adult literacy policy and programs and not on adult education in the broad sense. Nevertheless, an effort is made to highlight the extent to which general education policy has paid attention to non-formal education with the formal education system.

The selective tradition of adult education (1947-77)

Despite massive illiteracy, political independence from the colonial rulers in 1947 did not drastically alter the precolonial and colonial legacy of a general neglect of education for the adult illiterate population. After independence, the Indian state undertook the task of educational reconstruction for the development of state capitalism and a self-reliant nation against the legacy of the quantitatively deficient, culturally alien, and hierarchical system of colonial education, through the powerful apparatus of development planning. General educational policy during the first five development plans (1951-79) focused on the expansion of the pyramidal system of formal education to create a skilled labour force and to meet the growing social demand for formal education. The central government neither took any constitutional responsibility for educating the adult illiterate population nor emphasized adult education within general educational policy. The expansion of adult education on a large scale was not perceived as significant by the state in the context of the low level of economic development and high popular demand for formal education. It was assumed that the expanded system of formal education would alleviate the problem of illiteracy.

Nevertheless, the post-independence period marked important changes in the state's approach to adult literacy education. The development of adult education during 1947-77 can be divided into three distinct but interrelated phases.

During the formative period of capitalist development and nation-building (1947-64), the government promoted adult education essentially to make adult illiterates conscious of their rights and responsibilities as citizens of a democratic capitalist state. Citizenship education, known as Social Education, was the major thrust of the adult education programme. However, Social Education remained a marginal component of the community development programme, which failed to reach the rural poor. In practice, Social Education achieved modest success in imparting citizenship training or basic literacy skills to illiterate citizens in rural areas.

With the shift in the development strategy of the state in the early 1960s from industrialization of basic industries under the public sector to rapid modernization of agriculture, significant changes occurred in the state's approach to educating the illiterate adult population. Given the emphasis on the development of human resources for accelerating economic growth, it was proposed to train unschooled youth, school drop-outs, and others with insufficient schooling for the new production system. At the same time, adult education was conceptualized as a life-long educational process for all sections of society. In practice, however, the major focus of adult education remained on promoting functional literacy through the Farmers' Functional Literacy Project in the areas

of high yielding crop varieties. Notwithstanding rigorous planning, the Farmers' Functional Literacy Project suffered from poor implementation and had limited success.

Finally, a major shift in the state's conceptual approach and strategy of adult education occurred in the mid-1970s with the emergence of the first populist authoritarian regime in the context of deteriorating economic and political conditions. The scope of adult education was widened to extend remedial non-formal education to the disadvantaged groups who had missed schooling. The Fifth Plan (1974-79) advocated non-formal education for unschooled children, youth and adults at all levels of education. The primary focus of adult education, however, remained on extending non-formal education programmes to young adults (15-25 years), and expanding the Functional Literacy Programme to the beneficiaries of various development projects in order to increase their participation in those projects. In practice, the regime's weak administrative apparatus and party organization did not succeed in adequately implementing these programmes.

The general direction of adult education policy and programmes during 1947-77 was shaped by the changing nature of the state's development strategy. Two significant trends emerged during this period. First, adult education was integrated permanently as a sub-sector of general educational policy. Secondly, although adult education remained the primary responsibility of the state governments, the central government began to play an active role in decision-making through centrally-sponsored programmes of adult education and the creation of administrative structures at the national level to provide resource and technical support in the key areas of training, curriculum development and evaluation.

The emerging tradition of mass education

The political transition from an authoritarian Congress to a democratic Janata regime in 1977 brought significant changes in development strategy. The regime, faced with the task of softening the authoritarian image of the state and responding to popular demands from diverse sections of society, opted for a neo-Gandhian approach to development that was compatible with the capitalist state and economy. The focus of the new development strategy was on rural development, development of small-scale and cottage industries, and reducing poverty and income inequalities through fuller employment of human resources as well as through populist welfare measures. Consequently, a major shift occurred in the educational policy to gear it towards new development priorities.

For the first time, the focus of educational policy shifted from higher level

of education to mass education (i.e basic education) - elementary education and adult education. The major thrust of the proposed general educational policy was on eradicating illiteracy, universalizing elementary education and making education more employment-oriented and relevant to society. Educational strategy focused primarily on the expansion of elementary education and adult education and selective expansion of secondary education and higher education; elementary education received the lion's share of the planned education budget.

It was in this context that adult literacy came to the fore. Massive illiteracy was perceived by development planners as a major obstacle to increased participation by the rural poor in the populist development projects of the new government. The Janata regime proposed the first policy statement on adult education and introduced the first nationwide programme of adult education known as the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP), in 1978 to educate young adult illiterates. The two main goals of the NAEP were to upgrade functional skills and vocational capabilities of learners, and to create awareness among the poor and the illiterate about impediments to development, their conditions of deprivation and various government laws and policies.

The conceptual perspective of the new adult education policy and programme mixed pseudo-Freirian terminology (for example, conscientization, liberation and dialogue) with the dominant developmentalist perspective on education to articulate the populist rhetoric of the Janata regime. A broader concept of adult education was introduced to incorporate the components of literacy, functionality and social awareness. Unlike the earlier programme of adult education, which followed a selective approach in terms of coverage and quality, the NAEP was envisaged as a nationwide programme to educate approximately 100 million illiterate adults in the age group 15-35 years, especially women and the disadvantaged groups (scheduled castes and scheduled tribes), over a period of five years. The Janata government expanded and strengthened the organizational and administrative structure of adult education at all levels to implement the programme and created an extensive system of monitoring and evaluation.

During the short duration of NAEP under the Janata regime (1977-79), 5.77 million learners were enrolled in adult literacy classes across the country. However, progress and performance was very uneven, depending upon the nature of participation of non-governmental organisations in implementation. The bureaucratization of the programme also hindered its implementation. Despite the NAEP's emphasis on functionality and social awareness, it was largely confined to teaching rudimentary literacy skills. The change in the political regime in 1980 led to minor changes in adult education strategy and the programme. However, the legacy of poor implementation continued during 1980-1985.

The political economy of educational reform in the 1980s.*

The National Policy on Education (1986) was a second major attempt on the part of the Indian government to review the existing system and to gear educational development towards new development priorities.² The new reform was conditioned by the fiscal crisis of the state and the changed political and economic context of Indian society in the mid- 1980s (Patel 1992).

Educational expansion in the post-independence period had taken place with large public investment in education. Since 1950-51, government expenditure on education (both plan and non-plan) had steadily increased from Rs.1140 million in 1950-51 to 37,460 million in 1980-81. However, a major constraint to further expansion in the 1980s was the inadequacy of financial resources owing to the sluggish economic growth. The overall growth rate of the Indian economy between 1950 and 1980 was only 3.5 per cent per year. Moreover, the increase in population growth absorbed gains in terms of per capital income. Over the years, public expenditure on education had increased as a proportion of Gross National Product (GNP) from 1.2 per cent in 1950-51 to 3.1 in 1980-81 (National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration 1990 : 107). In the 1980s, however, the percentage of GNP going to education increased at a slower rate. Decision about which level or type of education should expand during the period of austerity were not only economic or technical, but also political.

Political transition to a technocratic regime in 1984 marked a significant change in India's development approach. Against the background of sluggish economic growth and a growing trend towards regionalism and communalism, the new regime assigned priority to unity and integrity of the nation, rapid modernization of industry, efficient administration and export-oriented economic growth through privatization and liberalization of one of the most controlled and regulated economies. It was assumed that the new economic policies would improve the performance of the Indian economy and would alleviate the problems of rural poverty and unemployment. Politically, the new approach was geared towards India's new middle class of 100 million, who represented only ten per cent of the Indian population. The new educational reform was proposed to meet the changing requirements in skills and values for the modernizing economy.

In the context of fiscal constraints, the major thrust of the 1986 reform has been on consolidating the higher levels of formal education while improving efficiency and quality of education with available resources. Specifically, it proposes to restructure the system of higher education and technical education to diversify growing social demand and to prepare the skilled labour force in the emerging areas of new technology. In secondary education, the policy

envisages diverting 25 per cent of students to the vocational stream. Basic education - universalization of elementary education and adult literacy education - is perceived as an important contribution to productivity, small families, lower infant mortality, improved health and hygiene and empowerment of women.

The National Policy on Education (1986) is based on the human capital perspective that assumes that all educational problems can be solved by "efficient" investment in education and management of resources. In reality, it reflects the ethos of the dominant development paradigm on education that has emerged in 1980s. While articulating concerns for quality and equity, the focus of the reform is far more on the role of education in preparing and training selected human resources for the modern economy and on improving educational quality for those who are already well placed in schools. Concern for basic education appears to be shaped by the new agenda of the state in the market economy of protecting lower levels of education, while paving the way for privatization and commercialization of higher levels of education. Thus, democratic concern for equality in education is to be tackled through selective programmatic interventions for disadvantaged groups and not through systemic reform.

The overwhelming focus of the new educational reform is on the formal educational system. Nevertheless, it emphasizes eradication of a literacy as well as non-formal education at different levels. Adult continuing education in the National Policy on Education (1986) is, however, perceived predominantly as an alternative to quantitative expansion of formal education and as a compensatory type of education and skill training for young and new entrants to the labour market. India is a newly "adjusting" country in the global economy. Actual implementation of the new educational reform will also be shaped by the rapidly changing economic and technological context and turbulent nature of Indian polity.

The general legislative framework

India is a parliamentary democracy with a federal structure comprising 26 states and 6 union territories. The Constitution of India that came in existence in 1950 guides the basic framework for planning and administration. Educational planning and management in India is undertaken in the broader context of India's development planning and administrative system (Ayyar 1993).

The federal nature of the Indian polity necessitates planning and coordination at two levels; the centre (i.e. federal) and the states. The Constitution of India determines the distribution of governmental powers (legislative, administrative and financial) between the central and state governments. Adequate institutional

mechanisms are created to facilitate the sharing of resources and responsibilities, and substantial financial resources flow from the central to the state governments through the Financial Commission and the Planning Commission. At the state level, a four-tier structure of administration exists, comprising region/zone/range, district, taluk/block/mandal and villages. In urban areas, there are local bodies, such as municipalities and municipal corporation. The district is the most important unit of administration.³ The recently enacted 73rd constitutional amendment has given the local bodies constitutional responsibility for local government and specific functions including primary education.

The Planning Commission plays a vital role in the Indian planning process. It acts in close collaboration and consultation with the ministers of the central and state governments. The arrangements for planning at the state level vary widely. State Planning Boards/Commissions have been set up in almost all the states. Some states have also set up district planning units.

Several articles of the Constitution of India lay down general principles governing educational development in the country.⁴ Though parliament has authority to legislate on education, central government in partnership with the state governments plays an important role in shaping the direction of educational development in the country through various institutional mechanisms at different levels. Until the 42nd amendment of the Constitution in 1975, education was in the State List. The role of the central government was limited to formulating policy directives related to higher education and research, and establishment and maintenance of central universities and specific institutions for scientific or technical education and research. To facilitate formulation of all-India policies, education was included in the Concurrent List in 1976, which is shared by both the central and state governments. The National Policy on Education (1986) envisages central government playing an active role with regard to the national and integrative character of education, quality and standards, manpower planning, research and advanced study, the international dimensions of education and culture and human resource development. Central government influences the planning and management of education through financial, technical and regulatory mechanisms, while decisions regarding the organization and structure of education are largely the concerns of the states.

The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), set up in 1935, plays a key role in the formulation and monitoring of educational policies and programmes. However, education as a sector is an integral part of development planning, and it is the Ministry of Human Resource Development, under the charge of a Cabinet Minister, that is responsible for all matters concerned with education. The Department of Education is the apex administrative body of the Ministry and functions through eight bureaus. It also functions as the administrative body for several educational institutions and research organizations.

The organizational and administrative structure at the state level varies. The most common pattern consists of three departments of school education, higher education and technical education. Each department has a few directorates; each supervising a particular stage of education, such as elementary education, secondary education, and so on. The organizations and functions of each of these departments are similar to the Department of Education at the national level.

The general education system

Over the years, a broadly uniform system of formal education has emerged in India, comprising ten years of school education, followed by two years of higher secondary education and three years of higher education to obtain a first degree.⁵

The significance of early childhood education is recognized in the educational policies. However, compulsory schooling begins at the age of six when a child is admitted to class I. Elementary education generally consists of two stages - primary education (classes I-V) and upper primary/middle school education (classes VI-VIII). The upper primary stage can be an independent unit or can be combined with the primary or secondary stage of learning or both. After completing elementary education, a child can also join a vocational school or an Industrial Training Institute (ITI) instead of joining the secondary school offering general education.

Secondary education in most states comprises two stages. The secondary stage consists of classes IX and X or in a few states includes classes XI and XII, while the higher/senior secondary stage comprises class XI and XII. In some states, higher secondary schools are located in schools and in a few they are located in colleges. The higher secondary stage is referred to as the pre-university/intermediate or pre-degree/junior college stage when located in colleges.

On the completion of secondary education, i.e. ten years of general education, a person has a choice of either taking up academic courses at the higher secondary level in order to prepare for college education, opting for the vocational stream within the higher secondary stage, or joining specialized vocational training institutes, such as polytechnics and Industrial Training Institutes. Successful completion of higher secondary education qualifies a person to enter institutes of higher education.

Institutes of higher education are broadly divided into four categories by the University Grants Commission (UGC) as follows: (1) universities established by Act of Parliament or state legislation; (2) institutes of national importance, such as the Indian Institutes of Technology, which are established by Act of Parliament and award degrees; (3) institutions deemed to be universities, which

offer general courses or advanced level courses in a particular field of specialization and award degrees; and (4) institutions such as Indian Institutes of Management, which are established by the Government of India for professional education and award diplomas.

For educational planning, the formal educational system is divided into four main sectors: (1) elementary education, (2) secondary education, (3) higher education, and (4) technical education. In the first four decades of development, there was phenomenal expansion of formal education at all levels (Table 4). However, the quantitative expansion has not contributed to improving the quality of education. Wastage and stagnation are still significant in elementary education. In 1987-88, drop-out rates were still 46.97 per cent for classes I-V and 62.9 per cent for classes I-VI. Improved access to education has also not solved the problems of educational disparities in terms of gender, class and regions, while in higher education, there is a growing trend towards privatization. The National Policy on Education (1986) has paved the way for rapid expansion of autonomous colleges and departments, which are privately funded and managed.

Table 4

Growth of Educational Institutions in India (1950-92)

Year	Primary	Upper Primary	High/ Higher Secondary Schools	Colleges		Universities+
				General	Professional	
1950-51	209671	13596	7416	370	208	27
1960-61	330399	49663	17329	967	852	45
1970-71	408378	90621	37051	2285	992	82
1980-81	494503	118335	51624	3421	1156	110
1990-91	558392	146636	78619	4862	886	146
1991-92	565786	152077	81201	5058	950	196

* Inclusive of intermediate and pre-degree junior colleges.

+ Inclusive of "deemed universities".

Source: Ayyar (1993-206).

The Provision of Organised Opportunities for Adult Learning

Adult education, in development planning terms, is a marginal sub-sector within the education sector. Until recently, adult education has been perceived by educational planners in India essentially as literacy education for the adult illiterate population or conceptualized as a limited type of compensatory education for those who have had missed opportunities for schooling at different levels. In general, adult education interventions are implemented in a sporadic and programmatic manner. However, over the years the scope and nature of the adult education system has widened from its narrow focus on literacy education to incorporate organized and flexible learning opportunities for out-of-school youth and adults at all levels.

Adult education as a system can be broadly divided into two : (1) adult education linked with the formal education system, and (2) adult education for development.⁶ A schematic overview of both types of adult education, based on the revised version of the National Policy on Education (1986), will help us understand the emerging system of adult education in India.

Adult education linked with the formal education system

The significance of non-formal education at different levels was acknowledged in the National Policy on Education (1968). However, it was the National Policy on Education (1986) that provided the impetus to expand non-formal education within the educational system. There is no well articulated system of non-formal education, but several types of non-formal/adult education are visible at each stage of formal education.

Non-formal education for out-of-school children

The first centrally sponsored scheme of non-formal education was introduced in 1979-80 as an alternative strategy to impart basic education to children in the age group 9-14, who for various reasons could not attend school. The Non-formal Education Project was initially started on an experimental basis in nine educationally backward states and then extended to a total of 13 states over a period of time. However, the National Policy on Education (1986) envisages non-formal education as an important strategy for attaining the goal of universalization of elementary education and revises the scheme to make non-formal education comparably to elementary education in formal schools. The focus continues to be on the ten educationally backward states - Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa,

Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. However, it has been extended to cover urban slums, hilly, tribal and desert areas and areas with a concentration of working children in the other states as well.

The central government provides financial assistance to the states/union territories in the ratio of 50:50 and 90:10 to run co-educational non-formal education centres, and non-formal education centres exclusively for girls respectively. Voluntary agencies are given 100 percent assistance to run non-formal education centres for experimental and innovative projects and District Resource Units.

National open school

The National Open School was established in 1989 as an autonomous organization to extend educational opportunities through distance education and open learning to the disadvantaged groups who could not pursue secondary or higher secondary education. It conducts its own secondary and senior secondary certificate examinations. During 1989-90, the National Open School had a cumulative enrolment of 150,000; a significant number of them were women and students from rural areas. The National Policy on Education (1986) envisages strengthening and developing the open schools at the national and state levels to widen access to secondary and higher secondary education. Efforts are also being made to offer crash vocational education courses in collaboration with organizations and institutions working in the field of vocational education. In general, the National Open School offers compensatory secondary education and short-term vocational education in limited areas.

Non-formal vocational education and training

The National Policy on Education (1986) envisages expanding non-formal, flexible and need-based vocational programmes for neoliterates, young people who have completed primary education, school drop-outs and persons who are either employed, partially employed or unemployed. It also proposes to promote short duration non-formal vocational training programmes through polytechnics, engineering colleges and other vocational and technical training institutions. However, the major thrust of the educational policy is on vocationalizing the curriculum of formal education at different stages. Nevertheless, non-formal vocational education and training programmes are offered by the National Open Schools, *Shramik Vidyapeeths* and open universities. Various departments or organizations such as the Department of Rural Development, Department of

Women and Child Development, Central Social Welfare Board, Community Polytechnics, etc., also organize non-formal vocational training programmes for different target groups.

Distance education

In higher education, distance education is offered through the open university system, comprising a national open university, several state open universities and institutes of correspondence education in conventional universities. In 1990-91, the distance education institutions - open universities and institutes of correspondence education - accounted for about 11.5 per cent of enrolment in higher education (Ministry of Human Resource Development 1993: 71).

Correspondence education was introduced in the conventional universities in India in the early 1960s. However, it was the National Policy on Education (1986) that promoted distance education through the open university system as a cost-effective, relevant and flexible educational alternative, augmenting opportunities for higher education and responding to growing social demand. The Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), established in 1987, is entrusted with the nodal responsibility for developing an open university system in the country and maintaining the standards and the system.

The IGNOU offers Bachelor's degree in 13 disciplines and a Master's degree in Business Administration. However, in recent years, the IGNOU has introduced several new employment-oriented degree and diploma programmes. In the context of new economic reforms, the state universities have also launched new programs in electronics, horticulture, education and communication along with the degree and diploma programs in humanities, commerce and social sciences. Institutes of correspondence education have also diversified their programs to offer new diploma and certificate programs in technical and professional areas.

Adult literacy

The major thrust of adult education is on imparting basic literacy education to adult illiterates in order to increase their participation in development. The National Policy on Education (1986) has given considerable impetus to adult education. The National Literacy Mission, launched in 1988, introduced Total Literacy Campaigns (TLCs) as a strategy for eradicating illiteracy in the productive age group of 15-35 years on a mass scale through mobilization of all sections of society. Women and the other disadvantaged groups with very low

levels of literacy are identified as important target groups for TLCs.

TLCs are planned as area-specific, time-bound, volunteer-based and outcome-oriented literacy programmes. They presuppose the generation of demand for literacy through environment-building programmes. Environment-building is followed by a door-to-door literacy survey during which potential learners and volunteers are identified. To facilitate rapid learning of literacy, specific primers (in three parts) prepared using the pedagogical technique of Improved Pace and Content of Learning are used in the TLCs. TLC-specific training is imparted to resource persons, master trainers and volunteer instructors. Literacy campaigns at the district level are implemented by the *Zilla Saksharata Samity* (District Literacy Committee), headed by the district collector, with wider participation of local non-governmental organizations and people from all sections of society. Teaching amounts to a total of 200 hours spread over a period of six months. Evaluation of learners is undertaken throughout, using primer-specific tests.

In quantitative terms, TLCs have been successfully completed in 30 districts in eight states, are in operation in 179 districts, and an additional 200 districts will be covered by the end of 1996-97 (Ayyar 1993: 213). The National Literacy Mission envisages institutionalizing post-literacy learning through *Jana Shikshan Nilayams*. During 1992, 32 post-literacy campaigns were approved, covering 13.2 million neoliterates in 56 districts (Ministry of Human Resource Development 1993: 140).

In addition to Total Literacy Campaign, several projects are implemented on a small scale. For example, the Rural Functional Literacy Project that follows the literacy centre-based approach is the oldest scheme of adult education, implemented since 1978 in the states of Jammu and Kashmir and other difficult and isolated areas. Furthermore, the *Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan* has also undertaken area-specific and time-bound literacy programmes in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. In addition, 32 *Shramik Vidyapeeths* (polyvalent adult education centres, SVPs) during 1992-93 offered non-formal education, adult and continuing education, and polyvalent training programmes to industrial workers, their family members, self-employed workers, and potential workers. Eight SVPs have been selected for imparting literacy-based vocational training programmes to adult women and girls with the assistance of UNICEF. The SVPs are run by the central and state governments, a few universities and non-governmental organisations.

It is estimated that out of 104 million adult illiterates in the age group 15-35, 80 million adult illiterates in the age group 15-35, 80 million will be covered by the TLCs to be launched in 350 districts during 1992-97. The remaining 24 million will be covered to literacy programmes run by voluntary organizations, educational institutions, *Nehru Yuva Kendras*, etc.

Adult education in development

With the expansion of development projects in various sectors since the 1970s, the scope of adult literacy education has also been broadened to include adult learning components in development projects. Adult education in India is perceived by development planners as an important contribution to development.

A compendium compiled by the Directorate of Adult Education contains information pertaining to the adult education components of various programmes and schemes of different department/ministeries of the Government of India up to June 30, 1984 (Directorate of Adult Education 1984). However, no systematic information is available at present on adult education in development projects since then.

The contextual analysis of the sectorial problems

As an example of the proposed use of adult education in a development project, however, this section examines the strategy for adult education and learning in the recent draft national population policy.

An Overview of the Problem in the Country

India is the second most populous country in the world, with more than 16 per cent of the world's population on 2.4 per cent of the land area.⁷ India's population has increased from 361.1 million in 1951 to 846.3 million in 1991, although the average annual exponential growth rate has decreased for the first time after Independence in 1947 to 2.14 during 1981-91. Despite some efforts to arrest the population growth rate, Indian population is increasing rapidly by about 17 million every year. According to the Standing Committee of Experts on Population Projections, the population of India is expected to cross the one billion mark by the year 2001.

The rapid population growth has also brought an unprecedented increase in the working population. According to 1991 Census 37.7 per cent of the population were enumerated as workers. In the 1990s, employment opportunities for the new entrants to the labour force is dominating the economic agenda. The labour force is estimated to grow from 420 million in 1996 to 522 million in 2006.

Against this background of population dynamics in India, population education and family life education for adolescents, young couples and adults assumes special importance.

The general policies adopted

In general, population education is promoted as an integral part of various programmes on health, family welfare and family planning through an extensive network of extension education and the mass media. The general focus of population education in the development sectors of health and population is on disseminating information about government schemes and programmes of family welfare and family planning.

With growing emphasis on human resource development for attaining the goal of population stabilization, the scope of population education has widened. The Draft National Policy on Population (1994) conceptualizes population education as a continuing social learning process and advocates development of a broader understanding of population issues among the divergent sections of society through education as well as various channels of communication. The draft population policy emphasizes Information, Education and Communication (IEC), as vital for the successful implementation of the population policy.

The draft population policy statement accords priority to promotion of literacy education, universalization of primary education, and reduction in the drop-out rates of primary and secondary school students as part of the Minimum Needs Programme of the national social-demographic charter. Specifically, it emphasizes female education as this is believed to contribute to empowerment of women, postponement of the age of marriage, reduction in family size and survival of children.

The growing emphasis on population education for human resource development in the policies on health and population has important implications for adult learning and education. The scope of population education is widened from conventional forms of population education activities, such as counseling for young couples, family welfare education, family planning education, etc., to creating general awareness among the wider sections of society through IEC activities. However, the draft population policy does not adequately spell out broad guidelines for implementing its policy directives for IEC.

Educational policies and measures: their meaning in the overall strategies

The significance of population education is also underscored in the education sector. The general focus of population education has remained on increasing awareness among the school-going population and young adults. It is assumed that better understanding about population issues will contribute to controlling the population.

To tackle the problem of growing population in India, the Ministry of Human Resource Development has launched the National Population Education Project (NPEP) since 1980, with the collaboration of UNFPA and with the active involvement of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The main objective of the project is to create in the younger generation adequate awareness about population problems and its responsibilities towards the nation. In general, the NPEP aims at institutionalizing population education in the formal and non-formal educational system. In the initial phase, the project focused on the development of curricula on population education for elementary and secondary education, and teacher training. However, during the Seventh Five Year Plan (1980-85), the NPEP was expanded to university education as well as non-formal and adult education.

The National Policy on Education (1986) has also accorded high priority to the NPEP by incorporating "promotion of observance of the small family norm" as one of the core curricular areas in formal and non-formal education. It has identified five core messages - family size and family welfare, population growth and resources, delayed marriages, population-related beliefs and values, and responsible parenthood. The Policy envisages taking these ideas to the grassroots level through active collaboration with other development agencies for the integrated development of the community.

Several initiatives have also been undertaken in the field of adult literacy education to promote population education. The UNFPA-funded Population Education Project is being implemented as an integral part of adult education programmes with the technical collaboration of the Directorate of Adult Education and 15 State Resource Centres (Ministry of Human Resource Development 1994: 155-56).⁸ The primary focus of the Population Education Project has been on integrating core population messages, articulated in the National Policy on Education (1986), in the teaching/learning materials of non-formal and adult education programmes, and on training functionaries. The State Resource Centres, which are entrusted with the responsibility for developing the curricula and teaching/learning materials for adult education, have developed a wide range of motivational, instructional and follow-up materials on population education, such as slides, teaching charts, flash cards, audio-visual cassettes, etc., to suit the needs of adult learners.

Conclusion: the adult education legislative and policy environment

In India, different forms of adult education are not planned within a single "system" of adult education. Hence, there is no broad legislative and policy framework that guides the development of adult education. Nevertheless, gen-

eral educational policy provides the general framework for different types of adult education. This section highlights emerging trends and underlying policy perspectives on adult and continuing education within the context of the revised version of the National Policy on Education (1986).

Adult literacy education

The National Literacy Mission (NLM), launched in 1988, has been one of the most ambitious programs of adult literacy in India to address the problem of eradication of illiteracy in the country. The mass mobilization and support of the wider sections of people has given a new sense of seriousness on the part of the government to tackle the problem of illiteracy.

The introduction of the National Literacy Mission in 1988, in fact, marked a new phase in the history of state-sponsored adult literacy programmes in India as it shifted direction from the centre-based approach to the campaign approach. The National Adult Education Programme (NAEP), introduced on October 2, 1978, was envisaged as the first mass programme for tackling the problem of illiteracy, but in practice it remained a traditional centre-based programme which was honorarium-based, hierarchical, government-funded and government-controlled. Hence, the absolute number of illiterates rose from 300 million in 1951 to 437 million in 1981, despite an increase in literacy rates from 16.7 per cent to 36.2 per cent during this period.

Several important changes are evident in the policy direction of adult literacy. First, adult literacy education on a mass scale is perceived as an integral part of the strategy for the universalization of elementary education and universal literacy by the year 2000. Hence, substantial financial resources are allocated in the Eighth Five Year Plan for adult literacy programmes.⁹ However, the extent to which the central government will continue its financial commitment to adult literacy in the context of structural economic reforms remains to be seen.

Secondly, a Total Literacy Campaign through mass mobilization is essentially a strategy for generating demand for literacy and imparting rudimentary literacy skills to a large number of people, those who have had missed earlier opportunities for schooling. In general, participation of the target groups, women and learners from disadvantaged groups (scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, Muslims, etc.) have been high. Specifically, a large number of women have come forward for literacy learning. Given their very low level of literacy, they have been a major target of literacy campaigns.

Nevertheless, literacy gains are very fragile. Although the NLM has proposed institutionalizing post-literacy learning opportunities through *Jana Shikshan*

Nilayam (JSN) in every village *panchayat* (village political council), retention of literacy after the literacy campaigns is a neglected area of NLM policy. Hence, there has been a considerable time-lag between the conceptualization and implementation of post-literacy programmes. Consequently, many learners have relapsed into illiteracy. Moreover, a limited form of literacy education is neither linked with vocational skills nor with lower levels of elementary education.

Thirdly, the success of the TLC, in general, is due to decentralized and participatory management structures at the district-level that link project implementors (the district bureaucracy and other functionaries) with the elected representatives and the public at large. Most literacy campaigns have generally been dominated by the officials of the district administration despite the establishment of committees with representation of non-officials and the public. On the other hand, the central government has retained its control over the policy direction and basic parameters of literacy campaigns (training, curriculum, evaluation, etc.). Literacy campaigns claim to bring costs down by involving volunteer instructors. However, such voluntarism does not appear to be sustainable beyond the campaign phase.

Finally, the Total Literacy Campaign is also seen as a successful strategy for generating demand for elementary education. There is an emerging demand among children who have participated in literacy campaigns, and their parents, for primary and secondary schools and evening classes to build on their newly acquired skills. Enrolments in primary schools have substantially increased in some districts. Quite a number of new entrants in many schools are children of neoliterates.

Given the top priority assigned to universalization of elementary education in educational policy as well as by international donor agencies, whether the Indian government will pursue the campaign approach to literacy beyond the Eighth Plan (1992-97) and make concerted efforts to impart sustainable literacy through an expanded system of post-literacy and non-formal education remains to be seen.

Non-formal education for out-of-school children

Provision of free and compulsory education to all children until they attain the age of 14 years is a Directive Principle of the Constitution in India. Despite considerable expansion of the formal education system since Independence, the goal of universalization of elementary education (UEE) has remained elusive. Problems of low retention in primary schools, high drop-out rates, wastage and stagnation are considerable. In 1987-88, the drop-out rates were 50.5 per cent

in classes I-V and 63.8 per cent in classes I-VIII (Ministry of Human Resource Development 1990:21). Furthermore, there are striking disparities in elementary education in terms of gender, class and regions. Notwithstanding considerable expansion of elementary education, the status of basic facilities and infrastructure in thousands of elementary schools is very poor. It is against this backdrop that the National Policy on Education (1986) and its revised version assigned highest priority to attaining the goal of universalization of elementary education by the turn of this century.

The strategy has shifted from enrollment per se to retention, minimum levels of achievement, quality of education, and improvement and school effectiveness. The NPE (1986) emphasizes improving access of girls and disadvantaged girls to elementary education, and proposes non-formal education as an alternative for educating out-of-school children of school age. Hence, the curriculum of non-formal education has been revised so that children from non-formal education centres attain minimum levels of learning. Secondly, some attention is also given in the new programme to establishing linkages between the formal and non-formal education streams through accreditation so that students from non-formal education centres can enter formal schools and pursue further education. Finally, despite lip service to decentralized planning and management, the central government controls the process of policy formulation, curriculum development, training, and development of standards for minimum levels of learning and equivalency. However, participation of voluntary agencies is actively sought in programme implementation.

Vocational adult education and re-training

The new educational policy emphasizes the vocationalization of education. However, the major thrust of the policy is on pre-employment vocational education and training in the formal education system, particularly in secondary education, higher education and technical education.

Continual upgrading of vocational skills and knowledge through short-term and flexible vocational training is essential for all workers, particularly those working in the areas of new technology. Continuing vocational education and training through non-formal education courses can contribute to building the vocational competence of the technical and managerial labour force, while providing them opportunities for vertical mobility. However, the new educational policy does not have a long-term vision for continuing and distance vocational education and training beyond the secondary stage after job placement.

The policy admits that vocational courses in higher secondary schools, and vocational and technical training schools/institutes are geared primarily to the

requirements of the organised sectors of the economy, while the bulk of the labour force is absorbed by the unorganized sector, which is often unskilled or semi-skilled. The policy acknowledges the need to organize vocational education and training for the out-of-school adult population in the unorganized sector with the active collaboration of agencies and institutes such as community polytechnics, rural development agencies, etc. However, the policy neither clearly articulates the strategy nor the financial resources to undertake vocational adult education and training programmes for the unskilled and semi-skilled workers of the unorganized sector to upgrade their skills in traditional occupations or in new areas of emerging technology.

Nevertheless, sporadic efforts have been made to impart non-formal vocational education, and training programmes are offered by the National Open School, *Shramik Vidyapeeths* and open universities and various development departments. In eight *Shramik Vidyapeeths* (SVPs), literacy-based vocational education programmes have also been organized for women with the assistance of UNICEF. In reality, however, SVPs function with limited financial resources and professional staff. Vocational education and training programmes offered by the SVPs provide a low quality of skill training, which does not necessarily improve the prospects for employment or self-employment.

In summary, the policy recognizes the need for expanding non-formal vocational education courses and training for those who are outside the formal system of education. However, no serious consideration is given to developing the non-formal system of vocational education and training.

Distance education

Distance education is an integral part of the expanded system of higher education in India. The National Policy on Education (1986) proposes to expand the open university system and distance learning institutions to democratize further opportunities for higher education. In reality, expansion of distance education at the tertiary level could be seen as an attempt to diversify the growing social demand for higher education by adding one more layer to the existing hierarchical system of higher education.

In the context of limited funding to expand the existing subsidized system of higher education, the major thrust of the new educational policy in higher education has been to consolidate the existing system while gradually paving the way for the commercialization of higher education. Far from equalizing educational opportunities, in practice, distance education has become a compensatory type of higher education for those who fail to gain admission to meritocratic institutions of higher education, or it serves as an educational

channel for personal enrichment for a small section of the educated population. The quality of distance education is far from satisfactory, and the market value of credentials from distance learning institutions is not at par with those of conventional universities.

In summary, a significant change is evident in policy on adult and continuing education. The influence of the dominant international paradigm of "basic education" is visible: non-formal education for out-of-school children and adult literacy education are seen as contributing to the goal of universalization of elementary education by the year 2000. On the other hand, non-formal vocational education and training is not emphasized adequately despite the emerging need to train and retain the labour force in workplaces and in the informal sector of the economy. Distance education has been expanded at the higher levels of education essentially to relieve pressure on the formal system of higher education.

Finally, adult learning is becoming the object of policy beyond the educational training field, but this recent development, like in the area of population policies is still ambiguous.

Notes

1. *The growth of educational institutions of different types over a period of 31 years (1961-92) was phenomenal. For example, a 73 per cent rise in the number of primary schools, 210 per cent in the number of middle schools, 387 per cent in the number of higher/higher secondary schools, 360 per cent in the number of universities, 452 per cent in the number of degree level institutions of general education, and about 275 per cent in the number of degree level professional and technical institutions (Institute of Applied Manpower Research 1995: 48-49).*
2. *The Indian government since Independence has routinely reviewed the country's educational system. There is no dearth of reports by various committees and commissions dealing with reforming various areas of the educational system. However, national policy on education has been reformulated only twice by the government, namely in the National Policy on Education (1968) and the National Policy on Education (1986).*
3. However, some states have implemented a system of Panchayati Raj, a three-tier system of local self government in rural areas at the district, block and village levels.
4. For example, Directive Principles contained in Article 45, Article 29(1), Article 29(2), Article 30(1), Article 30(2), Article 350(A) and Article 46 of the Constitution of India.
5. Discussion in this section is based on Ayyar (1993: 203-06).

6. It is important to emphasize again that adult education is not planned as a "system" within the education sector. In educational policy and plans, adult education is equated with literacy education, while adult education in the formal education system is planned under specific sub-sectors (for example, elementary education, secondary education, etc.).
7. Population statistics quoted in this section are taken from the country paper prepared by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in September 1994.
8. The first phase of the project was completed in December 1993, however, the project is likely to continue from January 1994 with the collaboration of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
9. Nine per cent of the educational budget (i.e. Rs. 18,480 million) in the Eighth Plan is allocated to adult education.

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6. Planning and Non-Literate Indian

K.K. Kak

“Wheels must turn steadily, but cannot turn untended. There must be men to tend them, men as steady as the wheels upon their axles, sane men, obedient men, stable in contentment well, progress is lovely, isn't it?” (Huxley 1958: 28, 67).

The Planning Commission was set up in March 1950 to propose “the most effective and balanced utilisation of the country’s resources” within the context of the Fundamental Rights and of the Directive Principles of State Policy, and of “the declared objective of the Government to promote a rapid rise in the standard of living of the people by efficient exploitation of the resources of the country, increasing production, and offering opportunities to all for employment in the service of the community”. For the British, we natives were a resource for their colonial expansion but, even in free India, human beings are “resources” to be “exploited” for the advancement of the “nation” and, by definition, the planning process advises on the most efficient means of exploitation. The interests of a nation are, of course, identified by its rulers and, not surprisingly, the world over, national interests coincide with the interests of the ruling elite – as Vijayan (1993) says, “the state is people who are more equal...”

To what extent is this true for adult education in our country?(1) Anil Bordia, the person who most and for longest influenced education policy in independent India, writes after his retirement as a civil servant that “policy pronouncements, official documents and numerous statements in Parliament notwithstanding, the Indian elite, in fact, has little concern for the education of the deprived sections of society” and he acknowledges some truth in Myron Weiner’s claim of the denial of basic education to the rural poor so that the elite can maintain its privileges (Bordia 1993a).

This essay is an analysis of the eight major Plans to highlight the extent of their concern for adult literacy as reflective of the official attitude, and to see the extent to which rhetoric matches reality. It follows a study (Kak 1993) that shows that policy proposers in independent India have attitudes indistinguishable from those of their colonial forebears. The Planning Commission is,

however, a considerably weightier and more authoritative institution than those policy committees and subcommittees, and what it says becomes in fact what should be done (and, of course, as is common in officialdom, those who propose in the Commission often become those who implement in the Ministries, and vice versa).

The First Plan

In the Introduction the only reference to education is a very brief one to technical education. The first chapter ("the problem of development") mentions "the right to education" in a discussion on the "economic and social aspects of planning", but literacy is not stated to be one of the "determinants of economic development". However, in considering "investment, income and economic development in India", the Commission expresses its belief that "idle manpower and the spare hours of those partially employed can be canalised into a nationwide programme of developmental activity" which includes, in this order, "the digging of canals, repair and renovation of tanks, construction of roads, bridges, and bunds, in rural housing, in improvement of sanitation, [and] the imparting of elementary education and technical training". Education (and health) is an investment yielding "larger returns" in the "development effort" and "rising standards of living will also be characterized by greater demand for the secondary essentials of life like education and health facilities, travel, entertainment, etc."

The second chapter ("objectives, techniques and priorities in planning") in a discussion on "institutional and structural factors in development" sees improvement in health, sanitation, and education going along with the building of "a big production machine" and with a reference to "the problem of unemployment ... among the educated classes" comes the realisation that unemployed nonliterate are, in a popular phrase, "idle manpower". The remainder of this chapter (including "the pattern of priorities") is silent about literacy. The fourth chapter, an outline of the Plan, allocates Rs.152 crores for "education", and from the 14th chapter begins special mention of education. It proposes a National Extension Service and, in language that presages the Friar's concept of concientization, says that

extension is a continuous process designed to make the rural people aware of their problems, and indicating to them ways and means by which they can solve them. It thus involves not only education of the rural people in determining their problems and the methods of solving them, but also inspiring them towards positive action in doing so.

The extension service will also take on "the education of the cultivators, so

that they may practice scientific agriculture" (ch.18.71). There will also be a community development programme with "education" as one of its "main lines of activity" because "it has been realised that the full development of a community cannot be achieved without a strong educational base, alike for men and women", and this base is apparently in "social education". Chapter 23 on "education" opens by noting that

education is of basic importance in the planned development of a nation.....In a democratic set up, the role education becomes crucial, since it can function effectively only if there is an intelligent participation of the masses in the affairs of the country.....It is essential for the successful implementation of the Plan that the educational programme helps to train the people to place responsibilities before rights and to keep the self-regarding outlook and the force of the acquisitive instinct within legitimate bounds.

This is social education, which is explained more clearly as literacy, together with instruction regarding "the health, recreation and home life of the adults, their economic life and citizenship training". It "implies an all-comprehensive programme of community uplift through community action" and is intended to "build up a self-reliant nation". Moreover, where so many

are illiterate, democracy will not take root until a progressive programme of primary education trains up a generation fit to undertake its responsibilities.....At the national level, priorities in the programme of social education should be determined by the overall national priorities, thereby not only winning for it the enthusiasm and support of the country at large but also making it directly productive, as it would enable the human factor to respond fully to the national plans of development.....To make everybody literate and give him in addition, a veneer of social education in the larger sense of the term,

the Commission requires an average annual expenditures of Rs.27 crores for ten years, though in this Plan a little over only Rs.3 crores annually is "visualised" (ch.23.51,53). The "everybody" in practice appears to be 30% of the people (incl. 10% of women) in the age group 14 to 40 (ch. 23.12(3)), and a "veneer of social education in the larger sense of the term" appears to be that

the social education approach must permeate all programmes of State aid to the people. That is to say that before any programme of State aid is launched the people should be so educated in regard to it that their instinct to help themselves is fully aroused and they are anxious to receive the programme and do their utmost in the execution of it.....the forces of friendship and goodwill released by one activity, immediately recognized by the villagers as good or pleasant, can be utilized for winning their cooperation for activities requiring more strenuous effort or the usefulness of which is not so immediately apparent to them.

In addition to this Pavlovian behavioral response, villagers must be provided

with “healthy recreation” and be taught how to live as citizens of a modern democratic State (ch.23.54,57,59).

The Second Plan

Tribute is paid in the Introduction to the vision of the First Plan which ended in March 1956. *Its approach and outlook are part of our common thinking. It has laid the foundation for achieving the socialist pattern of society—a social and economic order based upon the values of freedom and democracy, without class and privilege, in which there will be sustainable rise in employment and production and the largest measure of social justice attainable.*

The Second Plan must “carry forward the process initiated in the first plan period” (ch.1.1.2) and in the “key factors of development” has no doubt whatever

that the most important single factor in promoting economic development is the community’s readiness to develop and apply modern technology to processes of production.....Underdevelopment is essentially a consequence of insufficient technological progress (ch. 1.1.9).

There is not a word on literacy as a key factor in development nor, in the second chapter in its section on “reduction in inequalities” is there mention of literacy. The third chapter (“the Plan in outline”) considers only formal education, and the fifth chapter has a discussion on the educated unemployed. That the “uneducated” unemployed remain “idle manpower” is evident in the sixth chapter—“an under-developed economy has large resources in manpower which are not being fully utilised. These resources have to be used for creating permanent assets”. Neither in the listing of the functions of the village panchayat (ch. 7.12) nor among the “main constituents of a district plan” (ch. 7.23) is there a word about adult literacy, though ch. 11.5 does say that 35,000 adult education centres have been opened “which have imparted literacy to 773,000 adults” (during the First Plan?). Chapter 23 on “education” has a page on “social education” which is a summary of the social education ideology of the earlier Plan, and while the allocation for such education is Rs.5 crores (stated to be same as in the First Plan) there is no specific data for adult literacy other than that one sentence in ch.11.

The Third Plan

The socialist pattern of society that ostensibly framed the Second Plan becomes in the Third Plan what is called “a good life” for “the masses of the Indian people” (ch. 1.1.1). Poverty is for the first time called a curse, and the cause of social and economic ills. Education is a “social service” (on par with

health sanitation, water supply, and housing) and its "development" assists towards "equal opportunities" as is claimed to be so in "advanced countries". However, nowhere in the entire first chapter ("objectives of planned development"), in the third ("ten years of planning"), the fourth ("approach to the Third Five Year Plan"), or the fifth ("the Third Plan in outline") is there a word about adult literacy. In the tenth chapter ("employment and manpower") there is the usual reference to "educated unemployed" as against "labour force" or "rural manpower". Finally, the 29th chapter, specifically on education, continues the silence on the education of nonliterate adults.

The Fourth Plan

"Planning in India was intended, in the words of the Government Resolution of [15] March 1950 [by which the Planning Commission was set up], 'to promote a rapid rise in the standard of living of the people by efficient exploitation of the resources of the country, increasing production, and offering opportunities to all for employment in the service of the community'" (ch.13).

The eight-page preface repeats this as the programme for the Plan and "the emphasis is squarely on areas that have hitherto suffered from neglect". Education in general and adult literacy in particular do not in the preface feature as neglected areas. The first chapter ("aims and objectives of planning") quotes in full Constitution Articles 45 (free and compulsory schooling) and 46 (the promotion of the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections) and, even while admitting failure in fulfilling the former but patting itself for "the impressive increase in school enrolment", is silent about the promotion of the educational interests of nonliterate adults that is included in the latter Article. In its "general approach to Fourth Plan" there is no reference to the education of nonliterate adults in the section on "social justice and equality", only a passing reference in the problems of the scheduled tribes and castes, and no reference again in the problems of weaker producers, landless labour, or in the provision of social services generally. Social justice is stated to follow economic growth controlled by the "purposive intervention of the State" (ch. 1.II.32,46), yet there is not a word about the education of nonliterate adults in all the 30 pages of "the long term perspective" considered in the second chapter of the Plan, and statistical data in Tables 1, 3 and 7 ignores nonliterate adults as a separate category. Even in the 16th chapter ("education and manpower") which opens stating that a "suitably oriented system of education can facilitate and promote social change and contribute to economic growth, not only by training skilled manpower for specific tasks of development but, what is perhaps even more important, by creating the requisite attitudes and climate", there is no mention of adult literacy in the "approach" to "programmes of importance" in this sector

of the Plan. The paragraph later that deals with adult literacy (ch. 16.22) commends the pilot project approach and, other than coverage expected of one million adult farmers under the Farmers' Education and Functional Literacy programmes, no adult literacy figures are given in this Plan, nor is there anything concerning adult literacy in the chapters on "social welfare" and "welfare and development of backward classes".

The Fifth Plan

There is one sentence on non-formal education referring to the renewal of "existing programmes" in the chapter on education. That is all.

The Sixth Plan

The first chapter ("development performance") identifies four signposts showing the way to the socialistic good life of the earlier Plans – growth, modernization, self-reliance, and social justice. Of these, the first two are of the economy; the third, of the nation, and the last is concerned with the poor. The third chapter ("objectives and strategy of the Sixth Five Year Plan") lists ten objectives together with "major areas of effort". There is no reference to literacy except that, in the tenth objective, "appropriate education" will be used for "promoting the active involvement of all sections of the people in the process of development" (ch.3.9). However, the chapter on education does have three paragraphs on adult education– the focus is on the 15-35 age group, the aim is "raising the level of productivity in the economy", and the primary means is "techniracy" (sic) (ch.21.22,23). Messages of health and the biology of reproduction will be part of adult education (ch. 22.70) and the total Central allocation specifically for adult education is Rs.60 crores (Table 2.2)

The Seventh Plan

"Bold initiatives" are announced towards "the people's material, cultural and spiritual fulfilment....Outlays for human resource development have been substantially increased" and "the longer term strategy seeks, by the year 2000, to virtually eliminate poverty and illiteracy" (pp.vi,ix). "Education, in all its aspects, and people's participation...hold the key to rapid and sustained social and economic advance" (ch. 1.35); "by the year 2000, illiteracy would be eliminated" – this, it is stated, had been anticipated in the Sixth Plan too (chs. 2.87; 10.10,22,37), and "adult literacy programmes will be pursued with the objective of covering all illiterates in the age-group of 15-35 by 1990" (ch. 3.49). Educated people are instruments of progress (ch. 10.1-2) and there will

be “new mass movement programmes of adult education” (ch. 10.38), for which the Central plan allocation will be Rs.130 crores (annexure 10.4).

The Eighth Plan

Reiterated is the emphasis of the earlier plan on “human development”. As the Foreword says, this is “the core of all development effort. It is only healthy and educated people who can contribute to human well being.” In this Plan too, “eradication of illiteracy” is a priority and while, “in the process of development, people must operate and the Government must cooperate.....the provision of the basic elements [including education], which help development of human capital, will remain the primary responsibility of the government” (p.iii; ch. 1.4.4) Education is an investment in the process of development (ch. 1.4.10) and 100% literacy in the age-group 15-35 years is a target of this Plan (ch. 1.4.12) though the section on “protecting the weak and the left-behind” (ch. 1.4.22) makes no mention of adult women but only of more girls receiving elementary education. “We have to plan and structure the system of education to cultivate necessary calibre, skills and value systems” (ch.1.5.5) but, in elaborating on the “long term development perspective” towards “the objectives of fulfilling the social and human aspirations of the people, meeting the essential requirements of living, raising income levels and improving their quality of life”, it is, as in the Second Plan, again technology that is “the most important factor” among the “long term conditions of growth” (ch. 2.1.1, 2.2.1). Literacy does feature in “the social development perspective”, and while the increase in the overall literacy rate from 16.7% in 1951 to 36.2% in 1981 is described as “a considerable improvement”, it is acknowledged that “this is still a poor showing for 30 years of planning” (ch. 2.4.2).

Chapter 11 (“education, culture and sports”) in the second volume of the Plan says that

it is now universally acknowledged that the goal of Plan efforts is human development, of which human resource development is a necessary prerequisite. Education is the catalytic factor, which leads to human resource development comprising better health and nutrition, improved socio-economic opportunities and more congenial and beneficial natural environment for all.....Although the country has not so far achieved the goals of universalisation of adult education (UAE) and universalisation of elementary education (UEE) and eradication of adult illiteracy (EAI), the 1991 census reveals a literacy rate of over 52 percent, with a higher rate of growth for female literacy. This is highly encouraging and the country can hope to achieve the broader goal of ‘Education For All’ (EFA) by 2000 A.D. which has incidentally received international recognition at the world conference on EFA held at Jomtien in March, 1990. The commit-

ment of the Government to the National Policy on Education (NPE), implemented from 1986-87 onwards and reviewed in 1990, has been reaffirmed with revised formulation in respect of a few paras, placed before the Parliament on 7.5.1992. On the eve of Eighth Plan, therefore, the country is poised to make a real breakthrough in achieving its long-cherished educational goals as well as in supporting the drive for higher rate of economic growth (ch. 11.1.1).

The NPE and the Programme of Action (POA) envisaged that the Adult Education Programme (AEP) would cover 4 crore illiterates by 1990 and another 6 crores by 1995. With the launching of the National Literacy Mission (NLM) in 1988, the targets were reformulated and strategies recast. Accordingly, 3 crore illiterates were expected to be covered by 1990 and 5 crores by 1995. While Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP), the post-literacy the teaching-learning process were modified, new strategies like area-specific and time-bound approach to achieve 100 percent total literacy (TL), massive participation of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and students and effective utilisation of traditional and folk theatre forms in literacy work were evolved. By 1991-92, the post-literacy programme was institutionalised in the form of 32,000 Jan Shikshan Nilayams (JSN). Apart from the introduction of Improved Pace and Content of Learning (IPCL) method, which reduced the duration of learning from 500 to 200 hours, technology demonstration programmes were initiated in 42 selected districts. The scheme of Shramik Vidyapeeths (SVs) was reviewed, suggesting a need for expansion. The number of State Resource Centres (SRCs) increased from 19 to 20. A National Institute of Adult Education (NIAE) was set up in January 1991 to augment the technical and academic resource support to adult education and to undertake quality research and evaluation studies (ch. 11.1.6).

Area-specific and time-bound mass campaigns for TL first launched in Kottayam town and Ernakulam district in Kerala in 1989 with the active participation of students and voluntary agencies have been extended to other districts. By March 1992, twentyfive districts had achieved total literacy (in the sense of 85 percent literacy) and TL campaigns were at different stages of progress in 80 districts...covering over 3 crore illiterates with the help of about 30 lakh volunteers" (ch. 11.1.7).

Discussion

The Plan ideology for adult education – The rhetoric about literacy/education increases in each Plan – why this is so is not apparent in the Plans themselves. From the First Plan, education is related to the “development effort”, but it is a “secondary essential”, evidently intended to socialize ignorant, crude and greedy villagers (“fools and goofs”, notwithstanding Mishra 1992:58; see Kak 1993:7) into the refinements and delights of modern living, and the

subtleties of the democratic State, and to eagerly and anxiously working in the programmes designed for them by their sophisticated wellwishers who have already made it to the good life. The Second Plan continues this ideology - literacy is still not considered a "primary essential" but literate people are necessary to work the land and the factories for the benefit of the nation. The Third Plan discovers poverty (and hence the poor) as the cause of our social and economic problems, and a hindrance to our enjoyment of the good life. With the "advanced countries" as our social model, it becomes even more important to seduce the nonliterate with our vision and version of the good life (Ravindranath 1993; Kumar 1993a, 1993b), lest our enjoyment of it be disturbed by them. That the good life in such a model is highly exploitative and inequitable (Kak 1990) is not a reality with which we wish to confront ourselves, and that we are unserious that nonliterate partake of it too is apparent from the silence on adult nonliteracy in the rest of this Plan, the Fourth Plan, and the Fifth - and, of course, from Bordia's revealing post-revealing post-retirement observation quoted earlier. A sentence in the Fourth is telling - "the efficient exploitation of the resources of the country...in the service of the community" - and when official policy considers humans as resources, and the community, as experience shows, is really the elite in it, there can be no doubt that adult nonliterate are objects, not subjects, of official planning. The Sixth Plan, in proposing "appropriate education...[for] development" hearkens back to the socialising process of the First Plan. In the Seventh and Eighth Plans, planners consider themselves responsible for the "the material, cultural and spiritual fulfilment" of the presumably benighted Indian people, evidently through capitalising them to be invested in for Development. But, as D.P. Mukerji (quoted in Joshi 1989:175) says, "Those who composed the Plan[s] are highly educated people, competent, knowledgeable, scrupulously honest and industrious - everybody recognises their merits; *still they do not seem to be of their Indian earth, earthy...*". So, in reality, "invested" for the gander becomes "exploited" of the goose. The deification of Development and of Nation legitimises the acquisition of the fruits of Development by the ganders even as the geese are conditioned through "appropriate education" (see, for example, Patel 1987) to work strenuously, anxiously, and with friendship and goodwill for the ganders. Like Orwell's brainworkers, the ganders are concerned about the welfare of the geese even if the usefulness of what the geese are to do is not immediately apparent to the latter (Orwell 1949:29). That vision is privileged to the planners.(2)

The Plan mythology for adult education - No elaborate content analysis is necessary to establish that the need for adult education as expressed in the Plans follows the instrumentalist approach which "views literacy as meeting the basic reading demand of an industrialized society" (Macedo 1993:190). This is an ingredient of the recipe for "development" - a recipe sharply critiqued,

among others, by Alvares (1992) – and, for adult education, its “dominating knowledge” (Marglin and Marglin 1990) was brought (like the concept of human capital) into India from the West, substituting and destroying the indigenous nationalist goal of literacy as a human and an egalitarian endeavour (Shukla 1991:2195). And yet, as Tharakan (1993) pointed out, declaring a district literate (reading the word) in fact creates a myth that the people are now aware (can read the world). This is a convenient myth, for literacy thus “gets presented as a solution to very complex socio-economic and political problems” (Saxena 1993:324). The myth is assiduously propagated by international agencies, enthusiastically accepted by the Indian elite, and effectively reproduced through what Kumar (1991) and others have shown is still a colonial educational system.(3) The myth, coming as it does, from the West, has a root in the even older belief that (adapting from Coomaraswamy 1981:99) it is the divine mission of the West to civilize the savage East. Westernization displacing sanskritization, the Indian elite are become a “colonial adjunct” (Joshi 1989:38). It is unsurprising that the endeavour to “educate” the orally skilled Indian in morals, duties, behaviour, values and so on, is a responsibility assumed by national-level planners and, with earlier strategies not having proved successful, the “mission” approach (also from the West – see Kak 1993:14) is now presented as the most effective strategy of all (Mishra 1992; EFA 1993ab).

Planning and the results for adult education – There are many inspiring success stories in the literacy movement. Yet, as a general conclusion, the Eighth Plan refers to a “poor showing” of results in adult education after three decades of planning. The Directorate of Adult Education of the Government of India officially notes the poor showing of results thereafter. Official data on implementation of literacy campaigns is collected almost entirely from sources that are official – and not always reliable (e.g., Satapathy 1994). According to the Directorate of Adult Education (DAE 1993), as on 30.9.93, 187 Total Literacy Campaigns (TLCs) had been sanctioned covering 75 districts. Of the 187 TLCs, 47 are new. Of the remaining 147, the reporting for 140 is described as “irregular” (88) or “improved” (52). Again, of these 147, only 31 have been evaluated externally (including what is called a “quick” evaluation). The “targeted” population after survey is numbered at 45,541,329, and the “target age-group” various from 5-60 to 6-35, 6-45, 6-50, 9-35, 9-40, 9-44, 9-45, 9-50, 9-60, 10-45, 10-50, 12-35, 15-35, 15-45 and 15-60. The effective enrolment is claimed to be 32,592,094 (70.03%), The level III primer achievement is reported at 16,563,438 (35.59% of the target population), presumably covering the widest age-range 5-60. The target for achievement by 1995 is 80 million in the age group 15-35, later enhanced to 127 million to include the age-group 9-14 (Banerjee 1993:1274), though another and still later official report reduces the

enrolment and achievement figures by about a million and a half each, and gives the target figure for achievement as 121.3 million (of whom 62% are women) presumably by 2000 A.D. since 100 million are to be covered by 1997 (EFA 1993a:31,46). An even later official report targets "at least 80 percent in each gender and for every identified disadvantaged group" in the entire 15-35 age group, and retains the reduced figure for level III primer achievement (EFA 1993b:13,63-64), but "every identified disadvantaged group" is not clarified – presumably this includes every Indian not a MUCHA (Male Upper Caste Hindu Adult). An NLM advertisement appearing after this report (Indian Express, 2-1-94) changes the figures again, giving two - 50 million (5 crores) and 30 million (3 crores) – for what appears to be the enrolment number, and reducing by half-a-million the number of volunteers between earlier advertisements (The Times of India, 28/31-7-93) and the later one. The target for achievement declared in all three advertisements is 100 million (10 crores), presumably by 1995 which is when the NLM is scheduled to end, but another NLM advertisement (Indian Express, 15-1-94) appears to modify this to "all illiterates, particularly in the age group 15-35". Total literacy is defined as level III primer achievement in at least 80% of the targeted population (Katyal 1993a). The stated achievement as on 30.9.93 is therefore 41.8% of the DAE 1993 lower target, and 26.4% of the higher target reported by Banerjee, but obviously covering the age range 5-60 instead of 15-35. Bhavnagar, awarded the Unesco Literacy Prize in 1993, has its reporting status described as "irregular". Chittoor is stated not to have been evaluated externally, though a team from the University of Hyderabad brought out an external evaluation report in 1992. For Gandhinagar (Gujarat), the level III achievement officially reported drops from May 1993 to July 1993. The district claim of 81.46% coverage is accepted for incorporation in the official statistics even though it is officially stated that external evaluation indicates a coverage of only between 12 and 28%. For the PLCs, the DAE comment is that "both enrolment and performance under the PLC phase have been lagging behind". Even with external evaluations, there are difficulties (see, for example, Saxena 1992). The Narsinghpur evaluation generously interpreted outright cheating as "enthusiasm" (NLM 1992:23). The external evaluation for Karimnagar (A.P.) was found so positive that the local authorities themselves have asked for a second evaluation. Field workers raise doubts about the reliability of the Ajmer external evaluation. The Burdwan external evaluation used 50% as the pass mark in its level III tests though the official pass mark is 70%. Even Bordia (1993b), who himself retired as education secretary to the Government of India and was NLMA chairman, now admits that the prescribed level for literacy "is generally not achieved. Despite the evaluations, it would perhaps be correct to say most persons declared literate may have only completed grade II. In a substantial number of these cases the achievement

may be as low as grade I" and, of these last, "most will almost inevitably revert to illiteracy".

A DAE booklet distributed at a programme celebrating International Literacy Day, September 8, 1993, says that "although the spirit of the [NLM] objectives was path-breaking and opened new frontiers for development and growth, in practice fresh ground was not broken" and it declares that it was only in 1993 that there came a "radical change in our approach.....[to make] relevant the role of adult literacy in individual, community, and national life, so that the objectives of the Mission are realistically achieved". However, the pre-1993 NLMA director-general candidly admitted, also in a DAE publication, that "it may be stated straightaway that there is nothing new or innovative in this [TLC] approach; it is a continuation and renewal of the approach obtained even in the pre-independence era" (Mishra 1992:60). Even going by one set of official figures, with only about 15 million claimed totally literate in the three years till 1993, another 65 million to be claimed literate by 1995, another 20 million by 1997 and still another 20 million by 2000 A.D., the completion of the realistic achievement of the Mission's objectives claimed to have really begun only in 1993 is a task indeed. And this is just the quantitative achievement, measured solely in terms of numbers as reported by State officials (Katyal 1993b) – qualitative achievement, if any, is not considered at all. Prem Chand (1993) is more realistic – even "to halve the adult illiteracy rate in India by 2000, we may have to keep in view a target of making about 150 million adults literate during the decade 1991-2000". When the NLMA also acknowledges 12 million nonliterate adults in India in 2001 AD (Kak 1993:5), salvation is a long way off indeed. An uncomfortable conclusion emerges of a game of numbers – proposed by officials, accepted by officials, reported by officials, assessed by officials, explained away by officials, excused by officials, and revised by officials– designed to sustain the myth, rather than change reality.(4) Is this why empirical methods for research on the NLM are not an official desideratum?(IJAEE 1993:74) "The apparent effort at deception" characterizes even international officialdom (Kozol 1978:72) and this, in fact, is obliquely admitted by a senior DAE official – "We cannot always hold out a promise of better future for the illiterate people, for the simple reason that mass education is not accompanied by redistributive justice and dismantling of age-old social, economic and political power structures" (Mathur 1992:34). And it is in such a context that Gunnar Myrdal notes that

there has been, however, one reform continually expressed with seemingly great determination and practically never contradicted: the extension of popular education to the liquidation of illiteracy.....But the basic question remains: how is it possible to do anything substantial in this field of adult education before the increasingly inegalitarian social and economic structure in most of the

underdeveloped countries is broken down by radical reform or revolution?
(quoted in Unesco 1975:80,82)

Planning and the cost of adult education – Data on the money actually spent on adult education is not easily available. The Plans say very little, the status reports prepared for the NLMA say even less, and a direct request to the Department of Education in the HRD Ministry produced nothing at all. Yet an enormous amount of money has been spent (“The outlay on education in the eighth Plan is 128 times that of the first Plan expenditure” according to official sources quoted in *The Hindustan Times*, 27-11-93; Vaidyanatha Ayyar 1993:210 reports a total Plan expenditure of Rs.1110 crores from 1980 to 1992 and an Eighth Plan outlay of Rs.1848 crores) and will be spent, and the amount of money sanctioned as an indicator of successful implementation of the literacy mission is possibly the highest unstated priority with the NLMA (discussion on 24.3.93 between a key NLMA official and the author) – indeed, that the money must be spent is seen as fulfilling a budgetary commitment to Parliament and to the Planning Commission, and is an issue considered “non-negotiable”. No evaluation has examined whether the returns (assessed by any index whatever, quantitative or qualitative) justify the money spent nor, it appears, is this a relevant consideration at all.(5)

The NLM has been advertised as “the largest ever civil or military mobilisation in human history”. To what end, and at what cost? If it is indeed a second freedom struggle, why did the NLMA support the excommunication of those who sang in the Pondicherry PLC “Freedom for the country, but why poverty for us?” (Banerjee 1993:1278) (6).

Contrast another mobilization, in Bihar in 1938, when an almost year-long mass literacy campaign covering nearly 4.5 lakhs learners was “primarily co-ordinated and managed by a professor of Patna college in addition to his regular duties”. This professor worked the campaign mainly from his own house, was not paid extra, and functioned “without extensive infrastructure nor huge administrative expenditure towards office” (Shah 1989:25).

Planning for adult education as a technical exercise – The Second and Eighth Plans recognize technology as the key to “development”. This is an undertone in other Plans too, and technologism is an essential feature of the NLM (Kak 1993:10) as well as of the paradigm of Development. The “elimination of adult illiteracy” has been a Plan goal from the Sixth Plan. The Seventh Plan set 2000 as the target date, with all nonliterates in the age-group 15-35 to be covered by 1990. The Eighth Plan is more ambitious, with Education For All to be achieved by 2000 A.D., and full literacy in the age-group 15-35 by 1995 – though the Delhi Declaration of the EFA Summit 1993 effectively obliterated any target date. The NLMA quantifies total literacy as a coverage of 80 million in that age group by 1995 (down from 100 million of the NPE). Actually, it

is only 80% of the number (down from 85% for the first 25 TL districts), not necessarily getting even the 70% in the evaluation tests, and those above the age of 35 are excluded. A then HRD Ministry official implies that the number of nonliterates in the target age-group is actually a matter of guesswork (Saini 1992:16). To call all this the full or total literacy of the Indian adult population is obviously a myth, and part of the larger mythology of Development. Under the sway of this mythology, humans are numbers and planning for adult education is what Joshi (1989:175) describes as a technical exercise.

Conclusion

Sifting through the rhetorical chaff of official claims of what has been achieved one finds grains of what, by official admission itself has, in fact, not been achieved. The then NLMA director-general, reviewing major post-Independence adult literacy programmes and the "experimentation with one model after another", notes that none of the major pre-NLMA models was a conspicuous success. Expectedly, he was more optimistic about the TLC approach - "this is one model which can assure us of the right results in the right time in the right manner in the most participative, democratic and cost-effective way" (Mishra 1992:61-62, 79), even though this model, "being as it is, basically a centralised diffusion and not a centripetal cultural growth from the grassroots,...exist[s] in a somewhat skewed relationship with local society and culture" (Shukla 1991:2197). Other official reports, praising the TLC model for its "unique social mobilisation" (EFA 1993b:37), in an implicit condemnation of earlier models and earlier planners say that "for the first time universal adult literacy seems to be an achievable objective rather than a hopeless dream" (EFA 1993a:48). Yet Kozol (1978:77) has noted the "predictable failure" of Unesco-led campaigns; already serious questions have been raised about the effectiveness of TLCs as campaigns for literacy rather than as literacy campaigns (Mathew & Rao 1993); Bordia (1993b) refers to "signs of fatigue among the instructors and learners"; and the Indian prime minister reportedly said at the EFA Summit 1993 that "there was a need to 'overhaul' management of education in the country and warned that a routine, business as usual approach will not help in reaching the goal of elementary education and literacy for all" (Indian Express, 17-12-93). Meanwhile, as Paulo Freire (quoted in Unesco 1975:75, 76) wrote, "it is impossible for the power elite to organize, plan or reform education with the aim of laying open to question the essence of the social system in which precisely they are elites". "Systematic education", according to him, is a "powerful instrument of social control", intended to adapt educatees to the system.

Planning for the "education" of the nonliterate Indian in free India is a case in point.

Notes

Assistance from Dr. C.K. Mohan Rao is gratefully acknowledged. The usual disclaimers apply.

1. I use "literacy" and "education" interchangeably because official policy does so. They are, however, emphatically not interchangeable and it is the false equation of literacy and education that has resulted in the pernicious doctrine that equates ignorance and nonliteracy, and immorality and nonliteracy (or "illiteracy", which is the officially preferred word – it must not be forgotten that *illiterati* originated as "an abusive term denoting exclusion, not membership of a community" – Michael Mann, quoted in Hall and Gieben 1992:323).
2. The connection made between nonliterate and animals has been shown elsewhere (Kak 1993:12). Cf. Pilkington's *bon mot* (Orwell 1949:90).
3. I was invited to judge in a National Literacy week 1993 "declamation contest" at an elite school in New Delhi. Students from about a dozen and half leading Delhi schools participated. The subjects for declamation were unfortunately worded – they were grounded in the widespread fallacy that equates ignorance and nonliteracy – but it was the response of the students that was a horrifying revelation. With the single exception of one school, child after child parroted this fallacy and declaimed with gusto that corruption, violence, deforestation and environmental degradation, casteism, dowryism, sati, bride-burning and women's oppression generally, communalism, religionism (the words are theirs), you name it, all the social evils in India have a single root cause – illiteracy. And since it is mainly the poor who are nonliterate, the specious conclusion came easily to them that the poor are a curse on the rest of us. At another school, where the director-general of the National Literacy Mission Authority (NLMA) called the literacy mission "our second freedom struggle" (The Times of India, 8-9-93), children at a declamation contest expressed the same views, and were awarded prizes by the National Literacy Campaign (Delhi Schools) which is headed by a distinguished educationist. At the International Literacy Day celebrations, a reference was made with the highest authority to the spread of literacy as a factor in "binding the human race in brotherhood and harmony" (The Times of India, 9-9-93). What kind of "imported literacy" (Street 1989:98) is this that so blinds our elite to the fact "that the association of literacy with social mobility, economic progress, escaping from poverty and so on is not borne out by the statistics" (Harvey Graff, cited in Street 1989:99; see also Hinzen, Horn, Leumer & Niemann 1988:145; Wangoola 1988:161). The world's two bloodiest wars were fought amongst literate peoples; the most horrifying weapons of mass destruction are produced, sold, and used by literate people; the worst genocides have been planned and perpetrated by literate people; and, even in the Indian context, corruption, violence, communalism, the perversion of democracy, and so on, are all fostered by literate people.
4. For similar jugglery with elementary education, see Singh 1993.

5. At an NLMA-sponsored workshop on 13/14-9-93 on Status-cum-Evaluation of Literacy Programmes, the chairperson of the officially constituted Expert Group on Status-cum-Impact Evaluation of the Total Literacy Campaigns said that the government was going to spend Rs.1400 crores on adult education in the next five years. They would spend this amount, he said, no matter what the recommendations of the Expert Group. He repeated this on 29.10.93 at the National Institute of Adult Education in a meeting with its faculty. The advertised guideline (Indian Express, 15.1.94) is a "per learner cost ranging between Rs.65/- to Rs.100/- per person made literate".
6. Cf. "Somehow it seemed as though the farm had grown richer without making the animals themselves any richer,....." (Orwell 1949:84). Note the comment that the State is "legitimised wrong-doing" (Vijayan 1993).

The Plans

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- Second Five Year Plan* (Government of India, Planning Commission, 1956)
- Third Five Year Plan* (Government of India, Planning Commission, n.d.)
- Fourth Five Year Plan, 1969-73* (Government of India, Planning Commission, n.d.)
- Fifth Five Year Plan, 1974-79* (Government of India, Planning Commission, n.d.)
- Sixth Five Year Plan, 1980-85* (Government of India, Planning Commission, n.d.)
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7. Classification of Adult Non-Formal/Continuing Education and Training Agencies in India*

James A. Draper

Introduction to the Classification

A taxonomy is a way of classifying a phenomena within a particular field of practice and study, such as adult education. The taxonomy presented here attempts to classify all possible agencies and organisations in India which are involved in offering non-formal/continuing education and training programmes for adults (see the next section for a definition of terms). The purpose of this taxonomy is to articulate the rationale and purpose of adult education and the overall and crucial role adult education plays in the functioning and development of society.

The development of such a scheme is often indicative of the professional level and degree of sophistication of a particular field, such as adult education, the social sciences as well as the physical and applied sciences. The advancement of these fields have depended upon initial and revised classification systems or theoretical mappings. "No study of adult continuing education can become 'scientific' (i.e. severely examined) until it 'provides itself with a suitable technical nomenclature' (Mac Kinnon, 1985) or scheme through which it can be studied" (Lifvendahl, 1995).

Over the years, and as part of its increasing sophistication, attempts have been made to devise various classification systems of agencies within the field of adult education (for example, Griffith, 1970; Shroeder, 1970; OECD, 1977; Muti, 1994). In addition, attempts have been made to classify adult education activities according to the content being learned; the programme being offered; the teaching-learning methods being used; and the adult clientele or learning group (Griffith, 1970). As part of her article on "Trends in Adult Education Research in India", Patel (1994) used categories which described institutional

settings of research, financial support for research and the areas of adult education research.

As the OECD (1977) points out "Individuals seeking to comprehend the institutional dimensions of the education field often confuse a single institutional form or a small number of diverse kinds of institutions with the full range of the field". In fact, what is required and what this current taxonomy attempts to show, is that more adults are involved in non-formal education than those pursuing education through traditional schools and traditional formal institutions of education. There is hardly any imaginable setting in which adults do not pursue purposeful and intentional learning, that is, "education". Adult Education is characterised by its exciting and enriching diversity.

Definitions

The following definitions and terms are used in this article, reflecting the general international usage of these terms.

Learning

- is a process of interacting with, adapting to, shaping, and understanding our environment; a process of understanding ourselves.
- is a process of acquiring knowledge/skills/attitudes/values through informal experience or systematic study, both formal or non-formal.
- can be unintentional or intentional.

Education

- is a process of managing intentional/planned/systematic learning.
- is a process of organising learning toward a predetermined goal or direction (therefore does not include unintentional learning, except incidentally).
- all education is "continuing education" since it is always built on previous individual experience, not necessarily requiring literacy skills.

Adult Education

- learning is the essence of adult education.
- is a process of facilitating and managing the intentional, formal and non-formal, learning of adults (but always accompanied by incidental and informal learning).

- is the facilitating, supporting, managing and understanding of the unintentional and intentional or planned learning of adults.
- Adult Education refers to both -
 - (a) a field of practice and
 - (b) a field of study (e.g. A discipline within the social sciences with its own body of knowledge derived from research and critical reflection).

Note: The definition of “adult education” as used here, is not defined by the content, skills, attitudes or values being learned (such as literacy education or professional continuing education); by any particular age group of adults; by the sponsoring agency or location of the educational programme; or by the methods of teaching and learning being used. These are only variables for describing specific educational programmes.

A comment might be made that the above definition of adult education is too broad and all encompassing (although internationally and historically in India the tendency is to use a broad rather than a narrow definition). The same comment could be said of all fields of study, all of which use all-encompassing definitions to define the field, e.g. political science, sociology, economics, geology, anthropology and adult education.

Formal Education

- refers to education (that is, intentional and purposeful learning) for which one receives formal recognition for academic and/or skill achievement, for example, by being awarded a degree or diploma.

Entrance into such a programme requires a formal application, meeting pre-determined standards or requirements and being officially registered by the degree / diploma granting institution. The process of the programme is regulated by policies, examinations and the awarding of grades as is the termination or conclusion of the programme. Universities, colleges and schools are primary examples of formal institutions of education.

Note: In addition, such institutions will frequently offer non-credit, non-formal educational programmes to adults.

Non-Formal Education

- refers to educational programmes which do not lead to the awarding of degrees of professional / occupational certification or diplomas. Such

education does not preclude the awarding of “certificates of attendance” or certificates of skill achievement. There is sometimes flexibility in interpreting what is “formal” or “non-formal”.

Note: As can be seen from the above definitions of “formal” and “non-formal” education, by far the majority of adults are involved in forms of non-formal education as illustrated by this “non-formal taxonomy of agencies”.

Observations

From the taxonomy, a number of observations and assumptions can be made.

1. All of the categories of agencies are involved, to varying degrees, in providing some form of educational activity to adults, either for its own members, a wider public, or both. That is, all agencies are involved in the management of learning, meaning the acquisition and use of human and material resources.

2. All of the agencies are involved in more than the act of teaching. That is, they are involved in: the assessment of needs; budgeting resources (money and other resources); planning and implementation of educational programmes; selection of adult clients as well as the selection of instructors and other specialised personnel; the training of personnel; evaluation and research; selection and/or production of materials; and organising follow-up and continuing education programmes. All of these functions characterize the enterprise of adult education practice.

3. Some agencies may fall within more than one of the ten categories in the taxonomy. On the other hand, it is highly likely that most adults participate in programmes provided by a variety of agencies in order to serve their own multiple and complex needs.

4. The major factors which determine the category within which specific agencies are placed are: its source and/or diversity of funding, the primary reason for an agency’s existence, and the extent to which the agency’s mandate focuses on education.

5. Just knowing the content offered in an agency’s educational programmes does not necessarily determine why adults are participating in the programme or even what adults are actually learning. The matter of participation and motivation are complex and is an important area of research within the field of study of adult education.

6. The persons responsible for planning and implementing a specific adult education programme may (for purposes of discussion) be placed in one of two categories, namely, “educators of adults” or “adult educators”. The former refers to persons who have an expertise (and often specialized training) in a field other than adult education, eg. management, health, agriculture, accounting, engineering, policing and who realise that in order for them to achieve their mandate, they and others must be involved in some form of education. Often through trial and error, these personnel devise and implement educational programmes.

On the other hand, “adult educators” are those who have undergone a formalised programme of study, often as part of a post graduate diploma programme or a university masters or doctoral programme, which focuses on the field of study or “discipline” of adult education. Such persons will be expected to have: a detailed grasp of the body of knowledge within the field of adult education, a historical perspective and understanding of the field, and a grounding in the theory of adult learning. Hence, the adult educator is better able to understand “why” things work in practice rather than only being able to describe “what” is being done. An understanding of the theory, based on research and critical reflection, primarily distinguishes “educators of adults” and “adult educators”.

A Note to the Reader

The reader is urged to accept this taxonomy as a working document. Although the intent for constructing this classification system is to be all inclusive of all possible agencies in India which are involved in non-formal/continuing education and training programmes for adults, there are, undoubtedly, many limitations to the system.

The reader is invited to: discuss the taxonomy with colleagues; place your own organisation within the taxonomy develop a similar classification system for your region or state; and use the taxonomy as a working document in training programmes.

Classification of Adult Non-Formal / Continuing Education and Training Agencies in India

I. Government (A)

- Agencies in this category are those which have been established by government primarily for the purpose of education/training.

- Examples:

Farm and Home Programme (All India Radio); Focus-National T.V.; Hindi Directorate Correspondence Programme.

II. Government (B)

- In order to fulfil its legislated mandate, each level of government (Central, State and Municipal) depends on some form of non-formal/continuing adult education. Invariably, this will be of two kinds:

- a) The non-formal continuing and in-service education of employees in order for them to keep up-to-date with changes in knowledge and skills;
- b) Non-formal education and information giving programmes for the general public, for example, through publications and the mass media.

- Examples:

- Such government ministries as Agriculture; Armed Forces; Environment; Health and Welfare; Human Resource Development; Industries and Commerce; Interior; Labour; Prisons; and Railways.

- Both under the centre and state governments there are often special directorates or boards for the implementation of specific programmes, for example, within the Government of India: Ministry of Agriculture (Krishi Vigyan Kendras - Farmers Training Centre); Ministry of Human Resource Development (Directorate of Adult Education); Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (Directorate of Audio-Visual Publicity, Directorate of All India Radio, Doordarshan - TV); Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of HRD (Central Social Welfare Board).

III. Public Sector

- Organisations within this category have their own directors and management, have been incorporated by Government and are influenced by government policy. The non-formal education being conducted within these organisations are in the areas of inservice, continuing and professional development of employees.

- Examples:

Andhra Pradesh State Electricity Board; Bhilai Steel Plant; Central Bank of India; Electronics Corporation of India; Hindustan Aeronautics; Hindustan Steel; Hindustan Petroleum Corporation; Indian Petro Chemicals Corporation; National Mineral Development Corporation; National Thermal Power Corporation; State Bank of India and some other banks.

IV. Autonomous Quasi - Government

- Essentially these high profile, multiple resource organisations were set up to meet the formal educational needs of children, youth and young adults. In addition, however, most of these organisations are also involved in forms of non-formal continuing education for adults, (usually a non-captive audience), for example, through extension education programmes involving students or teachers or the use of the various resources of these organisations or any combination of these. Such organisations depend largely, if not entirely, on government funds.

- Examples:

Andhra Pradesh Open University; Government Schools; Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT); Indira Gandhi National Open University; National Open School; Technical Teachers' Training Institutes; universities and colleges; also publicly supported art galleries and museums.

V. Autonomous

- An important but sometimes not a sole function of these autonomous agencies is non-formal education and training of adults. Invariably other functions of these agencies include research and consultation. Such bodies usually have their own independent board of directors which set and control policies relating to staffing and programming. Although depending on various levels of government funding, sources of revenue also come from research contracts and fees for service. These organisations could be under the centre or state governments or union territories. Under each there are autonomous, public sector and non-governmental organisations. Programmes may include an international audience.

- In terms of funding, autonomous organisations are of two types:
 - i) Those which receive 100% funding support from the Government of India. Examples: NCERT (National Council for Educational Research and Training); NIAE (National Institute of Adult Education); NIEPA (National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration); NIRD (National Institute of Rural Development).
 - ii) Those which receive funds from a variety of sources such as central and state governments, private trusts, international agencies. Examples: Council for Social Development; Indian Institute of Education; and the various State Resource Centres.

Other Examples:

Action for Welfare and Awakening in the Rural Environment; Administrative Staff College of India; Centre for Policy Research; Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART); National Institute of Small Industry Extension Training (NISIET); Rajiv Gandhi Foundation. In addition, public schools and autonomous libraries (eg. Delhi Public Library) and other cultural institutes can be added to this category.

VI. Private Sector

- Agencies within this group include solely independent organisations whose primary goal is profit-making. Especially the larger of these organisations will conduct in-house, non-formal continuing education and training programmes for their employees in order to improve the effectiveness and competitiveness of the organisations. One or more persons are usually designated as staff development or human resource development personnel who are responsible for planning and implementing these educational programmes.
- Examples:

Educational Travel Tours; Hindustan Latex; Industrial Development Bank of India; Institute of Management Studies and Research (recognised by the University of Bombay); Kamani Metals and Alloys; Madura Mills; Premier Automobiles; Tata Engineering and Locomotive Company; Tata Iron and Steel Company; Union Steel Industries.

VII. Non-Government Voluntary (Indian NGOs)

- These non-profit agencies are officially registered as Societies under the Society's Registration Act of India or through some comparable registration at the state level. Some of these agencies could be affiliated with international organisations such as Oxfam or Action Aid or with specific United Nations bodies.

These agencies are dedicated to serving some social or educational need, constituting a wide range of programmes, and usually dependent on resources, human and material, given voluntarily. These agencies usually work with a non-captive public audience (except for the non-formal education of its staff and volunteers). That is, formal membership in the organisation is seldom a prerequisite condition for participation. Such agencies are usually dependent on multiple sources of ad-hoc funds. This uncertain long-term source of funds add to the precariousness of such agencies, requiring considerable time and energy in soliciting continuing funds. This category would include community associations which have some educational programmes.

- Examples:

Andhra Mahila Sabha; Astha (Udaipur); Bengal Social Service League; Gandhi Peace Foundation; Indian Adult Education Association; Indian National Chapter of the International Association for Education and World Peace; Intercultural Cooperation - Hyderabad Chapter; Kasturba Gandhi Memorial Trust; Kerala Association for Non-Formal Education and Development; Literacy House (Lucknow); Princess Esin Women's Educational Centre; Seva Mandir (Udaipur).

VIII. Non-Profit Special Interest

- The primary purpose of the non-formal education programmes run by these charitable agencies is to serve the interests of its members. That is, membership in these registered organisations determines whether or not one is eligible to participate in these programmes. The funding of these agencies largely comes from membership fees.

- Examples:

Arya Samaj; Aurbindo Ashram; Central Labour Institute; Cooperative Societies; Hobby Clubs; Indian Association of Engineers; Islamic Education and Cultural Society; Junior Chamber of Commerce; Krishnamurty

Foundation; Labour Unions; Religious Groups; Swami Vivekananda Society; YM and YWCA.

IX. Non-Profit Special Issues

- These registered charitable agencies essentially focus on a single issue and related concerns. The non-formal education programmes which it organises includes:
 - a) those which it organises for its own staff and volunteers;
 - b) those aimed at the general public including publications, training programmes and using the mass media.

To a large extent, the continuation of these agencies depends on their degree of success in raising the public awareness of the issue at hand. Apart from its educational function, such agencies are often engaged in research (or in locating funds for research), service and consultation. Such agencies usually have multiple source of funds including contributions from various levels of government and voluntary donations. The focus of the issue may link these agencies to other national and international counterparts.

- Examples:

Association for the Blind, Association for the Handicapped, Cancer Patients Aid Association of Bombay, Voluntary Health Association of India (VHAI).

X. International NGOs

- These non-profit charitable organisations have programmes within India and therefore, to varying degrees, are bound by Government of India policies. These agencies are registered under the charity society act (or the equivalent) within the countries in which their headquarters are located. The service and non-formal educational work of these agencies in India will vary in their degree of autonomy, some of which will be largely "Indianised" with a minimum of foreign intervention.

As with NGOs in general, these agencies usually include service, educational, research and consultation functions. Similarly, they may have multiple funding sources, including, in some cases, the reimbursement of expenses by the Government of India.

In general, International NGOs may be classified into two categories:

- i) Those that are basically charity organisations such as Oxfam and Action Aid but also including Lions and Rotary clubs (through their extension activities); and
- ii) Those which are multi-lateral agencies such as UNICEF, UNDP, and WHO.

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PART III

TOTAL LITERACY CAMPAIGNS

8. Total Literacy Campaign in India : Status and Issues

C.J. Daswani

Adult Literacy in India

The progress of the adult literacy program in India has been singularly uneven. The programme has undergone a number of revisions in the past forty-five years on account of periodic shifts in policy. In the process, with every shift the goal of achieving universal adult literacy has been pushed further into the future. It has been argued by some that the immense cultural and linguistic diversity is an inhibiting factor in the achievement of universal literacy (Bordia and Kaul, 1992). There is also an extreme view that perhaps India is not fully committed to the eradication of mass illiteracy (Tarlok Singh, 1991). The fact, however, remains that despite several attempts at eradicating adult illiteracy since the early 1950's, there are more illiterate adults in India today than there were in 1951. Of course, the literacy rates in the country have shown a steady increase of about eight percent every decade since 1951.

TABLE - A

Literacy Rate and Growth of Literacy 1951 to 1991

Year	Total	Increase in Literacy Rate
1951	19.74	-
1961	30.11	10.37
1971	36.49	6.38
1981	43.56	7.07
1991	52.11	8.55

(For Age Group 7 and above) (Source: Prem Chand, 1991 a)

From a national rate of 19.74 in 1951, the literacy rate rose to 52.11 in 1991. However, it is generally agreed that this growth in the literacy rate can be attributed almost entirely to the increased enrolment in the formal primary school and not to the success of the adult literacy program.

It would seem that illiteracy was not perceived as a critical factor in social and economic development until 1978 when a national programme of adult education was launched for the first time to bring functional literacy to about 100 million adults in age-group 15-35. Before the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) of 1978, adult literacy program focussed first on social education and later on farmers' functional education. While the social education program was aimed at improving the life of the individual, the Farmers' Functional Literacy Program aimed at enabling the farmers to employ agricultural technology through literacy (Shah, 1993). Neither of these programs was implemented long enough for the planners to derive any lessons from it.

The NAEP of 1978 was a planned shift in the direction of development oriented literacy focusing on social awareness and functionality, besides basic literacy. This program, like the earlier ones, was virtually abandoned in 1980, although it was formally in existence until 1990 when it was replaced by the present program of Total Literacy Campaign (TLC).

Right to Education

The Constitution of India, adopted in 1950, rightly recognised the importance of education as an instrument of social and economic development, and promised free and compulsory education to all children upto the age of 14 by the year 1960. Sadly, the Constitution did not stipulate any deadline for achieving universal adult literacy in the country, nor did it assign any priority to adult education. Perhaps it was assumed that once universal elementary education was achieved, there would be no need for adult education. Unfortunately, the goal of achieving universal elementary education by 1960 has not been reached even today.

Of the nearly 170 million children in the age-group 6-14 only about 90 million attend primary school. Most children who enter Grade I of the formal school do not complete the five years of the primary stage. Only about one fourth the number of children who enter primary school go on to the next stage of upper primary school. The primary and the upper primary stages together make up the stipulated eight years of elementary education promised to all children in India. In fact, although the Constitution mentions free and compulsory education, elementary school education has never been made compulsory in India (Weiner, 1991). Whether children come to school or not is left

to the will of the parents, even where free educational facilities have been provided by the state.

Literacy and Illiteracy

In 1951 the illiterate population in the age-group 15 years and above was about 174 million which rose to 281 million in 1991. This increase of around 107 million adult illiterates in this age-group (15+) can be traced to the unsuccessful program of universalizing primary school education as much as to the absence of an effective adult literacy program in the country prior to 1978. It is significant to note that in the same period (1951-1991) the number of literates in the age-group of 15 years and above rose from 42 million in 1951 to 259 million in 1991. This six-fold growth in the number of adult literates in forty years can also be attributed almost entirely to the growth of the primary school system. We notice a similar six-fold growth in the total number of literates in the age-group 7 years and above, from 60.2 million in 1951 to 364.2 million in 1991. The congruity in the growth rates of literates in the age groups 7+ and 15+ clearly point to the positive results of the growth and utilisation of the primary school system.

TABLE -B

Growth of total population, number of literates and illiterates (7+ and 15+). In Millions. 1951-1991

Year	Total population	Total Age:7+	Literates Age:15+	Total Age: 7+	Illiterates Age: 15+
1951	361.1	60.2	41.48	304.9	173.86
1961	439.2	105.5	71.86	333.7	187.00
1971	548.2	161.4	108.32	386.8	209.51
1981	683.3	246.5	164.53	436.8	238.77
1991	843.9	364.2	259.00	479.7	281.00

(Based on: Prem Chand, 1991 a and b)

National Adult Education Policy

It can now be surmised that in the early 1970's it had become abundantly clear that the goal of universal elementary education was not going to be

achieved very quickly. It was also clear that all the school drop-outs had already been added to the growing numbers of adult illiterates. Furthermore, it was also evident that the adult illiterates belonged to the less advantaged sections of the society who were at the bottom of every conceivable social and developmental index. It was this realization, which had been slowly growing since the mid-1960's, that led to the formulation of a national adult education policy and the NAEP of 1978. For the first time, adult education was perceived as an essential instrument for bringing about structural reform in the Indian society.

The national adult education policy in India was influenced as much by internal compulsions as international efforts in the field of adult literacy. In the absence of a well established adult literacy philosophy and tradition, India provided fertile ground for the germination of alien concepts and ideas that had succeeded in other contexts but were not necessarily appropriate in the Indian context (of. Shah, 1993).

National Policy on Education and EFA

Adult literacy as an integral element in the national education policy-frame was first accepted in the National Policy on Education of 1986. For the first time since 1950, it was acknowledged that universal primary education can be achieved only when it was coupled with an educational plan for the adult illiterates who as parents were responsible for sending their children to school. This outlook was both influenced and reinforced by the concern of the international educational activists and thinkers whose efforts of a decade or more finally culminated in the now famous Jomtien Conference of 1990 where the concept of Education For All (EFA) was mooted. Adult literacy was seen as one of the three essential components, together with primary education and early childhood education, that could lead to universal basic education for all. EFA was advocated as a workable strategy for countries in the Third World where large populations were deprived of education, which has been perceived by the advanced countries as one of the main causes of underdevelopment and associated ills such as poverty, high population and poor health (Manzoor Ahmed, 1990; 1992).

The current program of adult literacy in India is the outcome of this crucial policy shift in the direction of EFA by the year 2000 A.D.

Total Literacy Campaign

Like the NAEP, the TLC is a developmental oriented adult literacy program which is essentially run in the form of a mass movement seeking to mobilize a large number of literate individuals in a specific geographic area to impart

literacy to all the illiterate adults in that area in the shortest possible time. The TLC has been launched in more than three fourths of the entire country, and 130 million adults illiterates are reported to have been covered under the program so far, out of which 49.89 million people have been made literate so far. While the exact impact of the TLC will become available only in the national census of 2001, it is claimed that a 100 million adult illiterates in the age-group 15-35 will be imparted functional literacy by 1997.

Functional Literacy

The connotation of functional literacy has changed with every shift in the adult literacy program in India. The Farmers' Functional Literacy Program of the mid-1960's linked literacy to the occupation of the learner. In the NAEP, functionality was built in as one of the three components together with basic literacy and awareness (Shah, 1993). In the TLC, functional literacy includes self-reliance in the 3 R's, awareness of the causes of deprivation, skills improvement and imbibing values such as national integration, conservation of environment, women's equality and the small family norm. Clearly, in the TLC the concept of functional literacy has been enlarged to include not only the three components of the NAEP but several elements of national and global concern.

This enlarged definition of functional literacy is a reflection of the international interpretation of literacy concerns and how these can be built into meaningful programs of adult literacy. In the present day global context functional literacy can no longer be equated with basic alphabetic literacy alone (Wagner, 1987; 1992).

Basic Literacy

Despite the expanded scope of functional literacy, the expected levels of learning prescribed under the TLC relate only to the 3 R's. There is no mention of any specification for the other elements of functional literacy including 'skills improvement'. Even the evaluation of learners' performance, which has emphasized in the TLC, measures only the achievement in 3 R's. Evaluation of the other elements of functional literacy receive no systematic attention. The Arun Ghosh Committee Report (1994) notes that most external evaluations of TLC have measured only basic literacy levels of learners according to the norms laid down by the Dave Committee Report (1994) on evaluation of learning outcomes in literacy campaigns. Earlier, in 1980 a Review Committee on the NAEP had also noted that the program (NAEP) had been confined to literacy (3 R's). It would not be unfair to suggest that the adult education programs in India have tended to be limited to the 3 R's, although the policy statements

have often listed objectives that go beyond basic literacy and include developmental as well social goals designed to usher in a transformation in the structure of Indian society.

It has been demonstrated elsewhere that, in fact, most adult literacy programs in the developing countries of South and South-East Asia have actually tended to emphasize only the 3 R's although other broader curricular goals have been visualised for these programs (Daswani, 1994 b).

Literacy Curriculum

The TLC prescribed curriculum in the 3 R's approximates the formal primary school curriculum in reading, writing and numeracy.

Prescribed Levels in Three R's

Reading

- (a) Reading aloud with normal accent simple passages on topics related to the interest of the learners at a speed of 30 words per minute
- (b) Reading silently small paragraphs in simple language at a speed of 35 words per minute
- (c) Reading with understanding road signs, posters, simple instructions and newspapers for neo-literates, etc.
- (d) Ability to follow simple written messages relating to one's working and living environment.

Writing

- (a) Copying with understanding at a speed of seven words per minute
- (b) Taking dictation at a speed of five words per minute
- (c) Writing with proper spacing and alignment
- (d) Writing independently short letters and applications and forms of day-to-day use to the learner.

Numeracy

- (a) To read and write 1-100 numerals
- (b) Doing simple calculations without fractions involving addition, subtraction upto three digits and multiplication and division by two digits

- (c) Working knowledge of metric units of weights, measures, currency, distance and area and units of time
- (d) Broad idea of proportions and interest (without involving fractions) and their use in working and living conditions.

This curriculum is sought to be completed in about 200 hours of instruction time spread overall period of 8 to 12 months. The curriculum is transacted through a set of three primers written in a format which has been standardized for all the TLC projects in the country. It is not clear how the total period required for acquisition of the prescribed levels of 3 R's has been determined.

There is no research evidence to support the implicit assumption that the TLC curriculum can be acquired within the stipulated time-period. It is well known that children require at least three to four years to achieve independent reading skills. Although adults are believed to have certain advantages of cognitive maturity, it is believed that they do not necessarily acquire basic reading skills at a more rapid pace (C. Chall, 1987; Wagner 1992).

It is not surprising, therefore that the Arun Ghosh Committee has noted that the literacy standards acquired in the TLC are often very fragile.

Improved Pace and Content of Learning

The TLC literacy curriculum is imparted through a pedagogy which has been labelled 'Improved Pace & Content of Learning' (IPCL). The IPCL pedagogy rationalizes the claim that the prescribed curriculum can be transacted within 200 hours of instruction time. The argument is circular : Basic literacy (including numeracy) can be acquired in 200 hours because the three IPCL primers should be completed in that time. There is no reference to learner factors in acquisition of literacy skills.

Moreover, the IPCL format has been so standardized that no TLC project in the country is permitted to innovate any teaching-learning materials. The IPCL model alone has been accepted for implementation all over the country with a stated target of making 100 million adult learners literate by 1997. The Arun Ghosh Committee has reported that the State Resource Centres, responsible for development of the IPCL primers, do not encourage any variation on the standard model. The Committee has recommended that the teaching-learning material needs to be reassessed.

Mother Tongue Literacy

The rigidity of the IPCL model is not restricted to its format alone. The

fundamental question relating to the language of literacy is not addressed by the IPCL pedagogy.

In a multilingual country like India standard written languages are often restricted to formal communication, while dialects and vernaculars are used in more informal and natural communication settings. According to the census of India there are 211 known languages spoken in India which are grouped under 105 language names. Of these 105 languages, 96 may be called living (modern) Indian languages each spoken by 10,000 or more speakers. Not all the 96 languages are written languages. Only 50 of these can be considered to be written languages since there is some written literature available in them. Of these 50, only 14 languages have long literary traditions.

Of the remaining 46 living languages, 32 actually have alphabets but no real written literature. Fourteen languages do not have even an alphabet.

Of the 50 written languages, 17 are termed official languages and are recognized as such by the various states in the country. Primary education is imparted through the 50 written languages as well as English which is classified as a foreign language by the census, and as an associate official language by the Constitution (C. Daswani, 1994 a).

Although primary education is imparted through 50 written languages, the medium of instruction in the secondary schools and colleges is restricted to the official state languages and English. Most written communication in the country is also carried out in the official languages and English.

Each of the 105 languages has several dialects which in turn have many regional and social varieties. The standard written languages including the dominant state official languages can have a number of regional dialects that vary from each other as well as from the written standard language. Hindi, for instance, has at least 19 regional dialects and numerous social and caste dialects. According to the 1961 census there were 1652 mother tongues spoken in India.

Not even the primary school books are available in the mother-tongues of the learners. The IPCL primers have been written in most of the standard official languages and some of the more widely spoken dialects and tribal languages. Given the fact that most of the adult illiterates are speakers of dialects or minor tribal languages, the IPCL primers are invariably beyond the linguistic competence of these learners. This is a major factor that contributes to the fragility of literacy skills acquired in the TLC.

This problem is not new. In most of the adult literacy programs in the country, teaching learning materials have invariably been written in the formal style in the standard written varieties ignoring the linguistic competence of the learners in their mother tongues (Pattanayak, 1981). Research studies in language learning are often not available to the literacy planner, or are ignored as unimportant when teaching materials are developed.

Bilingualism, Biliteracy and Script

The TLC is essentially a District - based program. District as a coherent unit of operation is linked to the administrative machinery and control. However, a District is by no means a homogenous entity with regard to language. In fact, not one of the over 460 Districts in the country is monolingual. Every District has a significant number of speakers of languages other than the dominant state official language. Unless this fact is recognized and incorporated in the TLC planning process, many of the adult illiterates are likely to be faced with no choice but to acquire literacy in a language that they do not speak as their mother tongue.

A less serious problem is that of bilingual speakers who control more than one language or dialect and would perhaps wish to become literate in both languages/dialects. So long as these languages are written in the same script the problem may not be too severe. But, as often is the case, if the two (or more) languages are written in different scripts, then the problem of biliteracy needs to be resolved.

Biliteracy is a reality in the Indian context since all people who have been through the formal school system are bi- or multi- literate. They are able to read and write two, three or even four scripts.

In addition to the Roman and Persian scripts there are nine Indian scripts in use in India today. These eleven scripts provide the alphabets for the 91 alphabetised languages. The Roman and the Devanagari scripts are the most widely used scripts. Unwritten languages adopt one of the available scripts when they are first alphabetized. The government policy recommends the use of the dominant regional language script as the scrip for adult literacy. Yet, this is not always the most optimal solution. Several attempts at adopting a common script for all Indian languages have all failed for a variety of reasons (Daswani, 1994 a).

Literacy and the Urban: Rural Divide

The language issue is inter-linked with the urban: rural factor in a significant way. The bulk of India's 364 million illiterates live in the rural areas. They speak in dialects or in minor tribal languages, most of them unwritten. They have no access to information through the written word.

According to the 1991 census, 74.30 per cent of the total Indian population lives in the rural areas and 25.7 per cent in urban areas. On the other hand the literacy rate in urban areas is 74.99 while in the rural areas, it is 44.18. More

than half of the rural population is illiterate, and only a quarter of the small urban population is illiterate (Daswani; 1992).

Table - C
Literacy rates - rural/urban ; male/female. 1991

	All Persons	Male	Female
All Areas	52.11	63.86	39.42
Rural Areas	44.18	57.86	30.58
Urban Areas	74.99	83.31	65.66

(Source: Daswani; 1992)

The issue that needs to be addressed is that of the appropriateness of the IPCL materials for the rural learners who do not control the standard written languages.

A great deal of flexibility needs to be built into not only the format of the IPCL, but also the language of instruction with its numerous ramifications of vocabulary, syntax, style and discourse.

Caste and Gender

Urban and rural parameters intersect in significant ways with the social parameters of caste and gender. It has been pointed out above that the literacy rate among the urban Indian populations is much higher than among the rural populations. However, the literacy levels of males and females as well as of scheduled castes and non-scheduled castes are determined by the rural: urban parameter. Put on a hierarchy of literacy levels, the urban non-scheduled caste male is at the top of the scale, while the rural scheduled caste female is at the bottom of the scale.

Table - D
Male: Female/Scheduled Caste: Non-Scheduled Caste

	Literacy Rate
Urban Male (non-SC)	68.46
Urban Female (non-SC)	51.19
Urban Male (SC)	47.54
Rural Male (non-SC)	46.14
Rural Male (SC)	27.91
Urban Female (SC)	24.34
Rural Female (non-SC)	21.68
Rural Female (SC)	8.44

Literacy Rates - 1981 Census. (Source: Daswani; 1992)

Clearly the male: female parameter is the most significant, followed by the rural: urban. The caste parameter is the least significant. All males rank higher than females except the urban upper class females who are second only to their male counterparts. All other females, SC and non-SC are at the bottom of the scale. The caste factor is significant only for males but not females, since rural non-SC males are higher than their female counterparts.

These ramifications are highly significant for planning of any literacy program where a standardized teaching learning package is being implemented.

A report on the current status of TLC claims that of the 49.89 million learners who have achieved the prescribed literacy rates, 62 per cent are female and 38 per cent male. This is certainly a positive gain even if in terms of coverage alone.

The status report also states that 69 per cent of the successful learners are non-SC/ST, 21 per cent are scheduled caste and only 10 per cent belong to scheduled tribes. This would seem to be an unsatisfactory situation because numerically the bulk of the rural adult illiterates belong to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

Post Literacy Campaign

The TLC model provides for a Post Literacy Campaign (PLC) phase following the TLC phase of 8 to 12 months which includes the 200 hours of basic literacy skills. The PLC phase was built into the model when it was discovered that the TLC phase by itself did not lead to stable literacy among the learners. As a matter of fact, the initial TLC projects were implemented in high literacy Districts in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of the campaign mode. Quite predictably the TLC model was found to be successful in these high literacy Districts where the 10 to 20 per cent illiterate adults were easily mobilized and made literate during the TLC phase. However, when this model was tried out in low literacy Districts, it was discovered that the TLC phase did not result in total literacy. First, not all the targetted illiterates were able to complete the TLC phase and, second, the literacy levels acquired by the successful learners were below the prescribed levels.

In order to prevent such learners from relapsing into illiteracy, it was decided to follow-up the TLC phase with a PLC phase of partly structured programs to continue guided literacy instruction and to provide remediation. The ultimate objective of the PLC phase was to create stable literates who would be able to use their literacy skills for continuing education of their own choice.

According to the Arun Ghosh Committee there is evidence to show that for effective implementation the post literacy phase demands conditions sufficiently

different from those prevailing in the TLC phase. The Committees make a distinction between the campaign mode employed during the TLC and the program mode necessary for successful implementation of the post literacy phase. In other words, it seems to be the case that even if some degree of literacy is acquired through the campaign mode, it is necessary to consolidate this gain through a more programmatic approach in the post literacy phase. The Committee has also suggested that it is unreal to claim 'total' literacy in a District at the conclusion of the 8 to 12 months of the TLC phase. The campaign mode, therefore, should be seen as an effective methodology for mobilization and center-staging literacy which should be systematically developed and strengthened through a well planned program of post literacy of a longer duration.

This raises once again the issue of optimal duration for the acquisition of stable literacy by the adult illiterate. Contrary to all research evidence available, it has been assumed that an adult illiterate can be made functionally literate after about 200 hours of instruction; an assumption which has been proved wrong both during the NAEP and now in a large number of TLC projects.

Research Issues and Agenda

From its inception in 1950's, the adult literacy enterprise in India has been marked by a number of characteristics. First, no program has been carried out long enough to yield useful lessons. Second, on account of several factors, the adult literacy policy has been most fickle. Third, as a result of this fickleness it has not been possible to establish a professional institutional network to provide academic and research support for the programs. New institutions have been set up at every stage, only to be dismantled or crippled when the program was abandoned. Fourth, in the absence of a professional cadre, the responsibility for planning and implementation of the adult literacy has fallen largely on the bureaucracy. This over dependence on the bureaucracy has not always been in the interest of the programs. Bureaucratization has inevitably led to structural and program rigidities. While rules and procedures yield results in the short run, they tend to feed upon themselves and undermine the basic flexibility so essential for effective implementation of an adult literacy program. Bureaucratization has also been responsible for the frequent shift in orientation and policy because the bureaucrats are not able to make adult literacy their only career specialization.

The most crippling aspect of the adult literacy programs in India has been the almost total lack of a research agenda to support both planning and implementation. Research has invariably been replaced by evaluation. While some evaluative studies can contribute to research, not all evaluation can be termed

research. Research is essential for addressing some of the crucial issues which have beset the adult literacy programs in India.

For a more effective implementation of the TLC and the post literacy phases of the program, it is necessary to draw up a research agenda. Some of the critical issues for such an agenda could be redefining literacy in the Indian context, understanding acquisition of literacy by adults, distinguishing stable and fragile literacies, mother tongue literacy, biligualism and biliteracy, literacy curriculum, literacy materials, social parameters of literacy and many more.

Use of Literacy

The most significant issue for research could be to study the extent to which a culture or a society uses literacy.

The uses of literacy skills are directly linked to the extent to which literacy is employed in a society. The extent to which an individual is able to use his/her literacy depends on a number of complex factors like class or caste, gender, location, occupation and social status.

In a highly literate society, it is likely that an illiterate individual may find it very difficult to function optimally without minimal functional literacy skills. In a partially literate society, on the other hand, an illiterate individual may be able to function quite adequately without basic skills of literacy. In a highly literate society, the illiterate individual is acutely aware of his inadequacy and may stand socially ostracized. In a partly literate society, on the other hand, the illiterate individual may never perceive illiteracy as an inadequacy and may never be ostracized by the society on account of his/her illiteracy.

In India where nearly half the population is illiterate, illiteracy is not perceived as an inadequacy, particularly by the adult illiterates, even when the illiterate individual is aware of the inadequacy. He/she is not empowered enough to overcome this inadequacy because the society compels such an individual to continue to function marginally.

Scores of vocations and occupations do not insist on literacy skills as a prerequisite, and millions of skilled workers in India acquire their vocational skills without literacy. In such societies it is not enough merely to provide literacy skills through mass programs. It is necessary at the same time to bring about structural changes which would ensure increased used of literacy by all people in all situations. Only when a society begins to use literacy as an essential tool for socio-economic survival, the individual is motivated to acquire the literacy skills necessary for functioning within that society.

Converting a partly literate society into a fully literate society is not a simple task. It requires not only the political will to effect the structural changes in

the society, it requires a clear sighted policy and a pragmatic program to create a learning society which is motivated and committed to justice and equity.

In India today there is the realisation that literacy is crucial for building a just society. We have to discover the most efficient route to reach our goal.

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9. Total Literacy Campaigns - An Unwritten Chapter in Indian History*

Lakshmidhar Mishra

The National Literacy Mission (NLM) was launched on 5th May, 1988 by the former Prime Minister - late Shri Rajiv Gandhi at a formal function held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. The National Literacy Mission Authority (NLMA), having two wings, namely a Council and an Executive Committee, was formed in June, 1988. Two months later in a meeting in August 1988, Shri K.R. Rajan, the then Collector and district Magistrate, Ernakulam exuded a lot of confidence that Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) was possible, feasible and achievable in India and that a beginning could be made in Ernakulam. Despite initial reservations, the proposal was supported by the NLMA and the State Government and a campaign for total literacy in Ernakulam was launched on 26th January 1989. The campaign, which was implemented by the Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad, was a collaborative effort of the District Administration and Non-governmental organisations and was successfully concluded in December 1989. On 4th February, 1990 Ernakulam was declared as the first fully literate district in the country. Out of 1.85 lakhs 1.35 lakh potential learners reached the NLM levels of literacy and numeracy thus raising the rate of literacy of Ernakulam District from 77% to 98%. It is on this day that a campaign for total literacy was also launched for the whole of Kerala State by the then Prime Minister of India - Shri V.P. Singh, who had earlier launched the International Literacy Year (ILY) on 22.1.1990, reinforcing the solidarity and support of Government to NLM.

Successful accomplishment of TLC in Ernakulam and taking up the TLC venture for the whole of Kerala State, with so much of political will and commitment acted as a powerful spring-board and spurred several State Governments, District Administrations and Voluntary Organisations to launch similar initiatives in the direction of total literacy. The entire process was facilitated by formation of a Non-governmental organisation called "Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti" in August 1989 reinforced by a countrywide Caravan for Literacy during

* *The Turning Point : Some Thoughts on Adult Education*, 1992, pp. 54-89.

October, 1990 known as Bharat Gyan Vigyan Jatha sponsored and executed by the Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti and another Caravan for Literacy in five States of Assam, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh sponsored and executed by the Gandhian and Sarvodaya organisations. The two caravans taken out at one of the most difficult periods of Indian history, had succeeded to a large extent to spread the message of literacy and science for self-reliance and to create the desired churning a critical consciousness in favour of literacy and lifelong learning or continuing education to inculcate a rational, secular and scientific temper along with values of national concern such as national integration, small family norm, women's equality and conservation of environment. These will remain as two important milestones in the history of literacy and adult education in India and the world.

• Ernakulam had an infective effect on other districts and TLCs in Bijapur and Dakshina Kannada in Karnataka, Burdwan and Midnapur in West Bengal, Karaikkal, Mahe, Yanam and Pondicherry in the UT of Pondicherry and the State of Goa followed in quick succession. During the last three and a half years since launching of the TLC in Ernakulam, the number of TLC projects and TLC districts has grown progressively and as on 1st August 1992, as many as 106 projects (including combined projects of some districts in a state) involving 165 districts have been approved by the Executive Committee of the NLMA for being covered under TLC, which is an impressive indication by any account. While the State of Kerala and the UT of Pondicherry were declared as fully literate on 18.4.1991 and 30.11.1991 raising the rate of literacy to 93.5% and 89.5% respectively, the districts of Bijapur and Dakshin Kannada in Karnataka; Chittoor and Nellore in Andhra Pradesh; Burdwan, Midnapur, Hooghly, Birbhum, North 24-Parganas and Bankura in West Bengal; Sindhudurg and Wardha in Maharashtra, Gandhinagar and Bhavnagar in Gujarat, Pasumpon and Pudukottai in Tamil Nadu and Narsingpur in Madhya Pradesh have also concluded the first phase of their total literacy campaign, some successfully and some not so successfully. While some have declared themselves a sfully literate in a formal ceremonial function some have simply closed the first phase of TLC and have started the post-literacy and continuing education phase after having shared the outcome of the first phase of the campaign with the people on whose mandate they have launched the campaign. In all, 17 projects in 33 districts have been approved for post-literacy and continuing education, while about ten proposals for basic literacy and post-literacy (five each) are awaiting the approval of the Executive Committee NLMA. There have been several interesting an inspiring fall-outs of these campaigns (both TLC and PLC) which will be enumerated at a later stage.

What has been listed above is just not a mere catalogue of dates when certain events were launched and certain activities took place. Each one of them

represents an important milestone in the history of development of adult literacy and education in India and will continue to stand on its own, evoking powerful memories, generating new hope, faith, conviction and optimism and spurring millions to action in a new direction. Historians and politicians, alike social scientists and economists as media and communication experts, could study these events and activities and could record them as important chronicles in the history of mankind. Regretfully TLCs on the whole have not found their way into the corridors of history in the same manner in which comparatively less important and rather insignificant events centering round the lives of Emperors and Kings, Generals and Ambassadors, Zamindars and Middlemen, Courtesans and others have found place.

What could be the reason?

Education is One Which Liberates

The question is complex and there could be no straight and simple answer.

It is well-known that education is not an autonomous system; it is a sub-system of the broader socio-economic and political system. To the extent, it is able to influence the structure and operations of the total system, it can be a tool of liberation of men, women and children, who are often prisoners of the system. This is how, lot of faith and hope has been reposed in education from time to time as an agent of bringing about a qualitative change in the lives of millions.

Education is one which liberates. Thus goes the ancient adage.

In reality, however, education has been the victim of the total system and is hardly in a position to influence the former in order to channelise it in a positive and reformative direction. The sectarian, divisive and disruptive forces which affect the total system do not spare the educational system; the same fads, taboos, mercenary interests, diehard obscurantist ideas and practices which blur the vision of the total system and rob it of its elan vital also devitalise the educational system and are responsible for its degeneration.

Instead of bemoaning the progressive deterioration in educational standards and its total devitalisation, it may be worth-while to ponder over ways and means of restoring the centrality of education and according it its rightful place so that it can ensure the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation. In countries like Myanmar, Cuba, Nicaragua, Vietnam and Ethiopia, an attempt was made to restore the primacy of literacy and education through rather unconventional and unorthodox means. In these countries, there was a revolution which put an end to the tyranny of the prevailing dictatorial system and which, in turn, brought about a radical change in the social, economic and political system.

Education and literacy were the offshoots of that historic change. They were prompted and facilitated by the change and they came to occupy the centre-stage. Immediately, in the wake of change of Government, it was thought and rightly so that these countries which have been groaning under the wheels of colonialism and imperialism and had been economically ruined by years of misrule, can be put back on the rails of progress and development only if the pride and patriotism of the people could be evoked and sustained.

It was also thought that there could not be a better weapon to do so than mass education and literacy. Mass education and literacy were to be imparted in a campaign mode which involved democratisation of the entire educational process through establishment of a common school system for all races and classes, backed by a common curriculum and common medium of instruction. It implied injection of a new awareness and consciousness based on political liberty and social and economic equality. It meant that one who knew could share with the other and particularly the women and other disadvantaged groups, who have been deprived of the access to educational opportunity due to forces and circumstances beyond their control. It also implied imparting skills of economic production to the masses to prepare them to build the foundations of individual and collective self-reliance.

As history has documented it, in Vietnam, backs of buffaloes and brick-kilns became slates and blackboards as also shade of the trees and harvesting yards where the peasants and agricultural labourers thresh the rice. The juice extracted from the plants and the trees became the ink. In Vietnam rains and floods, and in Nicaragua volcanic eruptions and red-hot lava, contaminated water and gushing streams did not deter scores of learners and volunteers from plunging into the campaign for total literacy which was also a campaign for social regeneration and national reconstruction. It restored the national pride which was badly mauled by years of colonialism; it created a new society which values and prizes the literacy and education as tools of social action. It reinforced this faith and belief that you can do it and you have to do it for your sheer survival and for the survival of your dear nation and the countrymen.

Literacy and Education

Before proceeding to analyse the relevance of total literacy in a campaign mode which was successfully carried out in countries like Myanmar, Cuba, Nicaragua, Vietnam and Ethiopia and drawing a worthwhile parallel, as may be appropriate to our requirement, it may be useful to examine the nomenclatural identity of literacy and adult education and whether they should be treated as co-terminus or parts of a larger system or independent entities. To state it rather

firmly and without any ambiguity, *literacy and education are not repetitive or co-terminus*; they may be parts of a larger system but certainly they have a uniqueness and identity of their own. To state it with further precision and clarity, literacy is a minimal, though very important, entry point; it provides a gateway to the world of information, communication, modernisation, innovations and skills and more significantly the life-skills, vocational-entrepreneurial skills, communication-skills, survival-skills etc. It is essentially a tool for communication and learning, for acquiring and sharing of knowledge and information and a pre-condition for individuals' evolution and growth.

Research studies and human cognitive development have established beyond doubt that literacy enhances our 'critical consciousness' and enables us to think, reflect and critically analyse the existential reality of the situation in which we have been placed. It enhances our cognitive faculties. It promotes objectivity, capacity for clear perception, clear thinking and logical and coherent analysis. It promotes a sense of history and helps to combine individuality with universalisation of education. Literacy certainly includes readings, writing and arithmetic skills but it goes beyond alphabetisation. It is something deeper than mere mechanical skills of reading and writing. Understood in its broadest perspective, literacy could free us from the narrow confines of our individual pride and prejudice, ignorance, fads and taboos and direct our creative energies to flow unhindered towards a search for and discovery of the true meaning of our existence. It is a kind of open sesame which enables men and women to transcend the barriers of their restricted lives and establish an easy outreach with the wider world of information, communication, modernisation innovations and skills.

If literacy is a sub-structure, adult education could be a super-structure.

If literacy is an entry point, adult education is its continuum in the direction of lifelong learning. *Adults in 15-35 age-group, who constitute the most productive and reproductive segments of the society and whose acquisition of a literate status is crucial to the survival of our nascent democracy, are certainly not fools or goofs, they are intelligent, mature, sensible and often sensitive. They have a world of information and wisdom with them which may not be adequate or foolproof but could certainly be tapped for many a productive endeavour and could be profitably used to our advantage.*

Education of such an adult has to be viewed somewhat differently from education of a child, who is in one of the most formative years of a human being and has, therefore, to be based on certain guiding principles. The first and the most important guiding principle is that *every adult, who is not literate, is first a human being and then a learner*, having the same hopes and aspirations, weaknesses and failings as any other human being. He/She operates in an environment which is not amenable to any precise regulation and which gen-

erally has not been very positive and supportive of his/her education. Remaining illiterate is not a matter of his/her discretion or volition but on account of circumstances (social, economic and cultural) often beyond his/her control. It is only when we bring ourselves down to the level of a potential learner and speak to him/her in an intelligible language, the gap separating the teacher and the learner could disappear and the urge and motivation to learn could acquire a new form.

The second guiding principle rests on understanding and internalising the *nexus between the demand and the supply syndrome*. No worthwhile programme of literacy can be launched without generating a natural and spontaneous demand for literacy and without creating a climate which will be positive, supportive and appreciative of literacy. Demand generation must precede delivery and demand should be generated in as simple and natural a manner as possible. Harnessing the folk culture and tradition could be one of the ways by which the potential learners could be aroused and awakened and an emotive bond established with literacy.

The third important guiding principle is based on *an objective understanding of the interface of literacy, adult education and development*. These are undoubtedly dialectically inter-related. *Paulo Friere*, the Brazilian revolutionary and an outstanding adult educator had, as a matter of fact, redefined development and redirected the efforts of many adult educators working for social change. Being highly critical of most development efforts, he had proposed an alternative paradigm based on the development of 'critical consciousness' as different from the state of 'naive consciousness'. *Julius Nyerere*, yet another outstanding adult educator and the former President of Tanzania, had also perceived this nexus between literacy, adult education and development with great deal of clarity, imagination and vision. It is quite true that literacy perse, and even adult education at a fairly advanced stage, may not lead to a radical or qualitative change in the lives of individual learners. It may not lead to an end of the status of landlessness, assetlessness and bondage but they can certainly be a tool of 'critical consciousness' and in that sense can be an important tool to induce or stimulate change - social, economic, cultural and even political.

The fourth guiding principle is related to the *level of literacy and the stage at which post-literacy and continuing education should begin*. According to a statement made by Madam Helen Butt, the level of literacy is as important or even more important than the content of literacy. We need a level which is reachable, which can be precisely and scientifically defined and which is sufficiently high to ensure retention and application. Such a level can also be described as a switch-over from the syndrome of guided-learning to that of a self-reliant learning. Post-literacy and continuing education can begin only at that stage when the fragile level of literacy has been replaced by a self-reliant

level i.e. one where the need for guided-learning has been fully dispensed with. It is important that there is a simultaneity in planning for both basic literacy and post-literacy programmes, so that there is no avoidable interregnum and the latter commences quickly at the close of the former with of course adequate planning and preparations.

Yet another principle which is important in our context is related to *the issue of language*. Unlike most other countries, we are in a *multi-lingual situation* where in addition to 18 languages listed in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution, we have as many as 1642 dialects, many of whom are spoken by large groups of people. No literacy or adult education strategy can be meaningful if it does not take cognizance of this multi-lingual situation and does not proceed to respect the linguistic identity and preferences of the adult learners. It is in this context that bilingualism becomes an important principle in any teaching-learning process, both for children as well as for adults. Bilingualism implies learning literacy in the dialect spoken by large groups of people at the initial or incipient stage of literacy and providing a bridge at an appropriate stage for switch over from the spoken dialect to the state's standard language. Yet another important aspect of this principle is that since all spoken dialects may not have a script of their own, the script of the state's standard language may be adopted, so that the process of learning literacy through that script becomes easier for every basic learner.

Evaluating the Campaign Approach

It is in this perspective of a correct understanding of the inter-relationship between literacy, adult education and development that we may proceed further to critically analyse the rationale and efficacy of the campaign approach. It may be stated straightway that there is nothing new or innovative in this approach; it is a continuation and renewal of the approach obtained even in the pre-independence era. In the 20s, 30s and 40s, when the country was reeling under the weight of an oppressive colonial era, the rate of literacy was barely 5% and in terms of absolute number, the country had millions of illiterates, who were also victims of social discrimination and economic deprivation. How could they unite and fight the colonial regime and obtain freedom for the country when they themselves were not free from the shackles and fetters of ignorance, illiteracy and bondage. It is this predicament of millions of people which had haunted the conscience of the Father of the Nation and which had made him to utter those historic words with a lot of anguish. "*It is a matter of sin and shame that millions in India continue to be illiterate; they have to be liberated*".

Popular Ministries which were formed in the provinces in 1937, under the

act of 1935, responded to the call of the Father of the Nation and launched Mass Campaigns for Total Literacy as well as adult education programmes.

These were small, isolated and scattered efforts with a limited coverage. There were, however, several silver linings.

- Illustratively, in Bihar a campaign, which in the words of Dr. Frank Laubach can be said to be the "most impressive Government campaign conducted in India at that time was under the inspiring leadership of Syed Mahmud.
- In the city of Bombay, the literacy movement was launched under the auspices of the Bombay Adult Education committee under the chairmanship of Shri B.G. Kher Premier and Education Minister.
- The Mysore University Unit launched literacy campaign in 1940 and the Mysore state Literacy council was born in 1941.
- Dr. Frank Laubach inspired a large number of teachers in Moga in Punjab and launched a campaign for "Each One Teach One" which gave rise to literacy leagues in almost all the districts of the State.
- The campaign oriented movement for basic literacy during this period also gathered momentum due to Granthshala Movement in Kerala and village Library Movement in several parts of the country which provided the much needed spurt for post-literacy and continuing education.
- It is interesting to note that Chakravarty Rajagopolachari (popularly known as Rajaji), the then chief Minister of Tamil Nadu had, in clear recognition of the need for post-literacy and continuing education wrote a primer for neo-literates known as "Thambee va" and also short stories for new literates "Kuttikathaigal".

People of the status like Shri Harishsavotham Rao and Smt. Durgabai Deshmukh in Andhra Pradesh, Dr. Syed Mahmud in Bihar, Shri Morarjibhai Desai, Shri B.G. Kher and Shri J.P. Naik in Bombay, Dr. Frank Laubach in Punjab, Sir M. Visvesvaraya in Mysore, Dr. Weathy Fisher in Uttar Pradesh and Dr. Mohan Singh Mehta in Rajasthan (popularly known as Bhai Sahib), had acted as pioneers in the field of adult education and are known for their monumental contribution.

In its range and ambit, the programme has grown over the years at a remarkably rapid pace and there have been experiments with one model after another in quick succession, such as, Gram Shikshan Mohim in Maharashtra in the late 50s, Farmers' Functional Literacy in the late 60s, Functional Literacy for Adult Women (FLAW) and Non-Formal Education programme for the youth in the early 70s, Polyvalent Education for urban slum dwellers, industrial work-

ers and their family members under the caption of "Shramik Vidyapeeth" in the 60s and 70s, National Adult Education Programme in the late 70s and now National Literacy Mission in the late 80s and 90s.

Alike in the field of institutionalisation of experiment with one model after another, there have been changes in the content and process of literacy and adult education programmes from year to year. Each one had its own peculiarities of strategy and methodology and strengths and weaknesses in operationalisation.

Illustratively, Gram Shikshan Mohim was one of the first experiments to take literacy to the masses by way of a movement. Launched initially in the district of Satara in Maharashtra in 1959, it covered as many as 25 districts of the State during the period 1961-63. In these districts, the annual average figure of persons becoming literate increased from 3,000 in 1959 to 1,09,000 in 1961.

In the State as a whole, a total of 10,08,000 persons in 14-50 years age-group in 1109 villages were made literate. The Mohim aimed at total eradication of illiteracy, provision of library services and other materials for retention of literacy and around development of villagers through social education centres. Even the Kothari Education Commission (1964-66) had acknowledged the achievements of the Mohim that harnessed the local village patriotism to eliminate illiteracy from the villages and required the teachers and all educated men and women to work for literacy. The enthusiasm and tempo generated by the Mohim could not, however, be sustained due to want of adequate back up support and services, particularly in the field of post-literacy and continuing education and there was large scale relapse of neo-literates to the old world of illiteracy. *Notwithstanding this major weakness, the Mohim continues to be an important silver lining in the history of adult education in India.*

The Farmers' Functional Literacy, functional Literacy for Adult Women and Non-formal Education for the Youth in the 60s and 70s were essentially sectoral or departmental programmes confined to few Ministries of Education, Agriculture, Information and Broadcasting. Their scope and ambit was limited in as much as no serious effort to achieve nation-wide coverage and promotion of literacy on a universal scale was either conceptualised or accomplished through these programmes.

The National Adult Education Programme launched on 2nd October, 1978, undoubtedly represented a major initiative in the field and a radical departure from the sectoral and departmental approaches in the past. It was intended to be a Mass Programme involving all sections of the society with a view to making 100 million illiterate adults literate over a period of 5 years i.e. 1978-83.

The NAEP document was crystal clear in its perception and insight. It said "*No country perhaps, with the exception of china, faced the problem of illiteracy of the magnitude we are facing and hardly any country has had such a long tradition of respect for learning and knowledge or the vast resources which*

we have.” It proceeded to add “The aim then would be to strive for a learning society in which life-long education is a cherished goal, a goal which is enunciated in our scriptures. Intended to be a Mass Programme, the NAEP, however, remained a traditional centre-based approach programme (which was also honorarium based, hierarchical and Government-funded and Government-controlled). *Undoubtedly, it imparted a national and holistic dimension to adult education programme, which has been later recognised in Kothari Review Committee Report submitted to Government in April 1980, and created an infrastructural base for adult education. Given, however, the magnitude of the problem of illiteracy, its intensity and spread were limited and given the dangers of too much of centralisation in a governmental and hierarchical mode, it failed to evoke any positive response in the minds of numerous Government functionaries and least succeeded in stirring the imagination and critical consciousness of the unlettered masses to come forward and participate in the literacy programme. The programme became a victim of its own hierarchy and out-moded rules and procedures and failed to inspire the policy formulators, opinion moulders and representatives of the people, etc. It did attempt degovernmentalisation encouraging involvement of voluntary agencies which in implementation of the programme on a large scale but a target oriented approach without an effective screening mechanism to screen and certify credentials of implementing agencies brought discredit to the programme and became major causality. It was also short-lived in as much as programme was subjected to a review in October, 1979 even before it could barely complete one year of its existence. Even though the review brought out several positive aspects of the programme and made several positive recommendations to impart it a new strength and resilience, it could not retrieve the same euphoria with which it was launched on 2nd October, 1978. The critical consciousness about the limitations of a traditional Government-funded and Government-controlled programme like NAEP (which was also honorarium-based) was reinforced with submission of as many as 56 Evaluation Study Reports which had a catalogue of debits and very few credits to programme on the one hand and also due to the projections made by the World Bank and of UNSCO about the magnitude of problem illiteracy of the country in terms of percent as also in absolute number on the other.*

The Radio broadcast of late Shri Rajiv Gandhi on 5th January, 1985, putting women’s education centre-stage in the conceptualisation and formulation of the National Policy of Education and according a very high priority to literacy and adult education as an area of national concern therein, and a detailed Programme of Action laying down the strategy of implementation of NPE, were also positive indicators of the direction in which the new Government wanted to go and stimulate to the future course of action. The NLM is partly a by-product of

the National Policy of Education - 1986, but largely the outcome of an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the NAEP by the Institutes of Social Science Research and Management; it derived its inspiration and strength from the new urge for application of the findings of scientific and technological research to improve the environment and pedagogy of literacy learning. In terms of content, it tried to imbibe and assimilate values of national concerns which were reflected in the National Policy of Education and in terms of process, it tried to impart a new sense of urgency and seriousness by adopting the mission mode of implementation of a hitherto Government programme. Soon after the Mission was launched by late Shri Rajiv Gandhi on 5.5.88, all of us, including Shri S.G. Pitroda, the then Adviser to PM, Incharge of all technology Missions, started, in all earnestness, the exercise to translate the laudable objective of the Mission into a reality.

We did a lot of introspection and asked questions to ourselves as to how a programme which was traditional in character for nearly three decades could be converted into a people's movement. It is not, as if nothing happened after launching of the Mission. The Advisor to PM on Technology Missions - Shri Pitroda had indeed assumed the gauntlet on his shoulders immediately after the formal launching. He used to take the Mission Directors to the State Capitals, to the district and block headquarters to have a direct inter-personal communication with the political leaders, the administrative bureaucracy, media and the people in a climate of total openness and critical reflection. There was a lot of learning through sharing to search for a workable strategy in the direction of a goal which we had set for ourselves. Immediately in the wake of the launching, the National Literacy Mission Authority was constituted with two wings, namely the Council and the Executive Committee, the former headed by the Minister of Human Resource Development and the latter by the Education Secretary.

State Literacy Mission Authorities were also formed simultaneously and State Mission Directors were appointed. All the ongoing conventional programmes were given a critical look, reviewed and revised. A number of joint study teams went round different States and Union Territories, districts, blocks and villages to gauge the mood of the people, to spread the message of the Mission and the clarity and conviction and to create a climate for a people's movement for literacy.

Some of the significant developments which had taken place both before and after in the wake of launching of NLM could be chronicled in a historical perspective as below:

- * Launching of "Sampoorna Saksharata Abhiyan" by Gujarat Vidyapeeth-1.5.1988.

- * Launching of a campaign for total literacy for Coimbatore by the Adviser, Technology Missions on -11.5.1988
- * Launching of Mass Campaigns for Total Literacy in 20 taluks @ 1 taluka per district in Karnataka in a massive convention of VAs and NGOs at Nanjangoud (Mysore) on 7.11.1988.
- * Initiative taken by Dr. (Miss) Bengalee, Vice chancellor, Bombay University for a Mass Programme of Functional Literacy with the help of teachers and students of Bombay University on 15.8.1988.
- * Initiative taken by Committee of Resource Organisations (CORO) for launching a Mass Campaign for Total Literacy with the help of student and non-student youth volunteers in Dharavi BARC belt on 15.11.1989.
- * Literacy as a movement of the people (LAMP) - Convention organised by Dr. B.V. Parmeshwara Rao of Bhagavatula Charitable Trust, Yellamanchilli in Bangalore from 1st to 3rd July, 1989.

A lot of communication with the States, UTs, districts, etc. took place. A lot of solidarity, rapport and bonhomie was established but the government-funded and government-controlled programme did not instantaneously become a people's movement. Despite best possible intentions and efforts, literacy continued to be a stereo-typed conventional centre-based programme. Voluntarism and mass mobilisation remained a far cry. Outcome oriented results, which are also measurable and deliverable within a prescribed time span, were elusive.

The first opportunity came in April, 1989 when the efficacy of the campaign approach was demonstrated for the first time in Kottayam city of Kerala. It was also demonstrated that small is beautiful. The district and the city had the highest rate of literacy in the country (81% and 97% respectively). There were only 2000 persons in 6-60 age-group to be made literate. The Collector and District Magistrate, Kottayam – Shri A.J. Alphons succeeded in mobilising 200 volunteers from NSS Unit of Mahatma Gandhi University for forging in link with the 2000 potential learners to make them fully literate within a period of 3 months (April-June, 1989). The city was declared fully literate on 25.6.89 and the story of this first great experiment in total literacy has been encapsulated in shape of a book- How we did it in 100 days - written by Shri A.J. Alphons the Collector of Kottayam.

What started as a time-bound one-shot affair, though on a modest scale in Kottayam soon grew into a massive movement, first the district of Ernakulam, then in the whole Kerala State, Gujarat, Pondicherry and now 106 projects involving 165 districts. The methodology which was adopted in Ernakulam and later in the whole of Kerala State was unique in many respects, which need to be listed. These are:

- * Massive approach - entire district taken in one go.
- * Total coverage to the point of saturation- one member of the society, literate or illiterate could escape from the impact of the campaign for total literacy.
- * Transformation of literacy work from avenues of employment to a duty/ obligation tinged with pride and patriotism.
- * Meticulous spatial and temporal planning as in a war for mobilisation and deployment of human and material resource.
- * Integration of people's enthusiasm with administrative machinery on the one hand and a professional project structure on the other.
- * Delinking the implementing machinery from governmental bureaucracy to increase dynamism and flexibility and at the same time ensuring accountability by stringent monitoring by the people themselves.

The total literacy plan for Ernakulam was launched on 26.1.89 with the following prophetic words:

"There are no prospects for a literate Kerala within an illiterate India. Kerala has to play a leading role in making the whole of India Literate. This is imperative for the progressive of Kerala. Only by eradicating illiteracy from its own soil and sharing the experiences and excitement there-from that Kerala can play this role."

Doubts and Criticisms

Why are people indifferent to literacy?

Why is there so much of cynicism and scepticism towards literacy?

Why is it, that people, after so many silver linings on the horizon, are indulging in endless debates and disputes on literacy

- "Is it necessary?"
- Is it desirable?
- Can literacy not wait?
- Can't the resources meant for literacy be diverted towards elementary education?"

Such endless debates go on in the outside world to the total exclusion of millions of learners and volunteers participating in the literacy programmes with boundless enthusiasm and commitment.

It is quite natural that these and many other questions should agitate those who are actively engaged in conceptualisation, planning and actual implementation of the Mission at the national, state and district levels as also at the grass root level.

Before we squarely address ourselves to these questions, it may be interesting to understand some of the doubts, disputes, misgivings and reservations in somewhat greater detail so that we can also simultaneously counter them with all the force at our command, not so much with a view to silencing the critics, cynics and skeptics but to restore the primacy and centrality of literacy and to put the Mission and its objectives, strategy and methodology in a proper perspective.

To start with, both before and after the Mission was launched by the former Prime Minister - Late Shri Rajiv Gandhi, questions were raised about the status of the Mission in a manner which is a sad reflection of our thinking and ethos.

The Mission was being linked by many to the handwork of a particular political party in power, even though the late Prime Minister had stated in so many clear and unambiguous words, "This is not the Mission of any particular Ministry or Department or Agency; this is the concern of the whole nation. Literacy should be viewed by the people as important as drinking water and immunisation".

After sometime, when the Adviser to PM on Technology Missions started playing the role of a nodal institution to intensively monitor and coordinate the activities in all the National Technology Missions, similar confusing and disturbing questions continued to be raised linking the Mission to be the handwork of an individual.

It was clarified again and again that a National Mission cannot be the handwork of a particular individual or even groups of individuals. A Mission is a national endeavour and time-bound search for a new identity of literacy, a new expression of the cultural energy and creativity of the people and the outcome of accumulated research and wisdom and therefore, cannot be equated with just one individual or one political party or one political personality.

When the Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) proposal was received from Ernakulam, this was straightway dismissed as an attempt to carry coal to the new castle. It was clarified that even though the rate of literacy in Ernakulam was high (as high as 77% according to the 1981 Census), the Ernakulam model, if successful, could have a very good spin-off effect in as much as it would inspire and motivate several other districts that total literacy is not something which is utopian, but something which is possible and achievable.

After the Ernakulam experiment was successfully concluded, it started acting as a powerful stimulant for several other districts, alike in the North as well as in the South. In other words, one K.R. Rajan could nucleate many potential

Rajans who came forward to assume the leadership for similar experiments with lot of enthusiasm and self-confidence that they can also do it as good as Rajan could do. The fact that all districts are not uniformly placed and endowed and that there is a great deal of geographical, topographical, socio-economic and cultural diversity obtaining in different regions, in different districts and even within the same district, did not undermine their enthusiasm to go ahead with the idea of TLC.

It is true, that it was comparatively easier to launch the campaign experiment in Ernakulam than in other districts but this, by itself, did not imply exclusion of other districts nor did it imply exclusion of the poor, the deprived and disadvantaged people of less endowed regions. All that was simply intended, simply was

- the concept of Total Literacy in a Campaign mode, treating the district as a unit was comparatively new;
- a countrywide awareness of all the parameters of success of a campaign cannot straightway be generated; and
- *we should try it out*, in an area where it was likely to succeed better.

By now, it is matter of history that Ernakulam did succeed admirably well in the wake of that success, TLC for the whole State of Kerala, for the UT of Pondicherry, Goa and several districts of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Orissa, Assam, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan, were taken up in quick succession.

All of them cannot be said to be the exact replication of the Ernakulam model, even though they have derived a lot of inspiration and strength from the latter adapting the essence of the Ernakulam experiment profitably to their advantage.

What exactly is the essence of that experiment?

It means that despite social heterogeneity, caste and stratification factor and despite numerous divisive and disruptive forces, there are a number of good, well-meaning, conscientious and progressive minded people in the society, who can be mobilised and whose support can be harnessed for literacy work purely on a voluntary basis.

It means that like minded people can come together, think together, plan together and act together for a common cause like literacy. It also means that they can do so notwithstanding the euphoria of the stock market, notwithstanding the call of the God of Mammon and numerous corrupting mercenary forces obtaining in the society.

There are still people who have retained the spark of altruism, the impulse of voluntarism and who are willing to work for others without any expectation of award or reward or incentive as teacher, trainer, evaluator and environment

builder. They are willing to part with a portion of their time, energy, ingenuity and skill in favour of those who do not have them, who have been deprived of them for no fault of theirs and yet who are in need of the same.

Once such innate goodness in human beings is recognised and the basic premise is established that voluntary work for literacy is possible and feasible with the help of a number of good samaritans, it is not difficult to build a super-structure on the sub-structure. This super-structure, however, need not be a skyscraper; it needs to be a structure which is simple, inexpensive, with few layers, credible and accountable, open and accessible to all. The importance of the structure, however, remains in as much as a campaign for total literacy is essentially a short-duration endeavour and if the results are to be achieved in a process which is extremely difficult and complex, the entire effort has to be a planned, coordinated, systematised and well-structured effort. There must be close monitoring, supervision and coordination so that we get to know that the right things are happening at the right time, in the right manner and if anything has gone wrong, the correctives need to be applied instantaneously; so that there can be no let up or slip-off. It also means that the results sought to be achieved are not only deliverable but also measurable in clear, precise and scientific terms.

After the new approach i.e. TLC started gathering momentum, every increase in the number of TLC districts was accompanied by a near increase in the number of cynics and skeptics. The first attack came from those who are protagonists of elementary education. Their guns were targetted against so much of concentrated attention to adult literacy, to the exclusion of elementary education in the formal system.

Some of them were undoubtedly well-meaning and had years of track record of dedicated service in the field of basic education. In a sense therefore, they were justified in discouraging effort to sweep the floor when the tap was on. Some of their attacks were also equally ill-conceived and ill-designed. Universalisation of elementary education, non-formal education for non-school goers and school dropouts in 9-14 age-group and adult literacy are inextricably interwounded; one is as important as the other. They are, as a matter of fact, mutually supportive and inter-dependent programmes, one supporting and reinforcing the other. This nexus has been recognised in reports of successive Education commissions, Kothari Review Committee on Adult Education (1980), NPE Review Committee headed by Acharya Ramamurthy, NPE Review Committee headed by Janaradan Reddy, NPE (1986) as modified in 1992 and the POA (1986) as modified in 1992 and is otherwise known as the '*Dual Track*' Approach. In the districts where TLCs are being taken up, there has been a planned and systematic effort to carry children in 9-14 age-group along with adults in the first phase of the campaign, while creating better conditions in

the formal school system for enrolment of children in 5-8 age-group.

In majority of the TLC districts, there is a realisation that children who are enrolled in the first phase of the campaign along with adults would be in need of a more stringent and systematic non-formal education spanning over a period of one and half years which is the minimum to reach the minimum levels of literacy. This consciousness is reflected in the Action Plan for TLC as also in the actual implementation at the basic literacy and post-literacy stage in several districts and therefore, the criticism levelled against TLC, that it ignores and belittles the early childhood and elementary education with over-riding preference for adult education is rather unfair and unfounded.

In our scheme of development, family is treated as the lowest unit and a family comprises of parents, adolescents and children. There can be three types of situations in a family in relation to literacy.

- In the first category both parents, adolescents and children are illiterate. In such a situation, no worthwhile interaction can take place amongst the family members.
- In the second category, the parents are illiterate but the children are literate. The latter, in such a situation cannot communicate to the former on the same wave-length.
- In the third category, the parents may be literate but due to peculiar circumstances, children may have been deprived of the access to educational opportunity. Such a situation may be more of an exception than rule.

In the Dual Track Approach which we have adopted for ourselves in the National Policy of Education and the Programme of Action formulated thereunder, what we are saying is that parental illiteracy and child illiteracy go together and no learning society can be created in any household by sending children to school while parents remain illiterate or by imparting functional literacy to adult parents and not sending children to school.

Creation of a learning society is essentially the outcome of constant inter-activity between parents and children which ensures learning by sharing and, therefore, there is no question of permitting one at the cost of the other or to the exclusion of the other, but promoting both together with the same urgency, same seriousness, same emphasis and same thrust.

If as a result of the cultural campaign, as an integral part of the campaign for total literacy, parental demand for enrolment and retention of the children in the formal school system has been generated, the demand has to be met regardless of the financial implications, otherwise the entire experiment will be counter-productive and the gap between parental illiteracy and child illiteracy will get widened.

The Collector and District Magistrate in a TLC district occupies a pivotal position. As chairperson of the Zila Saksharata Samiti, he/she acts as the principal mobiliser and coordinator of the campaign and provides the leadership and overall direction to the pace, tempo and rhythm of the campaign. This is quite natural as every campaign is a short duration affair, where both the process and outcome are important and where it is imperative to unite and coordinate a number of defused and uncoordinated elements and forces who would otherwise tend to act at cross-purposes. Who else is better placed to unite and coordinate these inchoate and uncoordinated elements than the head of the district administration? We are, however, not looking at the collector and DM in a TLC as one who will be the regulator of a mechanism or the controller of the destiny of others but as one who will be the first amongst the equals, who will be able to carry a number of discordant elements and make them think together, plan together and act together, so that there is some symmetry and harmony in an otherwise highly heterogeneous society.

This calls for lot of modesty and humility, lot of respect for the dignity and equality of all beings, lot of catholicity and tolerance. It may not be uniformly forthcoming from all District Collectors but wherever these characteristics are present, they will contribute most towards the success of the campaign and where the style of functioning is highly personalised, arbitrary and authoritarian, it is bound to be counter-productive.

Criticisms have been levelled that collectors and DMs are principal instruments of maintenance of law and order, peace and tranquility; they also constitute the focal point of coordination of all development efforts in a district. Excessive pre-occupation of Collector and DM with the total literacy efforts in a district could result in a situation where other components of development may get sidelined or neglected and, therefore, according to them, it is doubtful whether such over-riding priority to literacy promotion efforts on the part of Collector and DM urges well for the district. Such criticisms are as unfair and unfounded.

In whatever manner we may look at it, literacy creates motivation and awareness which results in acquisition of skills necessary for development. Literacy also creates conditions for acquisition of a critical consciousness of the ironies and contradictions of the society in which we live. Literacy provides certain competencies to the youth required for productive participation in the affairs of the family, of the society and the larger affairs of the Nation. Access to literacy stimulates the desire for training in diverse skills and motivates the poor and the deprived skills and motivates the poor and the deprived to intensify their efforts to break-out of the poverty cycle to adopt more effective modes of production and distribution. Access to literacy heightens political awareness and would enable people to participate more effectively in civic

affairs and affairs of the body politic - both local and national. It would promote democratisation of the working of Government and NGOs, local self-governing bodies, voluntary agencies and would improve the content and quality of conducting the entire democratic process through Parliament, Legislative Assemblies, Corporations, Municipalities, Notified Area councils, Panchayats, etc. More than anything else, access to literacy would also ensure access to the development parameters such as access to credit, access to seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, access to water both for irrigation purposes as well as drinking, and access to a world of information of direct interest and relevance to the learners (healthy, family welfare, immunisation, nutrition, maternity protection, child care, small family norm, etc.).

Viewed in this perspective, literacy becomes the key to the entire development effort, not merely by expanding the flow of information but by way of promoting awareness, empowerment and eventually leading to formation of organisation of the unorganised and strengthening of the entire collective bargaining process.

It is important that access to information in matters of public policy in the areas relating to age of marriage, age of employment, prohibition, untouchability, dowry, etc. is viewed as important as access to acquisition of vocational skills. Literacy being an important tool of acquisition in both, it assumes paramount importance for all development departments and development functionaries. They need to own literacy as their own programme and as the key to the success of their programmes.

Attention to literacy promotion efforts cannot, therefore, be wished away in the name of maintenance of law and order, peace and tranquility nor in the name of departmentalism. There have been two principal banes of our entire development effort :

- targetitis i.e. fixing artificial targets in terms of number and making the entire planning process revolve round the game of numbers; and
- viewing development in terms of water-tight compartments such as health, hygiene, sanitation, agriculture, animal husbandry, veterinary, etc.

Since a human being is one and indivisible, we cannot afford to divide a human being in the name of different development departments and functionaries which will not only amount to compartmentalisation but making of a living being directionless.

As a matter of fact, literacy can be an important uniting factor to forge a practical and useful link between different development departments and human beings who are the beneficiaries as well as participants of the entire development process.

Several doubts have been raised in the past and even now that literacy can ill-afford to level or unite divergent elements and forces in a society which is

hierarchical, stratified and caste-based. It has also been observed that illiteracy is synonymous with poverty, deprivation and economic backwardness while literacy is synonymous with affluence, rank and status in society. Nothing can be farther from the truth.

It is true that those who are high up in society generally come from the landed aristocracy and by virtue of their power and position and capacity to garner resources, they may look down upon the need for and relevance of literacy as an important entry point for the poor, the deprived and the disadvantaged. They may even dissociate themselves from literacy promotion efforts and demonstrate their hostility to it.

While launching a campaign for total literacy, one cannot wish away the harsh socio-economic realities obtaining in an inequitable system surrounded by all pervasive poverty and deprivation.

The campaign may not put an end to the state of landlessness or assetlessness or bondage. The campaign can, however, unleash several good, positive and progressive elements of the society and bring them together to work for literacy as a movement of the people and in that process, may appeal to their good conscience that they owe in no uncertain terms an obligation to those who are less fortunate but whose sacrifice has in no small measure contributed to the total evolution, advancement and growth of the society. It may so happen that as a result of social churning, which may be caused by the cultural campaign for literacy, there maybe an attitudinal change even in the minds of those who are otherwise averse or indifferent to literacy.

Such a process may be a slow and gradual one but judging by the trend of development taking place in some of the TLC districts, it is quite likely that the campaign could act as a powerful tool to induce certain changes which are healthy and in the larger social interest. Undoubtedly, all such efforts will have to be backed-up by simultaneous measures for land reforms, for asset distribution and reduction of economic disparity and for creation of certain outlets which will promote democratic participation of all sections of the society.

This brings to our mind certain mistaken notions relating to people's empowerment. This is an important concept which has been laid down in the NLM document and is an object to be cherished and achieved through total literacy efforts. Empowerment of the people basically means that people are enabled to understand and internalise the causes and factors of social discrimination and economic deprivation; they are also enabled to perceive their strengths and weaknesses vis-a-vis the strength and weaknesses of the diverse elements of the society which surround their day-to-day lives. Efforts which go to promote empowerment of the people cannot, therefore, be treated as subversive or a sign of belligerence. If that is so, all that is being done in the NLM will have to be negated or given a go-bye.

People's empowerment becomes all the more important in the context of women, who have been for successive generations sidelined or marginalised and who remain at the mercy of the menfolk despite their enormous capability for hard work, ingenuity and their contribution to the development of the family, the community and the nation as a whole.

The moment they are enabled to think, reflect, critically analyse and question the aura of false consciousness surrounding their lives, it will unfold vistas of a new vision for them. Once they are aroused and awakened and perceive the importance of organisation, they will come together and constitute a cohesive force which will be a formidable one.

This unity and solidarity will make possible the liberation of the womenfolk from the numerous fads, taboos and diehard conservative ideas which have confined their lives to a cocoon like existence and reduced them to commodities. This way of conscientising women to organise themselves has been attempted through WDP in Rajasthan and is being tried out, though selectively, through Mahila Samakhya, a Dutch assisted project in 10 districts of Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Gujarat with many positive fall-outs.

NLM Achievements

Having made an attempt to respond to some of the oft-repeated criticism or rather misgivings about the NLM and the new campaign approach for total literacy, it will be appropriate now to turn attention to the latest status of the Mission and share with the readers some of the ground level achievements.

The most important strength of the campaigns lies in the fact that it provides an ambience of political parties, representatives of the people and cross-sections of the society to come together, plan and work together in a common direction despite internal contradictions or ideological differences.

The campaign has also proved that learners, despite caste, class and gender divide, can learn and today nearly 55 million learners are learning with the help of about 5 million volunteers with a lot of zest and self-confidence. They can see for themselves the pace and progress of learning. They can retain and apply the benefits of learning to real life situations.

It is a most satisfying experience to see people belonging to multiple strata of the society such as small and marginal farmers, landless agricultural labourers, share croppers, rural artisans, fishermen and women, beedi workers, leather workers, tribal collectors of minor forest produce, are learning together, sharing the same concern, the same excitement and joy of learning.

A widow of 65 years in Mehbubnagar district finds in the slate and pencil a silent companion in a dark and lonely corner of her existence, deriving a lot of solace and comfort from reading and writing.

Campaigns in this sense have promoted social and emotional integration. They have also promoted linguistic integration and communal harmony. Learners, who are domiciled in a state and who have assimilated the history, geography and culture of that State, are willing to learn in the state standard language (in preference to learn through their mother tongue) so that they can identify themselves better with the mainstream. About 5 million volunteers, about 2.5 to 3 lakh master trainers, about 15 to 20 thousand resource persons and about 1000 key resource persons are rendering voluntary service of a scale and quality which was not witnessed before.

Majority of them are student volunteers around 60% while about 40% of the volunteers come from the non-student youth belonging to a varied strata of the society, such as tailors, carpenters, mechanics, primary school teachers (serving and retired), ex-servicemen, bank employees, employees of public sector undertakings, government employees, employees of cooperatives and elders - all imbued with a new pride and patriotism, a new spirit of service and sacrifice.

A leprosy afflicted middle aged person in the district of Midnapore, who at one time was ex-communicated from the society (for being victim of leprosy), now discovers in teaching a new elixir of life.

Such stories can be recounted in good number.

Several volunteers have succeeded in mobilising scheduled caste and minorities women to break the barriers of purdah and transcend the shackles and fetters of a conservative society to join the literacy class; many others have succeeded in motivating the learners addicted to alcohol to give up drinking.

There are numerous instances (in Midnapore and Burdwan TLC in West Bengal where wife is the volunteer teacher (VT) while husband is the learner and vice-versa. Hindu volunteers have been teaching Muslim learners and vice-versa; there are volunteers belonging the SC and ST while learners belonging to upper-caste, for former representing one the finest specimens of dedication. The campaign has converted *nisidhapalli* (red ligid areas) to *pavitrappalli* (decent and civilised colony). The activity in a learning centre itself remained affected by the fury of communal rise affecting the whole village and eventual helped in defusing the communal situation.

In several villages of Andhra Pradesh where the campaign has been successfully conducted, untouchability and feuds on account of caste and stratification in bedevilling day-to-day existence are issues of the past.

Teaching-learning process has created and reinforced an awareness of the needs, rights and obligations. This awareness has manifested itself in terms of enrolment and retention of children in the school system, immunisation of pregnant mother and their children, health, hygiene, environmental sanitation, children, ORT and small family norm. Yet another strength of the campaign

is that women are participating in the teaching-learning process in much larger number (about 70%) and with much greater enthusiasm than men. They are more vocal, more articulate and more assertive than before.

Through literacy, they have been able to perceive the generative sources of their disadvantage and are guarding up their lions to fight these sources.

Hundreds of women's groups in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka have been made aware of the evils of bootlegging and have been raising their voice against alcoholism. A number of grass root level institutions, such as village and panchayat level committees are emerging through which the learners can transform themselves from the status of passive beneficiaries to that of active participants of the process of development and manage their own affairs with strength, courage and confidence. Some of these institutions have struck deep roots and have acquired the capability of managing the formal school system, NFE and AE programmes.

As more and more districts get covered by the TLC, the governmental bureaucracy gets closer to the people; it becomes more positive, sensitive and empathetic.

As Shri Poromesh Acharya, a distinguished historian and management expert and member, Executive Committee, NLMA writes:

"The strongest point of the West Bengal programme, as we have observed, is the perfect coordination between the administration and the panchayat. In every district that we have visited, we noticed that the District Collector and the Sabhadhipati of the Zilla Parishad were working in unison. The District Collector and his team became whole-time workers. There is, for the first time, that the entire district administration went to the people instead of the people coming to them. It was a unique exposure for them and they enjoyed it. I saw District Collectors walking through the muddy roads, their hair greyed with the dust. There was hardly any difference between a political worker, a volunteer and an administrator. All the barriers got broken. This was no mean achievement."

The campaigns have also produced a unique confluence of creative forces and energies. Creative writers, thinkers, artists, environmentalists and women activists have come together to write songs, slogans, nukkad natak, role-plays and simulation exercises and to render them soulfully in myriad forms in different parts of the country. Every activity in the campaign in general and in the learning centres in particular acquires the shape of a festival. Whether it is Independence Day or Republic Day or Ganesh Chaturthi or Sarswati Puja or Onam or Pongal or Durga Puja or Diwali or World Literacy Day (8th September) or World Population Day (16th July) or World Environmental Day (5th June) or World Women's day (8th March), every activity is converted to a mass festival and every mass festival is celebrated in such a manner that the

celebration is harnessed to the advantage of literacy. They arouse and awaken the whole community for literacy work. A good number of songs, slogans, drama, eloquence, essay and poster competitions on literacy are being held on these occasions which bring out the ingenuity, creativity, innovativeness, and resourcefulness of individuals and groups.

Evaluation of TLCs

The narration in the preceding paragraphs is only a minuscule of numerous positive indicators on the impact of TLCs on attitudes, approaches and consciousness of individuals as also on the overall quality of their day-to-day life.

We have been generally speaking of two types of evaluation in relation to a TLC district i.e. (a) evaluation of learning outcome and (b) content, process and impact.

Successive evaluation studies of the TLCs which have been conducted so far Ernakulam (Kerala), Burdwan, Birbhum, Bankura, Hooghly, Midnapore and North 24 parganas (West Bengal), Sindhudurg and Wardha (Maharashtra), Chittoor and Nellore (Andhra Pradesh), Durg and Narsingpur (Madhya Pradesh), Muzaffarpur (Bihar), and Bijapur and Dakshin Kannada (Karnataka) have primarily concentrated on the number of persons actually made literate and numerate in terms of the levels laid down in NLM document. Some of them have thrown some light on the bridge or partnership built between the Government departments and functionaries, representatives of the people, social and educational activists, media and communication channels, etc.

There are two reports to have come to light so far which have thrown some light on the sociological impact of total literacy campaign. These are (a) sociological impact of total Literacy Campaign the case of Midnapore conducted by Shri Chandan Dasgupta of Tata Institute of Social Sciences; and (b) Towards developing a conceptual framework for sustaining literacy based on some field experiences conducted by Ms. Nitya Rao of National Institute of Adult Education.

There is also a third study captioned "Total Literacy campaign in West Bengal" a Study of Midnapore, Hooghly and Birbhum conducted by Shri Poromesh Acharya and Associates of Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta, which is primarily a study on the soundness, adequacy and effectiveness of planning, preparations and execution of the TLC though it does throw some light on the impact of the campaign on the level of general awareness of the people, their motivation and participation in the campaign.

It would be useful to critically examine the findings of these studies with reference to the objectives of the NLM. People's empowerment is the most important objective of the Mission in qualitative terms. The objective has thus been stated:

“Functional Literacy implies becoming aware of the causes of their deprivation and moving towards amelioration of their condition through organisation and participation in the process of development.”

“Functional Literacy implies acquiring skills to improve the economic status and general well-being”.

Who are the people and what is people’s empowerment? In ordinary parlance, people would mean all categories of persons working and living in an area who would be the beneficiaries of all development programmes.

For our purpose and the context in which functional literacy has been used the NLM document refers to people or certain target groups who constitute the rural poor, the deprived and the disadvantaged. They constitute the small and marginal farmers, landless agricultural labourers, the share croppers, the rural artisans, the fishermen and women, the leather workers, the building and construction workers, the forest labourers, salt workers, the beedi workers, workers in brick kilns, workers in stone quarries, garment makers, contract and migrant labour etc. They are not uniformly placed in terms of employment and wages, but there are two common threads running through their predicament. These are (a) they are victims of malfunctional and dysfunctional middlemen and work in a situation which is akin to bondage for all practical purposes; and (b) they are not aware of the viciousness of the phenomenon. They do not know what they do not know.

If ‘critical consciousness’ is an important index of true development according to *Paulo Friere*, they lack that critical consciousness which can enable them to understand their strength and weaknesses vis-a-vis the strength and weakness of their advisory(s) and which can also enable them to acquire the wherewithal to grapple with the hostile forces and eventually to over come them. Let us analyse the extent to which TLCs have fostered this critical consciousness and to what extent this is being used as a tool of people’s empowerment.

Two examples may be taken from Ms. Nitya Rao’s study of TLC in Pondicherry and Pudukottai. To quote from the study on TLC Pondicherry:

“The response from women was tremendous at all levels during the campaign. There is widespread, almost universal male alcoholism in the State, making men’s contribution to household income almost negligible. Women work very hard to support their families and, therefore, aspire for better employment opportunities and earnings. Development programmes specifically for women, like DWACRA do exist in the State but no purposive effort to integrate it with the literacy movement has been made whether in terms of identifying the most needy beneficiaries or even in terms of development DWACRA groups around learning groups which could facilitate the growth of a common group purpose.”

Analysing the present sorry state of affairs in Pudukottai and the factors contributing thereto, she writes:

“The inability to address local problems on the spot and work out solutions for the same has led to a decline in enthusiasm over the months. To take an example, twice there were floods in a fishing hamlet whereby three rows of houses got washed away. The people wanted financial assistance for housing but this issue was not taken up. Similarly, the fisher women take the catch to the fish market in the morning and again return there to work for contractors in the afternoon as their earnings are very low. An attempt to introduce the fish Aggregation Device to increase collection/production was made. However, privately owned launches came and smashed these devices. The other method of increasing earnings by plugging the holes at the marketing end through organisation of marketing collectives was not discussed or attempted.”

The above example is indicative of the viselike grip of middlemen (contractors) which drive the people - the poor, weak and disadvantaged to a state of penury and desperation. The middlemen act as agents of the principal employer in matters of recruitment of migrant labour, in matters of payment of nominal advances (more as a tool of allurements than as a positive incentive), in matters of supply of raw materials, often of poor quality, collection of finished product, rejection (Chat) on the ground of poor finish, sale of those finished products of alleged poor quality and appropriation of the sale proceeds to their full advantage (as in the case of beedi workers), denial of remunerative price to the workers for their hard labour and product of their labour (both by way of cheating in weightment and calculation, particularly in piece rates relevant in brick kilns and stone quarries, taking full advantage of ignorance and illiteracy of the workers) so on and so forth. They virtually rule the roost. The fishermen and women who receive the advances from these middlemen for purchase of boat and net for deep sea fishing, do so often at a discount and are forced to part with a major share of their produce (catch) to the middlemen - a practice which is akin to the theory of unequal exchange in Economics or bonded labour system under section 2 (g) of the Bonded Labour system Act. Same is true of all other categories and sub-categories of unorganised rural labour masses. They lack the power to individually bargain for their irreducible barest minimum (for sheer biological survival) against organised onslaughts and vested interests which are too powerful for them. As the wily middlemen thrive and prosper by manipulation and cheating at the expense of the poor, the latter sunk in loans, debts and advances to slide lower and lower on the scale of humanity.

Is there a way out? Organisation of the unorganised rural poor into aggregations, informal groups, formal formations like cooperatives is certainly a way out but can be meaningful only if the following two conditions are fulfilled i.e. (a) the entire process of organisation must be preceded by meticulous planning and systematic execution, by orientation, conscientisation and aware-

ness building through literacy; (b) government cannot bring about organisations of the rural poor but can certainly act as a catalytic agent, a promoter and facilitator to enable and facilitate the entire process with empathy and sensitivity and not view the process as a threat to status quo.

In the context of Pudukottai Arivoli Iyakkam, Ms. Nitya Rao cites two case studies on the process of organisation of the rural poor, one very encouraging and the other not so encouraging. To recount the first:

“Father Anthonisamy of the Holy Redeemers and also on Executive Committee of the Arivoli Iyakkam believes in learning by doing. He conducted a debt survey amongst a Arivoli group and found that 85% of the learners were in debt. Through the Holy Redeemers, those paying more than 10% interest per month were redeemed immediately. The same amount apportioned into principal, interest and savings is deposited in the group that was organised. In one area, this thrift and credit group has even taken a space and employed a volunteer to maintain their records and accounts. Almost all the money collected is being revolved amongst the members, in the form of small loans. Such an initiative, by actively involving the people in finding solution to their problems, has not only generated discussion and awareness about the whole issue of debt, interest rates, savings but has also motivated the group members to explore the various alternatives available to them, made them realise the importance of maintaining records and hence desirous of strengthening their own cognitive skills.”

The example of the second category which is not so encouraging is narrated by Ms. Rao is below:

“An attempt has been made to develop village level committees. As a part of this, women’s sub-committees have been formed. Women are more forthcoming, as this gives them an opportunity to interact in society and gradually bring about changes in social and more particularly, gender relations. They, however, desire some financial assistance in terms of seed money for progressing towards a situation of economic independence as well. This aspect has, however, not yet been worked out, leading to some frustrations. The women, therefore, have also not gained the confidence to take up social issues like alcoholism and face social conflicts due to their position of economic dependence.”

It is evident that the objective of NLM in terms of promoting ‘participation’ through organisations of the ‘people’ has not been fulfilled to any worthwhile extent even though sincere efforts have been made in that direction.

Let us turn to Pudukottai, the second case study of Ms. Rao to see if there is any concrete answer to this dilemma of people’s empowerment.

Pudukottai, which a year ago, was a small and comparatively unknown and under-developed district, is today something more than a geographical expres-

sion. It is vibrant with a new spirit, a new ethos, a new identity. Pudukottai along with Pasumpon Muthuramalingam Thevar (PMT) district has earned the unique distinction of being the first fully literate district in Tamil Nadu. It was declared so on 11.8.92 by Governor of Tamil Nadu - Dr. Bheesmanarayan Singh at a special function held at Pudukottai parade ground.

There are a host of exciting, soul-stirring and inimitable features in Arivoli Iyakkam, Pudukottai. They transcend the limited frontiers of mechanical reading, writing arithmetic and encompass the process of making a complete man or woman or child. It is impossible to recount them.

In terms of forming organisations or collectivities of the people, using the literacy campaign as a tool to forge the solidarity of the people in general and women in particular and promote their empowerment, however, it has few parallels. Whether it is training 60,000 women to learn cycling while learning to read and write or its organisation of women quarry workers or women gem cutters and gem polishers or women potters or women palm basket weavers, each has its unique innovativeness.

Behind the entire effort to organise the unorganised, the less privileged and deprived sections of society lies the imagination and ingenuity of many committed activists and organisers but one person stands out clear and distinct. She is Sheila Rani Chunkath, the energetic articulate and dynamic Collector of Pudukottai and also the Chairperson of Arivoli Iyakkam. Almost anything and everything which centred round Arivoili bears the indelible stamp of her personality, transparent sincerity and total commitment to Arivoli. To quote a small fraction of her initiative to organise the women quarry members of Pudukottai as recorded by Ms. Rao:

"The district has about 450 quarries and 4500 women quarry workers. Last year when the quarries were brought in for auction, the contractors refused to bid at the offset price as they wanted to depress the price further. The Collector, however, organised the workers into groups of 20 women each and gave them the quarrying rights at nominal rates for period of 3 years. Currently there are about 150 such women's groups. They were provided loans of Rs. 1,000/- each from Indian bank for purchase of tool kits, uniforms and initial working capital. They take a daily wage of between Rs. 20 to 30 and then share the profits every week. Men can also work in these quarries on daily wages. The workers, mostly women, have gradually learnt to write out their own bills and receipts and maintain their production accounts. Two of the group leaders, Vasantha and Sholai showed us their accounts. They were totally illiterate and have learnt this only through attending the Arivoli classes. They also collect all the members of their groups for the classes. Some are not too interested still, as they feel exhausted after their hard day's work and prefer to go to sleep. Gradually,

however, more are getting motivated. They want to understand their production accounts, in order to avoid conflicts over distribution of wages and profits, to read their loan and savings pass books and so on. By knowing to read and write, the contractors and transporters can also not cheat them."

One can draw several interesting and useful lessons from the two examples of Pondicherry and Pudukottai.

In Pondicherry, the campaign was sponsored and supported fully by Government at the initial state. It is as a result this support that the first phase of the campaign in the basic literacy stage could be brought to its logical and successful conclusion.

Puduvai Arivoli Iyakkam became the symbol of hope, pride and resurgence for many other States/UTs. As, however, the campaign acquired the character of a mass movement and became a tool of empowerment of the masses, it was perceived as a threat to the sacrosanctity and constitutional inviolability of private property rights and the status quo. It is at this crucial stage that the campaign has almost lost its momentum as a movement of the people and has got into a jam. It could have matured into one of the finest movements of Indian history but sadly these lofty expectations have been belied.

Pudukottai TLC experiment stands on its own and in sharp contrast to that of Puduvai Arivoli Iyakkam. Every campaign is primarily a movement and secondarily a programme but it has to be conceptualised, planned, initiated and implemented in a well-structured and well-coordinated manner, so that the desired results are achieved in a short time.

It is here that Government functionaries have a major role to play, not so much as a control mechanism but as a catalytic force, enabling and facilitating mechanism. Such a role was played admirably by the district Administration, Pudukottai and more particularly by the collector and chairperson of Arivoli Iyakkam. Organisation of 3000, out of 4500 women quarry workers, into co-operatives and giving the quarries on lease to them is a case in point. This was an unusual, unconventional and extra-ordinary step. This required a lot of grit, courage and determination which the energetic collector, Pudukottai had possessed in abundant measure. Once it was made known that she was empathetic and sensitive to the genuine needs of the poor and her commitment to alleviation of their plight through organisation was made known, others followed suit.

This is how the Assistant director (Mines) at the district headquarters, who would have ordinarily followed the conventional approach in matters of grant of lease, was found sensitive to the women's need at every step.

As Ms. Rao writes, "Seeing poor, rural women struggling hard to break out of their social barriers and overcome economic hurdles, seems to bring out the goodness and desire to help in government officials and ordinary people as well".

It was, however, not all a smooth sail. As the contractors felt deprived of their quarry rights and hence profits, they refused to allow trucks entry into the area. The threat continues and help from law and order authorities has to be sought time and again. But the problem arising out of the threat is not intractable or unresolvable as the sympathy of an empathetic administration lies with the quarry workers, the poor SC women who deserve help.

Conclusion

In a pluralistic, multi-lingual and multi-cultural country like ours, where conditions vary widely from region to region, from district to district and even within the same district, it will be a travesty of truth to say that only one approach, far less the campaign approach, should be adopted and implemented for uniform results. Those of us who have been with the Mission since its inception have accepted the limitations of a uniform social policy being valid for the whole country at one point of time. Instead of advocating the inflexibility and sacrosanctity of any policy or any approach, we have all along made ourselves amenable to new ideas and suggestions and have advocated a policy of learning by sharing in a climate of total openness and flexibility.

It is acknowledged that neither the spread nor the impact of the campaign strategy is uniform, being far less dramatic. Like any other social policy, the campaign is also the product of a particular point of time or milieu or setting and it has to weather all the storms and vicissitudes of that time. It cannot get away from it. Having said this, however, we will not be doing justice to the campaign approach if we do not acknowledge its rationale and force. It needs to be told and retold with full conviction that after having experimented with successive and alternative models of literacy and education over a time-frame of more than 4 decades (1950-92), we have now settled down to a model - the campaign mode of total literacy which has given us a lot of hope, faith and conviction that this is one model which can assure us of the right results in the right time in the right manner in the most participative, democratic and cost-effective way. The freedom and spontaneity with which people have taken to this mode, the cultural renaissance which it has generated, the literacy friendly environment which it has created and sustained and the glitter of hope, excitement and joy which it has left in the face of millions of learners and volunteers, are all factors which have renewed and reinforced our commitment to this mode. It has, however, to be remembered that campaign is a mode and not the goal. Total Literacy is our goal, our polestar, the cynosure of all eyes. The paths may be more than one but all of them must lead to the primacy or centrality of that goal. There cannot be any compromise with this supreme truth. Even if we

have suffered some reverses due to extraneous factors or circumstances beyond our control, our faith in the efficacy of the approach which is now fairly well-proven and well-tested must remain unshaken. Since success in areas of social policy and their execution is rather elusive and not uniform and is also short-lived, it was all throughout being contended that stories of such success which are also stories of absorbing human interest must be documented for history, failing which posterity will not forgive us for not telling the strategy we chose ourselves and the direction in which we have moved so far. We have certainly not achieved any miracles through the campaign approach and we have to traverse a rather long and thorny path to reach the ultimate goal but every single milestone (be it Kerala or Burdwan or Pudukottai) must remind us of the hurdles crossed and the trials and tribulations awaiting ahead. There is no question of giving up or surrendering in the midst of this long journey to eternity. To conclude in the words of Kattopanishads:

Arise, awake (O Man) ! Realise (that Atman) having approached the excellent (teachers). Like the sharp edge of a razor is that path, difficult to cross and hard to tread - so say that wise.

10. 'Uses of Literacy' - Total Literacy Campaign in Three West Bengal Districts

Sumanta Banerjee

As a part of the NLM (National Literacy Mission), programmes to bring about total literacy have been undertaken in nine out of West Bengal's 17 districts- Midnapur, Burdwan, Hooghly, Birbhum, Cooch-Bihar, Bankura, North and South 24 Parganas and Howrah. The present study is based on a survey made between November and December, 1991 of the programmes, in three of the selected districts - Burdwan, Birbhum and Bankura.

The choice of the districts was influenced by the considerations of their proximity to each other in an area which is traditionally known as 'Rarh-Banga' where the inhabitants share certain socio-cultural traits and where there is a large concentration of tribal population. Differences at the levels of economic progress and political consciousness were also taken into account while choosing the districts. Large tracts of Burdwan and Birbhum have experienced, during the last several decades, a certain amount of economic well-being in the countryside primarily due to increased agricultural production because of multi-cropping. Bankura still remains backward in comparison. Burdwan has a long history of peasant militancy, particularly from the late 1960s when both the CPI(M) and the Naxalites (in the tribal belt) organised peasant resistance against landlords. Some of the veteran leaders of the CPI(M), like the late Harekrishna Konar, and the present minister of land and land revenue in the West Bengal cabinet, Benoy Chowdhury, come from Burdwan where they started their political career in the peasant movement way back in the pre-Independence years. In parts of Birbhum, during the late 1960-early 1970 period, the Naxalites organised armed peasant resistance against feudal oppression. Compared to these experiences, the villagers of Bankura had by and large remained immune from the rural turbulence of the 1960-70 period.

These socio-economic factors and historical experiences of political movements appear to have influenced the course of progress of the total literacy

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campaign among the rural masses - and may explain the divergences which one observes in the attainment of the targets for total literacy (set by the NLM) in the districts selected for the present review.

NLM Objectives

Before coming to an assessment of the actual progress in the three districts, it is necessary to explain the salient features of the NLM. It is for the first time that such a massive programme for literacy has been undertaken aimed at making literate a selected group of 30 million odd people mainly in the nine to 50 age group. The focus of the mission is on rural areas and particularly on women and persons belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Apart from imparting functional literacy (implying ability to sign, fill up forms, read texts specially prepared for the neo-literates, and count), the mission aims at conscientising the learners to values of national integration, conservation of the environment, women's equality, family planning, etc., and making them aware of the causes of their deprivation to enable them to move towards the amelioration of their condition through organisation and participation in the process of development. Texts for the learners - prepared according to the NLM norms by the resource centres of the different states - are required to highlight these issues, and the teachers (who are volunteers) are expected to discuss them with the learners in the course of the lessons. Being a government-funded programme (the expenditure is shared by the state governments and the department of education of the union ministry of human resource development), the district administration naturally plays an important role in the total literacy programme. But since it requires the participation of masses of unlettered villagers and local volunteers, trainers (VTs) who will impart literacy (like students, school teachers, educated unemployed youth and housewives who are willing to offer their services), the success of such a programme depends to a large extent on the involvement of grassroots organisations like the panchayats, voluntary organisations, and mass fronts of the political parties which can mobilise both the learners and the teachers.

The role of these non-official groups and the extent to which the district administration can establish a rapport with them may often decide the success or failure of the total literacy campaign. While this observation should not be treated as a generalisation for all the districts in other states, it is surely relevant for the campaign in the three West Bengal districts selected for the present review.

Of the three district, only Burdwan claims to have completed the total literacy programme by covering 12 lakh people in the age group of 9 to 50 years

by the stipulated date of April 1991. Birbhum, with a target group of about 7 lakh in the same age group was expected to complete the programme by May 1991; but the date has now been extended to May 1992. Similarly, the completion date for Bankura (which aimed at converting 11 lakh odd unlettered people into literates by July 1991) has now been extended to July 1992. An analysis of the divergences in the performance of the three districts reveals certain interesting traits.

Burdwan

Let us first take Burdwan, where the administration has declared the district as 'totally literate' and inaugurated a 'post-literacy' campaign (to consist of programmes to enable the neo-literates to retain whatever they had attained, through reading of newspapers and texts specially prepared for them, and to gain self-reliance in daily functionality as well as to pull through those who are still left behind). The district authorities have been badgered by critics in newspapers who dismiss the claim of total literacy and allege that figures have been fudged and that the external team (formed with the approval of the NLM authorities which evaluated the performance of the learners and concluded that 90 per cent of the learners had attained the NLM norms) was fed with samples of answers that were actually written by primary school students instead of the learners. That such cases of cheating could have taken place in some of the learning centres selected for evaluation is acknowledged even by the external team which suspected that some of the test papers, "were not in learners' handwriting, mainly letter writing and the sentence-making sections. It appeared that they were done by the VTs (volunteer trainers), MTs. (master trainers) themselves. These papers were excluded from the final analysis". (A Report on the Final Evaluation of the Total Literacy Campaign of Burdwan District Conducted by the External Evaluation Team", May 10, 1991).

One may also question whether every single person among the 90 per cent of the 12 lakh learners can be described as "totally literate". The external evaluation team selected at random some 19,000 odd learners as representative samples from different language groups in the district. Such a sample survey may not always faithfully reflect a comprehensive picture of the actual state of literacy among a heterogeneous population with different levels of comprehension and receptivity. But the external evaluation team in their final analysis did discern signs of uneven performances. It observed: "Among the different groups of learners, Muslim learners [learning Bengali] showed the best results; 93 per cent reached the norm and 80 per cent came in the excellent category. Similarly

the SC [Scheduled Castes] fared much better as compared to ST [Scheduled Tribes] and others. The main reason for the tribals showing slightly lower results than other groups appears to be the language difficulty. Though they know some Hindi and Bengali, they had problems in expressing in writing in these languages". The team also noted another discrepancy: "Though the percentage of learners reaching NLM norm is very high most of them cannot be regarded as having reached a reasonably good standard in writing".

Notwithstanding these lacunae in the programme, one cannot really join the sceptics of the Calcutta newspapers in dismissing the entire total literacy campaign in Burdwan as hog-wash. Such an attitude betrays a typical urban-based, middle class insouciance which tends to miss the basic reality - the mood of enthusiasm and self-confidence generated by the discovery of the tools of the literacy among the first generation of learners who are coming from the vast masses of the rural poor. It is this which gives the human dimension to the facts and figures. Almost every villager this writer talked to during the survey had a story to tell - usually one of struggle, sacrifice and hope. All of them may not have mastered totally the tools according to the requirements of the NLM, or the academic pedagogues. But more important than a cold clinical evaluation of their achievements in terms of the fixed official norms, is an investigation into the changes (if any) brought about in their mental framework, attitude and behaviour by the programme instead of trying to check and cross-check figures (relating to attainment of total literacy), the present survey therefore aimed at seeking answers to certain major queries. Has the programme (which consisted of a full-fledged social environment building campaign prior to the setting up of the literacy centres, followed by lessons aimed at con-scientising the learners to their economic and social problems as well as larger national issues like communalism) made them aware of possibilities of solving their problems? Or is it just reinforcing their awareness of what they already know, and helping them to articulate and conceptualise their old grievances and demands? Has the programme led to an increased response to health measures like immunisation and family planning? Or, to conscious resistance to communal propaganda? Is the programme a catalyst, even if it may not bring about an immediately perceptible radical improvement in literacy rates, but is having an indirect impact on the learners in a process which may be speeding up their awareness of possibilities of socio-economic changes in their lives - however limited - in the present political structure?

The performance has not been uniform all over the district, or even within a single block. Even after the completion of the first phase, there is a large number of learners who are still plodding through the first and second primers and are not sufficiently confident in reading and writing. One can find in the same village one literacy centre being attended by advanced learners while

another still trying to cope with the problems of those lagging behind - thus confirming the observations made by the external evaluation team in its final report (quoted earlier). The continuation of this uneven trend - even six months after that report was submitted - could be attributed to a variety of factors which suggest that an ambitious national programme like the one under the NLM will have to contend with several imponderables at the micro level. In Burdwan, they range from those of a local nature (like interruptions in the studies of the learners due to their preoccupation with sowing and harvesting, particularly in the multi-crop sowing areas, which require attendance even during the evenings) on the one hand, to those of a general nature like disparities in individual capacities and receptivity among the learners on the other. According to the district administration, there are about two lakh people (from the originally identified group of 12 lakh illiterates) who have not been able to attain the NLM level of literacy either because of such interruptions in their studies, or because some among them did not join the literacy classes at all. The administration is planning a mopping up operation for them through a fresh campaign.

Impact of Women

But significantly, interviews with both the neo-literates, and those who had not yet reached that status, revealed that women in both the groups showed a stronger purpose and will during the learning process than the menfolk. Most of them (wives and daughters of agricultural labourers), in addition to their daily work in the fields, had to perform domestic chores like drawing water, collecting fuel, preparing meals and looking after children. They came to attend the classes with their children - some of them suckling babes - at the end of these chores late in the evening (at around 7 pm, when the classes usually began, to continue till 9 or 10 pm).

What makes these work-worn, fagged-out women come every evening to the learning centres and laboriously try to pick out letters from the pages of the primers, build up sentences and diligently put them down in their exercise books? The centres do not provide them with any largesse or facilities. The classes are usually held either in some small thatch-covered courtyard of a villager's mud hut, or just in an open space under the skies. In most of the centres about 15 to 20 learners huddle together under the light of just two kerosene lamps (the quota allotted to each centre). At the open-air centres - during the winter night classes which I visited - a knot of learners wrapped up in threadbare blankets or patched-up quilts poring over the primers around a flickering oil-bottle is a common sight. Surely, such an environment is no inducement to serious studies, more so among a hard-working lot at the end of their back-breaking labour. Yet, they continue to attend the classes. The query as to what

they gained from learning evoked a variety of replies - 'I can write letters to my son who is working in the city' (from a middle-aged widow); 'I pull up the grocer if he dares to cheat me now' (from a peasant housewife); 'I can read the number and the name of destination of the bus' (from a daily wage-earner).

It is too early to claim that the literacy drive has led to an improvement in the status of women and recognition of their rights in rural society. Women learners were of course more articulate, and at times more assertive regarding their grievances (not so much about male oppression like wife-beating, but about lack of facilities like drinking water, health care, etc). The literacy classes had perhaps given them more confidence in such assertions, but had not yet led to their uniform transformation into self-reliant and independent creatures through the messages given in the lessons. It seemed that their coming together in the classes, ability to identify some of the causes of their daily problems through discussions among themselves which were generated by some of the lessons (e.g. on environmental protection, health care, family planning) had given them a new confidence in collective assertion and possibilities of change.

The immunisation programme has shown considerable progress in Burdwan during the 1990-91 period - a trend which can be possibly traced on the one hand to the literacy classes (which made the learners aware of the need for immunisation of their children) and on the other to the better performance of the delivery system which made available the services required by the learners. Thus the learners were able to put their awareness into practice, which again highlights the need for co-ordinating the literacy programme with developmental programmes. In fact, in many villages of Burdwan, 'anganwadi workers' were recruited as voluntary trainers to run the literacy centres for women, which must have influenced the progress of the immunisation programme.

Another encouraging trend is the increase in the enrolment of students in the primary schools. Quite a number of new entrants in many schools are children of the neo-literates - a fact which suggests the impact of the literacy programme on this first generation of learners who having themselves realised the advantages of literacy are now interested in sending their children to the schools. But the campaign for enrolment in primary schools continues to face certain problems. For one thing, the usual hours of the classes (during the day) do not quite often suit the children of the poor peasants and landless labourers (who may have to go to the fields with food for their fathers, or take out cattle for grazing, or help their mothers in domestic chores, or look after their siblings). As in the past, these factors might again lead to dropping out from the primary schools, unless the school hours are changed (may be into early morning or evening shifts specially for these children). Secondly, the primary schools themselves suffer from lack of adequate space and dearth of teachers and equipment. The rate of enrolment this year has gone up to such an extent that in many areas,

classes are being held in the court-yards outside the school buildings. Voluntary services offered by former students of these schools (who form the core of the unemployed middle class youth in the villages) quite often make up for the lack (or absence) of teachers. But such ad hoc arrangements cannot continue for long. The district administration has approached both the central and state governments for funds for the construction of primary school buildings. The state government is yet to release its share, only after which the central government can release its matching share. Any delay in the release of these funds will frustrate the entire objective of universalisation of primary education.

Issues like communal harmony and efforts to draw in the tribal community in the mainstream also featured prominently in the total literacy campaign in Burdwan. One is not sure however how far the literacy classes have directly contributed to any success in these directions. Hindus and Muslims do attend classes together in the centres. But this could be a reflection of the communal harmony that had existed in the villages even before the classes started. In some areas which are prone to communal violence, the tensions could have become less because of the drawing into the classes of followers of anti-social elements who otherwise would have been engaged in criminal activities like communal riots. In Ketugram, Purbasthali and a few other places there had been instances of outbreak of communal riots even when the literacy programmes were in operation there. After a brief interruption, resumption of literacy classes seems to have again brought together the members of the two communities who are now blaming 'outsiders' for disrupting communal harmony. The literacy programmes therefore can be viewed as encouraging communal harmony rather than motivating the learners to organise active resistance against communal propaganda and conflagration. The need for such motivation becomes important in view of the growing signs of communal tensions in certain parts of Burdwan caused by inflammatory propaganda by the BJP which in its turn has provoked communally hostile speeches from orthodox Muslim 'mullahs'. Although the literacy classes have quite rightly eschewed from their lessons and discussions policies of political parties, if they are to emancipate their learners' minds from the hold of communal prejudices, religious superstitions and misinformation about history, how long can they avoid taking up issues like the Ram Janmabhumi dispute, 'maha-yagnas' and 'ratha-yatras', edicts from 'mohunts' and 'mullahas', the Muslim personal law, the practice of 'burkha' - issues which are determining the policies of the political parties and provoking riots and disharmony?

As for the tribal population, in the Santhal-dominated villages of Aushgram and Kanksha their tradition of collective participation to community activities explains to a large extent, their massive response to the literacy programme. The response is not confined to more attendance at literacy classes, but has found expression in cultural performances like songs and plays in the Santhali lan-

guage (composed by themselves) which urge the learners to fight against the mendacity of moneylenders and put an end to alcoholism. Demands for self-employment facilities are being voiced by the learners (who are mainly landless agricultural labourers). Part of the success can be attributed to the leading role being played by the local Santhal youth, many among whom became politicised during the Naxalite movement in this area in the 1970-76 period, under the leadership of the MCC (Maoist Communist Centre). The district administration is however yet to overcome the mismatch between the tribal ethos and officially sponsored developmental schemes - the latter often found to be unsuitable for the tribal needs. Literacy could probably help them to formulate their own proposals for official support and subsidy to develop their indigenous skills.

Cadres and Bureaucracy

In other parts of the Burdwan countryside, political awareness (due to the CPI(M)-led peasant movements in the past) has lent a certain sharpness to the literacy campaign. Organised attempts by the district CPI(M) leadership to mobilise its cadres at every level during both the environment building campaign and the total literacy programme - as well as now in the post-literacy phase - have succeeded in activating the 'panchayats' and motivating both the learners and their trainers (mainly highschool students, unemployed youth and primary and secondary teachers). While in the case of other developmental projects, allegations of corruption and embezzlement of government funds against the 'panchayat' heads are quite common, in the literacy programme such charges have been less, may be because the money involved is a meagre allocation of Rs. 5 crore and the scope of misusing it is less since much of it is provided in the shape of primers, blackboards, exercise books, etc., by the administration. The district CPI(M) leadership also took care to invite and involve the other major political party in Burdwan - the Congress(I) - in the campaign, as a result of which it has managed to avoid petty, political intrigues and irritants which could have otherwise frustrated the work of the literacy centres in the villages.

The other important component in the Burdwan programme is the crucial role being played by the district administration, consisting of a dedicated band of young bureaucrats manning the entire network from the district headquarters down to the sub-division and block levels. Apart from providing the required infrastructure (like the primers, blackboards, exercise books and kerosene lamps for the literacy centres), these officials have been coordinating with the local 'panchayat' members in regular supervision and monitoring of the progress of the centres, and in trying to link up the learners with developmental activities (particularly in the areas of health care and primary education). At a time when

our society is threatened with disintegration along religious, casteist and linguistic lines, it is heartening to find in far-flung villages of Burdwan, sub-divisional officers (SDOs) coming from different parts of the country and from a variety of socio-cultural surroundings who have succeeded in an amazing way in identifying with the local villagers in the course of the literacy programme. One bumps into a Kayasth, or a Brahmin, or a Rajput from Bihar or UP or Rajasthan, and - of all people - a Tibetan Muslim brought up in Darjeeling, among the young IAS officers working in the district. Along with the rural learners, they are also changing in a certain way, having been involved for the last one year or so with the hopes and aspirations of the rural poor. One wonders though how many from among them will be able to retain this sense of involvement and human concern? once they are transferred to the uncaring and impersonal environs of the state capitals, or the sullen corridors of New Delhi's bureaucratic establishments where routine exercises with abstract statistics and mindless official correspondence may in all probability reduce their current experiences of the living reality in the West Bengal countryside to fast disappearing memories.

One can discern in the Burdwan experiment a convergence of several factors that have triggered the popular enthusiasm - and ensured to some extent the success of the literacy programme. A tradition of peasant articulation developed through political movements; a spirit of enterprise among the farming community (which helped them to adopt modern agricultural techniques in the past that have turned Burdwan into an agriculturally prosperous district - and which today is prompting them to take to the new programme of total literacy); a dynamic group of officials working in tandem with a committed of 'panchayat' leaders and activists; a well-knit district organisation of the ruling party (the CPI(M) where the writ of the leadership runs at all levels and can thus rally its cadres behind the programme - all these have combined to help Burdwan move ahead of the other districts in the experiment. Ernakulam, in Kerala - which was the first district in India to be declared totally literate - can also probably claim a similar convergence of favourable factors, given the level of political consciousness, the organisational efficiency of the CPI(M), the successful co-ordination of efforts by the administration, and the major role played by voluntary organisations. But one has to remember that while Ernakulam had a target of only two lakh odd illiterates Burdwan had to cope with 12 lakhs.

Birbhum and Bankura

One cannot surely expect a replication of such convergence and combination of advantages. This can perhaps explain partly why Birbhum and Bankura have lagged behind Burdwan in achieving the targets. In Birbhum, both at the political

and administrative levels, the drive suffered a set back due to the general elections which interrupted the literacy campaign as both the 'panchayat' leaders and activists and the district officials got bogged down in the electoral functions. This meant a resumption of the programme from the preliminary stage (after the elections were over) including a fresh recruitment and training of the volunteer instructors. At the political level, the CPI(M) district organisation (which controls the bulk of the 'panchayats') does not appear to be as well-knit and disciplined as its counterpart in Burdwan. There are a number of factions within the party's district unit, working at cross purposes, as a result of which the party has not been able to move unitedly in mobilising its cadres at the ground level around the literacy programme. Unlike Burdwan again, the party leadership of the district has failed to seek co-operation from the local Congress (I), leaving the latter sulking and non-cooperative. It is also facing resistance from the BJP which is emerging as a force in trading and commercial centres like Sainthia and Rampurhat. In Bolpur parliamentary constituency, in the last elections the BJP candidate secured the second position, after the winning CPI(M) candidate. In Suri, the district headquarters, it recently held a rally where it publicly opposed the literacy campaign accusing the CPI(M) of using the campaign to further its ends.

For all practical purposes therefore, one can say that the programme in Birbhum picked up from September 1991. The district administration hopes to complete the programme by January 1992. Although the CPI(M) party organisation and the 'panchayats' are trying to tone up their role in the literacy campaign, whatever success achieved so far can be attributed to a few committed officials - both at the district headquarters and down at the sub-divisional and, block development levels and some dedicated volunteer trainers who stuck to their work even during the elections thus maintaining the continuity of the learning process in some of the centres.

It is more or less the same story in Bankura, where the elections disrupted the literacy campaign, and barring a few centres almost everywhere the campaign had to be started all over again. The level of political participation among the rural people is less, compared to Burdwan and Birbhum. Large tracts of the southern part of the district are agriculturally poor and predominantly inhabited by tribal landless people who migrate during harvesting and sowing seasons to other neighbouring districts. In some of these places, tensions had developed in the recent past between the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha and the CPI(M), which affected the literacy centres. There is a demand among certain sections of the Santhals for primers in the Olchiki script (which is recognised by the West Bengal government). The state resource centre is yet to prepare the primers in that script. In other parts of the district, the performance remains uneven with some centres showing moderate success, and some hampered by irregular at-

tendance. According to the district administration, 60 per cent of the target group have been brought under the literacy programme so far, out of which 10 per cent only have completed the second primer (which is expected to equip them with the ability to write and read simple sentences, and do elementary arithmetic).

But even in these two districts, one could suddenly come across neo-literates who had learnt to make use of the information imparted to them at the literacy centres. In a Muslim-dominated village in Bolpur in Birbhum, a young Muslim widow with three children is planning to pen a letter to the district administration to seek a loan in order to run her trade. In the Indus block of Bankura, agricultural labourers, mainly from the 'dalit' community, have become vociferous in their demands, and critical of the local administration: "What is the use of teaching us about the benefits of immunisation if there are no doctors to vaccinate our children? Why instruct us to use clean water if the tubewells in the villages do not work? In the tribal villages of Jhilmill in Bankura, the Santhal landless labourers are learning to explore the possibilities of organising co-operatives to develop indigenous skills and market their produce. These various instances indicate that while in some cases the literacy campaign has generated awareness of available opportunities and rights, in other cases it has reinforced the awareness that was already there and helped the neo-literates to conceptualise and articulate their demands. If such awareness and articulation become widespread, they could stimulate the organised political efforts from the bottom to pressurise the policy-makers and administrators at the top to meet their demands. It is this long-term impact, rather than the immediate aim of functional literacy, that one expects from the National Literacy Mission's ambitious programme.

Urban And Semi-Urban Areas

Significantly, however, in all the three districts, the municipality areas (which cover the urban and semi-urban localities) have shown a peculiar resistance to the programme. Even in Burdwan, barring the industrial segments of Durgapur and Asansol (where the trade unions have played a major role in mobilising the workers and the volunteer trainers in the working class enclaves), in the urban area (including Burdwan town) the programme has failed by and large to attract the bulk of the poorer classes like the slum dwellers, rickshaw-pullers, domestic servants, shop-assistants, daily wage-earners and others who float around the towns doing odd jobs. In the Birbhum and Bankura urban areas, the educated middle classes have generally remained indifferent to the programme, and denied their help and services which could have provided the literacy centres with volunteer teachers, master trainers and key personnel. An official report

by the Birbhum administration (in October 1991) bemoans: "... the response from the municipal areas and the progress of this programme in these areas has not been up to the mark... One development, which is a bit depressing is that the response from college and university teachers has been extremely poor". ('Mass Literacy and Health Education Programme in the District of Birbhum'). In Bankura, during a visit to one literacy centre, a secondary school teacher told me how he was the only one from among his colleagues who volunteered to be a master trainer- and as a result, was exposed to constant humiliation by other teachers in the school who taunted him for wasting his time on trying to educate the 'chhotoloks' (the poorer classes, as distinct from the upper class Bengali 'bhadraloks')!

A probe into the reasons for the lack of response - and in some cases even resistance - to the literacy programme in the urban and semi-urban areas revealed certain interesting findings. The district officials usually tend to attribute the failure of the programme in these areas to (i) disinterestedness among the urban daily wageearners who are more concerned with immediate financial gains which leaves them with little time for literacy classes; (ii) indifference of the municipality councillors (unlike their rural counterparts in the 'panchayats') to the need for motivating the urban illiterate population; and (iii) lumpenisation of the slumdwelling proletariat, who live by smuggling and other criminal activities and who do not consider campaigns like the literacy programme as worth responding to.

While these official assessments do explain to some extent the failure of the literacy programme in the urban areas, there are other reasons too. For one thing, the social cohesiveness which prompts community participation in a rural situation is lacking among the uprooted migrants and floating population in the cities and suburban towns. The organisational efforts to mobilise the learners and the teachers in the countryside (through the 'panchayats') and in the industrial enclaves like Burdwan (through the trade unions) are also absent among these segments of the urban population, who because of their fluid occupational status do not quite fit into any fixed category of a community or class that can be covered by established institutions like 'panchayats' and trade unions. Further, the rural educated middle classes (mainly consisting of primary school teachers and unemployed youth, who have usually offered their services, as voluntary trainers or master trainers for the literacy programmes), still remain closely integrated with their rural social environment. Unlike them, their urban counterparts (the college and university teachers, their students and other professionals) are not sensitised to the mood and requirements of their poorer neighbours. Having better access to profit-making ventures in the cities, the teachers in particular, 'seem to prefer making money from private tuitions to sparing any time on work that does not yield any financial benefit.

Larger Questions

Certain questions however loom large beyond the immediate issue of success or failure of the total literacy programme in the three districts selected for the present review. Can literacy alone - divorced from a concurrent revolutionary transformation of society (as happened in China, Cuba, Nicaragua, where the literacy campaign went hand in hand with such transformation) - succeed in improving the quality of life of the poor? If a communally surcharged social environment is allowed to be built up by the powers to be, will mere lessons on national integration help the neo-literates to resist and conquer such an environment? Has education per se made our political leaders (most of whom are erudite scholars or claim university degrees and who hegemonise over the socio-political scene) less communal, less casteist, less obscurantist? While the NLM, quite rightly, seeks to make the learners aware of the need for social change and of the opportunities available to them for such a change, do such needs and opportunities (to reduce inequities, inequality and disadvantages) form priorities in the plans of a government at the centre which is cutting down precisely on the same social benefits and subsidies which are needed to reduce inequalities in a highly skewed socio-economic structure? As long as the structure remains dominated by the privileged and powerful few (who determine the distribution of benefits), how can the neo-literate agricultural labourer (who may have learned to conceptualise his needs and articulate his demands through the literacy training) ensure that he gets his dues and protect his rights unless he is backed by concurrent organised peasant movement?

It is obvious that an official mass literacy programme has to be a part and parcel of a holistic mission, a means whereby the state seeks development of all groups and sectors among the under-privileged in a certain intended direction. In India, the direction professed by the policy-makers (the constitutional aim of building up a socialist, secular and democratic republic) is constantly being perverted in practice by the same leaders. While the right hand, through total literacy programmes (like many other altruist plans) promises opportunities, and advantages to the underprivileged learners, the left hand withdraws them surreptitiously. While the primers in the literacy centres urge upon the learners to get rid of communal feelings, caste prejudices, sexually discriminating biases, religious superstitions, the mass media (the government-dominated TV, commercial films, and the privately owned newspapers) to which they are exposed continue to reinforce these same social norms and values.

Writing in 1958, Richard Hoggart in his 'Uses of Literacy' observed how changes which had greatly increased opportunities for literacy and further education in England at that time went hand in hand with concurrent changes in the mass media which were bringing about a trivialisation and commercialisa-

tion of values among the same class of neo-literate and newly educated people. Which set of values will prevail among the neo-literates of India? Those promoted by the NLM, or those propagated by political tub-thumpers and religious bigots?

11. Total Literacy Campaign : Gujarat Experience*

Gokul O. Parikh

Adult education has been perhaps the most neglected sector in educational development planning not only in developing countries but even in developed countries. According to UNESCO estimates of literacy for the age group of 15 years and above, India has the highest number of illiterates in the world, constituting as high as 29.1 per cent of the estimated 962.6 million illiterates of the world. To improve the literacy situation, and to achieve the goal of Education for All (EFA) by A.D. 2000, it is essential "to take effective steps for eradication of illiteracy in India, and China which together have 52.0 per cent of the illiterates in the world". (Singh and Bhaumik, 1993, pp. 224).

In India, the tradition of adult education is as old as the civilization itself. While reference to adult education is found in epics like the Ramayana, and Mahabharata, and in later periods, adult education emerged as a specific subject during British rule, and was assigned a definite place in government policy. A great fillip to adult education was provided during the freedom struggle led by Mahatma Gandhi. Mass literacy movements in the country have passed through several vicissitudes since then, and gained admirable success in some provinces while virtually failing in others.

The attainment of independence in 1947 gave a new colour to adult education programmes. They were studied at great length by several committees, and commissions. A definite place was accorded to adult education in development planning, and specific financial allocations were made for what was then termed social education in the first two five year plans. In the third plan, a new approach of integrating literacy with functional training of adults was adopted for making their education more effective. In the fourth plan, farmers' functional literacy programmes were started which were found to have brought about improvements in agricultural practices (Bordia, 1975). It was during this plan that the National Board of Adult Education (NBAE) was established by the Government of India. Also during this plan period, the broad concept of adult education or social education was narrowed down to 'adult literacy' aiming at teaching of three R's to adults.

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Feeling dissatisfied with the progress of adult education, the Janta Government launched a comprehensive National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) on October 2, 1978. The objectives of NAEP were not merely imparting literacy in the conventional sense but also providing learners with functionality and awareness with the ultimate objective of improving the quality of life of neo-literates. NAEP comprised Rural Functional Literacy Projects (RFLP) which were centrally sponsored, State Adult Education Programmes (SAEP), and the central scheme of assistance of voluntary agencies to ensure their greater participation in NAEP.

However, this centre-based programme could achieve a target of only about 20 per cent by March 1988. Evaluation studies of NAEP revealed the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- women's motivation and participation had been high;
- coverage of weaker sections of society (scheduled castes, and scheduled tribes) was higher than the target;
- project approach to management adopted for the programme was feasible;
- the quality of teaching-learning materials prepared by the national resource centre and the state resources centres were found to be good;
- the programme worked well where special recruitment procedures were adopted.

Weaknesses

- quality of training of the functionaries was poor;
- the learning environment in the adult education centres was poor;
- the mass media did not provide appreciable support;
- voluntary agencies did not receive willing cooperation from state governments; procedure for their involvement was discouraging;
- there was no linkage between basic literacy, post-literacy, follow-up, and continuing education, resulting in the relapse of a large number of neo-literates into illiteracy;
- achievement levels of literacy were below the desired levels;
- training of adult education functionaries at all levels lacked participatory, and communicative techniques;
- political, and administrative support of state governments, and panchayati raj institutions was not forthcoming.

In 1980 there was change in government at the Centre. The new government reviewed NAEP and modified it to be a part of the Minimum Needs Programme (MNP) in the sixth plan (1980-85) aiming to cover adults in the productive age group of 15-35 years. Soon followed the announcement of the National Policy of Education, which laid special stress on adult education, especially in the context of public participation in national development programmes. The Programme of Action (1986) envisaged a new National Programme of Adult Education (NPAE) emphasizing skill development, creating of awareness among learners of the national goals of development programmes, and liberation from oppression.

The seventh plan period (1985-90) witnessed some epoch making developments in the arena of education in general, and adult education in particular. The government launched the National Literacy Mission (NLM) on May 5, 1988, for eradication of illiteracy, and for imparting functional literacy to around 80 million illiterate persons in the age group of 15-35 years. The revised objective of the national policy of education stated that after experimenting with successive alternative models of literacy programmes "we have settled down to one which is known as campaign for total literacy which is area-specific, time-bound, volunteer-based, cost-effective, and outcome-oriented".

Total Literacy Campaign:

The total literacy campaign (TLC) owes its origin to the experiment in mass literacy campaign initiated in 1989 and successfully completed in 1990 in Ernakulam district in Kerala. The Ernakulam experiment, characterized by a fusion between district administration headed by the collector, voluntary groups, and social activists, and spearheaded by the Kerala Shashtra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP), was immediately followed up with the launching of several TLCs in different states which in turn had a snowballing effect. The executive committee of NLM had approved literacy campaign in as many as 256 districts, and post-literacy campaign in as many as 77 districts by August 1994. The basic model in all these literacy campaign projects is the same as the model in the Ernakulam campaign.

The focus of NLM is on rural areas, and particularly on women, and persons belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Apart from imparting functional literacy (implying ability to sign, fill up forms, read texts specially prepared for neo-literates, and count figures), NLM aims at conscientizing the learners to values of national integration, conservation of environment, gender equity, small family norm, etc., and making them aware of the causes of their deprivation to enable them to move towards the amelioration of their conditions through organization and participation in the process of development.

The duration of the literacy programme was to be 200 hours spread over five to six months (since revised to 180 hours spread over two months of actual teaching). This was preceded by a long well-conceived campaign of motivating the potential learners, and recruiting volunteers to teach them, through environment building efforts like literacy-based folk dances, cultural, and other programmes, street plays, use of the mass media for disseminating information, generating awareness, etc., and mobile cultural performances. Resource centres were set up in states, and at district levels consisting of specialists in adult education to fashion model primers for the learners. TLC was to be followed by a post-literacy campaign (PLC) as part of the continuing education process for the neo-literates.

The district was chosen as the basic unit of operation. Funding the campaign was on a sharing basis: state governments were persuaded to bear one-third of the total cost of TLCs in selected districts, the rest was to be borne by NLM. District literacy committees were set up headed by collectors, at block and village levels. Panchayat representatives and activists of voluntary organization were members of these committees. The teacher-student ratio was fixed at 1:10 with flexibility allowed for local conditions. NLM arranged for external evaluation of functional literacy acquired by the learners.

TLC in Gujarat

Based on the same salient features of the NLM model, TLC was launched in Gujarat in May 1990. In the first stage, the programme was introduced in three districts; Bhavnagar, Gandhinagar, and Dang. The last is a predominantly (almost wholly) tribal district. Subsequently, NLM sanctioned TLC projects for the remaining districts, and by August 1995, the entire state was covered by TLC. District administration headed by the district development officer is in overall charge of campaign execution in the district. The latest position with regard to the progress of TLC in different districts is as follows:

Number of districts	:	19
Districts where-TLC sanctioned	:	19
TLC completed	:	18
TLC in progress	:	1
PLC commenced	:	10
External evaluation completed	:	14
External Evaluation in progress	:	4

According to the specifications of the NLM-model, the campaign is funded by both, state and central governments. Actual planning and execution of the campaign is, however, carried out by the district authorities. In every district,

a Jilla Saksharta Samiti (JSS) has been formed with the collector as chairman, the district development officer as Chief Executive, and the Jilla panchayat president as Vice-Chairman. The members of JSS are selected from government, and non-government organisations.

The implementation of TLCs is organized in three tiers: district, taluka, and village. JSSs are assisted by taluka, and village level committees which supervise, and monitor the campaign in the taluka, and individual villages respectively.

The campaign was initiated with the identification of illiterate adults in the village through door-to-door surveys. These were conducted by the taluka saksharta samitis, and were finally consolidated by JSS.

On completion of these surveys, a large scale environment building programme was carried out in every nook and corner of the selected district. Simultaneously, identification and training of volunteers was carried out as per specific guidelines from NLM, and with the active support of the State Resource Centre (SRC).

To create awareness among people, and inform them about the rare opportunity of learning available to them at their doorsteps, the message of importance of literacy, and TLC was conveyed through various communication media. Literacy slogans written on the walls of public buildings in the village, state transport buses, trees, and lampposts carried the appeal to the literates to contribute to the campaign, and to the illiterates to join literacy learning. Saksharta rallies of school-going children in the village shouting slogans for literacy, and carrying the Saksharta Jyot or Saksharta Rath (chariot) from village to village attracted the attention of the people. Newspapers carried reports, and articles on literacy. As radio is still a very effective media of entertainment and information in rural areas, messages by dignitaries, talks by academic experts, and other programmes of 'Lokdayra' (a mixed bag of songs, stories, and jokes) ras garba (popular folk dance of Gujarat), puppet shows, and dreams, and street plays on literacy were also organized in almost all the important villages in different districts. All these efforts made general public aware of the campaigns, and its need, and content.

Simultaneously, selection, and training of volunteers continued. As the campaign was based on voluntarism, it was expected that literate adults would willingly contribute to the mission of imparting literacy to their illiterate brethren Primary school teachers, literate youth of the village, anganwadi/balwadi, and health workers of the government, and literate housewives, were recruited as volunteers. Primary teachers of local schools, of course, worked as volunteers as well as supervisors, village yuvak mandals, mahila mandals, workers of voluntary agencies, and religious service groups also willingly supported the campaign. Each of these volunteers would teach 5 to 10 adults. The classes

would be held at the time, and place convenient to both learners, and instructors. The classes were conducted mainly in the premises of schools or some houses for about two hours in the evenings.

The volunteers were trained by experts of the State Resource Centre, Gujarat Vidyapeeth, Ahmedabad. They trained the volunteers on how to motivate, and teach adult learners. Teaching was done through the primer *Janchetna Vachanmala* (in three parts), specially prepared for adult illiterates by SRC, and based on NLM guidelines.

The illiterates were taught for 90 days at the rate of two hours a day. The duration varied in some places so as to suit the local conditions, and the requirements of the participants. Care was, however, taken to ensure that they learned the three R's after completing all three parts of the primer.

External Evaluation

The Sardar Patel Institute of Economic and Social Research (SPIESR), Ahmedabad, was assigned the task of carrying out external evaluation of TLCs in all the districts of Gujarat. The broad objectives of the evaluation were as under:

- attempt a review of the progress achieved in quantitative and qualitative terms;
- examine whether programme achievement compared favourably with the targets envisaged, and ascertain factors responsible for any shortfalls between expectations and fulfillment;
- policy measures, and other efforts for mitigation of bottlenecks in the programme;
- suggest policy directions for the post-literacy efforts;
- examine other related features of the campaign.

SPIESR has completed evaluation in 13 districts. This paper seeks to review the performance of the campaign in the state based on the evaluation studies.

The SPIESR evaluation covered a sample (see Table 2) of over 3500 volunteers, and an equal number of village surveyed by the evaluation team in 13 districts (till August 1995). In the absence of guidelines from NLM or other responsible agencies, the survey was designed to cover a not-too-large sample of campaign participants, and the evaluation mainly focused on securing results from the survey which also highlighted the campaign deficiencies, and suggested solutions. Subsequently, the Ministry of Human Resource Development recommended a 5 per cent sample of neo-literates in January 1995. This standard was used to evaluate TLCs in the districts of Ahmedabad (9-14 age

group), Amreli, Rajkot, Banskanta, Jamnagar, and Panchmahals where TLCs were evaluated during 1995.

Before presenting the findings of the evaluation studies, a look at the literacy levels in the state would be of some relevance. According to the 1991 census, the state had a large proportion of literates in its population (61 per cent - 73 per cent of males and 48 per cent females). When compared with the all-India literacy ratio (52 per cent), this is satisfactory. A considerable increase (especially in female literacy) has been recorded in the literacy ratio during the last three decades as is evident from the following figures:

Census	Literacy (%)		
	Overall	Male	Female
1961	36	49	23
1971	42	54	29
1981	50	62	37
1991	61	73	48

Table 3 sets out available information about the distribution of neo-literates by important socio-economic characteristics. In the sample of neo-literates interviewed for intensive study, women comprised 64 per cent. It, however, deserves mention that the proportion of female volunteers identified to teach adult learners was not as large as this but, in fact, was lower than that of male volunteers. Age distribution of sample neo-literates revealed a strict adherence to the productive age group of 15-35 years defined as the target group by NLM. Mention must be made of cases of impersonation during the field study. It is indeed a redeeming feature that in Gujarat, instances of 'fake' neo-literates appearing at the examination conducted as part of external evaluation were very few; in fact, they were minimal compared to cases reported in the evaluation reports of other states.

Occupational classification of the neo-literates displayed the preponderance of agricultural classes, notably marginal farmers and agricultural labourers. In 'trade' and 'service' classes as well as other non-agricultural pursuits, the level of participation by beneficiaries was lower, probably reflecting a lower level of illiteracy in these classes.

Caste categorization of the neo-literates showed that scheduled castes and schedule tribes formed 10 per cent and 23 per cent respectively. Castes classified as socially and economically backward were numerically dominant.

Involvement of primary schools was very notable. Extremely limited participation of voluntary agencies in the campaign was reported from almost all

districts. Response from secondary schools and other higher educational institutions was poor. In Gujarat, TLCs appeared to be spearheaded by panchayat agencies at the three tier-district, taluka, and village and primary schools. The limited role and contribution of NGOs including women's organisations, other philanthropic institutions as well as the low participation of peoples, elected representatives are alarming and need to be probed.

The performance of a few religion-based organisations was admirable in certain regions. For example, the saints and followers of Pramukh Swami Maharaj of the Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan sect showed a high degree involvement and made significant contributions to eradication of adult illiteracy in areas like Gadhada taluka of Bhavnagar district. The Swadhyay Parivar of Pandurang Shastri Athavale helped in accelerating the pace of TLC in a large number of villages in several districts. This indicates a strong possibility of using 'religion' as an effective instrument for removing illiteracy, ignorance and superstitions.

The bureaucracy at all levels played an extremely effective role. They were closely associated with the campaign and identified themselves with the principal participants - volunteers and adult learners - paying special attention to the motivational and monitoring needs for the successful execution of the campaign. Political will and support was in evidence. Such positive inclination of the politicians in power was greatly helpful in conducting the campaign. TLC, being able to draw a large number of women and girls to act as grassroots level volunteers or to join as learners (or, as in the case of primary school female teachers, to perform supervisory/motivational functions) has been able to break the traditional structured constraints owing to orthodox outlook and has in fact, rejuvenated the socialization (reformatory) process to that extent. Accelerating female literacy rate in the state is a dire need. TLC stimulated a high degree of female participation. How did the thirst for literacy arise? The first step was, therefore, 'creation of demand' for literacy. In this context, the phase of environmental-building for TLC, which would seek to build up the necessary organizational infrastructure right to the grassroots level of a village, was important. In these endeavours, TLCs have made liberal use of the mass and 'automised' media and organized rallies, processions, and assemblies to spread the literacy message to the vast multitudes of rural masses. In districts like Panchmahals, Surendranagar, and Vadodara the efforts and effects were spectacular while in other districts, they did not seem to be as spectacular. Village level mass involvement and popular enthusiasm is by far the most essential ingredient of the campaign/programme and hence effective build-up of a congenial environment for TLC is a pre-requisite for the success of the campaign.

The sudden emergence of a large number of neo-literates with obviously heightened aspirations calls for a two-pronged attack (a) prevention of a massive

relapse into illiteracy owing to time lag between TLC and PLC (post literacy campaign); and (b) sustenance of functional literacy and achievement of the ultimate goal of literacy campaigns, viz., improving the quality of life of the neo-literates. The Ghosh Committee has made specific recommendations on post literacy and continuing education.

In Gujarat, those districts where TLCs have been completed administration has hardly taken PLC seriously. Wherever PLCs have commenced work, they are at best engaged in 'mopping up' those neo-literates who have either not have been covered or dropped out or have not successfully passed the examination. In fact, these districts ought to take cognizance of the element of continuing education, economic linkages, establishment of village libraries, strengthening of the Jan Shikshan Nilayams, etc., and visualize post-literacy phase also as a cultural movement with widespread popular participation embracing several educational spheres, formal, non-formal, and even informal (Saldanha, 1994).

Outcomes And Impact

TLC, as noted earlier, is a learner-centered, volunteer-based time-bound, cost-effective campaign. The campaign has covered 34.5 lakh population in the 15-35 years age group in the 13 districts. The SPIESR evaluation team interviewed and spot-tested literates. We can see from Table 7 that 75, 66.4 and 78 per cent of the neo-literates respectively were successful in passing the test of skills of the three R's: reading, writing, and numeracy. Compared to the modest (and perhaps reasonable) standard of 50 per cent as the passing norm, these results are very satisfactory.

While figures of 'enrolled' illiterates were not available for all districts, the sample results of individual districts show that the percentage of passed neo-literates to enrolled illiterates was higher. The campaign, thus, appears to have accomplished commendable results, especially when compared with corresponding outcomes in other states (see Table 7), Saldanha (1994) has this to say of the Maharashtra experience: "The Maharashtra data suggest that on the aggregate 74 per cent of the identified illiterates in the selected districts were enrolled, the neo-literates whose achievements were upto the NLM norm formed 55 per cent of the enrolled and 40 per cent of the identified illiterates".

Judged by NLM prescribed norm of 70 per cent aggregate marks (which is rather too high for persons who are totally illiterate), the performance, though very satisfactory, indicates scope and need for improvement through a fresh dose of TLC "mopping up" operation. It is interesting to note that in areas with poor accessibility and with predominantly tribal population (like the districts of Panchmahals and Dangs), the campaign had made considerable headway.

Reading competencies scored better over writing skills while numeracy

occupied a middle position. Nevertheless, there is considerable reduction in adult illiteracy in the crucial age group of 15-35 years. In order to ensure the sustainability of the educational process, it will be important to introduce post-literacy/continuing education programmes simultaneously with (a) desirable economic linkages on the one hand; and (b) strengthening the universalization of primary education on the other.

Interestingly, even the budgeted expenditure of Rs. 65 per learner (which itself is not a big amount) was really not spent in several districts. TLC has been cost-effective owing to economies exercised by JSS and fundings from panchayats, schools, and co-operative societies at village level. In Panchmahals, for example, teachers' unions have spent their own funds for TLC work.

While the evaluation has revealed fairly satisfactory results in different districts, an assessment of the qualitative impact of the experiment on the learners as well as other campaign participants assumes importance in the context of the NLM concept of '*functional literacy*'. Functional literacy envisages assertion of rights by the neo-literate poor through organization, and their active role in crucial issues like national integration, conservation of environment, and movements for women's equality, and making the learners aware of the causes of their deprivation. In this direction, TLC in Gujarat has been an admixture of successes and failures - the former mostly in health areas and various aspects of social transformation; evils of dowry system, child marriage, superstitious beliefs, etc. Failures were in economic aspects: new cultivation practices and use of scientific farm inputs, formation of savings and banking habits, knowledge about improvements in various cottage industries, arts, crafts, etc. Failures are also noticed in civic and political awareness levels (see Tables 4, 5, and 6).

Concluding Observations

TLC has laid great emphasis on mass mobilization through environment building efforts and training of trainers and campaign participants with support from central and state governments, and non-governmental organizations. It is built on well-knit and efficient management structure with an in-built monitoring system. As is often claimed, TLC has "succeeded in transforming a fully government funded and government controlled traditional centre based programme into a mass campaign leading towards a people's movement for total literacy and new awakening" (Mohanty, 1994). The TLC approach constitutes the main strategy of the NLM and could continue to be so till the goal of universal literacy is fully reached.

It must be noted that practically in none of the districts did we come to learn

about resistance to the campaign from quarters like landlords, traders, small industrialists or any caste/religion-based groups, as was the case in other states (e.g. Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh) where the privileged groups displayed callous indifference (even apathy) towards TLC. Learning outcomes and impacts on awareness levels of neo-literates have lent testimony to these achievements though any complacency on the part of campaign managers is unwarranted. There remains the apprehension of a relapse into illiteracy. Such a danger of neo-literates sliding back to illiteracy has to be guarded against through a systematic introduction of well-conceived post-literacy and continuing education programme.

While these are the positive features of TLC in Gujarat, certain weaknesses/deficiencies noticed in the earlier adult education programmes have persisted during TLC too. Non- or severely-limited involvement of voluntary agencies including women's organisations, inadequate (and ineffective in a few districts) monitoring and supervision, far from being satisfactory, coverage and quality of training of some functionaries, and insufficient achievement in writing competency are some of the major lacunae that have come to light in external evaluations. These, however, are bound to be eliminated.

Table 1
Distribution of Illiterates in the 15-35 years group

(in thousands)

District	Number of Illiterates			
	Population	Total	Male	Female
Bhavnagar	2228	118	48	70
Ahmedabad	1606	227	105	122
Kheda	3438	274	69	205
Dangs	144	26	10	16
Sabarkanta	1758	139	43	96
Surendra	1204	160	58	102
Kutch	1246	174	63	111
Vadodara	3093	230	89	141
Amreli	1251	74	32	42
Rajkot	2514	100	38	62
Banaskanta	2158	308	124	184
Jamnagar	1545	266	106	160
Panchmahals	2949	396	137	259
Total	25194	2492	922	1570

Source: Action plans prepared by the Jilla Saksharta Samitis.

Table 2
TLC in Gujarat : Some Basic Statistics

District	No of Talukas	No of Villages	No of Sample Villages	% of Sample Villages	No of Illiterate Adult Identified	% of Sample Learners	Adults Learners Interviewed
Bhavnagar	12	245	25	10	118000	0.18	355
Ahmedabad	7	661	46	7	227035	0.25	651
Kheda	10	965	30	4	274137	0.16	428
Dangs	1	312	24	10	25613	1.42	365
Sabarkanta	10	1359	50	10	139183	0.35	489
Surendra	9	620	31	5	160120	0.28	450
Kutch	9	1091	45	4	173724	0.34	521
Vadodara	12	1653	80	5	229908	0.34	801
Amreli	10	595	92	15	73936	5.40	3998
Rajkot	13	856	73	9	100289	4.50	4604
Banaskanta	11	1370	206	15	303000	4.00	12404
Jamnagar	10	637	99	15	160421	4.00	6295
Panchmahals	11	1909	182	10	395874	4.60	18360
Total	125	12271	1704	13.9	2386240	1.50	49721

Table 3
Social Characteristics of Sample Neo-Literates

(in %)

District	No of Neo Literates	Age			Sex			Caste			Occupation						
		< 15	15-35	> 36	M A L E	F E M A L E	S C	S T	O B C	O T H E R S	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Bhavnagar	355	-	90	10	-	-	4	1	59	34	39	18	4	3	.5	35	-
Ahmedabad	651	1	94	5	43	57	14	6	51	29	58	-	-	17	-	-	-
Kheda	428	4	93	3	27	73	9	7	61	23	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr
Dangs	305	1.5	97	1.5	35	65	6	88	5	1	44	15	4	3	37	3	3
Sabarkanta	505	1	98	1	31	69	21	26	39	14	60	25	2	10	12	4	-
Surendra	450	2	94	2	32	66	11	20	48	19	25	21	6	5	33	5	4
Kutch	521	1	98	1	45	55	19	17	38	25	25	16	8	5	33	5	4
Vadodara	801	11	88	1	39	61	8	67	18	6	47	19	3	1	29	-	-
Amreli	3998	1	98	1	48	52	7	4	72	17	30	18	4	4	22	2	6
Rajkot	4604	.4	99	.6	35	65	8	4	46	42	45	18	2	2	27	6	2
Banaskanta	12404	1.9	98	.1	45	55	10	7	58	25	69	18	6	2	16	1	2
Jamnagar	6295	1	97	2	39	61	12	6	64	18	41	11	4	2	19	1	5
Panchmahals	18360	-	100	-	30	70	6	46	42	6	91	8	-	-	-	-	-
Total							10	23	46	19							

- 1= Agriculture;
 2= Agricultural Labour;
 3= Service
 4= Business
 5= Miscellaneous
 6= Animal Husbandry;
 7= Housekeeping

Table 4
Effect of TLC on Awareness of Civic Aspects
 (in %)

District	No of Civic Aspects*	Neo-Literates			
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Bhavnagar	355	NA	NA	NA	NA
Ahmedabad	651	88	68	64	10
Kheda	428	72.6	63	19.8	10
Dangs	305	NA	NA	NA	NA
Sabarkanta	489	87	67	45	17
Surendra	450	89	85	79	11
Kutch	521	NA	NA	NA	NA
Vadodara	801	73	-	-	44
Amreli	3998	83	74	55	72
Rajkot	4604	69	63	74	53
Banaskanta	12404	83	70	67	47
Jamnagar	6295	NA	NA	NA	NA
Panchmahals	18360	84	72	72	58

*Civic Aspects:

- (1) Duty to vote
 - (2) Importance of literacy in family
 - (3) Knowledge about post and telegraph systems
 - (4) Knowledge about health and family welfare systems
- N.A. Not Available.

Table 5
Effect of TLC on Awareness of Social Aspects
(in %)

District	No of Neo-Literates	Social Aspects*			
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Bhavnagar	355	NA	NA	NA	NA
Ahmedabad	651	92	80	76	81
Kheda	428	92	61	61	63
Dangs	305	47	30	52	21
Sabarkanta	489	81	48	80	71
Surendra	450	88	46	67	83
Kutch	521	44	22	36	36
Vadodara	801	83	78	80	79
Amreli	3998	76	56	75	72
Rajkot	4604	82	48	64	47
Banaskanta	12404	84	64	79	58
Jamnagar	6295	81	56	74	67
Panchmahals	18360	87	84	66	66

*Social Aspects:

- (1) Removal of Dowry System
 - (2) Removal of Undesirable Systems
 - (3) Keeping away from addictions and wasteful habits
 - (4) Not to have blind faith
- N.A. Not Available.

Table 6
Effect of TLC on Opinions about Literacy and Women's Education
 (in %)

District	No of Neo-Literates	Literacy*			Women's Education**		
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)
Bhavnagar	355	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Ahmedabad	651	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Kheda	428	NA	NA	NA	70	33	60
Dangs	305	NA	NA	NA	71	57	71
Sabarkanta	489	NA	NA	NA	82	73	77
Surendra	450	86	62	30	89	53	75
Kutch	521	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Vadodara	801	NA	NA	NA	94	75	83
Amreli	3998	86	54	40	89	54	71
Rajkot	4604	91	49	35	92	61	54
Banaskanta	12404	NA	NA	NA	81	62	73
Jamnagar	6295	NA	NA	NA	89	57	69
Panchmahals	18360	90	60	44	90	60	70

*Literacy:

- (1) Leads to increase in general knowledge;
- (2) Improves employment opportunities;
- (3) Leads to self-respect and industriousness

N.A. Not Available.

**Women's Education:

- (1) Women should be given higher education;
- (2) Women's marriage prospects improve due to education;
- (3) Mother's education improves children's education.

Table 7
Results of SPOT-Tests

District	No of Neo-Literates	More than 50% in			(in %) Aggregate		
		R	W	N	>50%	>60%	>70%
Bhavnagar	355	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Ahmedabad	651	82	87	83	83	71	NA
Kheda	428	NA	NA	66	61	55	NA
Dangs	305	61	60	76	62	43	24
Sabarkanta	489	NA	NA	88	82	75	NA
Surendra	450	83	62	88	86	58	22
Kutch	521	69	44	73	66	47	32
Vadodara	801	59	68	76	74	54	35
Amreli	3998	80	74	77	82	70	50
Rajkot	4604	75	82	70	73	62	34
Banaskanta	12404	79	55	80	76	56	32
Jamnagar	6295	82	56	73	69	63	29
Panchmahals	18360	80	76	88	90	75	44
TOTAL:	49721	75.0	66.4	78.2	75.1	60.8	33.5

R = Reading W = Writing
N = Numeracy NA = Not Available.

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12. Cultural Communication in Literacy Campaigns: Social Relational Contexts, Processes and Hegemonic Organisation

Denzil Saldanha

I. Introduction

This paper focuses on the environment building aspects of literacy campaigns.¹ Various communication media have been utilised in the literacy campaign districts in order to stimulate motivation, generate mass participation and to create a cultural climate that is congenial to literacy. Popular cultural forms have occupied a central place within the mobilisation process of environment building. The article begins with an identification of the messages and some of the folk media that have been utilised in literacy campaigns in Maharashtra. It continues with an analysis of the communication processes in the field on the basis of one's observations, interviews and group discussions.² These micro-level systems of communication have been discussed with reference to the folk media that have been utilised, the contexts and processes of communication, and the impact that they have had. The impact is seen both in terms of immediate motivation and mobilisation as well as the possibility of its transfer to sustained teaching-learning. What follows is a recapitulation of some general conclusions relating to popular communication during environment building in literacy campaigns.

Communication processes in literacy campaigns have important implications for the movement of vast sections of people from a culture of orality to one of literacy.³ The use of folk forms in environment building, in fact draws on the oral culture of the people in order to facilitate and motivate their transition to literacy. The teaching-learning process provides access to the symbolic systems of the literate universe. Several cultural groups and literacy activists are thrown up by the process of cultural mobilisation that takes place on a relatively

¹ *Economic and Political Weekly* May 15, 1993

extensive scale during the defined spatial and temporal frames of the district campaign. What are the larger organisational implications in terms of creating an alternate cultural hegemony for economic¹ entitlements, especially during the post-literacy period and beyond? The article attempts to address itself to this issue in conclusion.

While discussing the collapse of old paradigms and methodologies for communication studies, P. Mohan underlines the need for a new approach that is contextually situated, descriptive in character, and that works upwards towards a theory of communication. "The new paradigm would have to seek paths of change only as ordinary people need and want them, and always in harmony with their environment and history. The new paradigm must not set its own course, but discover it... Communication Theory must return first to the villages, the workshops, the market-place, and even to the places of worship - but this time only to observe, describe, and to try to understand (Mohan 1992, 772). The approach in this paper is broadly in accordance with the one that has been suggested.

A brief explanation of the emerging conceptual framework might be useful at the outset. One views the teaching-learning process of transition from orality to literacy as central to the literacy campaign. The literacy campaign is introduced into the relatively structured and given socio-economic context of the district. It attempts to create a cultural climate for literacy through the use of folk media drawn from the culture of orality of the people. This process sets in motion the macro-level dynamics of social mobilisation right up to and during the micro-level phenomena of teaching-learning in scattered villages and in discrete groups. One has attempted to describe the contexts, processes and forms used while communicating in village situations and their impact on motivation for sustained learning. These systems of communication, as part of a larger cultural mobilisation, have important implications for the possibilities of creation of an alternate cultural hegemony during post-literacy by utilising the potential of the 'organic' intellectuals that might have emerged from the campaign.

II. Messages through Folk Media

Several folk forms have been fruitfully utilised in the literacy campaigns in Maharashtra. During the environment building programmes in Ratnagiri district, for example, the kalajathas drew from musical forms such as lavani, powada, gondhal, jagar, etc. Environment building gave expression on to songs from tribal traditions such as the Dhangari Lok Geet and from religious sects like the Varkaries, followers of Vithoba of Pandharpur. During the environment

building phase which was held in an intensive manner from February 27 to March 8, 1992, 67 cultural teams went out to the different villages on kalajathas. The main thrust of the messages conveyed through song, dance and discussions was literacy. However, it was reported that other issues such as mother and child care, family planning, watershed management, the problem of alcoholism and dowry, small savings and agricultural development were also conveyed.

In this district, the participants in the kalapathaks were drawn primarily from the middle classes and in particular from the school teachers. However, in the TLC districts from the Marathwada region, like Latur and Nanded where the Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti (BGVS) has been active, one has observed a greater participation of the traditional practitioners of the folk media. The Kalajathas organised by the BGVS from October 22 to 30, 1990, during the Wardha campaign were held in five central villages in each of the eight talukas of the district. These jathas were also reported to have involved several local traditional artists.

The District Literacy Campaign Committee of Latur, with the participation of the BGVS, has brought out a recorded cassette - Saksharta Geet Mala - of songs that draws on various folk forms: geet, bharud, Bhajan, abhang, gondhal, lavani and powada. A content analysis of the central themes in these songs suggests that the following areas are covered: literacy for a happy family life and as a key to knowledge., literacy for women's emancipation, the problems of alcoholism, dowry and superstition, poverty and oppressive work conditions of labourers and literacy as a tool for emancipation, caste discrimination; inspiration to keep pace with a changing scientific world; literacy as prayer and devotion to god and the spirit of nationalism.

One has come across several innovative forms being used during the environment building campaign. Some of these spread the message of literacy by relating the forms to local festivals; akshar kandils and akshar rangoli at the time of Diwali and Akshar Ganapati at the time of the popular festival in Maharashtra. These were extensively used in Ausa taluka in Latur district. In the Sindhudurg campaign, haldi-kumkum celebrations were widely used to mobilise the women and bring them together to discuss issues related to their everyday life. In the slum pockets of Bombay, a voluntary organisation Committee of Resource Organisations (CORO) has attempted to relate literacy to major social reformers who have been close to the dalit community by celebrating the anniversaries of Jotiba and Savitribai Phule and Ambedkar. The environment building phase of literacy campaigns has contributed not only to the motivation for literacy but also to the education of the literate middle classes by releasing the latent creativity of a large number of individuals. Teachers, low level government officials and unemployed youth from sections that might be considered as "traditional" intellectuals have been drawn to the cause of literacy for the

disadvantaged. There is a need for an organisational form, that would take forward the potential of these individuals in a sustained manner during and after the post-literacy phase of the campaign.

The District Literacy Campaign Committee of Nanded has published a collection of folk musical forms that were to be used in environmental building. The publication is entitled, *Sakshar Sarita* (refer to the appendix for a brief description of some of these forms). The compositions were selected in a participatory manner. Language and music experts were also consulted. During our field visits we found that local artists and instructors were making use of the publication.

The following table presents a cross tabulation of the different folk media according to their thematic message. One finds that geet, a popular form that is generally used in diverse occasions, is most represented in the publication. Devotional forms such as abhang, Bhajan and bharud are the next in importance. The musical form of lavani that has found expression in the popular theatre of tamasha, has also received adequate representation in the text.

One has attempted to identify the central thematic focus of the messages communicated through the various folk media. The content of an invitation to the ignorant (adani) to move out of the darkness (andhar) of illiteracy towards literacy is the one that is most often repeated. This theme is to be predominantly found in the forms of geet, abhang and Bhajan. Communication processes and forms provide some indication about the subject who is communicating, i.e. the composers and the performers. In the case of the foregoing theme, it appears that a middle class condescension towards the illiterate has gained some degree of predominance in the compositions. Most of the thematic messages provide a rationale for achieving literacy. However, some of them focus on a direct inspiration for literacy through the use of emotional appeal, metaphors and colourful language. These songs are, as it were, a glorification of the letter (akshar) and an invitation to literacy. The call to women to view literacy as a means to their emancipation is a theme that has a high degree of predominance throughout a number of the forms, in particular, bharud, gondhal and geet. This is relevant in a situation where the vast majority of the learners are women. The spirit of nationalism as an inspiration to literacy resounds in some of the forms, as well as the call to widen one's horizons and gain knowledge (vidya, dnyan). It appears that some of the messages that might have a greater contextual appeal to the lives of the learners and instructors - the conditions of oppression and the rights of labourers, overcoming cheating and usury, inspiration to voluntary instructors, inspiration from social reformers for learning and the appeal to enrol in schools - have not been adequately represented. The powada which has been used in the past to inspire social awareness during movements, covers some of the messages, as well as the more secular forms of lavani, ovi and street play.

Do some of the forms lend themselves by their very aesthetic qualities to the propagation of particular messages, is a question worth researching.

III. Local Contexts and Processes of Communication

This section adopts an inductive approach to micro contexts of communication. It describes the contexts and processes of the use of folk media in varied field situations and at different points of literacy campaigns. One attempts to narrate one's learning experience in response to these situations.

We visited Budhada village in Ausa taluka of Latur district on November 6, 1992. Budhada has a population of 2,324 persons. 110 illiterates in the age group of 15-35 had been identified in the survey. The teaching-learning process in this taluka and village had begun in May 1992. The initial 22 classes had now been reduced to 16 as a result of drop-outs from among the instructors and the impact of drought, the onset of the monsoons and the agricultural season. However, an attempt was made to integrate some of the left out learners into the running classes. The village had an upper primary school with eight teachers. Unlike the situation with most primary schools, the teachers resided in the village. They could thus more closely identify themselves with the motivation and conduct of the campaign at the village level.

We moved around the village, tracking down the dynamics of the campaign from instructors to the learners, to the teachers who trained and monitored the campaign, to what was generally perceived to be the initial motivating fulcrum of the campaign -a cultural group called the Panchasheel Gayan Mandali, which had played a major role in the environment building process in this and the surrounding villages. The earlier Adult Education Programme was running for the past one and a half years prior to the campaign. According to the prerak of the Jan Shikshan Nilayam (the literacy activist who conducts the post-literacy centre), the major difference from the past was that a programme with paid instructors and preraks who were doing a job was converted into a social movement. Teachers, students, the educated unemployed youth, the prerak (himself) and the instructors were organised towards voluntary participation in a cause. The cultural group through its rousing songs and their emotive appeal was seen to have lit the first spark of enthusiasm for the campaign.

The group is equipped with dholak, a harmonium, and jharja. Seven members of a dalit family constitute the group. The lead singer is a girl in her late teens, a seventh standard drop-out from school. The other members, consist of her father, mother, uncle and two brothers. The family had been performing in the surrounding villages singing the literacy songs prepared by the campaign organisers, the BGVS in particular, and the ones they themselves had devised.

During this period they managed to survive on the hospitality and gifts provided by their rural audiences and the honorarium. Travel to several villages often meant forgoing agricultural wages which was seen to be worthwhile when one had the satisfaction of getting involved in a national programme. The spontaneous performance outside their hut on the outskirts of the village attracted a number of village women. The male folk were out for agricultural work. The performers considered their songs as entertainment with a message. They generally explained the thematic content of the song to their audience. The music helped to draw an audience and to hold their attention, while knowledge was imparted through explanations and discussions.

The motivational impact of the cultural group had spread to a nearby school for the technical training of the blind. The visually handicapped youth in this institution were being trained for weaving and other handicrafts and had begun to learn braille under the guidance of a blind instructor. They had learnt reading and some amount of numeracy with an enthusiasm that outshone that of the sighted illiterate in the village. Their writing abilities, were hindered for lack of adequate material. They attributed their interest in literacy to the songs of the local cultural group.

The Panchasheel Gayan Mandali represents the mobilisation of a local, traditional cultural resource - an entire dalit family of singers and performers - to meet the regional needs of the environment building phase of the campaign. Thanks to the literacy campaign a fragile cultural resource based on folk media is provided a direction and a wider legitimacy in its processes of communication. Cultural processes of communication. Cultural groups and their involvement in the environment building dimension of the macro campaign process are found to make a major contribution towards the initial motivate of learners and instructors and the consolidation of various social force government departments, educational institutions, voluntary organisations and the unorganised interested community in the -social movement" that is the literacy campaign. The use of folk media drawn from local traditions and the direct informal communication processes within small gatherings, facilitate the motivational impact.

Sustaining of Motivation for Literacy

Can this impact be sustained over the micro-level teaching-learning process which calls for a comparatively greater amount of discipline, regularity and investment of energy as compared to the flexible and spontaneous dynamics of the environment building phase of the campaign? One has observed that learners and instructors approach the teaching-learning process with a framework of priorities whose configuration is derived from their experience of the struggle

for survival in everyday life. High points in the rainfed agricultural season like sowing and harvesting operations, drought, elections, school examinations and vacations, festivals and communal riots result in major breaks in the rhythm of literacy campaigns and, in particular, the teaching-learning process. This provides some indication of the "irrational", sustenance-based ordering of priorities. Attempts have been made to create smaller bursts of cultural mobilisation at different phases of the teaching-learning process, especially during low points and periods of stagnation. All opportunities for direct personal contact during the preparatory phase of the campaign have sometimes been utilised to sustain motivation, i.e., the survey, training, distribution of material and monitoring. Motivation for literacy, especially when it does not result in immediate economic gain, needs to be seen in this context of grounded priorities. Literacy within the campaign approach calls for a reordering of and a direction to existing priorities of everyday life. Perhaps more than and accompanying cultural events as part of a cultural movement, a functional orientation to literacy instruction could provide the capacity to sustain literacy learning under trying circumstances.

We encountered another cultural group in Valsangi village of Ahmedpur taluka, Latur district on November 7, 1972. Valsangi has a population of 2,223 with 271 learners in the 15-35 age group. 26 classes run by instructors, of whom 17 are school students, cater to the needs of the learners. The classes were struggling ahead despite the claims of the harvesting season on the time of the learners. This cultural group consisted of three generations of a dalit family whose members contributed in different ways to different aspects of the campaign. The father was a primary school teacher by profession and also served as a master trainer. He himself, his wife, son, two daughters and daughter-in-law served as volunteer instructors. His mother had become literate during the course of this campaign. Two school-going grandchildren together with the rest of the family and the members of a local Mahila Mandal had formed a kalapathak, and had toured 10 villages during the environment building phase. The son acted as a *prerak* of the local JSN. Eighteen neo-literates had passed the fourth standard examination under his guidance. Themes related to social awareness were interspersed in between the songs calling on adult learners to join the classes and the young dropouts to enrol in the schools.

A relevant question that arises is the nature of the organisational form that will consolidate and take forward the large number of cultural resources by way of individuals and groups that have been stimulated during the literacy campaign. Can the cultural process that borders on a movement be sustained in an organised manner after the campaign or will these resources relapse into so many disarticulated foci of cultural expression.

Contents That Structure Processes

In Palshi village of Latur taluka in the same district, at night on November 5, 1992, one had an opportunity to observe the entire repertoire of a kalapathak. The programme had been organised in a village that was identified as 'weak' during the campaign and where the teaching-learning process had stagnated as a result of the agricultural season. The setting was the raised platform of the school building with the major part of the audience of about 300 persons sitting in the darkness on the village square across the road from the platform. Some space on the natural, well-lit stage was reserved for the village influentials and the respected visitors who sat on mattresses and cushions. Behind these venerable persons sat some of the village women. The performers would emerge from a classroom by the side of the platform.

One goes into these details of the structured setting and social context of the cultural programme in order to make the point that a kalapathak generally enters a socio-economic context as a given situation. The structured allocation of space during the performance flows from the context and sometimes intervenes in the communication process. There was no dialogue with the audience on this particular night. However, the villagers, especially those from the poor classes, sat with rapt attention from 9.00 p.m. till 1.00 a.m. Attempts have been made on other occasions to breakthrough this imposed structure on communication by having a more open setting, by the performers moving among the audience and engaging in informal dialogue and by doing away with the rituals of speeches, votes of thanks and garlandings.

The entire performance bore the character of several scripts within an extended script, constructed into a meaningful whole. It was comprised of kirtans and bhajans sung by a traditional kirtankar with much humour and compelling emotion while conveying the message of learning and literacy, a street play depicting the problems encountered by illiterates, the reasons for the neglect of schooling during the school-going age and the functional aspects of literacy, songs conveying the need for literacy and self advancement, a mono act which narrated stories, anecdotes, and jokes while explaining the need for learning, a skit which drew from mythologies in order to underline the limitations of superstition. The entire programme was interspersed with songs, poems and direct emotional appeals to the adult literate in the village to join the classes, be literate and widen their horizons. One did not have an opportunity to discuss with the assembled villagers given that the programme had extended late into the night and the audience dispersed immediately after. However, going by the rapt attention and their reactions especially to the humorous and emotional situations, one got the impression that the kalapathak is a powerful instrument for communicating a message to the rural audience and for generating initial

motivation. It becomes necessary to have a relatively discontinuous follow-up to these programmes in terms of the next stage in action, lest the cultural programme remains as only a vivid event in memory - an entertaining break from the drudgery of everyday life.

That the reproduction of social structures in the setting of a cultural performance results in inhibition of communication processes, may also be seen in the example of the single-actress play *Vhay Mi Savitri Bai* performed by S. Deshpande. We observed its performance on March 4, 1992, in Ratnagiri district. The play depicts the life story of Savitribai Phule as narrated and enacted by her. This powerful medium had been fruitfully utilised in several villages of Ratnagiri district to motivate the women to literacy. The play was able to hold the audience to spell-bound attention with the skilful enactment of an emotive theme that is close to the lives of the women in the district. On this occasion, however, one found that attempts on the part of the performer to stimulate dialogue with the audience met with little success. The reason appeared to be partly due to the mixed audience of males and females which also included children. The women were inhibited to speak out in this context. The other factor was the socio-economic spatial context. Persons from the dalit community who formed the agricultural labourers and poor peasants in the particular village community sat on the ground before the stage. Their employers, the well-to-do farmers and horticulturists from the region, sat on chairs behind them. The location of the play itself was the large courtyard of a major landholder, a political figure in the village who traded in horticultural produce. All these were contextual factors that dampened the possibilities of any horizontal communication. However, one could observe that the audience though silent, left with much food for thought.

The play played a major role in the environment-building phase of the campaign in Latur district and in the Marthwada region in general. A single kalajatha covered about 10 villages in the vicinity of a central primary school. A halt and stay in a village was followed by prabhat pheris in the morning, discussions with the learners, potential instructors and members of the village education committee during the day and cultural programmes in the evenings. The kalajathas of the BGVS were held during August 15-30, 1992 and covered two talukas of Latur district. Antar Bharati, a voluntary organisation in the region, covered two other talukas while the fifth taluka was allotted to a high school.

Potential and Limits of Cultural Mobilisation

Shirur Dhabade village in Mukhed taluka, Nanded district, is an illustration of the phenomenon that environment building activities, even with the incorporation of media drawn from the oral traditions of the people are inspiring persons to move from orality to literacy, do not necessarily get translated into

motivation for sustained teaching-learning. This was considered to be one of the 'stronger' villages in the literacy campaign and in one of the better performing talukas. Hence its importance. We visited this village on November 11, 1992, after the cultural mobilisation of learners, instructors and village level campaign organisers had been held. The initial motivation of 789 learners identified in the village had been consolidated into 74 classes conducted by trained instructors. The instruction had begun on August 15 and the learners were expected to have neared the completion of the first part of the kit. Despite the enthusiasm of the beat-level full time workers in the campaign, of the teachers from the local primary school and the volunteer organisers of the local campaign, one found that the combination of vacations for the teachers and students, and the harvesting phase of the agricultural season had taken its toll on the consistency of the teaching-learning process. Only 28 out of the 74 classes were running during the period of our visit. The claims of survival in everyday-life had gained precedence over the demands on time for literacy instructions. Learners, most of whom were poor peasants and agricultural labourers, had opted to invest their energies and time in maximising the gains from the limited agricultural season, especially in the context of the long months of drought that preceded it. We had reason to believe that they would get back to teaching-learning after the season, perhaps after suffering a relapse from the low levels of literacy that they had attained.

During our round of the village after 9 p.m. the time of the classes, we met an elderly primary teacher resident of the village but who taught at a neighbouring one. His son and daughter were engaged in adult instruction while he assisted them through guidance and inspiring songs. He was involved in the local cultural group which had covered this and the surrounding villages. The folk songs that he sung together with the adult learners attempted to motivate learning. The songs drew inspiration from patriotism as citizens of the state of Maharashtra and devotion to Goddess Saraswati on the one hand, and the everyday-life example of persons in similar economic situations on the other. The latter song narrated the story of a daughter-in-law who overcomes the opposition of her father-in-law while persisting with the instruction of her mother-in-law. The male head of the household appreciates the value of literacy and the desire of the women for learning, only when he himself is cheated.

Later that night a cultural programme related to literacy was spontaneously organised. There is a tendency for village-level organisers to hold a cultural performance for the benefit of visiting outsiders. This appears to serve the purpose of seeking legitimacy and appreciation from the wider universe beyond the village and sometimes to cover up the relative failures of the arduous teaching-learning process with the spontaneity of song and dance. The music attracted a large gathering even though it was past midnight. After the initial

programmes, we converted the function into a forum for discussion on the problems that the villagers presently faced as regards instruction and the contrast between the enthusiastic response to the cultural event and the poor attendance at the daily literacy classes. Discussions with the members of the cultural group, the local organisation and the assembled villagers led to the following conclusions.

Kalajathas and cultural performances are high points in the life of villagers. They help to create a generalised consensus on the need for literacy, to organise interested persons at the village level, to inspire adults to learning and to convey messages relevant to social development. They attract an audience and convey messages in an aesthetically pleasing and emotionally inspiring manner which otherwise would not hold attention. Importantly, cultural events create a forum for meeting, discussion and planning. However, the drudgery of everyday-life and the demands of the agricultural cycle tell on the regularity of the literacy classes. Organisational factors, such as teachers away on vacations and the leadership involved in the elections, also intervene. The meeting dissolved, not before it was recognised that the campaign was primarily that of and for the village and its learners (not that of the collector, the visitors, the taluka and district-level organisers) and after the garlanding of the learners who had persisted despite great odds and announcement of a meeting the following day to plan for the revitalisation of the literacy campaign.

Cultural Heterogeneity in Contexts of Urbanisation

A meeting with the organisers, instructors and learners at the Urdu High School which looks after the campaign at the predominantly Urdu speaking Ward No.22 of Nanded town and at the Municipal Marathi High School that co-ordinates activities in the neighbouring Ward Nos. 20 and 21 was held on November 9, 19924, during the day. The schools work in close co-ordination. A joint cultural function held on 'the occasion at the Samaj Mandir suggested how a cultural event could provide a forum for inter-communal communication at the level of orality and folk culture. Religious and linguistic identity was maintained in the instructional process, with Muslim learners being taught through the Urdu medium, their language in the domestic sphere, while Hindus and dalits learnt in Marathi, their mother tongue and the language of public 'functional' communication in the district. The cultural programme however was conducted by a group of musicians drawn from both communities. The music was inspired by the kawali, gondhal and jogwa forms (the 'last, a folk form that is traditionally sung by mendicants in honour of the deity, Khandoba). The entire audience understood and related to the variety of popular forms in

the two languages which were drawn from diverse religious and oral traditions.

While cultural heterogeneity might make for an organic development of inter-communal communication at the level of oral tradition, it does not necessarily lend itself to the efficient conduct of the teaching-learning process and the transition to adult literacy. We were given to understand that the programme in Nanded city itself was faltering. The problem arises with respect to organising and monitoring the day-to-day teaching-learning process where instruction is conducted through diverse linguistic media and, in addition, is confronted with other problems of urbanisation. Whereas in Nanded district the instruction was through Marathi, Hindi, Urdu and Telugu, the neighbouring Latur district had pragmatically opted through a process of seeking consensus, for one language - Marathi. It was agreed that Marathi in effect was and would be the language through which the adult literate express themselves in public, functional discourse.

Rural-urban differences have important implications for the conduct of the macro-level campaign mobilisation through communication media and for the micro processes of instructional communication within district literacy classes. Literacy campaigns have generally faced far greater problems in urban areas than in the villages. While well endowed with institutional and human resources, urbanised centres whether large villages located along highways, towns or cities - have generally faced more problems than smaller villages and relatively homogeneous ones. Apart from their ethnic heterogeneity, urban conglomerations have discrete and functionally institutionalised resources that do not lend themselves to co-ordinated deployment in the cause of literacy. Environment-building measures are confronted with conflicting stimuli-television, cable TV, films - and the dilution and the dissipation of literacy messages. There are conflicting claims on the time for literacy within a context of relatively greater opportunities for self-employment and employment in the informal sector. Apart from psychological and functional reasons that are stated by adult learners as motivating them to literacy - removal of the stigma of illiteracy, a feeling of self-worth and greater independence in inter-personal relations, the ability to communicate through letters and by reading newspapers, greater facility in spatial mobility and functional relations with offices and shops and the capacity to take interest in the education of one's children - an implicit motivating factor for regular attendance at the classes has been the social space that they provide for 'leisure'. Leisure, in 'the context of literacy learning and especially in a context where no immediate economic gains are visualised, is understood as space and time 'or oneself and for self-development in joyful interaction with others. The cultural and developmental messages of environment creation get dispersed in their effects and the social space for 'leisure' gets crowded out by the conflicting claims in urban settings.

One has observed these problems not only in Bombay city where a voluntary organisation, Committee for Resource Organisations (CORO) is engaged in a literacy drive in M Ward among the dalit bustis, but also in Nanded city as discussed above, in Latur City, in Loha town of Kandhar taluka, Nanded district, and even in urbanised villages like Ambulga with a population of around 7,000 in Nilanga taluka of Latur district.

We Visited Loha town earlier in April 1992 when a major public meeting was held during the environment-building phase of the campaign and again on November 8, 1992. Loha with a population of 15,065 is situated on the state highway. It is well endowed with educational institutions, seven primary or upper-primary schools, three high schools and two colleges. Several training programmes for the regional resource persons and master trainers had been held here. It was visualised that this trading town, market place and communication centre would serve as the focal point for the diffusion of literacy messages and a model of literacy practice for the surrounding villages. The teaching-learning began on May 1, 1992 with 319 classes. However, at the time of our visit on November 8, 1992 only a few classes could be got going for our observations and a majority of the classes had discontinued during the agricultural season and the vacation period. It was film time on the television and market day on the streets. This scenario does not accurately represent the then status of literacy instruction nor the potential of Loha to recover as a result of the efforts of enthusiastic and committed organisers. What was clear was that while the rural areas around Loha had gained, the campaign in Loha had stagnated, ironically because of the very factors that contributed to its being a major catalyst and focal point for literacy resource persons and educational institutions. A talking point of this literacy campaign, as was pointed out by the local organisers, was the regularity in a class conducted for the prostitutes of the town. Escaping the perceived double stigma of illiteracy and the profession with the possibility of training for self-employment during the post-literacy phase, provided the motivation to these learners.

Personalised Communication Through Monitoring

It appears that a disciplined, organised monitoring of a functionalised teaching learning can contribute more to regular learning, especially in urban areas, than the spontaneity of cultural mobilisation which creates a consensus on literacy, a consolidation of social resources for organising the campaign and an initial motivation for literacy learning. Systematic monitoring and visits to literacy classes by officials and non-officials provide an element of personalised contact. There can be no substitute for personal contact in its capacity to sustain

TABLE: FOLK CULTURAL FORMS

Thematic Messages	G e e t	A b h a n g	B h a r u d	G o n d h a l	B h a j a n	P o w a d a	L a v a n l	O v i	S t r e t Play	T o t a l
Poverty, Oppression and the Rights of Labour – Literacy	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	6
Overcoming Cheating, Usury-Literacy	2	-	1	-	-	1	1	-	2	7
Inspiration from Social Reformers for Learning	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	4
Inspiration for Volunteer Instructors	1	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	4
Enrolment in Schools	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2
Nationalism-Literacy	6	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	
Moving out of Darkness(Andhra), Ignorance(Adani)-Literacy	13	7	1	2	6	-	-	1	-	3
Widening Horizons of Knowledge(Vidya, Dnyan) – Literacy	4	-	-	1	3	-	4	-	-	12
Inspiration for Literacy (Akshar)	10	7	2	-	1	1	1	1	-	23
TOTAL:	48	14	10	7	13	4	10	4	4	114

Source: District Literacy Campaign, Nanded, *Sakshar, Sarita*, 1992

teaching-learning with adequate literacy outcomes. While functionality in terms of skills and organisation for employment generation provide a contextual meaning and direction to literacy, personal contact provides a human dimension.

The literacy campaign in the ITUTI3CO community on the outskirts of Nanded city provides a good illustration of the effectiveness of systematic organisation and monitoring of a functionalised literacy programme, with regular personal contact, in a relatively homogeneous industrial working class community. Household members of most of the 903 learners, about 95 per cent of whom are women, are employed in the nearby CIDCO industrial estate. Several environment-building activities, like the Initial kalajatha, haldi-kumkum celebrations, rangoli competitions and Akshar Ganapathi were held from May 1, 1992. But when the 84 classes were initiated from August 15, 1992 till the time of our visit on November 8, 1992-1, what has sustained relatively uninterrupted learning has been the efficient monitoring of classes by the school teachers from the five primary schools and the one high school and by resource persons, master trainers and full time volunteers. This has been reinforced by the reported high motivation of women learners who view literacy as an improvement in status, bringing them on par with their literate counterparts in the community. A self-employment programme among the women has also been initiated.

Shemboli village in Bhokar taluka of Nanded district, visited by us with the collector on November 9, 1992, is an illustration of how direct contact with a higher government official can sometimes spark off the literacy campaign. The U650 illiterates in this village headed by their sarpanch had been consistently resisting the campaign on the questionable ground that the primary school should be given prior attention and the collector should himself visit the village to hear its problems. On the day of our visit a rousing discussion between the collector and the villagers helped to convince the latter of the importance of literacy. A decision was collectively taken to start the programme the following day. All necessary arrangements in terms of material and training had already been made. The villagers were apparently only waiting for a sign of direct concern from the administrative authorities.

Cultural Homogeneity and Ethnic/Class Identity

One has come across several instances where cultural homogeneity, especially among the oppressed, results in an efficiently conducted teaching-learning process. This has been seen in the dalit hamlets of villages in Sindhudurg and Ratangiri districts during their campaigns. Inspired by the educational processes set in motion by Phule and Ambedkar, the dalits in these padas have utilised their local cultural resources for environment-building and have harnessed the available educational resources for training and instruction. The literacy achievements of these learners have generally been high.

Kuntur Tanda of Biloli taluka in Nanded district provides another example of the mobilisation of local cultural resources by a cultural group in the banjara (lamani) community. On the day of our visit on November 10, 1992-, there was a power failure in the village. The break in the electricity supply resulted in the disruption of the nine classes for the 88 learners in the village. It did not dampen the enthusiasm of the cultural group. A spontaneous programme was held for the assembled villagers in the moonlight. Several songs were sung with traditional musical instruments in the Lamani dialect and utilising the tribal folk media. Linguistic and ethnic identity was 'thus maintained through folk cultural expressions, while integration into the surrounding Marathi environment was found through the medium of literacy instruction. The kalapathak from this village had travelled far and wide spreading the message of literacy among the Banjara community in their language. The classes in this village were reported to be regular, despite the agricultural season. Literacy and education were seen by the Banjara community as providing one of the few avenues for socio-economic mobility. The community has already achieved a limited degree of political representation in Maharashtra politics. The late night programme was brought to an end with a community folk song sung by some of the assembled women. The expansion of social space for women in the act of singing cannot be underestimated.

In contrast with the poverty yet cultural homogeneity of Kuntur Tanda is the case of the relatively prosperous Nagtirthwadi village in Udgir taluka of Latur district, inhabited exclusively by the Reddy Yellarn caste of rich peasants. It was a period of grain panchayat elections when we visited the village on November 4, 1991---While the election fever in 'the surrounding villages affected the literacy campaign, in this Village the sarpanch was to be elected unopposed. According to him, his leadership during the literacy campaign had brought about this unanimity. Instruction had started in July 1992. The 44 learners in this village of a population of about 5,000 had been organised into 5 effectively conducted classes under trained volunteer instructors. The learners had made appreciable progress in this village which had to its credit a total enrolment of children in the school-going age; an exception in the district.

IV. Some Conclusions on Local Communication Systems; Context-Process-Im pact

Some tentative conclusions may be drawn from the foregoing descriptions of cultural communication in field situations: The kalajathas and their kalapathaks have clearly been the fulcrum of environment building activities. They have played a catalytic role in creating a climate for literacy within a larger mobilisation process. They have drawn on the traditionally existing folk culture

and from diverse local contexts. These resources have been not only in terms of the media for communication, but also the human resources within the folk traditions of the people, i.e., kirtankars shahirs, bhajan mandalis, tamasha mandalis, gondhalis, families from tribal and dalit communities, who were engaged in the performing arts. The literacy campaign, as a result of its people's movement approach, has enabled these persons and their folk media to acquire a wider regional legitimacy and has provided them a direction through messages of relevant developmental communication. Persons, processes and forms within traditional folk culture have received a fresh breath of life and have acquired relevance in changed contexts. In districts where a participatory approach to the formulation and selection of communication messages has been adopted to a greater extent, accompanied by the participation of voluntary organisations - i.e. Nanded district - 'there has been a veritable groundswell of the latent creative among the people.

The visit of a kalapathak to a village is generally an entry into a structured socio-economic context. The pre-visit planning and the entire day's programme consisting of the prabhat pheri, meetings and discussions with local activists, learners and instructors prior to the evening's cultural programme - helps to create a consensus among the different classes, castes and political formations within the village on the need/demand for literacy. Individual motivation moves towards organisational consolidation and a collective movement for local campaign implementation. However, the socio-economic configurations remain otherwise relatively undisturbed. These hierarchies often get reproduced in the contextual setting and spatial allocation during the performance of the kalapathak. Informal two-way communication consequently gets structured and inhibited.

The programme is generally conceived as several items, woven into a coherent whole for effective impact - scripts within a total script. It attracts a large audience of a cross-section of villagers and is able to hold them in rapt attention. The informal style, the direct and emotional appeal, the mix of humour and serious messages and, most importantly, the use of folk media that draws on the familiar culture of orality among the people and urges them to make the transition to literacy through learning help to create a significant immediate impact. Motivation for learning and instruction, a greater resolve among the literacy activists and their local organisation, flow from this generalised impact. The cultural performance provides a forum for intercommunal communication at the level of folk traditions. In addition, it provides one more occasion for dialogue and planning for the campaign.

As Wang and Dissanayake (1984-29) point out, an indigenous communication system is one sub-system contextualised within a larger cultural system. It is a living tradition that undergoes change while maintaining some degree of continuity. The use of folk media in literacy campaigns has provided them a new content and purpose - within relatively traditional forms. The contexts of

performance undergo some degree of transformation, i.e., devotional music is brought from the temple and the home to the streets and the class-rooms.

The social dynamics and communication processes of the literacy phase of the campaign might be conceptualised as taking place at two levels. The macro-level mobilisation of human, material and institutional resources consists of the different components of the campaign like planning meetings and conventions, the identification of individual's organisations and institutions, the environment building activities, the creation of organisational structures for implementation at various levels of the district; the survey; the preparation and acquisition of teaching material and the training. The kalapathak as part of the process of environment building plays a central role within this larger framework of mobilisation. The relatively phased structure and flexible dynamics of the macro process of mobilisation needs to be distinguished from the comparatively continuous and disciplined micro-level process of teaching-learning that takes place in scattered classes or on a one-to-one basis, the monitoring of these micro phenomena and their evaluation. The immediate motivational impact of the use of 'folk media in environment building does not get mechanically transferred into sustained teaching-learning. In fact, even the social awareness messages communicated through the former need to be reinforced by the pedagogical process in the literacy classes so that they might have a more lasting effect on consciousness. The inspiration derived from the culture of orality needs to be elaborated through the appropriate use of the literacy texts in the classes.

Apart from the very fact of the above mentioned two-level communication processes that have relatively distinct rhythms of activity, there are other factors that intervene between cultural mobilisation and sustained motivation for literacy among the adults. Learners approach the instructional process with a configuration of grounded priorities that emerge from the annual cycle of everyday life. The decision to invest time and energy in literacy is met with the counter claims of high points of the agricultural cycle, the seasons of migration for employment, festivals, school examinations and vacations, elections and communal disturbances. Some of these objective factors might be beyond the capacity of campaign organisation to control. However, one finds that sustained teaching-learning and regular attendance depends to a large extent on subjective organisational factors such as systematic monitoring, personalised contact and functionalised instruction. These inputs into the pedagogical process can be reinforced by short bursts of cultural mobilisation during phases of stagnation.

Urban-rural contextual factors also result in a differential capacity for sustained learning. Urban centres while rich in human and institutional resources, ironically pose several problems to their co-ordinated mobilisation for literacy because of their very functional institutionalisation. Urbanisation results in conflicting communication messages that dilute the impact of attempts to create

a climate for adult literacy, The claims on time and energy and the comparatively greater opportunities for employment in the urban informal sector conflict with the need for regular attendance in literacy classes. The social space for 'leisure', as defined earlier, is crowded out.

One has observed that cultural homogeneity with a given unit of mobilisation i.e., tribal or dalitt villages/hamilets, the social characteristics of Sindhudurg district lends itself to the sustained impact of communication within the environment building and the pedagogical process. Context and messages blend together in relative harmony. In addition, there is greater facility in monitoring a campaign with an instructional process that is conducted in a single language.

V. Sustaining Learning through Hegemonic Organisation

What are the larger implications of the campaign style of cultural mobilisation for literacy in terms of its capacity to create a 'learning society' that would not only sustain and enhance literacy (access to symbolic systems) but also ensure more equitable economic entitlements? If literacy is not to remain merely symbolical, campaigns would have to confront this question. And since the campaign process gives rise 'to and is also part of the literacy product, the organisational aspect of campaign mobilisation should throw light on the above mentioned question. A comparison of the social dynamics set in motion by voluntary 'action groups' and by the literacy campaigns helps one to understand the potential and limitations of the latter.

There are major differences in the mobilisation processes and organisational forms that have been used by some social action groups - i.e., non-party political groups - and the literacy campaigns.' Both engage in cultural and symbolic communication towards social change but through contrasting approaches. The former directly address themselves to inegalitarian socio-economic strictures, relatively close to the time of their entry in a given region. Organisational consolidation and the process of struggle for change are based on the cultural traditions of the concerned people. Education in its deeper meaning of learning to think- critically and creatively - is linked to the political act of social transformation for an alternate and more egalitarian development. The struggle for social transformation is itself seen as an informal process of education in widening circles of social awareness of one's interests, of the need for symbolic communication and of a felt-need for the letters. The recourse to literacy and to its symbolic systems is based on increasing felt-needs in the process of struggle. The social dynamics of this process may be seen in terms of expanding circles of symbolic communication based on experience, struggle and consciousness within everyday life: economic interests - organisation - a struggle that is

contextualised in culture and growing consciousness - literacy. Symbolic, communication thus becomes organic to and contextualised within socio-economic existence.

Literacy campaigns, in contrast, have generally a reverse dynamics, Social mobilisation makes its entry into a given regional unit - district, taluka or village taking the socio-economic structures of those contexts as relatively given and, at least initially, leaving them undisturbed.⁶ While functionality, social awareness and organisation for change are part of the stated objectives, the consensus and action across classes/castes/political formations that emerges is directed at literacy. Literacy, at least on the surface, does lend itself to such a fragile consensus at the initial stage. Action for change is postponed and the organisational consolidation is the literacy.⁷ In a situation where both mass organisations for and social awareness of the need and possibilities of change are generally absent in rural areas, a 'breathing space' is thus created for the possibility of mass literacy. The recourse to folk culture in creating a climate for facilitating the transition from orality to literacy, thus becomes 'instrumental'. Symbolic communication at the levels of culture and literacy instruction in effect become instrumental to organised action for social change, if indeed the latter is the final objective. However, a significant difference from the earlier National-Adult-Education-Programme approach is the mass-level social mobilisation and the consolidation of various social resources - government departments, educational institutions, the organised/unorganised people -for literacy. Apart from the gains in terms of numbers of literate 'that are achieved through social mobilisation, the organisational structures that emerge at various levels serve to ground literacy in 'experience'. Literacy would otherwise have only a symbolic expressive' value, parallel to everyday life. A fertile climate is created for the possibilities of hegemonic organisation.

Another difference between the TLC organisational structures and those of the social action groups may be noted. The former consist of disparate individuals, motivated and mobilised as part of organised collectivities for literacy. The individuals are drawn from diverse class, caste and political formations and from distinct social resources, despite their, at times, real conflicting interests. This fragile organisation is feasible given that the central message of a cultural transformation for literacy is - at least initially and on the surface - non-threatening and non-polarising.¹¹ The social formations of the action groups, in contrast, are comprised of organised individuals within a class/caste collectivity and as part of a programme of consciousness and action for exercising control over economic and ecological resources.

Field experiences suggest that literacy campaigns do have a major hegemonic potential. The mass approach and the recourse to popular culture in mobilisation and organisation for literacy have resulted in several individuals growing closer

to the needs of oppressed classes and castes. These have emerged from sections that one might consider in Gramscian terms as 'traditional intellectuals' -government officials, school teachers, the professional middle class and educated unemployed youth. Literate persons whose culture is organically steeped in that of the people have shouldered the task of culture mobilisation-shahirs, kirtankars, Bhajan mandalis and several others who were 'traditionally' engaged in popular performing arts. These individuals have a potential of serving as 'organic intellectuals' of the people, playing a role that 'mediates' between the cultures of orality and literacy and 'directs' the transition from access to communication symbols to struggle for economic entitlements. Some of these individuals have been incorporated as preraks of the postliteracy centres during the post-literacy phase. The relative success of the campaign approach has also given rise to a vast section of neo-literates in several districts.

There is a need for an organisational form that would sustain and consolidate these possibilities for an alternate hegemony during the post-literacy phase. Such organisations cannot emerge spontaneously. The movement from orality to literacy gains existential meaning only when the process is carried forward towards a sustainable learning society for social change." It appears clear that extensive literacy can be achieved by the relatively intrusive process of the literacy campaign, penetrating the everyday life of the disadvantaged from without- and attenuated by the utilisation of popular cultural forms for social mobilisation. But literacy itself can only be sustained and rendered meaningful by alternate hegemonic organisational forms that are close to and that advance everyday life through a change in the structures of oppression.

Appendix

A NOTE ON SOME OF THE FOLK CULTURAL FORMS

The descriptions are drawn from the text: Sakshar Sarita, District Literacy Campaign Committee, Nanded, 1992, Pramar (1975) and Ranade (1985) also describe some of these folk media. The compositions in Sakshar Sarita were selected out of the very large number that were received. The final selection was made by the Committee for Environment Building, Nanded, taking into consideration factors relating to tune, simplicity of language, effectiveness and popularity. Singers, musicians and language experts were consulted.

The Geet is a popular form generally used in rural gatherings. It has found a place in films and theatre. It is often used on festival occasions. Traditional as well as modern instruments could be utilised by a solo or group of singers.

Abhang is a devotional form used in praise of the deity. It is a form which is closely connected to the bhakti tradition in Maharashtra and has been used by the saint poets such as Dnyaneshwar, Tukaram, Namdev, Chokhamela, Janabai, in luktabai. The form appeals to a cross-section of persons from the illiterate to the highly educated. The instruments that are generally used to support the singing of the abhang are tal, table, harmonium and mridang.

The bharud and gondhal are also devotional forms that have deep roots in the culture of the people. They have been used by the saint poets who have drawn on the everyday lives of rural people. It has been traditionally used to generate social awareness. The gondhal is more particularly a form to express devotion to the clan deity. The bhajan mandalies use the bharud form to the accompaniment of tal, pak-havaz and veena.

The Bhajan is a popular form used to express devotion to the deity. Its history can be traced to the 12th century. A number of villages in Maharashtra have their Bhajan mandalies which are active during festival occasions. Bhajans have been utilised to inculcate moral values. The generally Bhajans mandalies are generally comprised of 10 persons. The songs are accompanied by the mridang, tabla, tal, chiplya, veena, harmonium and khanj'ia.

The powada is a powerful form within folk culture and has been used to inspire courage and to sing the praises of the brave. Its origins can be traced to the 17th century. Shahirs, the creators of powada, have made major contributions to Marathi literature. The form arose during the Peshwa period. It has been utilised in mobilisation efforts to spread social movements, examples are the Goa Liberation Movement (1955) and the Samyukta Maharashtra Movement (1956-6.2). The harmonium, tuntune, tal, dholki, kadi are some of the instruments used during the singing of the powada.

The lavani is a popular form in rural Maharashtra conveying romantic sentiments. It has made inroads into films and theatres. Tamasha, the popular theatre in Maharashtra, is the major context for this musical expression.

Notes

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1. The National Literacy Mission (NLM) was launched on May 5, 1988 in response to the massive problem of illiteracy in the country. By December 1992, it was reported that 178 literacy campaigns had been sanctioned in parts of or in entire districts within the country. Projects in 33 districts had been approved for post-literacy and continuing education. It was estimated that the literacy campaigns had covered 60 million adult learners with about 6 million voluntary instructors involved in these campaigns. It is proposed to bring 350 districts under literacy campaigns by the end of the Eighth Plan (Literacy Mission, December 1992). The campaign approach might be briefly described as concerted attempt involving various social resources with a high degree of voluntary commitment for the eradication of illiteracy in a defined region and a limited period of time.
2. One has been involved with the evaluation of some of the literacy campaigns in Maharashtra. Field visits have been made to Sindhudurg and Wardha districts during the last phase of these literacy campaigns, during the months of June-September 1991 and December 1991 -March 1992, respectively. One has also had the opportunity to visit the Ratnagiri campaign for brief spells during the period March-May 1992-1 and again in February 1993. More recently, during the month of November 1992 one made an extended field trip to Latur and Nanded districts during their mobilisation and teaching-learning phases, followed by a visit in March 1993. The paper draws primarily on observations and discussions during the last field trips.
3. It needs to be recognised that whereas literacy and orality are two aspects of linguistic performance-expressions of linguistic competence-they are grounded in distinct cultural contexts. For a discussion of the cognitive, linguistic and expressive implications of this cultural divide see P.P. Sha (1980), B.B. Mohanty (1990). The transition from orality to literacy for the adult learner is a traumatic experience. The process is made even more arduous by the fact that access to the symbolic system within literacy does not necessarily mean the acquisition of the greater economic entitlements that have been historically legitimised around literacy.

4. The concept of 'hegemonies' in contention and the conditions for the possibility of alternate hegemonic organisations with their 'Organic' intellectuals is drawn from a reading of Antonio Gramsci (1971). For a theoretical and methodological discussion of the use of Gramscian concepts in the study of a tribal movement in Thane district, Maharashtra, see D. Saldanha (1988).
5. One might refer to D. Saldanha (1989) for a discussion of the educational implications of the transformative actions of some non-party political groups in Thane district, Maharashtra. A comparison of the approaches to literacy of these groups and that of the literacy campaigns helps to draw conclusions as regards the wider implications of a mass approach to literacy.
6. While the literacy campaign makes its entry into a district and acquires a participatory consensus at various levels within it in a manner that leaves the initial structures of inequality relatively untouched, it needs to be pointed out that the initial inspiration for a mass approach emerged from the voluntary, non-government experiences of the People's Science Movements (PSM) and in particular that of the Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad (**KSSP**). The All India Jatha of May 1985 in connection with the Bhopal tragedy, the Jatha of October-November 1987 with the involvement of organisations, and that of October-November 1990 covering 304 districts, have been landmarks on 'the way towards creating a national consensus and a mass base for literacy. The campaign approach, at the level of national communication systems and policy formulation, may thus be seen as having a grassroots basis of organised social transformationsocial action that was wider than and inclusive of literacy and education. The concept of a movement for literacy then acquired a legitimacy at the Centre, primarily among administrative and academic circles and to a limited degree among the political parties. Field experience in Ernakulam, Kottayam and the Kerala state served to confirm the feasibility of this approach, so that it acquired selective legitimacy in scattered districts across the country. However it needs to be recognised that the TLC mobilisations within districts are primarily initiated by the middle class professional elites, directed at the eradication of illiteracy and leaving the structures of oppression initially undisturbed.
7. There are instances where the messages of the environment building campaign and in the literacy text overtake the slow pace of literacy learning. The 'word' is translated into collective action to transform the political economy of contexts, especially where there has been some history of organised struggle. An illustration is the anti-arrack struggles in Nelore and Chittoor districts of Andhra Pradesh [see Ilalah and Balagopal 1991 and Alkash 1993]. The state has not hesitated to clamp down when the social transformative potential of literacy campaigns or of innovative educational programmes is taken to its logical conclusion, as for example in Kerala after its literacy phase, Pudukottai in Tamil Nadu, in Pondicherry and the educational programmes of Eklavya in Madhya Pradesh. (Refer to the EPW editorial of November 21, 1992 and Krishna Kumar 1992-2581).
8. As P.C. Joshi (1983-2172) points out "planning for access to culture for

the masses involves planning for their access to the fruits of material production. There is thus an indissoluble bond between economic planning and cultural planning”.

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13. Costing of Total Literacy Campaigns in India

N.V. Varghese

Introduction

Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) is the most recent delivery mechanism envisaged to directly target the adult illiterates in India. The organisational structure and administrative arrangements of TLCs are different from other adult education programmes initiated and implemented in India. Evaluation of the TLCs, in general, focus on the effectiveness of the delivery mechanisms to achieve the set targets. The cost of campaigns is seen in terms of direct monetary expenditure incurred to implement the programme. The direct monetary expenditure forms only a part, perhaps not even the significant part, of the total costs of the programme. The major component of TLCs is the voluntary labour inputs which are rarely accounted for in the cost calculations. This paper is an attempt to explore the possibilities of incorporating these community level efforts into the cost estimations. The information for the study is based on the various evaluation reports carried out in the TLC districts.

The plan of the paper is as follows: the next section discusses the changing perceptions on the role of adult education in economic development. Section 3 analyses the literacy scene and some of the characteristics of illiterates in India. Section 4 attempts to cost TLCs based both on the direct monetary expenditure and voluntary labour contributions based on the analysis of the community. The final section attempts to draw some concluding observations.

Literacy and Economic Development

The development theories of the fifties equated development with economic growth and argued that economic growth depended primarily on physical capital. Education was not considered as a necessary input in the process. It was in the sixties that the role of education was recognised in economic growth (Shultz, 1961).

How does literacy contribute to economic development? Blaug (1966) argued that literacy: i) raised productivity of the neo-literates; ii) reduced the cost of transmitting information; iii) stimulated demand for higher levels of education; and iv) strengthened economic incentives.

The role of education in economic development was measured in terms of its contribution to GDP. In the sixties Bowman and Anderson (1963) argued that 40% literacy level was a necessary condition for a 'take off' stage and 80% for sustained economic development. Hicks (1980) analysed the relationship between education and economic development in 83 countries for a period between 1960 and 1977 and concluded that an average increase in literacy rates by 20 percentage points is associated with 0.5% higher growth rate of GDP. Wheeler (1980) in his analysis showed that literacy is consistently labour augmenting and that an increase in literacy rate from 20 to 30% resulted in an increase in real GDP by 8 to 16%.

Development experience showed that regional disparities among and within countries and inequalities in the distribution in personal income increased in all countries (Prud'homme, 1995). Hence, in the subsequent period attention was focused on 'Growth with Redistribution' where equity considerations became dear to policy makers. To reduce inequalities, it became important to target the poor and targeting the poor in education meant according priorities to lower levels of education including literacy.

Ahmed (1985) argued that social indicators improved with an increase in literacy rates. Low literacy countries are characterised by high infant mortality, higher share of undernourished children, low life expectancy, endemic and communicable diseases and widespread poverty. However, when countries attain a minimum level of 75% literacy all the above indicators improve. The review committee on National Adult Education Programme (Government of India : 1980) explicitly noted that social justice demanded social groups which have received no education at all receive prior attention over those who have received some, if the education system is not to further enhance inequalities (see also Adiseshiah : 1991).

In the eighties, economic development was redefined in terms of 'expanding capabilities' of people (Sen : 1983; 1990). Expansion of human capabilities results in the growth of GDP per capita but growth in GDP per capita is not the same thing as expansion of capabilities and hence economic growth is to be seen as a means rather than an end (Griffin and Knight :1990) and at times it is not an efficient means either (Sen :1983).

These perceptions took a more concrete shape when UNDP decided to estimate the levels of development of different countries based on the Human Development Index (HDI). In its first Report (UNDP; 1990), it was pointed out that "human development is a process of enlarging peoples' choices. The

most critical of these wide ranging choices is to live a long and healthy life, to be educated and to have resources needed for a decent standard of living" (p.1). The thus constructed HDI has taken into account three variables, namely, i) life expectancy; ii) literacy; and iii) per capita income. The first Report noted that north-south gaps in human development narrowed even when income gaps tended to widen. The second Report (UNDP; 1991) argued for reducing wasteful expenditure and targeting the efforts towards basic education, training and health care. The third Report (UNDP:1993) argues that "at least 20% of the total aid should be allocated to human priority concerns, three times the present 6.5%" (p.7). It further argues that Official Development Assistance (ODA) should be allocated to people rather than to countries and it should go where the need is the greatest; to the poorest people wherever they happen to be. For example, the countries, containing three-fourths of the worlds poorest people should get atleast three-fourths of ODA not the present level of one-fourth (p. 7-8). The 1994 Report (UNDP: 1994) argues for a 20:20 compact for human development. This may mean developing countries devote 20% of their national budget and donor agencies devote 20% of their aid allocation to basic human development to make the efforts on a sharing basis whereby three-fourths of the contributions come from developing countries and one-fourth from donors.

The illiterate in the developing world are largely rural, often propertyless, without access to basic social services. Though they form a majority in terms of numbers, they are marginal in terms of ownership of means of production. These marginal groups do not create enough surplus to sustain an educational system or programme of their own. Therefore, unlike the minority who owns the means of production and can sustain their own system of education but still depended on the state exchequer to finance their education, this majority who are economically marginalised groups have no alternative but to depend on the funding from the government. And hence, the state should be the major player in the financing of adult education programmes. The resources from social groups and individual institutions can complement the state efforts but cannot replace it.

The economic crisis of the eighties and the ensuing adjustment programmes have severely squeezed the efforts by the developing countries to develop its human capability. Hence, there is a need to intervene directly at least to sustain, if not to increase, human development efforts of developing countries. The Social Safety Net Programmes attempt to protect the poor sections from the adverse effects of structural adjustment programmes (Varghese : 1993b). The recently initiated externally funded primary education programmes in India attempts to ensure that allocations to primary education are not reduced during periods of structural adjustment (Department of Education: 1995; Varghese: 1994).

The Literacy Scene

The adult literacy rates in all countries increased remarkably in the past decades. This is primarily due to the higher rate of growth of literacy than the rate of growth of adult population. The literacy rates grow faster because of the efforts made on two fronts: (i) expansion of education among children; and (ii) direct efforts on adult literacy per se. In fact, "general access to primary education is the key instrument for nipping illiteracy in the bud" (Hamadache and Martin: 1986). In many countries including India improvement in literacy rates can more be attributed to improving access to primary education than to direct programmes targeted towards adults. Despite significant progress in the aggregate expansion of primary education, a growing number of children are not in schools, the number of adult illiterates is increasing and the unmet needs of basic knowledge and skills continue to accumulate (WCEFA: 1990). Though the rate of literacy has increased the absolute number of illiterates has also increased in many countries. This is primarily due to the high drop out and low retention rates of the primary schools which continue to contribute to growing adult illiteracy.

As per UNESCO estimates for 1985, 105 million school age children (6-11 age group) are not enrolled in schools and nearly 70% of the non-enrolled children are in developing countries. In 1990 there were 982 million adult illiterates (15 and above age-group) in the world. Of this, 98% are in the developing countries. Asia accounts for 659 million (74.7%) of the adult illiterates in the world; followed by Africa which accounts for 165 million (18.7%); Latin America and Caribbean account for 92 million (4.8%) and the remaining 17 million (1.9%) are in the developed world. India and China account for 55.5% of the adult illiterates. Although China is the largest in terms of population. India ranks first in terms of illiterate population accounting for 29.7% of the total illiterates in the world.

As per 1991 Census India has an adult literacy rate of 52 per cent - 63.9 per cent among males and 39 per cent among females. The literacy rates in India increased by around 36 per cent points between 1951 and 1991. The increase in male literacy rate was around 39 percentage points whereas the same among women was only around 31 percentage points. It is not only that the female literacy rates were low to start with but also that gains during the past decades were also lower. In fact, the number of illiterates increased in India from 294.2 millions in 1951 to 332.3 millions in 1991. Needless to add, the number of illiterates would have been larger if they were not adjusted for population aged 7 and above in the 1991 Census. More than half of the illiterates are accounted by the four states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh while they account for only 42 per cent of the total population in India.

Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Madhya Pradesh account for 19 districts out of the total 24 districts with less than 30 per cent literacy. Larger number of districts in many educationally backward states have illiterates as a majority group. For example in Rajasthan, 26 out of its 27 districts have less than 50 per cent literacy rates. There are 70 districts in India which have female literacy rates less than 20 per cent of which 65 are in these states. Rajasthan is the only state in India which has districts (2) with less than 10 per cent female literacy rates.

Data from the 43rd round of NSS shows that illiteracy is an increasing function of age in India. Age groups between 7 and 20 have literates as a majority. Age groups between 20 and 35 have an illiteracy rate between 50 to 60 per cent; age groups between 35 to 50 have an illiteracy rate between 60 to 70 per cent and in age groups above 50 illiterates account for more than three-fourths of the population. More than 75 per cent of the illiterates are either agricultural labourers or those who depend on agriculture for their livelihood. The Jains are the most literate group in India (69 per cent) followed by Christians (61.5 per cent). All other religious groups have illiterate majority population. These highest levels of illiteracy are among Muslims (67 per cent) followed by Buddhists (63 per cent) and Hindus (62.8 per cent).

The direct efforts by the government to reduce adult illiteracy were mainly through various literacy programmes. The evolution of adult literacy programmes in India in the present century can be summed up as follows: (i) adult education as part of the social and political movements; (ii) experimentation in adult education during the period 1938-47; (iii) adult education as part of community development programmes 1947-66; (iv) adult education as part of pilot projects and allied schemes 1966-1978; (v) National Adult Education Programme 1978; and (vi) National Literacy Mission 1988 (Mohsini: 1992; for a review see Dighe and Mathur: 1981, Gomez: 1984, Planning Commission: 1992, Tilak : 1994).

In the post-independence period the major focus of educational policies has been education through formal primary schools. Adult education or social education was a part of the Community Development Programmes. During this period several community centres, rural libraries, youth clubs and Mahila mandals were established. During the second plan period, efforts were made to initiate mass campaigns to combat illiteracy. The Gram Shikshan Mohim of Satara District of Maharashtra was one such successful mass campaign. In the absence of systematic follow-up, there was large scale relapse of neo-literates into illiterates even in this otherwise successful programme (NLM:1994).

The next major effort in Adult Education was the launching of Farmers Functional Literacy Programme initiated in India in the late sixties. This was a joint venture of the UNESCO, UNDP and FAO efforts. The major focus was

to impart skills to successfully implement HYVP (UNESCO; 1976). The programme intended to cover 5 million families living in the area of HYVP districts with a view to bring about changes from the traditional to modern methods of cultivation. By 1977-78 nearly 260 thousand adults were made functionally literate under this programme. On the recommendations of the CABE meeting yet another scheme of Functional Literacy for Adult Women (FLOW) was initiated in the seventies. This was introduced in ICDS areas and this scheme continued up to 1981-82.

The other two programmes which were initiated during the late sixties and seventies were workers' education aimed at providing skills and information to workers, relevant to their work and for the welfare of their family. Second, NFE started in 1975 for the age group 15-25.

A very significant event in the Indian Adult Education programme was the launching of National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) on October 2, 1978 (GOI : 1980; Bordia, 1982). The objectives of the programme were imparting of literacy, functionality and awareness to a target population of 100 million adult illiterates in the age group 15-35. In the Sixth Five Year Plan adult education was included as part of the minimum needs programme. The launching of NAEP led to creation of organisational structures for adult education at the national and state level. In the late eighties the National Literacy Mission was established which accepted the campaign mode as the most appropriate approach to facilitate faster progress of literacy in the country (MHRD: 1988).

Costing of Total Literacy Campaigns

The low priority given by the government to adult education programmes in the first three decades of planning is reflected in the allocation pattern also. Adult education accounted for 3% of the total resources allocated to education in the first plan. This share further declined in the subsequent plans. In the third plan the share was only 0.3% of the total resources for education. From the sixth plan onwards, allocations to adult education witnessed marked increase. Between Sixth and Eight Five Year plans, allocations to adult education increased from Rs.1280 million to Rs.14000 million and now it accounts for nearly 9% of the plan allocations to education. Even these enhanced allocations fall short of the resource requirements estimated by different committees and individuals (for a review of different estimates see Tilak and Varghese; 1992a).

The situation has changed ever since of the TLCs were launched. The Central government share in the first three years of NLM from 1987 to 1990 was Rs. 555.6 millions in 1987-88; Rs.830.3 millions in 1988-89; and Rs.884.1 millions in 1989-90. The amount allocated to adult education as share of total plan outlay for education also increased (Table 1).

Table 1
Allocations to Adult Education

Year	Plan Outlay (%)	Total for Education (Rs. in Millions)
1991-92	3.4	16273.1*
1992-93	6.8	29461.8
1993-94	7.0	36502.8
1994-95	7.2	44088.7
1995-96	12.8	53468.8

Source: *Annual Reports of the MHRD* (Various Years)

* State and Union Territories only.

The table shows that allocations to adult education has consistently increased in the nineties both as a share and in absolute terms. This essentially can be attributed to the success of TLCs in India.

The distinguishing features of the TLCs are that they are area-specific, volunteer-based and time-bound programmes initiated and implemented through autonomous registered societies. The programme does not depend on the existing administrative structure and it does not attempt to create a regular governmental structure to implement the programme. The backbone of the programme is the people and their participation in the planning and management of the programme.

Estimating the real costs of the TLC programmes is a very difficult task for atleast two reasons: i) there are no well established methodologies to do it; and ii) the information base of is very weak primarily due the nature of the programmes. Whatever information is available on this aspect is not collected and collated in a systematic manner (for details on costing see Tilak, 1995).

Some features of TLC programmes make them different from costing of other educational programmes, especially the formal system.

(a) **Costs on physical infrastructural facilities.** In the formal education physical infrastructural facilities are of permanent nature. They may be created before teaching learning is organised i.e. in the formal system, the share of non-recurring expenditure will be higher in the initial stages. For example in formal primary education items of non-recurring expenditure like construction of school buildings and provision of durable equipments are undertaken in the initial stages itself. It can be argued that the share of capital expenditure declines once provision for access to education is almost universal. The share of recurring

expenditure increases in the later periods. TLCs, on the other hand, are run for short durations of one or two years only. Since the programme by its very nature is of short duration, creation of infrastructural facilities of a permanent nature is very often outside its purview. In other words, capital expenditure of the TLC programme is relatively less or negligible in the initial stages. TLCs do not normally create their own institutions like schools, etc. to run literacy classes. It most often makes use of the existing institutions and that too not necessarily on a payment basis. In fact the permanent structure, if at all, develops, is created only after the first phase of the campaign period is over and when post-literacy efforts take root.

(b) **Costs on salary.** TLCs are volunteer based programmes and no financial incentives are given to resource persons at any level i.e. the salary component is almost absent. Therefore, absence of salaries in TLCs is an important factor reducing the monetary cost of the programme in comparison to NAEP or formal primary education. In formal primary education salary constitutes the major item of expenditure. In fact salaries account for more than 95% of the total recurring expenditure at the primary level of education.

(c) **Cost on Training.** In the formal system training has two components pre-service and in-service. Pre-service training is before recruitment and posting of teachers and hence the incidence of training cost is on the trainees than the government. In-service training programmes are more similar to TLC training programmes. Although, training institutions are not created under TLCs, the training cost is met from the general stream of resources. In other words, the difference in training costs between the formal and TLC system is that in formal system the public spends on provision of training and individuals pay for receiving training. Whereas in TLCs the programme spends for both provision of training and bears the cost of individuals receiving training. Training costs in case of TLCs are transferred from the private to the public domain. Here, again the expenditure is more on the organising of the training programmes than on salaries or payments to resource persons.

(d) **Costs on Teaching Learning materials.** Teaching-learning material includes, black-boards and reading and writing materials. In the formal system this is a joint cost. For example textbooks are developed by the government and the costs are recovered at least partially from the direct beneficiaries or students through suitable policy for pricing of textbooks - taking into account the extent of subsidies to be given on textbooks. The incidence either partially or fully is transferred to the individuals concerned. However, in TLCs the primers are distributed free of cost; so also slates and other writing materials and hence the incidence lies with the public authorities. This is a major item of expenditure

in TLCs and costs on account of this varies directly with the number of illiterates participating in the programme.

(e) **Costs on Account of demand generation.** The underlying idea of TLCs is to first create demand for literacy and then make provisions for imparting literacy. In the formal system, first the provision of facilities is made and rarely any systematic and sustained efforts are made to generate demand for places in schools. Therefore no expenditure is incurred on generating demand for education in the formal system. In total literacy programmes this is an important component of expenditure.

(f) **Costs on account of supervision and management of the programme.** Although the share of expenditure on this account may not substantially vary between TLCs and adult education programmes, it varies between formal education and TLCs. The expenditure on this account may be lower in the formal structure. In TLCs, the major component of management and supervision are (i) centre visits by volunteer supervisors; and (ii) frequent meetings of the committees constituted at all levels. These meetings are an essential part of planning and organising TLCs.

Unlike the formal system TLC does not have permanent structure and personnel. The TLC by its very definition is a short duration programme. Since it is volunteer based, there is no direct expenditure on salaries by the government. This however does not mean that costs on account of these activities are not incurred. It only means that the government has not spent on it. Therefore, unlike the formal system a distinction needs to be drawn between costs on TLCs and public expenditure on TLCs. Public expenditure on TLCs, like in formal system will be based on direct financial expenditures provided by the government or mobilised by the public for the programme. However, the actual costing of TLCs should take into account the societal investment in terms of human labour which under TLC is of a voluntary nature.

In other words, there are two ways of arriving at cost estimates of the TLC programmes: (i) based on the direct monetary expenditure on the programme; and (ii) based on the societal investment on the programme. In the following paragraphs an attempt is made to arrive at cost estimates of TLC programmes based on these two approaches.

Cost Estimates Based on Direct Monetary Expenditure

The sources of funding the TLC programmes are the NLMA, the state government, the local government and the resources mobilised at the local level. The programme is expected to be funded by the NLMA and the state government

on a 2:1 ratio basis. There are instances when the programmes were totally funded by the NLMA as in the case of Delhi, Punjab etc. and there are instances where the programme depended mainly on the state government funding as in case of Ajmer TLC. Local mobilisation is more in terms of non-monetary inputs although a small share of the expenditure is mobilised from the public as in case of Ernakulam. In Burdwan TLC, the local bodies contributed perhaps more than the share of the state government. The Burdwan programme had incurred a total expenditure of Rs.47.5 million. Of this, Rs.30 million was given by the NLMA, Rs.7.5 million by the state government and the remaining Rs.10 million by the local government. On the other hand the TLC programme of Ajmer was based on a lumpsum allocation of Rs.6.3 million by the state government. In Ernakulam, Rs.0.5 million was locally mobilised over and above the NLMA allocation of Rs.64 million.

Based on these direct monetary expenditure on the TLC programme, an attempt is made to work out the per learner and per literate expenditure in different districts and is given in Table 2.

Table 2
Per Learner and per Literate Cost

District	Cost per learner	Cost per literate
Wardha	56.1	73.6
Sinddurg	113.6	199.8
Burdwan	40.2	48.1
Midnapur	35.9	56.0
Ernakulam	38.0	52.0
Orissa*		68.3

* Refers to NAEP for the year 1983-84.

Sources: 1. Estimated based on the respective reports except for Wardha and inddurg for which figures were directly available.

2. For Orissa, Government of Orissa(1986) *A Report on the Evaluation of NAEP in Orissa*, Bhuvaneswar, Planning and Co-ordination department.

It can be seen from table 2 that the per literate expenditure is not very high and is almost around the earlier norm of Rs.60.0 per adult literate under the NAEP which runs for 10 months. In many an instance the per learner expenditure of TLC is lower than that norm also. If we compare it with the per literate expenditure of NAEP in Orissa (for which figures are available), it can be seen

that TLC's are less expensive. The per learner or per literate expenditure is related to the number of learners per literacy centre. Wherever the number of literates per centre is large, the per learner expenditure is lower. It can be noticed that the per learner \ literate expenditure in Sinddurg is very high. This is because the salaries of the adult education functionaries are added to the total cost figures. Total expenditure of the programme less on salary expenditure was not available.

The difference between the per learner and per literate cost is due to stagnation and dropouts. Some people dropout; there are others who continued to attend the lietracy classes but failed to reach the NLM norm. The extent of wastage (stagnation plus dropout) varies between districts. The wastage rate is the highest in case of Sindudurg where only 57% successfully completed the literacy programme. On the other hand the percentage of successful candidate is as high as 88.5% in Pasumpon and 86% in Ajmer. The high per literate expenditure in Sindudurg is partly due to the low retention of the learners in the centres.

Another way of assessing the costs of the TLCs is to compare the items of expenditure in TLCs with other similar programmes like NAEP. Table 3 gives the pattern expenditure between these two programmes.

Table 3
Pattern of Expenditure (percentage)

Item	NAEP(TN)	NAEP (Karnataka)	TLC(EKM)
Physical facilities	16.0	13.2	13.0
Teaching -Learning material	16.0	11.6	41.0
Honorarium	29.0	44.6	0.0
Administration and supervision	25.0	27.7	24.0
Training	11.0	2.8	6.0
Environment building	0.0	0.0	11.0
Miscellaneous	3.0	0.0	3.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: For Tamilnadu and TLC Ernakulam, Tharakan (1990) and for Karnataka, Somaiah (1990).

It can be seen that the major difference in the pattern of expenditure lies in salaries and provision of learning materials. A major share of the NAEP was spent on salaries even when an instructor in an adult education centre used to get a meager amount as honorarium. Since the TLCs are run on a no honorarium basis, the salary component is zero. But TLCs spent a good amount on environment building to generate demand and also spends a higher share of amount on teaching-learning materials. In fact nearly three-fourths of the expenditure of the TLCs are on teaching-learning materials and management of the programme. The management of the programme in the context of TLCs does not involve substantial salary payment where as in case of NAEP, salary is a major component in this category also. Other items of expenditure between TLCs and NAEP programmes are more comparable.

Cost Estimates based on Labour Inputs

The backbone of TLC programme in India is the voluntary effort and volunteer-based programme implementation. All educational effort, whether formal or out-of-school is a highly labour intensive activity and hence labour costs account for a significant share of the total expenditure. In TLCs the labour inputs are the most significant input, but unlike the formal system this labour is not paid and hence it does not enter into the cost estimations.

The argument is that the per learner or literate cost arrived at based on direct monetary expenditure forms only a part, not even the significant part, of the total expenditure on TLCs. The major cost is in terms of human labour which is invested by society but not funded by the public exchequer. How do we account for these investments by society to arrive at total costs of TLC programmes?

Based on the information available for two TLC programmes, namely Midnapur and Ernakulam, an attempt is made to estimate the labour input for the successful completion of the TLC programme. Since comparisons are to be made with the formal structure, the labour inputs which are directly related to imparting literacy are taken into account and hence the labour inputs on account of demand generation activities is not considered.

The items that can genuinely be included for costing purposes are: (i) training; (ii) instruction; (iii) planning, monitoring and supervision activities. Based on the Midnapur and Ernakulam TLCs, an attempt is made to estimate these items to arrive at total man hours spent on the programme.

(i) Training : There were four types of Training in TLC in Midnapur and five stages of training in Ernakulam. The Midnapur training consisted of : (a) Training of 227 thousand volunteers for 4 days in the initial stage of the

programme; (b) Refresher training for the volunteers; (c) Training of 1216 Master Trainers for 7 days; and (d) Training of 6571 volunteers for monitoring the programme. All these together work out to be 13,77,083 man days of training. If we consider on an average 7 hours of training per day, this works out to be 96,39,581 man hours.

(ii)Instructional time : The norm is 200 hours of instruction and if we consider the total instruction time it works out to be 49 million hours in Midnapur. It may please be noted that it is the instructor time and not the learning time invested by the learners that is taken into account.

(iii)Planning, monitoring and supervision : This includes centre visits, meetings, collection and storage of information etc. Which works out to be 5 million man hours. The other component is the meetings of Committees at various levels to implement the programme. In fact Midnapur had meetings on five days a week at different levels - the Ward/Village Level Committee met every Sunday, Gram Level Panchayat Committee on Mondays, Block Level Committee on Tuesdays sub-divisional level committees on Wednesdays and district level committee on Fridays. The total man hours on account of these meetings work out to be 3 million man hours. The total number of man hours spent on TLC in Midnapur is around 66.64 million man hours and that in Ernakulam is 5.54 million man hours.

Table 4
Total Man hours spent on TLC

Item	Midnapur	%	Ernakulam	%
1. Training time	96,39,581	14.5	8,40,000	15.2
2. Instructional time	4,90,00,000	73.5	40,00,000	72.3
3. Programme Management (including supervision and monitoring of learning activities)	80,00,000	12.0	7,00,000	12.5
Total:	6,66,39,581	100.0	55,40,000	100.0

Source: Some of these figures are estimated based on evaluation reports of the respective TLCs.

In Ernakulam an estimated number of 1,35,254 illiterates were made literate by the TLC whereas the corresponding figure in Midnapur is around 8,94,491. However, the number of learners enrolled were much higher than these figures

in both the districts. For example in Ernakulam it was around 1,84,667 and in Midnapur it was around 14,17,860. Based on man hours spent and learners enrolled and successfully completed the programme, we have derived the per learner cost and per literate cost. The per learner cost in Midnapur works out to be 47 man hours and per literate cost in Midnapur is 74.5 man hours. Similarly, per learner cost in Ernakulam is 30 man hours and the per literate cost in Ernakulam is 41 man hours. The difference between per learner and per literate man hour is due to the difference between those who enrolled and these who completed.

Most of the volunteers were teachers, students and unemployed youth. In case of programme management, people holding higher positions were also involved. Based on the total man days involved in literacy programmes and the initial salary of a primary school teacher as the basis (around Rs.1800* / pm.) for cost estimates, one can work out the per learner and per literate costs. Normally a primary school teacher works for 6 hours a day. These man days can be converted into number of days worked corresponding to the working hours in a primary school. This works out to be 8 man days per learner and 12 man days per literate in Midnapur and 5 man days per learner and 7 man days per days per literate in Ernakulam. Based on the average per day salary of a primary school teacher this works out be as follows:

per learner expenditure in Midnapur	=	Rs.480/-
per literate expenditure in Midnapur	=	Rs.720/-
per learner expenditure in Ernakulam	=	Rs.300/-
per literate expenditure in Ernakulam	=	Rs.420/-

This takes into account the cost of labour inputs only. Costs on account of other inputs like learning materials, campaign expenditure and travel expenses etc. are included in the direct financial allocations for the programme. Per learner expenditure on account of these items are worked out in table 2.

If we add those figures to the unit cost estimates worked out on the basis of labour inputs, then the total unit cost of literacy programme will be as follows:

per learner expenditure in Midnapur	=	Rs.516/-
per literate expenditure in Midnapur	=	Rs.776/-
per learner expenditure in Ernakulam	=	Rs.338/-
per literate expenditure in Ernakulam	=	Rs.472/-

A comparison can be made between the unit cost at the primary level and that in TLCs. In (1988-89), the per student expenditure at the primary level

* at 1987-88 price levels

in West Bengal is Rs.307.0 and the same for Kerala is 505.7 and at all India level it is 339.7. If we compare these per student expenditure figures with the per learner expenditure in the TLC programmes, it can be found that the campaign mode to make people literate is more expensive than one year of primary schooling in West Bengal and TLC mode is less expensive than one year of primary schooling in Kerala. It needs to be noted that the per student expenditure in Kerala is very high when compared to the same in West Bengal and at all India levels.

The major source of variations in unit cost of TLCs is in terms of labour cost involved. The labour cost of educating an adult is higher in West Bengal. The labour cost is high due to two factors: (i) Ernakulam district is more thickly populated than Midnapur and hence each literacy class may have larger number of learners in Ernakulam. This reduces the number of instructors required and their training cost; (ii) when difference between the number enrolled in literacy classes and the number completed literacy courses is high the per-literate costs will also be high.

In Kerala, the cost per learner and literate is lower than that of Midnapur. However, the per student expenditure on primary education is higher in Kerala than in West Bengal. This is primarily due to the fact that each primary school in Kerala has a separate teacher for each grade and each division whereas multi-grade teaching is prevalent in West Bengal. The conclusion that per literate cost in TLC is cheaper in Kerala than per student expenditure at primary level is to be seen from these dimensions also. For example, if Kerala had a per student expenditure equivalent to that in West Bengal, then TLCs would have been less expensive than one year of primary education in Kerala also.

But for these differences the pattern of expenditure is similar in both the districts, the programme. What is significant in both the estimates is the striking similarity between the two districts in terms of distribution of labour inputs between different activities (table 4). The major share of the labour input is spent on instructional activities followed by training activities.

How to assess the efficiency of a TLC programme? No doubt the cost estimates provided is one way of assessing the efficiency of the programme. If we compare the costs of TLCs between the two districts, it becomes clear that the Ernakulam TLC is more cost-effective than the Midnapur TLC. An analysis of factors contributing to the differences in costs between these two districts, may help to arrive at some guidelines to assess the efficiency of the programme. The cost differences arise primarily due to three factors: i) volunteer learner/literate ratio; ii) the extent of wastage measured in terms of the percentage of learners who continue and successfully complete the TLC cycle; and iii) management of the programme.

In Midnapur the average volunteer learner ratio was 1:6 and the volunteer

literate ratio was 1:4. In Ernakulam the corresponding figures are 1:9 and 1:7. If Midnapur had maintained the same ratio as in Ernakulam, then the per learner cost in Midnapur would have been much lower around Rs.370 and per literate cost around Rs.515/.

The other important reason for difference is the wastage component. Wastage has two components: i) those who drop out of the learning centres; ii) those who continued but failed to reach the NLM norms to be declared as literate. The wastage percentage for Enakulam is 27% and that for Midnapur is 37%. If Midnapur had maintained the same percentage of wastage as that of Ernakulam, then the per literate cost in Midnapur would have come down to Rs.390 a figure closer to the Ernakulam TLC. The remaining difference can be attributed to costs on account the monitoring and management of the programme.

If VT learner/literate ratio and wastage are the major components in assessing the efficiency of the programme, then it may be interesting to see differences between different campaigns on account of these two factors (Table 5). Other things remaining the same, based on these two criteria, it can be observed from table 5 that and Ajmer are the most cost effective programmes. Similarly, Wardha where the VT learner ratio is the highest and wastage ratio is not very low and Sindudurg where VT learner ratio and wastage percentage are very high may be some of the least cost effective TLCs. These are very tentative conclusions which need further empirical validation based on detailed field based information:

Table 5
Wastage and VT-Learner/Literate Ratios

Districts	VT : Learner	VT : Literate	Wastage%
Ajmer	9.0	7.0	14.0
Burdwan	12.0	10.0	16.5
Sindudurg	3.0	2.0	43.0
Wardha	2.0	1.4	23.8
Pasumpon	6.0	5.0	11.1
Pondicherry	6.0	5.0	16.2
Midnapur	6.0	4.0	37.0
Emakulam	9.0	7.0	27.0

Source : Reports on TLCs

Concluding Observations

Assessing TLCs on the basis of the narrow confines of cost estimation is not justifiable. The intention of making these cost estimates is not to argue that TLCs are very expensive and that they should hence be discontinued. On the other hand, the intention is to show that TLCs may be seen to be less expensive if one considers only the direct expenditure by the public exchequer. However, the success of the programme lies in its capacity to activate the community to invest in real terms. Not to recognise this contribution is not justifiable. I would tend to argue that total literacy campaigns involve a very heavy investment in terms of labour inputs and it comes from the individual domain and not from governmental sources. Hence, TLCs are not expensive for the government exchequer but very expensive for the society at large. The cost continues to be high but the domain of incidence changes from the government to the general public.

The voluntary effort which is the basis for launching of TLCs cannot be sustained in the long run and hence there is a need to channelise and institutionalise these efforts through appropriate mechanisms in the post-literacy stage. Needless to add, at the post-literacy stage the incidence may be shifting from community to public ex-chequer. That is to say, in the second phase of the programme the investment from the public domain should be much higher than that in the first phase of the programme. These investments should be oriented to create a learning society through provision of reading facilities. In the subsequent stages, the efforts of the government can be reduced because the learners' desire to read may get translated into effective demand to purchase reading materials for which they may be willing to invest money from their own pockets.

The argument is that literacy programmes should be seen in terms of different stages where the domains of investment may be changing. In the initial stage of TLCs, the seed money comes from the governmental domain. But the major input at this stage is the voluntary public effort or investments from the societal domain. In the second phase, that is immediately after the TLC programmes are over, the government has to make massive investments to institutionalise the achievements already made in the first phase. The neo-literates are motivated to read, but they are not willing to invest money on reading materials. Since reading has not yet become a part of their habit, it is not as yet a priority item on which they are willing to spend money. The basic difference between the first stage and subsequent stages is that in the first stage people 'learn to read' and in the subsequent stages people 'read to learn'. During the second phase the voluntary efforts may be less forthcoming and hence the investments from the governmental domain have to be enhanced. In the subsequent phases, the desire for reading and learning become reinforced among individuals and

they may be willing to translate their desire to read in terms of demand for newspapers, magazines etc. During this period the government may again reduce its financial burden since the major share of the investments will be coming from the individual domain. If adequate additional investments are not made in the districts which have already been declared totally literate, the investments made in the first phase of the programme will be totally wasted because most of the neo-literates will relapse to illiteracy. Such instances are not uncommon in history. For example, in Somalia, in the absence of adequate investment in the post-literacy programmes, half of the rural neo-literates relapsed into illiteracy (Noor : 1981). It is hoped that such a situation does not arise in India.

The other sector which requires massive investment in the immediate future is that of primary education. All evaluation reports have shown that demand by the neo-literates for schooling of their children has increased. The existing facilities in the primary schools may not be able to accommodate the massive increase in the demand for primary schooling. Massive investment is therefore needed to arrest further growth of illiteracy in the country. These efforts are important because, the prevalent schooling pattern, with nearly three-fifths of the children dropping out before reaching the terminal stages of the primary cycle, is not going to help in arresting the growth of illiteracy in the country. Therefore, investment is needed both to enroll additional children and reduce dropouts and these investments have to necessarily come from the government sector. The private efforts may remain marginal and that too concentrated in resource rich areas and hence any reliance on the private sector is not a feasible proposition (Varghese : 1993a). The groups hitherto uncovered by the primary school system and literacy programmes are the marginalised groups whose paying capacity is far below the commercial viability of the private sector. Hence, the investments for primary education and literacy programmes has to come from the governmental domain.

Now the moot question is how the government can mobilise resources on such a large scale. The oft repeated solutions are transferring the resources from higher to primary education and literacy programmes; student loans; graduate taxes and discriminatory pricing (see Tilak and Varghese: 1991 and 1992b). It is here that a proper pricing policy of education is needed. There are sectors and segments of education which can mobilise more resources. Through proper pricing, a part of the public money that would have otherwise been spent on these types of education can be withdrawn. And such resources can be utilised for financing primary education and adult literacy programmes. The argument is for diversifying the sources of public funding rather than privatizing this sector. But the resources that can be generated through these sources may not be adequate to meet the requirements. It is therefore to be supplemented through

governmental efforts from departments other than education. Another possible area is to seek international assistance as is evident in the context of primary education in India.

The possible scenarios are the following: i) the government making adequate investments both for post-literacy programmes and primary education as indicated above in which case the literacy and educational map of the country will be changing very fast. ii) government making limited investments in post-literacy programmes and primary education. This may lead to massive wastage of resources invested in the first phase of TLCs and disillusionment among the general public. iii) increased investment at the primary level and limited investment at the post-literacy stage. This may lead to eradication of adult literacy through attrition. (iv) massive investment at the post-literacy stage and minimal increase of investment at the primary level. The result may be a situation of growing illiteracy among children who have to be captured at the adult education level or in other words continuation of illiteracy in the next generation also. I would tend to argue that the success of TLCs should not be assessed only on the basis of investments made and success attained in the first phase that on the basis of the future investments to be made in social development programmes in general and those to be made in post-literacy programmes and primary education in particular. It is imperative to adopt such an integrated approach in order to sustain and strengthen the efforts made during the first phase of the campaign period.

The recent trends indicate that the most likely future scenario may be characterized by a limited investment at the post literacy level accompanied by an increased investment at the primary level of education. As of 1994-95, 338 district TLC projects and 130 post-literacy projects are sanctioned. In 1995-96 about 66 TLCs and 31 post literacy projects are additionally sanctioned. The recent initiatives in primary education - District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) - attempts to mobilize resources for primary education from external sources (Varghese; 1996). Such efforts may help maintaining or increasing the overall investments in primary education. However, many of the districts selected under DPEP have not yet initiated or completed TLC programmes. Hence even if overall investments in primary education increases, it does not necessarily mean that the increased demand for primary education generated as a result of the TLC programme is met. Hence there is a need to link TLC programmes with DPEP initiatives. Such efforts are being made in the recent past by giving priority to TLC districts while selecting districts under DPEP (Ayyar : 1995). With the expansion of TLCs increasingly to educationally backward states and districts in the recent period, possibilities of linking TLCs and DPEP are becoming better. Such efforts may ensure that the positive gains of TLCs can be reinforced by initiatives in the field of primary education.

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PART IV

**POST LITERACY AND CONTINUING
EDUCATION**

14. Strategies for Post Literacy in the Next Decade*

Bhaskar Chatterjee

The great Chinese philosopher K'uan-Tzu has said, "If you plan for a year, plant a seed. If for ten years, plant a tree. If for a hundred years, teach the people. When you sow a seed once you will reap a single harvest. When you teach the people, you will reap hundred harvests."

The same spirit was echoed by the great educationist and humanist Dr. Zakir Husain, when he said, "Education is the life breath of our democracy. It is education that can give us a common vision of the future that we are striving to fashion, and generate in us, the intellectual and moral energy to create it. Education alone can preserve the old values worth preserving and education alone can give us the new values worth striving for."

I feel honoured and grateful to Indian Adult Education Association for giving me this opportunity of delivering this year's Dr. Zakir Husain Memorial Lecture in this historic city of Vadodara. Dr. Zakir Husain was great educationist and humanist who not only occupied the highest position in the country as President of India but dedicated over four decades of his life to serve the cause of spreading education among the Indian masses. He was a great visionary and always emphasized the adoption of a new perspective in relation to education and culture. He supported the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi on basic education and was committed to the cause of adult education. The high ideals for which this great man lived and dedicated his life have inspired the thoughts of many of us. I am deeply grateful to the Indian Adult Education Association for having chosen such a significant subject as "Strategies for Post Literacy in the Next Decade" for this year's Dr. Zakir Husain Memorial Lecture.

When we talk of Mahatma Gandhi, we are also reminded of that great lady of literacy Dr. Welthy Honsinger Fisher, the creator of Literacy House in Lucknow. When Mrs. Fisher visited Mahatma Gandhi in 1939 after her husband's death and sought advice from him on how best she could serve the people of India. Gandhiji advised her, "What you must do Behenji, if you really want

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to see your idea at work, is to go to Jamia Millia outside of Delhi. There is a man there, putting it all into action in an institution. His name is Husain.”

Dr. Welthy Fisher recalled that she went at Gandhi's bidding and was warmly welcomed by the Principal of Jamia Millia, Dr. Zakir Husain. She spent two revealing days in conversation with this brilliant scholar and it was out of this inter-action that she decided that as an educator she must help the Indian villagers to learn and discover the world for themselves. And, so from out of the inter-action of these three leading luminaries Gandhi, Dr. Zakir Husain and Welthy Fisher, was born what we today know as the first formal literacy campaign of India.

Why Mass Education?

The people of India have had a long and abiding commitment to literacy and learning. Unfortunately, however, India today has the dubious distinction of having the largest number of illiterates in the world. The global population of non-literates is around 900 million. One third of them reside in India. A major problem is that while our literacy rate is increasing over time, the number of illiterates is also increasing. So enormous is the problem that it cannot be solved merely by a rapid expansion of formal schooling facilities or enrolment drives. A two-pronged approach has, therefore, been adopted: Universalisation of Elementary Education and campaign approach to Adult Literacy. Although adult education has been receiving attention right from the first Five Year Plan, adult literacy programmes today constitute an integral part of the strategy of human resource development as well as the overall development of the country.

Literacy is one of the most important indicators of socio-economic and political development of a society. It is a major component of human resource development and is thus basic of any programme of social and economic development. In recent years, there has been a growing realisation among policy makers and planners that development would never become self-sustaining unless it is accompanied by corresponding changes in the attitudes, values, knowledge and skills of the people as a whole. The only way this change can be accomplished is through education. A literate society can usher in progress and prosperity quickly. Adult education and development are, therefore, inextricably linked with each other.

National Literacy Mission (NLM)

Since illiteracy is a serious impediment to individual growth and the country's socio-economic progress, the Government of India have accorded highest

priority to eradication of illiteracy. The launching of the National Literacy Mission(NLM) in 1988, as one of the five Technology Missions, constitutes a major landmark in our efforts to combat the evil. NLM aims at imparting functional literacy to 100 million non-literate persons in the 15-35 age-group by the end of 1997. NLM is based on the premise that literacy is an indispensable component of human resource development and an essential tool for communication and learning and for acquiring and sharing of knowledge and information. NLM also aims to harness the advances in science and technology, and of communications and pedagogical sciences for the benefit of the deprived sections of society.

NLM is a societal mission whose success rests on mobilisation of social forces on the one hand and harnessing of technology and findings of scientific research for the benefit of the deprived sections of the society on the other. After experimenting with alternative models of adult education, NLM has today finally settled down to a model which is known as TLC or campaigns for total literacy. The Total Literacy Campaigns which is started in the beginning of 1989 are rapidly gathering momentum and are also creating the desired impact. More than 370 districts in the country have been covered through total literacy campaigns and of these, as many as 160 districts have already completed the basic literacy phase and have taken up post literacy & continuing education programme as a follow up of the TLC. TLC projects so far sanctioned by the NLM are expected to cover around 130 million illiterate persons in the age-group 9-35. Around 90 million learners have been enrolled in the teaching-learning process which is being carried out with the help of over 9 million volunteers. There is now a heightened awareness amongst the literate and the educated about their role in eradication of illiteracy on purely voluntary basis and with a sense of pride and patriotism. The concrete achievement of NLM is reflected by the number of persons made literate which exceeds 53 million. It is undeniable that this phenomenal achievement has been made possible by a combination of factors. A strong political will, total and spontaneous participation of the administrative machinery, the keen concern of the State Governments for the spread of mass education, and above all, the whole-hearted participation of people from different walks of life have achieved so much in the sphere of literacy in such a short of time and at such a small cost.

NLM is also fully conscious of the fact that neglect of post literacy and follow-up programmes can be perilous. It is well recognised that those neo-literates who acquire basic literacy skills through the literacy campaigns may face great difficulty in retaining it and unless timely follow-up measures are taken, most of them may lapse back into illiteracy. It is absolutely essential that those who once acquire basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy make them permanent by reinforcement through post literacy programmes.

Towards a Definition of Post Literacy

The term "Post Literacy" has come to have different meanings in various educational systems. In some countries the term is used loosely to include all forms of education which follow after the achievement of basic literacy. In some other countries, post literacy is defined more narrowly to simply consolidate basic literacy skills to a level equivalent to that which would be achieved by the end of primary schooling in the formal system. In this definition, post literacy is considered as a "Bridge" between primary schooling or its equivalent and further study.

The definition accepted by the National Literacy Mission lies somewhere between these two extremes. As a part of continuing education, post literacy programmes attempt to give interested learners an opportunity to harness and develop their learning potential after completion of a course in basic literacy. This is particularly important when such neo-learners have either regressed or are in danger of regressing to partial literacy. Thus, the aim of the NLM post literacy programme is to consolidate the basic literacy skills of speaking, reading, writing, numeracy and problem-solving, while at the same time, transforming these learners into an educated "whole person" who is productive socio-economic asset to the community. The aim is to make such a person willing and able to participate actively and productively in our nation's development.

The broad perspective is that whereas basic literacy programme build both technical literacy skills and functional knowledge, what people learn to read, write and calculate becomes equally as important as technical literacy skills. All continuing education seen through this definition which we have adopted is functional. Thus, in our vision, functional literacy is not just a programme it is a concept signifying a technique of delivering knowledge so as to make learning relevant to living and working. In fact, in post literacy, it is the functional aspect which is the main point of concern. Therefore, we have envisioned our post literacy programme as specifically, vocationally-oriented in the knowledge that these are likely to be more successful than those that have merely an educational approach.

NLM's Perspective of Post Literacy

The past experience in the country shows that although awareness regarding the importance of post literacy programmes was not lacking, they were seldom systematically organised. This has been one of the main reasons for the rather limited impact of adult education programmes implemented in the past. Post literacy programmes have therefore, necessarily to be given as much importance as regular basic literacy programmes. Here, too, the words of Dr. Zakir Husain

shine like a beacon light, "Today education has become a life-long process and continuous learning has become essential even for survival, "Keeping this in view, NLM has visualized PLC as an extension of TLC in the continuum of life long education. Each TLC is to be followed by a two-year post literacy programme to be implemented in a mission mode. After a great deal of deliberations and discussions in several meetings of the Executive Committee, NLM has formulated and circulated broad guidelines for implementation of post literacy campaigns. These guidelines envisage that the three basic elements to be kept in view while planning a programme of PL&CE are :-

- a) Identification of learning needs of neo-literates :
- b) Provision of learning opportunities to meet the needs :
- c) Creating a socio-economic, political and cultural ambience to sustain the learning environment.

Post literacy programmes have been conceived by NLM not just as remedial measures to ensure retention and stabilisation of literacy skills. NLM envisages post literacy programmes to be developed in the context of life long education and with the purpose of improving the quality of life of the individuals and the society at large. From this view point, post literacy is regarded as an integrated learning process to assist neo-literates to retain, improve and apply their basic knowledge attitude and skills for the satisfaction of their basic needs and to permit them to continue education through self-directed process for the improvement of their quality of life, both personal and societal.

NLM has permitted and encouraged a great deal of flexibility and innovativeness in designing and implementation of PLCs. Each PLC project has to take into account the competency levels reached by the learners in the basic literacy phase their cognitive ability, their felt needs and other area-specific and socio-cultural specific dimensions. The approach most commonly followed, comprises of providing post literacy primer/graded textual material to the learners in the first phase of post literacy for guided study with the help of a volunteer instructor. This phase specifically aims at remediation retention and consolidation of literacy skills. In the second phase, the learners are provided with a variety of supplementary reading materials and library services to help them continue learning through self-directed processes.

In practice, the post literacy strategies actually being implemented are generally a combination of different approaches, borrowing successful elements from a variety of experiences. Experience of the past few years shows that a large number of PLCs have tended to be confined to reading reinforcement or transforming post literacy centres into Jana Shikshan Nilayams and conducting library type activities. The operational strategies adopted by PLCs have at times

not succeeded in ensuring that neo-literates become adequately functionally literate. One of the major concerns besetting the post literacy campaigns continues to be: how to enable the neo-literates to utilise the recently acquired literacy skills for the larger processes of development? How to link literacy skills retention with other major life concerns such as health, sanitation, population issues, women's empowerment etc. Although some of the PLCs have demonstrated commendable initiative and innovativeness in fostering linkages with public health programmes. PLCs in general are yet to evolve a systematic approach to utilisation of post literacy activities in disseminating information and messages related to such issues as public health, afforestation, population education. Another significant shortcoming of post literacy strategies adopted so far has been the failure to design, develop and operationalise short duration vocational courses for development of vocational skills and diffusion of technology.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the post literacy campaigns implemented so far have covered considerable ground and cumulative experience has yielded valuable knowledge for the promotion of post literacy programmes in general and shaping of continuing education strategies in particular. The success of post literacy campaigns in several districts such as Nellore and West Godavari in Andhra Pradesh; Pudukotai and Kamarajar in Tamil Nadu; Nanded and Pune in Maharashtra; Dakshin Kannada and Tumkur in Karnataka; Durg and Raipur in Madhya Pradesh; and Burdwan and Birbhum in West Bengal, points overwhelmingly to the conclusion that there can be no single national strategy for achieving the goals of post literacy and continuing education. Organisational and methodological approaches as well as curricular content have to be tailored to the particular political, social and cultural conditions prevailing. Whatever the strategies actually adopted ways have to be found to stimulate and sustain motivation, identify priority groups of learners make literacy functional in relation to the living conditions of the learners and of their specific goals, improve the quality of the programme offering and sustain and develop literacy skills.

Planning and Operationalisation of PL Strategies

Despite the vast variations in geographic, political, socio-economic and cultural conditions prevailing in different districts there is certain commonality of challenges which each district has to face while embarking on the course to post literacy and continuing education programmes. Each district will have to formulate and design operational strategy for implementing post literacy programmes having regard to certain basic considerations. These would include :-

- (i) Defining needs.
- (ii) Defining objectives.
- (iii) Defining the target groups.
- (iv) Initiating newer organisational process and structure.
- (v) Selecting learning methods and materials.
- (vi) Choosing content and communication media.
- (vii) Recruiting volunteer teachers/functionaries.
- (viii) Training literacy functionaries.
- (ix) Conducting evaluation and developing feed-back..

In formulating the right approach and operational strategy for post literacy programmes, the key to success is participatory design. This implies that for designing post literacy programmes and plan of action, the design decisions are taken democratically with all those involved e.g., learners, volunteer teachers, local leaders and project functionaries. Participatory approach encourages independent learning and motivates greater efforts. Moreover, it endows the programme with a legitimacy in the eyes of the whole community.

Defining Needs

The detailed nature of basic learning needs and how best to meet them will vary over time from district to district and even within a district. In all cases, basic learning needs cannot be separate from other human needs, the definition of which must include elements that are both personal and social. The neo-literates may be interested in securing services and access to numerous anti-poverty programmes or to science or even to appropriate rural technology to improve their quality of life. Post Literacy programmes therefore, will have to be designed keeping in view the felt needs and aspirations of the neo-literates.

Defining Post-Literacy Objectives

As we have outlined in our definition of post literacy, the key aim of our post literacy programme is to ensure that participants become adequately functionality literate. Adequate functional literacy is no doubt a pre-requisite for autonomous learning and the development of a learning society.

The idea of autonomous learning is a much more sophisticated concept than the idea of simply being able and willing to learn on one's own. At an autonomous stage of personal development, we see learning as leading to

productivity, self-fulfillment and awareness of values. Thus, the differences between functional literacy and autonomous learning is fairly considerable. The former deals with day-to-day basic skills of functioning in society, whereas the latter concerns itself with the view that education is valuable in itself and involves the mental, physical and spiritual development of the entire person.

The ultimate aim of our post literacy programme is, therefore, to help participants become true autonomous learners in the broadest and best sense of that term. We are firm in our belief that only if most members of our society are autonomous learners can true democracy emerge and our society can achieve the goal of being a learning society.

Though post literacy has these established common objectives, these are generally in the nature of broad guidelines. One has, therefore, to move specific objectives for each area and each category of learners. One has also to ensure that all key functionaries from village to district level have a full understanding of these objectives and actively participate in the process of evolving them. Since the post literacy programmes have to be developed in the context of life long education, these have to fulfil four major goals namely:-

(i) Remediation

The level of achievement of neo-literates is not uniform everywhere. There are neo-literates who are yet to reach the norm laid down by NLM. One of the main aims of the post literacy programmes should be to remedy the deficiencies of learning in the basic literacy phase and to help the neo-literates reach the desired level of achievement.

(ii) Continuation

The objective is to consolidate and improve the learning skills already acquired by the neo-literates with a view to making them self-reliant not only in the sphere of reading, writing and numeracy skills but in other areas of life as well. Post literacy is a bridge towards autonomous learning. To reach the stage of autonomous learning means that post literacy must facilitate transition from guided learning to a self-reliant level of learning and thus create the possibility of making a neo-literate a life long learner.

(iii) Application

The acquired learning skills of the learners must be reflected in different areas of their life and livelihood as well. They must learn to apply their acquired skills towards improving their quality of life. Post literacy programmes should be so designed as to help neo-literates attain the ability to use the newly acquired

skills and make them adequately functionally literate. To be functionally literate implies that a person must be able to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for the effective functioning of his or her group of community and also for enabling him or her to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for their own as well as the community's development.

(iv) Communitisation

The learner must discover and identify himself or herself as a part of the society at large and must feel that he or she has an important role to play collectively with others in bringing about social and economic change in the country. Post literacy programmes must help neo-literates to organise themselves for securing services under programmes related to health, family welfare, child care, nutrition, agriculture animal husbandry, etc..

Target Groups for Post Literacy

The post literacy programmes should be open to everybody who takes reading and learning as a way to enrich life. However, post literacy programmes should be specifically designed to serve :-

- (a) neo-literates in the age-group 9-14 years who have completed the basic literacy course under the TLC:
- (b) neo-literates in the age-group 15-35 years:
- (c) semi-literates/drop-outs from the basic literacy phase:
- (d) drop-outs from primary schools:
- (e) pass-outs from NFE programmes.

Organisational Strategies

As with all other important schemes and projects, the success of PL&CE programmes also depends on the setting up of a sound organisational structure for closely monitoring the implementation of the programme and for taking quick and effective steps for overcoming any difficulty or problem. The key principle is to have a three-pillared system for project management. The three main pillars are– the administration, the representative people's committees and the full-time project structure. However, at the post literacy stage special care needs to be taken to increase the role played by academic committees or resource

groups at all levels – Panchayat level, block level and the district level. Another imperative at the post literacy stage is to increasingly encourage initiative from below and facilitate community participation so that the programme may continue with community support alone.

For effective implementation of PL programmes it may be desirable to provide for the following while establishing the organisational structure :-

- (i) Setting up of Saksharata Samitis at different levels – from village to the District. Two-three neo-literates should be associated with each village/gram panchayat/ ward level committee.
- (ii) There should be constant dialogue, communication and coordination among committees at different levels.
- (iii) Functionaries of the Health Department e.g. Health Assistant/Supervisors, Panchayat Raj functionaries, Headmasters of local primary schools and local library workers must be associated with Gram Panchayat/Ward level committees.
- (iv) Representatives of different mass organisations, especially of students, youth, women and ICDS workers should be included in the Panchayat/Ward Committees.
- (v) A monitoring Committee with the Convenors of Gram Panchayat/Ward level Committees, Health Assistants, Headmasters of schools and other responsible citizens as members should be set up at each Gram Panchayat/Ward level.
- (vi) Whole time workers may be engaged at block/district level to provide organisational and managerial support.

The Cluster as Organisation

At the TLC stage, learning centres are organised on a principle of one volunteer to ten learners (1:10). In post literacy, especially after transaction of the PL text is completed, the volunteer is primarily playing the supportive organisational role. He assists the learners to use their newly acquired skills and confidence for continuing their learning and for improving the quality of their life. This changed role of the volunteer has a number of implications. In several Districts implementing PLCs, the concept of cluster has evolved and has been found to be useful. A cluster is generally formed by grouping together three to five earlier literacy centres. Burdwan District attempted formation of cluster with even 200-300 learners. However, an optimum cluster has about 30-50 learners, about 3-5 volunteers and a coordinator. Such clustering is

usually done on a geographic basis but one may also attempt to have in a large village, clusters for women and for children below the age of 14 if this is found to enhance their participation.

A cluster is not created overnight by administrative action. It emerges over time in a process of group activities. Right from the second month onward, various group activities may be planned that bring the learners and the volunteers of 3-5 centres together. As the time goes on, these activities become more regular and assume an organisational shape in the cluster. A cluster is not a substitute for learning centres. The centres, of course, co-exist and are the site of primer transaction as well as a number of other pedagogic activities. The cluster may meet at any convenient meeting place – local school, village tree, meeting square etc. The frequency of cluster meetings seldom exceeds once a week. Classes at centres in contrast may continue daily, especially, if the primers are not yet completed. The clusters must be conceived as evolving into local action groups of cultural movements in the course of time.

The cluster functions as an organisational unit for performing a number of pedagogic and mobilisation tasks. The cluster helps in the circulation of newspapers, books and other neo-literates materials. It ensures that a literate environment is maintained in the village. It conducts various group activities with the help of resource persons, for dissemination of information on various relevant aspects of life. It provides motivation and encouragement to learners to continue their learning. It acts as a forum where people discuss their problems and learn to act as a collective to improve the quality of their lives.

Learning Strategies in Post Literacy

Post literacy learning strategies as visualised by NLM envisage provision of learning opportunity both in structured and unstructured situation. Structured situation refers to organised learning where primers (PL-I) or graded textual materials are transacted to gradually achieve advanced level of competencies. The aim of post-literacy primers or graded textual materials is to ensure that every learner is systematically covered so that there is no relapse and he reaches a self-reliant level of learning. Another invaluable element of learning strategy in a structured situation is introduction of suitably designed supplementary reading books for the neo-literates.

Unstructured situations refer to widely differing literacy abilities necessitating provision of wide range of reading materials suited to the needs and interests of neo-literates. A major learning strategy that is often effectively used in post literacy programme is to provide along with structured courses, understand reading opportunities for neo-literates to practise their literacy skills, by creating an environment rich in letters. Thus, literacy walks, wall newspapers, wall

writing, posters both printed and hand-made and library facilities can make substantial difference, especially in the letter poor environment of interior villages. All this implies a competent team at work in preparing and publishing the numerous volumes of material required. It also needs trained persons at the village who can introduce different material in the village, ensure neo-literates have access to and encourage the neo-literates to utilise and benefit from it. The habit of reading and the culture of utilising a library requires far more inputs than the mere imparting of literacy skills.

A number of methods are generally needed to provide information to the neo-literates on a wide variety of areas with the aim of creating a better awareness amongst them. Radio and Television may be effectively used for this purpose. Art forms based on the local culture, theatre and songs can also be utilised. Inventing scientists, technologists, administrators and other persons with relevant expertise to talk or to interact with neo-literates is also useful for imparting information. Slide shows, video programmes and exhibitions are also very effective media to disseminate information to neo-literates. Study tours and excursions create endless possibilities as well. One novel and successful method of imparting information is the village parliament as being experimented in Bilaspur District or Gaon Kascheri as successfully experimented in Pune District. Group discussions will also critically reflect their reality and utilise the fund of knowledge already available with them. While planning learning strategies, especially for promoting better awareness, emphasis must be given to group activities. The experience of working and learning in a group is a goal in itself.

Instructional Planning for Post Literacy for 9-14 Age-Group

For those children in the 9-14 age-group who have acquired basic literacy skills under TLC, a different post literacy strategy may have to be evolved than that relevant for the adults in 15-35 age-group. In the case of children the same "fragile" literacy can quickly and completely disappear if more durable and longer duration exposure to learning experiences are not planned. For those who have attained the prescribed NLM norms, attempts should firstly be made to enable them to join the reorganised NFE course wherever available. For others, 3 courses, each of six months' duration should be conducted. Materials designed by NCERT may be found suitable for them. The goal should be that the learners should ultimately reach the class IV standard. Records of progress in respect of each learning centre should be maintained properly and certificate issued to the successful learners. It is also desirable that post literacy learning centres catering to the children must function at least 5 days or 12 hours a week.

Instructional Planning for Adults (15-35 Age-Group)

As mentioned earlier, NLM has emphasized that post literacy programmes should be organised for a duration of two years. In the light of past experience it is considered important that districts taking up post literacy programmes must draw up a comprehensive instructional plan for the entire two-year duration. The experience of successful PLCs would suggest the following approach :-

- (i) First 15-30 days should be spent for revision of lessons learnt during TLC. This would help them overcome their weakness and prepare them for studying the books prescribed for PLC.
- (ii) Two cycles, each of six months' duration, should be planned for the structured phase of the PLC. In the first cycle of six months, 150 hours out of the total 250 hours should be earmarked for learning of the core books/graded textual materials. The remaining 100 hours of the first cycle should be utilised for self-study, group discussions and debates on matters like remedial measures against common health hazards, use of electricity, preservation of environment etc.
- (iii) Each learning centre should function for 5 days a week.
- (iv) The first cycle should be followed by a package of 250 hours over a period of six months for acquainting the learners with the nuances of functional literacy. During this period, learners should be encouraged to undertake group activities in clusters, exchange experiences and ideas with one and another, participate in discussions on different socio-economic issues of common interest. Efforts should also be made during this period for kindling in them the desire for self-education and an interest for relevant vocational training.

Skill Development

In keeping with the declared objectives of New Education Policy, NLM has emphasized the integration of skill development with each programme of post literacy and continuing education. It has been observed that post literacy programmes have generally been less successful in sustaining the motivation of the learners than the basic literacy programmes. One of the reasons evidently is that learners do not see any apparent reward in improving literacy skills. The solution is to link together job oriented skills and reading skills. Post Literacy workers must be able to demonstrate that the programme will contribute to economic growth and social equality which is the declared policy of the Central

and State Governments. Skill development programmes should, therefore, be integrated in the post literacy programmes preferable as soon as the first cycle of transacting textual material is over. It would be the endeavour of NLM to support post literacy strategies for achieving the following objectives in close collaboration with other Departments/Agencies who will be requested to share specific responsibility :-

- (a) Enabling the neo-literates to acquire skills for economic self-reliance, such skills also including managerial and entrepreneurial skills.
- (b) Organising vocational courses and short-duration skill development programmes with the assistance of educational institutions, technical experts from various departments. For this purpose, NLM may also support educational institutions to conduct their own vocational courses for neo-literates without the educational qualification being a condition precedent for admission in such courses.
- (c) Opening of additional Shramik Vidyapeeths in urban, semi urban and rural areas and promotion of more agencies/institutions in the non-formal sector for the purpose of imparting vocational skill information to the neo-literates and conducting such programmes.
- (d) Creation of enabling structure for neo-literate women to help them come together to organise economic activities as a collective group. There could be several models of collective enterprise to provide worthwhile programmes of vocational education and technical skill development of women – e.g. women's cooperatives, Mahila Mandal, self-employed women's association.

What After Post Literacy?

Post literacy campaigns are currently being implemented in only about 160 districts in the country. This means that a very large number of districts which are still implementing TLCs or which are likely to be covered through TLCs in the next one year will be taking up post literacy programmes only during the course of 9th Five Year Plan. One crucial question is how the literacy and learning environment will be sustained once the districts taking up TLCs conclude the two-year follow-up programme of PLCs as well? While formulating strategies for post literacy in the next decade, due consideration would have to be given to the continuing education needs of the learners who have participated in the post literacy programmes. The concept of life long learning is particularly relevant to this rapidly revolving situation.

The enthusiasm and confidence generated among the learners in the districts which have successfully completed both the TLC as well as PLC phases clearly

points towards the need to sustain the educational process and to provide learning opportunities on a continuing basis. Literacy is not an end in itself. It is a minimal and imperative entry point to the world of information and communication. It is the foundation for life long learning and human development on which a country may build systematically further levels of education and training. The access to the world of letters and skills acquired by the neo-literates during the TLC and PLC phases, needs to be further carried forward to enable them to fully play the crucial role for their own social and economic upliftment and for the development of the country. This calls for creation of satisfactory arrangements for continuing education of neo-literates. Continuing education goes beyond post literacy. It is an indispensable aspect of the strategy of human resource development and the goal of creation of a learning society. Looking to the future, it is clear there will be far less stability in the work place and in all forms of professional life. Not only are patterns of employment changing, they demand greater flexibility of individuals in the course of their working life. The current restructuring of the economy is also showing a dramatic way the heavy burden that such changes are likely to place on skill redistribution and occupational flexibility. The planning for continuing education for the next decade will, therefore, have to be a future oriented to promote human resource development on lines consistent with future needs. Continuing education programmes will have to be purposeful and life related. These should not only catch the imagination of adult neo-literates but should also match their ambition and capability.

Continuing Education for Neo-literates

Post literacy is both a part and a process of continuing education. Its programmes and activities are designed to prevent neo-literates and semi-literates from regressing into complete illiteracy. The programme aims to consolidate the literacy acquired during Total Literacy Campaign. Post Literacy programmes are vital in bridging the gap between the attainments of basic literacy and the development of true learning autonomy. In the post literacy phase, therefore, it is vitally important to develop higher skills of critical reading and to foster skills in independent problem-solving. Post literacy programmes provide the point of "take off" in a continuing education system. Without it, Continuing education has little meaning for neo-literates.

NLM is fully conscious of this need and has designed a scheme of Continuing Education for Neo-Literates. This Scheme has been approved by the Government of India and has come into force from the 1st January this year (1996). The new scheme will replace the existing scheme of Post Literacy & Continuing

Education, also known as JSN (Jana Shikshan Nilayam) Scheme, which was launched in 1988 to meet the post literacy and continuing needs of neo-literates emerging from centre-based adult education programmes. The new scheme has been formulated taking into account the major findings and the recommendations made in the evaluation study report of the JSN schemes as also the recommendations made in the report of the Experts Group headed by Prof. Arun Ghosh. The main objectives of this Scheme is to institutionalise continuing education for neo-literates and to provide considerable flexibility in designing and implementation of diverse kind of continuing education programmes suited to the felt needs of the neo-literates. The more specific objectives of the Scheme of Continuing Education are :-

- (a) Provision of facilities for retention of literacy skills and continuing education to enable the learners to continue their learning beyond basic literacy.
- (b) Creating scope for application of functional literacy for improvement of living conditions and quality of life.
- (c) Dissemination of information on development programmes and widening & improving participation of traditionally deprived sections of the society.
- (d) Creation of awareness about national concerns such as national integration, conservation and improvement of the environment, women's equality, observance of small family norms, etc. and sharing of common problems of the community.
- (e) Improvement of economic conditions and general well-being as well as improvement of productivity by organising short-duration training programmes, orientation courses for providing vocational skills and by taking up linkage activities for establishing direct linkage between continuing education and development activities.
- (f) Provision of facilities for library and reading rooms for creating an environment conducive for literacy efforts and a learning society.
- (g) Organisation of cultural and recreational activities with effective community participation.

The new scheme will be implemented throughout the Zilla Saksharata Samiti which would be expected to formulate a project proposal for establishment of a durable infrastructure for continuing education and for taking up continuing education programmes in the District on conclusion of the post literacy campaign. Under the scheme, ZSS has been given considerable freedom to develop

its own type of programmes depending upon the prevailing socio-economic conditions, the needs of neo-literates, resources available etc. However, the scheme envisages creation of new organisational structures at the grass-root level keeping in view the need to provide institutionalised frame-work for implementation of CE programmes with active involvement and sharing of responsibility with Panchayat institutions, Mahila Mandals, educational institutions, NGOs etc. The scheme will be implemented in a decentralised manner. Funds for the scheme will be placed at the disposal of State Literacy Mission Authorities for further disbursement to ZSS.

Establishment of continuing education centres will be principal mode of implementing continuing education programmes. Continuing education centres will essentially community education centres. The scheme envisages setting up of one CEC for each village to serve the population of about 1500 which may include around 500 neo-literates, drop outs and pass-outs from primary schools and NFE stream. CEC's will be set in clusters of 8-10 with one of them being designated as nodal CEC. The principal function of the CEC would be to provide following facilities :-

- (a) Library – A repository of learning materials.
- (b) Reading Room – A place which encourages people to read.
- (c) Learning Centre – A provider of CE programmes.
- (d) Training Centre – For short duration training programmes to upgrade skills.
- (e) Information Centre – For securing information on various development programmes.
- (f) Charcha Mandal – Community meeting place for sharing ideas and solving problems.
- (g) Development Centre – For coordinating services of Government agencies and non-government organisations.
- (h) Cultural Centre – A place for cultural activities.
- (i) Sports Centre – For recreation and healthy living.

Continuing Education Programme

NLM recognises that in the areas completing post literacy programmes, diverse kinds of continuing programmes involving alternative and innovative approaches taking into account the local conditions and resources available,

would need to be promoted. The new scheme, therefore, envisages that besides establishment of continuing education centres. ZSS's will be encouraged to develop and take up implementation of target specific needs and interests of neo-literates. Such programmes would largely be functional in the sense that these would focus on development of functional knowledge with the aim of making learning relevant to living and working. The Scheme has suggested broad contents and parameters of four such types of programmes. These are:-

(a) Equivalency Programmes (EPs)

Equivalency programmes are one type of continuing education programmes which provide an opportunity to adults and out of school children who have acquired basic literacy skills or who have completed primary education and who are willing to continue their education beyond elementary literacy for acquisition of competencies equivalent to primary or secondary levels of the formal system. EPs are, therefore, designed as alternative education programmes equivalent to existing formal education. EPs designed with sufficient flexibility and innovativeness can, however, be a cost effective alternative to enable the neo-literates and all others who dropped out of the primary formal education to continue education of their choice at their own pace.

The National Literacy Mission in collaboration with the National Open School has developed design for implementation of an open basic education programme for neo-literates. Under this programme, an attempt is being made to provide opportunities of continuing education to those young and adult neo-literates who are interested in pursuing learning beyond basic literacy in a non-formal mode but with the aim of acquiring recognition and qualifications equivalent to those available under the formal schooling system. Under the open basic education programme, the entire range of basic education i.e. up to Class VIII level has been divided into three level – Level-A, Level-B, and Level-C. Level-A is for those who can just manage reading and writing (fragile literates), Level-B for those people with stable literacy and little beyond and Level-C for those whose competencies are equivalent to primary course. Within this framework, the learners would be offered a large variety of choices of learning tasks and they will be free to choose from a platter of equivalent learning tasks, e.g. language, science, environment, arithmetic and vocational. The District unit or the ZSS would be main implementation agency under the guidance and supervision of state agencies i.e. State Resource Centres and State Open Schools. The programme is proposed to be introduced to begin with in 20 Districts in 4 States and later it would be extended to other States as well.

(b) Income Generating Programmes (IGPs)

Income generating programmes are those vocational and technical education programmes which help participants to acquire or upgrade vocational skills and enable them to conduct income generating activities. Since vast number of people in rural areas live in acute poverty this calls for development of special strategies to provide opportunities to economically and socially disadvantaged groups to engage in economic activities through acquisition of relevant vocational, technical and entrepreneurial skills and abilities. Designing of IGPs as a component of CE involves development of a variety of innovative locally relevant, employment oriented vocational courses which may be delivered in multiple non-formal modes comprising of direct contact session, demonstrations, study visits, self-learning modules, on-site training, apprentice training, distance learning or a combination of any of those.

(c) Quality of Life Improvement Programmes (QLIPs)

Quality of life refers to level of well being of the society and the degree of satisfaction of a number of human needs. Quality of life improvement programmes aim to equip learners and the community with essential knowledge, attitudes, values and skills to enable them to improve quality of life as individuals and as members of the community. There is a strong development focus in these programmes as these are directly concerned with helping to raise living standards and to improve life style through education.

(d) Individual Interest Promotion Programmes (IIPPs)

These programmes aim to provide opportunities for individuals to participate in and learn about their chosen social, cultural spiritual, health, physical and artistic interests. The focus of IIPPs is on personal development by providing opportunities for promotion of specialised individual learning interests which may lead to improvement in the quality of human resources of the society.

Enough flexibility and freedom has, however, been granted to the ZSS's to develop their own programmes depending upon various factors such as the literacy levels of beneficiaries, needs and interests of the neo-literates, resources available, potentialities and requirements of various types of life skills, vocational and entrepreneurial skills at the grass-root level.

The Scheme of Continuing Education for Neo-Literates as visualised by NLM is an attempt to provide systematic, organised and well-coordinated mecha-

nisms to mobilise all resources in support of continuing education in the perspective of life long education. We have just embarked on a course which till now remains untraversed. It is, therefore, quite likely that the plan and programmes as outlined may have to be further modified and recast in the future to meet unforeseen exigencies and the demands of changing situations. We are aware that this is only a beginning. To sustain, consolidate and carry forward this movement is a more formidable task that requires unflinching commitment, dedication and perseverance on the part of all concerned and depends for its success largely on the support of those people who have contributed to the success of NLM till date. Given the commitment and effort that has been exhibited at all levels, there is every reason to hope that appropriate measures will be taken to ensure further success in future.

Before I close, let me turn again to the man who founded the Indian Adult Education Association. As we endeavour to banish the curse of illiteracy from our great country, as we strain every muscle and sinew to provide education for all, let us keep before us constantly as our goal, Dr. Zakir Husain said, "A society based on the illimitable freedom of the human mind, where men will not be afraid to follow truth wherever it may lead, nor to tolerate error so long as reason is left free to combat it."

15. Developing a Literate Environment

Anita Rampal

Introduction

It is commonly assumed that the act of reading is a mechanical and continuous process of scanning each word in a line and making sense of its meaning as we go along. We tend to believe that our eyes move smoothly from left to right as we traverse each line. However, interestingly, almost a century ago the French ophthalmologist Javal had shown that reading was a much more complicated process. He saw that our eyes jump about the page at great speed, almost three to four times a second, and it is only during the brief pause between movements that we actually “read”. How our sense of reading relates to the continuity of the text on the page, assimilating sentences or thoughts, and not to the actual jumping movements of the eyes, is a question that scientists still continue to grapple with. The same can be said about the process of reading - from the text to its meaning the reader goes through a rough and complicated journey. The reader constructs her own meanings through an entangled method - of making sense through learned significances, social conventions, personal experiences, previous readings and private tastes.

In trying to understand what shapes a literate environment we shall, in this paper, try to touch upon a host of issues involved. With a brief introduction section 1, we move to section 2, and look at what would make for ‘attractive’ reading materials for neo-literates. Section 3 deals with the importance of public reading and how people could be mobilised and stimulated to read, through different participatory forums, centres and libraries. Lastly, in section 4, we briefly mention various post-literacy activities being tried out in some parts of the country, that can help sustain literacy practices as part of the lives of neo-literates.

A Matter of Tastes

The personal taste of a reader seems to be a quintessential factor that most writers may wish to grapple with - it is shaped by and it also actually shapes the literate skills of an individual. In order to understand better what goes on in the act of reading we shall view the process somewhat metaphorically, and also historically. How can one define a good book? As Francis Bacon had succinctly put it, 'some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed and some few to be chewed and digested.' This curious metaphor of 'ingestion', now widely accepted, was first recorded probably as early as 593 BC, in the land of the Chaldeans, when the prophet Ezekiel had a vision instructing him to speak to the rebellious children of Israel. He was ordered to open his mouth and eat the book given to him, thereby ensuring that its meaning was fully ingested. This ritual of reading through physically 'eating' texts was carried on for centuries, especially in the initiation ceremony for young Jewish boys who were learning to read. The teacher usually placed the boy on his lap and showed him the slate with the Hebrew alphabet written on it. The teacher read out every word while the child repeated it after him. Then the slate was covered with honey and the child licked it, thereby bodily internalising the holy words. Eating of holy verses inscribed on eggs and other edible objects has been a ritual followed in some other civilisations too.

The gastronomic metaphor has more to suggest about why and how someone reads a particular book, and helps us move towards understanding what forms 'attractive' reading material for a given set of readers. For instance, readers may often speak of savouring a book, of finding nourishment in it, of devouring a book ravenously at one sitting, of regurgitating or spewing up a piece read earlier, of ruminating on a passage, or of being put off by the insipid fare. Similarly, we hear of people rolling the words of a poem on the tongue, of feasting on poetry, of getting their teeth into the crux of the story, or even living on a diet of thrillers. In the same vein writers may speak of cooking up a story, using half-baked ideas for a plot, spicing up a scene, rehashing a text, putting together the ingredients of a detective novel, or sometimes ending up with a soggy piece.

In our attempt to analyse materials prepared for neo-literates we need to look more critically at what is really hashed up for them, and why they may not normally relish reading it. We shall need to look more carefully at the recipes used, the stance of these authors towards their consumers who soon lose their appetite for the material routinely churned up for them, and the demands made on the thinking and 'digestive' abilities of the readers.

"I think we ought to read only books that bite and sting us. If the book we are reading does not shake us awake like a blow on the skull, why bother

reading it in the first place?... A book must be the axe for the frozen sea within us." - Franz Kafka

(From 'The Nightmare of Reason: A life of Franz Kafka', by Ernst Pawel, 1984)

Access and Affordability

In addition to the value of the materials produced, it is also crucial to go into the nature of the agencies/organisations engaged in publication, and to analyse the distribution system used by them. This certainly influences the accessibility, cost and quality of such materials. At present there are a plethora of agencies and publishers bringing out books for neo-literates, and there are indications that more are poised to jump into the fray for purely commercial reasons, anticipating adequate funds in the Continuing Education programmes. Are these agencies really addressing the demands of the readers or are they routinely dumping materials at the district/state offices, through centralised procedures of bulk purchase? Do they have any links both with the ground realities of neo-literates and creative writers sensitive to them? Are these books at all affordable for individual readers to buy themselves or are they distributed free only to centres/libraries? What is the nature of the language used and are there sufficient books available in tribal dialects too? Since it is now well accepted that for neo-literates to be able to attain fluency in reading they need to be 'flooded' by attractive and affordable materials, each country would need to look at the mechanisms through which such flooding can be achieved.

The Quality of Literacy and Post-Literacy Materials

Paulo Freire had said texts needed to recognise people's experiential knowledge and debunk the myth that only the rigorous knowledge of the intellectual was worth studying. "People have a right to know better what they already know. ... one counts on the ability of the popular masses to do, to think, to know and to create. One does not particularly deal with delivering to the people more rigorous explanations of the fact, as though these facts were finalised, rigid, and ready to be digested."

One of the texts of the Second Popular Culture Notebook for the post-literacy stage in Sao Tome states:

'Our principal objective in writing the texts of this Notebook is to challenge you, comrades, to think correctly. What do we mean by challenging you to think correctly? To challenge is a verb that means not only to call to battle, but also

to pose a problem, that is, to question, stimulate, provoke. Just as in literacy efforts it does not interest us to teach the people 'b-a=ba', it also does not interest us, in post literacy, to give sentences and texts to read without understanding them."

(From the book *'Reading the Word and the World'*, by Paulo Friere)

However, we found that the material for neo-literates in different states of the country bore a patronising and condescending stance towards the readers. These books ostensibly carried material that was considered to be 'informative' and 'instructive' by the writers. However, this immediately distanced them from the readers, and also constrained their readability. There was little that could truly excite or fascinate a reader, or even arouse her curiosity. More significantly, there was also very little that could pass as good literary material, as language that was truly enjoyable to read.

A particularly poor sample of such books were prepared by a University of Karnataka, as part of its programme of publication of material for neo-literates. These were found to be clearly off the mark, reflecting gross ignorance about the abilities and interests of the potential readers. Overloaded with information taken directly from texts meant for college or high school students, and written in a pedantic style, these books revealed complete insensitivity towards neo-literates. Fortunately, it was pointed out that in practice these books had been rejected by people on the field, and were not really being used by any of the district campaigns.

The Themes and the Content

While we went through hundreds of titles for neo-literates, we noticed that areas such as history or science are particularly marked by pedantic and uninviting themes. The language as well as treatment of the themes also leaves much to be desired. Ironically, even in regions that continue to have a rich tradition of oral history, of stories of legendary persons and events, there has been no attempt to capture such themes in these booklets.

One exception was a comparatively recent series, published on the occasion of the golden jubilee of the country's Independence, on Mahatma Gandhi and his philosophy. The series followed a simple narrative style of presenting how Gandhi actually spoke to the masses on various issues, such as the importance of local self-government, the role of women, etc. The series was written by eminent Gandhians, and they had made a conscious effort to retain the simplicity and efficacy of communication achieved by Gandhi himself, whose style and message had had an unparalleled influence on large sections of our people.

Good Literature and Classics by National and International Authors

In addition, books based on good literature and well-known classics, written by both national as well as international authors, need to be prepared. In Hindi this is being attempted by some groups such as Nirantar, Katha and Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti (BGVS), who have published small booklets as adapted versions of famous classics. Young writers could be encouraged to adapt such literature for neo-literates, while maintaining the essence and flavour of the original work. Clearly, this 'mediatory' set of writers would need to be oriented towards the linguistic style suitable for neo-literates and it is not always possible to expect authors themselves to abridge or adapt their own works.

Folklore and Folk Knowledge

One crucial area that has not been explored by most agencies has been that of folklore, riddles, games and folk stories. The Virudunagar district (earlier known as Kamarajar), in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, had made an attempt to bring out booklets based on such folk knowledge. In fact, one booklet based on the oral legend of 'Naalatunga' became so popular that thousands of copies were sold out immediately. Encouraged by this interest in folk stories and people's ability to buy low-priced books (at rupees 1-2 each), the BGVS Resource Centre at Madurai brought out over a hundred titles for neo-literates, based on a large variety of themes. The Centre also conducted a research study to document and compile the folk knowledge of its readers. Often more than 20,000 copies of a title got sold and in a couple of years lakhs of rupees worth of books were bought by neo-literate readers. This shows that our readers are indeed keen to buy books if only such books are interesting and, more importantly, affordable for them.

It is worth mentioning here that a series of discussion-based workbooks, entitled 'Oru Mudivu Eduppom' or 'Let us decide', were effectively used during the post-literacy phase of the 'Arivoli Iyakkam' campaign in Virudunagar. Real-life problems and dilemmas were posed to the readers and they were provoked to discuss their own responses, which often resulted in absorbing sessions of introspection and debate. These workbooks consciously provided no solutions or canonically 'correct' answers, but only challenged the readers to come to some kind of a consensual agreement. The need to challenge readers and provoke them to think and articulate their views has repeatedly been stressed by Paulo Friere and other educationists, but is rarely found in our materials.

Numeracy

We have found that numeracy is a very weak area and most learners feel frustrated at not being able to cope with the curriculum designed for them in their primers, though they do acutely feel the need for such written skills in their lives. Adults are treated as children, and are taught slowly and often painfully linearly, in a misguided manner adopted in our schools. Just as we do not start teaching adults how to speak before teaching them to read and write, we do not have to make them count simple numbers endlessly before teaching them written numeracy. They are often adept at mental arithmetic as part of their daily transactions, and use effective algorithms and strategies to get results that are normally very accurate. They also continue to enjoy solving oral riddles and play folk games, with tamarind seeds or pebbles, which are both entertaining and also sharpen their mathematical abilities. We at the National Literacy Resource Centre have worked in the area of adult numeracy and linked it to the methods of street and folk mathematics commonly used by neo-literates. Traditional methods of estimation, sorting and measurement still used in villages provide more familiarity, and are also more meaningfully related to their real-life contexts. We have highlighted these issues in a resource book entitled 'Numeracy Counts!', and suggested ways to creatively incorporate these in various teaching-learning situations for neo-literates. In Hindi we now have an expanded version of this book, entitled '*Zindagi Ka Hisab*'.

Gender Issues and Stereotyping of Roles

One striking feature of most of the material we reviewed was a lack of themes dealing sensitively with gender issues, especially those that could inspire women to dare to think differently or to change their own lives. The few that exist on this theme only drably describe how a girl was sent to school, or simply sermonise why it is important for a girl not to be married at an early age. The title or the illustration itself reveals that the theme is going to be moralistic and also perhaps unrealistic. Normally most books, including primers, tend to portray women in stereotyped roles, thus only reinforcing the dominant traditional patriarchal relationships in society. More realistic exceptions were to be found, for instance, in some issues of 'Pitara' and 'Subah', in a few books by the State Resource Centre, Jaipur, in a couple of the Marathi booklets by BGVS, etc.

One story of Kamla, from the Pitara magazine was very interesting. It described how two women from the literacy circle of Banda had gone to 85-year-old Kamla's house and spoken to her about her participation in the freedom movement. The story describes how Kamla had been arrested and put into jail with her two month old daughter, and how she continued her struggle even after she was released. Not only does this present a heroic example of the way women

have participated in many struggles in the past, and are still doing so today, but, more importantly, shows that a lot of material can be based on *oral history*, documented by the literacy activists or the learners themselves.

Local Histories, Biographies of Learners of Marginalised Communities

Innumerable booklets can be published based on the oral accounts of living persons, who participated in national events such as the freedom movement. Similarly many rich accounts of local history need to be documented. We still have many people who have remarkably sharp memories of interesting events or changes that have taken place in their village. People could speak about the first time someone saw a railway line or a school being constructed in their village, the way cropping patterns have changed, how migration affects village life, the travelling circus or cultural troupes they used to see, etc.

It is indeed surprising that there are no inspiring biographies of ordinary men and women, especially from marginalised backgrounds, who have participated in overwhelming numbers in the literacy campaigns. There are thousands of women who have assumed an enhanced self-image and encouraged many others to challenge the stereotypical role they have been expected to play. As active participants of the campaign they have moved out of socially restricted arenas and challenged traditionally oppressive norms. In fact, it was often this sense of empowerment that had motivated women to continue with literacy classes. There is a conspicuous paucity of materials that empathetically deal with the stories of most of our own neo-literates, live people in flesh and blood, who themselves belonged to marginalised sections of the community.

We at the NLRC had published a Hindi booklet for literacy activists, called 'Saaksharta Aayee Cycle par Sawaar' ('Literacy Came Riding on a Cycle'), based on the life stories of women who had learnt to cycle during the Pudukkottai campaign. There are clearly countless such case histories, anecdotes and stories that can be converted to inspiring booklets, for readers who will avidly wish to read about people they know only too well, people so much like themselves.

There is also very little that minority communities can identify with, in terms of the setting, the characters, or even the concerns depicted in these books. We may normally find a couple of sterile accounts of the festivals celebrated or dresses worn by tribals or other minority religious communities, often written by those who view them as somewhat alien.

Scientific and Technological Literacy

We found that there is little on science and that too is overly technical and unsuitable for this readership. Science writing in general suffers from a terse

and transactional stance, and much more concerted effort to evolve an expressive style for neo-literates is required. For instance, in one Kanada book on 'Eclipses' the explanations about the phenomenon were provided in too formal a manner, with obscure line drawings and illustrations normally used in high school texts. No attempt whatsoever was made to familiarise the readers in the codes and representations used in those illustrations.

Moreover, as part of a conscious drive to address the issue of *scientific literacy* there is need to be sensitive to people's deep social beliefs while providing alternative 'scientific' explanations to them. We can speak of eclipses, but must link the description to what is observed by them, and also to their existing legends about such cosmological phenomena. Dismissing their beliefs cursorily, and deliberately not trying to address how civilisations in the past have sought various explanations for such natural occurrences, can be alienating for them. It also gives the unnecessary impression that science is too 'impersonal' and opposed to all that they hold dear or sacred. It is imperative to appreciate that inculcation of scientific temper is a slow and complex process, and remains embedded within the various layers of social cognition - between myths, beliefs, folklore, superstitions, taboos, etc.- that have influenced people's thinking for centuries.

In this context, one good example of a successful attempt to sensitively address such issues is from the book 'Brahmaanda Yaatra' or Cosmic Voyage (BGVS, Delhi). During the last total solar eclipse in 1994 many literacy activists in the country had conducted a special 'Cosmic Voyage', under the aegis of the All India People's Science Network and the BGVS (we shall discuss this in the next section on mobilisation). The poems and plays in this book indicate how to use methods of communication that incorporate people's own beliefs and legends, while presenting new knowledge. For instance, the poem 'Bahut Sundar Lagega Surya' (by Arun Kamal) lucidly describes how the sun will look amazingly beautiful during the total eclipse, and the different phenomena that can be observed during those special moments. The play 'Graham men bhi Surya Sundar' (The Sun is Beautiful During the Eclipse Too) by Rajkamal Nayak, is an attempt to creatively weave popular myths, beliefs and rituals with scientific explanations. With characteristic folk humour and satire the play goads the audience to come out and see the spectacular event. Similarly, Eklavya had published material that looked at both the modern theories about astronomy and simultaneously gave what tribal societies have conjectured through their own observations.

In the context of scientific and technological literacy it is also felt that much more material should be made on 'artisanal science'. It is important to present issues people may ordinarily deal with as part of their vocations, and yet which may have never been considered as 'science'. Much can be written on the

scientific techniques or methods artisans have learnt through their own empirical observations. For instance, the fascinating methods and rich knowledge people have refined over the centuries about natural dyes used in block printing, or the indigenous methods of metal casting, or of baking and firing in furnaces meant for different types of ceramics or terracotta, etc. An interesting example of material based on people's indigenous knowledge is another story from Pitara called 'Hunar Chahiye' ('The need for skill'). It describes the skills of a woman who can extract honey from different bee-hives, and also the special techniques used by a tribal community which can dexterously deal with the hives of wild bees.

Population Education and Reproductive Health

There are a number of Population Education Cells in various State Resource Centres, which bring out large volumes of materials on such issues. However, the quality of these books and posters leaves much to be desired. Firstly, these agencies have not fully reckoned with the fact that the issue of 'population education' has itself undergone a paradigmatic shift since after the Cairo conference. Continuing to target women with top-down messages about planning for a small family, and being solely responsible for the health of their children, is contrary to the spirit of this conference. A more holistic perspective to human development, and social development in particular, is urgently required in this area, or lest objectionable material may continue to be produced in the name of population education. In fact, to break away from the problematic perspectives of the past, this name has itself undergone change in many quarters.

Similarly, many booklets and primers dealing with issues of health, nutrition and hygiene reflect a heavy middle-class bias, and little sensitivity towards the condition of the readers. Bluntly projecting the notion that readers are ignorant of the basic facts of cleanliness or personal hygiene, such books tend to mindlessly impart pedantic instructions. Moreover, the methods suggested are often impractical for the poor who cannot afford two square meals a day but are told to make fruit juice in an electric juicer.

Use of Oral Traditions in Written Language

In the context of writing for neo-literates, it becomes crucial to recognise that the language style of oral communication is much more expressive and personal, and draws upon rich traditions of narrative, through the imagery of

metaphors and analogies. Written language which is formal, impersonal and terse in comparison, can seem alien and distanced for readers, and may often fail to engage their interest. Moreover, the additional effort they need to make best use of their as yet fragile literacy can also discourage them sooner than those already initiated in the literate tradition of communication. Writing that creatively draws upon the strengths of oral traditions, is simple yet not simplistic, and is equally sophisticated in its literary content, needs to be promoted.

It is interesting to note that historically the use of ballads had played a significant role in the spread of literacy in England. In trying to understand how ordinary men and women had gained access to literacy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, much before institutionalised schools had begun, researchers have looked at how literacy had become a part of popular culture. The market was flooded by 'chapbooks' and thousands of printed ballads, sold cheaply by pedlars or 'chapmen', as they were known owing to the cheapness of their wares. The chapman wore a long pack, mostly open and hanging from his neck in front of him, and sold almanacs, books and other trifling wares. He would set himself up at a fair, sing and recite a few verses from his books, and then sell copies as fast as he could hand them out. Even the non-literate poor bought ballad sheets at fairs and pasted them on their walls at home. People loved to sing and recite them and those who could not read would ask visitors to teach them the words. The ballads would be about the usual popular topics – about unrequited love, miracles, strange occurrences, folk heroes, contemporary politics, religion, and so on. The most popular topics of the broadsheets were accounts of executions, and hangmen did a thriving business out of their privileged access to the condemned men and women, whose life stories they would record and sell at their hangings. Chapbooks were usually single sheets of cheap paper folded to make a 24-page booklet, and were sold for a penny or so. They too dealt with a range of subjects – history, folk tales, retellings of classical myths, tales of crimes and criminals, prophecies, etc. These books and broadsheets were bought as essential wares even by poor people. Curiously, 'in these printed materials, folk culture and national history coexisted; through literacy they became increasingly linked.' (T.Laqueur, *The Cultural Origins of Popular Literacy in England*, Oxford Review of Education, 1976).

Not a Question of 'Going Down to their Level'

It must be recognised that neo-literates are adults who have enough knowledge and experience of their own, and that writing for them has to be distinctly different from writing for children, who occupy a separate cognitive space. Moreover, moving into the cognitive domain of neo-literates requires a con-

scious lateral shift, and is not simply 'going down to their level', as is commonly assumed. Indeed it is this metaphorical 'going down to their level' which has resulted in a lot of condescending and patronising material to be written for them.

Materials in Different Dialects

There are hardly any reading materials in different dialects and this is an area that needs immediate attention. Though a few districts did try to develop primers in tribal dialects, (such as the ones made by the State Resource Centre at Jaipur, or those in Vagri by the Banswara literacy campaign), there do not exist adequate books and materials in the spoken languages of neo-literates.

In Dumka district of Bihar, for instance, it was found that the health primer in Santhali was very popular as compared to the same book in Hindi. However, in the post-literacy phase people demand more books and often feel disheartened when they find that most books and magazines are written in chaste Hindi, printed at Patna or Delhi, places far from their district, and therefore far removed from their interests and concerns. I remember the small rural library in the tribal region of the district, which was run by an exceptionally motivated volunteer, who had meticulously arranged all the magazines and books in the room constructed for the purpose. He proudly showed us all the materials he had carefully displayed, but looked unhappy when asked how many people came regularly to read books. He said they did not find the books and magazines useful and interesting. Even though people could read the same script they still identified more with their own mother tongue and would come to the library more often if many more books were developed in Santhali

The National Book Trust has produced only 3-4 booklets in Santhali, and those too are translations of books meant for children. Translations from Hindi might be a first step but does not always bring out the nuances and the richness of the original idiom. The NBT needs to devote much more serious attention to this area of work, and to forge closer links with the local people in such districts, while encouraging them to write (and draw) for themselves.

Visual Language, Folk and Tribal Art

Visual language is also an important medium of communication and is deeply embedded in cultural traditions and social symbolic conventions. Most of the literacy material is inadequately or poorly visualised, and this aspect is generally not taken seriously. Notable exceptions are books prepared by the National Book Trust, which make conscious use of visuals designed by creative

artists and illustrators. It is true that engaging good professional artists can cause a financial burden on most agencies, and that even local illustrators usually available for the design of such books are groomed in a singularly urban style, and draw characters and situations that belong to a limited genre. It is therefore necessary to include folk and rural artists in production teams, and some groups such as Eklavya, Katha and Nirantar have managed to enlarge the repertoire of visual design through such consistent efforts.

Learners as Writers and Designers

Not just for the design and artwork but also for the writing and conception of such material more neo-literates themselves need to be encouraged to participate. There has been a rich body of oral material generated through the literacy campaigns in many districts, in the form of songs, poems, slogans, anecdotes and biographical stories. These now need to be brought out as suitable written booklets, with the close involvement of the learners and volunteers themselves.

Some attempts have been made but have not been sustained for long. Recently the State Resource Centre, Indore, had held a workshop to create broadsheets prepared and designed by learners, but one has to see how these are to be continued. One exemplary effort that has indeed managed to sustain over the last few years is that of the 'Mahila Dakiya' or Women's Post. This is brought out every month by the women's group at Banda (U.P.), supported by the Mahila Samakhya programme. Started in response to the felt literacy needs of the village women trained as handpump mechanics, it has developed into a regular broadsheet managed by them. A concerted effort was made to include varied kinds of material- informative, narrative, experiential as well as creative. A combination of different types of texts are used – direct text, short blurbs, poems, songs, picture stories, etc. and the illustrations too are made by the learners themselves. The contributory cost is kept at rupee one per copy and a thousand copies are normally printed. An important feature of this publication is the effort to get feedback and weave it into the process of creation. Follow-up workshops to read and discuss other relevant materials have helped women to develop a more analytic perspective and have also reinforced their writing skills.

The Significance of Public Reading

The art of reading aloud has had a significant place in the history of literacy, and in many countries it played an important social function. Several literacy campaigns made conscious use of public reading to mobilise learners. In fact,

for neo-literates working for long hours in sedentary occupations, it has been found enriching and motivating to have someone read out to them. A 'beedi' factory in Kerala continues to have one worker, whose salary is paid by the workers' collective, to read out the newspaper to them while they work.

Interestingly, over a century ago this tradition of public reading in factories was established in Cuba, as part of its cigar-making industry. In 1865 Saturnino Martinez, a cigar-maker and poet, had conceived of publishing a newspaper *La Aurora* for the industry workers, which would contain not only political features but also articles on science, literature, poetry, etc. Many famous Cuban intellectuals and writers contributed to the paper, but it was soon realised that the lack of literacy was a major stumbling block. In order to make the paper accessible to all workers Martinez used the idea of a public reader. One worker served as the official 'lector', while the others paid for his efforts from their own pockets. In 1866 the newspaper reported:

"Reading in the factory has begun for the first time among us. This constitutes a giant step in the march of progress of our workers, since in this way they will gradually become familiar with books, the source of everlasting friendship and great entertainment."

Among the books read aloud were collections of poetry, historical compendiums, novels and also manuals of political economy. Interestingly, the novel 'The Count of Monte Cristo' by Alexander Dumas became so popular that a group of workers wrote to the author in 1870, asking him to lend the name of his hero to one of their cigars, and he consented. The readings were varied and had a fixed timetable for different contents. Novels and stories were read in the afternoons, and 'lectors' or readers were also expected to interpret different characters by suitably modulating their voices like actors. It was found that workers, who had been exposed to several years of public reading, were able to quote from memory long passages of prose or poetry.

Akbar, the famous Mughal emperor, is known to have had an excellent memory, and was familiar with the thousands of books in his library only through listening to them being read aloud everyday. In fact, it is said that he was so fond of books and philosophical debate that many of the wise men invited to his court did not realise that he was non-literate. The act of public reading has the potential power to mesmerise audiences even in oral performances and narrations of ballads. It is reported that even today in the north of France, village story-tellers use books as props, pretending to read them, even as they may hold them upside down, though they actually recite through memory. The possession of the book is seen to endow the reader with authority, and the power to create a story. The act of being read to is relished even today by literate societies, while they listen to an actor read a book on tape, or attend public readings by authors who choose to give voice to selected passages from their works.

Jan Vachan Andolan and Book Festivals

In our own country it has been recognised that only setting up rural libraries is not enough to get neo-literates to read. A massive effort to mobilise readers, through folk media and 'kala jathas' used during the initial campaigns, has proved to be effective in popularising material produced for neo-literates. The Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti (BGVS) has undertaken the 'Jan Vachan Andolan' (the Public Reading Movement) towards this end. Volunteers perform plays and sing songs in the same folk style used for Kala Jathas, mobilising people to read books, and then arrange for the public reading of some selected booklets. Activists describe the mesmerising moments when a volunteer with a resounding voice read aloud a book to an enthralled audience of 400-500 people gathered in a village square. In fact, these sessions of public reading had first been tried in the Virudunagar district (in TN), where it was found that people bought books in thousands and read them too. In other places too such reading aloud, through an expressive exposition, has been found to trigger people's interest in reading, has lent more familiarity with the books and given them more confidence to buy these for themselves. This exercise has also provided essential feedback to those engaged in producing books for neo-literates, since through discussions they have been able to gauge more closely the areas of interest and the indicators of readability of their readers.

Cultural Mobilisation

As mentioned earlier, the 'Cosmic Voyage' programme during the last total solar eclipse had proved very effective in mobilising people to come out and witness the spectacular event. For the first time in our country millions of people had dared to break away from their superstitions and beliefs, and also overcome the unwarranted fears that our media had propagated, by overstating the message that 'eyes could be permanently damaged' while observing the eclipse. Indeed, science activists had been shocked to see the response of the state on the last occasion in 1980, when the national TV channel had broadcast a popular film at exactly the time of the total eclipse in order to keep people indoors. However, this time the strength of the cultural mobilisation methods of the literacy campaigns, and the network of activists who could conduct thousands of contact programmes across the country, did get people out in large numbers. I personally recall the momentous event at Bhind (M.P.), when early morning, before sunrise, a massive crowd thronged the school building where we had camped at night, and demanded more solar 'goggles', sold at a nominal price. Telescopes and cameras had been positioned on the terrace, and villagers avidly watched the changing phenomena at the moment of totality, spellbound. Some people offered

sweets to celebrate and also make a point that it was not 'inauspicious' to eat during the eclipse. Songs were sung about the event, and about the power of literacy in helping us 'read the world', and learn more about our universe.

Public awareness and acceptance of new knowledge is also the hallmark of a literate environment. The success of the Eclipse programme only reinforces that literacy can mean more than just learning to read and write, and that mobilisation needs to be continued even after people have completed the first phase of their literacy classes. Very effective techniques for cultural mobilisation have been developed in our country during the TLC phase. In fact, the success of the national 'Pulse Polio Programme' and many school enrolment drives was attributed to similar mobilisation mechanisms by the same people. Concerted efforts now need to be made on different occasions, and for various purposes. Public reading campaigns and book festivals are one such objective, but districts would need to evolve many more programmes to widen the scope of literacy and work towards a sustained literate environment.

The Case of Andhra Pradesh

A concerted attempt has been made in the state of Andhra Pradesh to set up a large system of rural libraries and Continuing Education Centres (CEC) at the block and village level. Discussions with state level resource persons and administrators revealed that the structure for the programme had indeed been worked out carefully, but more creative effort is now required to sustain its activities. The village communities have participated and pooled in to provide funds, and also helped identify suitable persons to form village committees to run the centres. A regular weekly programme called 'Vaaram Vaaram Vigyan' has been carefully designed and carried out over the last year. The topic for each week is decided in advance by the State Level Consultative Committee and a booklet is prepared. About a hundred copies are sent to each of the district teams, to use them for their own broadsheet. There is of course a time lag in this process, and it depends on the ability of each district to actually make use of these booklets.

The topics chosen for the weekly meetings have been more functional and related to rural development, such as, irrigation management, minimum wages, a visit to the post office, welfare schemes, what do we expect from people's representatives, etc. However, there is need to select other creative areas, which allow neo-literates to read, discuss and listen to literary material as well as to participate in social debates. Moreover, the programme is centralised at the state level, though district members are part of the state team, but in future there is need to encourage districts to devise their own programmes. The Chittoor district team which ran a newspaper has now become involved in this statewide

enterprise; similarly, many of the district campaigns are losing momentum, and require specific agendas for their own Continuing Education programmes.

Andhra Pradesh has had a good history of the public library movement, financed through a library cess collected by the local bodies, as defined by the Public Library Act of 1960. Last year a sum of eight crores (eighty million) rupees had been collected as library cess alone, though no new books had been bought owing to certain bureaucratic lapses. The Zilla Granthalaya Sansthans are managed by officers nominated by the government and the panchayats. The government has a separate Department for Public Libraries and disburses salaries to the officers and librarians. Unfortunately, in the last couple of years, this system has not been functioning effectively, and a number of posts of librarians have been lying vacant. More importantly, there is need to create links with the Department of Adult Education, which runs the literacy programme.

'Real' Literacy Materials and Activities

It is imperative to think of literacy in terms of materials from different real-life activities, if one has to create a truly literate environment. Moreover, users of 'real' texts do not just read them, they actually engage with them. In fact, different users will engage with texts according to their different experiences and purposes. Thus there is now less emphasis on finding the 'readability' of texts per se, but more on how people with specific experiences engage with them (Rogers, A. et al, 'Redefining Post-literacy in a Changing World', Paper no. 29, DFID, London).

State Resource Centres could use participatory appraisal methods to find out what kinds of different 'real' literacy materials and tasks already exist in a given community, which may form the basis of a Continuing Education Programme. Moreover, there is an urgent need for campaigns to try and simplify and redesign existing formats of documents, such as, registration forms, bank slips, official or legal papers, etc. in order to make them more accessible for neo-literates, and, most often, also the literates.

Participatory resource mapping

As is apparent from the example of the Andhra Public Libraries, running the literacy programme without creating links with other departments or programmes, both within and outside the government, will limit the literacy agenda in the long run. At the village level many more participatory activities can be undertaken to integrate reading and writing skills for neo-literates through their engagement with 'real' literacy materials. For instance, village resource mapping exercises have been undertaken in the context of school mapping or

watershed management programmes, and neo-literates have avidly participated. Such activities also provide natural opportunities to learners for improving their own technical skills. In addition, as part of the programme for Continuing Education it has been suggested that more short-term courses for skill upgradation and vocational training be given to neo-literates. Such courses would also help in improving their scientific and technological literacy skills.

Thrift societies and savings groups: the MALAR case study

As a consequence of the women's involvement in the literacy campaigns, there has been a demand for the formation of many small savings groups for women. This has allowed them to save small amounts, keep control over their savings, while liberating them from the clutches of the moneylenders. These thrift and small savings groups of women neo-literates have required training in account keeping and also in computing optimal choices for income generation.

The Campaign for the Right to Information

In some districts the campaign for the Right to Information was taken up as part of the post-literacy campaign, whereby neo-literates were encouraged to personally check muster rolls or records of the public distribution system, to ensure proper utilisation of funds and resources. This was naturally an added motivation for them to engage with lists and records and look for false entries. It is clear that such campaigns, if they are strong enough to resist the inevitable political pressures from vested interests, will not only help participatory management but also place a premium on the possession of literacy skills.

Concluding remarks

As was pointed out at the beginning, this study is an attempt to understand the plethora of parameters that constitute a good literate environment. Each country would need to critically analyse the current status of what can be broadly termed its body of literacy materials, as well as the processes of attaining such an environment for all its neo-literates. It is well known that adults use various kinds of literacies in widely differing contexts. However, most persons engaged in developing post-literacy materials do not necessarily appreciate this diversity, and often conform to a uniform pattern. Much mobilisation is required to motivate learners to sustain their reading and writing skills through different life-related literacy practices, while also ensuring that they are indeed surrounded or flooded by truly attractive and affordable materials. The crucial role of written materials in tribal dialects and greater visible representation of minority

communities and their concerns needs to be emphasised. Consciously rejecting the patronising stance found in most primers and books, we must acknowledge readers as knowledgeable adults, who are keen to know better what they may already know, and are yet ready to be challenged to think differently.

Public awareness, acceptance of new ideas and collective action for change are significant indicators of a literate environment. It must be acknowledged that scientific and technological literacy is not simply achieved through publishing or reading of scientific materials alone, but is a more complex and gradual process of reviewing our own belief systems. The role of changing patterns of social cognition and critical thinking among neo-literates, through the availability of credible and alternative explanations has to be recognised while working towards this goal. Moreover, newer areas of 'artisanal science' or folk numeracy have to be studied seriously, to learn and appreciate how people have empirically coped with their rich indigenous and unwritten knowledge systems. Linking literacy with various other programmes, and involving participatory resource management and greater political participation at the village level can help sustain an environment that truly places a premium on literacy skills.

16. Informal Learning Processes of Small Entrepreneurs in New Delhi*

Madhu Singh

Introduction

In a country as populous as India, workers trained in the formal sector form only a very small percentage of the total skilled labour force. There are only a few formal vocational training centres, such as vocational training schools and technical institutes, access to which is limited to very few people. Most are therefore left to their own resources to acquire knowledge, abilities and skills with the goal of making themselves independent in the informal sector¹. This sector is growing dramatically. For India it may be assumed that more than half the urban population work in the informal sector (Joshi and Joshi 1976; Papola 1981; Kulkarni 1993).

The aim of this essay is to give some information on the existing learning processes, training practices and experience whereby skills, behavioural attributes and other competences are acquired for conducting businesses in the informal sector of New Delhi. Furthermore, some concepts and models will be sketched on the basis of which education and training programmes, and existing mechanisms for the acquisition of competence for the informal sector, could be more suitably designed.

The central questions of the enquiry therefore run: what competences are required by people in the informal sector? How are these competences acquired? And how, finally, can they be transmitted? "Competence" here is intended to mean a combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes and modes of behaviour. The notion of competence here does not only comprise "occupational" competences, which can be either instrumental or commercial competence, but "general" competences for action strategies. "General" competences relate to communicative, social and cultural action strategies, for example, the ability to deal with

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local formal and informal structures of power, to deal with governmental regulations and laws, to represent and articulate collective and individual interests, to cooperate and to organize raw materials, production and marketing. These frequently play a considerable part in economic survival in the informal sector. Self-confidence, initiative, flexibility and persistence are often crucial in deciding whether someone can survive in the face of the tough competition and the obstacles, some of them considerable, met with in the informal sector. With regard to the great importance of general competence in action strategies, therefore, a restriction to "vocational" competence would not be adequate.

In existing studies on the informal sector, the questions investigated, the analytical categories, and the fields of activity covered are as heterogeneous as the informal sector itself; this casts doubt on comparability and generalisability as regards the processes of the acquisition of competence. The number of evaluation studies of training projects has risen recently. This has enriched the discussion of both the success and the failure of training projects, but such studies are as a rule directed at the funding institutions and are limited to particular target groups. Furthermore, they hardly take into account the interactive dimensions of learning processes and employment in the informal sector. The effects of the training projects primarily benefit the western industrialised countries with their export-oriented economies, and the domestic elites. The mass of the population only has access to vocational training within the informal sector. "Official" statistics on "manpower development" in India are exclusively related to persons who have received a formal general or vocational education. This is paradoxical because the informal sector makes a decisive contribution in the economic sphere and dominates in the field of skill development. Furthermore, they hardly provide information about the forms of employment, or the level of competence or education of the employees and their conditions of work. It is therefore necessary to carry out empirical studies on the spot.

The task of researching the interactive aspects of working and learning experiences in the informal sector is of course a large and complex one and not all aspects can be dealt with in so short a space as this. I have therefore limited myself mainly to a discussion of the "careers" of persons in the informal sector. The process of acquisition of "general" and "vocational" skills is marked by several phases. The processes of learning within each phase have important consequences for the transition between phases, the forms of acquisition of competence, and access to the informal sector, and influence orientation and attitudes to employment in the informal sector. By means of the reconstruction of individual biographies and subject-related analyses in terms of "competence development", in the case of the persons studied as to their economic activity, their action strategies in the informal sector are followed up and conclusions expected as to where particular competences are acquired, or are not acquired

or acquired insufficiently. The success or failure of a micro-enterprise are not only dependent on macro-economic conditions (the history and structure of an industry), but also on the careers of individuals (Saberwal 1976). From the course of informal training that a person has behind him, objective opportunity structures in the informal sector and in society as a whole can be filtered out.

This essay is based on field research in two informal settlements of New Delhi (Trinagar and Sagarpur), which were selected because of the range of economic activities in the informal sector there. The selected areas consist of simple concrete dwellings, and almost every living unit is also utilised by a small business. Most of the owners of these small businesses work in tiny one-room workshops. Those who moved to the above-mentioned areas a decade ago pay less rent than more recent tenants; where the production of goods take place, the value of the property also rises. These two areas have good traffic connections to the other parts of New Delhi. Most of the workers (wage labourers, helpers, apprentices and casual labourers) live in the nearby slums and in some cases in the areas concerned.

The results of the New Delhi questionnaire, which was carried out in 1992-3, reflect the replies of 105 small entrepreneurs who have acquired their skills by various forms of "learning through working". In the following sections, some characteristics of these small entrepreneurs will be presented.

Eight fields of activity were chosen: the production of furniture and metal goods, the repair of motor scooters, tailoring, the production of plastic goods, office and pottery goods and printing. These activities are particularly typical of the relevant fields of investigation and the productive area of the informal sector. The activities were selected because a higher intensity of training, a certain degree of technical skill and the application of technology can be expected from the activities selected than either in services such as shoe-cleaning, car-washing etc. Or purely commercial activities such as trade. Typical women's activities such as pottery or tailoring were included. The study is rather concerned with finding out the process of the acquisition of competence than with the attempt to be statistically representative.

Small entrepreneurs are the owners and at the same time managers of the non-registered small firms, in which up to ten workers are employed, working under unprotected and unregulated conditions of employment. In the case of the "mini-enterprise", the enterprise consists only of the entrepreneur. Small entrepreneurs concern themselves with organisation, management and production in the firm and bear the business risk alone. Three categories of small and very small entrepreneur can be distinguished, as they point to important differences in the organisation of work and forms of training.

1. Small entrepreneurs who are subcontractors to larger firms in the formal

sector, and employ wage labourers, assistant, apprentices and casual labourers.

2. Small entrepreneurs who produce mainly for the local market, so that the chief form of interdependence is the network of relations between the micro-enterprises sector. In contrast to the micro-enterprises of the first category, which produce "intermediary" goods for large exporting firms, such dense neighbourhood networks serve their own markets and are therefore relatively independent. Such micro-enterprises also employ wage labourers, assistants, family helpers, apprentices and casual labourers.
3. The smallest entrepreneurs mostly work alone, with only the assistance of family members and casual labourers.

Contrary to the general claim that younger small entrepreneurs have a higher formal education, the data do not support this. The older entrepreneurs include a larger proportion of persons with primary schooling only, but the proportion of older owners of micro-enterprises with secondary school education is higher than with the younger owners.

92 male and 13 female entrepreneurs were questioned, as a consequence of the decision to include women's activities in the survey; with few exceptions, activities tend to be gender-specific. It is to be noted that men are more represented in technical trades and women in "household" production. Men and women differ in various ways, e.g. with regard to their level of education. There are, however, differences within the group of women too, with the average female potter having less training than the women who produce office goods.

The social and Ethnic-cultural Background of the Small Entrepreneurs

The manufacturing and repair trades of the informal sector has attracted workers from certain socio-ethnic groupings, which derives from a long history of migration from the bordering states. Some activities in the informal sector are dominated by entrepreneurs belonging to certain ethnic groups and originating from particular regions of India. Migrants from the Punjab (predominantly Adi-Dharmi and Ramgarhia castes) dominate in the production of metal goods and furniture. Potters (Kumhar caste) originate from villages in the states of Rajasthan and Haryana. Makers of plastic articles are chiefly from the Bania caste, who live in Haryana. The trading background of the Bania caste has to some extent given them a monopoly in the manufacture of plastics².

By comparison with the role of the Adi-Dharmi and Ramgarhia castes in wooden and metal goods production, which are also practised by other castes

communities, the production of unglazed pottery products is done solely by members of the Kumahar caste, i.e. the making of unglazed pottery is determined (“ascribed”) by birth into the Kumahar community and still not accessible to members of other castes (nor wished by other castes, on account of the low status). The art of pottery is still taught within the family by a master or “guru”. Both the learning processes connected with the craft and the revering of tools at festivals surround the craft with traditional sanctity. The Kumahar community is so much identified with its craft that pottery represents a way of life to them. Similarly, the business skills of the Bania caste are embedded in the family and the caste.

Only 35.2 percent (37) of the entrepreneurs questioned were born in New Delhi. The 64.8% (68) immigrated from federal states bordering on New Delhi. The main reason for their migration has been the search for work. When they migrated, just over half (36) of the 68 migrants were under 15 years of age, and presumably accompanied their families.

Table 1
Family Background and Migrant Status

Migrant Status	Family Background			
	Agriculture	Craftsman	Wage Labourer	Office Worker
Born in New Delhi	9.1 (2)	21.3 (10)	66.7 (10)	71.4 (15)
Migrants	90.9 (20)	78.7 (37)	33.3 (5)	28.6 (6)
Total:	21.0 (22)	44.8 (47)	14.3 (15)	20.0 (21)

The other half (32) of the migrants, however, were between 15 and 34 years old. In rural areas, wage labour of the non-permanent type offered in the urban informal sector is hardly to come by. Furthermore, the work that does exist is badly and irregularly paid. Even the introduction of agricultural courses as a way of contributing to productive work does not render it possible to keep school attenders in rural areas.

Migrants perform important work in the informal sector. A number of entrepreneurs prefer migrants, because they can be engaged as simple labourers without special knowledge or skills and are prepared to work for a low daily wage. The more dynamic among the migrants who have succeeded in making themselves independent have also enriched the informal sector of New Delhi with particular activities. Thus potters satisfy the demand for clay pots in the city. This activity is linked to a low status, and thus limited to a few communities and castes.

Bar Diagram

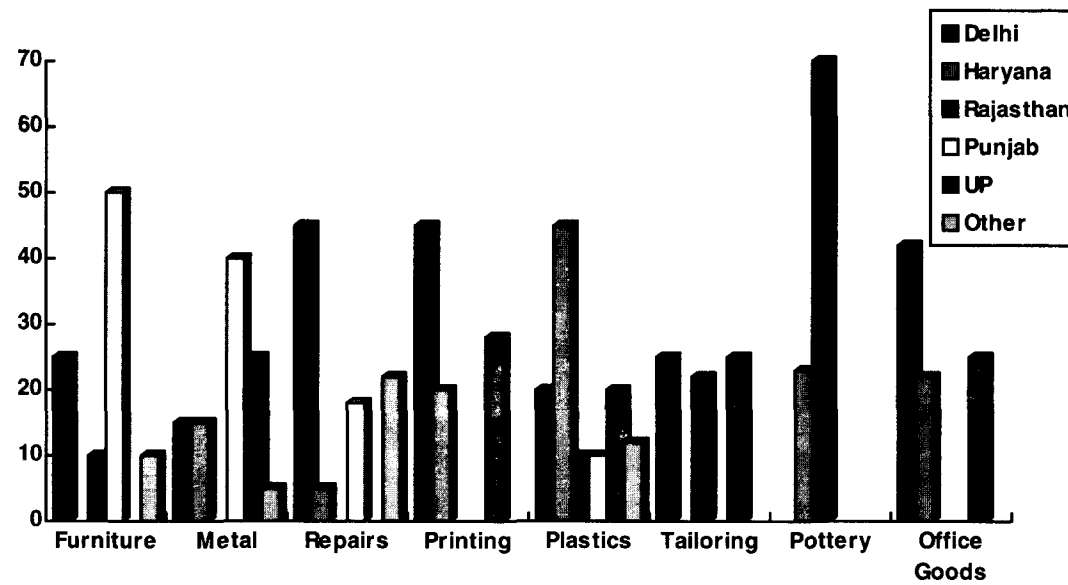


Diagram-1 - Regional Background and Trade in the Informal Sector, New Delhi.

Entrepreneurs born in the city spent their childhood in families in which the father worked as wage labourers or office workers. In 15 cases, the fathers are either petty officials or have had a "supervisory states" in the public service or public industry. A high percentage of the migrants have fathers who are independent tradesmen or craftsmen.

Migrant Status and Education

The connection between the migrant status and the level of education is equally important, for it shows us the social conditions that predominate within the informal sector. The question as to what social groupings predominate in the informal sector leads to important revelations about the acquisition of competence in this sector. Among those questioned, the migrants have a lower level of education than the non-migrants.

In India a student is financially supported by his family, because little or no financial assistance from outside exists. This means that the non-migrants with a high level of education have families able to pay for the school and college attendance of their children from their income. This indicates that relatively better-placed families, after they have supported the school education of their children, subsequently provide little capital for them so that young persons can start on their own. In view of the inadequate opportunities for formal employment, many young people have no other chance than to ensure their survival within the informal sector. In contrast to earlier times, when only persons with a low educational level, chiefly migrants, worked in the informal sector, today people are also employed in it who have received a formal education, were born in the city, and come from families that have been employed as waged or petty white-collar workers.

Table 2
Migrant Status and Education

Migrant Status	Level Education			
	No formal Education*	Primary School	Secondary and College	School**
Born in New Delhi	0.0 (0)	29.6 (8)	49.2 (29)	(37)
Migrants	100.0 (19)	70.4 (19)	50.8 (30)	(68)
Total:	(19)	(27)	(59)	(105)

* With or without primary school leaving certificate

** Incl. "matriculates" (10th grade) and "higher" secondary school-leavers (12th grade).

The low level of education of the migrants seems to be balanced by the fact that they bring the traditional craft skills with them into the informal sector (37 migrants had fathers who were employed in trade or a craft) and are supported by a mechanism of socio-economic and kinship networks. Studies of the informal sector have shown that the stream of migrants, once set in motion, is hard to divert, because new migrants only go where their relatives, friends or village acquaintances are. This also leads to a concentration of particular migrants within a given field of activity.

School Attendance and Employment

Among the entrepreneurs questioned, there are 18.1% with no formal education, 25.7% with primary school education and 56.2% with secondary school education. The raising of the general level of education by reason of the process of democratisation with intensified attendance at primary and secondary school can certainly also be observed in the population of the informal sector of New Delhi.

Whether the various fields of activity are influenced by differences in educational level or by differences in entry qualifications can hardly be seen from the table below. Except in the case of the producers of pottery goods, who have a very low level of education, there is no clear-cut statement regarding entry qualifications.

Table 3
Education and Employment in the Informal Sector of New Delhi

Trade	Education Without Formal Education	Primary School Education	Secondary to College Education
Furniture	16.7	33.2	50.1
Metal	6.7	13.3	80.1
Repairs	15.4	38.5	46.2
Printing	0.0	13.3	60.0
Plastics	13.3	6.7	80.1
Tailoring	16.7	33.3	50.0
Pottery	57.1	28.6	14.3
Office Goods	22.2	33.3	44.4
Overall	18.1	25.7	56.2

However, some trends can be observed regarding the connection between the level of education and the type of activity. At the same time, there are important differences within each trade in the level of the various activities. For instance, metal goods production involves a broad spectrum of products with the most varied levels of technology and different forms of work process. Among the female tailors we find a large percentage of illiterates. This may be traced to the large number of women in this field who carry out minor sewing work at home. Nevertheless, precisely in this field of business 50 of the entrepreneurs have "matriculation" (10th grade) or have attended a "college" after leaving secondary school. These are, for instance, clothing manufacturers, who are chiefly men. They have direct contacts with the large export firms, from whom they get their largest orders. In this area, only one woman has concluded her matriculation and taken a course in tailoring.

Entrepreneurs in printing are in almost all cases better qualified than those in other trades. This may be attributable to the nature of the trade itself, since work in printing shops requires a minimum basic knowledge of reading and writing. The production of metal goods, too, demands a relatively better level of education than that of other products. There are few illiterates among the producers of metal goods. Most of them are "self-made men" with years of experience in micro-enterprises in the informal sector.

The educational profiles of the various trades are important, but it is to be noted that this connection is also influenced by variables such as age, sex and ethnic background.

None of the informants was able to give a clear answer to the question as to the usefulness of school attendance for their employment in the informal sector. Practical knowledge leading to the carrying out of independent activities or useful for the informal sector was not acquired at school. A certain measure of formal education, the ability to read and write, was present in all those questioned. Attending school had served this purpose, and contributed to the adaptability of the entrepreneurs in the urban labour market. General competences such as linguistic and mathematical abilities are transferable from one context to another, and are accounted a basic component on the basis of which further competences, whether acquired at school or in extra-school economic activities, can be expanded and diversified (Bowman 1988, 149-171).

In contrast to the usefulness of formal school education, informants thought more useful the learning experience they had had through socialisation in the firm in the informal sector and through family and personal relations.

Formal Vocational Training

Persons employed in the informal sector today are mainly equipped with a general school education (81.9%), but the proportion of persons with formal

vocational training in the field of micro-enterprises in the informal sector is still very small, which applies in general to the whole area of the informal sector.

Only 2.4 (13) percent of the entrepreneurs questioned received a formal vocational training. 87.6% have no training. Of these 13 entrepreneurs, ten were registered in state institutions.

Entrepreneurs of the small and smallest enterprises have almost no experience in formal institutions of vocational training. Nevertheless, a trade analysis shows that manufacturers of metal goods and owners of repair shops for motor scooters have had more vocational training. By contrast, makers of plastic articles and office supplies and owners of printing shops have a low level of formal vocational training.

This reflects the fact that the under-privileged strata that form the majority in the informal sector have so far been only inadequately catered for in formal vocational training. The growing demand for education is an increasingly important political requirement, but the planners and policy-makers have done little to take account of vocational training as a central basic human need within the educational system.

Three of the entrepreneurs questioned have attended private vocational training institutes. One attended an institute run by a church organisation. For 6 entrepreneurs, the training course lasted between 3 months and 1.5 years. The vocational training of the remaining 7 entrepreneurs lasted 2 to 4 years. 5 of the 13 entrepreneurs had to pay no fees for their training, 5 paid fees of less than 100 rupees, and 3 paid 100 to 330 rupees.

Most of the entrepreneurs questioned complained of the inadequacies of the training institutions. Training was only designed for men. The quality was low. Hardly any information about technical or vocational training was given at school. It is more or less a matter of chance whether someone can use what he has learnt in the ITI (Industrial Training Institute) later on in his independent activity.

Additionally, most of the small entrepreneurs also lacked appreciation of the necessity to participate in further training courses, as well as often the time and the requisite financial means. As the owners of micro-enterprises have hardly taken part in formal vocational training, only vocational training within the informal sector is open to them.

Occupational Experience and Informal Training

What attempts do the small entrepreneurs in the informal sector make to remain viable, in view of the inadequate vocational training and the restrictive conditions on the labour market? What stages of informal training do they pass through? How do they cope with risks in the labour market? What do those whose training takes place in the informal sector learn?

Despite the increase in school attendance, and the fact that the forms of school organisation resemble the organisation of work in a firm or factory, there are few small entrepreneurs that have had corresponding experience in the formal business sphere. Instead, they have years of experience as wage labourers or apprentices in small firms in the informal sector, as family helpers or in independent work - that is, in situations where the forms of organisation are other than formal.

None of the entrepreneurs founded his business immediately after leaving school. They all pursued different career paths before being able to set up an independent business. Most entrepreneurs have passed through at least two preliminary phases such as apprenticeship and wage-employment.

“Informal Apprenticeship”

The number of entrepreneurs questioned who have acquired their skills via an informal apprenticeship is high 61.9 (65) percent of the entrepreneurs in the above-mentioned trades acquired their competences in this way. The status of the “informal apprenticeship” varies from trade to trade. The “informal apprenticeship” is more frequent in the following trades than in the others; manufacture of metal, pottery and plastic goods, furniture-making, motor-scooter repairs and printing. By contrast, the “informal apprenticeship” does not appear to be the normal way for acquiring skills for makers of office supplies and clothing; in these fields, competence is acquired on the job or as a wage labour.

Most entrepreneurs understand by “apprenticeship” a formal programme of vocational training in ITIs (Industrial Training Institutes) or Polytechnics, followed by a formal apprenticeship in some private or state firm or factory. Entrepreneurs in the informal sector are not willing to employ such apprentices, because in their opinion they are too specialised and not suited for working in firms in the informal sector where the division of labour and the use of machines demand no particular training. Furthermore, formally trained apprentices have skills that are more connected with theory than with practical application. Among formal apprentices, theoretical knowledge predominates over manual (“manipulative”) skills. They therefore expect a “white collar” job which most small entrepreneurs cannot offer them. Formal apprentices are not prepared to engage in manual labour. They have also been prepared for activities that are less labour-intensive. They are more suited for activities such as work as technicians, processing and service, and less for the manufacturing process.

Most small entrepreneurs did their “apprenticeship” in micro-enterprises in the informal sector. 61.5 percent of the “informal apprentices” did their apprenticeship in enterprises with between 1 and 120 persons. 34.5 did it in enterprises in which over 10 people were employed.

Bar Diagram

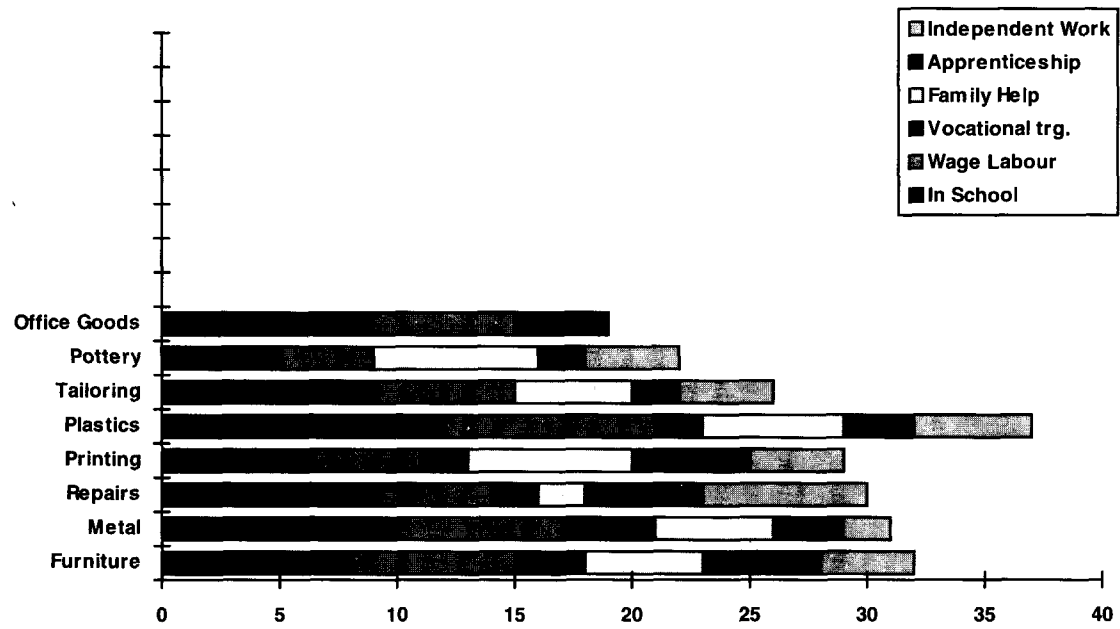


Diagram - 2 - Duration of Career Phases before Entrepreneurs start current Micro-Enterprises, by trade, year.

“Informal apprenticeship” takes place in more than one firm. One begins as an assistant in one firm, then changes to another to acquire new skills and abilities. Most of those who have acquired their skills through an informal apprenticeship in the informal sector may be termed “specialised”, as their knowledge is trade-related. At the same time, these are competences that can be transferred from one micro-enterprise in the informal sector to another.

An informal apprenticeship takes many years. 72.3 of the entrepreneurs who have worked as apprentices learned for 1 to 4 years, 24.6 percent 5 to 9 years, and 3.1 percent longer than that. The “apprenticeship” in the informal sector is unusually long, especially because the border line between “apprenticeship” and wage labour is hard to draw. Where the apprenticeship ends and wage labour begins is not clear, as is the case with formal apprenticeships.

The length of the apprenticeship in the informal sector depends on individual factors, for instance the motivation and talent of the apprentice. The subjective elements are also important here, so that the apprentice himself can gauge when the time has come to set up an independent business. However, an informal apprenticeship alone cannot equip the apprentice with the complete knowledge required to open a micro-enterprise. In view of the intervening factors such as the availability of a workshop, a site near the chief market, access to capital, problems with obtaining the raw materials or in marketing, informal power structures, legislation and other regulations, it is seldom happens that a considerable time elapses between the informal apprenticeship and the founding of a micro-enterprise.

A form of part-time apprenticeship is also important in the informal sector. It is customary to begin the apprenticeship already during the time at school. In small micro-enterprises, observations are made that serve as a kind of initiation into the world of work and as an orientation for the later choice of trade. Furthermore, contacts and business partnerships are made which maybe useful for later independent work.

An apprenticeship in the informal sector is frequently carried out in a micro-enterprise belonging to relatives. Such an apprenticeship may also be seen as family aid. The following example may clarify this: *SB has relatives who make plastic goods. For 2 months, he spent 4-5 hours each day in their firm. The relatives explained to him the production process, the technical details, where and how to obtain raw materials, how one can rapidly make contacts, how to market etc. All this was conveyed by informal discussion. This is important, because there are no formal training courses or programmes devoted to this particular trade.*

The apprenticeship varies in importance according to the trade concerned. In caste occupations such as furniture making and pottery, it is customary to do an apprenticeship with a relative. Not all furniture-makers carry out their

occupation as a caste occupation, but where this occupation is practiced as a caste occupation, the agency of the family is the most important way to acquire competences. The father with his own firm teaches his son the necessary skills. Later, the latter will continue to learn with another relative such as a brother or uncle, in order to expand his competences. Learning new skills and techniques is a life-long process, in which it is necessary to orient oneself continually to new products and production process.

In recent years and decades, the system of the "informal apprenticeship" in India has changed. The tradition of the close relation between apprentice and master appears no longer to be so important nowadays. This may be attributable to the collapse of the traditional crafts. Most entrepreneurs with a craft background prefer other occupations for their own children, and do not wish to teach their children the traditional arts of pottery or carpentry. And if they do so, this is only because they have no other choice. Once the children have started in a trade, it is difficult for them to leave it, particularly as the knowledge acquired is not easily transferred to other trades. The focus of training is also changing. The training of apprentices today is no longer, as it was formerly an all-round training system in which craftsmen were taught the elements of technical and business knowledge. Today the tendency predominates for apprentices to act in firms in the informal sector in a wage-labour relationship. This brings the danger of the "educational" components of the "informal apprenticeship" being inadequate.

The apprentices in the informal sector of New Delhi "pay" unofficially for the apprenticeship by accepting lower wages. Such a system frequently leads to the exploitation of the apprentices, who are still termed "apprentices", although they have acquired all the relevant knowledge and could take employment as wage labourers with higher wages. This is one reason why mobility from firm to firm in the informal sector is high. Apprentices break off their training when, after several years, they receive no wages, even if they have learnt new components of the production process.

Family Help

The employment of "family helpers" is widespread in the informal sector. A third of the small entrepreneurs had this status. Work as a "family helper" is mainly to be found in caste occupations such as pottery or woodwork, where family support is linked with the transmission of skills. Almost all migrants have worked as unpaid family members in agriculture somewhere at some time. As a rule, there are a variety of forms of skill transference through family support. The father of one entrepreneur was employed as supervisor and

technician in a formal sector private motor scooter firm. In order to augment his low wage, he resolved to repair motor scooters at home. His son (now himself an entrepreneur) helped his father and observed him. After some time he was familiar with motor scooter repairs. During his work there Rakesh was introduced to his future master, who was visiting the workshop. This means in concrete terms that the informant got his informal employment through the initiative of the father and his personal contacts. The father has a relationship of "friendship" with the master of the firm in which his son was then apprenticed.

When a micro-enterprise is a family business, children contribute to the work from an early age. In many cases the education and training of the children is neglected, especially where it is necessary to include more children in the work in order to improve the family income. In the production of pottery goods, it is customary that a child gains experience in its caste occupation for at least three years before it can earn money. Once the informal apprenticeship has been ended and there is no longer any obligation to work with the members of the family, a high degree of mobility sets in. Potters attempt to raise their income by going from one firm to the other, at the same time improving their skills.

In the case of entrepreneurs in whose community and families generations of wood or metal workers have informally trained, the learning of mechanical skills begins very early on in life. A maker of automobile spare parts: "We have technical skills in our blood; we had the skill to do the work and we said to ourselves: 'Why should we not start our own workshop and businesses to make the product?'" The technical and management skills are not professional, but "local" and "home-grown". Over the years, their fathers and forefathers have discovered by chance observation the importance of trademarks, the maintenance of quality, customer service, product design and customer feedback, and passed this on to their sons.

Wage Labour

A high percentage of the small entrepreneurs questioned worked earlier as wage labourers in small firms in the informal sector or in firms in the "private sector". Wage labour includes both short-term and long-term employment. As a rule, the entrepreneurs were short-term wage labourers, who worked regularly in small enterprises in the informal sector that were not registered.

With regard to the acquisition of their competence, the wage labourers tend to specialise in one part of the trade concerned, and in a few fields of activity, that is, they learn only some components of the whole cluster of skills. The demand for work in the informal sector suffices to occupy them 6 days a week.

Half of the former wage labourers had found wage labour in micro-enterprises. Only a few gained experience in the formal sector. The entrepreneurs with experience in the formal private business sector had more working and investment capital than the others. They were also more dynamic, and introduced new ideas into their firms.

As with the apprentices, among the former wage labourers a high rate of mobility is to be observed. The reasons are that the conditions of work in the small firms are mostly poor and inadequately paid. Resulting from this mobility, many entrepreneurs thus have experience with new technology and with the production of new products, and of working under better working conditions.

Attempts at Setting up Micro-enterprises

28.6 per cent of the entrepreneurs had become independent before they were able to consolidate their present firms. In contrast to the practice in industrialised countries, where a formal training is concluded long before one founds an independent firm, in the informal sector of New Delhi it happens not infrequently that persons first invest in machines and workshop equipment, with the goal of gradually acquiring the required skills and knowledge via on-the-job training and trial and error. The following example may make this clear: *S.J. had no idea how a letter-copy press could be operated. He had purchased such a press in anticipation, and then step by step acquired the necessary knowledge from the workers he employed. By trial and error, he learned how to operate it, without the wage labourers realising this.* The whole trade of the letter-copy press illustrates a specialised competence which contains a cluster of interconnected operative skills and corresponding productive abilities. The operation, however, is only one of the numerous group skills. This example shows a learning process by which the entrepreneurs questioned in the informal sector gradually achieve a higher level of skill. Obviously, S.J. possessed the general knowledge and skills necessary to add on further competences. Also it was very important for the foundation of a micro-enterprises that he acquired a site from his father and was thus able in good time to obtain a location for his firm in a market area. In the informal sector, precisely factors such as access to capital, a workshop and contacts play an important part.

Another variant in the setting-up of small firms is acting as an independent trader or a kind of agent, whose task it is to pass on orders to other small firms in return for a commission from the contracting parties.

Some entrepreneurs, have tried to start an independent business in different trades two, three or four times in succession before they were able to maintain themselves economically. To quote another example, *V. V. (a woman) began*

with the assembly of one-way hypodermic needles for injections. Vibha later set up a printing firm because the profit from the sale of needles was too low, since newcomers to the trade, to establish their business, sold their wares on the market very cheaply. Shashi Bhushan founded a firm for the making of cardboard boxes. But he was soon obliged to close it, because he had to pay cash for the new materials. After having sold his old machines (cutting machine, press, etc.) he began with the framing of maps. He was obliged to close down this firm too, because of complaints about faulty framed pictures, leading to large losses.

Unsuccessful entrepreneurs liquidate their businesses or regain capital by the sale of old machines, in order to start afresh in another trade. Switching from one business to another also reflects the relative fragility of firms in the informal sector.

Generally, such very small firms could be termed "subsistence-oriented". In the attempt to achieve independence, capital is invested in activities in which, although the risk is low, the potential for long-term profit appears slender. The entrepreneurs content as long as the small profits are able to cover their subsistence needs. Such an attitude frequently also leads to an over-production of goods with the same qualities. The owners have no idea of the profits they have made, nor the capital they have invested. They do not keep account books. The entrepreneurs are afraid to invest all their money in a single business, and prefer a highly varied inventory of small activities. The multiplication of the firms leads to even harder price competition, which in turn lowers the quality of the products.

The striving for independence in the informal sector is very great. The level of skills and technology is low, the amount of capital required is small, so that there appear to be no reasons why one should not go independent. In many trades, indeed, it is relatively simple to estimate the costs of the transition to independence. The entrepreneurs see no monetary advantages in continuing to work as wage labourers or apprentices. And so attempts to make an independent living in the informal sector increase and repeat themselves.

The ethnic and regional background of the entrepreneurs is mirrored in the various types of craftsmen and differing forms of the spirit of enterprise. The metal goods and furniture makers, who come from the Ramgarhia and Adi-Dharmi castes, have acquired their competences through trial and error and improvisation. They founded their firms little by little, as they were able to reinvest their small profits. On the other hand, there are the new entrepreneurs from Haryana, who show a kind of new spirit of enterprise, who require capital quickly in order to begin with the production of plastic articles, although they do not possess the requisite skills.

Evaluation and Conclusion

Although the level of education in the informal sector is lower than in the formal, sector, there are more and more persons with a school education working in the informal economy. On the one hand, access to school education continues to improve, and on the other vocational training is hardly taken account of as a basic requirement by the educational system.

Despite the lack of financial support and the use of low-capital technology, skills can also be acquired through informal vocational training. We have seen that the entrepreneurs have acquired their knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes in the course of a process lasting some years. The processes of the acquisition of competence are already set in motion in childhood by family socialisation and ethnic connections. During their occupational careers, they will additionally be confronted with various conditions and contexts of work, and with various forms of employment (apprentice, family help, wage labourer and self-employment).

By contrast to school education, in which an individualistic ideology obtains, the informal training of the questioned shows a "collective" and "community" orientation. The experience of work and the learning processes in the micro-enterprise go together with a collective and lifelong learning system in which older brothers, uncles and fathers introduce young people to the working processes. Such forms of action indicate the importance of the relations between the younger and older generation. Forms of communal solidarity and action governed by shared fates are still present.

The focus of learning processes in the informal sector is rather related to operative and manual skills. When, after a lengthy period of experience, the worker becomes an entrepreneur, he acquires further competences such as how to obtain raw materials, marketing, dealing with informal power structures and with legislation and other regulations. The working biographies show that, before the founding of small firm, considerable specialised and other competences and experience must be accumulated. At the same time, the workshop organisation of production means that firm owners in the formal sector do not work on the basis of a strict division of labour. The learning processes in the informal sector are skill-related rather than knowledge-based, and stress the general abilities and action strategies of the small entrepreneur.

In the informal sector there is no unified classification of skills. A detailed categorisation of skills therefore demands a full description of the activities that are carried out. A formally trained skilled worker is one who has learned certain skills, techniques and knowledge through a formal apprenticeship or a training programme. In the micro-enterprise sector, there is no formal apprenticeship training with an examination and a contract. The "informal apprentices" are

rather informal trainees. Even informally, there are semi-skilled workers, who have collected practical experience in the course of time by wage labour and improved themselves by practice and work routine. The borderline between informal apprentices, informal trainees and wage labourers is rather unclear. Then there are unskilled helpers who are family members or unrelated to the entrepreneur.

Skills are correspondingly assessed according to the prestige of the activity concerned. Pottery has a low status and is thus restricted to certain ethnic groups. The manner in which these activities are carried out today has changed. Technology contributes to raising the prestige of an activity, and plays an important part in the planning of training programme.

Conclusions for Intervention

The process of the acquisition of competences in the informal sector is hardly connected with the formal school system. For this reason, the planning of training programmes for persons in the informal sector requires that a clear picture be obtained of the learning process of the owners of micro-enterprises in the informal sector.

Although educational planners recognise the relevance of training measures for persons in the informal sector, the precise difference between occupational experience and independent work in the informal sector and the course of activities in the formal sector is hardly taken into account. Planners rely chiefly on "manpower development" reports, which hardly take account of the informal learning processes and working conditions in firms in the informal sector. The connections between education and occupations in the informal sector are hardly taken account of in training measures. The informal sector opens up opportunities for the illiterate and persons with a low level of education, but at the same time more and more secondary school and university leavers are seeking employment in it. People in the two categories are competing with one another.

Although the competence for employment in the informal sector is hardly acquired at school, this does not confirm the irrelevance of formal education. In view of the fact that a large percentage of entrepreneurs in the informal sector have attended primary or secondary school, and that this may be expected in future as well, the question arises how the primary and secondary schools can be adapted in order to favour the acquisition of basic competences for employment in the informal sector.

Mobility from firm to firm predominates in the occupational careers of the entrepreneurs. This fact must be taken account of before investment is made

in small firms in order to further certain skills or to improve the productivity of the firms. At the same time, it must be taken cognisance of that these are long-term processes of "human capital". The question arises whether this lengthy and not seldom wearisome process of the acquisition of competence cannot be shortened, in order to enable the small entrepreneurs to achieve something more than mere survival.

The questions as to which elements of the competence for employment in the informal sector can be acquired in formal schools and which elements/components should rather be promoted by on-the-job training do not relate only to training programmes, but are also determined by conditions of the labour market; for instance, the condition that apprenticeships and wage labourers are employed in small firms in the informal sector, provided that they are ready to do without higher wages, should be taken account of by planners of training measures for persons in the informal sector.

Training programmes and the vocational training system have so far hardly taken account of the existing traditions and forms of occupational training that are to be found in the informal sector. Educational policy as the basis of a socio-economic process of development, however, must permit the participation of all strata and groups of the population in the educational system. This is only possible when the knowledge, skills and abilities present within the informal sector are integrated into the system of vocational training and upgraded.

Notes

1. The informal sector came into being during the phase of import-substitution industrialisation of the 1950s. Regarded historically, the modern sector was never able to employ more than 60% of the urban working population; to the persistence of the high rate of under-employment in urban areas was added increasing migration from the country to the towns and a relatively high population growth. It was out of this situation that the informal sector emerged, which then became a lasting alternative for many people (cf. Axt/Karcher/Schleich 1986, 240). The characteristics of the informal sector can be summed up as follows: Ease of entry, reliance on indigenous resources, family ownership, labour-intensive and adapted technology, skills acquired outside the formal school system and unregulated and sometimes actively discouraged by the government (Ramanujam and Prasad 1993).
2. Similarly, only "local accidents and opportunities, and perhaps some peculiarities of custom and belief, can explain why certain castes dominate small industry". "Mahisya" control most small scale engineering in Howrah, near Calcutta (Owens (1973)
3. 3% of the entrepreneurs who were born in Delhi have parents who migrated from other states.

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17. Adult Education: Looking Beyond Literacy Campaigns*

Avik Ghosh

During the celebration of the 50 years of independence, the words of Nehru in his memorable speech in the constituent assembly on August 14, 1947 midnight were brought to us through Doordarshan, reminding us that the important tasks of removing 'poverty, ignorance, disease and inequality of opportunity' largely remain to be achieved. The most glaring and shameful failure is India's poor achievement with regard to literacy and basic education. The president of India K.R. Narayanan rightly called it a disgrace during his speech in parliament at midnight of August 14. Notwithstanding the hope and promise of substantial increase in allocation for education, to the extent of 6 per cent of GDP apparently the ground realities of 'resource crunch' permits only a marginal increase in the allocation to education according to the Ninth Plan document that is being finalised. It is a pity that the prime minister chose only to declare a 'war on corruption' rather than focus on the non-accomplishment of universal elementary education, unacceptably high incidence of infant mortality/morbidity and widespread prevalence of discrimination based on caste, class and gender.

It has been successfully argued, with evidence from many other Asian countries, that a high level of literacy and basic education is a necessary precondition for the introduction of economic reforms like deregulation and removal of trade barriers. The economic expansion that takes place thereby is assimilated and shared more widely through, what has been termed 'participatory growth' or people-centered growth. Positive state intervention and greater public concern and action on the issues of basic education, better health care and other measures of social security are therefore, necessary for any programme of economic reforms to succeed. Sadly, such public concern is lacking among the intelligentsia and in the media in our country. For a short while during the era of the high profile technology missions, some attention was given to issues like immunisation, safe drinking water and literacy along with talk of people's

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participation and social audit of these programmes. The district-based total literacy campaigns (TLC) emerged as a programme strategy for the National Literacy Mission (NLM) against this background.

The TLC in India started in 1989 in Ernakulam district and was founded on the principle of wider public participation linking elected representatives in local bodies, district administration, educational institutions and voluntary agencies to create an upsurge of community/people's participation for achieving the goal of eradicating illiteracy from the district. Needless to say that the programme was highly successful and led to the formulation of the 'Ernakulam model' of TLC in other districts. Very quickly, the adult literacy programme expanded to cover many districts in several states till it reached the difficult tract of the Hindi heartland. The expert committee set up to evaluate the impact of TLCs unhesitatingly commented that it 'has been among the best things promoted by the government since independence' in the social sector, mainly because TLCs sought wide participation of people and invoked the voluntary spirit and left participants with a tangible feeling of achievement.

The success of the TLC strategy in the initial years was partly because it was tried out in states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu where the problem was not so acute and popular support and volunteer participation was forthcoming in large numbers. Perhaps an exception has been Himachal Pradesh where the commitment of the state government to basic education ensured that the statewide TLC was executed with dedication and determination. While commendable work has also been done in some districts of Bihar, Orissa, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh and the literacy campaign focused on the need for basic education and the community's role in this regard, the campaigns have not been sustained long enough. The achievements therefore have been very limited. This, in fact, has been the weakness of the TLC strategy.

While it was correctly envisaged that the initial social mobilisation for a time-bound campaign provides the inspiration or spark for a mass participation of people, volunteering their time and energy for a cause like literacy, the follow up programme (what is commonly referred to as post-literacy and continuing education) was not worked out clearly. By definition, a campaign has to and can only be effective over a short period of time. If it does not work within that time, the strategy has to be abandoned. International experience of successful literacy campaigns have been usually in the context of revolutionary social transformation or freedom from colonial bondage. The Indian experience has been curious and unique though successful initially. However, admitting and recognising the many flaws and failures of the 'campaign approach' even as early as 1994 - the problems faced in the Hindi heartland, the absence of people's participation and over-bureaucratisation - NLM continued with the same TLC strategy and tried to bolster it with better monitoring internal evalu-

ation and, presently, with a revival effort through what is called 'Operation Restoration'. During this period, the programme continued to expand to reach a coverage of over 400 districts.

In many districts where the TLC has been launched, the preparatory ground-work to identify a core team of committed individuals to provide leadership to the literacy campaign with wide popular support was not done. Weak project plans have been approved in the rush to exhaust available budgets and expand the coverage. Officials in the district administration filled the managing committees of the zilla saksharta samithi (ZSS), and the programme was executed in a routine manner like any other development programme. In several districts, declaration of 'total literacy' achievement was done in a hasty manner without careful scrutiny and testing. Only in rare and exceptional cases, the sensitivity and personal initiative of an inspired collector may have yielded some results for a while.

In its inability to effect mid-course correction and shift/change from the strategy of TLCs, the weakness of a government or administration-led and funded 'people's movement' has shown up. Having found a convenient mechanism to transfer project funds directly to ZSSs, by passing and cutting short normal financial procedures of government and evolving a set of 'guidelines' for planning and implementing a TLC, NLM has refused to acknowledge the shortcomings and therefore abandon the strategy of TLC which, admittedly, was successful under certain favourable conditions and now failing under a different set of prevailing conditions.

It has to be recognised that a large-scale campaign for literacy is an effort to spur some dynamism and will to change among a vast number of adults who are burdened by their daily circumstances and prevailing social conditions of discrimination and injustice. They come to believe and effect some positive change in their own lives through literacy and associated practice of group discussion, information and experience sharing, and co-operative and collective action. Traditionally disadvantaged groups in society, women and members of scheduled castes and tribes, came forward with hope and expectancy in areas of TLC implementation. In most cases, unfortunately, their hopes have been belied by the uncaring manner of execution of the TLC and the absence of appropriate long-term follow up through a sustained community-based adult education programme.

The classic, and now legendary, powerful anti-arrack movement launched by rural women in Nellore district became possible because the literacy centres provided a forum for women to meet, share experiences and discuss issues. One lesson in the literacy primer narrated the account of a neo-literate woman galvanising other women in the village to close down the arrack shop. While it was never NLM's intention to create a confrontation between people and the

administration the facilitative factors of a volunteer-based and loosely structured programme provided the space for people to think and act freely. The enthusiasm, energy, courage and determination to carry through the struggle came from the women themselves once they had lost their initial timidity and reserve. The district officials and the literacy workers, on their part, facilitated and provided positive support to their cause.

The women of Nellore have moved forward since the anti-arrack movement to start thrift and credit groups known as 'Podupulakshmi'. Beginning in mid-1994, these groups generated substantial savings amounting to Rs. 6 crore till March 1995. "The literacy campaign made us aware, the anti-arrack movement gave us confidence; and Podupulakshmi (saving groups) empowered us" according to members of Podupulakshmi groups. Again, this kind of dynamic leadership provided by a collective of poor, rural women when freed from or given an opportunity to learn and act independently, is not unique to Nellore. Experience from the Mahila Samakhya and other women's programmes have similar accounts, though these may not be as dramatic and on an equivalent scale.

Technical achievements of 'literacy competencies' may or may not have been exceptionally high in Nellore but it did not matter so much. The TLC provided, for the first time on such a large scale, a forum for participation and dialogue, discussion, learning and sharing among volunteers (agents of change) and learners (those desirous of change). Whenever the TLC has been successful, at least the major achievement has been a greater and urgent demand for primary education for the children and an appreciation of the value of education for girls. The recent study commissioned by NLM confirms this through the empirical evidence gathered in the three districts of Birbhum, Dumka and Bilaspur.

India's commitment to the goal of education for all (EFA) and ensuring every individual's entitlement to basic education has to be met through an urgent thrust to universalisation of elementary education (UEE). Quality of primary education has to improve and drop-out rate has to be brought down drastically. The large numbers reaching adulthood without basic literacy has to be contained before that. After all, today's adult non-literates are a testimony to the failure of our programme of primary education. The programme of NLM through its TLC strategy has been a fairly successful supportive measure to affect literacy rates among adults. However, it cannot be a key strategy for meeting basic education entitlements. It is like 'mopping the floor while the taps are running'. The renewed initiative towards UEE cannot be allowed to fail in the hope of correcting it through an adult literacy programme!

The NLM's programme of TLC has demonstrated the keenness among people to learn and participate in social processes. The value of education and learning in life is being appreciated and this has to be the thrust for educational

strategies for adults with a focus on, what is being called 'learning throughout life' by Unesco's international commission on education in the 21st century. The present focus of NLM on literacy has to shift, and similarly the mission-mode, time-bound thrust of NLM should give way to a more durable and sustained programme of adult education that responds to the needs of adults as individuals and also as members of disadvantaged groups.

The strategy for adult education has to go beyond literacy, though ensuring literacy where it is necessary. The objective should become devising appropriate adult education programmes relevant to the prevailing conditions. For example, a vast number of adolescents and young adults have to prepare themselves for the world of work and responsibility. Even those who may have rudimentary education from the few years spent at existing primary/upper primary schools may not have the confidence or adequate competence to face the challenges of a changing work environment, especially with regard to new technologies and production processes as well as health and environmental concerns. Migrants to the towns and cities require preparation that goes beyond specific skills training on to awareness of minimum wages and rights of workers.

Elected representatives to the panchayats, particularly women, need to acquire the ability to assert themselves in the correct conduct of meetings and learn the skill to obtain information and ensure that tasks are assigned and executed satisfactorily. In this context, the successful struggle for the legislation on the right to information insisting on transparency of development projects in Rajasthan and the 'Jan Sunwaii' (public hearings) is trailblazer for the kind of grass roots-based adult educational activities that should be undertaken more widely if a more participatory democracy is to evolve in this country.

Such a programme of adult education cannot be centrally designed or pursued uniformly all over the country. Nor can it be introduced on a mammoth scale in all the districts where TLC and its follow up programme of past-literacy and continuing education are in operation. Learning strategies for programming will evolve through a process of interaction between the learners and activists/volunteers recognising the specific needs and aspirations of particular groups. There are numerous examples from the field where voluntary agencies and development workers have facilitated this kind of participatory planning and training programmes for women and men in areas of health, agriculture, environment and rural development.

Leadership programmes for elected members of panchayats have thrown up interesting case studies, like the Karnataka women panchayat members training programme, through the use of satellite technology of using one-way video and two way audio for interactivity among learners and resource persons located in different parts of the state. Several state governments are in the process of acquiring and establishing their own earth stations and installing C-band anten-

nas and TV receivers at district headquarters (if not in the blocks) for audio conferencing and training of health and agriculture field functionaries and primary school teachers. Such systems will have capacity for organising programmes for training of adult education workers at the village level. There are many areas where community workers at the village level are needed - preventive health care, soil and water testing, environment conservation, participatory planning for village development, to mention a few. Some basic citizenship training and specific skill development could form the core of a community-based adult education programme which should also include literacy as and where necessary.

A major claim of the NLM is the induction of a large number of volunteers in the literacy programme. These volunteers are young persons, students and unemployed youth who have given their time in serving the community and through that, deepened their understanding of educational processes. These volunteers have in many areas of TLC programmes taken up social and development issues for redressal or implementation with the active participation of neo-literate groups. In Kerala, such groups have participated in the formulation of village level development plans that have been incorporated in the block and district planning process for the finalisation of the state's Ninth Five-Year Plan. The task is to upgrade the skills and capabilities of these literacy volunteers further so that their energies and commitment are channelised for a wider community-based adult education programme.

Education is valuable by itself and necessarily improves the quality of life of individuals. Beginning with development of language and computation skills, and progressing to developing the capacity to gather, process and organise information, solve problems, take decisions and express and communicate thoughts, ideas and feelings are all intrinsic features of natural learning that get thwarted if not nurtured and supported at the development stages of childhood and adolescence. In our country, numerous persons enter adulthood without proper education and consequently their self-confidence is shaky. In a fast-changing environment of economic and cultural change they will continue to be edged out unless their capacities are actively consolidated and improved so as to encounter the world outside on equal terms. Providing opportunities for this learning, discovering 'the treasure within', as has been called by Unesco, should be the goal of the adult education programme for the future. The challenge before planners is to design a programme strategy, in cooperation with learners and development workers, social/political activists, voluntary agencies, community-based organisations, panchayati raj institutions and other educational institutions, that will make it possible to realise such a broad objective of adult education on a sustained and ongoing basis.

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PART V
GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

18. The Role of Adult Education in Reducing Class and Gender Disparities*

Anita Dighe

Background

Over the last few decades, increasing attention has been paid by the developing countries to the problem of adult illiteracy. It has been widely recognized now that any attempt at universalizing primary education would suffer wastage and inefficiency unless a significant investment is made in adult literacy. For it is generally believed that efforts to increase the literacy levels of adults will have positive consequences for the learners, as well as for the nation.

During sixties and seventies, literacy was seen as an agent for economic development and illiteracy was perceived as an obstacle to development. This was also the recurrent theme of many Unesco documents. In more recent years, however, it has been recognized that literacy does not deterministically bring about development, but that it is also almost impossible to conceive of development without literacy (Bhola, 1989). At the level of cognition, it has been shown that literacy can build self-esteem and self-confidence, provide hope and raise awareness of political structures that limit one's options.

Literacy and Development - Some Research Evidence

It is worth noting, however, that despite the recognition of the importance of adult literacy, it has still been a neglected area in terms of data collection and research. In many countries, it is even difficult to get precise information about simple facts such as the number of adults enrolled in literacy classes, the number of instructors recruited or the number of adults who were made literate.

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When it comes to the impact of literacy programmes, lack of adequate information is even more evident. Evidence has tended to come from analysis of primary education outcomes, pointing to the economic, social and technological gains from providing basic education. The evidence demonstrating that completion of primary education has a positive effect on poverty alleviation and economic and social development is compelling. "A diverse body of literature demonstrates that, in developing countries, adults with higher levels of educational attainment have higher individual earnings, more frequent employment in the urban labour markets, greater agricultural productivity, lower fertility, better health and nutritional status, more modern attitudes, and in turn are more likely to send their own children to school- all dimensions of development" (Lockhead and Verspoor, 1990).

Research evidence is now beginning to show that a mother's level of schooling is highly correlated with infant and Child mortality (Lockhead and Verspoor, 1990). There is also growing awareness of the positive effects which parent's education can have on the school participation and achievement of their children. An analysis of 1981 Census data in India corroborates that the educational level of the mother has a very strong influence in reducing child mortality (Child Marriage, Age at Marriage and Fertility in India, 1989). Furthermore, age at marriage is positively correlated with the levels of education of the women, both for rural and urban areas. For a gradual increase is seen in the mean age at marriage with the increase in women's educational level (Advanced Report on Age at Marriage Differentials in India, 1988). Also, an analysis of the educational level of the mother by various fertility indicators shows a positive correlation between women's level of education with her fertility (Child Marriage, Age at Marriage and Fertility in India, 1989). After analysing census data for 14 states, Sharma and Retherford (1987) conclude that literacy is a basic concomitant of development, for their study showed that literacy is strongly correlated with quality of life indicators such as infant mortality rate, death rate, birth rate and percentage of married females in the 15-19 age group.

Finally and more generally, it has been demonstrated that literacy learning is not merely a technical exercise. It affects a whole range of cognitive processes and attitudes that cause a substantive change in perceptions and understanding of reality. It has been seen that adults who have taken part in literacy programmes have tended to benefit more from different services and have been more open to put new ideas into practice than their illiterate counterparts.

Seen from this perspective, adult literacy appears to be an essential prerequisite for bringing about effective development. The question is, does adult literacy and more broadly, adult education, also reduce existing disparities in the society? This paper attempts to raise issues on the role of adult education in reducing disparities of gender and class in society.

Role of Adult Education in Reducing Class and Gender Disparities

In order to understand the extent to which adult education makes society better by making it more egalitarian and the extent to which it legitimizes and even enhances existing social and economic inequalities, it is necessary to consider two paradigms in the sociology of adult education. The two contrasting positions are represented by the consensus paradigm and the conflict paradigm (Rubenson, 1989). These two paradigms present different views of the structure of society and also vary in their notions of inequality. The consensus approach in the form of functionalist theories has dominated, especially in North America. According to this paradigm, societies cannot survive unless their members share some perceptions, attitudes, values in common. Its perspective on inequality is that an unequal society does not arise out of the vested interests of single individual or of groups but out of the needs of society as a whole. Thus inequality is seen not only as inevitable but also as necessary and beneficial to all.

On the other hand, the conflict theorists maintain that education is an instrument of domination that perpetuates the inequalities in society. According to this perspective, the educational system reproduces and legitimizes the existing power structures in society. These theorists maintain that the structure of symbols and of knowledge in educational institutions is that of the dominant culture and is, therefore, intimately related to the principles and practices of cultural and social control (Apple, 1982). Bowles and Gintis (1976) view the education system as an integral element in the reproduction of the prevailing class structure of society. Bourdieu (1977) examines the role of culture in the reproduction of class hierarchies and further links culture with class and domination. According to him, those most likely to be the recipients of the dominant culture are those who, as a result of birth and upbringing, have already acquired the cultural capital to receive it. By this he means that those who have already been socialized into a culture that is sympathetic to the dominant culture are more likely to accept it than those who have not. Kelly and Nihlen (1982) are of the view that the educational system reinforces the division of labour in society by maintaining not only class and race but also gender inequalities.

Adult Education Scenario in India

It would be necessary at this juncture to look at the literacy and adult education scenario in India and to examine the above mentioned theoretical formulation in the light of the Indian experience.

In the fifties, there was considerable concern over the problem of illiteracy

among the masses. But there was soon the realization that mere literacy was not enough and that it was necessary to develop programmes of adult education. Very soon, with the realization that adult education could not be divorced from attempts to bring about social change, the programme was re-named social education. In the fifties and sixties, concepts such as 'fundamental education' and 'functional literacy' came into vogue. It was in the early seventies that the concept of non-formal education gained wide acceptance. It is important to mention here that the origin of non-formal education also coincided with the overall disenchantment with the existing models of development and a search for an alternate model. As the policy makers and planners began to realize that the formal education made only a limited contribution to development, they pinned their hopes on non-formal education which they thought had the potential of contributing effectively and quickly to the process of development. It was, however, only in 1978 that the adult education programme received some priority attention for the first time and became the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP). NAEP held for the poor and the disadvantaged the chance to achieve basic literacy and numeracy, the opportunity to learn some functional skills and a means for participating in the process of development. With an emphasis on awareness raising, what was envisaged was that the less advantaged would be able to organize themselves, articulate their needs and demands, put pressure on the existing political and economic structure and thereby initiate a process for more equitable distribution of wealth and opportunity. With the formulation of National Policy of Education (NPE, 1986), and the subsequent launching of National Literacy Mission (NLM) similar goals have been articulated.

To what extent has the adult education programme in India achieved any of these goals? The limited achievements of the government-run programme, and those too only restricted to acquisition of literacy skills is now an acknowledged fact (National Literacy Mission, 1988). Bock and Papagiannis (1983) in ascertaining the overall effectiveness of the adult non-formal education programmes in bringing about development come to the conclusion that such programmes become institutionalized as educational diversification strategies to serve the interests of the ruling class and do not fulfill their idealistic initial goal of raising the critical consciousness and developing the self reliance of the poor and the disadvantaged. They also produce a 'cooling out' function, meaning thereby that they serve to diffuse pent-up frustrations by lowering aspiration levels and reinforcing existing disparities.

An interesting development over the years has been an increasing participation of women in the adult education programme. This has been borne out by the evaluation studies undertaken by the various social science research organizations (NLM, 1988). But despite their initial interest the fact also

remains that the possibility of women dropping out or coming irregularly because of various family pressures, is also very high. This is because literacy is neither a felt need of the poor women nor is it perceived by them as a central skill which will help them to improve their lives to a significant extent. Having learnt to cope without literacy, they have neither the motivation nor the interest to continue once the initial novelty effect wears off and the sheer strain of acquiring literacy skills begins to make demands on their time and energy. But even if some of them overcome these barriers and become literate, the use of their recently acquired literacy skills and hence literacy retention become severely limited by their lack of easy access to reading and writing materials. Women are, therefore, prone to relapse into illiteracy faster than men (Rana, 1988).

An oft-repeated problem that is mentioned regarding women's literacy programme is that of motivating and sustaining their interest in becoming functionally literate. An income-generating activity is, therefore, regarded as a necessary adjunct to most literacy programmes. The rationale given is that in conditions of poverty, literacy per se does not always attract women. An income-generating activity, on the other hand, is presumed to provide the necessary motivation to women to come to the adult education centre. Studies on such non-formal education programmes and income-generating activities have shown that most of these programmes which are either run by the State or voluntary organizations are focussed on mother-child health, nutrition, food preservation, cooking, sewing, handicrafts and similar 'feminine' activities - a majority of which do not seem to be generating much income (Stromquist, 1987). While teaching of literacy is intended to be one of the components, in reality it easily gets lost due to all the other time-consuming activities. Apart from the fact that the income-generating activities emphasize the reproductive role of women, a distributing finding that women who are engaged in such activities neither manage to generate income nor learn literacy skills (Lind, 1986).

What is, in fact, characteristic of these income-generating activities is that they are mainly fragmented activities with no efforts made to enable women to exercise control over their planning, operationalization and management. Nor are these activities accompanied by discussions that would enable women to question the gender-based division of labour in society that is responsible for women pursuing only certain types of occupations.

The problems listed by Bock and Bock (1989) with regard to the adult education programmes in a number of countries need to be mentioned here for it is possible that some of these problems would be relevant to the Indian experience as well. According to them, reaching the very poor-illiterate, the ones for whom the programmes are particularly designed - is a universal problem. The reason is that the poor often cannot afford the time to participate in such programmes. Problems of social distance is felt by the target population

relative to those participants who have more education and status. In the Indian context, the caste system exacerbates social distance so that those belonging to the Scheduled Castes automatically drop out if the adult education functionary belongs to the upper caste, or if the adult education centre is run in the locality where the upper castes live.

Furthermore, even in cases where the poor have been successfully recruited, the adult education programmes have proved to be inadequate in providing upward social and economic mobility. For, by not providing the accepted and socially valued certification which continues to be the essential 'gate pass' to high-status jobs, the existing adult education programmes lock workers into the lower segment of the occupational structure and provide them with limited avenues for vertical mobility (Bock and Bock, 1989).

Presently, not enough attention has been paid to the content of literacy primers. Except in very few cases, the content of the primers is traditional and makes no effort to question the unjust and exploitative society. Krishna Kumar (1982) has commented on the sheer irrelevance of most literacy primers that do not relate to the lives of the learners. According to him, there are certain recurring themes of a 'mythology' that promotes status quo and does not question the existing inequities in the society.

An analysis of existing literacy primers in different languages in India would reveal that for the most part, primers for women either do not exist or if they exist, they are confined to domestic life. Furthermore, they are almost never depicted outside the house; they also engage predominantly in domestic chores—cleaning, cooking, sewing, nurturing. In other words, these materials constantly reinforce patriarchal values that seek to portray domestic life as the female domain, with work outside the house as secondary, and the public domain as the male preserve.

Gramsci's concept of hegemony needs to be understood here in order to see the relationship between adult education and social change. Hegemony refers to the way in which one's social class exercises political, cultural or economic influence over other classes. "Hegemony is not found in one's head but is made up of our day-to-day cultural, political and economic (ideological) practices, a set of practices which help create us" (Apple, 1982). According to Gramsci, the subordinate classes could overcome the hegemony of dominant class with a counter-hegemony. While Gramsci saw counter-hegemonic education primarily as relating to political education of workers, it would be worthwhile spelling out various strategies whereby education of adults could bring about social change. For, it is the contention of this paper that existing adult education programmes tend to reproduce and perpetuate class and gender disparities in society. However, keeping in mind the criticism levelled against the reproduction thesis that it does not sufficiently take into account the human agency or

people's capacity to act in order to resist or change situations, an attempt is made to spell out strategies whereby the existing disparities could be reduced.

Using Literacy for Empowerment

It was Freire who in the early 1970s redefined development and redirected the efforts of many adult educators working for social change. Highly critical of most development efforts, Freire (1970) proposed an alternative paradigm based on the development of critical consciousness. His emphasis on dialogical education based on people's own knowledge and values led to a re-examination of the teaching and learning process in development. Adult educators who are influenced by the Freire paradigm facilitate learning by posing questions that stimulate reflection, leading to action.

For Freire, the special contribution of education to the birth of a new society was critical education which would enable people to progress from a state of 'naive' consciousness to a stage where men and women could assume an increasingly critical attitude towards life around them. In the case of women, this type of education would take as its starting point an investigation of their socio-economic reality, an examination of the problems in their own environment, leading to a collective action against injustices suffered by them at home, the work place and society.

But for all this to happen, literacy should not be forced on women or be made a condition for their participation. For women's groups have unequivocally come to the conclusion that literacy per se is not the priority need of poor, deprived women. This does not mean that teaching of literacy skills can get postponed indefinitely. What this means (and this experience has been validated by numerous other experiences) is that women will always seek literacy themselves, at a point when its meaning and realise their value. If women seek literacy at their own time and pace, they would then be more likely to retain literacy in a more permanent way. Rather than teaching them, the educational process would enable women to ask questions, seek answers, act, reflect on actions and raise new questions. For it is only when women gradually become empowered and understand the importance of collective action that they can join the men on any common platform.

There is a significant body of recent literature that shows that education can bring about shifts in self-definitions and awareness that are potentially disruptive to the continued maintenance of the existing social order. "When changes in individuals' social meanings and awareness aggregate to produce certain 'critical density', there comes into existence potential for assertive, even organized political action that was not there before and that may create preconditions for

social restructuring (Bock and Papagiannis, 1983) Popular education, first widely used in Latin America, has shown how education can begin with people's experience within the larger political and social context. Philosophically, popular education is a grassroots movement addressing society's underlying structural problems. Methodologically, it draws on people's own art forms - theatre, music, songs, poetry and art - to stimulate reflection and action (Ewert, 1989).

The experience of Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad in eradicating illiteracy in Ernakulam district and the recent experience of Bharat Gyan Vigyan Jatha in generating a demand for literacy through varied cultural forms, is beginning to show how the educational process can release the creative potential in people, provide a sense of hope and become an effective tool for mobilizing the disadvantaged to action.

Mention needs to be made here of the growing body of literature that is now available on participatory initiatives in education and development. Attempts to bring the benefits of education and training to the poor and the illiterate centre on participatory approaches in educational goal setting, planning, programme implementation, evaluation and research. Advocates of participatory research have argued that this approach leads to empowering the poor (Hall, 1972; Tandon, 1985; Kassam, 1982). On the basis of four cases from Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, the Philippines and India, Rahman (1985) has shown how a systematic process of social research was initiated by the people themselves. This led to a collective investigation and analysis of their social reality, which in turn, led to organized action on their part. By synthesizing participatory experiences in three Latin American countries Fals-Borda (1985) makes a major contribution to show that participatory initiatives can be carried out in varying socio-political contexts. While Borda acknowledges the political nature of such work, Rahman derives the principle from his case studies that the rural poor must form some type of organization and eventually become part of a wider movement of similar interest.

In other words, there is a need to associate adult education programmes of the oppressed groups with the wider on-going class struggles and socio-political movements. The participatory process of adult learning has tremendous pedagogical potential. But if a link is not established with wider on-going class struggles that also address themselves to women's issues, the cherished goal of empowering the oppressed, cannot be fully realized. For it has been argued that conscientization is not a pre-condition for political action but probably that the reverse is true (Parajuli and Mathema, quoted in Ghosh and Zachariah, 1987). Conscientization would then become an additional tool for deepening class consciousness, sharpening the perception of the contradictions in the social relations of production and furthering the struggle of the oppressed groups. If this started happening, then adult education programme could probably begin

to play the role of what Gramsci called, counter-hegemonic education. Unless this happens, the existing disparities of class and of gender would continue and would probably, get even further exacerbated.

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19. Gender (In)equity in Literacy : An Analysis*

M.V. Lakshmi Reddy

Promotion of women's education has been the concern of India since independence. The Central and State governments, voluntary organisations and other institutions have been doing a lot for the progress of women's education and literacy by stepping up and strengthening their formal and non-formal education programmes. Yet, the achievements in women's education and literacy are far from the goals set for Universalisation of Elementary/Primary Education, more particularly among women, has remained illusory.

Gender disparity in education and literacy is, of course, a historical phenomenon and can be attributed to several economic, social and cultural compulsions. Currently it has become an issue of wide discussion. The relevance of women's education and literacy to social, economic, cultural, and political development of the individual, family, community and nation is a universally acknowledged fact. The gravity of gender disparity in literacy and the need to bring it down has been recognised and voiced by all.

Major Concern

Eradication of illiteracy has been the major concern of India in the recent past in consonance with Education for All at the global level. Alongside strengthening the formal education sector, there have been many special drives in respect of literacy promotion like Farmers' Functional Literacy Programme, National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) covering many programmes - Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP), State Adult Education Programme (SAEP), Mass Programme of Functional Literacy (MPFL), Non-Formal Education Programme for the 6-14 age group, Back-to-School Programme, etc., - and Total Literacy Campaigns (TLCs) of the National Literacy Mission, all giving emphasis to women as the priority group among others. Further, the gender disparity in literacy has also been voiced in many national and international seminars, conferences, summits, etc., including the recently concluded

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Delhi summit of Education for All. No doubt, as a result of all the above efforts, the number of literates and literacy rate have increased over time. But, simultaneously the number of illiterates has also gone up. The total number of illiterate women (age group 7 and above) in the country increased from 182.91 million in 1981 to 200.52 million in 1991 as against the increase in the number of illiterate men from 120.90 million in 1981 to 128.36 million in 1991. That means the increase in the number of female illiterates is more than double that of the male illiterates. In both the censuses, the female illiterates constituted around 60 per cent of the total illiterate population of India.

Table - 1 reveals that there has been a continuous improvement in total, male and female literacy rates of rural, urban and all areas over the corresponding literacy rates in the previous decade. But, the gap between male and female literacy rate has been continuing at almost the same magnitude as it was a few decades ago. This is worse in the case of rural areas.

Table - 1

**Area and Sex-wise Literacy Rates and Gender Disparity in India :
1961-91**

Year	Age Group		Total	Male	Female	Gender Disparity (M-F)
1961	T	5 and over	28.30	40.39	15.33	25.06
	R	5 and over	22.46	34.26	10.13	24.13
	U	5 and over	54.43	65.98	40.46	25.52
1971	T	5 and over	34.45	45.95	21.97	23.98
	R	5 and over	27.89	39.55	15.52	24.03
	U	5 and over	60.22	69.83	48.84	20.99
1981*	T	5 and over	41.43	53.46	28.47	24.99
	R	5 and over	34.04	46.73	20.66	26.07
	U	5 and over	64.85	73.92	54.40	19.52
1981*	T	7 and over	43.67	56.50	29.85	26.65
	R	7 and over	36.00	49.60	21.70	27.90
	U	7 and over	67.20	76.70	56.30	20.40
1991@	T	7 and over	52.21	64.13	39.29	24.84
	R	7 and over	44.69	57.87	30.62	27.25
	U	7 and over	73.08	81.09	64.05	17.04

* Excludes Assam where 1981 Census was not held.

@ Excludes Jammu & Kashmir where 1991 Census was not held.

Source: *A Handbook of Population Statistics*, Census of India, New Delhi, 1988
Census of India, 1991, Series-1, Paper-2, Final Population Totals, New Delhi, 1993.

It can be observed from the above data that :

- a) female literacy rates, in all the censuses, in rural, urban and all areas have been below the corresponding male literacy rates which were higher than the respective total literacy rates.
- b) total, male and female literacy rates of urban areas continued to be higher than the corresponding rural literacy rates.
- c) the gender disparity in literacy rate (Male Literacy Rate - Female Literacy Rate) has been continuing at almost the same proportion (25.06% in 1961 and 24.84% in 1991). It has been higher in rural areas than that in urban and all areas. There is a considerable fall in gender disparity in urban areas, from 25.52 per cent in 1961 to 17.04 per cent in 1991, while there is slight increase in it in rural areas (24.13% in 1961 and 27.25% in 1991). The highest gender disparity in literacy (27.90%) is in rural areas while it is least (17.04%) in urban areas.
- d) Compared to males in rural, urban or all areas, the females are backward in literacy by about three decades, because the female literacy rates in 1991 are more or less equal to the corresponding male literacy rates in 1961.

It can, therefore, be concluded that though male and female literacy rates have gone up from 1961 to 1991, there has been an undesirable continuance of gender disparity, except in urban areas. An analysis of gender disparity in literacy, including that among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, at different levels - state, district, taluk, etc., - would help the policy makers, administrators and implementors at different levels understand the situation of gender disparity and take appropriate measures to reduce it. Such a detailed analysis is, no doubt, a laborious and time consuming process. However, it would not be untimely or less useful to analyse in detail the situation of gender disparity in literacy atleast at one level.

An attempt has been made in this paper to highlight situation of gender disparity at State/Union Territory level by analysing in detail the total, male and female literacy rates of rural, urban and all areas in 1991. The paper also intends to provide an insight into the correlation between the ranks of literacy rates and gender disparity. The analysis is based on the literacy rates calculated for the population aged 7 years and above, which excludes Jammu and Kashmir where 1991 census was not held.

Gender Disparity - All Areas

Table-2
Sex-wise Literacy Rates & Gender Disparity of States/Union Territories-1991

Sl.No.	State/UT	Total	Male	Female	Disparity(M-F)
1.	Andhra Pradesh	44.09(27)	55.13(26)	32.72(25)	22.41(15)
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	41.59(29)	51.45(31)	29.69(26)	21.76(16)
3.	Assam	52.89(22)	61.87(23)	43.03(22)	18.84(20)
4.	Bihar	38.48(31)	52.49(30)	22.89(30)	29.60(31)
5.	Goa	75.51(5)	83.64(5)	67.09(5)	16.55(23)
6.	Gujarat	61.29(14)	73.13(13)	48.64(16)	24.49(8)
7.	Haryana	55.85(21)	69.10(16)	40.47(23)	28.63(5)
8.	Himachal Pradesh	63.86(11)	75.36(11)	52.13(12)	23.23(12)
9.	Karnataka	56.04(20)	67.26(19)	44.34(21)	22.92(13)
10.	Kerala	89.81(1)	93.62(1)	86.17(1)	7.45(30)
11.	Madhya Pradesh	44.20(26)	58.42(24)	28.85(27)	29.57(4)
12.	Maharashtra	64.87(10)	76.56(10)	52.32(11)	24.24(9)
13.	Manipur	59.89(16)	71.63(14)	47.60(17)	24.03(10)
14.	Meghalaya	49.10(23)	53.12(29)	44.85(20)	8.27(29)
15.	Mizoram	82.27(2)	85.61(3)	78.60(2)	7.01(31)
16.	Nagaland	61.65(13)	67.62(18)	54.75(10)	12.87(27)
17.	Orissa	49.09(24)	63.09(22)	34.68(24)	28.41(6)
18.	Punjab	58.51(17)	65.66(21)	50.41(14)	15.25(24)
19.	Rajasthan	38.55(30)	54.99(27)	20.44(31)	34.55(1)
20.	Sikkim	56.94(19)	65.74(20)	46.69(18)	19.05(19)
21.	Tamil Nadu	62.66(12)	73.75(12)	51.33(13)	22.42(14)
22.	Tripura	60.44(15)	70.58(15)	49.65(15)	20.93(18)
23.	Uttar Pradesh	41.60(28)	55.73(25)	25.31(29)	30.42(2)
24.	West Bengal	57.70(18)	67.81(17)	46.56(19)	21.25(17)
25.	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	73.02(8)	78.99(9)	65.46(8)	13.53(26)
26.	Chandigarh	77.81(4)	82.04(7)	72.34(4)	9.70(28)
27.	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	40.71(29)	53.56(28)	26.98(28)	26.58(7)
28.	Daman & Diu	71.20(9)	82.66(6)	59.40(9)	23.26(11)
29.	Delhi	75.29(6)	82.01(8)	66.99(6)	15.02(25)
30.	Lakshdweep	81.78(3)	90.18(2)	72.89(3)	17.29(22)
31.	Pondicherry	74.74(7)	83.68(4)	65.63(7)	18.05(21)

Note:

Figures in parentheses indicate the ranks

Source of Literacy Rates : *Census of India, 1991, Series-1, Paper-2, 1992,*
Final Population Totals, New Delhi, 1993.

Table - 2 reveals that in all States/UTs the female literacy rates are less than male literacy rates which are higher than the total literacy rates.

Kerala occupies the first rank in total, male and female literacy rates. Still, though less, the gender disparity (G.D.) of 7.45 per cent exists in the state, which is slightly more than gender disparity in Mizoram (7.01%), the State with least gender disparity. The state of Rajasthan and Bihar not only take the last two ranks in female literacy rate, but also the gender disparity is higher in these two States (34.55% and 29.60% respectively).

Kerala, Goa and Tripura retain their respective ranks of 1, 5 and 15 in total, male and female literacy rates, while the ranks of other States/UTs in respect of their total, male and female literacy rates have varied.

Rank Correlation between different literacy rates and between literacy rates and gender disparity have been studied by using following formula:

$$r = 1 - \frac{6 \sum d^2}{n(n^2 - 1)}$$

Where r denotes Spearman's Rank Correlation, d denotes the difference between the ranks of two variables (of the same State/UT) and n the number of pairs.

The correlation, for the purpose of interpretation, is considered to be low, medium or high if the coefficient of correlation is between $+0.01$ and $+0.33$, $+0.34$ and $+0.66$, and $+0.67$ to $+0.99$ respectively. If it is $+1$, -1 and 0 it indicates perfect positive, perfect negative and no correlation respectively.

The Rank Correlations studied for Table 2 are shown below:

Sl.No.	Variables	Rank Correlation
1.	TLR and MLR	0.96
2.	TLR and FLR	0.99
3.	MLR and FLR	0.92
4.	TLR and G.D.	-0.70
5.	MLR and G.D.	-0.49
6.	FLR and G.D.	-0.75

It is clear from the above correlation coefficients that there exists high positive correlation between Total Literacy Rate (TLR) and Male Literacy Rate (MLR), TLR and Female Literacy Rate (FLR), and MLR and FLR. But medium to high negative correlations were found between TLR, MLR, FLR and Gender Disparity in literacy rates (G.D.) as shown above. It shows that with the increase in rank of TLR the rank of FLR increases more than that of MLR, and as a result the rank of gender disparity decrease. The decrease in gender disparity rank means the decrease in disparity between male and female literacy rates. In other words, *though the MLRs in all the States/UTs are higher than FLR, any increase in FLR at present has more positive effect on reducing the gap between male and female literacy rates.*

There are 22 States/UTs with their literacy rates above national literacy rate of 52.21 per cent, 21 States/UTs with their literacy rates above national male literacy rate (64.13%), and 23 States/UTs with their female literacy rates above the national female literacy rate (39.29%). While only 12 States/UTs have their female literacy rates above the national literacy rate (52.21%), all States/UTs excepting Arunachal Pradesh have their male literacy rates above the national literacy rate. This reflects the quantum of female backwardness in literacy.

The range in female literacy rates (65.73) is also higher than that of male literacy rates (42.17%) and total literacy rates (51.33%) of States/UTs.

The gender disparity in literacy in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Orissa and D & N Haveli is higher than the national gender disparity of 24.84 per cent (64.13% - 39.29%). Gender disparity is least (7.01%) in Mizoram followed by Kerala (7.45%), Meghalaya (8.27%) and Chandigarh (9.70%).

When total, male and female literacy rates of States/UTs are compared with the respective literacy rates at the national level, *ten years backwardness of:* (a) Rajasthan and Bihar in total, male and female literacy; (b) Arunachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and D & N Haveli in male and female literacy; (c) Andhra Pradesh and Meghalaya in male literacy; and (d) Madhya Pradesh in female literacy can be observed, because the total, male and female literacy rates, at present, of these States/UTs are almost equal to the respective national literacy rates of 1981.

Gender Disparity - Rural Areas

Table 3 presents the state-wise rural literacy rates and gender disparity alongside their ranks. It shows that there are 23 States/UTs with their rural total and rural male literacy rates less than the national rural total and rural male

Table - 3
Sex-wise Rural Literacy Rates and Gender Disparity of States/UTs -
1991

Sl.No.	State/UT	Total	Male	Female	Disparity (M-F)
1.	Andhra Pradesh	35.74(29)	47.28(29)	23.92(26)	23.36(17)
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	37.02(25)	47.00(30)	25.31(25)	21.69(20)
3.	Assam	49.32(21)	58.66(23)	39.19(18)	19.47(23)
4.	Bihar	33.83(30)	48.31(27)	17.95(30)	30.36(5)
5.	Goa	72.31(4)	81.71(3)	62.87(4)	18.84(24)
6.	Gujarat	53.09(17)	66.84(14)	38.65(20)	28.19(9)
7.	Haryana	49.85(20)	64.78(16)	32.51(23)	32.27(3)
8.	Himachal Pradesh	61.86(8)	73.89(9)	49.79(9)	24.10(15)
9.	Karnataka	47.69(22)	60.30(21)	34.76(22)	25.54(12)
10.	Kerala	88.92(1)	92.91(1)	85.12(1)	7.79(30)
11.	Madhya Pradesh	35.87(28)	51.04(25)	19.73(28)	31.31(4)
12.	Maharashtra	55.52(14)	69.74(10)	40.96(17)	28.78(7)
13.	Manipur	55.79(13)	67.64(11)	43.26(15)	24.38(14)
14.	Meghalaya	41.05(24)	44.83(31)	37.12(21)	7.71(31)
15.	Mizoram	72.47(3)	77.37(5)	67.03(3)	10.33(29)
16.	Nagaland	57.23(11)	63.42(18)	50.36(8)	13.06(28)
17.	Orissa	45.46(23)	60.00(22)	30.79(24)	29.21(6)
18.	Punjab	52.77(18)	60.71(20)	43.85(14)	16.86(26)
19.	Rajasthan	30.37(31)	47.64(28)	11.59(31)	36.05(1)
20.	Sikkim	54.38(16)	63.49(17)	43.98(13)	19.51(23)
21.	Tamil Nadu	54.59(15)	67.18(12)	41.84(16)	25.34(13)
22.	Tripura	56.08(12)	67.07(13)	44.33(12)	22.74(18)
23.	Uttar Pradesh	36.66(27)	52.05(24)	19.02(29)	33.03(2)
24.	West Bengal	50.50(19)	62.05(19)	38.12(19)	23.93(16)
25.	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	69.73(5)	75.99(7)	61.99(5)	14.00(27)
26.	Chandigarh	59.12(10)	65.67(15)	47.83(10)	17.84(25)
27.	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	37.00(26)	50.04(26)	23.30(27)	26.74(10)
28.	Daman & Diu	61.55(9)	75.23(8)	46.70(11)	28.53(8)
29.	Delhi	66.90(6)	78.46(4)	52.15(7)	26.31(11)
30.	Lakshadweep	78.89(2)	88.66(2)	68.72(2)	19.94(21)
31.	Pondicherry	65.36(7)	76.44(6)	53.96(6)	22.48(19)

Note:

Figures in parentheses indicate the ranks

Source of Literacy Rates: *Census of India, 1991, Series-1, Paper-2, 1992,*
Final Population Totals, New Delhi, 1993.

literacy rates of 44.69 per cent and 57.87 per cent respectively. But, the number of States/UTs with their rural female literacy rates higher than the national rural female literacy rate (30.62%) is 24.

The number of States/UTs with rural male literacy rate and rural female literacy rate above national rural literacy rate is 30 and 11 respectively. It means, while there is only one State with rural male literacy rate below that at the national level, there are about two-third of States/UTs with their female literacy rate below that at the national level.

Kerala and Lakshadweep take the first and second ranks in total, male and female literacy rates of rural areas while Rajasthan and Bihar occupy the last two ranks in total and female literacy rates. Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh occupy the last two ranks in male literacy rates.

The States of Kerala and West Bengal have retained their respective ranks of 1 and 19 in the case of total, male and female literacy rates of rural areas while the ranks of other States/UTs varied either in rural total or female literacy rates.

When the rural total, male and female literacy rates of States/UTs are compared with the corresponding literacy rates at the national level, *more than ten years backwardness of*: (a) Bihar and Rajasthan in rural total, male and female literacy; (b) Andhra Pradesh in rural total and male literacy; (c) Madhya Pradesh in rural total and female literacy; (d) Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya in rural male literacy; and (e) Uttar Pradesh in rural female literacy can be noticed, since the rural total, male and female literacy rates, at present, of these States/UTs are less than the corresponding literacy rates at national level in 1981.

The Rank Correlations between rural literacy rates and gender disparity shown below show the existence of high positive correlation between literacy rates, high negative correlation between FLR and G.D. medium negative correlation between TLR and G.D., and low negative correlation between MLR and G.D. Even here the relationship between TLR, MLR and FLR and G.D. indicates that the present TLR is more in favour of reducing gender disparity, though MLRs are comparatively higher than FLRs.

The Rank Correlations Studied for Table 3

Sl.No.	Variables	Rank Correlation
1.	TLR and MLR	0.95
2.	TLR and FLR	0.98
3.	MLR and FLR	0.88
4.	TLR and G.D.	-0.54
5.	MLR and G.D.	-0.28
6.	FLR and G.D.	-0.68

Gender Disparity - Urban Areas

Table - 4
Sex-wise Urban Literacy Rates and Gender Disparity of States/UTs - 1991

Sl.No.	State/UT	Total	Male	Female	Disparity (M-F)
1.	Andhra Pradesh	66.35(29)	75.87(30)	56.41(28)	19.46(7)
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	71.59(25)	77.99(27)	62.23(24)	15.76(14)
3.	Assam	79.39(14)	84.37(17)	73.32(12)	11.05(24)
4.	Bihar	67.89(28)	77.72(28)	55.94(29)	21.78(4)
5.	Goa	80.10(11)	86.33(11)	73.88(11)	12.45(20)
6.	Gujarat	76.54(18)	84.56(16)	67.70(20)	16.86(11)
7.	Haryana	73.66(22)	81.96(22)	64.06(23)	17.90(10)
8.	Himachal Pradesh	84.17(3)	88.97(6)	78.32(4)	10.65(25)
9.	Karnataka	74.20(21)	82.02(21)	65.74(22)	16.30(13)
10.	Kerala	92.25(2)	95.58(1)	89.06(2)	6.52(30)
11.	Madhya Pradesh	70.81(26)	81.32(23)	58.92(26)	20.40(3)
12.	Maharashtra	79.20(15)	86.41(9)	70.87(15)	15.52(16)
13.	Manipur	70.53(27)	82.11(20)	58.67(27)	23.44(2)
14.	Meghalaya	81.74(7)	85.72(14)	77.32(5)	8.40(28)
15.	Mizoram	93.45(1)	95.15(2)	91.61(1)	3.54(31)
16.	Nagaland	83.10(6)	85.94(13)	79.10(3)	6.84(29)
17.	Orissa	71.99(24)	81.21(24)	61.18(25)	20.03(5)
18.	Punjab	72.08(23)	77.26(29)	66.12(21)	11.14(23)
19.	Rajasthan	65.33(30)	78.50(26)	50.24(31)	28.26(1)
20.	Sikkim	80.89(10)	85.19(15)	74.94(9)	10.25(26)
21.	Tamil Nadu	77.99(17)	86.06(12)	69.61(16)	16.45(12)
22.	Tripura	83.09(5)	89.00(5)	76.93(6)	12.07(21)
23.	Uttar Pradesh	61.00(31)	69.98(31)	50.38(30)	19.60(6)
24.	West Bengal	75.27(20)	81.19(25)	68.25(19)	12.94(19)
25.	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	81.69(8)	86.59(8)	75.08(8)	11.51(22)
26.	Chandigarh	79.87(13)	84.09(18)	74.57(10)	9.52(27)
27.	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	78.44(16)	86.35(10)	68.42(18)	17.93(9)
28.	Daman & Diu	81.61(9)	91.14(4)	72.35(13)	18.79(8)
29.	Delhi	76.18(19)	82.39(19)	69.54(17)	13.85(18)
30.	Lakshadweep	83.99(4)	91.31(3)	76.11(7)	15.20(17)
31.	Pondicherry	79.88(12)	87.70(7)	71.98(14)	15.72(15)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate the ranks

Source of Literacy Rates: *Census of India, 1991, Series-1, Paper-2, 1992,*

The range of rural female literacy rates (64.53) is also wide as compared to that of rural total (58.55) and rural male literacy rates (48.08).

Gender disparity is highest in rural areas of Rajasthan (36.05%) followed by Uttar Pradesh (33.03%) while it is lowest in Meghalaya (7.71%) followed by Kerala (7.79%).

Table - 4 reveals that Mizoram and Kerala occupy the first and second ranks in urban total and female literacy rates while Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan take the last two ranks in urban total, male and female literacy rates. Kerala stands first in urban male literacy rate. Whereas Goa and A N Islands retained their respective ranks of 11 and 8 in total, male and female literacy rates, the ranks of rest of the States/UTs varied in one or more of the above literacy rates.

When urban total, male and female literacy rates of States/UTs are compared with the respective literacy rates at the national level *more than ten years backwardness of*: (a) Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh in urban total and female literacy; (b) Andhra Pradesh in urban male literacy; and (c) Bihar in urban female literacy can be noticed, as their urban total, male or female literacy rates are less than the corresponding literacy rates at national level in 1981.

The Rank Order Correlation Studies for Table 4

Sl.No.	Variables	Rank Correlation
1.	TLR and MLR	0.91
2.	TLR and FLR	0.98
3.	MLR and FLR	0.84
4.	TLR and G.D.	-0.79
5.	TLR and G.D.	-0.52
6.	TLR and G.D.	-0.88

The rank correlations studied reveal the existence of high positive correlation between urban literacy rates. But in case of literacy rates and gender disparity, the rank order correlation found was medium to high negative. Here also, the relationship between urban TLR, MLR, FLR and GD indicates that TLR is in favour of reducing gender disparity.

The number of States/UTs with their urban female and male literacy rates above the corresponding literacy rates at the national level is 22 and 23 respectively. But, the number of States/UTs with their urban male and female literacy rates above the national urban literacy rate of 73.01% is 30 and 12 respectively. This makes vivid the magnitude of gender disparity in urban areas as well.

Even in urban literacy, the range in female literacy rates of States/UTs, is 41.37% which is higher than that of total literacy rates (32.45%) and of male literacy rates (25.60%).

The range in urban gender disparity in literacy rates of States/UTs is 24.72 (28.26-3.54%). The number of states with their urban gender disparity in literacy below that of the national urban gender disparity of 17.04 is 20.

The State of Rajasthan ranks first in urban gender disparity (28.26%) followed by Manipur (23.44%). The least gender disparity in urban literacy is in Mizoram (3.54%) followed by Kerala (6.52%).

Gender Disparity Compared - Rural, Urban and All Areas

A glance at the Tables 2, 3 and 4 would reveal that the gender disparity is highest in Rajasthan. It is 36.05%, 28.26% and 34.55% in rural, urban and all areas respectively. Mizoram has the least gender disparity in urban (3.54%) and all areas (7.01%). But Meghalaya is the only State which has rural gender disparity (7.71%) less than urban gender disparity (8.40%).

The number of States with their gender disparity higher than the national gender disparity of 24.84 per cent is 7. There are 9 States/UTs with their rural gender disparity higher than national rural gender disparity of 27.25%, whereas only 5 States/UTs have their urban gender disparity above the national urban gender disparity of 17.04%.

The range in rural gender disparity of States/UTs is 28.31 which is higher than that of urban (24.72%) and all areas (27.45%).

Correlation between the ranks of total, male, female literacy rates and of gender disparity in literacy in rural, urban and all areas of all States/UTs studied show that there exists high positive correlation between literacy rates and also the gender disparity in rural, urban and all areas.

Variables	Area	Rank Correlation
TLR	All Areas and Rural	0.98
MLR	-do-	0.97
FLR	-do-	0.96
G.D.	-do-	0.93
TLR	All Areas and Urban	0.73
MLR	-do-	0.73
FLR	-do-	0.76
G.D.	-do-	0.87
TLR	Rural and Urban	0.77
MLR	-do-	0.73
FLR	-do-	0.81
G.D.	-do-	0.86

Table-5 presents the frequency distribution of the States/UTs according to their total, rural and urban literacy rates by sex. It reveals that there are 18 States/UTs with their female literacy rates being 50% and below in all areas while all the States/UTs have their male literacy rates above 50%. In case of rural areas the gender disparity situation is still worse and quite worse and quite alarming. There are 24 States/UTs with their respective rural female literacy rates being 50% and below while there are only six States with their respective male literacy rates of 50% and below. The gender disparity in urban areas is no less. While all the States/UTs have their urban male literacy rates above 60%, there are six States/UTs having female literacy rates below 60%.

Table - 5
Frequency Distribution of States/UTs in respect of their
Literacy Rates by Area and Sex - 1991.

Literacy Rate	All Areas			Rural			Urban		
	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F
1-10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11-20	0	0	1	0	0	4	0	0	0
21-30	0	0	5	1	0	3	0	0	0
31-40	2	0	3	6	0	7	0	0	0
41-50	7	0	9	5	6	10	0	0	2
51-60	8	8	5	10	5	2	6	6	4
61-70	5	8	4	5	12	4	4	1	10
71-80	6	7	3	3	6	0	17	5	13
81-90	3	7	1	1	1	1	2	4	1
91+	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	4	1

Findings

The findings, in brief, are as follows:

- 1) The male literacy rates in rural, urban and all areas are higher than the corresponding female literacy rates;
- 2) The gender disparity is more acute in rural areas as compared to urban areas. Gender disparity in urban areas is less than that in rural areas in all States/UTs except in the State of Meghalaya where it is slightly

Table - 6
Frequency Distribution of States/UTs in respect of their
Gender Disparity in Literacy by Area - 1991

Gender Disparity	General (All Areas)	Rural	Urban
1-5	0	0	1
6-10	4	3	5
11-15	4	2	9
16-20	5	6	12
21-25	11	8	3
26-30	6	8	1
31-35	1	3	0
36-40	0	1	0

A glance at Table-6 would reveal that the number of States/UTs with their gender disparity in rural, urban and all areas falling above 20 per cent is 20, 4 and 18 respectively. This also manifests the magnitude of gender disparity which is much higher than that in urban areas.

reverse, 7.71 per cent in rural areas and 8.40 in urban areas.

- 3) The number of States/UTs with their male literacy rates above the national literacy rate is more than the number of States/UTs with their female literacy rates above the national literacy rate.
- 4) There are 20 States/UTs with their female literacy rates below the national literacy rate, while none of the States/UTs has its male literacy rates below the national literacy rate;
- 5) When the literacy rates of States/UTs are compared with the corresponding literacy rates at the national level, more than ten years backwardness of (a) Rajasthan in total, male and female literacy in rural, urban and all areas; (b) Bihar in female literacy in rural, urban and all areas; (c) Andhra Pradesh in male literacy in rural, urban and all areas; (d) Arunachal Pradesh in male literacy in rural and all areas; (e) Uttar Pradesh in female literacy in rural, urban and all areas; and (f) Madhya Pradesh in female literacy in rural and all areas can be observed as the literacy rates of these States/UTs are less than the corresponding literacy rates at national level in 1981.

- 6) Despite all the above, the rank order correlation between literacy rates and gender disparity reveals that the present literacy situation is moving in favour of females. That is, though the gender disparity has been continuing from 1961 to 1991 in all States and UTs the improvement in literacy in general will lead more towards bridging the gap in male and female literacy;

Though there is gender inequity in literacy by many a measure, still there is a positive sign that has emerged in favour of gender equity in literacy. Nevertheless, the planners, administrators and implementors involved in literacy and adult education programmes must pay greater attention to the present movement with a view to quickening the process of bridging the gap between the literacy and education of males and females in rural and urban areas among others.

20. Participatory Training for Promotion of Social Development*

Binoy Acharya and Shalini Verma

The context

During the last one decade or so, "training" has become a common activity in all development projects. But it needs to be recognized that the "most extensive and far reaching learning has proceeded with no trainers at all or with the trainers involved marginally and from a distance."¹ If learning can happen without training, why is so much energy being put into training in general and participatory training in particular? Before we address this question, perhaps it is most appropriate to state that during the last decade, training has become reduced to a pre-planned technique-happy mass of simulations and role plays without any contribution to critical thinking and generation of understanding and awareness. In certain development circles, the practitioners opt for doses of training if a programme is not doing well. There are great expectations from training- "as if knowledge and action are related".²

On the contrary, the work experience of an agency and its projects are often not systematically articulated and analysed for further use in action. As long as it is assumed that increasing knowledge will automatically lead to changes in action, training cannot contribute anything to the development process. Such thinking only shows a type of development which is more technical in nature. Participatory training relates to a type of development which believes in enabling the poor to gain control over their lives in a more active manner, breaks the culture of silence, gives people the confidence to express their individual and collective interests, and helps them to understand the social dynamics and identify solutions.³

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Participatory training principles

Participatory training needs to be looked at separately from its generic word “training”. Participatory training is based on a value premise which believes in empowerment of the poor, including women, and believes in sustainability, ecological soundness and social justice. Participatory training cannot be carried out in every situation. It would be a mistake to understand the word “participatory” as synonymous with methods like role play, simulations and other structured exercises. No method makes training participatory or non-participatory. Participatory training is based on an article of faith among the trainers which, in turn, is biased towards the marginalized groups. Participatory training is rooted in certain basic values which are centered on poor people’s participation in rebuilding their own future.

A participatory trainer does not make magic to alter social inequality. The trainer only makes an educational intervention, whereby the people start thinking about their situation.⁴ Participatory training facilitates critical learning.

Agencies and projects believing in the participatory development process have concepts like “organizing”, “empowerment”, “participation”, “self-management”, “community control”, “sustainability” in their project document.

Ordinary people whose basic knowledge and experiences have been devalued and delegitimized for centuries do not feel confident enough to exercise control. They suffer from low self-esteem and their trust in themselves is shaken. The reason for this is to be found in the conventional approach to education of the poor. If poor people are considered ignorant and if the approach is to simply feed them with information that is useful to them, it will never lead to instilling confidence or empowerment. However, this does not imply that poor people should not be provided with technical information.

To take an example of a community health programme, there may be training for health workers on how to do safe delivery, but the training will only enable the health workers to practice, if they are given the opportunity to analyse their own experiences of conducting deliveries. This would enable them to find out what is “good” and “bad” in their own practices and why there is a need to adopt new ones. This raises the self-confidence and increases the participation of the health workers. In other words, the training related to social development change does not focus on information-giving or skill-building but encourages the practitioners and people to articulate their own knowledge and need to know and learn more. This principle is the same for any programme, whether it is watershed development, forestry, income-generation activities, food security, or savings and credit.

Though participatory training is based on a set of value premises it is also built on adult learning principles. In participatory training, we hear some common statements like “start where the people are”, “learn from their expe-

riences”, “learning is a social event”. These are nothing but principles derived for adult learning. Hence, participatory training is structured to bear in mind both value premises and adult learning principles.

The key features of this training are that:

- i) It is participant-centered. It is specific to learner’s learning needs.
- ii) The learning focuses not only on knowledge but also on awareness and skill. This makes the learning complete, critical and useful. The combined focus of these three makes the choice of training methods complex.
- iii) Learning is derived from the experiences of the participants. Experiential learning is crucial to participatory training.
- iv) Participatory training requires a learning environment where participants and their experience are valued and participants feel psychologically secure and safe to unlearn, try their new ideas and share their experiences.
- v) When participation is valued, participants develop their own norms and values and take responsibility for their own learning.
- vi) Since ensuring participation and building a safe environment are key requirements of participatory training, the role of trainers becomes crucial. The trainer not only believes in the participatory principles, but needs to demonstrate them as a way of life.⁵
- vii) Participatory training not only helps in developing critical understanding but also appropriates the relevant and useful knowledge of the dominant system.⁶

Participatory training in practice

Agencies and projects that give importance to people’s empowerment and control are involved in critical liberating education with the disadvantaged groups that they work with. In order to build the people’s competencies, projects and agencies conduct series of training. Hence, socializing development workers in accordance with participatory principles as well as building internal competency to facilitate participatory learning are very much needed. In India, many agencies have been working towards building the competency of grassroots development agencies in participatory training.

For the past decade, the Society for Participatory Research in Asia, New Delhi, and several regional support institutions have been involved in building competency in participatory training among grassroots groups. All these institutions individually and jointly have trained a large number of development workers in India and elsewhere in South Asia. The objectives of such pro-

grammes are (I) to build internal capacity of the grass root development agencies to facilitate participatory learning with the disadvantaged groups they work with, (ii) to help the agencies to systematize their training interventions and to create a cadre of people who believe in the participatory philosophy and to give them practice in training. Some of the key features of participatory training elaborated here are drawn from the experience and practices of various support organizations including UNNATI, where the authors work.⁷

The methodology used in strengthening the participatory training competencies is based on the participatory principles elaborated in the previous section. It is based on experiential learning and building the internal competencies of the development workers so that they emerge as participatory trainers. The training includes modules like:

- i) Why do we do training - Role of training in social change
- ii) Developing insights into how disadvantaged people learn
- iii) Developing insights into group behaviour - group process and dynamics
- iv) Self-development of trainers
- v) Developing an understanding of the effective use of training methods
- vi) Training design
- vii) Developing facilitation skills

These seven primary modules are taken up in a three-phase training programme. The first and third phases are residential programmes lasting eight days each. Between the first and the third phase, there is a gap of four months. During this period the participants make use of some of the principles they have learnt in the first phase. This is the second phase. This phase also provides a chance to articulate the learning needs of a trainer. While the first phase is devoted to understanding the methodological principles of training, the third phase is spent in developing skills to

experience of participants →	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training for change • participatory principles • group process • self-development • training methods • training design 	• practice →	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • articulation of participatory training • sharpen trainer skills • facilitation of group learning
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practise those principles. However, in both phases, experience, analysis and articulation are in-built. In the first phase, the participants enter into the learning

situation with individual identity. But as they are encouraged to learn from each other's experiences, the purpose of understanding the value and strength of experimental learning is met. From the analysis of their own collective learning process, the participants derive insights into group processes. From the trainer's behaviour and facilitation, the participants derive insights into the role of the trainer and facilitation skills. During the whole training, the trainer performs as a model learner, trainer and practitioner of participatory training. Besides the content of the programme, the process of training is very important. We have found that the participants learn more from the training process and trainer's behaviour than from the content per se. The seven key modules are as follows:

Role of training

There are polarised opinions on the role of training in the social change and development process. As practitioners of participatory training, we need to develop a balanced understanding of its role. When training is understood as a structured, deliberate, directed and purposive learning intervention, it makes the learning focused. In a participatory learning perspective, it provides learning on the daily issues central to the life of the people who are undergoing the learning and also helps the people to critically look into their experiences. The process helps the learner to acquire faith in him/her-self. The content of the training is of little value if the training does not create an environment where the learners feel confident enough to share and analyse their experiences. Participatory training does not provide information and skill alone but breaks the "culture of silence". People, particularly the poor, who undergo participatory training of any nature need to get structured space to gain confidence. Making people feel empowered and capable in a learning context enables them to practise in their own real life context. Besides this, learning in a group provides a microcosm of group functioning for the participants. From the training, the participants discover the relevance of the "group" and understand the norms, values and principles of group-building which later can be used in organizing themselves.

How adults learn

Insights into the learning process of adults can help in structuring the learning programme. People often avoid structured learning as it requires unlearning, which is painful. Learning creates several emotional feelings like stress, anxiety, fear, confusion, agitation and happiness. It has been found that people learn

best when learning is useful, relaxing, concrete and when their own experiences and understanding are valued. Such an understanding helps in building an appropriate learning environment and in preparation of the trainer. This module highlights the importance of the learning process rather the content. Developing insights into the issue of why people do not participate in learning as well as in the development process is crucial for trainer. If people are treated as objects rather than as active participants they feel alienated. Adults participate best in learning when they are give a safe, supportive and accepting environment in which to express and take action.

Group process

The group is basic to experiential learning and action for change. Thus there is a need to understand how a group performs its tasks while maintaining its group identity. There is also a need to understand the process of participation, communication, leadership building, conflict resolution and decision making in the group while its members are undergoing learning. Any inability to recognize these processes creates a problem in helping the group to get involved in the learning. Therefore, the trainer's insights into the group process is essential in order to facilitate collective learning.

Self-development of the trainer

“Knowing oneself is the basis for knowing others.” Since, during the training, the trainer needs to know how the participants are feeling, how comfortable they are in pursuing learning, whether their experience and knowledge are being valued, the trainer needs to know himself/herself completely. Without this, the trainer might impose herself/himself, her/his own views, pressures, anxieties and tentativeness on the participants. Hence, the trainer needs to undergo an analysis of his/her own understanding of micro and macro reality and perspective on social development and change, to be clear about his/her likes and dislikes and to have sensitivity towards gender, communal, cultural, racial and caste issues. The trainer needs to be clearly aware of her/his own self-concept and needs to respect him/herself. Having a balanced understanding of oneself helps in understanding others in a similar “situation”. As it is said, if your are sensitive to your own needs it helps in developing sensitivity towards others. Self-understanding and self-development are crucial to a trainer's overall development.

Training methods

Since participatory training focuses on knowledge, awareness and skill development, the methods used are consistent with the focus of learning. The methods used in the training are lecture, group discussion, simulation, role play, case analysis and practice and other variations of these major methods. Besides focusing on learning in the choice of methods, there is also a need to keep in mind participant's sustained involvement, to value learners' experiences and to enable them to build groups. Methods should contribute to learning, they should not be a bag of tricks and games used to entertain the learners. In fact, the entertainment value has become so over-popularized in recent times that it has made participatory training synonymous with fun and having a good time rather than critical and liberating learning.

Training design

"Developing an appropriate design for the learning objectives of a group of learners is one of the most creative and challenging first steps in any training."⁸ But many trainers feel that in participatory training one should not develop a pre-planned design. Such thinking only leads to blurring of training objectives and lack of preparation by the trainer. A participatory trainer ought to know about the background and learning needs of the participants. The trainer should also be clear about the organizational and socio-economic context of a particular training course. Based on this preliminary understanding, a training design should be prepared which includes articulation of training objectives, spelling out the contents and its sequencing and selecting appropriate learning methods. Once a design is prepared, the trainer can prepare for each session. But each design needs to be re-examined jointly with the participants, taking into account their articulated learning needs and training objectives. The steps in the preparation of a design are identifying learning needs, setting objectives, spelling out content, sequencing and identifying methods.

This helps in breaking the trainers' frequent obsession with methods and technique. Many trainers first look for an attractive method and then identify the content. This approach makes participatory training into a series of games without contributing to learning. Hence, competency in training design preparation is an essential skill.

Facilitation

In participatory training, the trainer facilitates group learning. Small group facilitation does not have one single theory or conceptual basis but can use a diversity of approaches.⁹

In participatory training, one enables individuals as well as the group to develop understanding and awareness. In a training situation, an individual or the group as a whole may get stuck in arriving at cognitive understanding or may show resistance or blocks in relation to the learning issues. In these situations, the trainer makes facilitative interventions. The facilitating styles can be "interactive", "inclusive", "intrusive" and "interpretive". The mix of different styles is helpful in a mix of learning goals, differential trainer personalities and various stages of group development. However, one needs to understand various approaches to facilitation such as psychoanalytic, NTL, Esalen Rogerian models, etc. The individual models are very powerful methods and grassroots trainers may not develop the competency to handle them. We have found that grassroots workers find it easy to use a mix of styles in promoting collective learning.

Training design adopted during 1993 for Gujarat based NGOs

Days	Phase	Methods
Phase I		
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● setting the context of the training ● introduction of participants ● rearticulation of learning needs ● spelling out the objective of training ● understanding training and participatory training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● dyads ● group work ● group distinction
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● understading participatory training (continued) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● group work ● self-study ● consolidation
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● articulation of participatory training principles ● role of trainer ● small group dynamics and processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● group work ● consolidation ● group distinction ● simulation, role play
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● small group process (cont.) ● inter-group process ● mid-term review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● video review ● exercise ● open verbal
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● trainers' capacities ● trust, respect, gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● exercise
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● self-awareness and dev. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● reflection
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● training design ● training methods and analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● case analysis ● demonstrations
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● up planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● group work ● open & ques.

All the above learning themes are carried out with the use of a variety of methods such as analysis of participants' experiences, analysis of cases and analysis of simulated experiences with adequate input to sharpen the theoretical base.

Phase II

Participants practice training at their work place and review their performance. Trainers help the participants during the training.

Phase - III

Phase	Methods
● analysis of training experience	● group work
● training design preparation	● group work
● training design preparation	● case work
● use of training methods	● practice in group ● video review
● facilitation	● group work ● video review ● lecture
● training evaluation, follow up, report	● case study
● insight into gender issues, trainer authority, team work, participation	● guided group work
● self-development of trainer	● group discussion ● lecture
● participatory training philosophy	● group discussion
● follow-up planning	● group work
● evaluation	● open
● closure	

Impact at the grassroots

Though we have not undertaken any formal study to assess the impact of training to build trainers' competencies in participatory training, we have witnessed some of its use at the grassroots.

The first and foremost important change is that the grassroots trainers have been able to understand why people do not participate. They realize the dangers of the "imparting" model of educating people. There is an increased understanding of the need to exploit experiences and to use a mutual, learner-centered and interactive model of learning. Training has helped them to promote participation in the programmes as well as to derive people's knowledge to make programmes people-centered and locally relevant.

The second nature of the impact is an increase in the grassroots workers' faith in people's knowledge. The trainers see and value the wide range of knowledge and resources people have. This breaks the dependence on external resource persons and experts. The trainers do value expert knowledge, but integrate it critically with people's knowledge-base. This training enhances understanding and insight into development issues.

The third nature of the impact is in terms of self-development. Development practitioners' examination, evaluation and assessment of their people-centered values in learning helps them to develop as individuals sensitive to poor people and their needs. The critical re-examination of social conditions also helps the practitioners to develop a concrete, practical, dynamic approach to social development. In sum, participatory training not only promotes people's participation, but creates alternatives to social development frameworks at the micro level and helps to build development workers committed to the empowerment of the poor.

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- 7 UNNATI - Organisation for Development Education, where the authors work, is actively involved in promoting participatory training. During the last three years, UNNATI has trained 90 development workers from 30 development agencies in the State of Gujarat, India. UNNATI has taken the initiative of developing an informal Participatory Training Network in Gujarat to share training experience. This network is a collective of development workers of Gujarat who have attended participatory training by UNNATI and PRIA.
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