

STUDIES IN INDIAN ADULT EDUCATION

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S.Y. Shah

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INDIAN
ADULT EDUCATION
ASSOCIATION
NEW DELHI



Studies in Indian Adult Education

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Acknowledgment

There has been tremendous expansion of adult education programmes in India specially after the launching of the National Literacy Mission in 1988. However, there is a dearth of research based publications. The present work is an humble endeavour in this direction. It comprises of eleven research papers prepared by the author during the last eighteen years.

Most of these papers are based on research projects undertaken by him with the financial support from different organizations in India and abroad, specially, University Grants Commission, Kellogg Foundation and the Association of Commonwealth Universities. Besides the author received considerable support and cooperation from several individuals and institutions which have been acknowledged at the end of different papers.

This volume covers most of the crucial areas of Indian adult education. Specifically, the following topics have been examined in different papers viz; Adult Education Policy and Planning, University Adult Education, Literacy Campaigns and International Linkages of Indian Adult Education. Grateful acknowledgments are due to the following serial publications in which the different papers have appeared—International Journal of University Adult Education, Indian Journal of Adult Education, Perspectives in Education, Journal of Education and Social Change, University News, Yojana, Report of Finish Adult Education Association and the Commonwealth Association for the Education and Training of Adults. While some of the papers have been considerably pruned, others have been edited for consistency and style. It is hoped that this handy volume will be a significant addition to the limited literature on Indian Adult Education.

S.Y. Shah

Section-I
Adult Education Policy, Planning
and Programmes

National Literacy Mission (1988) Objectives and Strategies

The Government of India's policy towards adult education has undergone several and significant changes over the years. At different points of time various factors and forces have influenced the policy. Of these, three factors seem to be common and crucial : (i) changes in the Government, (ii) interest and involvement of the bureaucracy, and (iii) budget allocation. In 1985 when there was a change in the Government of India, an official decision was taken to formulate a new education policy with a view to "reshaping the education system to enable it to meet the challenges of the future" and accelerate the pace of national development.¹ The New Education Policy (NEP) which was finalised in 1986 after a series of consultations and debates at various levels gave a new orientation to adult education in India. Recognising the importance of adult education as a tool for reducing economic, social and gender disparities, the NEP stressed that the "whole nation must pledge itself to the eradication of illiteracy particularly in the 15-35 age group."²

The operational details of the policy identified the strategies of involving different official and non-official agencies in the implementation of adult education programme. For the first time in the history of Indian adult education, the liquidation of illiteracy was considered as a societal and technological mission. To quote :

Eradication of illiteracy will be launched as a Technical and Societal Mission. Such a Mission approach pre-supposes that we are at the threshold of momentous scientific, technological and pedagogic changes, which may, besides augmenting the range of the communication systems, make the process of acquiring literacy quicker and easier. 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 audiovisual 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.³

Subsequently in 1987, when the Government of India identified eradication of illiteracy as one of the five National Missions,⁴ the whole machinery of the State became alert and action-oriented to the cause of adult education. However, it was the formal launching of the National Literacy Mission (NLM) by Prime Minister of India on 5th May, 1988, that gave the literacy programme the much needed prestige and publicity.⁵ Today, NLM document has emerged as the *magna carta* of Indian adult education.

The basic premise of the NLM that the problems of illiteracy can be solved mainly through the application of technology and scientific research may itself be questionable. While it would be possible to find solution to some of the problems through the application of science and technology, the process calls for detailed planning which may be time consuming and may require additional human and material resources. Are we in a position to mobilise such resources? In view of the limited financial resources at the national level, it may be necessary to plan and develop locally available low cost rural based technologies instead of importing technologies from developed nations.

The Mission approach is based on certain assumptions. The first assumption that there would be continuance of political will at all levels for the achievement of Mission goals raises certain questions.⁷ Involvement of political parties in the formulation of policies is only one aspect of the manifestation of political will. India being a federal country with different political parties in power in different States, is it possible to have the same degree of political commitment at all levels? Since in the Indian context the State plays a dominant role in the implementation of adult education programmes, the Government of India (Centre) though the main funding agency will have very little control, and then,

would it not be too naive to assume that there would be a political will ?

The second assumption that a national consensus would be created for mobilisation of social forces also seems to be questionable in view of the ideological differences prevailing among the ruling parties at the Centre and in States.⁸ Any attempt towards creation of national consensus for mobilisation of social forces is likely to be confronted with several obstacles. A great deal of caution will be necessary in identifying the social forces for some of them maintain close links with fanatical and fascist organisations.

The third assumption revolves around seeking the participation of people in the Mission.⁹ It may be easier to seek people's participation. But how to ensure their active and continuous participation ? Perhaps, the delegation of certain responsibilities to people may be one of the effective means.

Objectives and Operational Strategies

The National Literacy Mission has a time bound objective of imparting functional Literacy to 80 million illiterate persons in the age of 15-35 years by 1995.¹⁰ It aims at achieving the objective in two phases; In phase I, the NLM has a target of imparting literacy to 30 million illiterates by the year 1990; and in phase II, it has a target of 50 million to be covered in the next five years. The thrust of the NLM will be on women and rural illiterates since 62.7 per cent of the illiterates are women and 85.5 per cent illiterates belong to rural areas.

Imparting functional literacy to 80 million people within a span of seven years is a challenging task which requires multidimensional strategies and massive infrastructure. The strategies are of two types :

(i) Strategies related to people

(a) Motivation

The NLM recognises the importance of people and their power in making the programme of adult education successful. The NLM document rightly identifies the key role of motivation in literacy and suggests ways and means of developing and sustaining the motivation of learners as well as instructors. In a "Design for Motivation-Centred Programme" the document suggests certain "content inputs" viz. programme of skill development, health

related issues of women and children, recreation and cultural activities, conscientisation, religious discourses and "form related inputs" viz. dedicated instructor, improved learning atmosphere, attractive learning materials, etc.¹¹ Of all the inputs it is the commitment and competence of the instructor that makes or mars the programme and often it becomes extremely difficult to attract such dedicated and dynamic volunteers to work as instructors on a nominal honorarium of Rs. 100 (one hundred) per month on an average of two hours per day on all working days and that too, in an 'unattractive' literacy centre. The official policy of categorising the instructor who is the key grass-root functionary, as a part-time worker or a volunteer, needs to be re-examined in the context of the changing socio-economic realities of Indian society. While the number of voluntary agencies has been increasing,¹² the spirit of voluntarism among the people seems to be gradually decreasing as the experience of the organizers of Adult Education Programme show how difficult it becomes to lure a volunteer to run a centre.

(b) Peoples' Participation

The NLM envisages peoples' participation as a part of total strategy for mass mobilisation and recommends regular use of mass media, cultural caravans and training of youth.¹³ The NLM suggests the use of different techniques to seek the involvement of different groups of people. Through the publication of special features and coverage of news items having a bearing on adult education, the NLM suggests that the leading newspapers should be used to generate a positive attitude towards adult education especially among the influential sections of society. Unless the Governmental and non-Governmental agencies commission special articles and provide special incentives to Press, the coverage of adult education will remain too inadequate and insignificant. In this connection, it may be noted here that the recent launching of the NLM by the Prime Minister, considered to be a landmark in the history of Indian adult education, did not get a front page coverage in most of the leading newspapers! However, the *Door Darshan* (Indian Television) gave a live coverage of one hour programme which seems to have succeeded in catching the attention of the public. The television programmes and films are powerful media of public education and an attempt to use them should not be delayed till new programmes are developed. Simultaneous efforts will have to be made to select

the relevant TV and feature films from the already available stock and put them to regular use.

(c) Voluntary Agencies

In the years to come, the Government of India, proposes to involve voluntary agencies on a much larger scale in organising adult education programmes. Voluntary agencies are being considered as "partners in Literacy Action" and the NLM has envisaged the participation of 300 agencies during 1987-88. It is expected that the number of voluntary agencies participating in adult education would increase threefold over the next three years.¹⁴ However, in terms of financial allotment, the amount earmarked for voluntary agencies does not increase uniformly. While a sum of Rs. 100 million was set aside to involve 300 voluntary agencies in the programme of adult education during the year 1987-88, it is estimated that only Rs. 240 million would be required to involve 1,000 voluntary agencies during 1989-90!¹⁵ The Government policy of increasing the number of voluntary agencies over the next three years presupposes that either there are adequate number of such agencies interested in taking up adult education programme or new agencies would be coming up in due course. One wonders whether the decision to increase the number of agencies may not pave the way for the creation of a group of commercially-oriented agencies? One could argue that by increasing the number of voluntary agencies, the base of the voluntary sector could be widened. But, then, will it not be advisable as well as advantageous to expand the scope of the participation of the few tried and tested voluntary agencies in the first phase before inviting the new ones?

(d) Jan Shikshan Nilayams

The NLM has focused its attention not only on improving the ongoing programmes by introducing participatory training techniques, better supervision, distance learning techniques, increasing the number of women instructors and introducing literacy in spoken language but also strengthening the continuing education programme through the establishment of Jan Shikshan Nilayams¹⁶ (JSN) (peoples' centres for learning). It is proposed to set up a JSN for a population of 5,000 people and it is expected that nearly 60,000 JSNs would be opened by 1990. Each JSN is expected to provide a library and a reading-room, short duration training

programmes relating to subjects such as health, family welfare, agriculture and organize sports and adventure activities, recreational and cultural facilities, and evening classes for upgradation of literacy and numeracy skills. A sum of Rs. 1,100 millions have been set aside to establish 60,000 JSNs by the year 1990.¹⁷

(e) Youth

The NLM aims at making literacy, people's mission and has sought the involvement of different Governmental and non-Governmental agencies viz. universities, colleges, teachers, trade unions, public sector undertaking and defence personnel. A sum of Rs.100 million have been set aside to impart literacy to 1.72 million illiterates under the Mass Programme of Functional Literacy.¹⁸ Under this scheme, it is expected that literacy would be imparted according to "Each One Teach One" pattern where a student volunteer imparts literacy to an adult within a duration of 150 hours (spread over four months) and with the help of a specially designed literacy kit. The kit includes a set of cards/basic literacy materials; booklet consisting of topics related to the learners' life for supplementary reading; booklet on arithmetic; assessment sheet for assessing the learner's progress; teacher's guide and personal information of learners as well as instructors, a note book, a pencil and an eraser.¹⁹ The NLM has emphasised the importance of preparing attractive teaching learning materials on a wide scale and has identified the agencies to undertake the job. However, it is equally important that sufficient care be taken to distribute the materials in time and in adequate quantity to the learners lest the programme should suffer.

(ii) Strategies related to Technology and Budget

The central concern of NLM revolves around the application of technology to modernise the literacy programme. The following technological inputs have been suggested by the NLM: (i) improved lighting arrangements either through electrification or using solar energy or hurricane lanterns, (ii) high quality teaching-learning aids and equipment, (iii) use of new technologies for learning, and (iv) use of computers in the management of NLM.²⁰ The NLM suggests gradual introduction of technology. In the first phase, it is proposed to introduce the technology in 10 per cent of the selected districts,

comprising 20 well endowed and 20 under endowed districts.²¹

A well-defined Mission Management Structure and a Computerised Management Information System have been suggested by the NLM.²² It is suggested that at the National and State levels, there would be a National and a State Authority of Adult Education respectively. These Authorities would be entrusted with the responsibility for planning and implementation of the programme at the National and State levels. Technical resource support to these Authorities would be provided by the proposed National Institute of Adult Education, and by the State Resource Centres respectively.²³

It is calculated that a total sum of 5,500 million would be required to impart literacy to 30 million people during the period 1987-90. The voluntary agencies have been provided Rs. 500 million to make 2.5 million people literate. With a 9 per cent of budget, they are expected to cover 8 per cent of the illiterate population, whereas the State sector is expected to cover 54 per cent of illiterates with 54 per cent of the budgetary allocation. It is expected that nearly 15 per cent (4.68 million) of the target population of illiterates would be made literate through the Mass Programme of Functional Literacy with a budgetary allocation of 1.8 per cent (Rs. 100 million).²⁴ The sector-wise budgetary allocation viz. the expected coverage shows the high expectations of the Government from the non-Governmental agencies and youth.

The NLM is no doubt an exemplary document which covers the entire gamut of Indian adult education in a comprehensive manner. Unlike the earlier documents, the NLM provided the action programme, time frame and cost estimation and the requirements of infrastructure at different levels. Since the Government has already set up the task force, allotted the funds and formally launched the NLM on 5 May, 1988, one could be optimistic about the official concern and commitment towards adult education. Perhaps, one of the reasons for the active involvement of the Government in the formulation as well as implementation of the adult education policy, may be traced to personal leadership provided by Anil Bordia, whose interest in adult education is well-known. He could not only persuade the ministers and politicians but also mobilise the State machinery to promote the cause of adult education in India. His success was perhaps also due to Sam Pitroda, the Technical Adviser to the Prime Minister of India, whose

technological inputs have strengthened the literacy programme. So it may be argued that in making the current programme of adult education as one of the top priority programmes of the Government of India, the top bureaucrats have played a key role. But should the progress of adult education be left to the care of bureaucrats or to the people? What role should the people and their organizations play in strengthening the programme? These remain vital questions that would have to be answered soon.

The future of Indian Adult Education depends to a great extent on the successful implementation of the National Literacy Mission which implies continuous commitment of the State, dynamic leadership of key personnel viz., Education Minister, Education Secretary, Director of Adult Education, etc. massive mobilisation of resources and its full and proper utilisation, strong support of professional organizations, and above all active participation people. The central issue in the successful implementation of adult education programme revolves around the role of the State vis-a-vis the people. In examining this role, the following questions, amongst others, would have, to be addressed : Should the role of the State be confined to funding the programme as well as running the bulk of the programme through Government agencies ? Or, should the State give a dominant role to non-Governmental organizations in adult education programme ? Are the voluntary agencies prepared to accept a greater role in the adult education programme ? If so, do they still want to depend on the State for funds ? Can they raise adequate resources on their own ? Can institutions or mechanisms be developed to enable them to do so ?

REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. Government of India, *Challenge of Education— A Policy Perspective* (New Delhi : Ministry of Education, 1985), See Foreword.
2. Government of India, *National Policy on Education*, 1986 (New Delhi: Ministry of Human Resource Development, 1986), p. 9.
3. Government of India, *Programme of Action* (New Delhi : Ministry of Human Resource Development, 1986), p. 136.
4. The Literacy Mission is the third priority in the category of the following five National Missions :
 - (i) Immunisation Programme for Infants.
 - (ii) Drinking Water in Rural Areas.
 - (iii) Eradication of illiteracy.
 - (iv) Communication in rural areas.

(v) Production of edible oil.

5. For the first time in the history of India, the Prime Minister and his Cabinet colleagues, members of parliament and many officials of Government, representatives of several Adult Education Agencies participated in a programme connected with literacy. The programme was given a live coverage in the National Television and most of the National dailies also reported the event.
6. Government of India, National Literacy Mission (New Delhi : Ministry of Human Resource Development, 1988), p. 5.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 19, 24
10. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.
12. While in 1979, there were 408 voluntary agencies working in the field of adult education, in 1987, their number increased to 506. See *Directory of Voluntary Organizations Working in the Field of Adult Education* (New Delhi : Directorate of Adult Education, 1979). *Directory of Voluntary Organizations Working in the Field of Adult Education* (New Delhi : Directorate of Adult Education, 1987).
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.
17. For details see *Jan Shikshan Nilayam* (New Delhi : Directorate of Adult Education, 1988), pp. 5-6.
18. *National Literacy Mission*, pp. 30-31 and 56-57.
19. For details see *Mass Programme of Functional Literacy* (New Delhi : University Grants Commission, 1986), Annexure D.
20. *National Literacy Mission*, pp. 37-39.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 41-43.
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.
24. See Agency-wise coverage of Adult Illiterate in the Age-group 15-35 during 1987-90 and Financial Requirement of the NLM (1987-90) *Ibid.*, pp. 56-57.

Adult Education in the Eighth Plan : Some Issues

The Context

The Eighth Five Year Plan has been launched against the background of significant changes caused by an array of national and international events. While the break-up of the Soviet Union and the impact of the Gulf War had brought down India's foreign trade and revenue, the continuation of loss making public sector undertakings has been straining the exchequer. Apart from the resource crunch, the Plan had to take into account the policy of liberalisation of Indian economy and the increasing role of private sector. Notwithstanding the growth of Indian economy at the rate of 5.5 per cent per annum as compared to 3.5 per cent witnessed during the three previous decades, and the significant reduction of people living below the poverty line from 48.3 per cent in 1977-78 to 29.9 per cent in 1987-88; the enormous increase in the growth of Indian population at the rate of 2.1 per cent per annum resulting in 844 million in 1991, has considerably watered down the gains of the earlier plan efforts. Besides, the growing urbanisation and the large scale unemployment caused by the slow growth of employment at a rate of 2.2 per cent per annum compared to 2.5 of labour force, wide disparities in access to the basic amenities of life like health care, drinking water, primary education and the increasing social tensions generated by the communal, and terrorist activities have been posing serious challenges to the formulation as well as implementation of the Plan. "The imperatives of the growth in the face of these challenges require an innovative approach to development which is based on a re-examination and re-orientation of the role of Government, the harnessing of the

latent energies of people through people's involvement in the process of nation building and creation of an environment which encourages and builds up people's initiative rather than dependence on the Government."

Thrust Areas in Education

The ultimate focus of the Eighth Plan being on human development, considerable importance has been laid on education, health, population control, employment generation and creation of appropriate organisations and delivery system to ensure that the benefits of investment in the social sector reaches the intended beneficiaries. In the education sector, apart from elementary, adult and vocational education have been identified as the major thrust areas and accordingly universalisation of elementary education, eradication of illiteracy in 15-35 age group, and vocationalisation of higher secondary education remain as the three priority objectives of the Eighth Plan. In regard to literacy, the emphasis would be on sustainability of literacy skills gained and on the achievement of goals of remediation, continuation and application of skills to actual living and working conditions.

Achievement of these objectives not only depends on the objective assessment of the targets but also on the adoption of appropriate strategies and allocation of adequate outlays. In the case of adult education it is estimated that 11.08 crore illiterates in 15-35 age group would have to be covered by the end of the Eighth Plan to achieve hundred per cent adult literacy. Though the target seems to be ambitious yet it is very much within the realm of possibility given the increasing trend of coverage under the Total Literacy Campaigns, special support provided through a number of centrally sponsored schemes like Rural Functional Literacy (RFL) projects, Post-Literacy and Continuing Education, Nonformal Education, strengthening of administrative infrastructure and technical resource support at national, state and district levels, increasing role of non-governmental organisations, massive participation of people from all sections of society, mobilisation of resources from the local community and an enhanced allocation for the adult and elementary education in the Eighth Plan.

Targets and Trend of Coverage

A review of the Eighth Five Year Plan document reveals that of the

11.08 crores illiterates to be covered during the Eighth Plan, 10.99 crores are in the State sector and the remaining in the Union Territories. Among the States the bulk of illiterates are in Uttar Pradesh (1.67 crores), Orissa (1.3 crores), Bihar (0.94 crores), Rajasthan (0.93 crores) and Madhya Pradesh (0.86 crores) which together constitute more than 50 per cent of the illiterates in the country (see Table No. 1). A closer examination of the Plan documents of these States, however, reveals that none of them have realised the implications of 100 per cent coverage of illiterates in their respective States during the Plan period. While the proposed target in U.P. constitutes only 76.4 per cent of the total estimated illiterates in 15-35 age group, in Bihar it is only 65.8 per cent. While there has been considerable underestimation of targets in large States like U.P. and Bihar, in some States like Rajasthan and Orissa there is an overestimation. This may be probably due to lack of access to data base by the respective State Governments.

To elaborate further, during the Eighth Plan, the Government of Uttar Pradesh proposes to cover 167 lakhs illiterates under adult education programme. However, according to 1991 census, the total population in Uttar Pradesh is 1390 lakhs of which illiterates constitute 655.46 lakhs. Assuming that 1/3rd will be in the age group of 15-35, the proposed target is likely to be 218.48 lakhs (see Table No. 2). These State Governments have already covered a target of 23.61 lakhs during the Annual Plan 1991-92. Hence, to achieve 100 per cent literacy, the actual target to be covered during the Eighth Plan will be in the range of 194.87 lakhs. This suggests the need for massive expansion of adult education programmes in the States. Due to various socio-political factors, the State Government has been rather slow in switching over to the total literacy campaign approach. As on 31.7.1992, the State has launched only five total literacy campaigns at Fatehpur, Meerut, Chamoli, DehraDun and Almora. During the Eighth Plan the State proposes to take up total literacy campaigns in 20 districts, and at this rate it would require stepped up efforts to achieve 100 per cent literacy.

The slow progress of total literacy campaigns in Fatehpur and Meerut—presumably due to various socio-political factors, the comparatively large number of districts in Uttar Pradesh (63) and their larger size and the relative backwardness in terms of low literacy rate in general and among the females in particular, low enrollment ratio at the primary stage, high percentage of never

enrolled children and huge dropouts, large number of people living below poverty line, weak voluntary base and institutional support suggest the need for a variety of innovative strategies to tackle the problems of illiteracy in a big and backward State like Uttar Pradesh. Besides, the States of Bihar and Rajasthan also belong to the same category. As is evident from Table No. 3, the literacy rate in Rajasthan and Bihar is 38.81 per cent and 38.54 per cent respectively as against the national average of 52.11 per cent. In terms of female literacy, Rajasthan (20.84 per cent) and Bihar (23.10 per cent) are the lowest among the States. The dropout rate at the primary levels in these states is also highest in the country i.e. 65.63 and 52.25 compared to the all India rate of 46.97. Besides, in Bihar 66.6 per cent of 6-11 age group of children in rural areas are never enrolled in schools. As against 29.9 per cent of people living below the poverty line in India, in Bihar 40.8 per cent people belong to this strata (for detail see Table No. 3. With the exception of Rajasthan, the other States of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh propose to cover a limited target ranging from 65-76 per cent of illiterates. These States have also lagged behind in launching Total Literacy Campaigns.

The trend of coverage of the target of adult education programmes during the Seventh Plan and the last two Annual Plans indicate that it is difficult to cover 100 per cent target in the near future unless most strenuous efforts would be made. As against the target of covering 3.84 crore adults during the Seventh Plan, actual coverage was only 2.35 crores (61 per cent). During 1990-91 as against the target of covering 1.30 crores, the achievement was 0.82 crores (63 per cent). There was no substantial change in the target or achievement of adult education programme during the next year.

Literacy Campaign as a Dominant Strategy

The success of the literacy campaign in achieving total literacy in as many as 22 districts (as on 31.3.1992) seems to have strengthened the confidence of policy planners and administrators in replicating it in 75 per cent of the districts (345) by the end of the Eighth Plan. Though the campaign has been projected as the dominant strategy and it has been in operation in as many as 156 districts (as on 30th August, 1992), the Plan does recognise the need for a variety of strategies. It is mainly due to the uneven levels of development and wide disparity in literacy rate among different regions of India.

Accordingly, the Plan proposes to cover 80 per cent of the target through Campaigns and the remaining through MPFL, NYK's and RFLPs. In tribal, hilly and sparsely populated areas though the Plan has suggested the possibility of retaining the centre-based programme, in general, it has not supported the continuation of the programme. To quote the Plan, "The strategy for backward districts could be twofold : first a few blocks could be selected where the literacy campaign can achieve success within a reasonable period. The demonstration effect of the blocks would influence the backward blocks which in course of time could develop appropriate literacy programmes. Secondly, the voluntary base in educationally backward districts being somewhat weak, the ways and means of identification, strengthening and expansion of the same would be evolved in consultation with the respective State Governments."

Keeping in view the voluntary character of the expanding literacy movement and the drawbacks of the centre-based programme as brought out by several evaluation studies in the past, it would be desirable to design an innovative programme for backward areas which could be area specific, cost effective and in tune with the voluntary character of Total Literacy Campaigns. The Plan's emphasis on the decentralised approach demands that such a programme be designed and managed by local education committees.

With the launching of Total Literacy Campaigns in 75 per cent of districts and gradual phasing out of the centre-based programme large number of paid literacy instructors may have to forego their honorarium and switch over to voluntary work which may not be easily acceptable to many. Since the success of future literacy campaign is likely to be influenced by the co-operation of the former paid workers, it would be very essential either to prepare them well for the voluntary work or utilise their services in some other development programmes.

Strengthening of Institutions

The Plan has highlighted the need for developing long-term strategic vision which in the case of adult education implies the expansion of life long education and building up of permanent institutional infrastructure at various levels. While the Plan has suggested the phasing out of the National Directorate of Adult Education by 1997, it has supported the idea of developing the

National Institute of Adult Education as an apex organisation and also strengthening the State Resource Centres. While the strengthening of National Institute of Adult Education (NIAE), State Resource Centres (SRCs) and Jan Shikshan Nilayam (JSNs) are positive steps which would be welcomed by the adult educators, the gradual phasing out of the Directorate of Adult Education may be problematic unless the concerned members of staff are taken into confidence. Had the Directorate of Adult Education been converted and expanded into NIAE as had been originally recommended by the Task Force, then there would have been no overlapping of functioning or duplication of infrastructural facilities of the two institutions. Now, should these two institutions be merged into one? Perhaps not. Unlike DAE, which was set up as a subordinate office of the Department of Education, NIAE has been envisaged as an autonomous professionally competent and compact institute and hence merging the two may be a retrograde step.

The issue of DAE vis-a-vis NIAE becomes clear when it is examined in a historical perspective. The National Fundamental Education Centre which was established as an apex research and training institution in adult education in 1950s became a Department of Adult Education of NCERT in 60s and folded up early in 1970s when the DAE was established. By suggesting the closure of DAE in the wake of establishment of NIAE in 1990s the cycle becomes full. Should we close down some institutions to start new? Can't we explore the possibilities of streamlining the functioning of institutions so that both could co-exist? The increasing scope of adult continuing education in a huge country like India definitely justifies the continuation of DAE and NIAE. While the former could be a publication, co-ordinating and monitoring agency of field programmes, the latter could confine to research studies and professional development programmes. Keeping in view the decentralised approach to planning, SRCs could effectively take over the present functions of DAE related to material preparation and training of functionaries, specially when it is proposed to expand and strengthen them during the Eighth Plan. In fact, there is a need to have a Directorate for providing technical support to NLM.

Emphasising the need for convergence of services at the grass-root level for effective delivery of variety of adult education programmes, the Plan has suggested the need for integration of a

variety of programmes offered by JSNs, rural libraries, Krishi Vigyan Kendras and Shramik Vidyapeeths, etc. It has been stated that JSNs should be strengthened by integrating them with the rural libraries wherever they exist. Although integration of four different types of institutional infrastructures of JSN, rural libraries, KVK's and SVP's is desirable, it may necessitate redefining their roles and functions as each one is meant for a specific category of clientele. The scope of Shramik Vidyapeeths would be expanded by covering the workers in unorganised sectors and using distance education modules. The Plan has highlighted the role of open learning in the promotion of post-literacy and continuing education programme. On the issue of women's literacy, the Plan has upheld the methodology of Mahila Samakhya Project of mobilising women's groups to voice their needs.

Resource Mobilisation and Utilisation

Adult education is envisaged as people's programme and its success depends on their active co-operation as well as contributions in terms of materials and funds. This assumes immense significance in the context of resource crunch. The suggestion that 20 per cent of resources required for the literacy campaign should be generated from the local community is very modest. Keeping in view the earlier experiences, it may be possible to involve a large number of commercial concerns and industrial houses in sponsoring Kala Jathas and other environmental building activities. Another possibility could be a gradual reduction of 100 per cent grant to the JSNs during the second and third years so that the JSNs could be taken over fully by the local community. Thus the over-dependence of people on Government for developmental activities like literacy could be gradually brought down.

In spite of resource crunch there has been substantial increase in the outlay for adult education during the Eighth Plan. Compared to the approved outlay for adult education programme during the Seventh Plan, there was an increase in the overall expenditure (both State and Central sector). However, the increase was mainly in the Central sector. As against the approved outlay of Rs. 130 crores in the Central sector, the actual expenditure was Rs. 313.04 crores but in the State sector the actual expenditure was Rs. 156.53 crores as against the approved outlay of Rs. 230 crores (see Table No.4). Though in general there is a shortfall on the part of the State sector; as a whole,

shortfall in the backward States like Uttar Pradesh Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh is more than 50 per cent of the approved outlay. As is evident from Table No. 4, in the two annual Plans 1990-91 and 1991-92, the pattern of expenditure towards adult education shows an upward trend. As against 6.15 per cent (Rs. 469.5 crores) of the Seventh Plan expenditure on adult education, the allocation for it is the Eighth Plan in 9.43 per cent (Rs. 1,807.6 crores). Of this, Rs. 1,400 is in the Central sector and the remaining in the State sector.

Some Issues

Does the present Plan offer any innovative strategies or structures? The adoption of Total Literacy Campaign as a dominant strategy is not a novel idea. Different shades of the campaign have been tried over during the past five decades and in fact certain aspects of the present campaign have been first tried out during the Provincial Mass Literacy Campaigns of British India (1937-38). The Kala Jathas were effectively deployed during the Bihar Literacy Campaign (1937-39) when they were organised through special troupes of artists called Mod Mandalies. The teaching-learning process followed in the video film, *Chauraha* is based on Laubach Method developed in 1950s. The widespread participation of all sections of society in the present literacy campaigns and community contributions in terms of lanterns, blackboards, etc. also reminds us of the 1930s when such community support was common. In fact in the Bihar Literacy Campaign of 1937-39, big printing presses and publishers had brought out literacy primers free of cost. The establishment of National Institute of Adult Education may be seen as a reincarnation of the National Fundamental Education Centre which had functioned during 1950s.

Eradication of illiteracy has always been an important programme in most of the Five-Year Plans since 1980s. Yet the target of achieving 100 per cent literacy continues to elude us. Why has it been so? One of the reasons may be that our planners have not given due importance to the socio-economic background of illiterates. The majority of them being poor and living below the poverty line and also belonging to SC/ST and weaker sections of the society, the crucial issue revolves around poverty and unless the literacy programme enables them to tide over stark poverty and that too within a short period, it cannot succeed in achieving its objective. Though it may be possible to attract not so very poor,

it would be extremely difficult to motivate those living below the poverty line. Literacy would have meaning to the poor only if it becomes a means to sustain their lives. Since 29.9 per cent of the population (about 23.76 crores) live below the poverty line and 1/3rd of them (about 8 crores) may be in 15-35 age group – the clientele of adult education programmes – it would be essential to devise special strategies for this group. The problem becomes more complex and challenging since most of them are confined to predominantly nonliterate rural society ridden with casteism, social evils and class tensions. Hence it is all the more necessary to design and implement a variety of innovative income generation programmes, which would be area specific and enable the poor to earn as well as learn simultaneously. Such a practical oriented approach would not require any environmental building activities like Kala Jathas or other motivational programmes.

Despite having a well articulated philosophy of adult education which is basically rooted in Freirian concept of Conscientisation, in practice our adult education programme tends to be too conservative and conveniently side tracks the basic issues of poverty. Though the adult education programme seeks the co-operation of activists, their role remains restricted.

In spite of these limitations of the Plan, the Eighth Plan does come out with minor improvisations in the form of strengthening of institutional infrastructures of State Resources Centres, National Institute of Adult Education, Jan Shikshan Nilayams, enlarging the voluntary base and encouraging the voluntary organisations, expansion of the programmes of Shramik Vidyapeeths. However, the strategies and structures suggested in the Eighth Plan are of evolutionary in nature. They aim at strengthening some of the structures developed during the Seventh Plan. If there are no radical suggestions of new ideas in the Eighth Plan, it is not because of the dearth of ideas; but due to the inherent limitations of Plan formulation and the need to keep in view the National Policy on Education and Programme of Action, ongoing programmes of the Department of Education and their evaluations, and reports of the different Working Groups constituted in connection with the Eighth Plan. There is, however, a need for development of greater professionalism among the concerned staff in the Planning Commission by giving them greater freedom from the routine items of work so that they could come out with more innovative ideas.

In general, there is also a greater need for openness in the process of Plan formulation and dissemination. At present the Plan remains as the primary concern of the Planning Commission and the concerned ministries. The target-group-people, is only a silent partner. The first step in making a Plan as an effective instrument of social change, is to enhance the co-operation of people in the process of planning itself.

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TABLE 1
Adult Education : Proposed Targets in
Eighth Plan and Annual Plan

Figures in Thousands

Sl. No.	States/Us	Annual Plan 1992-93	8th Plan 1992-97
1.	Andhra Pradesh	4898	7778
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	33	175
3.	Assam	900	4500
4.	Bihar	1800	9400
5.	Goa	20	100
6.	Gujarat	850	4300
7.	Haryana	1142	5711
8.	Himachal Pradesh	160	800
9.	Jammu & Kashmir	958	1493
10.	Karnataka	1600	6000
11.	Kerala	196	980
12.	Madhya Pradesh	2500	8650
13.	Maharashtra	990	4450
14.	Manipur	46	230
15.	Meghalaya	35	248
16.	Mizoram	15	32
17.	Nagaland	23	115
18.	Orissa	2600	13000
19.	Punjab	1000	5000
20.	Rajasthan	1727	9335
21.	Sikkim	8	47
22.	Tamil Nadu	2000	7800
23.	Tripura	93	402
24.	Uttar Pradesh	3340	16700
25.	West Bengal	350	1750
26.	A. & N. Islands	2	10
27.	Chandigarh	5	26
28.	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	6	15
29.	Daman & Diu	1.20	6
30.	Delhi	150	750
31.	Lakshadweep	2.40	12
32.	Pondicherry	6	30
33.	Total UTs.	172.60	849
34.	Total States/UTs.	27456.60	110845*

* The Eighth Plan Document gives a target of 10.58 crores. However, the subsequent data received from the States indicates an increase by 0.50 crores.

Source : Planning Commission. Calculated from the 8th Plan Documents of all the States/UTs (1992-97).

TABLE 2
Proposed Target and Coverage of Adult Education in Selected States

Figs. in lakhs

Sl. No.	Name of the State	Total illiterate population	Estimated illiterate population in the age group 15-35 Years, (as 1/3 of total illiterate population)	Proposed Target From Eighth five year Plan.	Coverage of illiterate population	Total No. of Distts.		Proposed Distts to be covered under TLC
						1991-92	1992-93 proposed	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.	Uttar Pradesh	655.46	218.48	167.00 (76.4%)	23.61	33.40	63	20
2.	Bihar	428.21	142.73	94.00 (65.8%)	10.00	18.00	42	N.A.
3.	Rajasthan	214.71	71.57	93.35	7.90	17.27	27	10
4.	Madhya Pradesh	305.78	101.92	86.50 (84.9%)	12.30	25.00	45	14

Source : (1) Statistical Data base for Literacy (1981-91) New Delhi : National Institute of Adult Education, 1992.
 (2) Draft Eighth Five Year Plan Documents of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar.

TABLE 3
Status of Literacy, GER, Drop-out, People Living Below Poverty Line in Selected States

<i>Sl. States No.</i>		<i>Literacy Rate 1991 Census</i>			<i>Gross Enrolment Ratio Primary Level</i>			<i>Drop-out Rates 1987-88-I-V Class Primary Level</i>		
		<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>
1.	Bihar	52.63	23.10	38.54	107.55	55.05	81.70	63.38	68.93	65.63
2.	Madhya Pradesh	57.43	28.39	43.45	122.03	84.34	103.65	36.64	48.04	41.04
3.	Rajasthan	55.07	20.84	38.81	105.00	48.79	77.96	53.12	60.75	52.25
4.	Uttar Pradesh	55.35	26.02	41.71	98.59	62.27	81.38	47.84	47.24	47.65
	All India	63.66	39.42	52.11	115.29	85.97	101.03	43.35	49.92	46.97

TABLE 3

% Never Enrolled Children 6-11 Years Age Group						People Living Below Poverty Line	
Rural Areas			Urban Areas			Number of persons (Lakhs)	% of persons
Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total		
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
57.07	77.02	66.06	37.02	52.02	43.02	336.54	40.08
44.00	69.01	55.06	11.00	24.02	17.02	224.97	36.07
39.04	75.03	55.09	23.01	35.06	28.07	99.54	24.04
41.00	70.08	54.06	30.01	41.00	35.01	448.34	35.01
35.04	54.08	44.05	15.08	22.08	19.03	2376.07	29.09

Source: (1) Literacy Digest : New Delhi, Directorate of Adult Education -1990-91.

(2) Educational Statistics 1990-91 : Ministry of H.R.D. (Dept. of Education).

(3) Annual Report 1991-92 Part I : Ministry of H.R.D. (Dept. of Education).

(4) N.S.S.O. 42nd Round (July 1986-June 1987) report No. 365 Part II, Volumes I & II.

(5) N.S.S.O. Gross Report 43rd Round Report No. 372.

TABLE 4
Financial Progress for Adult Education

Rs. in crores

Sl. No.		Seventh five Year Plan 1980-85			Annual Plan 1990-91			Annual Plan 1991-92			Eighth Plan 1992-9		Annual Plan 1992-93	
Name of the State		App. Outlay	Expdr. utilisation	%age utilisation	App. Outlay	Expdr. utilisation	%age utilisation	App. Outlay	Expdr. utilisation	%age utilisation	Proposed Outlay	Recommended Outlay	App. Outlay	Outlay
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1.	Uttar Pradesh	42.04	16.07	38	4.75	3.03	64	3.40	5.31	156	30.71	30.73	24.26	5.50
2.	Bihar	29.96	37.31	124	12.50	11.72	94	12.00	12.50	104	107.00	82.00	60.34	10.17
3.	Rajasthan	13.14	5.01	38	0.88	0.89	101	1.15	1.40	122	12.00	35.00	30.00	1.60
4.	Madhya Pradesh	19.71	9.44	48	5.00	1.87	37	5.50	5.00	91	26.54	41.28	19.84	7.80
	All India State Sector	230.00	156.53	68	55.12	43.51	78.9	55.75	71.44	128	497.64	510.85	407.64	80.66

Source : Planning Commission. Eighth Five Year Plan Documents of the States.

Adult Education : Excerpts from Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97)

11.5.15 Literacy programmes will be launched in districts/regions which are educationally backward or have high concentration of SC/ST population or have low female literacy. By the close of the Eighth Plan, 345 districts including about two-thirds of all districts in the educationally backward States would be covered by the TL campaigns, while the centre-based approach would be gradually phased out and confined to hilly, tribal and sparsely populated regions. The strategy for backward districts would be two-fold. First, a few blocks would be selected where the literacy campaign can achieve success within a reasonable period. The demonstration effect of the blocks would influence the backward blocks which, in course of time, could develop appropriate literacy programmes. Secondly, the voluntary base in educationally backward districts being somewhat weak, ways and means of identification, strengthening and expansion of the same would be evolved in consultation with the respective State Governments. It is also necessary to develop technical competence among voluntary agencies so that the partnership between the Government and operating agencies becomes meaningful.

11.5.16 The possibility of further enhancing contributions from the community especially in urban areas and industrial towns would be explored so that apart from voluntary service, atleast 20 per cent of the total expenditure on the campaign may be met.

11.5.17 In States, where library movement is strong, rural libraries should be integrated with the JSNs which are envisaged as innovative post-literacy and continuing education centres. Reputed NGOs, educational institutions, distinguished individuals, ex-servicemen, war widows, award winning teachers, etc. will be encouraged to set up and run JSNs. Particular attention would be

paid to the availability of a variety of quality materials in adequate quantity to the neo-literates. Reputed printing presses and publishers would be motivated to print gratis literacy materials, posters and charts.

11.5.18 The academic and technical support to Adult Education programmes would be provided by the newly set up NIAE, which would be involved to a greater extent in various aspects of training, action research and monitoring, so that the Directorate of Adult Education can be phased out by the end of the Eighth Plan. At the State level, the State Resource Centres will be strengthened.

11.5.19 The scheme of SVs which provide a variety of training programmes to the industrial workers and their families would be extended to cover workers in unorganised sector and would also experiment with a variety of training models including distance education.

11.5.20 The contents of adult education would also include inculcation of values like secularism, national integration, scientific temperament, small family norm, concern for environmental conservation, cultural appreciation and so on. Even a society with a literate population is required to provide many avenues for continuing education in the context of the march towards a learning society, in which open schools and open universities would play an important role.

Excerpts from : Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97) – pp. 290-91.

Adult Education for the People : Some Indian Experiences

Illiteracy in India : The lingering past and the eluding future

Literacy is now universally recognised as a basic human right and a liberating force for the individual. As an essential tool for communication and learning literacy is considered crucial to the achievement of important national objectives such as universalisation of elementary education, significant reduction in infant mortality rates, improvement in women's status and alleviation of poverty. Yet the right to learn eludes millions of people in the world—the number of illiterates actually goes on increasing notwithstanding the enormous expansion of education and the efforts made to liquidate illiteracy : the rate at which the adult population gains literacy is out-stripped by the rate of population growth coupled with the rate of primary school drop-outs, which is a continuing phenomenon.

A recent study estimates that nearly 890 million, representing more than a quarter of the world's population (those who are 15 years and above), were illiterate in 1985.¹ Of this, around 75 per cent comprising nearly 660 million people are concentrated in the Asia-Pacific region. A full analysis of the literacy situation in countries of this region is handicapped by lack of data. More than 60 per cent of women in this region are illiterate and illiteracy is more prevalent in rural areas than urban.² Illiteracy rate vary from country to country. Of the 20 countries of the Asia-Pacific region, Afghanistan has the highest percentage of illiterates (76.3); it is followed by Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh and India which have

74.4, 70.4, 66.9, and 56.5 per cent of their respective population as illiterates. (See Appendix 1). Different countries have set different targets to achieve universal literacy. India 'hopes to achieve a high level' of literacy by 2000 A.D.

The problem of illiteracy in India is both colossal and complex given the size of the country, its huge population, considerable regional disparity and other cultural factors such as religion, caste etc.³ According to the Census of India 1981, of India's 685 million population only 36.23 per cent were literate leaving almost 437 million illiterate. There is glaring disparity among male and female literacy, the former being 46.89 per cent whereas the latter only 24.82 per cent. Furthermore literacy rates are lesser in rural areas (40.62 per cent for male and 17.99 per cent for females) compared to that in urban areas (65.58 per cent for males and 47.68 per cent for females). Also inter-state disparity in literacy rates are significantly striking : for instance Kerala one of the Southern States has the highest literacy rate (70.42 per cent; for females 65.73 per cent) while Rajasthan a Northern State has the lowest literacy rate (24.38 per cent; for females 11.42 per cent). In fact over one third of Indian States have literacy rates lower than the national average of 36.23 per cent. Finally as many as 243 districts out of the total 402 have literacy once again, below national level⁴ (See Appendix 2).

It is said that after forty years of independence, India has not achieved even forty per cent of literacy : Why has it been so ? Apart from the two perennial factors connected with the growth of population and high rate of drop-out from primary school, one may have to search for other reasons which retard the progress of literacy in India. In this paper it is argued that illiteracy in India continues primarily due to the uncertain attitude of the State towards adult education and the lukewarm response of the masses towards literacy programme. The poor participation of people in adult education programme is not only due to the poor quality of the programme but also may be ascribed to the absence of professional leadership at the grass-root level. The attitude of the State in India is invariably related to the degree of interest shown by the bureaucracy in implementing the programme. Indian adult education has suffered due to the absence of committed leadership from above and below.

The State in India was all through aware of the problem of illiteracy. The decennial publications of the Census Commissioner

and several other official documents have time and again estimated the extent of illiteracy in British India. But to start with, the State adopted a policy of promotion of primary education during the first half of the twentieth century and by 1927, it began to encourage night schools which were the precursors of the present day literacy centres. The Indian leadership, under the banner of the Indian National Congress Party took up the cause of adult education in 1937, when the Party came into power in seven out of eleven Provinces of British India. Under the leadership of eminent freedom fighters like Mahatma Gandhi, Rajendra Prasad, Syed Mahamud, Mass Literacy Programmes were launched as the Government sponsored literacy campaigns. The State sponsored literacy programme and the involvement of political leaders in literacy work seem to have motivated a group of Delhi based adult educators to form a professional organisation – Indian Adult Education Association in 1939 for the furtherance of the cause of adult education in India⁵ Since India was under a colonial regime, the Mass Literacy Programme organised by the leaders of the popular political party which was in power (Indian National Congress) appealed to the masses who participated in the programme in large numbers. The keen interest of the Ministers in the programme also ensured the active participation of the bueaucrary and the programme succeeded in making 12 million people literate within a span of four years.⁶ The percentage of literacy in British India increased from 9.5 in 1931 to 16.1 in 1941. There was then initiative from the top and involvement from below.

With the emergence of India as an Independent country in 1947, the State formulated a distinct policy towards adult education. The thrust of the policy was on imparting citizenship education (social education) to the masses and the key programme adopted to this end was Community Development which visualised an integrated development of community.⁷ It the leadership provided by the then Education Minister, Maulana Azad had played a crucial role in the operationalisation of social education during the 1950's, the credit for incorporating the component of development in adult education, primarily through the launching of the Farmer's Functional Literacy Programme during 1960's goes to V.K.R.V. Rao, the then Minister for Education in the Government of India.⁸ One of the reasons for the successful implementation of adult education programmes during 1950's and 1960's was due to the large financial and technical

support provided by various international Agencies viz. the UNESCO, UNDP and Ford Foundation to the Adult Education Programme.⁹ As a consequence of these factors, the literacy increased from 16.67 to 24.02 per cent during 1951-61.

The change in the Government in 1977 brought about a basic transformation in the official policy and attitude to adult education. The new Education Minister P.C. Chunder took an exceptional interest in adult education which emerged as a 'top priority' programme of the Government of India.¹⁰ For the first time after independence, the Government of India issued a **Policy Statement on Adult Education** and launched the National Adult Education Programme in 1978.¹¹ It was consistently observed that whenever the Government specially the Education Minister showed interest in Adult Education, the State machinery was activated and even sufficient resources could be mobilised. During 1951-88, India had ten education ministers, of whom only three viz. Maulana Azad, V.K.R.V. Rao and P.C. Chunder took special interest in adult education and that could be one of the reasons for the slow progress of Indian adult education.

Moreover, the number of bureaucrats and professionals who had taken distinct interest in adult education programme were also few. During the last four decades only four bureaucrats who occupied the key positions viz. Prem Kirpal and late J.P. Naik (both Educational Advisors to Government of India), Anil Bordia (Education Secretary) and Madhuri Shah (former Chairman, University Grants Commission) could be credited to have played a key role in the furtherance of adult education.¹² Not many individual leaders seem to have contributed substantially to the field of adult education. Late Mohan Sinha Mehta and late S.C. Dutta, and Late Malcolm Adiseshiah, who were the Presidents of Indian Adult Education Association during different periods and at the same time distinguished adult educators of their own, tried to develop Indian Adult Education. If the focus of the activity of the bureaucrats was in the quantitative expansion of the programme, the individual leaders strived for strengthening the professional front by establishing Departments of Adult Education in Indian Universities viz. University of Rajasthan, Delhi and Madras for the study of and research in adult education.¹³ They also brought out several professional publications.¹⁴

The programmes of Adult Education in India have suffered

for various other reasons as well. Several evaluation studies on adult education have noted that the extent of people's participation in adult education programme remains extremely low due to several reasons. The programme package as well as delivery system hardly attract the adult learners.¹⁵ While most of the adult education centres have reported as maintaining an enrolment of 25-30 learners, in reality, experience shows that the average attendance in a centre ranges hardly between 11-12 learners.¹⁶ Hence it is not surprising that the actual achievement of the adult education programme during 1981-82 to 1985-86, was only 16 million against the target coverage of 110 million adult illiterates.¹⁷

The financial constraints have also affected the Adult Education Programme in India. The budget allotted to adult education since 1951, has been very nominal and at times, even the allotted amount was not fully utilised. In fact, there was a gradual decrease in the percentage of budget allotted to adult education from 1951-1978 (3.5 to 0.3 per cent)¹⁸ and with such a nominal amount, it was hardly possible to expand the programme. Even in 1980's the budget allocation remained less than 10 per cent¹⁹ and hence it is all the more necessary to find alternative sources of finance to expand the adult education programme.

Since the State which plans and funds the programme seem to be very slow in taking any decisive action, the adult education organisations should come forward and try to improve the pathetic situation by developing innovative programmes and motivating and mobilising the masses to benefit from the Government programmes of adult education. How best the people and their organizations can help in making the adult education a peoples' programme is the real issue. Should the adult educators accept the present dominant role of the State or assert their right to play a more active and decisive role in making the adult education programme really effective ? Should they continue to depend on State resources or strive to raise funds from non- Governmental sources ?

Adult Education in India : Programme and Performance

The concept as well as the content of adult education in India have undergone several changes during the last four decades. Although a variety of Governmental and non-Governmental agencies have been involved in the implementation of adult education

programmes in India, the bulk of the programmes (60 per cent) are now planned and implemented through Government Departments.²⁰ The universities and voluntary agencies have a limited role in implementation. Since the programme are funded exclusively by the Government and implemented as per the official guidelines, there is virtually no difference in the operation or output of the programme. The adult education programme is conceived as projects and the following are the important projects which are in operation at present (i) Rural Functional Literacy Project, (ii) Mass Programme of Functional Literacy, (iii) Shramik Vidyapeeth (Urban Workers Education Centres), (iv) Nehru Yuvak Kendra (for out of School Youth Training) and (v) Post- Literacy and Continuing Education.²¹

The basic unit of operation remains a centre which caters to 30 adult learners and functions on an average of two hours per day on all working days for a period of eight months. The instructor of the centre is a voluntary worker who gets a nominal honorarium of Rs. 100 per month. A supervisor oversees the work of 30 centres, while 100 centres constitutes a project and remain under the overall charge of a project officer. The project staff undergo a training which ranges from 3 days to 21 days and according to the well-defined content spelt out in the Training Manuals.²² The teaching-learning process is teacher-centred. Although the concept of adult education includes, functional literacy, numeracy and social awareness, the thrust of the programme still remains basic literacy.

Different agencies involved in the programme of adult education have varied experiences.

(i) Universities

The involvement of universities in adult education is a recent phenomenon in India which began in the late 1970's when the University Grants Commission (UGC) formulated a policy of incorporating "Extension as the third dimension of Higher Education."²³ **The Policy Statement on Adult Education (1978)** further stressed the need for associating all educational developments with a view to "lending strength to adult education programmes."²⁴ The subsequent guidelines from the UGC spelt out the targets and strategies of involving universities. Considering that the "Universities are specially suited, structured and staffed to provide the needed professional and technical guidance required

for the implementation of adult education programme," the UGC took a policy decision to involve all the universities (numbering 140) and colleges (4886) in a variety of adult education programme by 1990.²⁵

The universities are expected to participate in adult education programme mainly through their students, teachers and employees; and the Departments of Adult Education are expected to play a lead role in the implementation of adult education programme. Apart from the literacy programme, the universities are free to initiate programmes on population education, continuing education, legal literacy etc. The majority of the universities and colleges are involved in the organization of adult education programmes. These programmes are organized in two ways : Centre Based Programme and Each One Teach One Programme. According to the UGC statistics, 83 universities (59.2 per cent) and 1,119 colleges (22.27 per cent) had actively participated in the adult education till March 1985 and they succeeded in enrolling about 2.74 million adult learners through the organisation of 19,566 centres.²⁶ It was proposed to involve about 10 per cent of the 35 lakh of youth in the colleges and universities in the Mass Programme of Functional Literacy (Each One Teach One) during 1986-87. It was reported that 1.48 lakhs students took up Each One Teach One Programme and enrolled 2.76 lakhs learners during the period.²⁷

The role of the universities in adult education programmes was evaluated by different agencies. While the **UGC Review Committee (1987)** was appreciative of the role of universities in adult education and noted the "growth of a positive movement,"²⁸ the Comptroller and Auditor-General's report was highly critical and observed that the "achievements under the programme were far below the expectations."²⁹ The two reports, presumably, were stressing different viewpoints. Individual case-studies of universities involved in adult education, may sharpen our understanding of this question.

In a particular university³⁰ which had a large number of construction workers on the campus, an effort was made by the staff of the Adult Education Department, to organize adult education programme for the illiterate workers. As per the prevailing practice, the 200 odd workers were recruited by the building contractor from a distant village on contract basis. The

workers lived with their families near the construction site. Since the workers were illiterate and unaware of their rights and privileges, and were at the mercy of the contractor for the work, they were forced to accept the partial wage and remained deprived of medical care, drinking water and creche for their children. Even when some of the workers were aware of the minimum wages, they did not dare to raise their demands lest they should get sacked. As per law there is a provision for minimum wages to the labourers and they were entitled for facilities like medical care and creche for children. Since this particular contractor was not complying with the legal provision and even keeping them as bonded labourers, the Adult Education Department decided to mobilise and motivate the workers on the campus to organise and fight for their rights. After a series of informal discussions with the workers, the Adult Education Department succeeded in identifying the potential leaders among them and encouraged them to work as volunteers in the adult education programme. However, the frequent visit by the staff of the Adult Education Department to the construction site and the coming together of the workers, aroused suspicion in the mind of the contractor who anticipated that the workers might start demanding due wages and other privileges. Because of this fear, the contractor warned the workers to keep away from the adult education activities and threatened the staff of the Adult Education Department to stop visiting the workers. At this juncture, it was decided that the Adult Education Department should seek the co-operation of the university authorities to continue their work among the construction workers on the campus and at the same time draw the attention of the officials of the Labour Department to take steps to ameliorate the condition of the workers. When the contractor came to know of these developments, he threatened to stop the construction work with the allegation that the staff of Adult Education Department were turning his peaceful workers into agitators and thereby disrupting the work. The authorities of the universities, were keen to avoid any type of problems on the campus and at the same time were primarily interested in the early completion of the buildings. Since adult education was not considered as a top priority programme in the university set up, the authorities turned a deaf ear to the cause and hence the staff of the Adult Education Department did not get the expected support from their own university which ultimately led to the stoppage of adult education work on the campus.

The experience of involving the teachers, students and employees

of this particular university in adult education was far from satisfactory. Since the basic orientation of the faculty is towards research and teaching, Extension remains outside the purview of their interest and they tend to look down on the Community Oriented Extension Programmes like adult education. As adult education is not a part of a credit programme, the students rarely come forward. The financial incentives are too inadequate to attract the students to work as volunteer Instructor. Although some of the university employees have shown interest in adult education and worked as instructors, the university administration do not encourage such participation and recently issued even a circular prohibiting the employees from participation in adult education programme. The university issued such an order when the employees started the demand for duty leave to attend the training programmes.

Not all the experiences of this particular university have been frustrating. This university has succeeded in making inroads into the neighbouring urban slums and urban villages, where it conducted socio-economic surveys, identified the illiterates and potential instructors, imparted training to them and organised adult education programmes which to some extent did succeed in enhancing the social awareness and communication skills of the learners. During the year 1987, the Adult Education Department organised upto 40 Adult Education Centres in and around the Campus and a striking feature was the successful organisation of a centre on the campus exclusively meant for the illiterate employees of the university. The university administration granted special permission to its employees to attend the literacy class held during the office hours (between 3–5 p.m.). The limited experience of this particular university shows that the adult education programme to be successful should be relevant to the needs of the university community and convincing to enlist their co-operation and at the same time should not be a threat to the normal functioning of the university.

(ii) Voluntary Agencies (Volags)

India has a long tradition of non-Governmental non-profitable, charitable organisations being involved in social and educational programmes. Most of these organisations are registered under the Societies Registration Act and many of them have affiliations with political and religious organizations. During the struggle for freedom from Colonial rulers, a number of social reform organisations named after the individual leaders like Ramakrishna,

Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Annie Besant, were established with a view to educating the masses. Besides several specialised organizations, connected with adult education, women's education, trade union etc. were also founded by groups of professionals and interested individuals. Most of the organizations are local and confine their activities to a district or a State. According to a survey of voluntary agencies (working in the field of adult education) undertaken by the Directorate of Adult Education, there were 408 voluntary agencies in India in 1979.³¹ Of these only 22 were all India level agencies. Among the States, Kerala (53), Gujarat (51), Maharashtra (40), Bihar (35), Rajasthan (31) had large number of voluntary agencies. Of the 22 all India based voluntary agencies, Delhi had 17. The YMCA is the only voluntary organisation in India which is affiliated to an International agency.

Following are some of the important all India based voluntary agencies currently working in the field of adult education : (1) Literacy House, Lucknow, (1953); (2) National Co-ordination Committee, Calcutta, (1974); (3) Balkan ji Bari, Bombay, (1952); (4) Rural Welfare Board, Bombay, (1953); and (5) Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust, Indore (1945). The following four are all India-based women's organizations located in Delhi : (1) All India Womens Conference (1926); (2) Bharatiya Grammeen Mahila Sangh (1955); (3) National Federation of Indian Women (1954); and (4) National Council of Women in India (1925). Besides, the following four professional organizations are also located in Delhi : (1) Indian Adult Education Association (1939); (2) Indian University Association for Continuing Education (1966); (3) Bharatiya Adim Jati Sevak Sangh (1948); and (4) YMCA (1967).

Of these Volags, the three agencies Literacy House, Indian Adult Education Association (IAEA) and All India Women's Conference (AIWC) are exclusively concerned with adult education.

The Literacy House founded by Welthy H. Fisher is recognised as a national institution dedicated to the eradication of illiteracy and promotion of training programmes, preparation of materials, organization of seminars etc.³² The Indian Adult Education Association, also organizes training programmes, conducts seminars and produces literature. However, it functions as a catalyst and "Keeps the flag of adult education flying" through the organization of seminars, conferences and publications.³³ The All India Women Conference is primarily engaged in running literacy

centres for women. Both the IAEA and AIWC have several regional level organizations affiliated to them and they undertake several activities in collaboration with them.

The association of the Government of India with Volags began in a limited manner. Today, Government of India consider the Volags as "partners in Literacy Action."³⁴ The Government of India has always adopted a policy of encouragement to the voluntary sector. The Government observe that the Volags are in "constant touch with the masses and the community" and have dedicated and experienced workers and hence it would be advantageous to involve them in adult education.³⁵ To streamline the financial grants, the Government of India has devised a "scheme of assistance" to Volags working in the field of adult education. Under this scheme registered Volags are sanctioned grants by the Government of India for undertaking projects of functional literacy, post-literacy, publication and organization of seminars. Grant is given on Project basis at the rate of 100 per cent on programme cost and 75 per cent on administrative cost for field projects. The voluntary agencies are expected to forward their applications through the respective State Governments. The Central Government gives grants only to those Volags recommended by the respective State Governments.³⁶

The number of Volags seeking Government grants as well as the amount of grant has considerably increased in recent times. In 1982-83, a sum of Rs. 12.38 million was sanctioned to 133 Volags while in 1985-86 a sum of Rs. 43.23 million was sanctioned to 368 Volags.³⁷ The bulk of the grant has gone to the Volags located in four States viz. Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan.³⁸

Notwithstanding the increased involvement of the State with Volags their relationship is not all the more smooth. Some of the Volags allege that the Government favours only those who toe the official line and sleep over the proposals of those Volags who are not "known" to the officials or who challenges the Government policy and criticises official programmes.³⁹ The scrutiny of the proposals submitted by the 84 Volags during 1987-88 for Government grants and discussions held with an expert who evaluated the working of Volags and a perusal of the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General reveal the other side of the story. As per the norms, the Volags are expected to submit their annual audit report for three consecutive years along with the application for Grant. Of the 84 proposals submitted for grant during 1987-88,

only 16 were cleared while the rest were rejected by the Grant-in-Aid Committee due to the non-compliance of norms.⁴⁰ An official evaluation report has noted that of the 382 Volags, the work of only 27 could be rated as "entirely satisfactory." The work of about 120 agencies was found to be "unsatisfactory in certain aspects" and the work of 81 Volags was not at all "satisfactory."⁴¹

Anita Dighe who evaluated the functioning of the eight Volags in Delhi, sounded very pessimistic about the functioning of some of them. Though she favoured the involvement of volags in adult education, she felt that all were not deserving to be supported by the State. She felt that there is a need to categorise the Volags. There are certain Volags which were primarily interested in building assets with the Government grants and organizing adult education apparently to justify the grant. Besides, there is another category, which organize adult education programme sincerely but in a stereotyped manner without any commitment to programme but with the ulterior motive of providing jobs to their supporters. She also found still another category which were basically involved in organizational work and take up adult education as a part of their developmental programme. She felt that the last category really needs to be encouraged.⁴²

It has been found that some of the Volags not only misutilise the funds but at times find it difficult to spend the grant. A number of Volags have produced teaching-learning materials of inferior quality. Some have not taken even precautionary measures to safeguard the equipment purchased out of the grants resulting in their theft.⁴³ The response from Volags remain orthodox and voluntarism remain as an "unrealised factor" in Indian society.⁴⁴

The functioning of the Volags and increase in their numbers in recent times (according to a survey conducted in 1986, 508 Volags were working in the field of Adult Education)⁴⁵ have forced the Government to be cautious in dealing with them, while the Volags clamour for more lenient and liberal support from the Government. In this tussle between Government control and the autonomy of the Volags it is the programmes of adult education that suffers. What is painful is that neither the Government nor the Volags are directly concerned with the **quality** of the programme. Today, only a handful of adult education programmes organised by the Volags can be said to be effective and successful. The successful Volags are those who have taken up adult education as a part of total

developmental programme and have given greater participation to local people in the management of programme and have not depended exclusively on State funds. Of the successful Volags, the following needs special mention : (i) Punjab Association, Madras; (ii) The Women's Voluntary Service of Tamil nadu; (iii) YWCA, Madras; (iv) Voluntary Health Services, Madras; (v) Gandhi Niketan Ashram, Kallupatti; (vi) Island of Peace, Kalakad; (vii) Vivekananda Girijana Kendra, Karnataka and (viii) Gram Mangal Pathagar, Orissa.⁴⁶

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1. "Current Literacy Situation in the world;" a paper prepared by the Division of Statistics on Education, UNESCO, 1985.
2. *Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All* (Bangkok : UNESCO Regional Office, 1986), p. 6.
3. India is the seventh largest country in the world in terms of geographical area covering 3, 287, 263 sq. miles and second largest in terms of population. India is a federal country with 23 States and 8 Union Territories. Major religious communities are Hindus (82.63 per cent), Muslims (11.36 per cent), Christians (2.43 per cent) and Sikhs (1.96 per cent). There are 15 major languages and 1,652 mother tongues. It is one of the poorest country in the world with a per capita income of \$ 250 in 1987. It has developed largest industrial base and ranks seventh in terms of scientific manpower. See, *World Almanac, 1986* (New York : Newspaper Enterprises Inc., 1986).
4. *Selected Statistical Information on Adult Education* (New Delhi : Directorate of Adult Education, 1985), pp. 3,11.
State Profiles of Literacy and Adult Education Programme (New Delhi : Directorate of Adult Education, 1985), pp. i-iv.
5. Taped Interview with Late Dr. S.C. Dutta, President of Indian Adult Education Association, recorded on 17 May 1987 at New Delhi.
6. Calculated from the Provincial Reports of Mass Literacy Campaigns of British India during 1938-39 - 1941-42.
7. *First Five Year Plan* (New Delhi : Planning Commission, 1952), pp. 542-543.
8. See, Saiyidain K.G., *Azad's Contribution to Educational Development*; (n.p. n.p. n.d.) p. 32
Dutta. S.C., *History of Adult Education in India* (New Delhi : Indian Adult Education Association, 1987), pp. 91-92.
9. UNESCO provided substantial grants from outside its normal budget to the setting up of National Fundamental Education Centre at New Delhi. It also helped in setting up Delhi Public Library.

Farmers Functional Literacy Programme was conceived as a part of World Experimental Literacy Programme and received funds from UNDP. The Community Development Programme received funds from the Ford Foundation under Indo-US agreement.

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10. *Ibid.*, p. -76.
11. For Details See, *National Adult Education Programme : An Outline*; (New Delhi : Ministry of Education, 1978).
12. See, Rao T.V. "Specialists, Bureaucrats and Politicians in Social Development : The National Adult Education Programme," in Ganapathy R.S. et al (Ed), *Public Policy and Policy Analysis in India* (New Delhi : SAGE, 1985), p. 139.
13. The taped interviews with Prof. Alan Rogers, Dr. S.C. Dutta, Prof. James Drapper (who were closely associated with the foundation and initial functioning of the Departments of Adult Education at the universities of Rajasthan, Madras, and Delhi) provide details of the role played by different individuals.
14. According to an estimate, of the 300 important books and articles on adult education published during 1951-80, nearly 100 were by these three adult educators. This is worked out mainly based on the following bibliography.
Adult Education in India : A Bibliography; (New Delhi : Directorate of Adult Education 1981)
15. For concise details see the monograph : Mathur R.S. and Jambullkar G.L.; *Evaluation of Adult Education Programme ; A Synoptic View* (New Delhi : Directorate of Adult Education, 1985), see pp. 4-8.
16. Leela Visaria, *The UGC Sponsored Adult Education Programme in Gujarat : An Evaluation*; (Ahmedabad : Sardar Patel Institute of Economic and Social Research, 1984), p. 32.
17. *Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year, 1985-86.* (New Delhi : Controller of Publication, 1987), vol. II p. 120.
18. See, Financial Allocation to Different Education Sectors in *Report of the Review Committee on the National Adult Education Programme* (New Delhi : Ministry of Education and Culture, 1980), p. 9.
19. During 1980-85, a sum of Rs. 1,280 millions (out of the total outlay for Education of Rs. 2,5230 million) was provided for the adult education which was raised to 3,600 million (out of the total outlay for Education 6,3820 million) for the period 1985-90.
Sixth Five Year Plan, (New Delhi : General. Manager, n.y), p. 361 and *The Approach to the Seventh Five Year Plan*, (New Delhi : Manager,

- Government of India Press, 1984). Vol. II, p. 269.
20. *Adult Education Programme : Policy Perspective and Strategies for Implementation* (New Delhi : Ministry of Education, 1984), pp. 3-4, 28-31.
 21. For details see, *Adult Education in India* (New Delhi : Ministry of Education, 1985), Chapter 2.
 22. At present the following two Training Manuals are in use for imparting training to the adult education functionaries of the Universities and Government Departments respectively :
 - (i) *Training Manual for Adult Education Functionaries* (New Delhi : University Grants Commission, 1985).
 - (ii) *Learning for Participation : An Approach to Training in Adult Education* (New Delhi : Directorate of Adult Education, 1987).
 23. *Development of Higher Education in India : A Policy Frame* (New Delhi : University Grants Commission, 1978), pp. 3, 12-13.
 24. *National Adult Education Programme*, p. 23.
 25. *Guidelines on Point No. 16 of the New 20 -Point Programme*; (New Delhi : University Grants Commission, 1983), pp. 2-4.
 26. *University System and Extension as the Third Dimension* (New Delhi : University Grants Commission, 1987), pp. 18-19.
 27. Statewise Involvement of NSS Volunteers in M.P.F.L. upto 15.3.1987. Programme Adviser's Cell, Ministry of Education, Government of India, New Delhi (Mimeo).
See also *DAE Newsletter* August 1986, Vol. IX, No. 8, p. 12.
 28. *University System and Extension as the Third Dimension*, p. 18.
 29. *Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General*, p. 134.
 30. For obvious reasons, the name of the university is kept confidential. However, the author is grateful to the project staff of the university for sharing their experiences.
 31. *Directory of Voluntary Organization Working in the Field of Adult Education*, (New Delhi : Directorate of Adult Education, 1979).
 32. *Ibid.*, p. 215.
 33. Taped Interview with late Dr. S.C. Dutta, President of Indian Adult Education Association.
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 35. *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.
 36. *Ibid.*, pp. 5-14
 37. *Comptroller and Auditor General Report*, p. 139.
 38. See *Adult Education Programme*, pp. 43-44.
 39. Interview with Late Dr. S.C. Dutta.
 40. See Minutes of the meeting of Grant-in-Aid Committee for Assistance to Voluntary Agencies for Non-formal Education held on 14 March 1988. File No. 1-18/87 NFE - II Government of India.
 41. "Many Literacy Agencies Bogus." in *Hindustan Times*, 19 May, 1988.

42. Interview with Dr. Anita Dighe, Director of Adult Education Unit, Jawaharlal Nehru University (who is an expert member of different National Level Committees on Adult Education), held on 3 and 6 May 1988.
43. *Comptroller and Auditor General Report*, pp. 126 -127.
44. *University System and Extension as the Third Dimension*, p. 12.
45. *Directory of Voluntary Organizations Working in the Field of Adult Education*, (New Delhi : Directorate of Adult Education, 1987).
46. For details see, *Profiles in Literacy : A Collection of Success Stories on Adult Education*, (New Delhi : Directorate of Adult Education, 1988), pp. 17-31.

APPENDIX 1

TABLE 1
Estimated Illiterate Population and Percentage of Illiterates
in 20 Countries of Asia and the Pacific

Country	Year	Age Group	Illiterate Population			Percentage of illiterates		
			Total (000)	Male (000)	Female (000)	Total %	Male %	Female %
Afghanistan	1985	15+	7,605	3,114	4,491	76.3	61.1	92.2
Bangladesh	1985	15+	37,274	16,313	20,961	66.9	56.7	77.8
China	1985	15+	229,176	66,881	162,294	30.7	17.6	44.5
Fiji	1985	15+	64	21	43	14.5	9.8	19.1
India	1985	15+	263,609	103,422	160,187	56.5	42.8	71.1
Indonesia	1985	15+	26,438	8,527	17,911	25.9	17.0	34.6
Islamic Rep. of Iran	1985	15+	11,995	4,634	7,361	49.2	37.7	61.0
Lao People's Dem. Rep. (1)	1985	15-45	....	....	....	16.1	8.0	24.2
Malaysia	1985	15+	2,579	938	1,659	26.6	19.1	34.0
Maldives	1977	15+	14	7	6	17.6	17.5	17.7
Nepal	1985	15+	6,893	2,892	4,001	74.4	61.3	88.1
Pakistan	1985	15+	39,408	17,452	21,956	70.4	60.1	81.4
Papua New Guinea	1985	15+	1,130	489	641	54.5	45.2	64.7
Philippines	1985	15+	4,765	2,344	2,421	14.3	14.0	14.6
Samoa	1971	15+	1.6	0.8	0.8	2.2	2.2	2.1
Singapore	1985	15+	265	64	201	13.9	6.6	21.4
Sri Lanka	1985	15+	1,401	489	912	12.9	8.8	17.3
Thailand	1985	15+	2,933	941	1,992	9.0	5.8	12.2
Turkey (1)	1984	15+	...	...	...	25.8	14.1	37.5
Viet Nam	1979	15+	4,847	1,340	3,506	16.0	9.5	21.7

Source : UNESCO office of statistics
 (1) official estimates.

[Cited in *Asia-Pacific Programme of Education For All*.
 (Bangkok : UNESCO Regional Office, 1986), p. 5]

TABLE : 2 India : Developmental Scenario

	Literacy 1981	Female Literacy 1981	infant Mortality Rate 1981	% Married Females in Age-Group 15-19 Years 1981	Death Rate 1982	Birth Rate 1982	Couple Protection Rate 1984	Agricultural Productivity (Rs./hectare) 1970s	Per Capita Income 1983-84
India	36.23	24.82	110	43.47	11.9	33.8	29.2	973	2201
Andhra Pradesh	29.94	20.39	86	56.27	10.6	31.2	30.5	1093	1878
Assam	N.A.	N.A.	106	N.A.	12.4	34.2	20.9	1227	1762
Bihar	26.20	13.62	118	64.06	14.1	37.3	15.8	978	1174
Gujarat	43.70	32.30	116	26.86	11.7	34.3	39.7	937	2795
Haryana	36.14	22.27	101	47.44	9.2	36.7	40.2	1150	3147
Himachal Pradesh	42.48	31.46	71	N.A.	9.5	32.5	31.3	931	2230
Jammu & Kashmir	26.67	15.88	72	N.A.	8.4	30.7	13.5	1135	1820
Karnataka	38.46	27.71	69	36.17	9.2	27.9	29.2	940	1957
Kerala	70.42	65.73	37	13.98	6.6	26.2	36.3	1775	1761
Madhya Pradesh	27.87	15.53	142	62.71	14.9	38.5	27.2	695	1636
Maharashtra	47.18	34.79	79	38.09	8.8	29.8	48.1	494	3032

Manipur	41.35	29.06	N.A.	N.A.	6.6*	26.6*	15.8	N.A.	1673
Meghalaya	34.08	30.08	N.A.	N.A.	8.9	31.1	6.1	N.A.	1483
Nagaland	42.57	33.89	N.A.	N.A.	5.3*	21.4*	1.9	N.A.	N.A.
Orissa	34.23	21.12	135	30.93	13.0	33.4	29.8	1026	N.A.
Punjab	40.86	33.69	81	14.12	8.4	30.4	42.9	1761	3691
Rajasthan	24.38	11.42	108	64.25	12.1	38.0	17.9	518	1881
Sikkim	34.05	22.20	N.A.	N.A.	9.5	31.6	12.0	N.A.	1300
Tamil Nadu	46.76	34.99	91	22.83	11.2	27.7	32.1	1770	1827
Tripura	42.12	32.00	N.A.	N.A.	7.7	24.4	9.7	N.A.	N.A.
Uttar Pradesh	27.16	14.04	150	60.50	15.1	38.6	15.5	1079	1567
West Bengal	40.94	30.25	91	37.28	10.4	32.3	28.0	1442	2231
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	51.56	42.14	N.A.	N.A.	6.1	36.4	24.3	N.A.	N.A.
Arunachal Pradesh	20.79	11.32	N.A.	N.A.	15.9	34.2	3.7	N.A.	N.A.
Chandigarh	64.79	59.31	N.A.	N.A.	3.7	26.0	36.0	N.A.	N.A.
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	26.67	16.78	N.A.	N.A.	13.2	41.7	28.0	N.A.	N.A.
Delhi	61.54	53.07	N.A.	N.A.	7.6	28.7	37.9	N.A.	3928
Goa, Daman & Diu	56.66	47.56	N.A.	N.A.	7.2	21.4	21.4	N.A.	3479
Lakshadweep	55.07	44.65	N.A.	N.A.	7.5	29.3	8.5	N.A.	N.A.
Mizoram	59.88	54.91	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	18.7	N.A.	N.A.
Pondicherry	55.85	45.71	N.A.	N.A.	6.5	23.8	46.1	N.A.	3693

*1981

Source: Sheel Chand Nuna, *Education and Development*, (New Delhi: National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, 1987).

Literacy and Development in India

Role of literacy in development has been much discussed and debated in India and abroad. Whether literacy precedes development or follows; literacy cannot be separated from the development process. In fact, they are intrinsically related and there is a dynamic interplay between the two at various levels of society. However, it has been recognised that literacy alone cannot deterministically engineer development though it is almost impossible to conceive development without literacy which is an enabling or accelerating factor. Different literacy programmes implemented in India since 1950's and their impact on various indicators of social development substantiate the thesis that literacy can accelerate the pace of development. Since literacy is relative to the context and conditioned by prevalent socio-political scenario, its effect cannot be studied without an examination of developmental goals vis-a-vis literacy content, strategies and structures devised by the policy planners.

This paper is attempted in two parts. In part one, changing concepts and connections of literacy and development in India since 1950's have been discussed with a view to delineating their meaning and operational strategies. Part two examines how literacy initiates, accelerates or influences different parameters of individual, social, economic and political development. This is attempted mainly with the help of different reports and evaluation studies brought out by the Directorate of Adult Education, Government of India from time to time.

Changing Concept and Connections of Literacy and Development

Over the past fifty years numerous operational and philosophical definitions of literacy and development have emerged. Keeping in view the changing priorities of India's developmental goals and

influences of international bodies like the United Nations and the World Bank, the concept of literacy and development have undergone tremendous transformations. Although the significance of literacy as an instrument of galvanizing and mobilizing the masses and arousing community consciousness and participation for bringing about social change was highlighted by our national leaders, literacy did not receive due priority during 1950's when it remained as an integral part of the Community Development Programme. While the concept of development revolved around building factories, industries and dams, the focus of literacy was on enabling the common man to live a richer life in all its aspects and instilling civic consciousness among masses. During 1960's when a direct correlation emerged between education and economic growth, the emphasis of literacy programme shifted from civic to functional literacy. It was felt that literacy, if it is worthwhile must be functional. It was argued that one of the reasons for the failure of many development schemes like agricultural production, family planning, co-operative, Panchayat institutions was the lack of functional literacy among the rural masses. The concept of functional literacy was translated into Farmers Training and Functional Literacy Project and implemented in 144 districts during 1968-77. The pilot evaluation study conducted by the Directorate of Adult Education in 1970 revealed the utility of the programme in contributing to agricultural production by raising the knowledge and awareness of farmers. During 1970's, Functional Literacy for Adult Women project was implemented with a view to accelerating the participation of adult women in the developmental efforts of local community and bringing about attitudinal change among them. This project also proved the efficacy of functional literacy as a tool for accelerating the pace of development.

The concepts of development and functional literacy were subjected to criticism by development workers during 1970's. While development came to be seen in dimensions other than economic, the focus of literacy was on arousing the critical consciousness of people. The emergence of Janata Government in 1978 brought about a radical shift in the concept of literacy and development. The new Government put more emphasis on redistributive justice and eradication of illiteracy. The National Adult Education Programme developed by the Janata Government put equal emphasis on literacy, functionality and social awareness and visualized adult

education as "a means to bring about a fundamental change in the process of socio-economic development." The subsequent Governments during 1980's also recognised the role of literacy in development. It was felt that development should not be just about factories, dams, roads but should centre around the development of human resources. By the 1980's broader definition of literacy as being central to human development had been accepted. Emphasis was put on people's right to literacy as a component of development itself. In fact, human development became central to India's developmental effects. Importance of literacy was reiterated by the National Policy on Education (1986) which envisaged that adult education would be a means for reducing economic, social and gender disparities and nation as a whole would assume the responsibility for providing resource support. Working out the implementations strategies, the Programme of Action recommended that "emphasis in adult education programme should be on skill development and creation of awareness among the learners of the national goals, of development programmes, and for liberation from oppression." Subsequently when promotion of literacy became an important national mission, the document on National Literacy Mission (NLM) specified that the objective of NLM would be to impart functional literacy to 80 million illiterates in 15-35 age group by 1995 through a variety of means and with the active involvement of all sections of society. The concept of functional literacy envisaged under NLM was much broader than the earlier and included the following four aspects : (i) Achieving self-reliance in basic numeracy, (ii) becoming aware of the cause of one's deprivation and moving towards amelioration of conditions through organisation and participation in the process of development, (iii) acquiring skills to improve the economic status and general well-being and (iv) imbibing the values of national integration, conservation of the environment, women's equality, observance of small family norms etc. This expanded concept of functional literacy has been termed as developmental literacy in view of its coverage of all aspects of human life and emphasis on the promotion of national concerns. Thus developmental literacy is defined as literacy for all-round development of human beings and nations. By enabling individuals to lead enlightened, productive and socially conscious lives, developmental literacy aims at the development of the nation as a whole. With the change

in the concept, the operational strategies were also modified to make it a mass movement through total literacy campaigns. With the successful culmination of Ernakulam District Total Literacy Campaign in 1989, the campaign strategy spread widely. Today over 400 districts have taken up literacy programme. Of the 86 million illiterates exposed to literacy programme, about 53 million have become literate with the help of 10 million volunteers. The gigantic efforts have raised the percentage of literacy in India from 43.57 in 1981 to 52.21 in 1991.

Quantitative Dimensions

Literacy programmes primarily aim at improving the quality of human capital which is very vital for the development of any nation. Over the years, different types of literacy programmes and projects have been implemented by official and non-official agencies in India. Of these, Gram Shikshan Mohim (1961-71) and the total literacy campaigns of 1990's have made significant contributions in quantitative and qualitative terms. During 1961-71, it was estimated that Gram Shikshan Mohim, succeeded in imparting literacy to 44,57,972 males and 50,96,566 females which made a significant contribution to the total literacy rate in Maharashtra, which jumped from 29.8 to 39.2. The Total Literacy Campaigns launched in different states/U.Ts. showed that upto March 1994, as against the target of 581.91 lakhs, 203.42 lakhs became literate (49.76%). Some of the States which have shown remarkable progress were : Maharashtra from 1.56 to 16.57 lakhs, Tamil Nadu from 5.03 to 15.18 lakhs, West Bengal from 42.44 to 54.39 lakhs.

Adult Literacy and Universalisation of Primary Education (UPE)

Universal literacy cannot be achieved without giving equal importance to Adult Literacy and Universalisation of Primary Education. Literate parents would not only enrol their children in schools but also ensure their retention. Educational statistics since 1950s shows that highly literate States and districts have higher enrolment ratio for 6-14 age group and lower drop-out rates. While highly literate States like Kerala, Pondicherry, West Bengal had an enrolment ratio of 102.45, 141.79 and 125.31 for classes I-V, in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh which had lower literacy rate recorded lower enrolment ratio - i.e. 81.70 and 81.39 respectively.

Total Literacy Campaigns launched in Pondicherry, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal have shown that the successful operation of literacy campaigns have invariably led to an increase of enrolment in primary schools. The evaluation reports have shown that in Burdwan district of West Bengal, of the 1,52,836 children of 6-9 age group 1,30,790 were enrolled after the TLC. While in Hoogly, primary school enrolment rose from 1.23 lakhs in 1989 to 1.27 in 1990 and 1.82 in 1991; in Birbhum district, there was about 25 per cent increase in the enrolment and attendance in primary schools. Sumanta Banerjee during his field visits to Burdwan observed that the rate of enrolment in primary schools had gone to such an extent that classes had to be conducted in the open courtyards. Similar positive trends in the enrolment of primary education have been noted by Nitya Rao in Pondicherry and Pasumpon district, where literacy workers not only launched "Back to School" campaigns to boost up the enrolment of children but even surveyed the reasons for school drop-outs. In Pondicherry, Visalakshi Tangappa – an headmistress of a Government girls high school opened a separate section for never enrolled ragpickers. The spread of literacy not only sensitised the parents but also the officials of Education Departments towards the cause of Universal Primary Education.

Literacy-Individual Transformation and Development

Transforming effects of literacy on individuals have been well studied. The writings of Frank Laubach, H.S. Bhola, Yusuf Kassam, Julius Nyerere and Lakshmidar Mishra have extensively discussed the role of literacy in the development of individuals. Jack Goody who proposed the "technology of intellect" hypothesis states that literacy (particularly writing) changes the mentalities of new literates thereby transforming their mode of perception, memory and ability to argue. Literacy, by focusing on individual behaviour promotes socialisation and cultivation of modern values and softens the resistance to change. Frank Laubach who worked for the cause of literacy in more than one hundred countries during 1937-77, noted that "literacy begets new faith and new vision in the learner; it destroys his sense of inferiority and frustration; it stirs him to new self-reliance, makes him feel that he belongs to the class of society that triumphs over difficulties.... It gives him a new sense of mastery over his fate... it pulls him from the edges of society where he has lain stagnant mentally into the currents where he will be swept onwards as a part

of the great, moving course of human history." These observations have been supported by several studies. *In illiterates No More : The Voices of New Literates From Tanzania*, Yusuf Kassam records and analyses eight dialogues illustrating the growth in personal confidence of neoliterates who commented that earlier they were carrying a small lantern; (and after literacy) they felt that they have got a pressure lamp which radiated more light and confidence.

The evaluation reports of Gram Shikshan Mohim and the recent Total Literacy Campaigns have documented several cases of individual transformation and development. The series of success stories published by the Directorate of Adult Education of Government of India are full of individual case-studies testifying to the development of personality traits like assertiveness, confidence gaining and improved self-esteem in neoliterate. Michael Tharakan who evaluated the Ernakulam District Literacy Campaign observed specific behaviour changes in 363 cases (See Table below).

Behavioural Changes Notified by Instructors in Learners

	Cases Reported
Improvement in the way of speaking	30
Controlled consumption of alcohol	26
Stopped consumption of alcohol	20
Began to eat green leafy vegetables	1
Maturity in behaviour	45
sense of unity	5
sense of personal hygiene	16
Systematic and regular habits	60
Stopped chewing pan	8
Controlled chewing pan	8
Started showing respect to officials	16
Stopped smoking	14
Controlled smoking	23
No fundamental change	19
No bad habits to begin with	2
General improvement	70

Source : Michael Tharakan, *Ernakulam District Total Literacy Campaign*, p. 48.

A detailed report on the three phases of a literacy training camp organized by Astha in Udaipur has reported the development of self-confidence among women participants. Field reports on

Pondicherry and West Bengal literacy campaigns have also mentioned the striking transformation in the personality of new literate women.

As Julius Nyerere observed, a man develops himself through education, which by broadening his mental horizon widens his choices and capacity to take decisions. Since decision decides direction and direction decides destiny, literacy enables adult to take control of their destiny. When adults acquire the ability to shape their life, it not only enables them to bring about desired changes in their own lives but also provide proper guidance to younger generation. Thus as Freire observes literacy enables the adults "to read the world by reading the word."

Literacy, Health and Population Control

Numerous studies indicate that literacy is strongly associated with higher levels of health and longevity of self, children, better nutrition and lower levels of fertility and Infant Mortality Rate. Different indicators of social development in India during 1951-1991 brings out this relationship very clearly (See Table below).

Social Indicators of Development for India (1951-91)

Item	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991
Literacy Rate	16.67	28.30	34.45	43.57	52.21
General fertility rate (live births per thousand women of child-bearing age)	N.A.	201.0	192.0	154.0	140.9
Contraceptive prevalence (number of users in '000)	N.A.	N.A.	1.963	3.809	17.905
Death rate (number per thousand)	22.8	19.0	14.9	12.5	9.8
Infant mortality rate (per thousand live births) :	182.5	135.1	129.0	110.0	80.0
Life expectancy at birth : Overall (Years)	32.1	41.3	45.6	54.4	59.9
Number of literates (in million)	—	105.52	161.41	235.73	359.28

Source : EPW Research Foundation, *Economic & Political Weekly*, May 14, 1994 Prem Chand; *Statistical Database For Literacy*, National Institute of Adult Education, 1993, Vol. II.

While literacy rate increased from 28.30 to 52.21 during 1961-91, general fertility levels and Infant Mortality Rate declined from 201 to 140.9 and 134.1 to 80 respectively. Inter- State comparisons brings out this relationship more clearly. Kerala State in which the

overall literacy rate is 86.81 per cent, being the highest not only in India but comparable with that in some advanced countries, also has the lowest IMR -17 per thousand as against the country's average of 80. It also has the lowest proportion of married females in the age group 15-19, and a very low death rate of 7 compared to 30.5 in Bihar.

Adult literacy projects implemented by Ramakrishna Mission Ashram in Calcutta during 1952-93, brings out the positive relationship of literacy and other indicators of socio-economic development (See Table below).

Literacy and Development

Year	Literacy % age	Income (monthly)	IMR	Employment
1952	5%	Rs. 150-200	110	Day Labourer
1961	50%	Rs. 700-800	64	Day labour + crafts
1971	65%	Rs. 900-1200	50	Cane, bamboo, paper crafts, and drawing and painting.
1981	75%	Rs. 1500-1800	14	Crafts, employment in private and/or Public Sector.
1993	80-89%	Rs. 2000-3000	11	-do-

Source : *Literacy And Vocational Education : The Narendrapur Experience*, National Literacy Mission, n.d, p. 15.

Today there is enough evidence to show that high literacy rates specially high female literacy rates are associated with low rates of population growth. Kerala is an outstanding example where high (specially) female literacy rates have gone hand in hand with not only low rate of growth of population but with superior performance in terms of a number of health indicators such as Infant Mortality Rate, death rates, sex ratio and so on. In sharp contrast abysmally low female literacy rates are associated with high population growth rates as well as performance in terms of health indicators in the BIMARU States, namely, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. For example, in Bihar and Rajasthan which have the lowest female literacy rates -20.84 per cent and 23.10 per cent, the decadal increase in population (1981-91) remains high - 33.49 per cent and 28.07 per cent respectively. Kerala which has achieved the highest female literacy rate of 86.93% in 1991, has also registered the lowest decadal growth of population - 13.98

during 1981-91.

The impressive achievement made by Kerala State is a demonstration of salutary effect of the spread of literacy among the people accelerating the attainment of developments goals. With a high density of population and below national average per capita income, Kerala has achieved the highest life expectancy of 66 years. Kerala's population growth rate has dropped from 2.26% per annum to 1.31% during the last two decades. It becomes evident that levels of achievement in literacy, population growth, life expectancy and infant mortality are all inter-related and are also mutually reinforcing.

The importance and need for integrating the components of education and health has been emphasised by the National Health Policy (1982) and National Policy on Education (1986). The National Health Policy states that "the public health education programme should be supplemented by health, nutrition and population education programmes in all educational institutions at various levels. Simultaneously efforts would require to be made to promote universal education specially adult and female education without which various efforts to organise preventive and promotive health activities, family planning, maternal and child health care cannot be achieved." This point has been further endorsed and elaborated by the National Policy on Education.

World Bank Studies in 29 Developing Countries have shown that infant and child mortality rates are in inverse proportion to the level of education of mothers and that each year of schooling for girls and women's literacy means further reduction of IMR and lower birth-rate. A study conducted by ICMR in 1990-91 on "Immunisation Programme and Maternal and Child Health" in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh., Rajasthan and Bihar has shown that the immunisation status of children of literate mothers is better than that of illiterate mothers both in urban and rural areas. Reduction of sickness arising from lack of hygiene, malnutrition, and superstitious practices has also been noticed in families which have literate women members.

It has been observed that literate fathers and mothers are less likely to contract venereal diseases and AIDS. Literate mothers are much likely to practice environmental sanitation, saving their families from cholera, malaria and other pestilences. A study on the impact of the population education integrated into the contents

of literacy primers for adult learners showed that there was not only an increase in awareness of public health and family welfare services among the learners but also a 13.7 per cent increase in the use of public health and family welfare facilities. As Bhola observes, "Literacy is not an elixir for perpetual youth nor panacea for all ills." However it does make good health and longevity more likely.

The question of environment is also closely connected with education. It has been observed that environmental awareness and achievement in environmental conservation and preservation, increases in direct proportion to the increase in the literacy level of a country. In the National Environment Awareness Campaigns organised by the Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of India during the year 1990s, it has been observed that the maximum number of proposals for organising environmental activities are received from the States where the literacy rate is quite high. In the sphere of unconventional energy resources also, women's literacy and education have proved to be strong supportive factors. In Ramanathapuram, 1,500 smokeless Chullahs have been installed by the neoliterate women's organisation. In Karnataka, literacy galvanized 570 village residents into recognising environmentalism as a panacea for their ills and they "donned the mantle of environmentalists."

Literacy and Socio-Economic Development

The relationship between the level of literacy in a society and the economic, social and political development of that society has been strongly argued by many. Based on extensive visits to different TLC districts and interaction with neoliterates, Shri Lakshmidar Mishra, the former Director General of National Literacy Mission has documented the innumerable ways in which literacy accelerated the pace of development in Indian society. He noted that in several villages of Andhra Pradesh, where the campaign has been successfully conducted, untouchability and feuds on account of caste and communal strifes have become issues of the past. The campaigns in Mehabubnagar and West Bengal have promoted social, emotional and even linguistic integration. Literacy campaigns in Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka motivated neoliterates to fight against the evils of alcoholism. The anti-arrack agitation of Nellore by neoliterate women showed that literacy plays a significant role in raising the consciousness of learners. To quote

Lakshmidar Mishra, "the literacy campaigns have not only brought Government and people more closer but also provided an ambience for all the progressive elements of society to come together and set up grass-root level organizations for initiating a variety of developmental programmes." In Mizoram, literacy facilitated access to developmental messages over radio and television. In several TLC districts, specially in Latur, Pondicherry, Pudukotai, Ramanathapuram several Mahila Mandals and Women's Development organisations came up. The literacy campaign in Pune paved the way for setting up of 1976 mahila mandals (Literacy – Pune Experience, 1992). These organisations conducted grass-root level meetings and propagated the idea of gender equality and worked for the empowerment of women. In general, peoples organizations provided an opportunity for neoliterate to engage in developmental and social welfare work, thereby giving a boost to the Government programmes aimed at the amelioration of poor and development of nation.

It has been observed that literacy heightens political awareness and would enable people to participate more effectively in civic affairs. The evaluation of Ernakulam literacy campaign showed drastic fall in invalid votes; during 1984-89, the number of invalid votes came down from 12,683 to 7,857. In several TLC districts, neoliterates started demanding better civic amenities like street lights, schools and primary health centres.

Effects of education, specially literacy and numeracy on crop-yields and other physical measures of farm outputs are positive and statistically significant. A survey of 18 studies conducted in low income countries showed that farm productivity increased on an average by around 7 per cent as a result of farmers completing four years of elementary education rather than none. The research studies conducted by Choudhury and Shri Prakash have shown the positive correlation between literacy and productivity. The Farmers Training and Functional Literacy projects implemented in different parts of India during 1967-77 have demonstrated the positive impact of literacy on farm productivity.

Some Structural Constraints

No doubt, India has made significant strides in various fields and launched several successful literacy campaigns in recent times. Although literacy did initiate and influence changes in social-

economic and political areas, it has not fully accelerated the pace of development. While it may be partly due to the inherent limitations of literacy programmes, to a great extent it is due to the limitations of our socio-political system. It is said that at least four years of primary education is needed for retention of literacy skills and upto six years to develop more open attitude towards innovations and change (Josef Muller). The short duration of current basic and post-literacy programme seems to be a limitation in bringing about significant changes. Besides, the contents of literacy primers and methods of literacy instruction also remain far from satisfactory as noted by studies conducted by Anita Dighe, Kamala Bhasin, Krishna Kumar etc. In places like Pondicherry, Nellore, where literacy primers were well designed, there were remarkable awakening among learners which were not appreciated by the State. Since literacy is contextual, it cannot show result without congenial structural conditions and dismantling of age-old social-economic and political structures and adopting redistributive justice as the goal of our development.

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Section-II
University Adult Education

The Policy, Philosophy and Problems of University Adult Education in India

A new phase began in the history of Indian university adult education in 1978 when the Government of India launched the National Adult Education Programme and subsequently the University Grants Commission (UGC) initiated the policy of promoting adult, continuing education and extension programmes (henceforth referred to as adult education) in the universities. Apart from providing the blueprint of programmes, the UGC also supported the universities with hundred per cent financial assistance. This policy has led to the massive expansion of university adult education at a very rapid pace during 1980's when 92 universities recruited about 350 members of core staff and set up the infrastructure for the implementation of adult education programmes. Notwithstanding the continuation of resource support from the UGC, adult education programmes in most of the universities have been languishing as a fringe sector of activity. A large section of the university community remains either ignorant of or indifferent towards adult education. While some of the teachers oppose adult educators as "trespassers" into the university system, few of the key administrators tolerate them as "show pieces of extension work." Because of their unique designations as Directors, Assistant Directors and Project Officers, the university adult educators are neither recognised as teachers nor administrators. They exist as alien bodies in the university system. If on the one hand their status has remained vague, on the other hand their problems have not received adequate attention. Why is it so? Is it due to the UGC policy? To what extent are the university adult educators responsible? How can their problems be solved? Who should take the initiative? How to integrate adult

education into the university system?

The variety of issues related to university adult education basically revolve around the lacunae in the UGC policy and the inability of the university adult educators to conceptualise the philosophy of university adult education and define their role. By examining these drawbacks in the light of extensive study of literature—the policy documents, deliberations of several conferences and seminars, writings and speeches of eminent adult educators and formal and informal interviews and discussions held during the past six years with a number of academicians, adult educators, policy makers and activists, this paper argues that unless the university adult educators strive to distinguish themselves as a distinct category of professionals committed to the development of adult education as a discipline of study through teaching, research and extension their problems cannot be solved.

In the early years of 1980's when the UGC had initiated the policy of supporting the university adult education programmes, there was an acute shortage of adult educators who had the appropriate educational qualifications and professional experience to fill-up the university level positions of Director, Assistant Director and Project Officer in the rank of Professor, Associate Professor and Assistant Professor respectively. Yet a number of universities welcomed the scheme mainly because of the hundred per cent financial support. When the universities advertised the posts, there were mainly two categories of applicants. The first category who were in the majority came from outside the university system—from the Governmental and non-Governmental organizations. Though most of them had the professional experience they lacked appropriate educational qualifications and university experience. Some of them having served long in the Government had developed bureaucratic attitudes and approaches which hampered their functioning in the university system. Ignoring the inherent deficiencies when some of them had adopted an aggressive approach, there were conflicts which further alienated them from the mainstream and hence they failed to make much headway in the university system.

The second category who hailed from the university system, had hardly any interest in adult education. They also lacked the professional experience. Since promotional avenues were limited in their parent disciplines and they were stagnating for long, some

of the sympathetic Vice-Chancellors "accommodated" them in the newly set up adult education units. How could such people do justice to adult education? Some of the universities which could not find the above two categories appointed full-time Professors or even superannuated bureaucrats as Honorary Directors and that too on ad hoc basis. While some of the Professors took interest in adult education, most of the bureaucrats remained fully occupied with official meetings and conferences. The few qualified adult educators who were recruited by certain universities were either too junior to take-up the leadership role, or they did not have any leadership qualities at all (?) In this situation where nearly 75 per cent of the key posts of Directors and Assistant Directors are occupied by "less qualified or disinterested" (?) adult educators, is it possible to expect high level of professional commitment and competence from them?

This peculiar situation arose primarily due to the UGC policy of supporting university adult education at a very rapid pace during 1980's. To a great extent it was because of the personal interest of the then UGC Chairperson Dr. Madhuri Shah. Being at the helm of affairs, she could allocate adequate resources required for the expansion of university adult education. At the same time had the UGC made an effort to systematically ascertain the availability of professional manpower in the country and not motivated the universities by providing ready-made programme packages and grants; and instead, resorted to a policy of slow and steady expansion of university adult education according to the ethos of different universities; then, perhaps, the foundation of university adult education would have been much stronger. As the basic infrastructure of university adult education remains weak, we cannot expect better performance.

Being aware of the situation, the UGC did make some efforts to improve the professional competence of the core staff through the organization of short-term orientation courses, workshops and summer schools. But a review of the contents of orientation courses and experiences of certain participants have revealed that such programmes were too inadequate to serve the purpose. Due to the dearth of high quality professional literature and specialists in India, these courses could only provide some technical know-how in the implementation of adult education programme and record keeping. Hence a section of adult educators tend to conceive adult education

as a field programme. They are blissfully ignorant of the fact that it is a field of study as well! If the university adult education in India has to be improved, then the UGC need to workout a scheme of either developing three or four centres of excellence in adult education in India, or identify such centres in other developed or developing countries where the university adult educators could spend 6-12 months for intensive study and research. If the UGC makes an effort to include adult education in some of the existing exchange programmes, then it may provide an opportunity to our adult educators. Such an exposure may enable many of the university adult-educators to improve their theoretical understanding so that they could relate theory to practice or develop theory from practice and thus generate new knowledge which may contribute to the growth of the discipline of adult education. When adult education develops as a discipline of study in the universities, it is likely to provide lots of insights into the practice which may ultimately develop the profession.

The UGC guidelines on designations, qualifications and duties of university adult educators have raised a number of issues. As per the guidelines, the adult educators are expected to undertake extension work, develop and offer courses besides conducting researches. Unlike the teachers, their core activity revolves around extension and hence they are given bureaucratic designations viz., Director, Assistant Director and Project Officer. However, the UGC Document—*A Policy Framework of Higher Education* states that extension should become the third dimension of higher education and it should get integrated into the entire university system 'which implies' that all the teachers should undertake extension and it should no longer remain as the exclusive concern of adult educators. Given this context, there is hardly any justification for the present designations of adult educators. Besides, it has been observed that the members of the Faculty of Social Work, Home Science, Agriculture, Rural Development, Community Medicine etc., who undertake excellent extension work do not have any special designations. It may be argued that if the adult educators are given the same designations as of teachers, they would be able to deliver the goods more effectively. Being a faculty, they would be in the mainstream of university life which would enable them to seek better co-operation of students, teachers and even administrators in their extension work. In fact, students would be more receptive

to teachers than adult educators. For enhancing the effectiveness of extension work in the universities, the designations of adult educators need to be changed at the earliest and in this connection the UGC should issue policy directives to universities.

Some of the champions of extension, however, fear that if the designations of adult educators are changed and they are allowed to teach, perhaps extension work would suffer. They argue that some of the courses which the adult educators are desirous of developing and offering could be effectively taught by the existing teachers of different departments. These assumptions need to be examined from several angles. If extension is the only or main activity of adult educators, then there is hardly any need for appointing highly qualified and paid persons for the job. It could well be undertaken by comparatively lesser qualified and paid persons. Adult education being a field-oriented subject, it could be effectively taught by the adult educators who are in touch with the field as they would be able to relate theory to practice and train the professional manpower which remains as one of their foremost task. To be effective, the training has to be offered in the form of a number of courses spread over 6-12 months duration which could fit into the university curriculum. The focus has to be primarily on pre-service programme than on in-service which could be of short duration and conducted by Governmental and non-Governmental agencies.

It seems that the rationale for the employment of highly qualified adult educators has not been understood by many. As the adult educators in the Government and non-Government organizations are especially but not exclusively concerned with the field programmes, research remains neglected. Most of them do not have the time, competence or infrastructure to undertake researches or even document their experiences systematically and bring out scholarly publications. In the absence of these, adult education cannot grow as a profession. Hence it was felt that by creating a new category of professionals—university adult educators—who by virtue of their research qualifications and university infrastructure, would focus primarily on documentation, research and publications and thus contribute to the growth of the profession, both as a field of practice as well as study.

The development of the discipline of adult education demands that each adult educator should identify a specific area which

should be studied by applying the tools and techniques of different disciplines. In the case of adult education, the focus may have to be on the formulation of policy, programme package, implementation, and socio-economic contexts. All these aspects may have to be studied in a historical perspective so that the previous mistakes or failures are not repeated and at the same time, certain valuable experiences of the past are kept in view for future planning. Without a historical perspective, it would be difficult to formulate any policy or programme. For optimum utilisation of resources, the economics of adult education need to be studied. As the success of the programme depends on the materials and training, the curriculum will have to be examined. The sociologists will have to study the various socio-political forces and factors that influence the programme formulation and implementation. Unless different dimensions of adult education are studied in depth by different adult educators in accordance with their own interest and background, the discipline of adult education cannot be developed. When each adult educator identifies an area for intensive study and spends considerable amount of time, it may not only enable the particular individual to emerge as a specialist but also make significant contribution to the subject through research studies and publications. It becomes all the more important for the university adult educators to focus on researches, documentation and publications as recognition, rewards and even annual reports in the university system take into consideration only such work.

Yet, it is surprising that most of the university adult educators in India function as mere co-ordinators and administrators of UGC funded adult education programme. They hold the UGC guidelines as the directives to be strictly followed and rarely exercise their academic freedom or are aware of university autonomy. In fact the UGC only provides broad guidelines and leaves its interpretation and implementation to the universities. Hence university adult educators have the freedom to mould their programmes within the broad framework of adult education. Instead of striving for an exclusive identity, some of the university adult educators join hands with Governmental and non-Governmental organizations in the routine implementation of adult education programmes and remain contented. Swayed under the influence of political leaders and activists, they consider it sacrosanct to devote their whole time and energy to stereotyped field programmes, thereby underestimating

their own professional calibre. Or, do they really lack the confidence or competence to undertake more challenging professional assignments ? Or, do they have some specific or vested interests in establishing such linkages ? However, if they provide some new insights or inputs into the ongoing programmes of the outside agencies, or even try to document the work, their participation may be justified. In fact such linkages may be beneficial for the university adult educators as they would provide an opportunity to them to test some of their theories and thus generate new knowledge. On the contrary, when they associate with outside agencies merely for the sake of programme implementation, sometimes it may create conflicts and the outside agencies may also accuse the university adult educators of sharing their fruits.

The second important objective of university adult education is the much publicised involvement of student community in adult education programme. It is argued that by harnessing the energy and enthusiasm of students, the adult education programme could be effectively implemented and that too with nominal resources. But the experiences of several universities show that the scope and strategies of student participation in extension work varies considerably due to the character of student population and institutional ethos. Hence it would be detrimental, if all the universities blindly follow the UGC guidelines. Each university need to ascertain the potentialities of extension work in their respective jurisdiction.

From the point of extension work, the universities in India may be categorised into four :

- (i) Those which have a strong tradition of extension work and where extension forms a part of the curriculum at different levels, e.g., Gandhian institutions like Gujarat Vidyapeeth, Gandhi Gram Rural Institute etc.
- (ii) Those which have some tradition of extension as it forms a part of course work in certain departments, viz., Social Work, Home Science, Rural Development, Agriculture, Community Medicine etc., e.g., Viswa-Bharati, Jamia Millia Islamia, agricultural universities etc.
- (iii) Those which have plenty of scope for extension work and have a large number of undergraduate students, e.g., Universities of Delhi, Bombay, Madras etc.

- (iv) Those which have neither strong tradition nor enough scope for extension work and where the majority of students are involved in professional, postgraduate and research studies, e.g., JNU, IITs, Universities of Hyderabad, Pondicherry etc.

Extension work being part and parcel of curriculum in the first two categories of universities, there would be practically no problem in ensuring sufficient student participation. While it would be comparatively easier to attract a large number of undergraduate students (of the third category of universities) for voluntary extension work as they may be having plenty of leisure time and a craving for adventure, social service, voluntary work etc.; it would be a strenuous task to attract even a handful of students for voluntary extension work in the fourth category of universities. In these universities the majority of students being career conscious tend to devote most of their spare time for the preparation of competitive tests. However, if extension becomes a part of their course work then they may opt for it. Hence to operationalise the concept of extension in such universities, credit based extension programmes need to be developed by the adult educators. Some weightage in admissions or award of grace marks may create problems where admissions are made on the basis of competitive tests and grade system prevails.

The development of innovative courses in extension may necessitate an extensive study of the existing curriculum, assessment of the interests of students, ascertaining the resources and requirements of the university and local community. When the university adult educators initiate such challenging academic work which involves research, course development and teaching—all centred around extension and active student participation—then they may emerge as a distinct but distinguished class of professionals who will be welcomed by the university system. On the other hand, if they confine themselves to the implementation of tailor made developmental programmes like any other Governmental or non-Governmental organization, then in course of time they may lose their identity. Though the developmental programmes may provide temporary resources (as most of the funding agencies insist on returning the assets created from the funds after the completion of programme) in actual practice, such

involvements may demand lot of time and energy for mundane administrative work, thereby dampening the enthusiasm for serious academic pursuits. If the university adult educators continue to involve in such activities, then they are likely to be dubbed as incompetent to undertake research and bring out university level publications. In course of time, if some of the critiques point out that university adult educators are mainly concerned with the implementation of the same programme package of adult education like their counterparts in Government and voluntary sectors, and hence their pay should be reduced or made at par with others, then it may be difficult for the university adult educators to justify and defend their privileges, perks and status.

The university adult educators are a distinct class of professionals committed to the development of their profession through research, teaching and extension. Hence it becomes imperative on their part to carve a niche for themselves by ascertaining their personal interest, professional requirements and ethos of their respective universities. In fact by virtue of their qualifications and placement, they are uniquely qualified to play a key role in the development of adult education both as a field of practice and study. If they strive to achieve that, then they may succeed in getting due recognition from the university community as well as outside agencies.

UGC and University Adult Education : An Approach to Ninth Plan

"There is not a single Department of Adult Education in any Indian university where atleast 3-4 members of faculty are engaged in innovative research, teaching and extension. Apart from the absence of team spirit, there is considerable academic inertia and pessimism among the faculty members. The only silver lining is the silent work of a handful of dedicated individuals in some universities. Otherwise Indian University Departments of Adult Education are merely implementing agencies of Government designed, monitored and funded programmes."

These comments made by a renowned professor of adult education from an overseas university who visited India during the last winter with a view to developing collaborative academic programmes with Indian counterparts, may seem to be too harsh to Indian adult educators who may dismiss them as biased view of an outsider. However, on deeper probe and objective evaluation, it becomes evident that the criticisms are not baseless. The fact that the overseas professor made comments after spending three months in visiting some of the university departments of adult education and interacting with a number of academics and reviewing the researches carried out in India lend credence to his observation. There is no denying the fact that in spite of the tremendous expansion of university adult education during the 1980s and hundred per cent financial support from the UGC, they could not make any significant dent in terms of developing innovative models of extension and research. The plight of adult education departments become more clear when compared to the departments of Bio-technology which also emerged during 1980s and which succeeded in carving out a distinguished place for themselves in

Indian university system. Till today majority of departments of adult education have not become permanent constituent bodies of universities but continue as projects or remain as non-teaching departments with temporary staff. Uncertainties loom large in the horizon of the departments of adult education. Why did adult education fail to strike strong roots in the university system? Is it due to the University Grants Commission (UGC) Policy? What should be the role of university adult education during the ninth plan? Should UGC formulate new guidelines or revise the existing ones and continue to support university adult education?

UGC Policy

There has been a continuous debate about the role of universities in developing countries and it is now generally recognized that they should no longer remain confined to discharging the two traditional functions of teaching and research. It is argued that since education is a sub-system of society, the educational institutions cannot remain unconcerned with the problems of society. The universities which have vast resources in terms of manpower, infrastructure, and finances are in an advantageous position and can play a major role in dealing with some of the problems of the society and in contributing to social development and change. In doing so, they would have to go outside the four walls of the campus and address themselves to the needs of local communities and evolve ways and means of redressing their problems. While some of the agricultural universities and Gandhian institutions in India have been trying to actively associate themselves with the problems of local communities for quite sometime, the majority of Indian universities have delimited their activities to teaching and research until 1977 when the University Grants Commission recognized extension as the third dimension of the institutions of higher education. It was observed that "If the university system has to discharge adequately its responsibilities to the entire education system and to society as a whole it must assume extension as the third important responsibility and give it the same status as research and teaching. This is a new and extremely significant area which should be developed on the basis of high priority."¹ However, it was only the launching of the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) in 1978 by the Government of India that provided an opportunity to universities to actively involve themselves with the

Indian university system. Till today majority of departments of adult education have not become permanent constituent bodies of universities but continue as projects or remain as non-teaching departments with temporary staff. Uncertainties loom large in the horizon of the departments of adult education. Why did adult education fail to strike strong roots in the university system? Is it due to the University Grants Commission (UGC) Policy? What should be the role of university adult education during the ninth plan? Should UGC formulate new guidelines or revise the existing ones and continue to support university adult education?

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solution of one of the crucial problems of our society — eradication of illiteracy. With the exception of a few universities like Mysore, Poona, Rajasthan, Baroda, Gujarat Vidyapeeth, Madras and Sri Venkateswara, most of the universities took up adult education programme only after 1978 and that too mainly in response to UGC policy and persuasion.

The different guidelines, communications and review committee reports of UGC issued since 1978, consistently emphasised the great responsibility of universities to society as a whole and their role in transmitting culture and knowledge besides providing leadership to the whole nation. Identifying the ways in which universities could play their role, the former Chairperson of UGC, late Dr. Madhuri R. Shah emphasised training, preparation of teaching learning materials, evaluation and action research as key areas.² The role of universities in teaching and research was highlighted by the UGC Review Committee (1985): "It is University that can tie adult education to action programmes through well designed and effectively conducted research programmes. The universities at the apex of the educational ladder can undertake more fundamental and applied researches rather than action research Since the non-formal adult, continuing education and extension programmes are growing very fast, it is urgent and imperative that systematic efforts are initiated to develop professional manpower suitable to conceive, plan, and implement these programmes effectively. The country is already experiencing acute shortage of professionally trained manpower resulting in ad hoc recruitment of personnel with hardly any professional abilities and skills which slows down the pace and efficiency of the programme."³

After the proclamation of New Education Policy (1986) and the launching of National Literacy Mission (1988), the focus of UGC guidelines changed. The thrust of new UGC guidelines (1988) was mainly on identifying an area around the universities and eradication of illiteracy through the organization of literacy centres.⁴ The subsequent guidelines issued in 1991 and 1993 also focused on achieving total literacy and setting up *Jan Shikshan Nilayams* and organizing continuing education programmes. Far from developing innovative models of extension, the emphasis of adult education departments shifted to merely implementing UGC guidelines on adult and continuing education. The UGC funds were released

mainly for the implementation of literacy, post-literacy and continuing education programmes. No money was allocated for curriculum development or research. The interested universities were requested to apply separately to UGC under the scheme of research projects. The monitoring and evaluation criteria of UGC was based mainly on the number of literates made, number of training programmes organized and other extension activities. The research and publications, which are integral parts of university adult education were not considered to be the main work of the staff of adult education departments. Since a large number of staff of adult education departments did not have research degrees or interests (?) there were no protests. Those who were interested in research had a tough time in convincing their colleagues about the importance of research and publications. Hence total number of research projects and publications brought out by university departments were few during the last ten years.

While UGC did succeed in persuading 60 per cent of Indian universities and a large number of colleges in implementing adult, continuing education and extension programmes, the co-ordinating cell at UGC has been too small to effectively liaison with different universities to monitor the progress of programmes. Due to these limitations of UGC in monitoring the progress of adult education programme, the idea of nodal universities was introduced during 1992. UGC identified fourteen universities and entrusted them with the task of monitoring the progress of the implementation of UGC programmes in their respective States. Accordingly each nodal university convened an annual meeting of the State level universities to discuss and prepare a consolidated report for submission to UGC. Since some of the universities have strong reservations about the choice of nodal universities, they do not extend full co-operation. In fact, they feel that by designating certain universities as nodal agencies, UGC has shown favouritism. If the UGC could consider the idea of entrusting the work to state-level research institutions, which are identified by the National Literacy Mission for evaluation work, or to the National Institute of Adult Education, the monitoring could be done in a more objective manner.

While UGC could legitimately take the credit for the tremendous expansion of university adult education and providing employment to nearly 500 members—300 faculty and 200

supporting staff—it cannot absolve itself of the problems that were generated. When this writer drew the attention of the former UGC Chairperson, the late Dr. Madhuri R. Shah who played a key role in the expansion of university adult education, she stated that had she not personally encouraged the universities (she wrote personal letters to all the Vice-Chancellors), then perhaps only few would have introduced adult education programmes. To quote her, "I am a strong supporter of adult education. As a Chairperson of UGC if I succeed in sowing the seeds of adult education in Indian universities and be fortunate in witnessing the germination and growth, then I would be delighted. I am afraid that if I fail to push adult education during my tenure and if my successor does not show the same interest, then the progress of adult education will be slow. I am not bothered how the plant of university adult education grows, it depends on the soil of universities, the extent of irrigation and how the saplings are tended. This is clearly the role of universities and UGC can only be a sympathetic observer."⁵ The former UGC Chairperson did succeed in sowing the seeds of adult education in Indian universities during her tenure, when nearly 60 per cent of Indian universities took up adult education projects. Perhaps nowhere else in the world, as many as 90 Departments of Adult Education were set up within a short span of 3-5 years. The indiscriminate policy of UGC of encouraging all the Indian universities to set up Adult Education Departments during 1980s when there were not enough qualified manpower in the country paved the way for the appointment of less qualified and disinterested staff who due to their lack of expertise and probably ignorance failed to nurture university adult education. One of the reasons why the university adult education could not succeed in making a significant impact may be traced to the quality of staff.

Response of Universities

The majority of universities accepted the UGC package on Adult, Continuing Education and Extension as a plan project and tried to implement the programme as per UGC guidelines. For them, it was yet another fully funded project. However, some of the universities which had a vision and strong leadership, saw tremendous potential in developing adult education project as full-fledged departments of teaching, research and extension. With the

policy and funding support from UGC, the task seemed to be simple. While about ten universities succeeded in starting post-M.A. Diploma in Adult, Continuing Education, only one university developed Master's degree course in extension education during 1980s. With the exception of two universities, Madras and Sri Venkateswara, which had started M.A., M. Phil. and Ph.D programme in adult education earlier, the rest continued as implementing agencies of UGC funded field programme. In some of the universities, where the staff of adult education projects tried to set up fullfledged departments there was vehement opposition from the departments of education. It was argued that provision for research and teaching in adult education could be made in the existing departments of education and other social sciences in a cost effective manner. The proposal to develop adult education project as an Extension Department was also vetoed by certain universities which felt that extension should become an integral part of all the departments and by setting up an exclusive department for extension, the impact would be very limited. Since the existing staff of adult education projects were initially recruited on temporary basis for developmental work, their credentials and competence in taking up teaching and research were also questioned by a section of university community.

The UGC has issued a number of circulars to universities during the last ten years to grant the status and privileges of teachers to the staff of adult education projects. With the exception of a few, the designations of the staff have not been changed in majority of universities. It is argued that since the staff of adult education projects were initially recruited by the selection committees of non-teachers, change of their designations could be legally challenged, unless universities made suitable amendments in the existing rules and regulations. This is not acceptable to certain universities due to a variety of reasons. It is feared that induction of adult education staff into teaching community might upset the seniority of the existing teachers for housing or other privileges. A section of teaching community feels that the granting of the privileges of teachers to those who were not recruited through proper advertisements and the selection committee of teachers would be a retrograde step and the regularisation of temporary project staff as permanent teachers of universities may even set an un-healthy precedence. Besides, some of the universities are also opposed to

the idea of change of designations for fear that as teachers, the staff of adult education projects might not take up extension work and the real purpose of setting up adult education departments would suffer. Even among adult educators there is a group of directors who oppose the idea of change of designations since they feel that their hold over their colleagues might loosen once they become teachers. This fear is more evident in those universities which follow rotation of headships.

Because of these criticisms and practical difficulties many universities have been very cautious in granting the privileges of teachers to the staff of adult education projects or setting up regular teaching departments. Although some of the universities have absorbed the staff on permanent basis and given them the service benefits of non-teaching staff, merit promotion scheme has not yet been given to them. Thus apart from the uncertainty of tenure, the staff of adult education projects continue to stagnate which seems to demoralise them and affect their performance.

Approach during the Ninth Plan

The development of university adult education in India has been mainly guided by the UGC since 1978. So far UGC has been taking initiative in formulating the guidelines and deciding the priority areas and funding support. The varied experiences of the past eighteen years of implementation of adult, continuing education and extension programmes through university system have provided valuable insights to the members of the staff of adult education departments. Today, majority of them are aware of the ethos and functioning of their respective universities, attitude of Vice-Chancellors, administration and academic community. Hence university adult educators would be in a better position to decide their programme priorities, operational strategies and funding requirements. As a first step in enabling them to formulate university specific adult education programme during the Ninth Plan each university needs to undertake an internal evaluation of its performance (even since the inception of their respective projects) focusing on significant achievements so that they may plan only such programmes for which they have the requisite expertise and co-operation of the university.

The approach towards university adult education during the Ninth Plan should be on the identification of strengths of the existing

members of adult education departments (as no university can terminate their services) and strengthening them through the formulation of university specific programme in any one selected area. For example, if a particular department of adult education has undertaken mainly extension work during the past and achieved some excellence, it may be assumed that the faculty may have developed some expertise in that area and hence it would be logical for them to select extension as a key area during the Ninth Plan. On the other hand, research and teaching may be opted by those departments which may have done substantial work in such areas. Instead of providing general guidelines for all the universities and expecting them to comply, if each university is encouraged to identify a particular area—extension or research or teaching—and develop university specific programme and budget them, it would not only enable them to develop as centres of excellence but also provide scope for diversification and specialisation. Keeping in view the 73rd amendment to the Constitution and the increasing emphasis on grass-root level planning, it would be desirable if UGC encourages a decentralised approach to university adult education.

Instead of the present practice of inviting annual plans and releasing yearly grants, which entails considerable delays, the UGC may consider the idea of giving approval for a five year programme and releasing 90 per cent grants in one instalment so that universities may implement the programme in a steady and systematic manner. The UGC may also consider the possibility of making one time final grant to university adult education and make an exit. In such a case, the universities should have the freedom to use the grants as a revolving fund or in any other manner which they deem appropriate, otherwise, if UGC continues to support university adult education as a plan project, universities may not get an opportunity to make it an integral part of university system and adult education would continue to remain as a temporary project. Does UGC envisage such a scenario? Are universities prepared for such temporary status?

There is considerable apprehension among the university adult educators about their role when UGC ceases funding. According to a survey conducted by this writer, all the three agencies involved in adult education programme, viz., Government departments, non-Governmental organizations (NGOs) and educational institutions consider the generation of knowledge and its dissemination to be

the most important role of university adult education. With the tremendous expansion of NGOs and their active involvement in a number of developmental activities including adult education at grass-root levels, they do not welcome the participation of universities in developmental work which they consider their monopoly. They feel that as NGOs they have more flexibility in programme planning and are closer to people. Unlike universities, whose commitment to programme and people depends on the flow of funds from UGC, NGOs have multiple sources of funding and can effectively function as activists mobilising and conscientising masses on several crucial social issues. They do not like the entry of universities into their domain as competitors. On the contrary, they expect the universities to provide technical resource support to their programmes besides documenting their work and studying its impact on the society. Although a large number of university adult educators have participated in the total literacy campaigns launched in different parts of India, in some places like Delhi the involvement of schools are preferred to universities. Some of the key officials of National Literacy Mission have observed that with the emergence of fully literate districts, and the possibility of setting up continuing education centres at village level, the universities should focus on research and teaching. With the proposed expansion of State Resource Centres during the next plan there is little scope for taking up training activity by the universities. Some of the Government officials feel that unless universities continue to provide qualified manpower and generate knowledge through researches, there is no justification for supporting university adult education. It is argued that if universities conceive and confine their role as implementation agencies of UGC then the task can be more effectively and economically carried out by lesser qualified and paid staff. What is the need to appoint a Ph.D. to implement the tailor made guidelines of UGC ? On the contrary, if universities aim at developing adult education projects as regular departments like Social Work, Community Medicine, Rural Development, which provide ample scope for teaching, research and extension, then it would be welcome addition. There is no place for an academic department of adult education in universities which refrains from teaching and research, but carries out limited extension work of a stereotyped nature which could be assigned to NGOs or Government departments. This assumes significance as most of

the universities find it difficult to involve students and teachers in extension programmes. Their limited participation in some universities and non-participation in the rest defeats the very purpose of university adult education. Unless a systematic study is undertaken to examine the different factors influencing the participation of students and teachers in extension, the university adult education cannot succeed in the objective of actively involving university community in the process of national development.

The opinion of the academic community on the role of university adult education reiterates the views of NGOs and Government officials. Majority of them view adult education as a populist or marginal programme and categorically state that unless university adult education focuses on developing some innovative models of extension, relevant courses, fundamental and applied researches and pursues an active publication programme, there is little need for adult education departments in universities. This implies the need for shifting the focus of adult education from being a field of practice to a discipline of study. Since active involvement of the staff with field programme hardly leaves any time for serious research or publication, there is practically no concern for the development of adult education as a distinct discipline of study at the university level. If university adult educators do not take up this challenge, then the character of university adult education would be distorted and its future would be in jeopardy. Hence the priority of university adult education during the Ninth Plan should be on its development as a discipline of study. This can be achieved by emphasising research and publications. As most of the university departments of adult education do not undertake these activities they fail to receive due recognition or co-operation from academic community. Today there is hardly any difference in the roles of the staff of adult education departments in a university, NGOs or Government. There is no study which shows that the performance of highly paid and qualified university adult educators is better than the workers of NGOs or Government departments. Unless university adult educators function differently from the NGOs and Government departments and involve themselves in teaching, research and publication they cannot become an integral part of university community. At best they may remain on the periphery as "service departments" or clubbed with non-teaching departments like physical education. Should university adult

education become a marginal field ? Should it be dubbed as an implementation agency of UGC ? Can the departments of adult education in universities strive to carve out a niche for themselves?

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The Training of Adult Educators and the University System in India

Training as a Function of Indian Universities

The university system in India is one of the largest in the world, with a variety of educational institutions scattered all over the country. The majority of them are primarily involved in teaching and research, though few are also undertaking nominal extension activities, viz. organization of occasional seminars, public lectures, conferences, etc. The concept of extension as a process of taking up important issues of the local community or imparting relevant training in different skills to the members of the community hardly seems to have taken root in majority of Indian universities, though to a certain extent the institutions of Social Work, Home Science, Agriculture, Teacher Training, and Community Medicine do undertake a variety of extension programmes. Outside the university system there are a number of specialised institutions/centres—both Governmental and non-Governmental - viz., National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), Indian Institute of Public Administration, Directorate of Adult Education (DAE), Indian Adult Education Association Literacy House, State Resource Centres (in different States), Astha, Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), Seva Mandir, Bengal Social Service League, which are engaged in a variety of extension and training programmes in different fields of health, education, agriculture, rural development etc. The duration, contents and methodology of extension and training programmes conducted by different agencies vary to a great extent, depending upon the prevalent policies and availability of resources. Today adult educators in India have emerged as one of the key extension

workers at the grass-root level and hence their training or orientation is viewed as an important function of different developmental agencies, training institutions and universities.

The origins of training of adult educators as an important function of Indian universities may be traced to two factors : The policy of the University Grants Commission (UGC) proclaimed in 1977, and the launching of the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) in 1978. Although the UGC did realise the importance of extension (which included the component of training) as the third dimension of higher education in 1977 and widely circulated the new policy document amongst all the institutions of higher education in India, in the absence of specific guidelines and supportive grants no university did plan any extension programme.¹ The opportunity, however, came in the next year when the Government of India launched the NAEP and the UGC provided liberal grants and clear guidelines to the universities to initiate adult, continuing education and extension programmes.² In the beginning there were very limited opportunities for university adult educators to get trained. Though a few university adult educators were associated with the development of a *Handbook on the Training of Adult Education Functionaries*,³ and had developed sufficient expertise in training, the rest had limited avenues for getting trained, mainly through the participation in some of the orientation or training programmes organised by Governmental organisations like the DAE, Literacy House, or NIEPA. When the University Departments of Adult Education started the process of organizing training programmes for adult educators they were of short duration and were meant for junior level functionaries, viz. programme officers, supervisors and instructors. The training was, however, one of the "weakest aspects" of the university adult education programme during 1978-82.⁴ With the gradual expansion of adult education programmes in Indian Universities and as a result of the critical comments made by the Review Committee of the National Adult Education Programme⁵ as well as the UGC Working Group on Point No. 16 of the 20-point programme of the Government of India⁶ and also due to the findings of several evaluation studies on the National Adult Education Programme,⁷ the UGC did realise the importance of strengthening the component of training⁸ and improving its quality, and hence constituted a committee in 1983 to chalk out the details of academic and administrative aspects related to the organization

of training programmes. The UGC committee came out with a comprehensive training manual in 1985 and since then, the UGC has been funding a number of orientation or training programmes for the different categories of university adult educators. Though in recent times some of the innovative university adult educators have accepted the participatory method of training designed by the Directorate of Adult Education,⁹ the bulk of the Indian universities continue to rely on the traditional model developed by the UGC.¹⁰ In spite of the several lacunae noted in the 1985 training package,¹¹ so far no attempt has been made systematically to review the contents and methodology or study the impact of the training programmes organized by different universities.¹² As observed in the Report of the Review Committee (1987): "training of functionaries continues to be a weak link in the programme, The overall situation in respect of its quality is not satisfactory With peripheral training, the staff members at the university level do not discharge their functions efficiently."¹³ How to strengthen the training component of adult education programmes seems to be an important concern of professional adult educators in India.

Any exercise aimed at improving the quality of the training component of adult education programmes calls for a proper assessment of the needs and background of adult educators, a comprehensive survey of resources and a thorough review of the prevalent training package. Are the objectives of different training programmes well defined and formulated? Are the resources adequate to achieve the objectives of training programmes? Are the adult educators interested in training at all? What are the issues in planning and management of training programmes for the adult educators? Since the UGC training manual has visualised different types of training programmes for different levels of adult education functionaries and has suggested varied contents for each one of them to be covered within a duration ranging from 20-100 hours,¹⁴ it would be a stupendous task to cover the entire gamut of training of adult educators in a single paper. Hence the scope of this paper is limited to the study of different aspects of the training programme of one category of functionaries, the master trainers, viz., Directors, Assistant Directors and Co-ordinators of the Departments of Adult Education in Indian Universities. This paper argues that though the UGC has been funding on an average 4-6 national and regional training programmes for the master trainers (mainly based on the

guidelines of the training manual brought out in 1985), these programmes cannot be considered as the training of trainers programme for they lack the emphasis on the art and science of training. Neither do they discuss the different types of training methodology; nor do they lay emphasis on practical aspects and problems of organization or preparation of training packages. They may at best be considered as excellent orientation programmes for the new entrants to the field of adult education, and participation in such programmes hardly seems to enhance the competence and confidence of the master trainers in planning and management of training programmes.¹⁵ Thus by examining some of the inherent drawbacks of the present training package, this paper highlights the need and importance of strengthening the training of trainers programme by laying more emphasis on the process and frequency.

The Training Package for Master Trainers : Some Aspects and Issues

The UGC training manual has identified three objectives of the training programme for the master trainers. They are : (i) "To acquaint participants with an overview of adult education programme in terms of conceptual and operational aspects; (ii) to acquaint participants with literacy and development matrix, planning of programmes and their management, monitoring and evaluation and research; and (iii) to acquaint participants with skills in training methodology."¹⁶ It is expected that the master trainers would be able to play their role effectively if they possess skills in organization, administration, material production, mobilisation of resources—material, financial and personnel—, planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, andragogy and research.¹⁷ In short, the master trainers are expected to be proficient in academic as well as administrative aspects of the training programme and hence the training manual suggests the need for giving equal stress on both the aspects.¹⁸

The master trainers are expected to prepare a sequenced schedule of training programmes for six types of functionaries, viz. (1) project officers (2) college principals (in the case of affiliating universities), (3) college Teacher-in-charge (in the case of affiliating universities), (4) supervisors, (5) Full-time Instructors and (6) volunteers of Each One Teach One Programme.¹⁹ Since the training manual has worked out the contents, methodology, duration and

budgetary norms for the organization of training programmes for each category, the actual task of the master trainers revolves around mere co-ordination. The training manual has provided enough flexibility and freedom to introduce innovatory practices,²⁰ but not many organizers seem to deviate from the suggested contents or methodology²¹ presumably due to the lack or inadequacy of training or perhaps from lethargy.

The suggested contents of the training programme for the master trainers include an overview of the concept of adult education in India and other countries, programme planning, organizational structure, details of basic, post-literacy and continuing education programmes, andragogical aspects, monitoring and evaluation (see Table 1). All these themes are expected to be covered mainly through group work, field visits and lectures and within a duration of 20 hours spread over 3-4 days.²² The entire focus of the contents revolves around information and its dissemination. Any thrust for developing group dynamics is lacking in the methodology. There is little scope for sharing of experiences or building on the strengths and weaknesses of the participants. A thorough review of the themes and techniques reveals their inadequacy in achieving the basic objective of "acquainting the participants with skills in training methodology," for there is no coverage of the different methods of training or preparation of training packages, in the proposed contents. How can the master trainers, who are not exposed to different types and aspects of training, be expected to plan and execute successful training programmes?

The proposed contents may be adequate in the ideal set-up where the Directors and Assistant Directors would have a sufficient expertise and experience in the field of adult education. But in the Indian context where more than 50 per cent of the Directors and Assistant Directors of the Adult Education Departments do not possess the relevant experience in adult education,²³ there is a greater need for strengthening the contents of the training programmes meant for them. In this background, the assumption that the master trainers would be able to play their role effectively if they undergo a one-shot training programme of 20 hours' duration needs to be re-examined and reformulated. Although the training manual has stressed the importance of retraining, how often does an adult educator get a chance for retraining? One of

Table 1
Contents, Methodology and Approach of Training of Master Trainers

S.No.	Content	Methodology and Approach	Weightage
1.	Conceptual aspects including an overview of Adult Education in India and other countries	<i>Methodology :</i> Presentation Group work/participatory Field visits	2 hours
2.	<i>Programme Planning</i>	<i>Materials Support :</i>	
	(i) Agencies, personnel and procedures	-Theme outlines with explanatory notes	1 hour
	(ii) Area/Community		
	(iii) Curriculum, content/ techniques (learning materials)	-Reference materials -Area profiles -Agency profiles	1 hour 1 hour
	(iv) Co-ordination (Resources in AE and other agencies)		1 hour
	(v) management of adult learning environment		2 hour
3.	<i>Organisational Structure :</i> Government, University, Voluntary sector, SRC*, DRU**		1 hour
4.	(i) Literacy : models and centre level organisation		1 hour
	(ii) Post-literacy : models and centre level organisation		1 hour
	(iii) Continuing Education : Programmes and target populations		1 hour
5.	<i>Andragogical Aspects :</i>		
	(i) Teacher Training including methodology		2 hours
	(ii) Learner evaluation		2 hours
6.	<i>Monitoring :</i>		
	(i) National Level		1 hour
	(ii) State Level		1 hour
	(iii) Project Level		1 hour
7.	<i>Evaluation :</i> short term and long term Research		1 hour 20 hours

Source : *Training Manual for Adult Education Functionaries* (New Delhi : UGC, 1986), pp. 16-17.

* State Resource Centres (SRC)

** District Resource Units (DRU)

the basic reasons for the poor quality of the training of instructors may be traced to the superficial training of the master trainers. Hence it is of utmost significance that the UGC should initiate the process of developing an exhaustive programme for the master trainers in Indian universities. If the adult education programme is to be successful, then there is a need for identifying the potential master trainers in different universities with genuine aptitude and necessary professional competence. It would be detrimental to assume that all adult educators would be successful trainers as well. A serious effort should be made to ascertain the interest of the adult educators in training through a well designed questionnaire. Training should be seen as a specialised job and should be assigned to genuinely interested few who may be encouraged to develop their networking for better interaction and further improvement of training as an art.

One of the key issues in planning and management of adult education programme revolves around the task of strengthening the training of trainers programme. It has become all the more significant due to the dearth of professional literature²⁴ and researches in the field. Of the sixty-five doctoral dissertations in the field of adult education undertaken during 1946-88 only five have focused on training²⁵ and of the 56 evaluation studies conducted on the different aspects of NAEP, none have exclusively examined the training aspect, though this has been covered in some of the studies.²⁶ While a good deal of literature of training of trainers has been brought out by the International Council for Adult Education, UNESCO, and certain overseas universities, little effort has been made by the UGC or any of the Indian universities to adopt or adapt such training packages to meet the requirements of the Indian university system. The universities were by and large kept out of the training of trainers programmes organised by the official agencies like the Directorate of Adult Education²⁷ and non-official agencies like the Society for Participatory Research in Asia.²⁸ The scope of the National Seminar-cum-Workshops on "Management of Adult Education Through Universities" organized by the National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration during '87-'88 also remained limited to mere orientation of university adult educators.²⁹ In short there are practically no avenues for university adult educators of India to develop their training expertise through a training of trainers

programme. In this context, if the Indian University system has to strengthen its training of trainers programme, then there is a dire need for closer interaction with the different official and non-official agencies at national and international levels who are actively involved in the organization of training of trainers programme. This process of developing linkages and networking for professional development of adult educators will be expedited if apex organizations like the UGC, the Commonwealth Association for the Education and Training of Adults, and the International Council for Adult Education, take the lead.

REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. See, *Development of Higher Education in India : A Policy Frame* (New Delhi : University Grants Commission, 1978), pp. 12-13.
During the 1960's, although Dr. Mohan Sinha Mehta played a crucial role in developing university adult education in India, with the co-operation of a group of distinguished Canadian adult educators, and succeeded in setting up the Department of Adult Education at the University of Rajasthan for the training of professional and technical personnel and introducing teaching and research programmes in adult education, the scope was rather limited to Rajasthan and hardly any other Indian universities followed the example. For further details see :
James A. Draper, "The Rajasthan Experience : Living And Learning in India," in Nancy Cochrane, et al, J.R. Kidd : *An International Legacy of Learning* (Vancouver : The University of British Columbia, 1986), pp. 163-183.
2. See, *National Adult Education Programme : An Outline* (New Delhi : Ministry of Education And Social Welfare, 1978), pp. 11-12.
Revised Guidelines on Adult And Continuing Education (New Delhi : UGC, 1982), pp. 1-12.
3. Out of 35 participants who attended two International Seminars organised by the Directorate of Adult Education for the preparation of the Handbook of Training of Adult Education Functionaries, there were only three representatives from Indian universities. They were Shri M. Khajapeer (S.V University), Dr. Rajani Shirur (Madras University), Dr. O.S. Rathore (University of Udaipur). See, *Training of Adult Education Functionaries : A Handbook* (New Delhi : Directorate of Adult Education, 1978), pp. 175-177.
4. See, *Report of the UGC Working Group on Point No. 16 of the New 20-Point Programme of the Government of India* (New Delhi : University Grants Commission, 1983), p. 28.
5. The Review Committee noted that the facilities for training were

"very inadequate." For details, See *Report of the Review Committee on the National Adult Education Programme* (New Delhi : Ministry of Education and Culture; 1980), p. 64.

6. See, *Report of the UGC Working Group*, pp. 28-29.
7. The following studies have pointed out several drawbacks of the training which remained a neglected element of adult education programme organized by several universities in Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Bihar. For details see, *Adult Education Programme in Tamil Nadu— An Appraisal of the Programme Implemented by the Universities and Colleges*, (Madras : Madras Institute of Development Studies, 1985).
Adult Education Through Universities (A Case Study of Bihar Universities), (Patna : A.N. Sinha Institute of Social Studies, 1984).
A UGC Sponsored Adult Education Programme in Gujarat : An Evaluation, (Ahmedabad : Sardar Patel Institute of Social And Economic Research, 1985).
8. For details see, *Guidelines on Point No. 16 of the New 20-Point Programme* (New Delhi : UGC, 1983), pp. 7-8.
9. For example Jawaharlal Nehru University has adopted the new model of participatory training. For further details of participatory training model see. *Learning for Participation : An Approach to Training in Adult Education* (New Delhi : DAE, 1988).
10. Though there have been some changes in the UGC policy towards adult education as a result of the adoption of Area Based Approach in 1988, and the UGC has constituted a new committee to revise the old training manual, the revised training package has not yet come out. Apparently the new training package seems to have put more emphasis on participatory methodology. For details see, S.C. Bhatia, "Training and Staff Development in Adult, Continuing Education And Extension Under the New Guidelines," in *New Guidelines on Adult Continuing Education And Extension* (New Delhi : Indian University Association for Continuing Education, n.d.), p. 34.
11. For example the following report has highlighted the poor quality of training for the University adult educators ;
University System And Extension as the Third Dimension : Report of the Review Committee Appointed by the University Grants Commission, (New Delhi : UGC, 1987), p. 38.
12. According to its own sources, UGC has not undertaken or commissioned any evaluative study on the effectiveness of the training programmes for university adult educators.
13. *University System and Extension as the Third Dimension*, p. 38.
14. See. *Training Manual for Adult Education Functionaries* (New Delhi : University Grants Commission, 1985), pp. 11-23

15. This observation is partly based on my personal experience and that of some of my colleagues who participated in the national/regional-level training programmes.
16. *Training Manual* p. 16.
17. *Ibid*, p. 28.
18. *Ibid*, p. 9.
19. *Ibid*, p. 24.
20. *Ibid*, p. 11. Ref. Footnote no. : 9 also.
21. This observation is based on the review of the reports of the training programmes organized by certain Indian universities and published in *DAE News* and the *IAEA News* letter at regular intervals.
22. *Training Manual*, pp. 16-17.
23. Since university adult education in India has expanded at a very rapid pace during 1983-86 mainly due to the initiative of late Dr. Madhuri Shah, former Chairperson of UGC, when there were not enough qualified people in the field, several universities were compelled to fill-up the positions from the available applicants belonging to different disciplines. The data pertaining to the educational background of the university adult educators is calculated from the membership list of Indian Adult Education Association.
24. In an extensive bibliography on adult education during 1951-80, there are only 157 publications under the category of "Personnel and Training." There is hardly any literature on training of trainers, See, *Adult Education in India : A Bibliography* (New Delhi : Directorate of Adult Education, 1981), pp. 287-303.
25. The following doctoral dissertations have covered training aspect very extensively
 - (i) N.A. Ansari, "An Appraisal of the Training Programmes for Social Education Workers in India," Ph.D Education, Delhi University, 1970.
 - (ii) J.S. Panwar, "Effect of Short Duration Agricultural Training on Farmer's Learning," Ph.D. Education, Udaipur University, 1978.
 - (iii) K. Karunakaran, "Identification of Factors to be Tackled in an Effective Programme of non-formal Education and Training of Farmers," Ph.D. Education, Kerala University, 1987.
 - (iv) G.S.K. Nair, "Preparation of Training Programme for Non-formal Education Workers in Kerala," Ph.D. Education, Kerala University, 1987.
 - (v) Rajender Singh, "Adult Education Training and Productivity," Ph.D. Education, Kurukshetra University, 1988.

Apart from these, a number of dissertations on the evaluation of adult education programmes have also covered training to a limited extent. For details of such dissertations, see,

- S.Y. Shah (Ed.), *A Source Book on Adult Education* (New Delhi : Directorate of Adult Education, 1988), pp. 249-257.
26. For details see, R.S. Mathur and S.V.S. Subramanyam, *Issues and Approaches in the Training of Adult Education Functionaries : A Synthesis of Findings from Evaluation Reports - Evaluation Manograph*, (New Delhi : Directorate of Adult Education, 1985), pp. 2-28.
 27. Of the 45 training programmes organized by the Directorate of Adult Education during 1976-88, there were only *two programmes* on training of trainers and they were primarily meant for the non-university adult educators, see. R. Gomez, "Training Activities of Directorate of Adult Education," (New Delhi : Directorate of Adult Education, 1989), Mimeograph, p. 2.
 28. The main target group of PRIA being the members of non-Governmental organizations, there is limited scope for university adult educators to participate in such programmes. Although PRIA, did extend an invitation to a particular university to participate in a training of trainers programme, the person invited could not attend.
 29. For details see, *Report on National Seminar-cum-Workshop on Management of Adult Education Programme with Special Reference to National Policy on Education 1986*. (New Delhi : NIEPA, 1987). *Report on National Programme on Management of Adult And Continuing Education at Micro Level Through Universities, 1988* (New Delhi : NIEPA, 1988).

Section-III
Literacy Campaigns

A Study of the Mass Literacy Campaign in Bihar (1938-1939)

The Mass Literacy Campaign¹ (MLC) organised by the Government of Bihar during the period (1938-39) when the Congress Ministry was in power, may be considered as one of the most successful mass programme that was ever undertaken in the history of Indian Adult Education. Sponsored by the State, the campaign was implemented with a spirit of dynamism and dedication that was rarely manifested in an official programme. Although the intensity and impact of the campaign did vary at different points of time, it stands as a glittering example of a social welfare programme undertaken with the full co-operation and collaboration of the Governmental and non-Governmental agencies. Not only the official reports of the campaign but also the personal accounts of some of those who were associated with the campaign bear testimony to its success. During the ten months when the campaign was in operation it succeeded in making 4.5 lakh people literate and establishing more than 2,000 libraries in Bihar ! How and why did the campaign succeed? What were the circumstances, factors and forces that contributed to its success ? Who were the architects of the campaign ? Answer to some of these questions may enable us to identify as well as study the key elements that made the campaign successful and in that process draw lessons and examples from the past so that similar strategies could be adopted or adapted in future.

Political and Ideological Context of the Campaign

A new phase in the Indian nationalist politics began when the Government of India Act of 1935 proposed the transfer of certain

powers to the elected members of Provincial Legislative Councils of British India. When the Act was passed and a decision to hold the election was announced, the Congress Party – the leading political party in British India – suspended its agitationist politics and participated in the elections which it won in seven of the nine provinces of British India. In Bihar the Congress Party contested in 107 of the total 152 seats and won 82 seats to come into power. On 20th July 1937, among others, Shri Krishna Sinha and Dr. Syed Mahmud were sworn in as the Prime Minister and Education Minister respectively.²

In the Election Manifesto of 1936 the Congress Party had made several promises to the people of Bihar. The Congress believed that real strength comes from organizing and serving the masses and hence it laid, "great stress on the development of people,"³ and to achieve that the Party adopted the "constructive programme as" suggested by Mahatma Gandhi.⁴ One of the closely linked components of the constructive programme was eradication of illiteracy.

Mahatma Gandhi had clear ideas on the eradication of illiteracy through "an intensive programme of driving out ignorance through carefully selected teachers with an equally carefully selected syllabus according to which they would educate the adult villagers' mind."⁵ He did not consider literacy in itself as education. He valued the knowledge of the alphabet only as a vehicle of education. To Gandhi "Literacy was not the end of education, nor even the beginning. It was only one of the means whereby men and women can be educated."⁶ However, he highlighted the importance of literacy and exhorted the Congress Ministers to "appeal to the intelligentsia of the country and call upon all who have the education of the people at heart to rally to the assistance of the new Government for the spread of literacy, culture and education" since he believed that literacy programme would "establish a mass contact on new basis... and serve the higher purpose of awakening, consolidation and organisation of mass power and intelligence."⁷ Thus Gandhi viewed Literacy programme primarily as a political strategy for mass mobilization.

Inspired by the Gandhian ideology and committed to the Congress Party, their leaders conceived the MLC as a top priority programme. The frequent visits of Gandhi to Bihar⁸ and the eagerness of the Congress leaders to demonstrate their concern for

the masses also paved the way for the successful launching of the MLC, notwithstanding the economic depression caused by the earthquake of 1934 the floods of subsequent years, the failure of agriculture and the deteriorating communal situation.⁹

The architects of the literacy campaign in Bihar had very lofty ideals as evident from the writings and speeches of some of them who conceived it neither as a "mere programme of imparting basic literacy nor as a supplement to the existing system of primary education."¹⁰ The organizers of the campaign did not consider it as a means of saving official funds by getting some primary teaching done without paying for it or by taking advantage of the enthusiasm of some good people. On the contrary it was taken up as an "experiment in the great and stupendous task of lifting up the masses of India, sunken, trodden and neglected for centuries so as to make them the backbone of the Indian nation of the future."¹¹ It was observed that "as long as the masses remain steeped in illiteracy and ignorance, the economic and social upbuilding of the nation would remain a pious dream."¹² In view of the magnitude of the problem of illiteracy and paucity of funds, the MLC was planned as a "voluntary programme, capitalising on the spirit of social service of the educated countrymen."¹³ The MLC was, however, only one aspect of the Adult Education Movement, which aimed at "teaching the illiterate adults the three R's and imparting knowledge closely correlated to his working life and giving him a grounding in citizenship."¹⁴

The literacy campaign was based on certain premises. It was observed that though India had shown to the world that she could produce great men in all walks of life of the same calibre as in any other country in the world, she still had to project the average Indian as efficient and as animated by civic and national consciousness as the average citizen of the most advanced countries in the world and the mass education was conceived as a strategy towards the achievement of this "high national and humanitarian objective." It was argued that the campaign was of utmost urgency, as India could not wait for another generation to see the results of a renovated system of primary education. It was felt that the presence of millions of adult illiterates in the country would be a drag on all efforts towards improvement of primary education for their children. Moreover, the campaign was chosen as a means of expediting the fulfilment of the ideals of democracy since it was through that the

man in the street and in the field must become as much imbued with civic, political and national consciousness as the members of the Cabinet. It was stated that as "purity of democratic Government could only be maintained by constant contact with the check by enlightened masses who could follow, guide, criticise and initiate," the education of the masses should be considered to be vital for the success of democratic nation in the making.¹⁵

The campaign having been taken up by the Congress Government as a top priority official programme had the much needed political will for ensuring its success. At the fifty-first session of the Indian National Congress held at Hapur in 1938, a resolution was adopted upholding the Mass Literacy Programme.¹⁶ Besides political backing, the personal interest, initiative and involvement of Dr. Syed Mahmud, the then Education Minister especially in the context of the ongoing freedom struggle did lend considerable support and strength to the campaign. One of the striking feature of the campaign was the relatively shorter duration of time between the policy formulation and implementation. The policy decision to initiate the campaign with effect from 1st May, 1938, was taken on 25th March 1938 which hardly provided about a month for the preparation. This shorter gap seems to have imposed a sense of urgency which may have motivated or compelled the organizers to mobilize all the resources and do their best. It didn't give much scope for dabbling in prolonged discussions on the logistics as often happens in several programme. In fact, when the State-wide campaign took off there was hardly any organisational set up. There was only one part time Secretary (who was a Professor at Patna College) who operated directly under the guidance of Education Minister and that too from the former's house! The campaign had neither a formal office, nor any infrastructure to begin with. Yet the campaign had a very remarkable beginning. It was mainly due to the commitment and co-operation of the people and the State towards liquidation of illiteracy.

The Campaign Strategy

During the year (1938-39) the campaign was conducted in two phases and in collaboration with a number of agencies— both official and non-official. The first phase was spread over a period of six months— May—October 1938; while in the second phase, the campaign operated from November, 1938—May 1939. In the first phase the campaign

was not concentrated in any one particular area, but spread all over the State. In the second phase, the campaign was intensive in character and only confined to certain chosen areas. In the first phase, the campaign passed through two distinct stages : 'pre-implementation stage' and 'implementation stage.'

Since the success of the campaign depended on the active participation of the people, several strategies were developed to mobilise and motivate the people during the first stage. The dynamic leadership of the Education Minister provided the much needed political and bureaucratic support to the programme. On March 12, 1938 an appeal was issued by the Minister of Education, Dr. Syed Mahmud in the local Press calling upon the students and teachers of Bihar to devote the ensuing summer vacation for the liquidation of illiteracy, "In the name of Bihar," the Minister appealed to the youth of the Province to "wage an unremitting war against poverty and ignorance." In view of the magnitude and urgency of the problem, he exhorted the student community to organise adult education centres "to broaden the mental horizon of illiterates and enable them to participate intelligently in the struggle for freedom." He considered the participation in literacy programme as a "genuine test of patriotism and an excellent opportunity to give unselfish service to the Province."¹⁷

The projection of literacy programme as an act of patriotism, especially in the prevailing colonial set up seems to have touched the heart of student community who responded instantly. The college professors and school teachers of Patna organized a public meeting at Bihar Youngmen's Institute on March 25, 1938 with Dr. S.C. Sarkar in the chair. Again, the Minister addressed the meeting and called upon the members to organise the campaign in "right earnest." He also issued an appeal to the teachers for he considered their co-operation and guidance indispensable in mobilising the students.¹⁸ Subsequently, he constituted a Mass Literacy Committee comprising of Dr. S.C. Sarkar as the President, Professor B.B. Mukherjee and Harbans Lall as Secretary and Joint Secretary. The appeal of the Minister and the formation of the committee was heartily welcomed and endorsed by the student community of Patna at a meeting held on March 30, 1938. In fact, there was immense and immediate response from the student community. Moreover, the campaign had the backing of a number of all India leaders viz., Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad,

Subhash Chandra Bose, Abdul Kalam Azad, Rabindranath Tagore etc.¹⁹ While the local Press, especially the **Searchlight** gave wide coverage to literacy programme,²⁰ there were debates on the progress of MLC in the Legislative Council which gave unstinted support for the campaign.²¹

All the preparations for the launching of the campaign on 1st May 1938, were completed in the month of April. Within this short period of one month, the following activities were successfully executed :

- (i) Formulation of the plan of work;
- (ii) Preparation of Teaching-Learning materials—charts and primers;
- (iii) Enrolment of Volunteers; and
- (iv) Training in the rapid method of teaching adults.

The task of developing teaching-learning materials was entrusted to a team of three teachers of the Patna Training School, viz., Professor Durga Prasad, Babu Sheokumar Lall and Maulvi Alimullah. The team also oriented the professors and teachers of the local educational institutions in the use of literacy materials and imparted training to the volunteers. While these activities were going on, a group of primary school teachers of Patna conducted a census of illiterates in the city under the guidance of D.M. Sahay. As a result of the repeated appeals made by the Education Minister through the Press and public meetings, and a series of circulars sent by the D.P.I. to all the educational institutions, 1,260 students and unemployed youths were recruited as literacy volunteers. One of the reasons for the large scale participation of people was due to the massive support from the different political parties. Besides the organization of mass rallies (in which not only the Ministers but also the prominent people of the area participated), adoption of catchy slogans—"Down with Literacy," "Each One Teach One," also seem to have succeeded in motivating the illiterates and literacy volunteers. The volunteers came from the following educational institutions : Patna College (301), B.N. College (179), Science College (19), Patna Collegiate School (85), R.M.R. Seminary (105), T.K. Ghosh Academy (84).²² A Sub-Committee consisting of Principal A.K. Khan as the President and Rai Sahib Jadubir Prasad as the Secretary was set up to co-ordinate the work of the volunteers.

Launching of the Campaign

The literacy campaign commenced on 2nd may 1938 as scheduled primarily with the involvement of student volunteers from different colleges and schools in Bihar, viz., Patna College, G.B.B. College, Nalanda College, Ranchi School, Madrassa Islamia Shamsul Huda, B.N. College and D.J. College were the first few institutions to have shown interest in the programme. However Patna College gave a lead in the literacy work.²³ The instances of literacy workers having shown extraordinary interest in terms of raising the required resources and devoting their time and energy for the organization and management of centres were plenty. While the majority of the people were appreciative of the voluntary effort towards eradication of illiteracy, certain communal leaders were opposed to imparting literacy to certain sections of society. In Shahbad and Gaya Districts, there were cases of literacy workers beaten up by high castes for organizing literacy centres for Harijans.²⁴ Notwithstanding the prejudice of a section of people, by and large the literacy work continued with full spirit during the vacation period May-June 1938. Satisfied with the progress of the MLC, the Education Minister started exploring the possibilities of making it a 'permanent programme.'²⁵

The tempo of the campaign, however, slowed down in July mainly due to the onset of monsoon and reopening of the schools and colleges. In several villages, there were no literate volunteers who could keep the flag of literacy flying when the students would return to their educational institutions after the vacation. With the beginning of monsoon the farmers who constituted the bulk of learners, also dropped out of the centres to attend to farming. Although these two factors considerably slackened the pace and progress of literacy work during July-August 1938, by September the campaign had gathered momentum when the Dussehra vacation began and the students took over the reigns of the campaign. During the next two months, the campaign continued with full vigour. It was estimated that during the first six months, nearly 37,000 literacy centres were in operation, catering to the needs of 5.89 lakh illiterates of whom about 3 lakhs were estimated to have become literate.²⁶

The key element of the literacy campaign was the adoption of rapid method of teaching adults within a short span of six weeks. According to this method, an illiterate person was imparted basic

literacy within a period of four weeks and it was further reinforced and improved during the next two weeks. During the six week period, the adult learners were also exposed to a series of selected documentary films and lectures on several topics of their interest.²⁷ The frequent visit by the political leaders and officials of the Education Department to the literacy centres further gave an opportunity to the learners to interact with them and develop a feeling of importance.²⁸ In view of the short span of the programme and limited enrolment in each centre (approximately fifteen) it was possible to keep up the tempo of the programme and ensure the co-operation of all those who mattered. In the first phase, which lasted for a period of six months, there were three terms of six weeks each.

In view of the exploratory nature of the campaign and the limited time available for the preparation of the campaign, no systematic or sound procedure of monitoring and evaluation could be worked out in advance. The literacy work progressed primarily under the overall supervision of the respective Literacy Committees that were constituted during the course of the campaign at District, Sub-Divisional or Thane level. The existing Inspecting Staff of the Education Department provided some assistance to the local Literacy Committees in the supervision of the centres.²⁹ This seems to be the weakest link in the campaign.

Widening the Scope of the Campaign

The second phase of the campaign which commenced in November-December 1938 witnessed considerable expansion of the scope both in terms of the involvement of agencies and intensity of work. In selected regions intensive work was planned, executed and evaluated systematically. The decision to continue, streamline, strengthen and expand the campaign that was begun in May 1938, was taken at a Conference of Divisional Inspectors of Education Department held at Patna on the 27th and 28th July 1938 mainly due to the tremendous interest and involvement of the masses in the programme.³⁰ Subsequently the Government of Bihar created a new organizational structure by constituting a Provincial Mass Literacy Committee comprising of 53 members and an Executive Committee consisting 22 members.³¹ As the former committee was headed by the Education Minister and nearly 50 per cent of members were from the Legislative Council, the literacy campaign

commanded prestige as well as political patronage. The official commitment to and concern for its success was manifested in the liberal grant of Rs. 80,000 sanctioned by the Government of Bihar in July 1938.³²

As per the revised plan of action, it was not only decided to continue the earlier campaign but also initiate intensive literacy programme in the selected Districts and Sub-divisions with a view to imparting basic literacy to all the illiterates of the respective areas who belonged to the age group of 15-40 years. It was also decided to expand the scope of the campaign by including prisons, industrial establishments, co-operatives, banks and other non-Governmental organizations. Depending on the location and management, the Government of Bihar identified the following four types of literacy centres for grant and recognition : (i) Centres located in lower or upper primary schools, (ii) Centres started by private associations which required assistance for meeting the contingent expenditure; (iii) Centres organized by Colleges and H.E. Schools; and (iv) Centres set up by Mills, Factories, Zamindars, Jails and Police Associations. The first type was entitled for a capitation allowance of 5 annas per literate made while the second type was to be paid a grant in aid of Rs. 15 per annum while no payment to be made to the other two.³³

In the planning stage, considerable attention was also paid to the task of revising the curriculum. The Charts and Primers were revised by a Committee consisting of B.B. Mukherjee, S.M. Alam, S.K.Lall, S. Alimullah and A.S.N. Sahay. For the post-literacy programme, a syllabus was drawn up and the authors were invited to send manuscript for review and approval.

The following Thanes were selected for intensive work which was scheduled to commence from 1st December 1938 : (1) Maner (Patna), (2) Nawanagar (Shahbad), (3) Hasua (Gaya), (4) Lalganj (Muzaffarpur), (5) Ekma (Saran), (6) Jalley (Darbhanga), (7) Pipra (Champaran), (8) Kharagpur (Monghyr), (9) Sultanganj (Bhagalpur), (10) Mahagama (S.P), (11) Kashba (Purnea), (12) Dhanwar (Hazaribagh), (13) Lesliganj (Palamu), (14) Govindpur (Manbhum), (15) Baharagora (Singhbum), (16) Banka Sub-Division (Bhagalpur), (17) Simdega Sub-Division (Ranchi).³⁴ In view of the vastness of the area and size of the population, the Banka Sub-Division was the first to be taken up for literacy work. While a period of one year was considered adequate to impart literacy to

all the illiterates in the area, in other areas it was stipulated to eradicate illiteracy within a period of six months.

The literacy centres were set up in the villages only after the completion of the census of illiterates and formation of a village level committees which were entrusted with the planning and management of the centres. Apart from the village level committees, similar committees were set up at Sub-divisional and Districts Levels to co-ordinate, monitor and supervise the functioning of centres. All the committees had representatives from Education Department, political parties, bureaucracy and local community.

The experience of the first phase showed that the minimum period of six weeks for imparting basic literacy was too short to have any lasting impact and hence the duration of literacy programme was extended to a period of three months in the second phase. At the end of the period, a formal literacy test was conducted by an external committee of three qualified teachers of day-schools. The test included reading ten sentences from different pages of the primers, and writing the name of the self and village, counting from 21 to 50 and knowledge of basic arithmetics. As it was not possible to exercise day to-day supervision of the centres—presumably due to the absence of supervisors—the method of payment of honorarium on the basis of actual results was adopted, according to which, 5 annas per literate was paid to the teacher as a token honorarium towards rendering the “public service.”³⁵

The literacy campaign in Bihar was very flexible and broad-based for it provided an opportunity to different types of agencies to take up literacy programme. The campaign was not an exclusive show of Education Department. Apart from the active involvement of the officials of the Education Department, a large number of Congress Party workers also played a key role in motivating and mobilising the illiterate learners. The religious organizations of the Christians and Hindus viz., Roman Catholic Church, Lutheran Church, Sharadhanand Hindu Mission took active part in the organization of literacy programme.³⁶ The authorities of the Gaya, Bhagalpur and Chapra Jails, Tata Iron and Steel Works (Jamshedpur), New India Sugar Mills (Hassanpur), Dhanbad Coal Mines, certain Co-operative Societies and Banks in North Bihar also set up literacy centres at their respective institutions. However, the literacy campaign got a tremendous boost when the Prime Minister issued a notification stating that “all Chaukidars

(Watchmen) below the age of 40 years should become literate within six months and that the police officers should give all possible encouragement to this movement," which finally culminated in setting up literacy centres at the police stations. It was reported that nearly 22,000 chaukidars were enrolled in the literacy centres during 1938-39.³⁷

The Administrative Infrastructure and Financial Outlay of the Campaign

It is rather remarkable that a mass literacy campaign which made nearly 4.5 lakh adults literates within a span of less than a year was primarily co-ordinated and managed by a Professor of Patna College in addition to his regular duties. The commitment of the Professor had no parallel in the history of adult education in Bihar. Not only did he spare a room at his residence for the campaign office but also worked with great zeal and that too without any remuneration. It was only after nine months that an office room was provided to him at the Patna College and some Administrative support was given in the form of a part time assistant Secretary (Babu Akhouri Shivanandan Sahay), and two clerks (one part-time) and a peon. There was neither an extensive infrastructure nor huge administrative expenditure towards office. Moreover, the officials of the Education Department, specially the Inspecting Staff, provided supervisory support without any additional pay or perks and hence the cost of the campaign remained nominal. Out of the total expenditure of Rs. 9,416 incurred during the first phase of the campaign, the administrative expenditure was only 18 per cent. The bulk of the expenditure was incurred towards the purchase of equipment for the centre, viz., lanterns, slates and cost of oil.³⁸ However, during the second phase, the expenditure towards the literacy campaign increased almost ten times ! While there was no expenditure towards the honorarium of literacy instructors during the first phase, nearly 48 per cent of the expenditure was incurred on that item alone during the second phase ! If during the first phase, the contribution of the Government was hardly 4 per cent of the total budget, it increased to 65 per cent during the second phase. But the public contribution towards the literacy programme which was 74 per cent in the first phase came down to 31 per cent in the second phase.³⁹ Similarly, the contribution from local bodies also remained drastically reduced during the second phase. Thus

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as the scope of the campaign expanded, its voluntary character was considerably minimised and the programme became an official concern.

Why did the character of the campaign change from the first phase to the second? Did the change bring about any qualitative or quantitative improvement in the outcome of the campaign? Possibly, the shift in the character of the campaign was brought about by the Government in its eagerness to streamline and stabilise the campaign. It was felt that the exclusive involvement of the students was not adequate to cover the entire illiterates and hence the primary teachers were encouraged to take up the literacy work for which they were paid nominal honorarium unlike the student volunteers. However, an analysis of the enrolment and achievement figures during the first and the second phase raises certain issues. With the involvement of the teacher volunteers in the second phase neither the enrolment of illiterates nor their achievement showed any upward trend compared to the first phase. While nearly three lakhs became literate in the first phase by dint of the efforts of unpaid student volunteers, only 1.5 lakhs became literate during the second phase and that too, with the involvement of 10,595 teacher volunteers which cost 48 per cent of the budget. Was it necessary to involve the teachers and incur the huge expenditure?

The comparative picture of the progress of the movement during the first and second phase shows that mere expansion of the programme both in terms of human and material resources did not lead to any gain. Perhaps the expansion only brought about an increased and active involvement of the officials of Education Department. The differential achievement of the programme in both the phases also brings out the importance of non-teacher volunteers in terms of their efficiency as well as economy. This fact, seems to have been realised by the Government of Bihar after the 1st year of the campaign and hence, in the subsequent years, the percentage of non-teacher volunteers have been on the increase.⁴⁰

Impact and Problems

The organization of literacy campaign in Bihar seems to have had positive impact on the attitude of people towards education and life. It was reported that there was an "appreciable demand for the opening of new schools" from the areas (especially Shahbad District) where the campaign was extremely successful and in the

already existing schools there was an increase in attendance ranging from 1 to 8 per cent.⁴¹ It was also noted that in Dumrama, Doranda and Kubri villages, where literacy work was successful, there was not only decrease in the consumption of alcohol but also closure of the existing toddy shops.⁴² The movement did succeed in "making a stir among the masses," and it was considered as a 'success.'⁴³ However, it has been reported that there was "extreme pressure" on the officials of the Education Department to show "good results" and a section of people had some reservation about the literacy material published under the series named after Rajendra Prasad and Syed Mahmud. For example, these publications included such terms like "Begum Sita," "Maharishi Mohammad" etc. which seem to have offended the sentiments of a section of people.⁴⁴ Such problems were possibly due to the oversight of experts who were in a great hurry to prepare and publish the literacy materials for learners.

The progress of literacy campaign was often hampered by communal clashes, national calamities and rigid attitude of certain local leaders. In Gaya and Shahbad districts, the organizers of the campaign had to encounter considerable opposition from many Brahmins, Rajputs and rich Zamindars for starting literacy centres for the poor and illiterate Harijan labourers.⁴⁵ The outbreak of communal disturbances in December 1938 and May 1939 in certain parts of Bihar especially in Champaran and Hazaribagh slackened the pace of work. Due to the rigid attitude of the local leadership towards girls education there was a paucity of women teachers who could organize literacy centres for women. The literacy work carried out by the Bihar Council of Women (Ranchi), Bihar Mahila Sangh (Patna), Aghore Main Samiti (Bankipore), The Ladies Literacy Committee (Gaya) gave "great impetus to the movement."⁴⁶ In March 1939, there were 219 women's centres with 4,084 learners on the roll of whom hardly 37 per cent became literate.⁴⁷ Although the Bihar Government set up a committee of ladies and sanctioned a sum of Rs. 5,000 the amount could not be fully utilised due to the dearth of educated women in Bihar who could take up literacy work. In view of this, a novel experiment was initiated in the Purnea District by S.M. Alam, Inspector of Schools, by organising "Little Teachers Movement" on the Chinese model. Under this experiment, 62 boys (aged 10) of Kasba Middle School (English) were trained to teach their female relatives and

women in the neighbourhood. It was reported that the boys apart from raising funds for oil and slates, succeeded in making as many as 150 women literate within a period of three months.⁴⁸

The biggest achievement of the campaign was the human and material resources raised mainly through the non-Governmental sources. The bulk of the literacy primers and teaching charts were gifted by the leading publishers of Bihar: Monghyr Publishing House, Barqui Machine Press, Pustak Bhandar. While the Municipality of Patna supplied eleven petromax lamps, Patna administration committee and the Minister of Education contributed Rs. 150 and Rs. 200 respectively to the Mass Literacy Fund.⁴⁹ The contributions from the different strata of society reiterated the social will and social commitment towards adult education.

What was the response of the masses towards literacy campaign? An analysis of enrolment figures in most of the areas selected for intensive campaign shows that in certain areas the percentage of enrolment (to the total number of educable illiterates) was as high as 80 per cent. However, in terms of achievement, the number of people made literate was considerably lower. The enrolment figure for the period December 1938 to march 1939, showed that though 58 per cent of the target population was enrolled, only 45 per cent (1.47 lakh) of the enrolled were made literate.⁵⁰ The high rate of drop out was ascribed to the "incompetence of the teachers as well as the defective methods of teaching itself." The success rate, however, showed an upward trend during the next quarter, when nearly 89 per cent of the target population was enrolled of whom 74 per cent (1.77 lakh) were made literate.⁵¹ Notwithstanding the variations in enrolment and achievement figures from region to region, there was an overall acceptance of the programme by the masses irrespective of caste and creed. The literacy programme was especially welcomed by the weaker sections of the society viz., the Harijans and the Muslims. While the former constituted 12 per cent of the total number of Hindus under instruction, the latter formed about 8 per cent of the total enrolment in the province⁵² which was lower than their percentage in the population. In fact, the educationally backward communities failed to take full advantage of the literacy programme presumably due to their conservative attitude and shortage of teachers from their respective communities.

According to the statistics prepared by the MLC during the

first phase, 3,6561 centres were organized and 5,89,096 people were enrolled, of whom approximately 3 lakhs were reported to have become literate. Compared to this, during the second phase only 3 lakhs people were enrolled (between December 1938 to March 1939) and half of them became literate. Half of the target population of illiterates was covered through the organisation of 14,259 centres and the efforts of 15,926 volunteers, of whom nearly two-third were primary school teachers and hence the literacy movement was regarded as the "business of the Education Department alone."⁵³ During the first ten months (May 1938 to 31st March 1939) the campaign made nearly 4.5 lakhs people literate with a limited budget of Rs. 80,000.⁵⁴

The achievements in the field of post-literacy programmes were also remarkable. Since the ultimate success of literacy campaign depended on the provision of post literacy programme, the organizers of the campaign had worked out a detailed programme of post-literacy mainly through circulating libraries and fortnightly news sheet called, "Roshini," (Light) which was edited by an Editorial Board consisting of Professors, K.M. Misra, S. Hassan and Brahmachary Shastri. The Editor-in-Chief was Professor A. Mann. The paper had a circulation of 30,000 and it contained selected news items and the language was based on the stock of words which the adult literates had learnt by reading the prescribed literacy primers. One column was set apart for the neoliterates who were encouraged to write. Several existing libraries in Bihar were strengthened to start the circulating section. In selected institutions, viz., Patna College and T.K. Ghosh Academy, post-literacy centres were set up.⁵⁵ A massive plan of establishing nearly 2,500 libraries in Bihar was also worked out by the Mass Literacy Committee. It was reported that of the 2,25,953 persons who passed literacy test during December 1938-July 1939, 1,49,521 were enrolled in post-literacy classes.⁵⁶

A review of the Mass Literacy Campaign in Bihar during 1938-39 shows how an interplay of a number of factors contributed to its success. First of all, the MLC had dedicated and dynamic leadership of the Education Minister of Bihar, full bureaucratic co-operation and above all the mass support – all of which are inevitable for the successful operation of a programme—could blend harmoniously due to the prevailing socio-political climate. Secondly, in spite of the absence of any elaborate administrative machinery, the channel

of communication remained smooth and clear and instructions were instantly followed. The frequent visits of dignitaries to the literacy centres enhanced the prestige of the programme in eyes of illiterate masses who then began to get enrolled in the centres. The active role played by the Education Minister in the mobilisation and motivation of illiterate masses in the initial phase remains as one of the most striking factor which placed the literacy campaign on the road to success. By recognising the excellent work done by certain literacy workers and honouring them with certificates and medals, the Government not only recognised their work but also reinforced their motivation and commitment towards literacy programme. By declaring July 14 as the Bihar Literacy Day cum a State holiday, and organizing a series of mass processions and public meetings on that day, the Government of Bihar tried to raise the awareness of masses towards literacy programme.⁵⁷ While the Government tried to promote adult education as an official programme, the people also responded favourably due to the prevalent socio-political set up. It could be possible that many a literacy volunteer came forward considering the literacy work as *sine-qua-non* for a chieving freedom. It was more so because the literacy programme was basically conceived and initiated by the leaders of the freedom movement. The active involvement of eminent Indian leaders in literacy programme and the background of freedom struggle provided a unique setting for the successful growth of literacy movement during 1938-39. The stream of visitors from all parts of India to Bihar to study the literacy campaign and the enormous demand for the Bihar literacy materials bear testimony to its success which seems to have motivated All India Adult Education Association as well as All Library Association to hold their annual sessions at Bhagalpur and Patna respectively. The adult literacy work in Bihar (1938-39), which showed how a successful campaign could be organized within a shorter duration and with limited resources remains as a classic model in the history of Indian Adult Education.

This study raises a number of issues which broadly revolve around the role of leadership, socio-political factors and mass participation. Although literacy campaigns were launched in five provinces of British India (Madras, Bombay, Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh) during the same time, the Bihar campaign succeeded within a short period and its achievements were remarkable

compared to other provinces.⁵⁸ How and why did it succeed? This study categorically shows that without the committed and continuous leadership of the key person like the Education Minister, the campaign could not have succeeded. But then, is it possible to rely on leadership alone for the success? Perhaps not. As discussed in this paper, it was the ideological and political contexts and circumstances that seem to have motivated the leadership to initiate the campaign and the masses to participate wholeheartedly. From the viewpoints of the architects as well as participants, the campaign was a part of the larger movement – freedom struggle of India. Hence this paper substantiates Tawney's thesis that all successful adult education movements are part of the larger social movements.⁵⁹ The extent of success, however, depends on the degree of commitment of the leadership. By conceiving a literacy campaign as a part of a broader socio-political movement, the leadership may succeed in making it effective depending upon their initiative and involvement. Then the mobilisation of the human and material resources will be comparatively easier.

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Total Literacy Campaign of Ernakulam District (1989-90)

A Case of Effective Partnership Between Government and Non-Government Organizations in India

The problem of illiteracy in India is both colossal and complex given the size of the country, its huge population, considerable regional disparity and various socio-economic factors. India is the seventh largest country in the world covering an area of 3,287,263 sq. kilometres with 14 per cent of world population. Of the 948.1 million adult illiterates in the world, 280.7 million forming 29.6 per cent were in India in 1990. India is ethnically a melting pot and has 15 recognised languages; the national language being Hindi. Though India has all the major religions of world, 80 per cent of the population belongs to Hinduism. Nearly 30 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line, denied of basic minimum needs. 74.37 per cent of the population resides in rural areas. According to the census of 1991, of India's population of 846.3 million, only 52.21 per cent were literate leaving almost 328.88 illiterates. There is glaring disparity among male and female literacy, the former being 64.13 per cent whereas the latter only 39.29 per cent.¹ In view of these disparities and socio-economic complexities the task of eradication of illiteracy in India poses a great challenge to adult educators and policy planners. Although a number of programmes ranging from Social Education, Farmers Functional Literacy, National Adult Education and Literacy Campaigns have been launched since 1950's, their impact was limited. Most of these programmes were especially but not exclusively, implemented by Government agencies. Though the Government of India has been encouraging voluntary organizations to take up adult education

programmes and provides limited funds, hardly there has been any partnership between official and non-official organizations in the formulation and implementation of adult education programmes till 1980's.

By 1988, especially after the launching of the National Literacy Mission, there was a shift in the official policy towards adult education. The new adult education policy proclaimed that one of the effective approaches towards liquidation of illiteracy would be through the partnership programmes between Government and non-Governmental organizations.² Since then, a number of collaborative programmes have been undertaken. Of the 421 districts in India, total literacy campaigns were launched in 196 districts upto June 1993.³ Of these, the total literacy campaign of Ernakulam District (1989-90) may be considered as an excellent example of partnership between official and non-official agencies. Being the first successful programme of its kind in India, which made the entire illiterate population (1,85,000) of a district literate within a period of one year, it has attracted the attention of adult educators all over the world. It is considered as a landmark in the history of Indian adult education.

Successfully masterminded by the joint endeavours of Government (both Central and State) and a non-Governmental organisation—Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad⁴ (KSSP), the total literacy campaign of Ernakulam has emerged as a model to be followed for achieving hundred per cent literacy in a district. Considered as 'the biggest ever campaign' mounted in a district, it was possible because of patient and lengthy work, often honorary by each of the 20,000 volunteers over a period of eight months (January-October 1989). It has demonstrated that such successful campaigns can be effectively conducted by the joint efforts of Governmental and non-Governmental agencies at a comparatively lower cost. Though some of the critiques tend to consider Ernakulam model as a show-piece, in reality it does provide valuable clues for motivating and mobilising the masses for a social cause as well as for planning and management of mass programmes in selected areas. In view of its unique character and success, it has generated a lot of interest among the policy planners, administrators, activists and researchers. Why did KSSP sponsor a total literacy campaign in Ernakulam? Is it possible to replicate the experiment elsewhere?

1. The Origin

The idea of launching a literacy campaign in Kerala had its origin during the year 1979-80 when the then Janata Government had formulated the National Adult Education Policy.⁵ Encouraged by the high priority accorded to adult education by the Government of India, the KSSP had explored the possibility of championing the cause of literacy in the State. But it had neither the support of the State Government nor the resources. The plan got a set back with the fall of the Central Government.⁶

The idea was revived in 1985 when the then Government of India under Mr. Rajiv Gandhi initiated the process of "reshaping the education system" and circulated the document—Challenge of Education.⁷ In view of the favourable attitude of the State, the KSSP mooted the idea of "total literacy in Kerala within five years" and even formulated a proposal entitled "War Against Illiteracy." However, their efforts didn't lead to any tangible outcome as the entire proposal was "badly formulated."⁸ The importance given to literacy in the National Policy on Education (1986)⁹ and the launching of the National Literacy Mission (NLM) in May 1988 by the Prime Minister of India had given considerable boost to literacy programmes. However, it was the nomination of one of the active members of KSSP, Mr. K.P. Parameswarn as a member of the Executive Council of NLM that seems to have revived the interest of KSSP in literacy. One of its longstanding member and former Vice-President, Mr. K. R. Rajan who was the then District Collector of Ernakulam decided to take-up the cause of total literacy in his district. Thus, there was "a right man in the right position to give the right push to the literacy programme."¹⁰ A proposal was drafted with the help of the District Planning Officer, Mrs. Rose and submitted to the National Literacy Mission. In the course of discussions held with the members of the Mission, it was observed that if the KSSP which had long experience of working with the people takes the lead and Ernakulam district administration provides the support, it would be easier to achieve total literacy. The speedy implementation of the plan not only showed the earnestness of the State but also the sincere and steady interest of a non-Governmental organization in social programmes and their willingness in joining hands with the Government.

The basic philosophy of KSSP revolves around the education

of masses through the propagation of scientific ideas, values and awareness among them so that they develop the competence and confidence to counteract and even exterminate the orthodox and obscurant ideas and practices prevalent in the society. Though KSSP had made its debut with popularisation of science through print medium, in course of time, a unique medium—Kala Jathas (Art Procession) of songs, street plays and folk arts were adopted since they were found to be very effective in conveying the messages even amongst the illiterates.¹¹ In this process KSSP realised the importance of literacy when it noticed that wherever the masses were literate, their programmes succeeded fully. To a great extent, this realisation seems to have motivated the KSSP to take-up the cause of literacy.¹²

Reviewing the previous literacy endeavours and experience of several official and non-official agencies, KSSP realized that long-term projects spread out over vast areas would be less effective and economic in wiping out the problem of illiteracy. It was argued that unless the programmes of eradication of illiteracy became area-specific, time bound, intensive and with the active co-operation of all the Governmental and non-Governmental organizations, it would be difficult to achieve complete success.¹³

The launching of the literacy campaign in Ernakulam, a highly developed and literate district in Kerala, has been viewed with some amount of reservations by a section of adult educators.¹⁴ Questioning the relevance of transforming a highly literate district into fully literate, they felt that the real challenge would have been in lifting a backward district. Though they tend to dismiss Ernakulam as a showpiece which cannot be easily replicated in other districts,¹⁵ a thorough study of the Ernakulam Campaign provides certain valuable insights and clues to the adult educators. The rich experience generated by the campaign cannot be brushed aside on any pretext for it is one of the most systematically planned and executed literacy campaigns ever undertaken in India.

2. Why Ernakulam ?

The organizers justify their decision to launch the literacy campaign in Ernakulam on several accounts. Being a challenging experiment and their first involvement in literacy, the KSSP was keen to make it a total success.¹⁶ They were confident that if they launched the

campaign in Ernakulam, it would become a total success compared to any other district in Kerala. Unlike other districts in Kerala, Ernakulam had three specific advantages : viz., (i) committed leadership (ii) optimum size and level of development and (iii) availability of key persons. Besides, Ernakulam district has a distinguished tradition of organising popular movements and it was ripe for undertaking a mass movement for illiteracy eradication.¹⁷ Though the campaign was sponsored by the KSSP, its overall co-ordination was entrusted to the District Collector, Mr. K.R. Rajan. Since he was a former Vice-President of KSSP, he was quite familiar with its' philosophy and programme. Immensely interested in the development of his district, he was keen to extend full support to MLC. The leadership of such a committed District Collector was greatly responsible for the success of the campaign. Besides the role played by the eminent Jurist Mr. V.R. Krishna Iyer in the capacity of the President of the District enhanced the prestige of the campaign. The strategy of assigning important roles to the key administrators, leaders and prominent citizens of the district with a view to seeking their active involvement in the campaign, did ensure their co-operation and commitment. This in turn set in the process of leadership development at various levels.

The size of a district and its level of development are the two crucial factors which are to be kept in mind for the successful launching of literacy campaigns. Ernakulam is a medium sized district of Kerala State. Administratively, it is a viable area which includes a corporation, 7 municipalities, 86 panchayats, 15 blocks and 1,100 wards. According to the Census of 1981, population of the district was 2.53 m. of which 1.26 m. were males and the rest females. It is the most urbanised district in Kerala, which had 39.56 per cent of urban population as per 1981 census. The Cochin Corporation has the second largest number of scheduled (lower) caste in Kerala. It had a high level of literacy 76.82 per cent. Compared to the literacy of 80.75 per cent among males, the female literacy in the district was 72.88 per cent. Even in rural areas the female literacy was 71.11 per cent compared to 79.48 among males.¹⁸

The creditable achievement in literacy was not only due to a variety of socio-economic factors but also the enlightened policy followed by those who were in power at different points of time and especially the rulers of the former Cochin State, who proclaimed education of the people to be the prime concern of the State as

early as 1818.¹⁹ Being a coastal area which came under the continuous contact with the foreigners, both through commerce and conquests, the area around Cochin had developed at a faster pace. Today it is the most industrialised district in Kerala which has an excellent network of roads, rails and rivers which provide a variety of transport facilities.²⁰ The existence of such a well-developed infrastructure is a prerequisite for the success of any developmental programme.

3. Key Persons

The effective implementation of a literacy campaign depends to a great extent on the availability of key persons who can take on various types of responsibilities. Often it becomes difficult to find a large number of competent persons in a particular district. If such key persons are available in the adjacent districts, it facilitates the programme. Compared to Ernakulam, the neighbouring district, Trichur had a large number of key persons, who could be easily requisitioned for the Ernakulam Campaign.²¹ Hence, there was no dearth of resource persons. Moreover, the State Government had given a free hand to KSSP to select the persons of their choice from any department for the campaign. The KSSP also released a substantial number of its most active and efficient workers for the campaign.²² The close collaboration with KANFED (Kerala Association For Non-Formal Education And Development) and other organizations also provided a number of resource persons. Since Ernakulam had a large number of educated but unemployed youth, especially women, who were keenly interested in literacy work, there was no problem in recruiting as many as 20,000 instructors required for the programme. 62.16 per cent of them were women and 82.62 per cent of the instructors were below 30 years.²³ The availability of such a large number of educated youth, especially women was a big asset to the campaign.

4. Campaign Strategies

The striking feature of the campaign was the formulation of series of innovative operational strategies aimed at ensuring and sustaining people's co-operation and participation. Each strategy was planned meticulously and in a realistic manner keeping in view the ethos of the people and their socio-economic background. Of the different strategies, the following five were the most important:

(i) Networking of people, (ii) Organisation of Kala Jathas, (iii) Development of relevant curriculum, (iv) Organisation of a series of crash training programmes, (v) and a well structured implementation machinery functioning round the clock. Drawing upon their rich and vast organisational experience connected with the implementation of the People's Science Programme in Kerala during the last three decades, the KSSP initiated the process of the formation of people's committee as their first strategy towards launching the campaign. Such a strategy was well received by the Keralites as most of them have an inherent interest in forming and working through associations for all sorts of activities. Mainly KSSP constituted two types of organisations for involving all those interested in literacy work. They were the popular committees and literacy brigades.

Popular committees were set up at district, block, panchayat and ward levels. Comparising key officials, elected representatives of the people, political leaders and other prominent citizens of their respective areas, these committees discussed the different issues and provided guidance to the workers. Of the different popular committees, the District Literacy Society was the most important one. It was responsible for the overall guidance and monitoring of the campaign. It had an executive council under the Chairmanship of District Collector which co-ordinated the entire campaign.²⁴ The involvement of key officials with the campaign ensured full administrative support from the different Government departments. By inviting the dignitaries like the Chief Minister and other Ministers from the State and Centre to several functions organised during the campaign and working out a systematic schedule of visits to the adult education centres by the dignitaries, the sponsors tried to project it as a serious and prestigious programme worthy of receiving full co-operation and support from the State and people.

The literacy brigades were the grass-root level committees constituted at the ward level. In all, there were 1,100 literacy brigades and they served as the 'eyes' and 'ears' of the campaign. They played a key role in ensuring the regular attendance of the learners. The membership of these brigades was open to all those interested in development work in their respective wards.²⁵ Thus by providing a forum to the local people interested in the welfare of the community, KSSP succeeded in developing people's network in all the wards for the future development activities.

5. Striking Feature

The well-designed component of cultural programme was the most striking feature of the Ernakulam campaign. Aimed at publicising the cause of literacy and at the same time building up and sustaining an appropriate environment conducive for the campaign, the Kala Jathas included street plays, folk arts, songs which were mainly based on specially written themes which conveyed the message of literacy. As KSSP had developed a repertory of items for about 40 hours of performance in connection with their earlier programmes and had the expertise,²⁶ it was possible to recruit as many as 300 artists and train them within a short period. They were divided into 20 troupes to cover 20 sub-project areas. Performing at each village, these troupes moved from area to area and during the entire campaign as many as 1,200 shows were staged by them. They were aided by padayatras (foot marches) and publicity programmes through mass media. Since these motivational strategies were maintained at a high pitch, they were very effective in developing as well as sustaining people's interest in the literacy campaign.

The relevance of curriculum, the commitment of instructors and informal approach towards monitoring were the three crucial aspects which have contributed to the success of the campaign. Though the thrust of the literacy primer was on health and science-related themes, a lot of practical information related to bank loans, co-operatives, consumer forums, Government subsidies etc. was also imparted to the learners by the instructors. Special efforts were made to provide detailed knowledge to the instructors in the form of six handbooks so that they could supplement the limited information provided in the primer. An exclusive handbook on 'Development and People' was also provided to each instructor which contained a number of application forms required in daily life so that the learners could be trained in filling-up such forms. In fact, most of the instructors also found the book very useful.

The teaching-learning process revolved round discussion method and problem solving. The actual teaching started with concepts. The teaching-learning materials which consisted of a primer-Aksharam (word), two work books and six teacher's handbooks were developed through a series of workshops jointly organised by the KANFED and KSSP. The training of 20,000 instructors was undertaken through 1,000 master trainers who had volunteered their services. While the master trainers were given a

three-day orientation by 50 resource persons belonging to KSSP and KANFED, the instructors were given 7 days training programme in three phases and in 20 batches. The thrust of the training programme was on leadership development.²⁷

The commitment of the instructors was due to a variety of reasons. Being unemployed, most of the instructors were keen to gain some work experience. They viewed it as a rare opportunity to be associated with a social cause and at the same time useful to the society and thus gain social recognition. To many women, literacy work not only provided a chance to "come out of their cloistered surroundings" but also improve their self-confidence.²⁸ Since the activities of literacy centres were informally monitored by the local people and the centres were also regularly visited by the dignitaries and officials, young instructors were keen to excel in their work.

6. Operationalisation of the Programme

The one year campaign was operationalised in three phases and under the caption "Operation Floodlight." The campaign was formally inaugurated by the Chief Minister of Kerala on January 26, 1989. During the next month a series of popular conventions were held, besides setting-up a number of popular committees. Recruitment of volunteers for the survey, preparation of survey schedules, organisation of workshops for the 'Kala Jathas,' development of instructional materials, training of instructors were completed during March and April. One of the unique features of the survey was its completion in a day (March 18) by nearly 50,000 volunteers who were grouped into 1,100 squads. Each squad comprising of 4-5 volunteers conducted the survey of fifty families. The survey covered a population of 3 million and it revealed that 1,85,000 were illiterates. Of this 62.55 per cent were women. While 22 per cent of the illiterates were Muslims, 18 per cent belonged to lower caste.²⁹

The second phase of the campaign was of five months duration. It began on May 1, 1989 when the classes were started. The classes were held at all convenient places and the local community provided a variety of resource support in the form of blackboards, mats etc. The second phase was also preceded by 'Kala Jathas' performed all over the district which aimed at motivating the illiterates to join literacy classes. Throughout this phase a series of

motivational programmes were organised intermittently by the KSSP to keep up the tempo of the campaign in the form of padayatras, posters and celebration of district literacy day (10 August, 1989), and International Literacy Day (September 8) with massive involvement of students of schools and colleges in the district. The wide publicity given to the literacy programmes through the Press, radio and television further helped to bolster the campaign. When the actual teaching started it was discovered that large number of illiterates could not read because of poor eyesight. Hence, eye testing camps were organised with the co-operation of State Health Department and nearly 70,000 persons were given free spectacles which gave an impetus to the literacy programme. While fifty per cent of the fund – Rs. 500,000 required for the spectacles were raised through donations, the remaining amount was met from the Government grant.³⁰

The internal evaluation of the learners was conducted by the instructors as per the norms of the National Literacy Mission and it showed that nearly 98 per cent have become literate.³¹ But according to the evaluation conducted by an external agency—Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum the achievement was only 91.37 per cent.³² Since the district which attains a literacy level of 85 per cent is considered to be fully literate, Ernakulam was formally declared as the first fully literate district in the country by the Prime Minister of India on 4th February, 1990.

During the third phase which extended from October to December, 1989 attempts were made to set-up 120 Jan Shikshan Nilayam (Peoples Education Centre) for organising post-literacy programmes. Besides an immunisation campaign was also launched. In order to sustain the interest of the neoliterates and improve upon their newly acquired skills, literacy circles have been planned in all 1,100 wards.³³

7. Impact and Issues

The Ernakulam literacy campaign has been one of the most effective and successful literacy campaigns ever conducted in India. It has not only won international recognition in the form of King Sejong Literacy Prize of UNESCO in 1990 but also stimulated similar efforts in the entire State of Kerala, and a number of other places, viz. , Pondicherry, Goa, Hyderabad, Chittor, Cuddaph, Dakshin Kannad, Bijapur, Midnapur etc.³⁴ According to the Evaluation Report, it has

succeeded in achieving the target of imparting literacy to all the illiterates in Ernakulam district at a comparatively lower cost per learner than the earlier centre based programmes.³⁵ While detailed studies would be required to ascertain the exact per learner cost, this campaign reveals that if sincere and steady efforts are made, it would not be difficult to raise the required resources for literacy programmes from a number of sources. Though the Government of India sanctioned a sum of Rs. eight million, the Government of Kerala and several individuals and organisations have made substantial contribution both in terms of human and material resources. Yet, the value of honorary work done by the innumerable volunteers cannot be undermined.

The impact of the campaign on the local society has been significant. The police department has noticed considerable fall in the crime rates during June-October, 1989, when the literacy classes were functioning. Compared to 6,275 cases registered during this period, there were, 8,843 cases during the previous year. It is reported that health awareness among the neoliterates has helped them to check diarrhoea. It was noticed that there has been a reduction in the number of invalid voters. Compared to 12,683 invalid votes polled during 1984 parliamentary election, there were only 7,867 such votes during 1989 election in the Ernakulam District.³⁶ Ernakulam experiment has generated a large number of individual success stories.³⁷

The Ernakulam experiment provides an excellent model for planning and implementation of massive campaigns in a district. It shows how non-Governmental organisations should work-out the modalities of seeking the co-operation of the State as well as public in the implementation of mass campaigns. Their success, however, depends on the art of defining and co-ordinating the roles of different official and non-official agencies. If the co-operation between these two agencies enabled the administrators to come closer to people and understand their problems; it also makes the people realise the limitations of administrative machinery. The growth of harmonious relationship between the administration and people has been an unexpected but valuable outcome of the campaign.³⁸ It proved that the bureaucracy and masses can work together for a social cause with ease and effectiveness.

8. Policy Clues

The Ernakulam model provides certain clues to the policy makers. For the successful execution of mass campaigns in any region, the place and people should have reached the take-off stage. The chosen district should be of optimum size and have attained a critical level of development—both in terms of the infrastructure and appropriate social climate. While the growth of infrastructure like the roads, communications network, supporting institutions etc. may require plenty of resources and time, the social climate may be built-up within a limited time and resources. The process would be quicker in those regions which have a rich tradition of learning and culture, committed leadership, and strong organisations capable of developing innovative motivational programmes like the 'Kala Jathas.' The KSSP has demonstrated that non-Governmental organizations can effectively motivate and mobilise the masses for a social cause through such 'Kala Jathas.' However, the success may depend upon the credibility of their organisation built-up through sincere and steady work with the people over a period of time. Whenever such organisations take the lead, the support from the Government and public comes easily.

Some of the regions in India or elsewhere may not have reputed non-Governmental organisations. In such places concerted efforts will have to be made to bring together a group of interested people and form an organisation prior to the launching of a mass programme. In this process, the District Institute for Education and Training (DIET) or any such institutions can play a vital role. Moreover, they can extend considerable resource support for the development of materials and training of resource person. Adult education being people's programme, its success depends on their initiative and participation. When the State recognises and encourages such endeavours, they are likely to yield the desired results. The desire for partnership should come from Government as well as Non-Governmental Organizations.

The evaluation study conducted by Dr. Michael Tharakan observes that the campaign has not only succeeded in the development of human resource in the district but has also helped the learners to acquire positive personality traits and become participatory citizens who could strengthen the functioning of the democratic institutions. Notwithstanding the poor reporting and

record-keeping system, over-burdening of certain functionaries, lack of teaching aids and inadequate lighting at certain Centres, Dr. Tharakan feels that the campaign style and the manner in which it was organised could be effectively duplicated elsewhere.³⁹

The hope of KSSP that the "inspiration and enthusiasm that radiates from the Ernakulam achievement would spread to the entire length and breadth of the country," seems to have been realised when the Bharatiya Gyan Vigyan Jathas – a national level peoples organization for education and science – launched mass programmes in 30,000 villages on 2nd October, 1990 with the idea of propagating the cause of "science and literacy for national integration and self-reliance."⁴⁰ The success of the Ernakulam campaign has caught on the imagination of a lot of others. More than 30 districts, including the entire State of Kerala, have already become literate through similar campaigns within two years. Notwithstanding the reservations of the Acharya Ramamurthy Committee about the expansion of such programmes,⁴¹ the response of the masses and adult educators reveals that the campaign strategy has greatly appealed to them. Today, it has emerged as the most effective and economic model for achieving total literacy in a democratic set-up.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. All the relevant statistics are from the following publication. Prem Chand, *Statistical Database for Literacy*, New Delhi : National Institute of Adult Education, 1993, pp. 1-8.
2. See, *National Literacy Mission*, New Delhi : Ministry of Human Resource Development, 1988, pp. 24-25.
3. Prem Chand, *loc cit*, p. 100.
4. KSSP was formed in 1957 as a non-Governmental organization with headquarters in Trivandrum. It has 75,000 members. It is mainly concerned with popularisation of science through print medium and its objective is "Science for Social Revolution." It brings out three science monthlies, viz. , *Eureka*, *Shastrakeralam*, *Shastragathi* and 40-50 new books every year. Recently KSSP has initiated programmes in the area of education, environment, health, development and literacy.
5. See, Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad, *Ernakulam District Total Literacy Programme : A Report* p. 1 (Henceforth referred to as KSSP report.)
6. Although the KSSP had prepared a proposal for the eradication of illiteracy from 19 Blocks by opening 568 centres in 10 districts, the

proposal was not forwarded to Government of India by the State Government due to various reasons. For details see, M.P. Parameswaran, "Communication, Culture and Literacy – The Kerala Experience," a paper presented at the Seminar on Literacy held in New Delhi during November 20-22, 1991, p. 7.

7. *Challenge of Education : A Policy Perspective*, New Delhi : Ministry of Education, 1985, See Preface.
8. M.P. Parameswaran *loc cit*, p. 8.
9. The New Education Policy had stressed that the "whole nation must pledge itself to the eradication of illiteracy." See, *National Policy on Education, 1986*, New Delhi : Ministry of Human Resource Development, 1986, p. 9.
10. See, Anita Dighe, *et.al.*, "Campaigning for Literacy – The Experience of Bharat Gyan Vigyan Jatha; An Analytic Documentation Study," New Delhi : BGVS, 1992, p. 2.
11. M.P. Parameswaran, *loc cit*, p. 4.
12. Interview with Mr. Narayanan, one of the leading activists of KSSP, held at the office of the Bhartiya Gyan Vigyan Jatha, New Delhi on 16th October, 1990.
13. *Ibid.*
14. This point has been repeatedly raised by the participants in some of the recent conferences and seminars e.g. : See the Proceedings of the Seminar on Literacy And Development, organized by the India International Centre, New Delhi during November 20-22, 1991. Orientation programme in Planning And Management of Adult Education, organized by the National Institute of Education And Planning, at New Delhi during February 4, March 17, 1991.
15. For example, See, *Towards An Enlightened And Humane Society : Report of the Committee for Review of National Policy on Education 1986*, New Delhi : 1990, pp. 198-199.
16. Interview with Shri Narayanan, *op cit.*
17. For details see, K.R. Rajan, *Mass Literacy—The Ernakulam Experiment*, Ernakulam : District Literacy Society, 1991, pp. 40-41.
18. See, *Census of India : Series 10, Kerala, 1987*, Delhi : Controller of Publication, 1987, pp. 19-26.
19. For details, see, A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazetteer : Ernakulam*, Trivandrum : Government Press : 1965, pp. 94-103.
20. *Ibid* p, 225.
21. Interview with Shri Narayanan, *op cit.*
22. *KSSP Report*, p. 2.
23. P.K. Michael Tharakan, *The Ernakulam District Total Literacy Programme : Report of the Evaluation*. Trivandrum : Centre For Development Studies, 1990, p. 28.

24. K.R. Rajan, *Declaration of Total Literacy in Ernakulam District : Report*. p. 3. (Mimeograph)
25. K.R. Rajan, "Ernakulam District Total Literacy Campaign, A New Experiment in Mass Movement For Literacy." p. 2. (Mimeograph)
26. M.P. Parameshwar, *op cit*, p. 4.
27. For details of training and teaching, See R.K. Rajan, *Mass Literacy : The Ernakulam Experiment*, pp. 111-130.
28. P.K. Michael Tharakan, *op cit*, pp. 34-35.
29. *Ibid* p., 4.
30. *KSSP Report*. p. 6.
31. K.R. Rajan, "Declaration of Total Literacy In Ernakulam District," p. 2.
32. P.K. Michael Tharakan, *op cit*, p. 49.
33. K.R. Rajan, "Ernakulam District Total Literacy Campaign," p. 8.
34. See, *Literacy Mission*, Vol. XIII, No. 10, p. 31.
35. P.K. Michael Tharakan, *loc cit*, p. 89.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 48 and K.R. Rajan, "Declaration of Total Literacy in Ernakulam District." pp. 4-5.
37. For details, see K.R. Rajan, *Mass Literacy : The Ernakulam Experiment*, pp. 153-173.
38. See, *KSSP Report*, p. 6. And Interview with Narayanan, *op cit*.
39. For details, see, P.K. Michael Tharakan, *loc cit*, pp. 88-90.
40. See Anjali Puri, "On the Write Track," *Indian Express*, October 21, 1990, and *KSSP Report*, p. 7.
41. The Committee has observed that "while this [Ernakulam experiment] is commendable, it is doubtful whether lessons could be drawn from this experiment for application elsewhere.... The campaign strategy cannot be applied in all parts of India principally because of the differing levels of awareness in different States," For details, see *Report of the Committee For Review of National Policy on Education*, 1986, pp. 198-199.

Section-IV
International Co-operation in
Indian Adult Education

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

Dr. Frank C. Laubach (1884-1970) was an 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. Far 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 included materials related to adult 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 Collections 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, Jawaharlala Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rabindranath 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 anybody 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 today¹² 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 dismiss 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 phase—(1956-1970) when Laubach continued his association with Indian Adult Education mainly as representative of a non-Governmental organization—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 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 per cent), Travencore (29 per cent) and Baroda (21 per cent) 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. Daniel and Ms. Devasahayam in Madras Presidency, Professor S.R..Bhagwat in

Poona, Mr. Gijubhai Bhadega 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 organisation 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, 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 missionaries 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 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 Panjabi; 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 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-root level, taking the leadership into confidence through briefing, seeking the co-operation 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 1930's 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 co-operation 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 Second World War 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 towards literacy though the Seargent Report of 1944 had viewed literacy as a Governmental activity.³¹ The entire attention of the Indian leadership was focused on the struggle for independence. Hence literacy programme dwindled into insignificance during 1940's.

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 the 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 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 nationwide 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 weeks visits 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, Telgu, 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 and 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 grant 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 reach, 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, sanitation, 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 co-ordination.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 publicised.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, Welthy 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 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."⁴⁶ While Gandhi and Nehru had welcomed Christian missionaries and sought their co-operation 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-1950's 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 organization - Laubach Literacy And Mission Fund in 1955 for the worldwide 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 Americans 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 some grant (US \$ 10,000) to the building fund of Indian Adult Education Association and helping a number of Indians, viz. Eapen, Shashi Kumar Dethé, George Prasad, Ammini, etc., to acquire training in literacy journalism at Syracuse University.⁵⁵

During 1960's 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 declined over the years, continued interruptedly 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 co-operation 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 1950's. 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 through "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 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 strongholds 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 1950's and 60's 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 build 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 crusader 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 never 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 an hectic schedule of travel, literacy workshops and conferences, it would have been difficult for him to engage in the actual process of proselytisation which need sustained efforts and close contact with the masses. Laubach was too restless and busy an adult educator who would 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 Cristianity and literacy were interlinked and reflected a broader concern for the values like love and service to humanity.

Some Accomplishments

Laubach was one of the first few adult educators who focused 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, *Toward 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 accorded 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 sweetheart's 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 for 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 alphabets if there were too many alphabets 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 to 10-12 lessons, Laubach developed each lesson in the form of a chart depicting picture, word and syllable. A particular alphabet 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 phonetic, 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 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 1950's, 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 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 wholistic 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 to 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 organizations. 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

NOTES AND REFERENCES

- * This is a revised and enlarged version of a paper presented at the Second Visiting Scholar Conference on History of Adult Education held at Syracuse University during March 20-24, 1990. 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 father's papers.
1. Laubach, B., *The Vision Lives On*, Syracuse : New Readers Press, 1984, 22.
 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, 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 Bibliogra-*

- phy, 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 Writings of Frank Laubach*, New Delhi : Jawaharlal Nehru University, 1990, 232-237.
 11. The observation is based on the statistics provided by Ms. Carolyn Davis of George Arent's Research Library and discussions held with her on April 20, 1990. The absence of any publication on the role of Laubach in India further supports the observation to a great extent.
 12. Though the present method of "Each One Teach One" differs from the original method 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 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. 1, Part-1, Delhi : Publications Division, 1933, 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, 13-18.
 19. See Hand, 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, 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 reading book, p. IV in *Laubach Collection*, Box No. 122. For details of Laubach's work in Philip-pines 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 in Vocabulary of God : A Spiritual Diary*, Tennessee : The Gospel Press, 1956, 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, 46-52.
 32. Shah, S.Y (Ed.) *A Source Book on Adult Education*. New Delhi : Directorate of Adult Education, 1989, 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 the Nationwide Literacy Drive" in *Laubach Collec-tion*, Box No. 119.
 35. The details of his visit are given in letter Nos. 3 & 4, published in *Far 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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 41. For details see *Laubach Collection*, Box Nos. 201, 234, 250, 262.
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International Co-operation in Indian Adult Education Indo-British Scenario (1970-1990)

Introduction

The role of international co-operation in adult education has been repeatedly discussed by several international agencies during the last two decades.¹ The UNESCO, International Council for Adult Education, The German Foundation for International Development, Swedish International Development Agency, the Asian-South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education and Commonwealth Association for the Education and Training of Adults have been taking active interest in the promotion of collaborative programmes in adult education. The Jomtien Conference (1990) which reiterated the urgency of addressing basic learning needs of adults and children to achieve the goals of education for all also generated considerable interest among different bilateral and multilateral agencies in funding basic education projects in developing countries. Today illiteracy is perceived as a global problem calling for the mobilisation of international resources. Hence the earlier tendency on the part of several donor agencies to view literacy primarily as a national imperative requiring little capital investment or overseas expertise² seems to have been replaced by a genuine concern to combat illiteracy; and literacy forms an integral part of their aid packages. Though limited, external assistance in terms of funds and technical cooperation have enabled a number of developing countries to strengthen their adult education programmes and at the same time establish professional links with their counterparts in other countries. Notwithstanding the several co-operative endeavours

in the field of adult education there has hardly been any attempt at studying the process and problems of operationalising international co-operation at the micro level.³

International Co-operation in Indian Adult Education : An Overview

The development of Indian adult education has been considerably aided and even influenced by a number of countries viz. America, Denmark, Canada, Britain, Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands. By channelling human and material resources through their respective Governmental and non-Governmental agencies at various points of time, especially after the 1940's, these countries have not only supported a variety of important but innovative adult education programmes and projects in India, viz., Vidyapeeths, Functional Literacy, Bay of Bengal, Mahila Samakhya, but also the establishment of institutions like Literacy House at Lucknow and the Department of Adult Education at the University of Rajasthan. Several Indian adult educators as well as adult education organisations have received a variety of resource support from the different inter-Governmental bodies of the United Nations, Commonwealth and non-Governmental organisations such as the International Council for Adult Education, the Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education, the Commonwealth Association for the Education and Training of Adults, Action Aid, Oxfam, and World Literacy of Canada. Undoubtedly the financial and technical co-operation extended by a host of overseas agencies have enabled India to organise several international conferences, training programmes, production and publication of teaching-learning materials, undertake research studies and also develop the infrastructure for certain adult education institutions.

International co-operation in Indian adult education has not only brought Indian adult educators and administrators closer to their counterparts in other countries, but also provided better access to overseas literature and programme packages which opened up the avenues for the permeation of overseas ideas and programme methodologies into India. While the basic philosophy of certain Indian institutions like the Vidyapeeths may be traced to the traditions of the Danish Folk Schools, the idea behind polyvalent adult education and Farmers Functional Literacy Programme seems to be linked to the concept of adult education in developed

countries. The origins of the Extra-Rural studies in the Indian University system may be traced to the British tradition of Liberal Adult Education. To a certain extent the current philosophy and programmes of Indian adult education which puts emphasis on 'conscientisation,' 'Each One Teach One,' and participatory methodology, owe their origin to the ideas and pioneering works of Paulo Freire, Frank Laubach, and Budd Hall.

Unlike Freire who visited India only for a short while, Laubach spent great deal of time in India and kept up his contacts with Indian adult educators for thirty-five years (1935-70). Besides, Indian adult education has been immensely benefited by the active involvement from a number of international adult educators such as Welthy Fisher, Robby Kidd, James Draper, Paul Fordham, Alan Rogers, Asher Deleon and John Oxenham who at different points of time have spent a considerable amount of time and energy in formulating programme guidelines, staff training and development of curriculum for various levels of adult education courses. Though a number of overseas adult educators have visited India under various schemes and programmes, a few of them, especially Paul Fordham, Alan Rogers and James Draper, have been maintaining continuous professional links with Indian adult educators through collaborative research studies, institutional networking and participation in a number of international conferences, workshops, and training programmes.

Over the years, a clear pattern in the involvement of international agencies in Indian Adult Education has evolved. During the 1930's the methodology of 'Each One Teach One,' developed by an American Missionary, Frank Laubach, had found its way to India. The 1940's witnessed the blossoming of the philosophy of British Liberal Adult Education and Danish Folk Schools in India. After Independence, the involvement of American agencies in Indian adult education increased tremendously when the community development programme and agricultural extension methods were introduced during the 1950-60. The late 1960's saw a major involvement of Canadians when they extended their resources and expertise in establishing the first Department of Adult Education in India at the University of Rajasthan. The British revived their significant links with Indian adult education in 1970's. The 1980's witnessed the beginning of German aid for training and publications in adult education, the Swedish Grant

for the Women's Development Programme and the Netherland's support for the Mahila Samakhya project. This pattern of overseas interest and involvement in Indian adult education is neither accidental nor preconceived, but was dictated by the fluctuating foreign policy of the Government of India and her changing relations with foreign countries as well as a host of social, economic and political factors both within and outside India.

Indo-British Scenario

Compared to any other country, India receives its largest share of Development Assistance from Britain. Such external assistance to India is channeled through the bilateral, multilateral and non-Governmental agencies. Of the different British official agencies, the British Council has been playing a significant role in adult education through the implementation of the Higher Education Links Scheme (HELs). In addition a number of British non-Governmental organisations, viz., Christian Aid, Catholic Fund for Overseas Development and Methodist Church Overseas Division, have also been supporting a variety of adult education and training programmes in India. British funds are also made available for different developmental programmes, training and studies through Commonwealth bodies such as the Commonwealth Foundation, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Association of Commonwealth Universities. The scope of this paper is confined to the contributions to Indian adult education from the British Council especially the HELs.

By making use of hitherto untapped primary source materials, especially the unpublished reports of British and Indian Adult educators who were, associated with several Indo-British programmes during the 1970-90's and policy documents and annual reports of the British Council, this paper attempts to answer the following questions : What were the main concerns, channels and strategies of co-operation? What kinds of programmes were supported ? What were the experiences of key people associated with Indo-British projects in adult education ? Did the co-operation pave the way for any innovation or reform in adult education or generate any conflicts or lead to any crisis? What was the impact of co-operation on the development of adult education in India and Britain ? Can the effectiveness of co-operation be enhanced ? What insights and learnings can be derived from the past experiences of

co-operating for literacy? In the process answering these questions, this paper points out that though Indo-British co-operation in adult education has been mutually beneficial or the development of adult education in both the countries and professionally rewarding for the British and Indian adult educators, their success to a great extent depended on their professional competence, commitment to adult education and interpersonal relations. This paper observes that British specialists and bilateral programmes have played a key role in sustaining British influence on Indian University adult education during the last two decades.

Partnership Programmes of British Council

It was during the 1970's that the British Council in India started taking special interest in development projects and adult education programmes. It was being argued by a group of policy planners that for island trading nation such as Britain which is dependent upon a network of widespread economic and political interest, the maintenance of international education and cultural connections would be vital.⁴ Some of them claimed that Britain had special resources which could be tailored to the needs of developing countries over a number of years⁵ and such co-operative ventures could gradually stimulate British economy and society. In an article, "Idealism and self-interest: Britain's Aid Programme," Christopher Patten stated that "If we help build up the economics of poorer countries we create potential markets for our own products and services."⁶ It was pointed out that helping India will pay a handsome political and economic dividend...West's economic interest in making the Indian Plans succeed is more clear cut. A rich customer is in the long run a better customer...A growing country in the long run buys more."⁷ The commercial connections of aid becomes evident from the fact that 99.5 per cent of aid is in loan form and 70 per cent of it is tied to the purchase of British goods and services, and only a small part adopts the welfare approach where it addresses itself directly to the problems of poverty through basic education, health services and assistance to agriculture. However, British policies on educational aid during the 1990 were supportive of the broader human resource development strategy and were based on the principle of bringing British resources education to bear on the agreed needs of the developing countries as to "build on rather than replace local

expertise and other resources."⁸ It is in this background that the different partnership programmes of the British Council have been formulated. Since the Council supports the thesis that it is through individuals that bonds of understanding are forged and professional bridges established, it adopts the strategy of identifying and exposing to British influence thoughts peoples who are likely one day to be in a position to influence others.⁹

Of the different programmes implemented by the British Council, the Higher Education Links Scheme (HELs), and the Specialist Tours and visitorship have been playing a key role in the field of Indian Adult Education. It is through these schemes that systematic attempts have been made to establish closer co-operation and links between British and Indian adult educators and adult education organisations.

HELs¹⁰ is just "one element in a larger process of co-operation and development" between institutions in Britain and developing countries. Established by the British Council in 1980 with full financial support of the Overseas Development Administration (ODA), HELs is conceived as a form of co-operation in teaching and research with specific objectives and duration between a Department or Comparable Unit of an overseas institution of higher education, and one or more in Britain. Aiming at promotion of understanding and co-operation between higher education institutions in Britain and developing countries, the HELs inter alia strives to make the excellence of British Higher education known and appreciated overseas and simultaneously inform British institutions of important work which is going on in developing countries. While the scheme may provide an opportunity to British researchers for field work in developing countries, it also exposes the scholars from collaborating institutions to the advanced developments in the field and gives access to the latest literature available in Britain. It is anticipated that the HELs would enable the collaborating personnel "to derive fresh stimulus from contacts abroad." It is argued that though "a delicate mechanism," the HELs, if sustained over a period of time would be one of the best means of developing the personal co-operation and international understanding through intellectual collaboration which is of vital importance for future international relations.¹¹

The HELs in India aims at encouraging a high level of professional contact between Indian and British personnel working

together in selected high priority areas. The scheme is intended to benefit in particular Indian research departments with a high reputation for applied activities and the subject areas should be those of high priority to the Government of India and the topic should be one in which Britain has a recognised international reputation. It is expected that India should have an interest in and an infrastructure to support collaboration in the field with Britain. According to the "Guidance Note" (1989) prepared by the British Council in India, the HELS is "intended to help the development of a Department as a whole rather than that of individual researchers. The emphasis ought to be on the professional enhancement of the younger faculty member, and the orientation should be towards their research, teaching or both." It is specified that the planned link can have the objective of joint research, joint publication, curriculum and course development, academic/professional/administrative staff exchange and development. Besides, the Guidance Note states that the links programmes should be of 3-5 years duration and "take place on a scale that is sufficient to make a significant contribution to the knowledge and application of the topic in India and, within which, the British contribution should be substantial and recognisable."¹²

Once the interest has been established and the joint proposal is drafted, it is scrutinised by the British Council in the light of overall policy of the ODA and the particular country, and then the approval is accorded. Financial support is limited to nominal subsistence allowance and 50 per cent of the travel cost. Normally the duration of the visit ranges from 4-6 weeks. Although several institutions in Britain and India have established successful links in different subjects,¹³ in the field of Adult Education, there were only a few attempts which were confined to the University of Madras, Mother Tereasa University, S.V. University, Jawaharlal Nehru University, South Gujarat University in India and Universities of Nottingham, Warwick, Edinburgh and Southampton in U.K.

Under 'Specialist Tours,' British Council sponsors distinguished British experts to visit overseas countries and "establish or renew personal contact with those working in the same subject and to make British practice and thought better known abroad."¹⁴ The request for a tour generally originates within a ministry, university or other institution in an overseas country and it is recommended by the local Representative of the British Council if it is in accordance

with the current policies of ODA and priorities and is likely to be of advantage both to the host country and Britain. There are several kinds of tour, which may be a combination of advisory, consultative work, lecturing, teaching, participation in a workshops etc. The British Council not only benefits from the assessment made by the specialist of the current status of a particular profession in the host country but also identifies areas for future co-operation or expansion. It is reported that over the years, tours by specialists have made important contributions to the work of promoting mutual co-operation and understanding in the educational, scientific and cultural fields.

Operationalisation of Programmes

In the late 1970's, the British Council in India had taken special interest in adult education. Apart from sponsoring Paul Fordham (Southampton University) and Alan Rogers (Nottingham University) as experts to the Madras workshop on the "Development of Adult Education as a University Discipline". Under Specialist tours, the British Council had deputed a team of three British experts; viz., John Oxenham (Institute of Development Studies, Sussex), K.J. Elsdon (Department of Education and Science) and J.W. Spencer (University of Leeds) to participate in two national workshops organised in connection with the National Adult Education Programme in 1978.¹⁵ The team was expected to provide academic help in the preparation of guidelines for a training manual for adult education personnel. Besides submitting "ad hoc papers" and "sharing in plenary and group discussions," the experts provided "some assistance in drafting the report." The Indian attempt at relating planning as closely as possible to the actual realities of the field was appreciated by the team. Though the team observed that the experience and understanding which the British may be able to offer in return could include "good field practice in teaching adults and its organisation...relating of academic and field levels to one another," in reality the team felt that India was not in need of experts whose influence tends to cause "confusion between practice on the one hand and abstract conceptualisation on the other." To quote the confidential report of the team "nor do we believe that in this field Britain has any more knowledge and expertise to offer India than India has to offer Britain. But we do believe that there can be a great deal of mutual learning and sharing

a number of Commonwealth countries including India.²² Alan Rogers also carried out "A Pilot attitudinal survey of literacy animators in Tamil Nadu" with the collaboration of the Department of Adult Education at the University of Madras.²³

During 1979-85, two significant reports on Indian adult education were brought out by Paul Fordham and P.J. Sutton. On a study tour funded by British Council, Fordham visited several universities in India in 1979 with a view to ascertaining the status of University Adult Education and exploring the possibilities of developing linkages between British and Indian Universities and brought out a significant report entitled, "Indian Universities and Adult Education," which not only discusses the status of adult education in the Universities of Rajasthan, Madras, Pune, Andhra and Baroda (M.S. University), but also comments on the work culture at the Departments of Adult Education in a confidential annexure to the report.²⁴ Commenting on the lack of interest in field programmes among the members of certain Departments of Adult Education, in India, Fordham mentions his experience of visiting a village project accompanied by a member of the staff of a particular university who was supposed to be supervising the field programme of students. When the Staff member could not find the way to the village project and had to ask several people about the route then it became apparent that the concerned member might not have visited the village to supervise the field programme. This report which is noteworthy for its objective assessment of Indian University Adult Education in the 1970's makes interesting reading with a number of anecdotes. The second report on "Adult Education in India" by P.J. Sutton is a detailed study covering the programme, practice and problems of adult education in four states viz., Kerala, Karnataka, Rajasthan and Maharashtra. One of the observations of the study is on the exaggerated claims of success of adult education programme and the need to have a sense of proportion in making statistical projections and assessment of success. Perhaps Sutton was puzzled by the practice of certain Indian Adult Educators of supplying inflated figures and making lofty claims of their success.

One of the characteristics of the British visitors to India was their keenness in visiting the maximum number of University Departments of Adult Education, professional organisations and NGO's and interacting with as many as possible leading adult educators of India. Though most of them gave public lectures, and

of experiences which could be achieved through exchange."¹⁶ Perhaps these observations of the British team might have sent certain signals to the British Council or possibly due to the winding up of the NAEP in 1980, there was a dull in Indo-British Co-operation for a short while. Apart from sponsoring a visit by John Foster and Good to study adult education programmes in south India in 1980,¹⁷ the British Council also funded a visit by Alan Rogers in 1983 to help the S.V. University (Tirupati) develop an extension education programme."¹⁸ In 1985 when the SNDT University (Bombay) sought the assistance of British experts in the development of curriculum for a certificate course in Adult Continuing Education, the British Council sponsored Alan Rogers (University of Reading, Jennifer Barnes (Sheffield Polytechnic) and Donald Macleans (University of Manchester).¹⁹

Development of institutional links has been one of the main pursuit of half a dozen British adult educators who visited India during 1970-90. The earliest initiative in this connection was taken by Alan Rogers in 1977 when he made a proposal to the British Council to support a link between Universities of Madras and Nottingham for the exchange of members of staff, publications and collaborative research.²⁰ Since university adult education was at its infancy in India, the link with Nottingham University was very beneficial to the University of Madras. Subsequently in 1979, Fordham explored the possibilities of establishing a link between the University of Madras and Southampton with the same objectives.²¹ These links provided an opportunity to a few members of the staff of the collaborating universities for mutual visits. While the British experts, by virtue of their experience and academic credentials could participate in teaching and research programmes at the University of Madras, most of the Indian counterparts were found to be lacking in such qualifications required for undertaking teaching work at British Universities and hence their visit to U.K. was essentially limited to participation in conferences and browsing through libraries. Because of the unequal partnership between Indian and British Universities, little significant collaborative research or teaching programme could be designed. Perhaps the only exception was a research study co-ordinated by Fordham on "Commonwealth Experience in the Use of Distance Teaching for the Non-Formal Education of Adults," which was funded by the Commonwealth Foundation and carried out in collaboration with

participated in Adult Education Conferences, some of them like Fordham and Rogers who were closely associated with the University of Madras, S.V. University, SNDT University, Andhra University, M.S. University, University of Rajasthan and JNU, provided academic help especially in curriculum development, designing extension programmes, staff training, teaching and guiding research. Besides, they also served and continue to serve as external examiners for Ph.D. of a few Indian Universities. Though they have had the professional satisfaction of providing academic support to the development of adult education programmes in a developing country like India and at the same time building up friendly relations with their counterparts, certain specific academic advantages also accrued to them. Apart from their official reports on various activities undertaken in India submitted to the funding agencies, they also gave seminars in the UK on Indian adult education and brought out publications.²⁵

Impact, Issues and Implications

It is estimated that during the last two decades about 47 adult educators—25 British²⁶ and the rest Indians²⁷ availed the financial assistance from the British Council, either fully or partly under three schemes viz., Specialist Tours, Visitorship and HELS with three specific purposes : (1) providing academic support to the University Departments of Adult Education, especially in the process of curriculum development, staff training, teaching and research, (ii) studying the ongoing adult education programmes, visiting adult education institutions and organisations, and (iii) participating in conferences, workshops and interacting with fellow professionals. The duration of their visit varied from six days to six months. The diverse experiences of those who were associated with the implementation of HELS and its limited success in achieving the objectives of designing and carrying out collaborative research, partnership projects, bringing out collaborative publications, developing innovative models and exchanging publications bring out a number of issues.

If we subscribe to the view that international co-operation should capacitate and empower the partners, then, Indo-British partnership in adult education has been a success, especially from the point of view of British. It is mainly due to the fact that over the years British adult educators have gained considerable professional

competence and experience both as practitioners as well as researchers and hence better placed to derive the benefits. When the partnership is between a strong and not so strong partner, then, the charges are that the former reaps maximum benefits. The interest of collaborative programme however, demands that the strong partner assume a leadership role so as to enable the other to achieve common objectives. In the case of Indo-British co-operation this did not happen. It may be partly due to the personal idiosyncracies of certain Indian and British adult educators associated with partnership projects or the tactical decision of British adult educators to remain "absolutely non-interfering."

Indo-British co-operation in adult education has had its impact on the development of adult education curriculum in some of the British universities. The experience of studying Indian innovative programmes like Women's Co-operatives or income generation programmes seems to have motivated some of the British professors to incorporate certain aspects of the programmes and the related literature into the curriculum of Masters Degree Programme at the Universities of Edinburgh, Reading, Southampton and Warwick. T.G. Steward who took an active interest in establishing links between the universities of Edinburgh and S.V. along with Rogers observed that since "much of the interesting developments take place outside England," the opportunity for "creative learning from developing countries" provided through the links scheme was welcome. Vickerstaff who was associated with the links programme between Kent and Mother Teresa University considered such a programme an opportunity which provided a "non-Anglo-American perspective" to the British Curriculum.²⁹

It is rather surprising that in spite of longstanding association between British and Indian adult educators, there has been dearth of collaborative projects. One of the reasons may be traced to the absence of a research culture in some of the Departments of Adult Education in India and the lack of interest in research as a key activity among the members of faculty. The limited number of research publications by Indians in International journals bear testimony to this fact.³⁰ While some of the British professors who had served as external examiners of Ph.D. theses on adult education of certain Indian Universities were dismayed at the quality of research work, others who had the chance of working longer in India were disillusioned with the "total lack of research

orientation and work culture" in the Departments of Adult Education in most of the Indian Universities.³¹ Perhaps these factors might have also discouraged them from working out collaborative research projects with Indian counterparts. Since a large number of international adult educators tend to specialise in some area, as compared to Indian adult educators who invariably tend to be generalist, the possibilities of collaboration remains limited.

One of the major irritants in the HELS revolves around the funding pattern. Under HELS, the participants receive 50 per cent of International travel fare and a meagre subsistence allowance ranging from £10-20 per day. Few of the British university adult educators who were keen to establish links with Indian Universities were able to raise the additional resources to meet their expenses and visit the selected partner institutions in India and hold discussions and formulate collaborative projects. For example, although the initiatives in establishing the links between S.V.-Edinburgh and J.N.-Warwick universities came from the British side, the Indian side could not reciprocate. Since the Links Scheme provides only half of the international fare to the participants (the other half to be paid either by the parent university or the UGC), Indian partners were handicapped especially due to the non-supportive attitude of their respective universities and UGC and hence failed to raise the required resources. While the UGC policy has recognised extension as the third dimension of higher education in India and has issued guidelines to the universities to support adult education as a legitimate activity, in practice some of the key academicians like the Deans and vociferous members of academic bodies tend to ignore the legitimate claims made by the adult educators and do not provide adequate finances. Unless the two collaborating institutions make some preliminary assessment of their strengths, weaknesses, and attitude of key administrators towards adult education, the implementation process is likely to run into trouble. In the light of experiences of a number of British and Indian adult educators it is observed that to be fully productive, the partnership between British and Indian adult educators needs to be finely tuned to each other—both from personal and professional angles—and all the administrative and financial details of the collaborative programmes need to be meticulously worked out.

Added to this biased attitude of Indian university community is the unattractive subsistence allowance in the UK which dampens

the enthusiasm of Indian adult educators to initiate any collaborative programmes with the British universities. In the absence of any reciprocal response from Indian counterparts, the British attempts at establishing links remains as one sided affair and in the long-run may encourage paternalism. It is argued that in the Links Programmes, there should be some amount of sharing of expenditure between the two partners. The experience however shows that university adult educators in India rarely get their share from their respective universities. In this situation, there could be two alternatives to make the programme reciprocal and productive; either the British Council provides 100 per cent travel assistance, some research allowance for books, stationery, typing and a decent *per diem* to the visitors, or Indian adult educators seek the financial support from professional bodies or research foundations, so that the objectives of the programme could be fully achieved.

One of the handicaps of the Links Scheme is its over dependence on institutional leadership. The limited operationalisation of the Links Scheme however, reveals that its success depends primarily on the ability of key individuals to chalk out a mutually acceptable programme. As long as such individuals remain at the helm of affairs, the programme operates smoothly and successfully. However, it has been observed that there has been high professional mobility among the key individuals. With their departure, the scheme collapses mainly because of the absence of second level leadership. This happens when due to interpersonal problems and professional rivalries the key persons find it difficult to groom their successors. In such a situation, the idea of strengthening a department as a whole and encouraging younger members of faculty to derive benefits from the HELS remain utopian. Since the links scheme is basically an arrangement between institutions, it becomes difficult to transfer the scheme along with the key person to the new institution. Some amount of flexibility in HELS, which permits its transfer to a new institution, may go a long way in making it more successful.

A review of the implementation of HELS tends to give the impression that the British Council has been operationalising the scheme in a half-hearted manner. Those who are in receipt of grants from the British Council invariably submit a report to the Council which on several occasions contains interesting but important observations and discussions on the problems and prospects of

future collaborations. It seems that the reports are examined and filed in a routine manner by the London office of the British Council and rarely preserved for more than five years, presumably owing to the shortage of space. Had the British council preserved the reports for the last two decades, and scrutinised them and identified the issues and perhaps convened a seminar of the recipients, then probably ways and means of making the programme more effective could have been explored. This is all the more important when none of the evaluation studies of ODA-funded projects included the HELS.³²

Although British Co-operation was sought by India not only to draw on international experiences but also as an additionality to the available resources and expertise within the country, often questions have been raised on the relevance of British experience to the Indian situation. It is a fact that much of non-formal education programmes in Britain are far removed from the realities of Indian society. However, with the emergence of Britain as a multicultural society and growing poverty and unemployment, special programmes for urban poor and women are being undertaken which are not much different from the approaches followed in Third World Countries. To quote Paul Fordham, the former Director of the Department of Adult Education at the University of Southampton; "I was stuck by the similarities of efforts being made in Bombay urban slum areas with those being made by my department." He felt that the "great strength of British Departments is their wealth of practical teaching experience at a number of different levels....The British contribution might be offered in terms of adult education training methodology and on a wider front than just functional literacy."³³ Commenting on the possibilities of developing meaningful co-operation between British and Indian universities, Alan Rogers who was associated with several Indian universities observes that adult education methodology being culture free, there is tremendous possibilities for developing collaborative researches, evolving training of trainers programme and exchange of staff between developed and developing countries."³⁴ Apart from the deep interest in University Adult Education, it was the academic challenge of working in such an area in a developing country like India that had motivated some of the British adult educators. Invariably most of them seem to have cherished the prospects of developing professional and personal

links with Indians. Those who had the academic competence and third world experience were acceptable to quite a few leading adult educators of India who invited them time and again. The closer interaction between Indian and British adult educators not only sensitised them to each others philosophies, practices and professional ethos, but also generated considerable academic interest in each others programmes which paved the way for collaborative projects and publications.

A review of the experiences of British experts and discussions with some of them bring out their desire to learn as much as possible from India. Their publications on various aspects of Indian Adult Education brought out from time to time bear testimony to their interest in the subject. While the drawbacks of Indian adult education did not escape their notice, they have highlighted several strengths as well. The Indian Workers Education Programme has been identified as worth emulating by Britain.³⁵ Others have noted that India has one of the most highly developed infrastructures for non formal and adult education programmes.³⁶ Emphasising the need to learn from the experiences of those in economically and technologically less developed regions, as well as reverse, Alan Rogers observes that "the West is moving closer to the Third World and is beginning to seek in that part of the world answers to some of its problems....In the application of the concepts of development to the West, we have much to learn from the insights and experiences of the Third World Countries. The concept of development as applied in the Third World Countries might form the basis of the reorientation which is being sought for adult education in the West."³⁷

Informal discussions with a few British experts revealed their disillusionment at not being "properly utilised." Some of them had a feeling that their time and talents were not fully tapped by their local hosts who considered them as "dignitaries" and tried to pack their programmes with public functions and meetings with local luminaries. They mentioned that there was hardly any scope for serious scholarly interaction.³⁸ Such a situation arises when the local hosts lack international exposure and intellectual orientation to interact with overseas experts. In spite of these limitations, British participation has always been welcomed by Indian adult educators not only as an additionality to Indian expertise but also as a means to enrich the Indian programmes by drawing on their international

experiences and expertise. On the other hand British specialists were also keen to visit India notwithstanding the problems. To quote Lowe, "India is strange and sometimes irritating country, but ultimately a rewarding one."³⁹

What was the response of the Indian adult educators to British participation ? How did the Indian professionals perceive their counterparts ? Surprisingly not many Indians were forthcoming. A questionnaire was mailed to 22 selected Indian adult educators and the response was very disheartening. Unlike in U.K., it was neither easy nor economic to contact the Indian experts who are scattered all over the country by telephone. Only a few could be personally interviewed. Some of the Indian adult educators rated the leadership qualities of British experts and their contribution to the programme as "very high" on a 3 point scale. The evaluation of the participants at a National Workshop held in New Delhi in 1990, in which one of the eminent British adult educator gave a series of lectures reported that his lectures were "very scholarly" and "academically stimulating."⁴⁰ In view of the vast differences in the academic background and experiences of British experts and the large number of programmes in which they had participated, it would be misleading to generalise. A more detailed questionnaire tailored to the role of individual experts in various programmes would be required to make a realistic assessment. The majority of Indian adult educators who have had a chance of interacting with the British specialists reported that they were "enamoured by their academic credentials and ability to cope with Indian conditions." Jayagopal, head of the Department of Adult Education at the University of Madras, who had the chance of working with a number of British experts for more than a decade categorically stated that his Department has greatly benefited by British Co-operation. "Apart from the gifts of British books and journals," he said that "the students and members of the staff of the Department also got a chance to interact with British specialists, attend their seminars and even participate in some of their research projects and collaborative publications."⁴¹ The fact that several Departments of Adult Education in Indian Universities viz, Barkatulla (Bhopal), Kerala (Trivandrum), SNDT (Bombay), S.V. (Tirupati), M.S. (Baroda) and Madras which have been in close contact with British universities have introduced a variety of short-term adult education courses on the pattern of UK universities may be viewed as a

manifestation of British influence on Indian adult education. As observed by Styler, "India has shown, however, that she can take models from other countries, give them specific Indian characteristics and even relate them to her own traditions."⁴² A survey of the reading lists of various adult education courses in Indian Universities reveals their over dependence on British professional literature. It may be concluded that as far as Indian University Adult Education is concerned, it still follows a British tradition. In perpetuating and promoting this tradition, British experts and various partnership programmes have been playing a key role during the last two decades.

It has been observed that since 1972 about 22 Indian adult educators have visited UK under various exchange programmes, fellowships, study tours and bursaries. However, only six of them seem to have spent more than 3 months and made systematic attempts at studying certain aspects of British adult education. While all of them had prepared detailed reports about their programme in the UK and disseminated their experiences through presentations and publications, two of them have brought out comprehensive studies.⁴³ Those Indian Adult Educators who had undertaken a study tour to different adult education organizations in the UK and whom this researcher could contact, unanimously stated that their UK experiences were "academically refreshing and led to the widening of their knowledge and even helped them to change their attitude and belief on adult education in the Western World." They were also benefited by access to a wide variety of professional literature on adult education.⁴⁴

Conclusion

A variety of factors have promoted Indo British co-operation in Adult Education during the last two decades. If on the one hand, the continuation of English language, colonial administrative infrastructure and patterns of education in India had brought the two nations closer, it was the growing need for international co-operation between the developed and developing countries that had paved the way for a number of bilateral and multilateral programmes between India and Britain, since the 1950s. While the persistent interest of a number of Britishers and Indians in maintaining the old colonial links due to personal and social reasons cannot be underestimated, the emergence of Britain as a multi-

cultural society, growing unemployment and poverty were some of the crucial concerns that seem to have drawn the attention of a number of British development workers and policy planners towards India which has been tackling such problems on a much larger scale. Since 1980 some of the British researchers had identified India as a potential field for finding clues to their developmental issues such as growing illiteracy and unemployment.

Irrespective of the amount of professional benefit that may have accrued to both the partners and the immense potentialities of co-operating for literacy, a number of factors are likely to hamper its future prospects. With the growing regionalism and gradual replacement of English by regional languages as the medium of teaching and research in a number of Indian universities, it would be difficult to pursue collaborative ventures. While the new communication technologies have bridged the distance between India and Britain; the postal, fax and telephone charges in India remain far too prohibitive for the average Indian professor to communicate frequently with his/her counterpart in Britain. The recent budgetary cuts in higher education in India and the increasing international fares also do not augur well for the development of partnership projects. Yet, the significance of international co-operation in literacy cannot be undermined especially because of its role in bringing the two nations closer and thereby enhancing international understanding and friendship. The future challenge lies in exploring the ways and means of enhancing the effectiveness and extent of co-operation in an increasingly interdependent world. What new instrumentalities and methods can be employed? How can the continuing co-operation be strengthened?

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 4. *Annual Report of the British Council 1981-82*, p. 22.
 5. Overseas Development Administration, *Into the Nineties : An Education Policy for British Aid*, p. 11.
 6. See, Overseas Development Administration, *Overseas Aid*, 1986, p. 53.
 7. Zinkin Maurice, *Why Help India* (London; Pergamon, 1962), pp. 40-41.
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 10. Earlier, the Scheme was known as Co-operation Through Links.
 11. *Committee for International Co-operation in Higher Education : University Links*. (London : British Council, 1987), pp. 7, 10-11.
 12. *Higher Education Links Scheme—A Guidance Note* (Revised Edition), August, 1986, British Council, New Delhi, pp. 1-3.
 13. There were successful links in the fields of Science and Technology. There was a successful link between the University of Sussex and Rajasthan in Chemistry in 1983.
 14. See a Note on Specialist Tours, Specialist Tours Department, The British Council (January, 1984).
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23. See, Alan Rogers (Ed) *Partners in Literacy : A Pilot Attitudinal Survey of Literacy Animators in Tamil Nadu, India*, (Norfolk : Education for Development, 1989).
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