CHAPTER – III
ADULT EDUCATION IN INDIA:
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON
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3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a brief of major developments towards adult literacy and adult education in India. The objectives of this chapter are:

i. to provide historical account of the development in the field of adult literacy and continuing education in India during pre-NLM and post-NLM periods;

ii. to reflect the factors associated with success and failure of the policies and strategies of adult literacy and education with special reference to NLM.

In 1990 there were 982 million adult illiterates (15 and above age-group) in the world. Of this, 98 per cent were in the developing countries. Asia accounted for 75 per cent of the adult illiterates, followed by Africa (19 per cent); Latin America and Caribbean account for around 5 per cent and the remaining are in the developed world. India and China account for around 56 per cent of the adult illiterates. Although China is the largest in terms of population, but India ranks first in terms of illiterate population accounting for around 30 per cent of the total illiterates in the world.\textsuperscript{167}

In India, in 1698, the Charter Act recognised the role of missionaries in the promotion of education. After the advent of the East India Company, some structural changes were brought about in Indian society that influenced the growth of literacy all over the country in a more significant manner.

Developments in the field of adult literacy and education have been attempted in this chapter for the following three phases: (i) pre-independence phase, (ii) from independence to pre-NLM, (iii) post-NLM. This chapter consists of four sections. First section discusses the initiatives taken during the British rule. Second section highlights the initiatives since independence and before launch of NLM with policy recommendations proposed by various committees, and their implementation during various plan periods. Third section discusses the policy implementation after the launch of NLM and analyses the extent of

implementation of recommendations of various committees during this period. The last section analyses the gaps and limitations of the policies and programmes.

3.2. Adult Education during British Rule

The concept of 'basic literacy'\(^{168}\) evolved with the expansion of night schools during the British period. With the support of the initiatives from the 19\(^{th}\) Century intellectuals, nationalist leaders, social, religious and political organisations, attempts were made for rudiments of reading, writing and deciphering\(^{169}\).

In 1813, the Charter Act granted the freedom to missionaries to set up educational institutions. During the first quarter of the 19th century, Governor of the then Bombay, Mountstuart Elphinstone, took personal interest in the promotion of mass education. In 1830s, the British implemented the theory of downward filtration; it was criticised later by the Education Despatch in 1854. In 1882-'83, the Indian Education Commission strongly recommended that the night schools, already established in the-then Bombay, Madras and Bengal be extended to all the provinces of India. In 1836-'37, the literacy rate in India was only 6 per cent. In 1931, the adult literacy rate was as low as 10 per cent in India. In 1937, adult education was accepted, for the first time, as a definite responsibility of the government and this programme was considered as a movement\(^{170}\).

In December, 1938, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), at its 4\(^{th}\) meeting, appointed an Adult Education Committee under Syed Mahmud, the Minister of Education, Bihar. This committee emphasised the need for training of literacy teachers for the first time and dealt with other aspects, such as motivation of adults, use of audio-visual media, programmes of retention of literacy and continuing education. In 1939, in its report, the Adult Education Committee of CABE recommended that adult education must be recognised as an essential component in the system of public instruction.

This committee recommended that the functions of adult education would be making adults literate in the narrow sense, encouraging literate and newly made literate adults to continue their education, enabling adults to proceed to more advanced stages of education.

\(^{168}\) Shah, S.Y. (1999), Op cit. p.2  
\(^{169}\) Ibid. p.2  
\(^{170}\) Ibid. p.2-4
This committee felt that due to lack of stimulus or facilities neoliterate adults in many cases relapse into illiteracy. To avoid such relapse, the committee recommended continuing education. The Committee also felt that the interest and desire for further education is best awakened through vocational courses. It is remarkable that this committee recommended Continuing Education (CE) but not Post-Literacy (PL). Adult literacy was considered to be a tool for providing impetus for further education. The concept of 'CE', provided by this committee, is not similar to the concept of 'CE' which is followed in the present programmes of adult education. Indian Adult Education Association (IAEA), an all India voluntary organisation was established in 1937. Initially it had to work hard to get adult education recognised as an essential component of development and also had to assist the governmental and non-governmental agencies in the country in formulating the policies and programmes of adult and continuing education. But adult education was, to a great extent, neglected because of the emphasis on expansion of primary education. According to Shah, “…the colonial rulers did not develop any specific programme to liquidate adult literacy as there were neither the resources nor the trained personnel to take up adult education programme.”

The provision of free and compulsory education to all the children till they reach the age of 14 years was accepted as the responsibility of the state for the first time during 1940s. Major initiatives for promoting literacy and adult education since 1940 include the following: (i) formation of Bombay Adult Education Committee under the leadership of B.G. Kher, Premier and Education Minister, (ii) launch of Literacy Campaign of the University of Mysore, (iii) launch of ‘Each One Teach One’ campaign in Moga (Punjab), (iv) formation of Education Expansion Department in Uttar Pradesh, (v) function of Department of Adult Education, Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi, where Zakir Hussain himself tried to teach illiterate people around the institution etc. Behind the mechanism ‘Each One Teach One’ was the thought of Frank Laubach, who went on ‘literacy safaris’ to 105 countries including India with the primary aim of making the world literate. He came to India in 1935 and continued to be associated with the development of adult education in this country till his death in 1970. Laubach initially worked as Christian Missionary (1935 – 1947), then as a US Consultant to the Government of India (1948 – 1955) and later on continued his association with Indian

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171 Ibid, p.2
adult education as representative of a non-governmental organisation, ‘Laubach Literary and Mission Fund’\textsuperscript{172}.

3.3. Adult Education since Independence to Pre-NLM

After 1947, India experienced many development activities in the context of social upliftment. As an inseparable ingredient of social development, literacy and education were given the utmost importance. The post-independence era saw gradual acceptance of the broader concept of adult education.

The Constitution of India lays down the general principles for guiding and governing the educational development in this country. The Preamble to Indian Constitution resolves to secure to all Indian citizens social, economic and political justice, liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship, equality of status and opportunity, and to promote among them all fraternity, assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the nation.

Article 29 (1) states that any section of the citizens, residing in the territory of India and any part thereof, having a distinct language, script and culture of its own, shall have the right to conserve the same. Article 29 (2) mentions that no citizen shall be denied admission to any educational institution, maintained by the state or receiving the aid out of the state funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them. Article 45 enjoins that the State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of 10 years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years. Under Article 46, the State is obliged to promote, with special care, the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and the Scheduled Tribes (STs) and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

The Article 45 of Directive Principles of the Constitution enjoins upon the state to provide free and compulsory education to all children up to age 14 in ten years i.e. by 1960. Despite all efforts made so far, the number of out of school children, particularly from the disadvantaged groups and those engaged in labour, and those receiving poor quality


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education has remained very large. The 86th Constitutional Amendment Act 2002 has provided for free and compulsory education of all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years as a Fundamental Right under Article 21A of the Constitution in such manner as the State may, by law, determine. This Act provides under Article 45 that the state shall endeavour to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of 6 years. This Act further provides under Article 51 – A (K) that it shall be a fundamental duty of every citizen of India who is a parent or guardian to provide opportunities for education to his child/ward between the age of 6 and 14 years.\(^{173}\)

Since independence, India has implemented several policies and strategies to improve the status of literacy and education of the people. Although all the policies are not directly related to adult literacy and education, but many of those are associated with the improvement of adult literacy scenario and also the status of continuing education among the adults. The initiatives are discussed here sequentially. Policy initiatives are analysed here in the light of recommendations by several committees, formed prior to policy implementation.

3.3.1. Committees and Their Recommendations

The Indian Adult Education Association (IAEA) carried on the task of reviewing the role of adult education and reinterpreting its functions in a democratic set up in their annual conference during December 29-31, 1947, held in Rewa. The recommendations made by the organisation were accepted by CABE. CABE appointed a subcommittee on January 15, 1948 under the chairmanship of Mohan Lal Saxena, the-then Minister for Relief and Rehabilitation, Government of India, to work out an elaborated ‘scheme for adult education and literacy’. The Committee pointed out the objectives of social education to be the core curriculum such as health and hygiene, family and community living, vocations, literacy, cultural and recreational activities.

At its 14th meeting in January, 1948 CABE regarded adult education in the country as an ‘imperative’. The CABE set up another committee to examine ‘A Scheme for Adult Education and Literacy’ which recommended ‘A Scheme for Social Education’. This committee opined that greater emphasis must be given on the social aspects of education as the work of literacy had to continue with the goal of achieving 50 per cent literacy in India.

within a period of 5 years. As per this committee, the objectives of social education needed to include basic literacy and numeracy, continuing education through libraries, discussion groups, clubs and institutes like people's colleges along with the other aspects of social education. The concept of Continuing Education (CE), as reflected through the recommendation of this committee, is basically different from the earlier concept of literacy as a tool for continuing general education. The primary objectives of the social education, as per the recommendation of this committee, were related to citizenship, democracy, cultural heritage, health, cooperation, moral values and the like. Another important recommendation of this committee was sending educationists by the Government of India, for getting trained in social education to foreign countries, particularly to UK, USA, Russia, China and Mexico.

In 1949, a sub-committee was appointed under the chairmanship of Mohan Lal Saxena that laid greater emphasis on general education to enable every Indian to participate effectively in the new social order of the newly independent India. This concept of 'General Education' was further developed by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the then Education Minister, who termed it as 'Social Education' which included four elements of education: (1) Democracy, (2) Citizenship, (3) Health and (4) Education for desirable change of the society. The contents of social education were broadened with a view to build up a comprehensive programme of education for life, covering numerous helpful activities around the core activity of literacy. The aims of social education, detailed out by the commission were as follows:

i. to raise a sense of rights and duties of the citizens, to raise a spirit of social service and creation of love of democracy;

ii. to acquaint the adult population with the national problems;

iii. to make them proud of cultural heritage through history, geography etc;

iv. to educate them for effective use of the opportunities of pleasure (like music, dance, drama etc);

v. to impart a permanent knowledge of the '3R's;

vi. to impart leisure time education;

vii. to help them expand bounds of knowledge through literary services, debating, community colleges and centres;
to impart attitudes of cooperation with the other people.\textsuperscript{174}

CABE at its 15\textsuperscript{th} meeting, held at Allahabad in 1949, accepted social education as the main and significant programme of education for the masses in India. The difference between the meanings of adult education and social education is that adult education does not simply mean making the adults literate, it also includes political, civil and moral education, all formal and informal instructions, where core activity of social education is literacy. In 1949, the original scheme of social education was conceived which was modified in 1952, being integrated with the Community Development Programme (CDP). CABE held its meeting in 1974 and 1975. It lent strong support to non-formal education programmes for adults with emphasis on its functionality.

Mohan Singh Mehta Committee was appointed in 1963 and the concept of technology that was first introduced in 1948 was explained in detail. In 1963, another committee on 'Operation of Social Education' recommended some steps to strengthen the programme of social education. This committee recommended giving literacy a proper place in the comprehensive programme of social education. The committee recommended proper arrangements for further and continuing education by organising adult schools, evening colleges, correspondence courses and refresher courses. It is remarkable that in 1963, the concept of Continuing Education (CE) was refined although the shadow of general education seems to accompany CE, both in the versions of 1948 and 1963. It is somehow reflected through the recommendations of 1963 Committee that this committee felt that in the scheme of social education, the role of literacy was somehow denied.

In 1965, the relationship between literacy and social education was further elaborated by the Standing Committee on Social Education of CABE. According to this committee, since more literacy does not interest adults, social education provides a comprehensive concept of adult education. Further and continuing education is seen as a part of numerous activities that are required to realise the objectives of social education.

In 1966, the Kothari Commission on Education stressed the relationship between education and productivity and the critical role of education in national development. As per

this commission, education as an investment in human resources plays an important role among the factors that contribute to economic growth\textsuperscript{175}.

3.3.2. Programme Implementation during the Plans

The days in early 50s were ‘euphoric days for India’\textsuperscript{176}. Emphasis was given on infrastructure development, building of institutions of higher education, technical education and primary education during 1950s when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was the Prime Minister of India.

In the First Five Year Plan, the Union Ministry of Education provided support to the programme of social education through financial assistance to various schemes. Opening model community centres and developing selected primary schools into school-cum-community centres were evidences of such services. The other schemes were for improvement of library services in the rural areas. Major initiative in 1952 was creation of a full-fledged Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation and the integration of social education with the community development programmes made it easy to make more systematic attempts to tackle the problem of illiteracy. At the end of this plan, a scheme for appointing district social education officers to provide a link between social education organisers in the development blocks and the Departments of Education of the State Governments and Administration of UT was also introduced. The Departments of Education continued social education and literacy work in those areas, not covered by community development programme. The plan allocation for adult education was Rs. 7.5 crore. At the national level, an important step in the field of adult education was the initiation of the National Fundamental Education Centre in 1956, whose functions included training and orientation of key personnel, experimentation in preparation of materials, conducting research and evaluation and performing the important function of a clearing house of ideas and information in India in the field of adult education.

In the Second Five Year Plan, the Union Ministry of Education established the National Fundamental Education Centre, with assistance from UNESCO and the Technical Cooperation Mission of the USA to train the key personnel of social education, e.g. district


\textsuperscript{176} Ramachandran, Vimala (1999): Op cit. p. 2250
social education organisers, to carry out research, to produce prototypes of audio-visual aids and teaching materials for social education and to act as an information clearing house. The Union Ministry of Education also introduced an additional scheme of workers' social education. As a result, a Workers' Social Education Institute was established in Indore. The other schemes taken up during this plan period were production of literatures for illiterates, organisation of ‘Sahitya Shivir’ (literary workshops) for training the authors in the technique of writing for the neo-literates, establishing National Book Trust (NBT), the Institute of Library Science in the University of Delhi for facilitating training in public librarianship. Financial assistance was extended to voluntary organisations working in the field of social education. The plan allocation during this plan was Rs.10 crore and another Rs.10 crore for national extension and community development. Issues like securing the services of ‘Gnyan Panchayats’, Co-operative Societies and professional unions and organisations were emphasized.

After joining the Central Ministry of Education in New Delhi in the early 1960s, J.P. Naik felt the necessity of emphasizing educational planning at all levels, for both the extension and qualitative improvement of education at all stages. He pursued both the ideas of improving educational management and administration at all levels, and the establishment of NIEPA gave a tangible base for their successful dissemination.

First Five Year Plan started in 1951 and Second Five Year Plan ended in 1961. During this period of time, two censuses were published. The progress from 1951 to 1961 in terms of total literacy rate indicates the extent of impact of policy implementation during this decade. The figures of 1961 Census reflected that despite all efforts through implementing various schemes, adult literacy work could not make sufficient impact. Although there was a rise in the percentage of literacy from around 17 per cent in 1951 to 24 per cent in 1961, but it was evident that the number of adult illiterates increased. The need of massive programme for the eradication of illiteracy was therefore felt.

The allocation of Third Five Year Plan was Rs.12 crore with emphasis on centres of literacy, training of workers and organisers, libraries, audio-visual institutes etc. In 1964-'66 cost-effective campaign approach in the State of Maharashtra was successfully launched and a shift took place in the official policy towards adult education programme.
A three-dimensional integrated programme of Farmers' Training and Functional Literacy was launched in 1967-'68. This was for the first time that the three central ministries, namely, Agriculture, Information and Broadcasting and Education coordinated their efforts. In 1968, the national government declared the National Policy on Education (NPE) with special emphasis on the strenuous efforts to equalise educational opportunities. The equalisation was further clarified in terms of caste, class, gender, religion as well as physical and mental ability of the people.

The phase of functional literacy also witnessed the establishment of National Board of Adult Education (NBAE) in 1969, Directorate of Adult Education in 1971 and emergence of non-formal education programme177.

The Fourth Five Year Plan allocated Rs. 64 crore emphasised on libraries, adult schools, night schools, training colleges for workers, formation of a National Adult Education Board and State Boards. But the Fifth Plan allocation was again reduced to Rs. 35 crore with emphasis on non-formal education as well as integrated, problem-oriented, environment based knowledge. During Sixth Plan with allocation of Rs. 200 crore some schemes were introduced, such as (i) farmers’ functional literacy for rural areas, (ii) labour institutes and multipurpose adult education centres for the urban areas, (iii) adult education departments in the universities, (iv) Nehru Yuvak Kendra (NYK – Nehru Youth Centre), (v) National Service Scheme (NSS), (vi) assistance to voluntary organisations. With the emphasis on the people of 15-35 age group, the target of the plan period was to bring 650 lakh people under adult education and literacy programme.

The scheme of Functional Literacy for Adult Women (FLAW) started in 1975-'76, which aimed at enabling illiterate adult women to acquire functional skills along with literacy to promote better awareness of health, hygiene and child care. FLAW started the experimental Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) project areas which was expanded in 1981-'82. Two major initiatives during late 70s were formation of the National Board of Adult Education (NBAE) in 1977 under the chairmanship of the Education Minister of the Central Government and formation of National Adult Education Programme (NAEP).

The functions of NBAE were as follows: (i) providing advice to the Government of India on all matters concerning the NAEP; (ii) bringing about coordination between and

among the central government and different state governments, different government, semi-
government and non-government agencies; (iii) Taking necessary measures to accelerate adult education by seeking cooperation from all government and non-government agencies, specially the voluntary agencies and the youth and (iv) Reviewing and evaluating the progress of the implementation of the NAEP\textsuperscript{178}. The members of NBAE included central ministers, the in-charge of planning, information and broadcasting, five ministers of education from the states (to be members by rotation), certain senior officials and nine eminent non-officials with experience and expertise in the field of education such as heads of organisations of the UGC, the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), the Indian Adult Education Association and other non-officials and field workers. Apart from these, the Deputy Governors or Chief Commissioners from Union Territories were also members of the Board by turn for two years. There were some committees set up by the Board to perform some specific tasks. These committees were: Committee on Preparatory Action, Committee on Motivation, Committee on Voluntary Agencies, Committee on Post Literacy and Follow up programmes, Committee on Evaluation. Here structure and functions of NBAE and NAEP are described briefly; it helps to understand the background of NLM, its structure and functions.

3.3.2.1. NAEP

The conceptual framework of NAEP gave equal emphasis on literacy, functionality and social awareness. The policy support, given at this time, was further reiterated by the National Policy on Education of 1986 which was modified in 1992. The policy stressed more on the need for a radical reconstruction of the education system to improve its quality at all stages and special attention was given to science and technology, the cultivation of moral values and a closer relation between education and the life of the people\textsuperscript{179}. Later on, the NAEP was further emphasised by the Sixth Five Year Plan (1978-'83) and also by the Prime Minister's 20 point Economic Programme.

Similar to any other public organisation, the administrative organisation of NAEP consisted of both formal and non-formal aspects. While the formal aspects such as powers

\textsuperscript{178} Singh, Arvind Kumar (1988): Op cit. p.71

\textsuperscript{179} Ibid, pp. 288-296
and functions were generally provided by acts, rules and executive orders of the government, informal behaviour determined the success or failure of the entire organisation.

The National Policy Resolution of 1968 accepted the recommendations of 1964-'66 Education Commission Report, and it accepted adult education as essential for accelerating programme of production, especially in agriculture and also in quickening the tempo of national development in general. It agreed that adult education is necessary for people’s participation in the working of democratic institutions, for national integration and for realising the ideal of a socialistic pattern of society. But it took another 10 years to launch first important initiative in adult education promotion in India. In 1978, National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) was launched. NAEP provided the space for the involvement of the Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and voluntary organisations to play a big role in promoting literacy and education in the society. Therefore, immediately in the post-emergency period, the NGOs and social action groups started playing active role in literacy movement. Prior to NAEP, because of lack of consistency in the policy implementation process, adult education programme could not take a definite shape to leave remarkable long-term impact on the target community.

The intended goal was ‘education’, not mere ‘literacy’; literacy was seen as a tool in the larger effort to create awareness. Adult education in NAEP of 1978 was defined as literacy, functionality and conscientization. It provided a set up with District Adult Education Officers at the district level, with their District Resource Centres and Project Officers at the Block level for looking after learner centres in the villages. According to the NAEP norm, one teacher for 30 learners, one supervisor for 30 teachers, one project officer for 10 supervisors were prescribed. With around 100 villages to each Block, all the 500,000 villages of India were supposed to be covered by the NAEP. Although it was a government initiated programme it tried to make it a people’s programme involving voluntary agencies and universities. As many as 30,000 voluntary agencies and 5,000 universities and colleges were sought to be drawn into NAEP. The government kept out political parties and their mass organisations of women, youth workers and peasants, all-India cultural, religious and youth organisations, and federations and associations of teachers, employees in trades and industries. Despite all these efforts, limitations in integrity among various organisations,
working towards the same goal, restricted the process to be confined within limited scope of action and impact.

According to Bhola, during 1978-80, some 130,000 literacy centres may have been active, where some 3,640,000 adults were enrolled in classes to last ten months, 30,000 functionaries including instructors, supervisors and writers of books and primers were trained, around 3,000 literacy and post-literacy texts and materials were published, and a start was made with monitoring and evaluation. In 1980, new government that came to power, NAEP was reviewed by a specially established national committee and a ‘new’ programme, called Adult Education Programme (AEP) was disseminated as part of the 20-point programme for the removal of poverty\textsuperscript{180}.

In this policy, an attempt was made to introduce ‘realism’ in the teaching-learning process. Ten months’ time was not considered enough to teach literacy, functionality and awareness, so the programme became a three year programme in three phases. The phases are as follows: (i) Phase 1 of about 300-350 hours in a year to include basic literacy, general education with emphasis on health and family planning, functional programme relating to learners vocations, and familiarity with laws and policies affecting the learners; (ii) Phase 2 of about 150 hours in a year to reinforce literacy skills and its use in daily life; (iii) Phase 3 of about 100 hours spread over a year to achieve reasonable degree of self-reliance\textsuperscript{181}.

From the initial phase of planning of the NAEP, enormous importance was given to the process of monitoring and evaluation. Monitoring and evaluation were the tools for identification of the strength and weakness of the system and for evolving means to re-design the programme or to make the objectives operationally more realistic in order to ensure effective implementation of the re-designed programme under the given constraints and available material and human resources. The in-built arrangements of monitoring and evaluation were expected to be applied in coordinated research so that the experience of NAEP could be systematically analysed and could provide guidelines for future action. There were five main phases of monitoring and evaluation of the NAEP, these were: (i) Programme Planning Phase, (ii) Initial Phase, (iii) Operational Phase, (d) Final Phase and (v) Follow-up Phase.

\textsuperscript{180} Bhola, H.S. (2000): Op cit. pp. 53-54
\textsuperscript{181} Ibid. p. 55
The monitoring system was introduced in April 1979, with the commencement of NAEP. The monitoring system was based on the feedback in terms of (i) financial aspects (release of funds, payment of honorarium etc.), (ii) administrative aspects (structure for implementation, appointment of personnel, creation of boards and committees, coordination etc.), (iii) physical aspects (number of centres, arrangements for seating and lighting, attendance, coverage of women, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes etc.), (iv) academic/technical aspects (programme content, learning materials, training etc.)

National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986, modified in 1992 was considered as a forthright statement on Education as an empowering agent. To ensure the penetration of socio-economic development of the nation in all sections, the Government of India, through NPE, made an effort to encourage human capital development by means of educational development. NPE identified a number of thrust areas that inter-alia included education for equality at all stages of education, open learning systems, promoting efficiency and effectiveness at all levels and making system of work through effective management of education. The new educational policy consisted of almost the same aims and objectives for adult education, re-named as ‘National Policy of Adult Education’ (NPAE). The main thrust of this new education policy seemed to be efficiency, not equity and the approach seems to be more ‘technocratic’. Although adult literacy and adult education were covered in this policy, it was not a central point of plan as per the policy mentions.

Under NAEP, there was a scheme of grants for the voluntary organisations and later on the government of India initiated adult education units also to run literacy classes. As stated by Ramachandran, the ‘non-party political formations’ were hailed as harbingers of social change and the presence of community based social action groups and voluntary agencies were seen as a ‘triumph for democracy’. There were ups and downs due to the vested interests with an eye on the readily-available funds on one hand and genuine works done by the groups of people influenced by the ideology of Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich on the other hand. Despite all initiatives, within 10 years of its launching, NAEP got discredited.

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183 Ibid. p.57
Anil Bordia, who conceptualised the programme and nurtured it during the initial few years also admitted the same.

The administrative set up of NAEP had five levels as follows: 1. National level, 2. State level, 3. District level, 4. Project level, 5. Village level. The organisational structure and functional hierarchy are shown in Figures 1 and 2.

3.3.2.1.1. National Level Organisational Set up and Functions

The overall responsibility for the administration of the NAEP was with the Ministry of Education. The Secretariat to the NAEP was provided by this Ministry. Apart from the inter-ministerial matters, the Ministry of Education also played a major role in the implementation of the programme in the states. The role of the central government, especially the Ministry of Education was as follows:

i. **Policy formulation and issue of guidelines** for implementing NAEP and assisting the states to plan for State Adult Education Programmes;

ii. **Monitoring** the implementation of the programmes at the state, district and project levels in conformity with the Policy Statement of Adult Education;

iii. **Coordination** at the national level to secure the involvement of various official and non-official agencies, including trade and industry, organisations of workers and peasants, students and youth and voluntary agencies;

iv. **Leadership to create favourable environment** for NAEP, particularly by manifesting the political commitment of the country’s leadership and use of mass media;

v. **Piloting** for mobilisation of financial resources;

vi. **Provision of financial support** for involving youth and voluntary agencies;

vii. **Resource development**, more specifically, the development of the methodologies for training, curriculum development, production of teaching/learning materials and evaluation;

viii. **Monitoring and evaluation**, innovation and research.

The National Directorate of Adult Education (NDAE) functioned as the national resource agency. The main functions of NDAE included coordination with SECs, supervising the works of SECs, giving advice on technical matters to the Ministry of Education, developing the methodologies for training, preparing teaching/learning
materials and organising researches. It was the apex of national monitoring system and was expected to feed the Ministry of Education and through the Ministry, the Council of Ministers and Parliament with an analysis of available data regarding the state of the programme.

3.3.2.1.2. State Level Organisational Set up and Functions

The administrative structure at the state, district and block levels were created during the First and Second Five Year Plans. The principal responsibility for planning and administration of the NAEP were on the state government. The state governments had to look after the cooperation of various agencies, political parties, labour and youth organisations and the individuals with an interest in the programme. The Education Department in the Secretariat discharged the following functions:

i. Establishing administrative arrangements;

ii. Setting up financial arrangements;

iii. Coordinating between adult education and non-formal education and involving the universities, colleges and schools.\(^\text{185}\)

According to the NAEP structure, each state had a Directorate of Adult Education (State Directorate of Adult Education - SDAE) with adequate staff and facilities. SDAE was responsible for the implementation of the programme in the state according to the objective of NAEP and targets set by the state government concerned. It formed the apex of the state level machinery of adult education. The functions of SDAE were as follows: Setting up administrative and planning machinery; Motivating voluntary organisations to participate in the programme; Directing and supervising the programmes run by the state; Supervising and coordinating the efforts of the implementing agencies; Selecting and placing the functionaries; Coordinating with the State Resource Centres (SRCs) to ensure the resource support to the programme, especially the training and instructional materials; Providing the Secretariat to the State Board of Adult Education (SBAE). Ensuring proper monitoring and evaluation and keeping the state appraised regarding the status of the programme on the basis of the data received and studies made.

\(^{185}\)ibid, p.72
The State Board of Adult Education (SBAE) was headed by the Chief Minister or the Education Minister of the State and also the ministers involved in major development programmes such as agriculture, health and family planning, rural development etc. To effectively oversee the implementation of the programmes in the state, steering committees were set up (Figure 3.1 and 3.2).

The functions of this board were the following:
1) Planning the adult education programme and offering consultation in the implementation of the NAEP;
2) Enlisting cooperation from various sections of population and establishing coordination among various developmental agencies;
3) Periodic supervision and evaluation of the programme;
4) Providing guidance in policy formulation;
5) Creating suitable environment\(^{186}\).

There was a Steering Committee to oversee the implementation of the programme in the state. It mainly helped to sort out administrative bottlenecks and improve coordination of adult education with other development programmes. The functions of this committee were:

i. To enforce the programmes;
ii. Establishing coordination between adult education and other developmental agencies;
iii. Coordinating among various implementing agencies;
iv. Steering the programme;
v. Counseling the state board.\(^{187}\)

\(^{186}\) Ibid, p. 73
\(^{187}\) Ibid, p.74
Figure 3.1: Administrative, advisory and resource structure in NAEP

Figure 3.2: Functional Hierarchy of NAEP


State Education Department/Adult Education Directorate, SRC, Universities, Voluntary Agencies etc

District Adult Education Office, District Resource Unit

Project level committee

District Adult Education Board

State Adult Education Board

National Adult Education Board

Developmental Ministries (Agriculture, Labour, Cooperatives, Industry, Home, Tribal Development, Information and Broadcasting etc.

State Developmental Departments – Dairy, Labour, Industry, Cooperative, SC and ST Development, Community Development etc.

District level offices of development departments

Block level functionaries

Project level committee

Supervisor

Project Officer

District Adult Education Board

Supervisor

Project Agency

Village level functionaries

Instructor

State Resource Centres (SRCs) were set up in different states to support the programme with required technical assistance in different fields. SRCs were autonomous voluntary institutions. The main responsibilities of SRCs were set as follows:

i. Curriculum development and preparation of teaching and learning materials, publication of methodological guidelines etc.;

ii. Training of project officers, supervisors and resource persons, publication of training handbooks and other aids;

iii. Publication of Post Literacy and follow up materials;

iv. Evaluation, research and innovation;

v. Organising seminars and symposiums to put across the objectives and activities of the NAEP;

vi. Assistance in environment building through mass media, publication of posters and other materials, exhibitions etc;

vii. Other publication such as the translation of the publications of the Directorate of Adult Education and other SRCs.

3.3.2.1.3. District Level Organisational Set-up and Functions

The head of the adult education in any district was the District Development Officer who was known by various names such as District Collector, District Magistrate, Chief Executive Officer etc. There was a District Adult Education Officer (DAEO) in each district who is supported by a small staff. He was the Chairman of the District Adult Education Board (DAEB). The functions of the district level administration included the following:

1. Organising coordination -
   i. among the various adult education activities within the district;
   ii. between the formal system of education and adult education programmes;
   iii. between adult education projects and the various developmental agencies and
   iv. of various agencies involved in implementing the adult education programme, including prescribing areas of operation and resource development;

2. Providing Training to instructors;

3. Arranging extension activities for the project officers and supervisors of various agencies;
4. Controlling the agencies run by the government and providing them maximum autonomy for smooth functioning;
5. Examining the applications of the voluntary agencies and evaluating their progress periodically;
6. Monitoring and evaluating;
7. Evaluating the programme under the guidance of the state level or national level agencies.

3.3.2.1.4. Project Level Organisational Set-up and Functions

The project approach is another innovative approach of NAEP. The main characteristics of such a unit were as follows:

i. it dealt with a reasonably homogeneous group, the environment had more or less common characteristics;
ii. there was no overlap in administrative jurisdictions;
iii. the project areas were easily accessible from the project headquarters;
iv. there was commonness in the development programmes.

At the project level, the functions were pre-programme training of the instructors, preparation of the teaching/learning materials, evaluation and monitoring and post-literacy activities. The project officer was the sole agent of implementing the programme at the project level.

3.3.2.1.5. Village level Organisational Set-up and Functions

The critical unit in the entire organisational system of the NAEP was the Adult Education Centre (AEC) which was under the charge of an instructor. It is the grass-root level organisational unit of the NAEP that generally comprises of 30 learners. On the basis of a survey, conducted by the project functionaries, the AECs were opened in those areas where already there was a huge concentration of literate people. The number of AECs also depended on the total number of illiterates in a particular village. For the smooth running of the AECs there was provision of forming a Village Adult Education Committee, under the chairmanship of the ‘Mukhiya’ (head) of the village/panchayat.

188 ibid, pp.76-77
Since its beginning, the programme was being implemented through various agencies such as state governments, governments of UTs, voluntary agencies, universities and colleges, Nehru Yuvak Kendras (NYK), public undertakings etc. More that 94000 centres were being run at the end of June, 1979 by various agencies with or without financial assistance from the Government of India. These were as follows:

1. Rural Farmers’ Literacy Programme - 27996
2. State Government Projects - 19644
3. Voluntary agencies with central assistance - 19029
4. Voluntary agencies without central assistance - 13650
5. Nehru Yuvak Kendras (NYK) - 7129
6. Universities and Colleges - 3684
7. ICDSP - 3049

**TOTAL** - 94181

On April 30, 1979, the Education Minister of the Government of India presented the draft of the proposed National Policy on Education (NPE) to the Parliament. This was the culmination of a resolve, made two years earlier, to introduce new priorities in Indian education. The Sixth Five Year Plan resolved that by the end of the Seventh Five Year Plan i.e. in 1990, the illiteracy of the entire age group 15-35 would be completely eradicated. In 1985-'86, another technology mission, the National Literacy Mission (NLM), was conceptualised for the eradication of illiteracy, which drew inspiration and strength from the NAEP.

The Adult Education Programme, although inaugurated on October 2, 1978, vigorous preparations were made for it up to the end of March, 1979. The initial preparations were made for it up to the end of March, 1979. The initial preparations produced some agenda with the objective of continuing literacy programme for about ten crore illiterates of 15-35 age group so that they may be able to perform an active role in the progress of self and surroundings. The agenda points under the initial preparation were as follows:

i. Building of surroundings conducive to the launch of adult education programme;

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189 www.shikshamic.in
ii. Study of some important previous experiences influencing the progress or regress of planning and implementation of the programme;

iii. Appointing expert groups for extensive organisation of various parts of the programme such as preparation of extensive schemes for each State and Union Territory;

iv. Establishment of required infrastructure for administration and coordination and making necessary modifications in the processes and methods followed;

v. Identifying the sources of the government and non-government agencies and making necessary arrangements to enhance their functioning;

vi. Preparing required exercises to achieve expected competency in alphabet-literacy as well as number-literacy in all regions;

vii. Developing the ability to prepare need-based teaching/learning material in all the states and making arrangements to provide the same to launch the programme;

viii. Developing training techniques to initiate the programme and preparing training guide and making arrangements for functional training of people at various levels;

ix. Building of satisfactory system of evaluation and information collection and to base it on the required functional research.

To fulfill all the agenda, some tasks were automatically developed that needed to be followed one after another at the initial stage and simultaneously at the later stage. These tasks were as follows:

(i) Environment building i.e. creation of favourable environment to encourage the people participating in adult education programmes;

(ii) Resource development, i.e. building of resource base that includes preparation of diverse and need-based learning material, motivating the functionaries of different categories to perform their duties and formulating the method of evaluation and research to mobilise the programmes;

(iii) Preparation of teaching/learning materials according to the need of the target groups (neo-learners);

(iv) Organisation of training to train the teachers or volunteers;

(v) Making arrangements for teaching and implementing agencies;

(vi) Arrangements of funds, schemes, administration and supervision;
The importance of literacy was reiterated by the National Policy of Education (NPE) in 1986. It envisaged that adult education would be a means for reducing economic, social and gender disparities and the nation as a whole would assume the responsibility for providing the resource support. NPE envisaged that adult education would be a means for reducing economic, social and gender disparities. The principal aim of the new National Policy of Adult Education (NPAE) was to provide education including literacy to the population in 15-35 age group which numbered about 100 million. NPAE was a phased time-bound programme covering approximately 40 million by 1990 and another 60 million by 1995. The main features of the implementation strategy consisted of the following:

(i) Reorganisation of the existing programmes, to introduce flexibility and other measures for greater effectiveness;

(ii) Application of science and technology, and pedagogical research for improving the pace and environment of learning;

(iii) Establishing linkage between AE and the development programmes;

(iv) Launching of mass functional literacy programme;

(v) A multi-dimensional programme of Continuing Education (CE) as the instrument for moving towards a learning society;

(vi) Creation of dynamic management structures to cope with the targets envisaged;

(vii) A distinct slant in favour of women’s equality and taking of all measures in pursuance of this resolve.

The previous programmes of literacy and adult education suffered from problems like excessive dependence on administrative structures and lack of involvement of the mass organisations, media and the education institutions. Therefore, in NPE, it was proposed to correct the imbalance by taking some measures as follows:

i. active cooperation from the political parties and the mass organisations of workers, peasants, women, youth and students;

ii. effective support through the mass media;

iii. ensuring that all development departments utilise the adult education programme for the furtherance of their objectives;
iv. ensuring that the entire education system will commit itself to this cause;
v. involving the district, tahsil and thana level administrative machineries in NPAE;
vi. to ensure their support for awareness-oriented adult education programmes.

3.4. Adult Education in India during Post-NLM

The National Literacy Mission Authority (NLMA) was established on May 5, 1988 with the objective of achieving a sustainable threshold level of 75 per cent literacy rate by 2005 AD. It was an addition to the adult education programme. The encouragement to Non Government Organisations (NGOs) gave further fillip to the programmes. The NLM in 1992 appointed Dave Committee, headed by R.H. Dave, its report came to be known as ‘The Dave Committee Report’. This Committee delineated the level of achievement in literacy skills in respect of the ‘3Rs’ which became the NLM norms about literacy achievement level of learners in TLCs. The purpose of this norm was to evolve a uniform assessment system which might be comparable on literacy achievements across the states. But, later on, doubts rose about the credibility and reliability of the percentage of literacy achievement, claimed and reported. The expert group, appointed by NLM in 1993, provided specific recommendations about the sample sizes and designs to ensure uniformity and comparability. These recommendations are now part of the NLM’s guidelines for literacy achievement evaluation in TLC. Two decades ago, various States of India witnessed the establishment of State Resource Centres (SRCs) in order to provide academic and technical resource support to adult education programmes.

Despite all these initiatives, gross regional inequalities in adult education continue to exist. It is also marked by wide disparities between males and females, various castes and classes of the society. Specification of problems associated with literacy programmes must help to modify the structural framework and planning as per the need of the area concerned.

The Constitutional obligation, stated in Article 45, has been deferred successively to 1970, 1980, 1990 and then to 2000. The approach to the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-’07) has

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set the target of all children completing five years of schooling by 2007. The Central Government has introduced the Constitutional 93rd Amendment Bill 2001 for enacting the Fundamental Right to free and compulsory education for the children in the age group 9-14 years. Before this initiative, there was no Central Act on compulsory education, though 14 states and 4 Union Territories (UTs) passed acts making elementary education compulsory either in their entire state or in certain notified areas. These states are: Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and West Bengal. The UTs that enacted legislations on compulsory education include Chandigarh, Delhi, Pondicherry and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

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 groups by 1995 through a variety of means and with the active involvement of all sections of the people. NLM adopted campaign approach to achieve its objective by means of Total Literacy Campaign (TLC), Post Literacy Programme (PLP) and Continuing Education Programme (CEP). The concept of functional literacy envisaged under NLM under was much broader than the earlier concept and it included the following 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 wellbeing and imbibing the values of national integration, environment conservation, women’s equality, observance of small family norms etc.

In view of its coverage of all aspects of human life and emphasis on the promotion of national concerns, ‘Functional Literacy’ can be termed as ‘Developmental Literacy’ – the literacy for all round development of human beings and nations. For this purpose, campaign approach was formed with Total Literacy Campaign (TLC), Post Literacy Programme (PLP)

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http://planningcommission.nic.in/reports/genrep/nhdrep/nhdch4.pdf

Strategy of NLM owed partly to the impact of Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti (BGVS) launched by people’s science organisations led by the Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP).

On the basis of the Ernakulam campaign, by August, 1994, the executive committee of the NLM sanctioned literacy campaigns in 275 districts and Post Literacy Campaigns (PLCs) in another 100 districts. By March 1988, of the 525 districts in India, more than 80 per cent (447) district launched TLC. During the decade 1988-'98, 68.5 million learners were made literate as against the target was making 100 million people literate by 1999, which was a remarkable achievement given the size of the country and its diversities in terms of region, religion and culture. Although a perusal of 130 evaluation reports of the TLC districts showed that only 25 per cent of the districts succeeded in achieving the literacy rate of above 80 per cent, the Census Report of 2001 has revealed that the literacy percentage has increased from 52 per cent to around 65 per cent from 1991 to 2001.

Since 1988, NLM is functioning in various states and UTs in India, which consists of three phases – (i) Total Literacy Campaign (TLC), (ii) Post Literacy Programme (PLP) and (iii) Continuing Education Programme (CEP). A brief description about these three phases is provided below.

TLC is a well defined programme associated with motivation at the grassroots level through ‘jathas’ (street plays in local dialect), electronic media, person to person contact, conventions and pledges. It is time bound - in general it continues for 8 to 12 months for 200 hours; a maximum time period of 18 months is fixed up for TLC. The programme targets a total coverage for the given age group i.e. 15-35. It follows a volunteer-based approach through Zilla Saksharata Samiti (ZSS), NGOs and all sections of the society. The volunteer learner ratio is supposed to be 1:10.

In the TLC programme, the standards of ‘3Rs’ are as follows:

Reading: (i) The neoliterate is supposed to read at least 30 words per minute from any of his/her favourite texts loudly with perfect pronunciation; (ii) Silent reading rate – 35 words per minute; (iii) Transport signals, posters, general instructions, the newspapers specially
published for the neoliterates must be read with proper understanding; (iv) He/she must understand his/her own responsibilities and the discussions regarding the surrounding environment etc.

**Writing:** (i) Seven words per minute with proper understanding; (ii) Five words per minute after hearing the same; (iii) The words must be arranged maintaining proper gap; (iv) Ability of writing a word with the help of a hint, ability to write letters or filling up forms.

**Arithmetic:** (i) Reading and writing from 1 to 100; (ii) Adding or subtraction of 3 digit numbers and multiplication and division of 2 digit numbers; (iii) Understanding measures of weight, area, time etc e.g. kilogram, metre, centimetre, kilometre, hour, minute etc; (iv) Understanding ratio and interest.

The objectives of the Post Literacy Programme (PLP) are as follows:

i. Consolidation – to prevent the regression to illiteracy;

ii. Remediation – to enrol drop outs and enable non-achievers to upgrade their literacy skills;

iii. Continuation – to improve literacy skills to a self-reliant level of learning;

iv. Application – to enable learners to use literacy skills in day-to-day life;

v. Skill development – to enable learners to acquire skills for economic self reliance;

vi. Institutionalisation – to protect collective action and facilitate take off to continuing education. The target groups are neo-literates, drop outs of primary schools/National Formal Education (NFE) Programmes, drop outs of literacy campaign (for ‘mopping up’ operation). The duration of this programme is scheduled to be 12 months.

The objective of the third phase i.e. Continuing Education Programme (CEP) is to provide life-long learning opportunities to all the people beyond basic literacy and primary education. Continuing Education (CE) for neo-literates scheme came in force on January 1, 1996. This scheme has replaced the scheme of Jan Shikshan Nilayam (JSN) which was introduced in 1988. The responsibility of implementing this scheme rests with the Zilla Saksharta Samiti (ZSS) headed by the Collector with assistance from the voluntary agencies such as mahila mandals, panchayati raj institutions, Nehru Yuvak Kendras etc. The objectives of the schemes are achieved by establishing Continuing Education Centres (CECs). The beneficiaries are: (i) neoliterates who complete the functional literacy or post
literacy in the TLC or PLP; (ii) school drop outs, pass outs of primary schools and NFE programmes; (iii) all other members of the community interested in availing opportunities for life-long learning. The principal function of CEC is to provide facilities like information centre, library, reading room, learning centre, training centre, development centre, cultural centre, sports centre and charcha mandal (discussion group/centre).

3.5. Impact of Policies implemented during Pre-NLM and Post-NLM Phase

After the emergency of mid '70s, the government of India decided to initiate nationwide programme for eradicating illiteracy. Radical literacy movement took place in 1970s. Prior to the formation of National Literacy Mission (NLM), India's perception about literacy was the product of the thinking at international levels, especially UNESCO and the imperatives of national development as Indian leaders perceived. The NLM definition of literacy eminently aligned itself to the broadened vision of literacy with focus on functionality. With the birth of NLM, the perception of literacy, its definition and norm, as would be evident later, eminently presaged the vision discernible with the World Declaration of Education For All (EFA) at Jomtein in 1990.

NLM aimed at imparting functional literacy (not mere literacy ability) to 100 million non-literate in the 15-35 age group by 1997. The competencies to be achieved at the end of the basic literacy phase were also specified. However, in the initial phase of the literacy movement marked by the Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) approach, ‘Total Literacy Declaration’ became a sensitive and tickling question and opinions were sharply divided for and against the issue of ‘declaration’. In the early phase of the literacy movement, declaration of ‘total literacy' status became a ruling passion, something of a status symbol, with TLCs. The structure of NLM is shown in Figure 3.3.

According to Shah, the launching of National Literacy Mission in 1988 gave a fillip to adult education programmes in the country. The Government of India was mainly responsible for the main task of defining the policy parameters, designing the programme package and providing funds. To evolve the adult education policies and programmes, Indian government invariably sought the cooperation of professionals and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) as members of various committees and working groups, set up from time to time. The government has consistently but cautiously encouraged the participation of
NGOs. Starting with a 50 per cent recurring grant to NGOs in 1950s, the government has switched to the policy of seeking their active cooperation after the proclamation of National Adult Education Policy (NAEP) in 1978. With the launch of the Seventh Five Year Plan and the National Literacy Mission (NLM), the government has started providing hundred per cent programme grants to the NGOs, and started considering them as 'partners in literacy programme'. These changes in policy also encouraged students and other members of the society to participate in the literacy programme. The initiatives like ‘Lok Jumbish’ in Rajasthan, ‘Lokshala’ in Bihar, even the well known ‘Ernakulam experience’ of Kerala show how community participation matters in the success of any social development oriented movement.

![Fig.3.3: Structure of National Literacy Mission (NLM)](image)

3.5.1. Committees formed during NLM and Their Recommendations

Dave Committee examined the need and modality of 'declaration' (what and how to declare) as well as the procedures for precisely evaluating the learning outcome. The methodology of evaluating the learning outcome, which the Dave Committee spelt out, was necessitated because of the differences and deficiencies found in the procedures adopted by TLC organisers in assessment of literacy attainment. The Committee opined that sharing and
informing the performance of TLCs are desirable and important but, this should not be confused with declaration of total literacy achievement. Declaration should be more in the nature of sharing what has been accomplished against original goals and the shortfalls still needing attention.

The committee also advocated uniform evaluation of learning outcomes for all categories irrespective of gender, community and regional considerations. Besides functional literacy, many TLCs also set up related objectives, such as Universalisation Of Primary Education (UPE), including enrollment, retention and better performance, activating National Formal Education (NFE), greater participation in health care programmes of children, utilisation of services of development programmes, small family norms, etc. The level of achievement of these objectives also needs to be shared.

The term 'total' is sometimes misunderstood. 'Total literacy', said the committee, refers to the particular target age group taken up in the programme and a level of achievement, namely, 80-90 per cent, by the targeted learners. The basis of declaration should be a proper evaluation of learners' achievement, based on a test design and procedures which would precisely measure and describe the learning outcomes. However, a comprehensive statement of the project's outcomes would include the teaching-learning activities and process, participation rates etc, to convey the results and provide input into policy, planning, remediation and reinforcement of the programme. The committee's emphasis on proper evaluation of learning outcome and other impacts was not merely in the case of external evaluation but was equally addressed to internal evaluation, which it said, should be aligned as closely as possible to the external evaluation. Thus, having dealt with the approach and procedures of sharing or conveying TLC outcomes and the criteria of declaration, the committee dwelt in length on the methodology of evaluating the learning outcome.

Laying down the guiding principles, the committee said that the evaluation scheme has to be - (i) simple, intelligible and non-threatening; (ii) systematic and progressional; and (iii) technically sound. The evaluation process, especially the design of the test, has to be aligned to the norms of literacy acquisition envisaged by NLM. The broad elements of learning and a 'Blue-Print' of test design were provided to help evaluation teams to develop appropriate capabilities for testing and also to design parallel tests.
The learning outcomes to be tested, as envisaged in NLM's objectives of imparting functional literacy, imply:

1. achieving self-reliance in literacy and numeracy;
2. becoming aware of the causes of their deprivation and moving towards amelioration of their conditions through organisation and participation in the process of development;
3. acquiring skills to improve the economic status and general well-being;
4. imbibing the values of national integration, conservation of the environment, women's equality, observance of small family norm, etc.

In the context of UNESCO/PROAP's emphasis on broadened vision of literacy, with focus on functionality, it is pertinent to note how the Dave Committee viewed the feasibility of evaluating the 'functionality' and 'awareness' components. Even while conceding that 'functionality' and 'awareness' are important components of 'functional literacy' and need to be evaluated, the committee felt that in the present stage of the programme, it may be enough to evaluate the learning outcomes in terms of the '3Rs', and assume that these components will automatically develop if the learners reach NLM literacy norms. Moreover, if the Improved Pace and Content of Learning (IPCL) package is properly used and tests organised (i.e. passages meant for Reading and questions on Comprehension), these would indirectly indicate the level of awareness and functionality attained.

As for literacy learning, the committee was of the view that no person should be declared literate unless he/she has reached the NLM norms. The test design worked out by the committee refers to the competencies expected in reading, writing and numeracy, the manner of testing, scoring, etc. Keeping the total score as 100, 40 points are assigned for reading, and 30 each for writing and arithmetic. In each of the competencies, the minimum score should be 50 per cent of the maximum and for being declared literate a person should have a minimum of 70 per cent in the aggregate. The test should be aligned to the competencies enumerated by NLM and the topics covered in the primers should be the basis for testing every competency. This would allow flexibility within the basic framework.

As regards the scores obtained by the learners, description of their performance by ranges was considered desirable such as below 50 per cent; 50-59 per cent; 60-69 per cent;
70-79 per cent and above 80 per cent. It was considered unfair to categorise learners into 'pass' or 'fail', 'literate' or 'illiterate' and 'successful' or 'unsuccessful'.

Evaluation of TLCs/PLP/CEP is an in-built component of the TLCs. In every literacy primer, literacy tests are to be administered at the end of every three lessons. In addition to these tests, concurrent as well as external evaluations are required to be conducted at different stages to know the progress of the learners. Systematic and scientific guidelines for the agencies, which are required to conduct concurrent or external evaluation of TLCs, external evaluation of post literacy and CEP. National Literacy Mission (NLM) has got a panel of external agencies for conducting external evaluation of TLC, PLP and CEP of the districts. On receiving the request from the State Directorate of Adult/Mass Education for external education, NLM sends a panel of three agencies. Districts are given freedom to select one agency out of these agencies for conducting external evaluation. Financial norms are also clearly mentioned in the guidelines. During 2001-2002, all over the country, 255 TLC districts and 60 post literacy districts were externally evaluated.

The Dave Committee Report on 'Evaluation of Learning Outcomes in Literacy Campaign' also provided a blueprint of test construction for measuring literacy achievement; it remained the guideline for External Evaluation (EE) since 1992. The absence of a standing guideline on the sample size and design led to, what the Expert Group (set up in 1993) on 'Evaluation of Literacy Campaign in India' (known as Ghosh Committee) found in some cases of EEs are deficient in terms of coverage and sample design as less than 1 per cent of the target group considered for test it was also said that extremely partial coverage of the areas and unrepresentative sample was used in the estimation procedure adopted to arrive at district level estimates. The committee did not specify whether the EEs should cover all learners in a TLC or only a part of them. Given the unfeasibility of organising simultaneous EE for the entire target universe, even if a sample test was implicit, neither the sample size nor the sample design and procedures were indicated.

The Expert Group found that these 'deficiencies' were not only in the area of what the Dave Committee did not specify, but also in respect of literacy norms (so clearly stated in the methodology and procedure of literacy measurement), considerably lowering the qualifying scores/standards in declaring a person or district literate. Moreover, most evaluations reports were found to have focused only on the percentage of success of literacy
as per the Dave Committee norms and the social (or other) impacts were generally ignored.
The concern of the Expert Group for an evaluation is that representative, random and adequate sample design and size must be appreciated; e.g. the TLCs were 275 in number when the Expert Group deliberated (August 1994), and the number has increased at various stages [nearly 450 by August 1997, covering more than 80 per cent of the districts in India]. TLCs are implemented in districts as the basic unit, often with 0.2 to 0.4 million non-literates target size cannot lend itself for external evaluation of all its learners. But at the same time, a number of factors such as the high prestige TLC enjoyed, high visibility, media attention, etc., led to 'targetitis' and the tendency to inflate significantly the achievement figures.

The pre-occupation with achievement of 'total literacy' led to one-sided focus on quantitative aspects, with a pressure to report high percentage of achievements. Therefore, the Expert Group attached "special importance to its recommendations on tightening up the procedures of both external and internal evaluations". The Expert Group viewed that EE should provide:

1) an objective and reliable assessment of literacy achievement and other social impact;
2) feedback to local organisers about the present status, its strengths and weaknesses for remedial measures;
3) academic inputs to improve policy and planning at district, state and central levels.

The approach should be participatory, involving participants of the programme, and non-threatening. EEs must adopt a multi-dimensional research approach, supplementing testing and interviews by secondary data, observations and group discussions. The sampling design suggested for EE is based on the principle that every learner gets an equal chance of being included in the sample, while also covering the varying social demographic and regional characteristics of the district. In other words, the selected sample should be representative of the target population and one should be able to draw valid conclusions, based on the sample of learners tested, about the characteristics of the entire target population.

Following this principle, 5-10 per cent of the target learners by stratified random sampling is suggested as the size of the sample, besides a sub-stratum within the sample to represent the socially disadvantaged groups, religious minorities and rural-urban variations. Village (ward in urban areas) would be primary unit of sample. All learners in the sample
villages/wards are to be covered under external evaluation. Based on the performance of learners in sample villages/wards, the success rate at the stratum level, i.e., panchayat, block, could be worked out, and for the entire district, by taking weighted average of success rates of different strata. At least 80 per cent of the learners of the sample villages/wards must be tested including home visits to catch up with absentee learners. External evaluation is considered to be opportune when 60 per cent of the learners have completed the third primer.

Much like the Dave Committee, the Expert Group also had serious reservations about the reliability of internal evaluation and dilated on the need to bring its procedure as close as possible to the EE. The Expert Group was more forthright than the Dave Committee for abandoning the whole business of declaration of total literacy status as it believed that total literacy at 80 per cent level of success of the target number of learners to be nearly impossible.

In the Expert Group's view, EEs are to be done by persons trained in social science research methodology, and statisticians and must adopt a multi-dimensional research approach, with testing, interviews, secondary data, observations, group discussions etc. The Expert Group's concern was not with the problems of compromises in the rigour and fairness of testing or what all aspects to be measured and with what test design framework etc. On these, the Expert Group went by what the Dave Committee had recommended. Its concern was mainly about the unrepresentative, non-random and inadequate sampling design.

About literacy norm, the Ghosh Committee felt that the level needed should be less than what the Dave Committee recommended. Regarding awareness and functionality dimensions, it did not suggest either the parameters/elements or the framework for measuring. The Ghosh Committee found many EEs have gone beyond mere literacy achievement testing and tried to capture functionality and impact dimensions, but the most essential minimum must be the measure of literacy attainment.

Two issues remained in the aftermath of the Ghosh Committee report. One was an issue of morality, not professional competence, but uncompromising sincerity in the rigour and fairness in testing learning attainment including functionality and impact of TLCs. The other was professional competence about external evaluation with sound methodology. A sound methodology might remove the element of subjectivism and bias, thereby eliminating compromises and unfairness in evaluation. Therefore, close on the heels of the Ghosh
Committee recommendations, submitted in 1995, the NLM launched on (i) a countrywide dissemination of the Expert Group's Report to all the TLCs, and adult education authorities of the State Government; (ii) organised regional level workshops with evaluation agencies, TLC organisers and adult education officials of the state governments; and (iii) fostered attempts to work out evaluation methodology and sampling design based on the Ghosh Committee recommendations.

The NLM also constituted a Core Group to update and orient evaluation agencies based on their track record and/or potential for TLC evaluation. The unambiguous and pervasive concern behind all these efforts (i) to streamline External Evaluation, (ii) to align the modality of internal evaluation as close to the EE as possible, and (iii) to introduce concurrent evaluation, mandatory for all TLCs, to ensure a standardised or uniform evaluation framework and its sincere application in evaluation so that (i) a comparable evaluation methodology could evolve; and (ii) a reliable information about the literacy status could be obtained.

The latest in the series of NLM efforts is an attempt to impact evaluation of TLCs. However, there is as yet no prototype set of measurement instruments, as the UNESCO/PROAP Project proposes, which incorporates measurement of literacy and other learning outcomes (such as functionality and awareness) and impact (with indicators on development and improvement in the individual and family well-being of the learners. Such an effort as UNESCO/PROAP Project proposes is crucial as the Indian literacy movement is graduating into a more difficult and complex domain of Post Literacy and Continuing Education (CE) phase for which reliable information about the literacy status and achievement as well as the impact, in terms of improvement in the well-being of the learners are vital inputs in the planning and management of literacy programmes.

Red tapism in the policy implementation procedure always matters in any kind of social development in the democratic set up of India. Apart from the policy implementation, there are many other aspects also which are closely associated with the implication of such policies at the grassroots level of the society. These factors lie within the society itself and sometimes become exposed and show the way to implement social development activities through awareness generation within the community itself. This kind of exposure has been
reflected in the ‘PROBE’ Report where the increasing awareness of school education among the rural community of Himachal Pradesh has been specially highlighted.

Apart from the government initiatives, there are numerous evidences where initiatives of NGOs have achieved remarkable success in social development sector, especially in the field of education development. NGOs have also proved their potential to play a crucial advocacy role to foster public participation in schooling matters. Some of the initiatives are ‘Eklavya’ in Madhya Pradesh, MV Foundation in Andhra Pradesh, URMUL Trust in Western Rajasthan etc. While these NGOs work towards basic education of children, ‘Lok Jumbish’ of SIDA in Rajasthan began with a bold vision to transform the educational scenario in Rajasthan. Initiated in 1992, ‘Lok Jumbish’ aimed to bring the village community, especially women, into the educational orbit. It was funded by SIDA, the Government of India and the Government of Rajasthan in the ratio 3:2:1. The contribution of Lok Jumbish towards mobilising people for education and empowering women was quite exceptional which has proved that community based works initiated by the government or NGOs can succeed despite all social hindrances, if the focus of works be properly identified and the involvement of the works associated can influence the community concerned.

3.6. Limitations of Pre-NLM Post-NLM Policies and Programmes

The period of the 1970s is considered as the turning point of adult education programme because the policy orientation started focusing more on this important issue since the 1970s. But there was a vast gap between the rhetoric perspectives and the real scenario.

(i) As stated by Bhola, culture and politics of India allow an educational policy which is functionalist in providing the necessary manpower for keeping the system going, and populist to win the popularity contest at election time. This encourages greater investments in higher education and proportionally less in constitutionally mandated universalisation of elementary education and therefore, development of some elite centres of education for the privileged, surrounded by a sea of sub-mediocrity. Despite the rhetoric of a learning society, adult education in such a scenario can be anticipated to have the role only of ‘amelioration and pacification’ and it has to be a sector of ‘more rhetoric and less reality’. It must have populist objectives and petty resource allocations. He also mentioned that even the resource allocation, provided by
the state must be captured mostly by the agents of the state and by the vested interests at various levels of the adult education system.\(^{193}\)

(ii) The twist of political scenario and also the change in the strategies in adult education policy has also affected impact of the programme to a great extent. New schedule of three phase teaching-learning process, implemented since 1980s, has postponed results from literacy programme further than before, and it has effectively promoted a trend of 'schooling' of adult literacy and thereby has removed any possibility of forming a popular movement. Lack of planning for the grass root level also resulted in lack of emerging social movement at the grass root level of community.

(iii) Ramachandran has highlighted some of the major issues behind the lack of success of adult education programme in India. One of the main issues pointed out by her is that in 1988, when the NAEP was wound up and Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) launched, the emphasis was turned from adult education to adult literacy.\(^{194}\) As a result, in many cases, the programme could not accelerate beyond TLC. The same scenario is also found in some of the sample villages of Haryana.

(iv) Other major lacunae in the entire policy system, observed by research studies, include the following:

1) Systems set up for making grants and monitoring their use could not function well, resulting corruption, mis-utilisation of funds, especially by the influential people who set up voluntary organisations;

2) Many voluntary organisations could contribute very little in comparison to the extent expected;

3) Inadequate payments to the literacy instructors and abysmal support structures have eroded the credibility of the programme;

4) Discrepancies in fund distribution, funds were not distributed as per the credibility of organisations in all cases, as a result many organisations, despite showing poor performance, have received huge funds for this purpose;

5) The difficulties could not receive enough attention;

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6) The administrators, who designed the programme, have placed too much reliance on the capability of committed civil servants;

7) Lack of transparent system for selecting voluntary organisations;

8) Outdated grant-in-aid procedures, shrouded in bureaucratic secrecy and erratic financial flow;

9) Lack of foolproof system of evaluating the environment building phase of TLC.

(v) The policy orientation lacks in the arrangement of proper training for the individuals who are supposed to get associated with the grassroots community. Adult learners want to learn something beyond simple letters, as they want to implement their education in their own life. Therefore, until and unless the illiterate people get convinced about the significance of literacy and continuing education, they may not show interest to take part in teaching-learning process or to continue for long term at their own will and without community participation, social movement may not crop up. The people associated with the teaching-learning activity must be aware enough about the socio-economic linkages of adult education. It is very true in India that the magnitude of external effect of literacy on the 'proximate illiterates' depends on various characteristics of the literate members in the household. The age, gender, location (where the literate member stays) and level of education of literate members in a particular family are most important influencing factors for the 'proximate illiterates' of that family. Although India has a patriarchal society, female literate members have a larger impact rather than the male literates as the females play a major role in the domestic activities. Therefore, the volunteers, involved into the motivational activities must be aware enough about the individual’s way of thinking as well as the structure of the families where 'isolated illiteracy' or 'proximate illiteracy' prevails.

Despite elaborating all possible problems associated with adult education, there is both scope and hope for change within this set of conditions. It is undoubtedly true that adult education does and can have a role to play in India’s future, provided the intelligentsia plays a progressive and activist role in influencing the dialectic.\(^\text{195}\)

\(^{195}\) Ibid, p. 50
3.7. Conclusion

Up to 1976, though the significance of adult education programme for illiterate masses of India was recognised and in comparison to the efforts made in the pre-independence era, more meaningful efforts were made, the result remained far from satisfactory. The programme could not take the shape of a national programme in the true sense of the term mainly because of lack of political commitment and full-heartedness of previous efforts. The achievements in the field of literacy in the post-independence period were far from satisfactory. In 1947, the rate of literacy was 14 per cent which rose to around 34 per cent in 1971 (excluding the age group 0-4). Because of the population increase at faster rate and half heartedness of past efforts, number of illiterates rose from 247 million in 1951 to 307 million in 1971. According to 1971 census, total number of illiterates of above 14 age group was 209.5 million, of which 97.5 million belonged to the age group 15-35.

From the discussion in this chapter on various policies, programmes and activities for promoting adult education, the following conclusions can be drawn:

• It is, although unfortunate, but true, that adult education in India has been so far either perceived narrowly as literacy education or has been linked with functional literacy in the overall context of development.

• The process of change in the character of adult education is slow, but the trend indicates that Indian adult education is gradually shedding its character as an exclusive government programme and shaping up as a people's programme\textsuperscript{196}.

• The trend of policy implementation has been changed to a great extent over a period of time as per the requirements and priorities of the activities, especially at the beneficiary level. Initially the policy conceptualisation as well as the implementation procedure was more confined to the bureaucratic set up which has been modified later on.

• The recent trend shows that the government is prioritising the partnership in implementation process and therefore showing interest to join hands with NGOs, autonomous bodies etc. As a result, in various States and Union Territories, numerous social development activities have been initiated which are very much associated with

the adult literacy and continuing education programmes. The community participation in those activities is playing a major role in many areas of remarkable success.

- Without belittling the efforts to imbue the objectives of NLM and as amplified and refined according to the socio-cultural contexts of each TLC, as also the recommendations of Expert Groups, endorsed by NLM about the approach and methodology of evaluation and training of evaluators, strict adherence to the common framework cannot be said to be existing today all over India.

The social development and changes in the socio-economic parameters are not uniform all over the country. There are spatial and gender based disparities. In light of the organisational activities towards adult education and policy formulation and implementation of the same, the disparity in adult literacy and achievements of adult education programmes will be analysed in the subsequent three chapters. The next chapter will initiate this analysis. It will focus on the inter-state comparison in the status of adult literacy in last three decades with special focus on the changes observed in last one decade after the launch of NLM at the village level.