CHAPTER - VIII

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In India, educational development has been emphasized through policy implementation since British period. However the initiatives towards adult education could not spread much impact among the communities in all the states before 1970s. Major and remarkable impact of policy implementation has been observed only after launch of National Literacy Mission (NLM) in 1988. Before launch of NLM, although literacy rate has shown declining trend, but there has been no decline in volume of illiterates. Decline in absolute number of total illiterates and adult illiterates have been observed for the first time in 2001 census.

This study has focused on the historical background of adult education programmes in India, pattern and trend of adult illiteracy in India and its selected states and UTs and the socio-economic linkages of adult education with special reference to NLM activities in Haryana. It has analysed the pattern and trend of adult illiteracy at national and state level and also that of Haryana and its districts with special reference to Karnal and Mahendragarh, selected as samples. In this context, it has analysed the pre-NLM and post-NLM progress in terms of decline in adult illiteracy in the NLM specified age group (15 – 35 years) and the mechanism of NLM at macro and micro levels with special focus on sample districts and sample villages. It has focused on issues related to adult education and NLM activities in sample villages.

The critical questions answered based on primary survey consist of three parts. There is a focus on adult illiterates and their socio-economic backgrounds. In another part focus has been made on those, who have ever attended AECs for achieving basic literacy skills or to get into the process of continuing education and what is impact of NLM on adult illiterates, ever attended AECs. Third part has focused on adult illiterates, never attended AECs, reason behind their non-attendance, and also who are the drop outs from literacy classes. On the basis of these analyses, the problems associated with structural mechanism of NLM and its approach are discussed.

The objectives of this study are (i) to analyse the patterns and trends of adult illiteracy at national level and in selected states and UTs and also the status of Haryana in comparison
to other states in India; (ii) to analyse patterns and trends of adult illiteracy in Haryana and its districts; (v) to focus on the extent of adult illiteracy among people of underprivileged section of the society and also on the socio-economic background of adult illiterates of NLM specified age group (15 -35 years), benefited by NLM (National Literacy Mission) activities; (vi) to focus on the socio-economic background of adult illiterates of NLM specified age group (15 -35 years), left out from NLM (National Literacy Mission) activities; (viii) to explore the structural organisation of NLM and role of NLM in augmenting literacy programme in sample villages in the sample districts of Haryana; (ix) to analyse the benefits of NLM and to analyse the areas where NLM couldn’t leave remarkable impact.

In Haryana, NLM has shown some major impact on community in some districts, whereas in some districts, the impact is insignificant. Two sample districts, Karnal and Mahendragarh are located in different eco-cultural zones. In both districts NLM has already been launched and Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) completed, but these two districts show a contrast in terms of performance and progress in NLM activities. Karnal, located in the eastern part of Haryana, bordering Uttar Pradesh, has shown a remarkable achievement during NLM activities to promote adult education while Mahendragarh district, located in southern part of the state bordering Rajasthan, has not shown notable progress in terms of adult education and literacy despite the formal launch of NLM activities in this district.

From two sample districts, eight sample villages were surveyed, when these two districts were in different phases of NLM activities. From each of the sample districts, four villages have been selected from four different Community Development Blocks. In total 582 adult illiterates were interviewed in 362 households; each of these households consists of at least one adult illiterate of 15-35 age group. Another 74 volunteers were also interviewed to have an idea about the linkage between socio-economic profiles of volunteers and profiles of adult learners in AECs.
9.1. Findings of the Study

The concept of adult literacy and education is not new in India, but the mode of implementing policies for adult education has been changed through time and space. There has been remarkable influence of political activities and decisions in the democratic set up of the country on the policy implementation process for promoting adult literacy and education. In this study, analysis has been made on the spatial and temporal trends of adult illiteracy at national and state levels in India and also at district and village levels in Haryana, policy aspects associated with NLM and related activities at various levels.

9.1.1. Historical Perspectives of Policies on Adult Education

Analysis on historical perspectives on policies and programmes has revealed that up to 1976, adult education programme could not take the shape of a national programme in the true sense of the term mainly because of lack of political commitments and full-heartedness of previous efforts. Because of the population increase at faster rate and half heartedness of past efforts, number of illiterates raised 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 on various policies, programmes and activities for promoting adult education, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Perception of adult education as literacy education: 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.
2. Slow process of change in the character of adult education: The process of change in the character of adult education is slow. 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 trend indicates that Indian adult education is gradually shedding its character as an exclusive government programme and shaping up as a people’s programme.

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3. Recent trend prioritising partnership in implementation process: 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 UTs, 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.

4. Lack of strict adherence to the common framework: 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.

Analysis on the impact of adult education policies in programmes in the states and UTs reveals the role the policies and programmes have played so far. Inter-state comparison of pattern and trends of adult illiteracy reveals that there are some important facts which need to be analysed further for policy implementation for adult literacy and education.

9.1.2. National and State Level Patterns and Trends of Adult Literacy and Education

The findings of the analysis on ‘Adult Illiteracy: Inter-State Patterns and Trends’ focus on two aspects: (i) what is the stock of adult illiterates and what is their character in terms of distributional pattern and trend of adult illiteracy in the states with reference to last three decades, (ii) what influence the adult education policies and strategies could bring to the pattern and trend.

There are at eight states, which have shown persistent problem of high illiteracy rate mainly because of burden of adult illiterates; these are Uttar Pradesh, Bihar in north India, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya in eastern part, Orissa in eastern coast, Rajasthan in western part, Madhya Pradesh in central India and Andhra Pradesh in southern part of India. In all these states, female illiteracy rate is also higher than the national average, except for Meghalaya where female illiteracy rate is less than national average, but male illiteracy rate is higher than the national average. Education among the children has
shown progress in last few decades as also reflected by decrease in volume of illiterates in 15-19 age group in 1981-1991. 17 states and UTs out of 25 selected states and UTs have shown decrease in volume of illiterates in this age group during this decade.

Major portion of females who were under 10-14 years age group during 1991 census enumeration might have not been benefited by formal schooling activities. Because 20-24 age group females during 2001 census enumeration shows an increase in terms of absolute number of illiterates and the exponential growth rate is also showing positive value. One major reason of increase in volume of total illiterates during 1981-1991 was the increase in the absolute number of adult illiterates.

There was stock of adult illiterates in 15+ age group among which only the illiterates of 15-34 were targeted by NLM as beneficiaries; therefore the stock of illiterates in 35+ age group were getting accumulated even after launch of NLM as there was no special drive for the illiterates of this age group. The age group below 15 years have shown a decline in illiteracy, but there is still a tendency of addition of illiterates in adult age groups that results increase in illiteracy rate towards higher age group. There is also almost a stable percentage share of adult illiterates in three adult age groups, i.e. 15-24, 20-24 and 25-29. Maximum addition in 35+ age group in each decade and also lack of any policy implementation for these illiterates have resulted increase in the share of this age group in total stock of adult illiterates. Inferences made on the basis of discussion are as follows:

(x) The trend during 1981-1991 shows that NAEP couldn’t bring much change in volume of illiterates, especially adult illiterates up to 1991, although the rate of illiteracy decreased to some extent at the national and state levels. NAEP was introduced on October 2, 1978.

(xi) There has been a vicious cycle in spread of adult illiteracy which is unavoidably related with retention of children below 15 years in formal education. In all Five Year Plans, efforts have been made during this decade to promote education and schooling among the children. Despite that, school enrolment has not yet achieved 100 per cent and even if it increases, the number of drop out cases hampers the ultimate promotion of education. And most of these drop-outs are added to the total number of adult illiterates after crossing the age of 15.

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(xii) The progress among the females has been found more than that of the males in most of the states because of two reasons: (i) the progress among females started from lower rate in all the states and UTs, males’ illiteracy rate has been less than females in all the decades in all the states/UTs; (ii) females have shown active participation in NLM activities in most of the states/UTs.

(xiii) There is a trend of decrease in volume or absolute number of illiterates and at the same time in the percentage of illiterates. It indicates that the proportion of people attending education among all the age groups is increasing and the trend is being carried on from one generation to the next.

(xiv) There are disparities in spread of adult literacy and education in terms of both gender and space. But, the recent trends have revealed signs of progress towards decline in gaps and disparities.

(xv) The progress among all the adults took place in a slow pace while the progress among the adults of 15-34 age group shows a remarkable growth, especially during last decade (1991-2001). It can be inferred as an impact of programmes and initiatives for promoting adult literacy.

(xvi) Data on the number of people going to the literacy centres states that at the national level, the percentage of people going to the literacy centres is very poor. Among the illiterates only 0.68 per cent are going to the literacy centres. Some reasons behind the poor percentage of illiterates attending literacy centres can be assumed. Although NLM was launched in 1988, many of the states are still in the process of formalising NLM activities and in many states it has been launched during late 90s, when the enumeration of 2001 census was almost over. Therefore the participation in literacy classes in literacy centres is expected to be improved by the next decade and the next census may reflect the impact.

9.1.3. District Level Patterns and Trends of Adult Literacy and Education in Haryana

The discussion on ‘Adult Illiteracy in Haryana: Inter-District Patterns and Trends’ reveals some facts on the recent trends of adult illiteracy in the districts of Haryana, which are as follows:
1. **Isolated impact of NLM activities:** There has been rarely an exceptional impact of the educational programmes over the population and some of the age groups have remained almost untouched by the educational development activities. A major portion of illiterates are from 30-34 and 35+ age groups in 2001. The total number of illiterates in adult age groups has increased mainly in 30-34 and 35+ age groups except for a few cases.

2. **Maximum increase in absolute figures of illiterates in urban areas:** Increase in absolute figures of illiterates in various age groups including all ages is found maximum in urban areas; it further indicates that the rural areas of Haryana have shown a better progress in respect of both elementary and adult education. Although it seems to be a healthy trend that the rural areas of the districts of Haryana have not experienced increase in terms of volume of illiterates, but, at the same time, increasing trend of illiterates in urban areas seems to be alarming. Despite having better literacy scenario in urban areas in comparison to rural areas, the accumulation of illiterate population may result some imbalance in socio-economic growth of the state in near future.

3. **Illiteracy rate higher than national average in some districts:** The changes, brought by the policy implementation for compulsory education for children below 15 years of age and intensive campaign at the grassroots level for promoting adult literacy and continuing education, are reflected through the decennial census data, available since 1971 for Haryana. Although the state level data shows illiteracy rates (both among male and female) lower than that of national average, but in respect of individual level of performance of the districts, the scenario is not always the same.

4. **Limited evidences of remarkable success in adult education:** There are some areas where adult education and literacy programmes have achieved remarkable success, one of such examples is Kurukshetra where adult literacy and continuing education programmes have taken the shape of a massive social campaign that could influence adjacent districts to a great extent. There are three districts in Haryana, where Continuing Education (CE) phase has been started; these are Kurukshetra, Panchkula and Karnal. The impact of adult education programme is expected to be reflected through the numerical decline of illiterates in the next census. More than the numerical decline of illiteracy, it is the element of social change that has come up significantly as evident from some incidences that took place in last few years after introduction of NLM activities.
It is evident that NLM couldn’t bring the majority of the adult illiterates of the targeted age group into its curriculum. Therefore, a major part of the adult illiterates are excluded from the benefit of NLM activities. Even those, who have ever been into NLM initiated literacy classes, may be vulnerable to illiteracy if they discontinue before achieving basic level of literacy. To reveal the socio-economic profiles of adult illiterates and also facts and factors associated with attendance and non-attendance of literacy classes by the adult illiterates, analysis has been made on the adult illiterates in sample villages.

9.1.4. Adult Illiterates in Villages of Haryana and Impact of NLM on Them

Discussion on socio-economic characteristics of adult illiterates in sample villages has provided: (i) socio-economic character of adult illiterates in the villages of Haryana, (ii) adult illiterates never attended literacy classes in AECs, (iii) adult illiterates ever attended literacy classes in AECs and completed primers for achieving basic literacy skills and (iv) adult illiterates never attended literacy classes in AECs, but discontinued without achieving basic literacy skills. The conclusions drawn from this chapter are as follows:

5. The participation of male illiterates was remarkably less in all the sample villages. The main cause behind the lack of enrolment of male illiterates into NLM activities was rooted into the patriarchal social formation of Haryana.

6. Despite having acute problem of illiteracy, SC people of sample villages of both of these two districts, have shown very less participation in AECs. More than one-third of total sample potential learners belonged to Scheduled Castes (SC) and most of them were socio-economically marginalised. Social isolation from higher caste people in sample villages resulted limited enrolment of adult illiterates who were from SC households. Social exclusion of lower caste people and a deliberate neglect regarding this fact has been observed at village level because of the set pattern of distribution of works in the village as per the caste hierarchy.

7. The proportion of labour was more in case of never attended illiterates. Economic status of households played a major role in attendance of literacy classes in the villages.
8. Most of the potential learners who were married females and who belonged to households of agricultural labourers or cultivators, hardly felt the need of basic literacy skills.

It has been observed that majority of the participants in literacy classes were females. Social background and traditions paved the way to motivate women to participate in NLM. Literacy classes provided an opportunity to a large number of women learners and volunteers to meet, to talk and to share, and to break the social isolation, structured for women in traditional patriarchal society. The classes provided social space to them away from home and offered them an opportunity to meet in a group to share their common experiences and knowledge about many aspects of day to day life. Participation of women in literacy classes in Adult Education Centres (AECs) under NLM activities was facilitated by several other factors also such as association of the learners with the volunteers and motivators, timing of the classes etc.

Females ever attended AECs were not only from NLM specified age group, there were many cases where participants were more than 35 years of age and in some cases, they were also below 15 years. Enrolment of people above 35 is a positive sign in terms of motivation within the community for adult education; on the other hand, enrolment of children into literacy classes indicates lack of formal schooling by some school children.

Causes of drop outs from literacy classes included lack of motivation from family members and also lack of interest towards literacy showing no immediate impact or benefit. Apart from socio-economic aspects associated with the adult illiterates of villages and their attendance and non-attendance of literacy classes in AECs, there are some issues emerged from the discussion which highlights some limitations of NLM activities at the grass root level in Haryana.

It is apparent from this study that the policy framework somehow has not yet achieved the satisfactory level of success in all areas of Haryana. In Karnal, although NLM couldn’t obtain that status in terms of its achievements, but the incessant effort of NLM authority in this district laid the structured social development process with continuity which left major impact on all the communities in Karnal. Therefore in Karnal, although motivational activities couldn’t ensure enrolment of potential learners from every nook and
corner of the society, but it was able to establish awareness about NLM activities among potential learners in the villages. On the other hand, in Mahendragarh, where PLP was sanctioned, but not started in all the villages where TLC was over; 42.86 per cent of potential learners were found in sample villages who were unaware about NLM activities and Adult Education Centres.

The critical issues emerged regarding association of adult illiterates with NLM activities are as follows:

1. Organisational problems associated with social and economic problems limit the scope and impact of NLM in villages of Haryana.
2. There was hardly any initiative to help neo-learners to associate adult education with their daily life. It usually causes high rate of drop out from AECs. No special measure was taken by NLM for the illiterates of households without single literate member.
3. NLM activities could not motivate maximum number of total potential learners from the households having adult illiterates of NLM specified age group in sample villages.

It has been observed that social status of the literate agents of the households has motivated the illiterate members of the households to achieve basic literacy skills. But the impact of policy-centred development activities could not bring long-term impact at the household level. Policy implementation process have played a major role to make the mopping up programmes more effective.

9.1.5. NLM, Its Organisational Strength and Access in Villages

The chapter on organisational structure and access of NLM reveals that although organisational structure and framework of NLM was almost similar in all the districts, but the intensity of activities varies from one district to another. Differences in terms of effectiveness of policy implementation were caused by lack of motivation from the community; lack of motivation from people associated with policy implementation at grassroot level; delay in policy implementation at grass root level affecting consistency of activities; lack of coordination among policy implementers of various levels due to redtapism; lack of coordination in between policy implementers and beneficiaries. Apart from the organisational limitations, there was a limitation in the process of identifying the target beneficiaries. Instead of random quantification of adult illiterates, it was essential to identify
the spatial and temporal character of illiterates, for that identifying the illiterates as per their social groups or economic profile is important.

It has been observed that in the entire system of NLM impact analysis has been overemphasized in terms of achievements of neo-learners at the village level. But the root causes behind the limitations of NLM have not been focused always. One of the major aspect associated with the impact of NLM at grass root level is the social and economic profiles of volunteers. In the entire system of NLM impact analysis has been overemphasized in terms of achievements of neo-learners at the village level. But the root causes behind the limitations of NLM have not been focused always. One of the major aspect associated with the impact of NLM at grass root level is the social and economic profiles of volunteers. There was a need to monitor the progress of volunteers apart from impact analysis while evaluating the programmes. The issues emerged from volunteers’ profiles are as follows:

7. The remarkable participation of females in literacy classes and remarkable absence of male illiterates in literacy classes might have some long-term impact which emerged from the discussion.

8. There were both positive and negative impacts of involvement of school students in teaching learning process of NLM.

9. Sometimes volunteers’ profile and irregularity in classes encouraged drop outs. The untrained teachers didn’t have the skill to keep the adult learners motivated up to the level of achieving basic literacy skills. Therefore, achievement rate in terms of completion of three primers was remarkably low.

10. In the villages, where volunteers from lower castes actively participated in NLM activities, success was remarkable.

11. There are some limitations from the volunteers’ sides, related to their economic status.

12. It was found that sometimes training was being given more emphasis rather than learning process in JCKs. The adult illiterates, never attended AEC, were found to be keen to know more about sewing training rather than adult literacy and continuing education. Therefore actual motto of JCKs gets affected.
9.2. Inferences

Secondary data analysis has shown that spatial culture influences the development of education to some extent although policy implementation process has its own impact within political boundaries. Therefore, while implementing any policy and also while analysing its impact character of space must be taken into consideration, instead of considering only the political boundary. There are two aspects which must be highlighted here, both of which relates space with development of adult education.

i. In case of districts of Haryana, the districts adjacent to Himachal Pradesh might not provide a different scenario in comparison to other districts. Himachal Pradesh has already shown a remarkable progress in development of education, the socio-cultural development of this state might have influenced the areas adjacent to this state to some extent. It can be assumed that because of this spatial influence, some districts adjacent to Himachal Pradesh have shown exceptional response to NLM activities during last decade.

ii. Spatial distribution of adult illiterates is dependent on the mode and extent of migration, especially in the urban areas and rural-urban periphery and also in specific states and UTs. Therefore, it is essential to point out the segments of the country, where immigration has caused increase in adult illiteracy. At the macro level also, impact of migration has been found in some states such as Kerala, Goa and Nagaland and selected UTs which has left impact on the adult illiteracy status of those states and UTs. In Haryana, absolute figures of adult illiterates has increased in the last decade mainly in the urban areas and also in more urbanised districts like Gurgaon and Faridabad. Adult illiteracy here is of a different nature, therefore it may need a different extent of attention. Such areas all over India need special attention for promotion of adult illiteracy.

When the programmes for promoting adult literacy and continuing education have been launched, the programmes have been either unsuccessful or partially successful in many areas. There have been very limited cases, where the adult education programmes could enable the target groups to understand its long term impact on the entire development process. The problem has been viewed more in the context of teaching methods and of
learning to read and write rather than relating the teaching-learning process to daily life of adults. There are cases, where potential adult learners have not responded as per the expectation as the adult learners have some own priorities of works and involvement into works. In many cases, adult education centres are attended often largely by young persons who are supposed to be enrolled in formal schools. From these facts, it can be assumed that there is a need to analyse initiatives and their mechanism apart from evaluation of districts and states in terms of progress of NLM. In many cases, efforts are made to begin with adult literacy and most often not perceived as a felt need, therefore lack of self motivation or community motivation has been experienced.

9.3. Ways Ahead

There are numerous studies on education of various levels, but there is still lack of sufficient studies on adult literacy and adult education, based on secondary data analysis. For planning framework and policy implementation for adult illiterates in India, it is essential to analyse the illiteracy among adult population in India. Therefore, data-based analysis and research on adult illiteracy on each state is required in India.

For research purpose, there is a need for age-wise database on illiterates at the village level, as it may provide a better way out to research more intensively on the progress towards literacy through activities like NLM at the grass-root level. Research studies, which are based on sample surveys, may have better scope of analysis if age-wise database on illiterates at the village level is made available by the government.

There is an immediate need to identify the areas of special need at the household level which have illiteracy as a chronic problem for generations. There are households in the villages without a single literate member which need to be more emphasized while implementing adult education programmes in the villages. But there is no method of identifying such adult illiterates till now in the mechanism of NLM.

NLM also needs to re-structure its study materials as per the need and interest of age-specific groups of people. The contents which are interesting to adult learners of above 30 years, may not be of interest to the adult illiterates, who are recently dropped out from school and now illiterates of 15-19 age group.
It has been found throughout the study that adult literacy has not yet been placed within a wider social context. The influence of policy implementation for adult literacy and adult education has been observed more in already socially developed areas of the country where awareness among people regarding value of literacy and continuing education has paved the way for a social movement for literacy and education at all levels and among people of all age groups. But there are areas, which are far from the process of such awareness generation. These areas immediately need to break the barrier of social exclusion, which stands as a major hurdle to the spread of impact of adult literacy and continuing education in all the segments of the society. It is essential to interpret illiteracy as a form of marginalisation or social exclusion and for overcoming this constraint, adult literacy and continuing education need to be placed within a broad social perspective.