CHAPTER SIX

(Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations)

Epitome

The study with all its aspects is summarized in this chapter. The findings are presented and discussed with suggested use for planning future Adult Education programmes for women.
CHAPTER SIX

6.1 Summary and Conclusions:

In view of their socially prescribed, traditionally accepted and psychologically imbibed roles, women view themselves as non-learners especially of literacy skills.

Adult education, although in policy planned with an integrated approach, remains a mere literacy programme. The reasons for this, amongst others, are poorly, equipped functionaries with little or no support from the organizing bodies.

To reduce the apathy, it was felt that adult education activities if built around their role directed interests, would become more meaningful to the women learners. Hence mother-craft was thought to be an ideal focal point for such activities. Mother-craft education is a term coined in this experiment to include education with emphasis on the role-directed interests of Indian women. While it is chiefly health education, it also encompasses skill training chiefly in the areas of home improvement and family income augmentation, as well as other relevant topics.

Suitable training of functionaries, and development of a firm support mechanism are imperative for such an endeavour.
With this background base, a model for women's adult education was developed and tested through action research, in a total of 15 experimental centres. The experimental classes were a mixed group of urban and rural classes comprising of beneficiaries from all classes and castes and a variety of economic strata.

Ten classes were used as control to the experiment against which the performance of the experimental classes could be compared. Both the experimental and the control groups could be subdivided further as 8 and 4 respectively* were organized by the S.N.D.T. College of Home Science under the UGC scheme and 7 and 7 respectively* were organized by the District Adult Education Department of Pune, under the Govt. Scheme.

Out of this sample 2 control and 2 experimental classes dropped out at various stages from the Govt. Group (EG + EGR) and one experimental centre dropped out from the Home Science (EH) group.

The chief features of the model were:

2. Continuous monitoring through scheduled and unscheduled visits.

* Experimental and Control
3. Special Training to instructors:
   i) Eight days intensive training, initially;
   ii) Follow-up training meetings every fortnight;

4. Provision of teaching-learning material as and when required and discussion of its meaning and possible use during training.

5. Exchange of instructor-skills.

6. Arrangement of special programmes.

7. Sessions handled by the investigator.

The chief findings may be briefly listed as follows:

1. The hypotheses that mother-craft education helps generate better interest was proved. But it was felt that for proving the same more conclusively a longer time-frame is necessary.

2. Regular training proved invaluable.

3. Guided but need-based following of a syllabus ensured better coverage of topics.

4. Material support, especially visual aids, provided on library basis ensured definite discussion of the topic in class and better retention by both the learners and the instructors.
5. Instructor's note-book with points dictated by the investigator helped retention and recall of knowledge.

6. Skill training in craft was also found to be useful.

7. It was not uncommon to find many women not enrolled in the AE class attending discussions on awareness relevant matters and skill-training, lending further support to the hypotheses.

8. There was qualitative change observed in the experimental classes in terms of -

   i) Regularity of attendance,
   ii) Coming to class without daily invitation/persuasion,
   iii) Enthusiasm to learn, start new projects, demand for new programmes,
   iv) Change from passive learners to active participants,
   v) Better communication,
   vi) Decrease in pessimism on the part of the instructors.
9. The performance of the experimental classes on all counts was significantly higher than the corresponding control group classes; especially so in the case of elements of awareness. Within the experimental groups the performance of the Govt. groups was higher than the Home Science group inspite of better material support available to the latter. This has been found to have an explanation in the spring-board action of training and support to the Govt. experimental centres and the Home Science centres technically operating in a longer time frame.

10. The total information obtained by all the experimental groups and the portions of the same assimilated as well as put into action, was also significantly higher. Infact in most control groups, especially the Govt. Control Groups, the learners were not exposed to anything except literacy skills.*

11. As a result of this experiment it is felt that AE would be further improved if coupled with home-based income-generating activities.

* In once case even this was limited.
6.2 Indications for Improvement of Future AE Programmes:

Through the implementation of the experimental model, it may be claimed that a large portion of the hypotheses was proved conclusively. This is with regards to the necessity of development of a firm support mechanism including regularly repeated training. The other part of the hypotheses that the planned subject-matter (mother-craft) being more close to women's liking, would generate greater interest amongst the clientele and therefore make adult-education more successful (by decreasing the drop-out rate and increasing regularity of attendance), was partially proved, with an indication that for further proving this point a bigger time frame is absolutely essential. Some of the lessons learnt from this experiment can be summarized as follows.

1. A firm support mechanism in terms of man-power and teaching-learning material, along with a strong central coordination adequate supervision, and as few bureaucratic hassles as possible is the key to the success of such a programme.

2. Such support can easily be provided with very little extra effort and no additional expense.
by the existing staff. There is only a need of a strong will succeed on the part of the concerned personnel.

3. The instructors, out of their own inadequacy in handling other topics, and no suitable support at the right time have managed to find the easy way out of hiding this inadequacy in the garb of learner-demand for a literacy biased AE class. Need for some unlearning on their part is indicated.

For this model to achieve a greater rate of success, this weaning of the instructors away from the literacy bias needs to be successfully accomplished. This may take time. Alternatively, the model could be implemented with a fresh batch of functionaries not so sold to the formula:

Adult Education = Literacy Teaching

a) Material from other departments like Health, Social Forestry, etc., is available freely for merely an asking. Since the need of the AE functionaries is greater, instead of getting into the politics of blaming each other's departments, the AE officials could procure the same, or direct the functionaries
to the concerned offices.

This material has been found to be useful for generation of information which is most relevant to the clients' need, and it augments the instructors' poor resources.

b) Organizations like the SRC who produce an immense lot of specialized material for AE could think in terms of a system of distribution of material so as to reach the instructors directly, before spending more time and intellectual energy on production of new material.

c) A reference book/kit containing notes on different topics to be handled is necessary in view of the limited capacity of the instructors with respect to assimilation and sequential reproduction of the lessons. More important still, such a book, if produced, should reach every instructor.

4. Guidance regarding topics to be handled every 8/15 days proves useful.

5. The supervisor or the guiding officials need to visit classes regularly (once every month at least)
and handle topics which are difficult for the instructor to discuss. Chiefly among such topics were found to be topics relevant to Superstitions, abstract topics like Equality of men and women, Equality of castes, Position of women in family and society, etc.; and difficult to handle topics like Legal provisions, Banking, Women's health problems. Alternatively, expert lectures on the same may be arranged directly in the classes. This has to be done by the organizing officials. Leaving it to the instructor, as is the present-day practice, will not be successful.

6. The model implementation has also shown that although non-formal in approach, targets have to be set. Topics to be covered have to be specified. Evaluation expectations if specified regularly helps achievement of the same.

7. The action research has, in addition, demonstrated that in view of:-

1) The slow learning, difficult assimilation and poor quality of reproduction by the instructors,
ii) Absenteeism and high drop-out rates of the women—learners, and their poor capacity of assimilation,

iii) Effects of the history of the AE programme,

iv) Lack of support and coordination, and other similar reasons;

AE is necessarily a slow process. Hence it is absolutely outrageous to expect change within the span of the prescribed 8/12 months.

Even provided the ideal conditions of firm support, good coordination, motivated teachers and learners, etc., not much can be achieved in such a short span of time. Else the same women keep coming to the class again and again.

3. The model managed to draw at least a few women voluntarily to the class and change the negative attitude of a few more. However, this was entirely dependent on the instructor's capacity to get over her literacy bias. The same is seen by this investigator as a highly positive result personally, which over a larger time-frame would definitely spell complete success of the model.
9. Many programmes of social relevance undertaken in the communities or AE classes go waste. The reason for same was discovered to be lack of training for follow-up of these programmes. Most such attempts are looked upon as entertainment and thoughtlessly enjoyed but the messages meant to reach the audience are not assimilated. Hence all such programmes arranged in the experiment were only after ensuring that the instructors were prepared for follow-up of the same. The system if followed would aid AE greatly.

10. Lastly the investigator cannot but mention that in comparison to the large national effort in terms of money spent and man-power engaged, very little is being achieved by the AE programme.

The investigator has even with this limited number of classes found one or multiples of the following phenomena to exist:

- a) The instructor missing.
- b) The class missing.

*Exhibitions, street plays, demonstrations, puppet plays, etc.*
c) No progress or very little progress by the end of the year (see results of achievements test – especially the control groups).

d) Non-cooperative supervisors whom the instructors allege of mishandling their salaries and not helping generally.

e) Officials accepting the extremely poor level of functioning.

f) Instructors handling classes sponsored by the Govt. Department, voluntary organizations, as well as universities, often:

i) Without a single one really operating,

ii) The same class being shown to the different sponsoring bodies to get payment from all sources.

g) The very few motivated instructors having lost interest in sincere good work with a realization that the prize schemes floated for motivation are caste-biased and the prizes more often than not go to undeserving candidates.

Another aspect of the prize scheme discovered was that the candidates who do get the prizes are dis-
satisfied with its nature because the poor rural
prize-winner does not know what to do with imple-
ments like an oven in a village where there is no
electricity, or a knitting machine, she cannot
afford to use nor has the skill for the same. She
would rather rebuild her collapsing house with
the cash which the office according to the rules
cannot pay her.