INTRODUCTION

The SBM was started throughout the country from 8th Sept. 2009 in the place where the adult female literacy rate is below 50%, as per 2001 census, is eligible for coverage under the Saakshar Bharat Programme. But in Manipur this massive programme of adult education was launched on 15th Jan. 2010 at Thoubal District and the same was launched simultaneously at the three hilly district viz. Chandel, Senapati, Tamenglong of the state. The main objectives of the programme are eradication of illiteracy, retention of the literacy among the age group of 15 years and above. In order to fulfill the demand and needs of the adult learners, an assortment of teaching learning programmes are given to the learners as an integrated continuum of learning that is a) Basic Literacy, b) Basic Education, c) Vocational Education and d) Continuing Education.

The SBM is being implemented through well equipped multiple functional Adult Education Centre (AEC) at panchayat level for delivering entire range of activities including basic literacy, basic education, vocational and continuing education. It is a place for community members to carry out various activities to improve their overall living condition. On the other hand model AEC is also an AEC which get financial support from the Public Private Partnership (PPP). It is also set up to provide institutional, managerial and resource support to literacy and lifelong education. It acts as centre for registration of learners for all teaching learning activities in its jurisdiction. In Thoubal District, out of the 64 AECs, 27AECs are in Thoubal block and 15 AECs in Kakching block and under this there are 5 model AECs set up in the district in 5 constituencies, namely Thoubal A/C, Khangabok A/C, Tentha A/C, Wabagai A/C and Hianglam A/C under the container Coorporation of India Ltd. (CONCOR). The five model AECs are namely, Khangabok Part-I Khullakpam Leikai Model AEC, Sangaiyumpham Part-I Mairelkhun Mayai Leikai Model AEC, Irong Thokchom Thoudam Wangmataba Model AEC, Hianglam Awang Leikai Model AEC, Keirak Tomalmakhong Model AEC.

PHYSICAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PROGRAMME
Assessment of competence of the population in literacy skills is important for getting feedback of the success and outcome of the programme. It would also promote courage, self-confidence and self-actualization among the learners. First time in India National Literacy Mission Authority (NLMA) undertook nationwide learners’ assessment in collaboration with National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS). The basic involvement of various governmental and non-governmental institutions. The system of learner’s assessment includes assessing literacy skills as well as general awareness and empowerment through participation in various activities. The NLMA has evolved a systematic mechanism for learners’ assessment and certification. The learners are provided opportunities for appearing in the assessment tests conducted twice in a year during March and August. The system of learners’ assessment includes assessing literacy skills as well as general awareness and empowerment through participation in various activities. The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) is closely associated in the process of Learners Assessment and Certification. Learners are assessed in reading, writing and numeracy.

After the launch of SBP, as described by the National Literacy Mission Authority, Government of India, to conduct learners evaluation for basic literacy programme, State Literacy Mission Authority (SLMA), Manipur in collaboration with National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and State Resource Centre (SRC) Shillong conducted evaluation test on 20th August 2010 in which about 865 Basic learners participated the evaluation test in nine examination centres through District Literacy Samiti, Thoubal. The second National level learner’s assessment was held on 6th March 2011. The number of learners registered was 4114 learners, 670 male learners and 3444 female learner appeared in the assessment. The third round assessment was held on 20th August 2011. Registered 14316 learners, out of which, 608 were males and 13708 were females. The fourth round assessment test was held on 18th March 2012 registering 31585 adult learners, 3968 were males and 27617 were female. The fifth round assessment test was held on 17th March, 2013 registering 37,799 adult learners and the number of passed (A-B Grade) were 7,480 learners.

The learners’ assessment examinations were successfully conducted, and a good number of learners have been certified to be literate by the National Institute of Open School (NIOS). Most of the learners have reported appearing in the examinations and learners are of the opinion that the number of classes held before the assessment is adequate. As regards to passing certificates, majority of the learners are yet to receive their passing certificates in the District. Learners expressed their satisfaction with the way classes are conducted. Most of them are of the opinion that they benefited from SBP. The learners now feel that they are more confident and have realized the importance of education after enrolling in SBP. Now, people are quite aware and very enthusiastic about Saakshar Bharat and hope that the government will continue this programme in future bringing more changes and development in the society. The SBP had brought a remarkable changes and implementing the programme successfully in Thoubal District.

LEARNERS’ ATTITUDE ON SAAKSHAR BHARAT PROGRAMME

Teaching- Learning environment

The present study shows that most of the adult learners are from poor family. So, most of them do not get much time for learning. Their main objectives for joining the adult education programme are to enable reading, writing and arithmetic. The classes of the learners carried out in the Literacy Learning Centres (LLCs). These LLCs are mostly run in the VT’s houses. The classes are held regularly in most of the LLCs. Most of the learners have reported that the classes are adequately held round the year. As
regards to timings, learners are fine with the timing of the class. Most of the learners have not answered to the query related to the duration of the classes. Majority of the learners attend classes mostly in summer as compare to winter season. The distance of the LLC from learners home is within the range of 1 Km to attend the literacy classes. Most of the classes were held mainly at the volunteer teacher’s house. Regarding the adequacy of space in the classroom there is a mixed reaction among the learners; most of them were dissatisfied with the lighting facilities, space and the infrastructure of the classroom. As per the learners, majority of them sit on mats in the classroom, besides sitting on ground in some GPs. Furthermore, majority of the LLCs (Literacy learning Centres) do not have drinking water facilities, except some Gram Panchayats. Proper toilet facility, proper ventilation and proper lighting facility for night classes is also not available in most of the LLCs.

**Supply of learning materials**

The learners have a mixed reaction regarding the timely supply of learning materials. Further, regarding supply of learning materials like books, pencils etc, and the majority of the learners reported not receiving the materials in time and good quality. Volunteer teachers (VTs) and Preraks takes the classes in the centres. The learners have also reported getting help in studies from prerak or VTs besides class timings. As reported by the learners, the VTs or Preraks regularly come to the centres and takes the attendance of the learners and also encouraged the learners while teaching. The VTs had used mostly the method of group discussion while teaching the learners and evaluating them. Majority of the learners are satisfied with the internal assessment methods and its frequency.

**Assessment and impact**

Assessment is a process of collecting evidence and using it to judge the degree of goodness or worth of the entity being evaluated for various types of decision making. It occupies an important place in the context of adult education and also to determine the effectiveness of the programme. Most of the learners have reported appearing in the Nationwide Assessment of National Literacy Mission Authority-NIOS once or twice. In some Gram Panchayat, the learners have also taken the Nationwide Assessment thrice. Learners are of the opinion that the number of classes held before the assessment is adequate. As regards to passing certificates, majority of the learners are yet to receive their passing certificates in Thoubal.

Learner expressed their satisfaction with the way classes are conducted. In most of the centres of Thoubal District, the learners have been able to read newspaper, books, invitation, write one or two paragraphs continuously and calculation like addition, subtraction and multiplication. Some of the learners have express that they can go anywhere without the help of others. The interest of the learners over the matter was the main factor to make the programme a grand success. Most of them are of the opinion that they have benefitted from SBP. Regular teaching and supervision all the days and the co-operation is also one of the important factors for the success of the adult education programme. The learners now feel that they are more confident and they can interact independently and have realized the importance of education after enrolling in Saakshar Bharat Program. Most of them expressed that they wanted to continue their study/learning and the equivalency programme of SBP may provide the opportunity.
ROLES OF DISTRICT LITERACY SOCIETY, THOUBAL DISTRICT

The District Literacy Samiti, Thoubal was reconstituted in 2010 as per guidelines of the NLMA, Govt. of India with Adhyaksha Thoubal district as chairman and one of the officer of the project (AE) as Member Secretary. The DLS, Thoubal had conducted various environment building activities to create a sustainable demand for literacy; make the literacy campaign participative, voluntary and more visible. Environment Building Committee of SLMA, Manipur with resource and financial support for SRC, NEHU produced various EB materials. The DLS, Thoubal in collaboration with BGVS, New Delhi, SLMA, Manipur, SRC, NEHU, and JSS Thoubal organized a Kala Jatha (Saakshar Bharat Yatra) on the 14th March, 2012 as an environment building programme Saakshar Bharat Mission in Manipur State.

In Thoubal District, the DLS had also organized various vocational training and awareness programme for the literacy and neo-literate learners on skill development as a part of convergence programme under SB in collaboration with SLMA, Manipur and Department of Home Science, G.P Women College and S.Kulla Women College, such as squash making, chips making, pickle making, preparation of Indian sweet dish, embroidery, flower and doll making, soap and detergent making hair cutting and beauty care on 26th May and 23rd June, 2012. The DLS, Thoubal had also organized many orientation training programs and basic computer awareness training for preraks of Model Adult Education Centres (MAECs) at the block and District level from time to time as per direction of the State Literacy Mission Authority, Manipur.

The JSS Thoubal District provides support only to the socio-economically backward and economically disadvantaged groups of rural and urban population such as men, women and youth, self-employed, neo-literates, prospective workers and their family members as well as unemployed youths.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND ROLES PLAYED BY SRC, NEHU, SHILLONG

There is no SRC for Manipur State. Presently, Manipur is under the SRC (NEHU), Shillong and only two resource persons were engaged for the successful implementation of the Saakshar Bharat Programme i.e., one is in Thoubal District and another in the Senapati District. The SRC, NEHU helped in organizing various capacities building training for personnel of SLMA, Manipur, DLSS, Resource persons and other functionaries of the District. Various training programmes including Primer, Environment Building, Material Development, Other capacity building of GP functionaries were given to resource person, Master trainers, VTs, Preraks, Block co-ordinators etc. In order to accelerate the process of implementation of SBP for female literacy, the SRCs played an important role in the State. According to the guidelines of the Government of India, the principle responsibility of SRC is to provide academic resource to all agencies in the states engaged in adult and continuing education programmes. The following are the objectives of the SRCs:

- Development of literacy materials (Primers), neo-literate Materials (books, booklets, etc) and other forms of literature;
- Development of training manuals for different levels of functionaries
- Imparting training for Resource persons, preraks, literacy educators, master trainers and district coordinators
- Development of audio-visual aids for adult education programmes
Monitoring and evaluation of literacy programmes being implemented by different agencies
Conduct research studies for the improvement of strategies for adult education programmes and
Innovations in the field of adult education

The SRC, NEHU is now given responsibility to look after the state of Manipur to accelerate the Saakshar Bharat Programme. The SRC, NEHU, Shillong has adopted one resource person from Thoubal block of Thoubal District. Accordingly, SRC has organized training programme for various functionaries at the state, district block and panchayat levels in collaboration with SLMA, DLS and PRIs. During the training the SRC team has identified Block Resource Persons to Co-ordinate/monitor/ evaluates the activities in the adopted block.

The SRC, NEHU has developed the basic literacy primers in 7 languages of Manipur and distributed to the Adult Education Centres with the help of State Literacy Mission Authority (SLMA) of Manipur. Certain preparatory activities like survey, uploading of household survey data in NLMA's web portal, opening of online account, engagement of co-ordinators, preraks and volunteer teachers, identification of the Adult Education Centres (AECs), distribution of teaching learning materials (TLM) to the AECs, community mobilization, training of functionaries, starting of literacy classes etc. have been completed in the state.

REMEDIAL MEASURES FOR IMPROVEMENT OF THE SAAKSHAR BHARAT PROGRAMME

The Saakshar Bharat Programme especially focus on female literacy is found to be quite successful as most of the learners can write their name, count number but in some areas of Thoubal District most of the learners can read newspaper and the number of female learners who had passed the NIOS-NLMA assessment were also increase year by year
In most of the centre of Thoubal District, the teaching learning materials provided to them are insufficient
Seating arrangement is mostly by mats and lighting arrangement is commonly with a candle or lamps that too are mostly from the pocket of the volunteer teachers
There is need for more awareness about the programme and lack of proper appreciation, motivation, incentive and reward for VTs for their efforts
Most of the prerak of the district doesn’t get their honorarium in time.
Though this programme has benefited many adult female illiterate, however it still lacks the reach and prominent awareness as the benefits are only limited to receiving basic education, which the learners feel and not helping them to the extent they need. They look forward to linking it with a means of earning their living which is missing in the programme in the present scenario.
Thoubal District is found to be the first with highest woman marginal workers which affects a lot in the female literacy programme in the District
Among the volunteer teacher, it is observed that most of them had faced many problems in making the learners to come out and learn at the adult education centres. They are sometime bound to visit to the houses of the learners to motivate and encourage them to come and attend the adult education centres.
It is found that most of the AECs in Thoubal District don’t maintained proper infrastructures and there was the irregularity attendance of the adult learners. Some adults just enrolled their names in the adult
education centre and drop-out because of the pressure of family work, illness, could not deviated from their normal works etc. and it is necessary to convince and motivate the learner or family members for retaining the drop-out rate in the literacy centres.

- In most of the AEC and the MAEC, the library and reading rooms are not properly maintained and insufficient. However, Library book donation campaign helping them to collect quite a number of books in some centres.
- There is lack of audio-visual facilities in most of the adult education centres of Thoubal District except in the Model AECs.
- In an AEC of Leisangthem, Thoubal District, Skill development programme is found to be conducted successfully under convergence programme with Home Science Department of one college.
- Kakching block is found to be weaker block according to the details of National Wide Assessments and observations through field visits reports.
- Number of visits by resource person of SRC to the Kakching block is almost nil because of the result that only Thoubal Block is the adopted Block in the District.
- In some muslim populated areas of Thoubal district like Lilong, Moijing, Phoudel, Sangaiyumfham, Sora, Cherapur, Keibung, Kiyam, Leitanpok, Amakcham etc, the number of literate person specially women is still low may be due to their social system and convention. However, the SB Programme makes it a different. They started to participate in the SB programme. Even then, the Department should give more and proper emphasis in such particular muslim populated areas so as to make the program more successful and to became a literate society.
- People are quite aware and very enthusiastic about the Literacy Programme now with the coming of Saakshar Bharat programme in the State. The Government and all stakeholders need to continue this program in the right path to bring more changes and development through Literacy.

**Conclusion**

The overall impression gathering from this study is that the performance of the SBP in Manipur is progressing though it may not be a great success at present under the guidance and supervision of State Department, District Lok Shiksha Samiti and voluntary organizations and more progress is shown every year in the SBP than TLC or PLP period. Community participation is of great importance in the successful implementation of the Saakshar Bharat programme and the value of the programme can be achieved only when adult learners, their family, and society are interested in the adult education programme.

With the change of the social scene in Manipur people are becoming conscious of the present social life which aims at happy and prosperous life. For the proper development of adult education there is need for good efficient and systematic planning. Co-operation and coordination of all the agencies should be ensured actually working in the field of adult education especially SBP. The state government should earnestly manage to impart purposefully and successfully the needed education among the different section of the people and it is quite clear that “mass involvement is the key for the successful implementation of the various literacy programme”. The SBP which aims to create a literate environment that bolters and sustains a literate society and provide ample opportunities for continuous improvement in the level of adult literacy. It will be a National response to development of quality human resource to meet the demands of a fast changing Bharat as well as challenges of globalization. It is probably for the
first time that Governmental perspective on literacy is being made to rely on phrases like the adult’s Right to literacy, Right perspective on literacy, Creating a literate environment, Sustain a literate society and Development of quality human resources.

Literacy and adult education skills are not being pursued just as a matter of adding to the number of the literates, but adding to the pool of quality of the human resources that the Nation so badly needs and the spread of education among women leads to improvement in their status which in turn leads to further educational, social and economic development. Thus, it can be said that “female education can play a great role for the socio-economic development of a country”. In our country, rapid growth of population acts as a serious drag on economic development. An educated woman can take a rational attitude in order to limit the size of her family. The success of family welfare and other developmental programmes depends largely on the quality of women. So,” women education is a much for a Saakshar Bharat”.

Reference
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