The purpose of this chapter is to discuss a perspective of adult education in the first section. In the remaining section attempts are made to present in brief the results and findings of some of the Indian researches and studies made in the field of adult education.

This is an age of rapid changes and vast development of science and technology. In an age of machines, of computers, of new implements, of new inputs, of new methods and techniques one needs to be properly educated. An educated person can take advantage of the knowledge of the past, understand the present and build the future. While an illiterate person cannot take advantage of the knowledge of the past and cannot build the future. He can barely understand the present. These illiterate adults tend to become a drag in the programmes for nation's progress. A nation which wants economic growth and development at a faster rate has to educate its adults in such a way that
they can participate in the developmental programmes intelligently, willingly and effectively. Thus education for adults is very important for developed and underdeveloped countries alike.

Importance of adult education

In India 70 percent of the population is illiterate. If someone were to prepare a literacy map of the world and colour the illiterate area black, India will, look like a dark continent. To set-up a good picture of literacy in India adult education is needed urgently.

Besides this the question is raised about the necessity of educating our adults. Can we not wait till the next generation which may be covered under the scheme of compulsory education? The answer is obviously 'No'. Illiteracy retards the development of the next generation of the country. Therefore, adult education is needed in India. The reasons for the importance of adult education are various. Some of them are as follows:

Economic reasons: Education is needed for economic development. After independence it was realised that the adult who tills the soil should know the nature of the soil and the
worker who turns the lathe should know the scientific process involved in production in order to be able to adopt to new practices and improve upon them. The pace of industrialization and modernization of agriculture and in general the economic progress of the country is hindered by the large number of illiterates, who constitute the work-force. For the desired economic development, education for adults, especially the illiterates is a must.

**Social reasons:** Adult education is also very important for a social change. Illiterate people cannot understand new ideas and new practices. Whether it is a family planning programme of social security which requires change of attitude and habits of life, the programme should be accepted by the people as a sensible one. Communicable diseases like small-pox take a heavy toll of life. People in general, rely on propitiating local deities for their wrath. This is the condition of appalling ignorance and superstition of rural people. It is only relevant education that can dispel ignorance and superstition. Thus for social change and to raise the social standards of our people adult education is very essential.

**Political reasons:** Adult education is today not only a social necessity but the top-most human right also. The illiterate men cannot form a real democracy. They do not understand
the duties and responsibilities of a citizen in a democracy. They are liable to be misled by evil-propaganda. Democracies do not flourish on uneducated electorates. Therefore for political awareness adult education is important for our democratic nation.

**Educational reasons:** The programme of adult education is needed so that the parents may take proper interest in the education of their children which can in turn lessen wastage and stagnation in primary education. Literate parents are likely to make the progress of primary education more rapid as well as more effective.

Adult education is also needed to make good the lack of formal schooling in the adults. Through adult education he may obtain such skills as reading, writing and arithmetic. After that he may continue his education either on his own or through other available avenues of education.

Thus from the various points of view, adult education is necessary, so that the vast majority of people can take an active part in the building of new India.

**Concept of adult education**

The concept of adult education has been very broad. Adult education in its broadest sense, signifies any form of learning
undertaken by or provided for mature men and women. Because of the wide scope of this meaning the term has had many cronolizations and interpretations, each built on some con­cepts of the learning process, some historical movement or some institutional pattern. Consequently it is important to understand the concept of adult education.

The phrase 'adult education' has been defined in differ­ent ways. As is very clear from the phrase 'adult education' it means making the adults literate. As a matter of fact, the meaning of adult education is much wider than this.

In Dictionary of education, Carter Good (1973) defines the phrase 'adult education' in the following words:

"adult education: any process by which men and women either alone or in groups, try to improve themselves by increasing their knowledge, skills or attitudes, or the process by which individuals or agencies try to improve men and women in these ways".  

(Good C.V., 1973, p.16)

International Dictionary of Education defines adult education as —

"Education provided for adults for general educational, rather than vocational, reasons. Adult education may be provided by a college/university extramural department or extension studies or other sponsoring
organizations such as the Workers' Educational Association. It has much in common with education permanent, life-long education and recurrent education."


These two definitions reveal broad concept of adult education. More broadly, it may be defined as a means of social adjustment and an educational movement.

In the beginning, the programmes of adult education meant only adult literacy, as they were limited to teaching of 3 R's, that is teaching people to read and to write and to learn the barest elements of simple arithmetic. But with the passage of time the point of view of adult education underwent a change and it was called social education. The scope and range of adult education has been greatly extended and it has assumed the comprehensive form of social education.

While delivering the inaugural address at the UNESCO seminar on rural adult education held in December, 1949 in Mysore, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad expressed the concept of social education in the following words:

"By social education we mean education for the complete man. It will give him literacy, so that knowledge of the word becomes accessible to him. It will teach him how to harmonise himself with his environment and make
the best use of the physical condition in which he subsists. It is intended to teach him the improved crafts and modes of production so that he may achieve economic betterment. Last but not the least, this education should give him training in citizenship so that he obtains some insight into the affairs of world and can help his Government to take decisions which will make for its progress.

(Report of the UNESCO Seminar on Rural Education, 1949, p.3)

This definition reveals broad concept of social education. Social education programmes include, besides literacy, education for health and hygiene, improvement in economic status and recreation.

After some time the term 'adult education' is back in use once again. This term is accepted by international organisations such as UNESCO.

At present the concept of Adult Education differs in programmes, development and emphasis. In some programmes, priority is given to the acquisition of the rudiments of written communication and numeracy, whereas in others vocational or other components may receive equal or greater stress. Burma, for example, has emphasized training in literacy and numeracy 'based on the needs, aspirations and interests of the illiterates'. In Vietnam, a literacy campaign followed by
complementary education is an integral part of the ideological and cultural revolution. In Iran, training in the skill of reading, writing and numeracy is integrated with a programme intended to promote understanding of and participation in socio-economic and cultural life. Thailand's programme is based upon the 'khitpen' (a transliteration from Thai meaning 'know how to think') concept. The 'Khitpen person' understands his environment and copes with its challenges in a rational manner through the application of appropriate knowledge, understanding skills and attitudes.

In the conceptual emphasis of the programmes in Thailand, Indonesia, Iran and India, functional literacy and adult education are not ends in themselves, but essential means to assist the individual and his society to deal with the increasingly complex problems which the process of development engenders.

During the course of the present decade, the concept of literacy has been broadened to include not only the "three R's" but also the development of a range of skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to cope up with problems of life. More recently increasing attention has been given to the role of literacy in assisting the participant to understand critically the physical, political, social and economic realities of his environment.
Under this developing concept of adult education, work of adult education has been done in India during the pre and post independence period. Before and after independence many changes have been made in adult education programmes for individual and national growth. However, the problems are as they were in the past. These problems are obstacles in the way of success of adult education programme. The following section discusses in brief some of these problems.

**SOME PROBLEMS IN ADULT EDUCATION**

The problems of adult education are comparatively more complicated than the problems in the other fields of education. They are complicated because the purpose of adult education is to educate those adult men and women who have crossed the age of receiving education.

The problems of adult education in India are different from the problems existing in other progressive countries in the same field. In other countries, the schemes of adult education are implemented for those adults who had received compulsory education during their childhood. In India, the problem is mainly to educate those adults who are completely illiterate because they have had absolutely no schooling. Besides this, yet another special feature that is found in India is that these so called adult illiterates are not comple-
tely uneducated; therefore, the first problem is of suitable curricula.

**Problem of curriculum:** Because of the improper and unsuitable curriculum, the work of adult education is not making much progress. So far, there has not been unanimity on this point as to which type of curriculum would be most suitable for the adults. The curriculum which is used for the education of the children cannot be used for the adults because their interests, needs and viewpoints towards life are completely different. Again some curriculum cannot be determined for all the adults because some of them are totally illiterate and for them a curriculum which can teach them the knowledge of the letters is necessary; some are half illiterates and for them teaching of some special subjects is necessary, and there are some neo-literates who know some reading and writing and in order to inculcate the feeling of citizenship in them, the curriculum including subjects such as civilization, culture, history, geography, civics etc. is necessary.

Last but not the least, a difficulty that has been experienced in preparing curriculum for the adult is that there are adult men and women of different ages. The mental tendencies, the actual standards, the interest and aptitude of the adults of all the different ages will be different from
each other. Hence, it would not be proper to frame some curri-
culum for all the adults.

Problem of method of teaching: The problem of deter-
mining a suitable method of teaching adults is also no less
complicated. The main reason for this is that the view-points
of the adults towards life and the world are also different
and varied. In this respect, they are different from children.
The same method of teaching is neither possible nor proper
for the adults. The feeling of 'self' is sufficiently developed
in the adults. They exercise more social freedom than the
children. They have some principles of their own, and they
develop certain habits against which they do not want to do
anything.

In view of the above-mentioned things, it is not easy
to determine the suitable method of teaching for the adults.

Problem of teachers: The teachers who are appointed in
the adult schools, are ordinarily, the teachers of primary
schools. They do not possess necessary ability to teach the
adults. They are ignorant of the psychology of adults. They
are not trained in the suitable teaching methods for the adults.
They are also not acquainted with the aims, objectives, necessary
literature and useful means of adult education. Hence, when they are entrusted the responsibility of adult education, they find themselves, incapable of fulfilling this responsibility. Consequently, adult education is not making the desired progress.

The more serious problem regarding teachers is, that the desired number of teachers are not available. The problem of dearth of women teachers is even more difficult, because they do not want to waste their time in the midst of unknown illiterate women in far-off places.

**Problem of suitable literature:** The responsibility of adult education cannot end only by making the adults literate. It is not sufficient only to teach reading and writing and simple mathematics to the adults. If they stop practising the newly acquired skills they lapse into illiteracy. It is, therefore, necessary that after giving them preliminary education some literature should be made available to these neo-literates. The neo-literates should be made available such type of literature as may develop their capacity to examine things, power of criticism and the social feeling so that they may be able to distinguish between best and worst in the field of art, truth and untruth in the field of knowledge, and good and bad in the field of conduct.
Problem of equipment: Adequate adult and adult education material is not coming up to satisfy the requirements of adult education centres. Specially prepared text-books, well equipped libraries, suitable audio-visual aids, attractive charts and pictures - all these and much more forms, the necessary equipment for a good adult education centre.

Problems of women's literacy centres: Many adult education classes are specially organised for illiterate women only even though women are not motivated to learn at all. This is specially true in rural situation and is due to the lack of motivation, pride and dignity, traditionalism, fatalism, norms of modesty, time problem and dearth of women teachers.

Usually schooling is associated with childhood. The role of a student is all right for youngers but is inappropriate to the adult state. Adult women feel it below their dignity to go to the literacy classes with slates and pen. Besides, illiterate women believe that literacy will not help improve the condition of life, and poverty is the verdict of the desting. With this kind of fatalistic attitude women refrain from doing any new thing and hence are not eager to go to a literacy class. The time problem is also obstacles for illiterate women. Illiterate women are too busy with their home work, farm work or factory work. They are too tired in
the evening to join the literacy classes. Thus these problems are obstacles in the organisations of literacy programmes for women.

Moreover, finance, apathy towards primary education for girls etc. are obstacles in the way of success of adult education programmes.

The above problems and many more need special attention of the adult education workers. To solve the problems of liquidation of illiteracy the National Adult Education Programme was launched in 1978, with the aim of promoting social awareness, functional skills and literacy among 100 million illiterate in the age-group 15 to 35 years. This programme was declared as a part and parcel of the national educational system.

Many voluntary agencies have been and are being encouraged to participate in this vital programme and considerable mobilisation or resources had been achieved. Some bonafide voluntary agencies and enthusiastic workers had made commendable work in this field in comparison with governmental departments in many states. But this vital programme of National importance had been frozen during some time and this promising system of education for poor had received a great set back due to the political reasons. This set back caused the voluntary organisations financial embarrassment. Many honest and
dedicated local youths, who were engaged in this programme, felt betrayed and frustrated. People of the concerned area who had began to respond to this programme were bewildered and started thinking in a negative way about the policies and programmes. The organisers and voluntary workers were also in a dilemma as the entire programme of adult education was then shrouded in uncertainty.

Whatever be the opinion of people regarding the success of the programme there is no denying that there has been a growing awareness among people about benefits of this programmes. Consequently adult education has also found a place in the Prime Minister's new 20 point programme. During the sixth and seventh plan period 110 million adult illiterates will be covered through NAEA.

Adult Education has been a rich area for researches and mainly these researches have focussed upon the evaluation of adult education programme, factors determining the programmes of adult education, attitude towards adult education, problems in adult education etc. Comparatively less work has been done on dropouts among the adults and in view of the fact that the sixth and the seventh plans have aimed at a target of 110 million adults to be covered under NAEA, this aspect of adult education attains a far greater importance. The present work
reviews the problem of the adult dropouts and the following 
section gives several studies that are very relevant to 
the problem of adult dropouts.

REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

Gadgil, B.R. (1945) conducted a project in the area of 
literacy programmes. The project was 'Investigation into the 
Problem of lapse into illiteracy in the Satara District'.

The aim of the investigation was to ascertain the mini­
mum educational attainments needed to ensure retention of 
literacy after leaving school.

The sample was selected from only such schools as had not 
changed their 'type' during the period 1911 to 1936, 
from 104 villages of the Satara district. As many as 2,678 
persons, who had left the school in standards II, III or IV 
at any time during the period 1911 to 1936 were selected. Read­
ing and writing tests (in Marathi) were used.

Findings:

(1) Single teacher schools and untrained teachers do not 
seem to contribute to problems of major importance,
(2) A sharp fall in the lapse into illiteracy and the pro­
gressive rise of the standard in which a student leaves
the school show a positive relationship,

(3) The lapse into illiteracy is smaller when the age of leaving the school is higher,

(4) In the majority of instances reading and writing habits are neither developed nor maintained and that the educational effort is considerably wasted even though there is not actual lapse into illiteracy,

(5) The incidence of lapse into illiteracy is specially high among the so-called intermediate and backward classes among the agriculturists and agricultural labourers and among the very poor.

Bhandari, J.S. (1974) studied the factors affecting persistence and dropout at adult literacy classes in Udaipur District in Rajasthan State.

The study was confined to Seva Mandir in Hadgaon and Girwa Panchayat Samities in Udaipur District.

Twenty literacy centres and twelve functional literacy centres were selected by two stage stratified random sampling method. As many as 192 respondents - ninety six persisters and ninety six dropouts - were selected from the thirty two literacy and functional literacy centres.
Tools developed and used for the collection of data were:
(1) Schedule for participants of literacy and functional literacy classes who had completed the course; (2) Schedule for participants who had not completed the course; (3) Schedule for teachers of literacy and functional literacy classes; and (4) Interview by the researcher himself.

Findings:

(1) No significant differences existed between the persisters and dropouts with respect to age, sex, caste, marital status, occupation, affiliation with economic, social and political organisational groups, exposure to schooling in childhood, size of land holding and use of improved agricultural practices;

(2) The difference was significant for the source of discouragement from attending the class and discontinuance in case of literacy classes;

(3) There was no significant difference between the literacy and functional literacy dropouts and their responses to the efforts of the teachers for continuing in the class, the solution of their difficulties, desire for rejoining the class and self perception for having not been able to attain literacy;
(4) Reasons for dropping out were day work, animal husbandry work, lack of interest, far-off school, domestic work, and ridicule by friends and relatives.

(5) To be able to write letters, to sign, to read newspapers and books on religion, to be able to maintain farm records and accounts, to learn a language and to utilise free time profitably were considered factors for persistence.

These two studies referred to in this section do throw some light on the nature of the problems. The extent of problems in any area of education is practically unlimited. This is much more true in case of adult education.


The objectives of the investigation were (1) to measure the retention of literacy among the adult neo-literates; (2) to study the relationship between retention of literacy and classroom learning factors and environmental factors; and (3) to determine which of the factors needed to be strengthened after establishing relationship between literacy retention and the classroom factors and the environmental factors.

The sample consisted of 310 adults selected from thirty villages round about gargoti. The tools used in the investigation
were: (1) a graded silent reading comprehension test of three levels of reading with five questions attached to each level; (2) a questionnaire eliciting factual information about the class; (3) an interview with each of the adults to ascertain his attitude to the classroom conditions.

**Findings:**

(1) The reading materials had a very high correlation with literacy retention,
(2) Environmental factors had no influence on retention, and
(3) Classroom factors needed to be stressed for retention.

It is obvious from the above investigation that the impact of adult education and functional literacy on the life and living of the adults is very noteworthy. It is, therefore, felt that the impact of adult education on the life and living of the adults can be increased if the voluntary agencies use new interesting methods through adequately trained personnel.


The study was conducted in the Wardha District with seven rural blocks. Observation, interview, visits and specially devised tests were the various tools and techniques used to collect the data. The sample consisted of 250 men and 250 women ranging in age from fifteen to fifty-five years.
FINDINGS:

1. About seventeen percent of men and women in the age group fifteen to twenty were found to be immature and unstable.

2. Fifty percent of men and forty one percent of women in the age group of twenty one to thirty one were found to be enthusiastic and ambitious.

3. Life conditions arrested the efforts of the village people for their own betterment and they mostly resigned to their fate.

4. Average number of members in a family was six.

5. Adult education had not brought about the changes which were expected in spite of efforts of government. There was no improvement in the standard of living of the village people. Their work efficiency had not increased.

6. The village people did not like the girls taking up a job. Thought it below the dignity of the family. They hold that the girls should marry and maintain the house.

7. Most of the rural people spent their leisure time in religious affairs, only a small percentage of people engaged in social work.

The objectives of the study were: (1) to examine the working of the ABCs vis-a-vis the objectives of the WARP, (2) to identify the strength and weakness of the ABCs, (3) to identify, if possible, the factors responsible for the strength and weakness of the ABCs, (5) to indicate the areas for action.

The study was conducted in the Gujarat State. The sample comprised a random sample of ABCs stratified in terms of the VAs running the ABCs. The data were collected through structured questionnaires.

Findings:

(1) The average dropout level for the sample ABCs work out at 1.94 percent of the total enrolment.

(2) About 1.1 percent of the learners were below 15 years and 7.6 percent of them were above 35 years.

(3) 84 percent of the learners were occupied in agriculture, 4.5 percent of them were self employed, and the rest were mostly non-workers. In the sample of 530 learners interviewed for this study, the proportion of non-workers, mostly women, is slightly higher.

(4) The average attendance per class was 25.50 percent in the case of 6.13 percent of the ABCs, 50.75 percent in the case of 26.99 percent of the ABCs, and 75 percent and above in the case of 60.97 percent of the ABCs,
(5) About three fifths of male as well as female learners in the sample were found to have acquired skill to write at the time of the field visit.

(6) 57.4 percent of the instructors belonged to the younger age group of 20-30. More than half (55.37 percent) of the instructors were having education below the S.S.C. level and one-fifth had passed the S.S.C. examination.

(7) 19 percent of the instructors had not received their remuneration regularly.

(8) About 23 percent of the AECs were found to be held in public buildings, an equal percentage of the AECs were found to be held in open space and about 37 percent were held in the instructor's house.

These two evaluative studies do not present a bright picture of the adult education programmes. The findings abound in failures rather than in achievements. They also indicate deficiencies which appear unsurmountable. On the bases of usually common norms one cannot really be blamed for being depressed. But education is a field where no progress is possible without optimism, perceived accordingly, adult education programmes certainly appear to have potentialities for improvements and successes.
Haragopala, G. and Sudershan, G. (1972) made a survey of Rural Adult Literacy: An enquiry into the Attitudes. The study attempts to elicit information about the attitudes of the adult members towards adult literacy. This study covers different aspects of adult literacy such as earlier attempts for literacy and its results, reasons for their illiteracy, willingness for learning and the reasons for willingness and unwillingness.

200 adult illiterates were drawn from three villages in Warangal District of Andhra Pradesh. The respondents were interviewed with the help of an interview schedule.

Findings:

(1) The respondents were young, backward in caste, dependent on agriculture and belong to poor income group.

(2) About 30 percent of respondents did make an attempt in their early stage of life but all of them considered themselves illiterates as they lost touch with letters.

(3) About the reasons for their remaining illiterates, a large number of them blamed their poor economic conditions which compelled them to engage themselves in earning livelihood right from the childhood.

(4) And some of them pointed out that lack of interest on the part of their parents and lack of facilities as reasons
for their illiteracy.

(5) About their present willingness for learning, about 2/3rd of them are willing while 1/3rd are unwilling.

(6) Those who are willing to learn are: young, male, dependents on agriculture and come from low income group.

(7) A large number of members from scheduled castes are willing to learn.

(8) Age and sex appear to be more important variables than the caste, income and occupation in determining the attitude towards learning.

(9) Their willingness to learn was also governed largely by consideration such as: to be able to read communication from friends and relatives, books, newspapers, names and bus routes. They also felt the necessity to understand accounts and receipts they had to deal with in day-to-day life.

(10) Those who were not willing to learn felt that they had no time, no interest and felt shy to learn in the later age.

There are also several other field reports and researches resembling with the present work in some way or other but the researcher did not think it necessary to review them at length for the sake of brevity as well as unavailability of the
original sources in some cases. Some of these studies are

This review covers in all six researches completed in the areas of Impact of Adult Education, Attitudinal Studies, Problems in Adult Education and Evaluation in Adult Education. These reviews provide guidelines for developing the frame of non-formal/adult education programmes for different categories.
of learners put under various circumstances. They also indicate ideas regarding not only the research instruments, but also the formulation of research hypotheses and procedures adopted in the studies covered in the review. The conclusions drawn in these studies bear a great relevance to the present study as it would be reviewed out at the proper stage in reporting.