CHAPTER-4

4. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ADULT EDUCATION SYSTEMS BY INDICATORS: CONCEPT, PURPOSE, POLICY, DEFINITION, LANGUAGE AND PROGRAMMES

The widespread need for adult learning is an undeniable fact. Basic Education for Adults and Children (Adults Education and Primary Education) has grown into a priority area of policy and programmes of action for human development in all the developing countries in different forms depending upon the political circumstances and level of involvement of the community. The focus of concern of the present study was to compare adult education in India, Indonesia, Thailand and China and to analyze it critically:

The indicators that emerged for comparison by focusing on the historical analysis of policy, practices and implications there of, and further substantiated by the evidence of changes in the conceptualization of adult education taking place from time to time when viewed within the particular ideological perspectives including concept, purpose, policy, definition, language and programmes of adult education.

4.1 CONCEPTS AND PURPOSE OF ADULT EDUCATION

Concept is a general notion; an abstract idea or in other words it is to help or publicize an idea or an invention. Adult Education has a diverse meaning attached to it in the selected countries. It is considered as a second opportunity for those who could not get a chance in the mainstream schooling. Adult Education in these countries is for the poor, unreachable, disadvantaged groups of the population for whom popular primary education has been non efficient. These groups are marginal- socially, culturally and economically. Adult education in the selected countries explicitly comprises basic adult literacy along with acquisition of desirable knowledge pertaining to civic duties, personal hygiene and adapting to occupational skills so as to become productive part of
the system. It can be stated that adult literacy in these countries remains at the core of adult education concept and its components. Further it has been evolving over the last fifty years in the respective countries selected for this study.

In India, adult education was planned with a purpose with intention to make it a part of community programmes and for individual and societal development. It was not directly related to the development in basic literacy in the first thirty years of independence. Adult education for literacy was conceptualized as a means of socio-economic development and for self-reliance in the last thirty years. On the other hand, the concept of Adult Education in Indonesia was related to progress or literacy for national development in the first thirty years and preparation for vocational and continuing education was added to later in the next three decades which followed.

In Thailand, adult education has been equated with non-formal education which covered educational activities for out of school children, youth and adults. It was interesting to note that the concept of adult education was totally focused on adult literacy until 1972 to Skill which Vocational training and continuing education were later added later during the 1980’s thereby further its scope.

In China the concept of adult education was popularly defined as workers and peasants education. The other term given to it was spare time education. It was regarded equivalent to the regular system of education and it showed common purposes with general and other forms of education. It included civil and political education, besides literacy, for the first thirty years after independence. Since 1978, there has been shift in policy of Chinese government for reforms. As observed that by opening up to the outside world the purpose of adult education in China had changed to economic re-construction greatly depending on the advance of science and technology. In sum the main emphasis was laid on raising the quality of the work force and their economy in marketing. The lessons as could be desired from the above diffusion may lead to formulating. Learning of the lessons takes place in exchange of ideas at the National and International forums, which helps in adopting successful models.
4.2 ADULT EDUCATION POLICY

Policy or policies is a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government, party at business. It is useful to trace the ideological construction of policies affecting the future of adult education. The ideological construction are obvious in policy proposals articulated in national and international policy forums of each country.

India became free in 1947, Indonesia became independent in 1945, Thailand became constitutional monarch in 1940 and China became independent in 1948.

India launched for the first time in her national history, a nationwide adult education programme in 1978. In Indonesia, Kejar Package was introduced for vocationalisation of education, post literacy and continuing education. In Thailand the educational reforms of 1978 brought about decentralization of administrative structures, while China opened its economy to the world in 1978. For the purposes of this study literacy programmes have been compared in two stages.

I 1940s-1977
II 1978-present

4.2.1 Adult Education Policy in selected countries during 1940s-1977

Adult education has a long history of entering into public policy in the selected countries with each of the four selected countries addressing its adult education problems in its own way.

During the first three decades following independence, India planned integrated forms of community and national development. This period focussed on development of infrastructure and expansion of the education system inherited from the British, which was to provide education to a large number of people. Adult education remained neglected in the national policy, as it was believed that universal education would be achieved through the primary education under the constitutional directive principal of providing free and
compulsory education to all children by 1960. During the 1960s the emphasis of adult education shifted from civic to functional literacy due to the change in the national development strategy to modernize agriculture. It can be said that an adult education policy was not on the national agenda during the first three decades following independence in 1947. According to Bhola (1988), India followed the model of manpower development for the modern formal sector of the economy during, 1947-1976. Adult education and adult literacy that would have helped the informed sector and the poorest of the poor was neglected.

This interpretation of policy is evident from the national five-year plans of India and the National Education Policy of 1968. Hypothetically India would have achieved 50 percent literacy within five years according to what was as mentioned in the Saxena committee report, which was never implemented. The literacy rate of India was only 18.33 percent in 1951, 34.45 percent in 1971 and 43.57 in 1981.

On the other hand Indonesia undertook massive literacy programmes immediately after independence. The Indonesian government recognized the essence of education and made commitment to education in the Constitution of new Republic of Indonesia, which in its preamble states that one of the obligations of the state is “to develop the intellectual Life of the nation”. It spells the right of every citizen to obtain education. Indonesia started planning for sustained literacy campaign throughout the country after it became sovereign in 1949 and immediately formulated a long-term ten-year plan to eradicate illiteracy. Presidential commands from time to time gave direction to the policy of eradication of illiteracy and adult education practices. Under the Presidential command of August 1961, Indonesia planned to eradicate complete illiteracy within three years, 1961-1964. In 1964 the whole country was declared free from illiteracy. In 1967 it was found by Single that twenty one percent population was still illiterate by taking a sample survey. This happened due to the then non-expansion of basic education and great relapse of illiteracy. The situation became grave due to the high population growth rate and poor school conditions.
During the next thirty years, Indonesia developed adult education as an integral part of the national development system. It managed to raise literacy levels to 79 percent during a period of thirty years, compared to India which was still at a literacy rate of 40 percent.

Thailand had a long history of adult education, and the constitutional ushered in a new period of educational reforms. The 1936 amendment required that the provinces should have at least 50 percent adult literacy to be fully represented in Parliament. This brought about a rapid expansion in elementary education. Non-Formal education in Thailand was started in 1940. During 1940s and 1950s, adult education was a means of promoting nationalism. Between 1960s and 1980s adult education had been planned for developmental governance and was meant to create a new Thai working class for industrial capitalism and export oriented growth, leading to work oriented literacy programmes in 1970s and preparation for globalization. These changes were brought about by the policy guidelines based on the National Education Scheme of 1960 and its subsequent alterations including several other ministerial and departmental rules and regulations issued to serve the purpose of adult education. However the policy which contributed to the reduction of illiteracy, was the government’s decision to expand compulsory education from four to seven years in 1960 to permanently restore the school leaver’s literacy. Vocational skill training was added to adult basic literacy in the light of UNESCO conference of 1965, while in 1969 content on household knowledge and awareness about daily living conditions added. Literacy rate of Thailand which was 31.2 percent for aged 10 years and above in 1939. It was raised to 53.7 percent in 1947, 70.8 in 1960 and 81.8 in 1970 and 89.5 in 1980.

China during the developing period (1949-1966) made the provision for courses for adults in elementary, secondary and higher education. During this period the literacy rate increased from 20 percent to 40 percent. About 103 million adults were made literate. During the Cultural Revolution from 1966-1976, adult education, like other forms of education, came to a stand still. The
focus of the adult education was on general education in this period. This was an inactive period in the history of adult education in China.

China like Indonesia undertook massive adult education programmes for national construction immediately after independence. Many of the adult education programmes associated with ‘post independence’ governments looked to combat ‘colonial mentalities’ and to further a commitment for the emerging nation state (Julius Nyerere in Tanzania and Steele and Taylor, 1995)

4.2.2 Adult Education Policy in selected countries from 1978 to present

In India, with the change of government in 1977 for the first time a nation wide National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) was launched in 1978. Literacy and functionality were seen as means to bring about a fundamental change in the process of socio economic development. The government was not seen as a vehicle for adult literacy. It was planned to be implemented by the involvement of NGOs. Literacy was planned to be through classroom or adult education centres. National state resource centres were established for the production of literature, training of adult education functionaries and research in adult education in the states and in universities. With the change of the government in 1980, the NAEP was abandoned and was made a part of Rural Integral Development Programme. JSN’s were established during this period for continuing education. The change in regime in 1984 and the National Policy of Education 1986, it had a considerable impact on adult education policy. Adult Education took the form of the National Literacy Mission (NLM) in 1985. There was a greater component of science and technology and greater focus on development and extension of 3R’s and productive skills. The NLM adopted non-political and the mass campaign approach to literacy in 1989.

On the other hand, in Indonesia a new literacy programme, the Kejar Package was introduced in 1977 in the form of employment-oriented training. It was implemented through non-formal education under the state a general policy
direction in order to make adult education functional. Post Literacy and continuing education programmes were added.

In 1978, in Thailand there was a significant change in policy and programmes of adult basic education. Thailand strengthened further its compulsory education by reducing it to six years helping more than 90 percent of the children who were 9-10 years old to remain in school. This strengthened primary education and literacy in the country. It provided equal opportunity for boys and girls for basic education. The educational reforms in 1978 made the changes for reduction in the excessive centralization in administrative structure and these reforms became the law in 1980. As seen, there was no joint planning between formal and non-formal education but some coordination existed between universal primary education (UPE) and eradication of illiteracy (EOI). The adult education division was given departmental status in 1980. The government stated its commitment to reduce illiteracy in the 1982-86 development plan. Consequently, continuing education was added to basic education, vocational skills, and information availability made in order to reap the benefit of ongoing literacy campaign in 1983-1987. The campaign covered 75 percent of its targeted illiterate and the left out to be covered by functional literacy and continuing education (FLACE) Level 1-2 Programmes. The 1987-1991 development plan emphasized the promotion of literacy among out of school especially those in the working age group. The literacy education policy was formulated for developing Thailand as liberal democratic state in the form of changes for democratization of educational opportunities in the constitution of 1997 and passing of Education act of 1999.

China marked a new era in the history of adult education starting from the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Conference of the Chinese Communist Party held in December 1978. The state council promulgated the directive on eradication of illiteracy. In 1980, China opened its economy to the world. China adopted a market economy and accelerated its development of modernization in industry, national, defence, science and technology. The constitution of the
Peoples Republic of China promulgated in 1982 stipulated; that the state developed educational facilities in order to eliminate illiteracy. The goals of educational development had been set as the highest educational standards of individual workers to progress economically and full harness and protect the natural resources of the country. In 1988, the state council promulgated the regulations of eradicating illiteracy, which has explicit provisions on such matters as target groups, criteria for the units and individuals to attain minimum literacy, post literacy, continuing education leadership and management of literacy work, policy measures and fund raising. China adopted adult basic education to solve the population burden into an advantaged human resource. During the 1990s China decided to eradicate illiteracy among China’s middle age and young adults. In 1993 the Central committee of the CPC and the state council jointly promulgated the guidelines for the reforms and development of education in China. This important document stated that by the end of the 20th century, illiteracy among young and middle aged adults should basically be eradicated by reducing the illiteracy rates than 5% among the age group of 15-45 years. In 1994 the central committee of the CPC and the state council jointly convened a national conference on education. In it the universalisation of 9 year compulsory schooling and the eradication of illiteracy among the young and the middle aged adults were set as priority the objectives of educational development. Subsequently the peoples Republic of China provided that the Peoples’ government at various levels would carry out literacy education programmes. A great leap forward in both the range and depth of provision of courses for adults was made during this period. A parallel adult education for primary, secondary, technical and university was opened on large scale. So far as the goal of universalizing nine-year compulsory schooling is concerned it has been realized in the area inhabited by 65 percent of the nations population. Literacy rate of China in 1982 was 66% and in 1955 it rose to 83.5 for 15-45 age groups it was 93.86 in 1995.
The size of the problem of Adult Literacy in India continued to be very large. In Indonesia and Thailand, vocational oriented programmes formed a significant component of adult education. This may be attributed to achievement of near cent per cent literacy in these countries. In Indonesia, provision of literacy is inseparably linked to peace and progress. (Napitupulu). Thailand promotes even critical thinking among adult learners.

China has made persistent efforts in the development of adult education policy for national development according to the Marxist political philosophy making a investment in education in a social rather than individual basis. Owing to China’s relatively centralized political system, unified policies regarding adult education have been existing from the very beginning. These policies enabled and facilitated educational minorities to monitor the large and complex adult education system. They also enabled and facilitated coordination and articulation within the system.

4.3 DEFINITIONS OF LITERACY IN THE SELECTED COUNTRIES: DIFFERENTIALS

To arrive at a universal definition of literacy is almost impossible. There are many definitions of literacy. Literacy is not just about teaching how to read and write; it is providing opportunities for people to protect themselves. (Pradeep Ungsongtham Hata, executive secretary of Duan Prateep Foundation, Thailand).

According to Bhola (1994) of the definitions literacy are definitions are different, because of the different languages of literacy; because of the different levels and standard of literacy skills and; because people differ in their objectives. In the 1960s, UNESCO defined literacy as ‘the ability to read and write in the mother tongue’. There are other definitions of literacy involving functionality, local culture, personal hygiene and community development. These definitions are associated with particular communities and areas. The question of level in literacy definition is again ambiguous or avoided. The
United Nations defines illiteracy as the inability to read and write a simple sentence in any language.

The traditional definition of literacy is the ability to use language i.e. to read, write, listen and speak. In the modern context, this word means reading and writing at a level adequate for written communication and generally a standard that enables one to function at a certain degree in society. The standard that constitutes the level “Literacy” varies among societies. The countries studied have adopted their own definitions on who is a literate. Some of them have related literacy standards to a certain level of formal education. Thus a person who had studied for a certain number of years in primary school is considered as literate.

In Thailand the definition of a literate person is one who can read, write and calculate, as well as know how to solve problems through “Khit-pen” process, which consists of information on academic environmental and self-knowledge. He / she can take decisions solve his/ her own problems by following the three areas of information. Functional literacy in Thailand means promotion of literacy that includes skills, training and knowledge about income generation. This is based on the assumption that literacy is not isolated from life and income generation. Thailand has defined functional literacy in relation with functionality and formal education (at least 5-6 years of schooling). The definition of functional literacy in recent times refers to the percentage of the population who has at least completed 6 years of schooling, either in the formal or non-formal system.

Indonesia has defined a literate as one who can read and write using Roman alphabet, do simple calculations and can function in Indonesian language and in basic general knowledge.

China has defined literacy for peasantry as knowledge of 1500 characters and ability is keep simple accounts. One who is able to perform basic calculation on an abacus and capable of writing short notes and read specially prepared
simple newspapers and journals is termed as literate in Modern Chinese reformers and western scholars have agreed with traditional Confusions on at least one thing – the centrality of ‘culture’ (Weshua). To be illiterate is to be ‘wenmang’ (culture blind). Chinese common language has 40,000 characters and there are more than 500,000 characters in the Chinese language. Around 70,000 characters are needed to read a basic newspaper.

In India literacy programmes have defined a literate person as one who can with understanding both read and write a simple statement on his/her everyday life (2001).

The general data of adult literacy in India has been based on the National Census or sample surveys. The National Census is undertaken every ten years, usually at the beginning of each decade. To estimate the magnitude of literacy in between the two decades is to make assumptions. The other variable of ages presents different problems to decide who is a literate. All children below the age of 6 cannot be expected to master the basic skill of literacy. The size of the population below 5 or 6 years accounts for changing the literacy rate of the country. In 1941, for census purpose, the definition of literacy, adopted by the enumerator was that a person should be able to read and write a postcard in simple language. Till 1961, the same definition existed. Both in the 1971 and 1981 census defined a literate person as one who could read and write with understanding in any language. It was not necessary for a literate person to pass any minimum education standard or to have received any formal education. The enumerator had tests to know the literacy status of a person. However, census data in most cases is based on self – enumeration and depends upon the reply offered by the respondents. No quantitative test was given.

Qualitatively a person is considered literate only if he/she has mastered

- Accuracy and fluency in word recognition in any language
- Comprehension of 90 percent of what he/she reads.
• Critical thinking should enable him/her to discuss objectively the ideas required through reading.

• Should have daily living and working skills.

A minimum set of learning required in the area of reading, writing and arithmetic has been prepared by the Directorate of Adult Education, Ministry of Education, to be achieved at the end of first phase of literacy. These have been worked out keeping in view the fact that literacy which is imparted in the basic course of adult education should be up to the point of “no return” i.e. learners are taken up to the point from where there is no chance of relapsing back into illiteracy and it is ensured that they are in a position to use literacy in transacting the business of everyday life. These standards may be termed as a Quantitative definition of literacy

• Reading aloud, with correct pause and emphasis of simple literature.

• Reading silently with a speed of 40 words per minute.

• Reading with understanding road signs, posters newspaper for neo – literates and simple instructions.

• Ability to follow simple written messages related to daily work and life.

Thus, apart from reading, writing and arithmetic the other major components of the basic literacy course in India are awareness and functionality.

“Awareness”, assumes that people should become conscious of the realities of their life and learn to take appropriate action to solve their problems. It involves understanding of laws and government policies, which are affecting them. The functionality component seeks to impart necessary skills to an individual to do things related to his responsibilities in the family, occupation and society in a better way. The aim of functionality is to bring about improvement in working or learning life skills and utilizing time and energy in a productive way.

These are some of the definitions of literacy from the practical aspect of adult education programmes and such as those used in global literacy statistics. Achieving a consensus on the definition of literacy has been, and remains,
elusive. Any assessment or evaluation for the purpose of comparison requires uniform definitions.

Wagner (1992) has rightly said that literacy cannot be defined in one way only, because literacy is a cultural phenomenon – adequately defined and understood only within each culture, language and period of time in which it exists. Therefore it is not surprising that a single definition of literacy may never be permanently enshrined. The definition on literacy by UNESCO has thus been adopted in different words and forms by the countries.

4.4 LANGUAGE OF LITERACY

The choice of language of literacy is a question of policy, curriculum and methodology at the same time. If teaching-learning takes place in the mother tongue, there would be less problems of handling the transition from mother tongue literacy to literacy in the official or the national language. If literacy could be taught in the official or national language not necessarily spoken by adults the problem is not that of teaching literacy but that of teaching literacy in a second language (Bhola, 1994).

Again the growing issue concerning the choice of language(s) for literacy, adult education is not simply about the use of local language(s) or national language(s), it is also about enabling adult learners to communicate and participate in the context beyond their communities.

India has many languages with different scripts, ethnic groups and cultures. The difference between the language of use and the language of study was, in most cases responsible for the learners leaving the classes early or lapsing into illiteracy after a short while. This was caused by the unavailability of follow up reading material in several of the spoken languages or their respective mother tongues.

In India the language policy for the total literacy campaigns advocates a flexible approach of literacy among learners who used a district dialect of the spoken standard language and recommended gradual transition from the dialect to the standard language through appropriate literacy material.
Indonesia being a multi-linguistic community. Many people were able to read or write in Arabic or local languages such as Javanese, Buginese, or Balinese, but they were not considered literate and therefore were part of the target population for literacy campaign (National Studies: Indonesia, UNESCO, Principle Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, 1991, p.2).

In Thailand, minorities, hill tribes, refugees, migrants and people living in remote areas form the special target groups for learning Thai language. Khmer is spoken along the eastern border towards eastern provinces bordering Cambodia. The Muslim Thais, in the south are yet another group which needs special attention due to their mother tongue being different from Thai. They form 74 percent of the population in the three southern provinces (1970 census). More than 60 percent of them cannot speak Thai (National studies: Thailand, UNESCO, Principle Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, 1991, p.35).

LITERACY RATE TRENDS IN INDIA, INDONESIA, THAILAND AND CHINA FROM 1951-2001

![Graph showing literacy rate trends in India, Indonesia, Thailand, and China from 1951-2001](image-url)
4.5 ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN THE SELECTED COUNTRIES

The countries studied have different approaches towards adult education. The common factors of development are basic literacy, functional literacy e.g. agricultural skills and personal improvement to generate civic awareness and sustain development among the poor. The countries studied do not equate adult education with adult literacy. The Adult literacy component in adult education is more prominent in a lesser developed country like India.

Both mass and selective approaches have been adopted in the countries studied to tackle the problems of illiteracy. The countries studied differ significantly with regard to planning and management of adult education programmes and the problems associated with literacy of the masses Rogers (2006). Adult literacy programmes are very varied. Unlike primary education, most adult programmes consist of training programme in literacy skills designed to make illiterate people literate once and for all. Some of them are at a very large scale such as government programmes; some are very small scale, mostly programmes of NGOs. Short and time bound programmes are specifically adopted for literacy learning programmes. These are of mainly of two kinds, namely stand alone literacy courses and literacy with developmental messages. The primary function of the stand-alone literacy courses is to provide instruction in the skills of reading and writing through various teaching-learning texts. The success of the programme is measured in terms of “level” of literacy skill achieved Rogers (2002). Literacy programmes with developmental messages include developmental messages as part of the learning programmes besides basic literacy learning.

In India during the period 1947- 1977 most of the programmes were limited in scope and reach. It was relatively a passive period regarding direct instructions for adult literacy except that some isolated programmes by states and few functional programmes for the farmers were undertaken. Community development programmes through infrastructure and communication
development were implemented immediately after independence. As is seen, India could implement adult education programmes country wide only from 1978 onwards. Education as a whole was linked with development. The three important components of the adult education programmes were functionality, awareness and literacy but the main emphasis was on basic literacy. This programme promoted centre based approach and was a partial success generally due to the lack of motivation among the learners, the voluntary nature of the programme and inadequately trained adult teachers. This was a selective area approach. Poor community support was a limiting factor for the success of adult education programmes.

The best method applicable after NAEP was of the campaign mode to achieve the targeted goal of Total Literacy in the country. A mass based campaign approach was launched in 1985 to make people literate over a period of nine months. The design of the Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) did not however pay sufficient attention to post literacy (PL) and Continuing Education (CE) for consolidation.

Successful implementation of post literacy and CE Programme were upstream problems confronting the mission. The NLM encountered the problem of retention of both learners and volunteers. However, TLC was a great success in activities of environment building. It was a success in motivating non-literates to become literate and the educated to become volunteers so as to give time and help in efforts of achieving the goals of literacy campaigns. It promoted primary education and women empowerment. The objectives of eradicating illiteracy by 2000 and replacing it with more feasible objectives of developing a learning society (The Arun Ghose Committee, set up in 1993-94). NLM has revised its targets with focus on 75 percent adult literacy by 2007.

The adult education (AE) programmes of Indonesia are one of the best examples of integration of non-formal education (NFE). Integration of education and development through NFE programmes through approaches such as the establishment of Learning Investment groups, which encourage the launching of
village industries & small business. They were Government sponsored programmes. A.E. programmes were the programmes of the people themselves. The government and community played active role in implementing the programmes. AE programmes of Thailand provides us with an excellent need based designing and implementation techniques of an integrated adult programme with primary education along with adult basic and adult higher education. Some of the good examples of the programmes in non-formal education are providing continuing education at five levels leading to academic equivalency, short vocational courses up to twelve months, functional literacy including adult basic literacy and vocational subjects informational activities such as circulation of village newspapers, establishment of reading centers and public libraries.

Thailand literacy programmes depended upon universal primary education, promotion of adult basic literacy through equivalency certificates and providing immediate provision for CE. It may be said that the programmes were integrated as a whole to provide for education. The country planned its literacy efforts as a continuous process without any intervals of long inaction. Post literacy programmes for consolidation followed these literacy programmes. AE programmes of Thailand have been planned and implemented keeping in view the institutional and socio political context at the developmental stage of the country in its political history.

Special programmes were designed and implemented to cover people with special needs living in far off remote areas. Thailand successfully developed a strong continuing education programme through organizing reading centers, libraries and the organization of reading campaigns. Vocational and continuing education has been a significant component of adult education in Thailand form the very beginning.

Adult Education in China had a specific purpose to produce people both socialists in mind and professionally proficient, to serve proletarian politics, to serve the needs of both material and cultural civilization and to raise the
qualifications of workers in national productivity. China held adult education programmes at all levels of learning from primary to higher education. At the elementary level, there were adult courses in literacy or adult basic education offered by their elementary or middle schools. At the lower secondary level, adult education programmes were offered by vocational schools and cultural schools, spare time schools Adult education is regarded as equivalent to the regular system of education and shared common purpose with general and other forms of education that was to enable individuals to develop intellectually and physically and become a productive worker with both socialist consciousness and culture. In the early years of the Peoples Republic of China (PRC), eradicating illiteracy was high on the agenda of the workers and peasant’s education, and it was conducted in its own social setting in which the prime concern of the country was to restore and develop production. Illiterates accounted for an overwhelming majority of the country’s population and there was a great shortage of teachers. The difficulties were formidable but extensive mobilization by the government, party cadres of various levels and the efforts of peasants and by the educational departments with strong associations kept the anti illiteracy movement among the people. The period extending from 1949 to 1965 was a period of vigorous development in literacy and education in China. About 80 million illiterates became neo-literate. The Socialist government had increased their investments in literacy work. There was however inactive period between 1966-1976.

All the selected countries planned to target the productive years of the illiterate population in the adult education programmes. In India adult education programmes in general were targeted for 15-35 years of age. The Programmes were target oriented (women and disadvantaged groups).

In Indonesia, it was a well targeted programmes for the 7-44 year age group, a school dropout or an illiterate in Latin alphabet, who never attended any school. Priority was given to boys and girls between 10-25 years of age.
Illiterate beyond 45 years of age were also served but through other mediums and programmes.

In Thailand the adult education programme was for those who had completed less than 4 years of primary education and were between the age group 14-50 years.

In China, adult education was designed for those who were employed, and priority was given to people who were below the age of 40 as stated in the issued government policy statement. In 1981 and 1982 the two measures and exceptions are self-study and adult basic education examination. The target group constituted of young and middle aged illiterates between 15-40 years of age with no written vocabulary or with a vocabulary smaller than 500 Chinese characters; children between 12-15 years of age who did not attend full time school, and those who had dropped out before completing five years of school or without completing grade 3 were enrolled.

India is a vast and diverse country and considering its socio-cultural and linguistic diversity there are number of non-governmental initiatives to make the people literate. Despite successful NGO interventions, it could not take the shape of a massive movement. Very limited interaction among NGOs and hardly any interaction between those engaged in adult literacy and primary education has been a draw back. NGO’s have a limited number of institutional arrangements. Most of the NGOs are dependent upon the government programmes and grants. The Tenth Five Year Plan stresses on greater involvement of NGOs, but how it is to be done is not clearly explained. The Zila Saksharta Samiti (ZSS) or District literacy society is the implementing agency in the district, which has been bureaucratic and static in its approach and work.

In Indonesia, all the provinces have a number of NGOs working in the field of adult literacy. There are a total of 291 NGOs working in this field. There are more than 135 NGOs working in the field of literacy in Thailand. These agencies have undertaken several projects to enroll about 10
percent of the out of school youth, particularly the disadvantaged to gain access to the formal educational system.

In China, agencies like All China Women’s Federation (ACWF) have a mandate to improve the technical skills and literacy of women in rural areas and they too offer courses. Tutors are often women volunteers or ACWF staff. They publish a number of series of pamphlets to promote literacy in rural areas for income generating skills. The Chinese Association for Science and Technology (CAST) is responsible for the implementation of the non-formal education sector. It has also carried out similar courses, which are often part of rural development initiatives.

In India, Jan Sikshan Sansthans, (JSNS) earlier called as Shamrik Vidayapeeths for vocational skills in Continuing Education (CE) are constructively institutionalising for PL and CE. The capacity building of the various institutions engaged in literacy as well as understanding of post literacy (PL) and CE for consolidation within the system relatively are weak. On the other hand PL & CE were very effective in Indonesia and Thailand.

Volunteerism is the principle of relying on voluntary action rather than compulsory. In India mostly adult education programmes were based on volunteerism. To get volunteers who could run literacy centres for six months without remuneration seemed to be a very difficult task in an atmosphere when otherwise government gets everything done on payment basis. In Indonesia, all modes of learning were employed such as self-study, group learning, mutual learning, using an instructor and apprenticeship for learning. Literacy teachers in China are mainly working on part time basis, with a small number of full time teachers and senior grade students. Most of them are from party cadres.

The Adult Learning largely depends on their psychology and takes place faster when the adults are treated with respect and dignity and the teaching methods are appropriately suited to the needs of the adult learner in this way it was attempted to adjust pedagogy to scientific principles of learning.
The methods of teaching and the material production for teaching learning of adults was well experimented in India. The period of learning was reduced to six months (200 hours) under Improved Pace of Content Learning (IPCL) method. This was done to attract more learners as it was found that the longer the duration, the lesser the attraction for non-literates. The country recorded the highest decadal jump of 13 percent with female literacy going up by 15 percent against the increase in male literacy by 12 percent. For the first time, the absolute number of literates was less than that of the literate under NLM.

Directorate of Community Education in Indonesia responsible for NFE has designed innovative learning materials for a variety of different groups of people. Kejar package A & B were the best programmes for learning and earning.

In Thailand, attractive curriculum development blended with functional and vocational components through classroom teaching was the main features of adult education programmes. Community mobilization benefited the maximum to generate considerable interest among the masses in sustaining their interest in reading over a long period of time. It may have been partially attributed to the demand of literacy and vocational skill as per the needs of Thai economy and administrative measures taken by the government to employ only literate persons for jobs.

In India, media and local cultural programmes were used for mobilization of the people. All India Radio and Television were used for agriculture extension activities. In Indonesia, media and culture form the integral part of teaching learning process. In China, 60-minute television adult education programme were found to be very effective.

In India, Primary education was given priority immediately after independence but there was no coordination between adult and primary education. Primary education was equated and strengthened in Indonesia as adult
education. Indonesia made the provision for compulsory primary education for adults by legislation as early as 1954.

In Thailand an integrated approach to primary and adult education was made through the department of non-formal education, which was part of the Ministry of Education. The crucial feature of the Thai experience has been the importance given to primary and adult basic education. The imposition of a six-year compulsory schooling in Thailand in 1977 brought in good results.

In China, during 1990s Universalisation of 9 year compulsory schooling has been given “top-priority” in order to prevent the next generation of illiterates.

In these programmes, the notion of second chance leads to the development of compensatory education with strong linkages to the regular system. Equivalency with the regular system meant that emphasis was put on the acquisition of knowledge which was in most of the cases mere information and such information was considered basic not for its usefulness for an adult’s life but for its correspondence with the children, basic curriculum and equivalency programmes for adult learners. Adult education programmes of Indonesia, Thailand and China prepared out of school adults giving equivalency for primary examination. India has equivalency programmes in a limited way through adult literacy. Thailand under the provision of functional literacy and continuing education has level 1-2 programmes (equivalent to grade 4 of primary education).

The hilly area Education Project was initiated during 1980-81 and increased the literacy in the hill tribe area substantially. The programmes had been successful in increasing enrolment retention in primary education as well as literacy in Thailand. In India accelerated female literacy programme (AFLP) for the low female literacy rate states has been recently implemented.

All the countries studied undertook massive literacy campaigns. India’s NAEP (1978) programme was centre based. NLM’s TLC in (1988) was a massive campaign in a phased manner covering most of the districts.
Table 4.1: Literacy Campaigns in selected countries by the year/s of launching.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Duration of campaigns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>1987-onwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>1961-1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>1983-1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>1955-56, 1958-59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Countries studied clearly demonstrated incorporation of different institutional practices in their respective national education systems. The institutional practices varies from ad hoc projects to building of permanent infrastructure. Multiple institutions or a mix of institutions exists in the form of Government owned, Government sponsored a NGOs, International organization and corporate bodies. Adult Education has been a cross sectional function within the Ministries of Education. The responsibility varied from centralized to decentralized for Educational development. The number of adult education programmes is increasing in the countries studied and are targeted and focused according to the illiterate sub populations. Adult Education programmes were characterized as a great source of involvement of civil society and the masses.

Adult literacy practices in four countries studied differ substantially though it was found that the policies employed were nearly similar, in ideas, concepts, target groups and in evaluation. Concentration was laid on low female literacy, Rural / Urban differences in Literacy, regional differences in literacy rates, disadvantaged groups and low literacy rate areas.

There was diversity of concepts and projects, as well as processes of institutionalization which the different countries were employing as they moved towards the goal of cent percent literacy.
Efforts for high enrollment, retention and productivity of primary education has also definitively contributed to adult literacy rates in the countries selected for comparison. It has been found that China and Indonesia had achieved great success in primary education by 2002.

Rural adult schools called the community learning centres for information motivation further learning for farmers in China and accreditation of non-formal education the equivalency system and continuing education of Thailand. Interwoven Learning activities (vocational) centres of Indonesia and the total literacy campaigns of India are the pertinent particular programmes to be mentioned.

It could be visualized that the core function of the adult literacy was to equip an illiterate with minimum level of 3R’s. Most of the adult education projects and programmes were run by State or Central governments. NGO’s were also participating in this venture. The NGO’s were greatly dependent upon the government. Adult education policy and programmes always changed with changes in the governments so that they matched the ideology of the party in power. India’s adult education was a typical example of a developing country emerging after a long period of colonization. Volunteerism was the crux of the philosophy of adult education.

On the other hand, China’s adult education model was associated with Marxist Socialist State. It had the impact of centralized economy. Immediately after independence in 1948, China undertook Mass Literacy Campaigns, which were characteristic of Marxist Socialist States. This ideological connection which was true for China gave priority to mass adult literacy coupled with an overall development in agriculture, health and environment. The political concretization was the foremost object of this ideology. The mass organizations of workers (women and youth) were seen as structures of socialization and participation for the advancement of the interest of the state. The Adult education and its relationship to the surrounding system was dialectical.
In all the selected countries the countries political thought played a big role in effective implementation as the term ideology itself denotes, a set of ideas on which a political or economic system is based.

China’s Adult Education was based on the total commitment of the government to literacy and literacy was politically motivated. The purpose was to prepare people for the Marxist-Socialist State. To politicialize them adult education was for the cadres, peasants and for industrial workers seeking higher production. It involved mobilization of the masses to fight against their own ignorance.

In India the adult education programmes were for the adult illiterate. It included adult literacy with certain other objectives. It was horizontal in structure. But in China, the adult education system was parallel to the main education system.

In India the purpose of adult education was to produce efficient human resource for development that could serve society. The purpose of adult education in China was to produce people who could read and work to serve proletarian politics.

In India, literacy has been placed on the national agenda by the NLM. In some places literacy had become the focus of local as well as national politics. It was linked with development at the district level. The implementation of the programme was decentralized at the local level.

India has been well behind China in the field of Adult Education. Only the recent TLC under NLM being implemented since 1988 has shown effective results for literacy in India.

Thailand has reached a level of cent percent literacy, while Indonesia is approaching it. Age specific literacy brings out a crucial feature to the Chinese advantage. It depicts that China was close to universal literacy in the younger age groups. This could be attributed to success in Universalization of Primary Education. In India, by contrast, there is a massive problem of illiteracy, although the money spent on higher education was less in China than in India.
The high population growth rate of India is also a limiting factor to a great extent.

China’s relative advantage over India was a product of its pre-reform groundwork. During the eighties there had been progress in both the countries with no major changes in China. Female literacy rates were well below male literacy in both countries. The gender gap in particular was large in India but has been narrowing down in the younger age groups lately. There was a wide range of variation in literacy rates in different regions of both the countries.

To sum up, the failure in the field of literacy programmes has to be understood in the wider context based on the failure of universalisation of elementary education and failure to make qualitative changes in education itself.

The earliest attempts in adult learning in the countries studied concentrated on providing basic skills of reading and writing to illiterate adults. Functionality was added later to prepare him/her for the complex and changing society of the future. The functional literacy programmes was often seen as programmes of empowerment through education.

In order to reduce the number of learners lapsing into illiteracy, countries in the region sought to integrate literacy with training for work with increased productivity. Development linked literacy was labelled as ‘functional literacy and designed to fulfil the occupational needs of the learners.

Unfortunately, such literacy programmes were also short lived because it was difficult to integrate literacy skills with technical, vocational skills or occupational training. The concept of functionality was enlarged to link training in literacy with improvement of human conditions. Therefore literacy programmes were built around issues of health, civic responsibilities; values, right attitudes and home economics.

Of Late, the countries studied had linked continuing education programmes with literacy programme. Initial literacy skills became the basis for a variety of continuing education programmes, which were flexible both in terms of duration and format.
There is a difference in literacy rate among the rural and urban areas of India from 1951-2001. The literacy rate was highly in favour of urban areas, that showed that the facilities of education were poor in rural areas. In Indonesia, on the basis of literacy rate by location, there was a significant difference between rural and urban literacy rate. The data indicate that rural illiteracy rate which in 1998 was 86% of the total illiterate population in rural areas. The rural – urban disparities in adult illiteracy were very large and there was a significant gap in the implementation of the programmes.

70% of China’s population lives along the countryside, the rural adult literacy rates in China were found to be high. Still the gender disparities were large in the countryside. Though it was very difficult to work in rural areas but it was prioritized and due attention was given to rural development.

4.5.2 Differentials by Sex

Table 4.2: Literacy in Thailand by sex 1937-2001 (10 years and above)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>80.6</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>74.8</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>89.5</td>
<td>93.1</td>
<td>86.2</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>97.3</td>
<td>94.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Literacy Situation in Thailand, Department of Non-formal education.
We can view that the literacy programmes in the countries studied have evolved through a number of stages and phases. They had genuine problem of motivation, retention, monitoring and evaluation. They were mostly:

- Beginning as simple literacy programmes.
- Linked to development technical / vocational / occupation skill, training programmes (functional literacy).
- Linked to self-empowerment.
- In continuing education (CE) the shift was from programme to learners.

Therefore, from the above deliberations it can be summarised that adult education of a nation or a society reflects its overall political ideology and gives an account of its comprehensive development. The historical analysis undertaken in the present study revealed a deep association between the political ideology of the nation and its adult education policy and programmes from within. The countries were studied for a particular period of time. It can be said that formal basic education receives the main attention of policy and planning formulation. In general, adult education delivered non-formally was still not appreciated. Adult education emerged as a particular progressive idea in the countries studied.

### 4.5.1 Comparison of Adult Education on the basis of Area, Sex and Language

#### Table: 4.2: Differential Rural/Urban Literacy Rates, 1951-2001 (India)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>18.33</td>
<td>12.10</td>
<td>34.59</td>
<td>22.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>28.30</td>
<td>22.50</td>
<td>54.40</td>
<td>31.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>34.45</td>
<td>27.90</td>
<td>60.20</td>
<td>32.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>43.57</td>
<td>36.00</td>
<td>67.20</td>
<td>31.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>52.21</td>
<td>44.70</td>
<td>73.10</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>65.38</td>
<td>59.40</td>
<td>80.30</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Censes of India, 2001
As is evident the disparities persist in Thailand in the early decades but the efforts of the country to reduce the gap have been persistent. Thailand has managed to decrease the gender gap in literacy rate from 27% in 1947 to 7% in 1980. By 2004 the literacy difference by sex was about 3 per cent.

In comparison the gender differences in literacy are prevalent in India since 1951-2001. In the last decade (1991-2001) there was a significant increase in female literacy rate of about 15 per cent. It was realised that there was need of strengthening female literacy programmes in the field. Adult education has an important role in handling gender issues and in the empowerment of women. A very tangible proof of this policy is that most of the adult education tutors, facilitators and learners are women.

In China, presently among the existing number of illiterates 70% are women. Therefore the Chinese government had placed great emphasis on women’s literacy. From 1997 to 2002, 9.1 million illiterate women became neo-literate accounting for 60.7% of neo literates and the illiteracy rate of adult women declined from 24.05% in 1995 to under 10% in 2000. Illiteracy rates of young and middle aged women declined from 9.42% to under 5%.

In yet another move and in the course of making 9 years education compulsory, the Chinese government has paid great attention to the school
International organization in the past decade has played an important role in bringing gender issues to the forefront of education, especially in adult attendance of school going age girls. The gender gap in enrollment declined from 0.7% in 1995 to 0.09% in 2002. The dropout rates of primary school girls declined from 1.49% in 1995 to 0.61% in 2000. Efforts have been made to improve women’s access to vocational education too.

Although census data reveals that girl’s enrollment is rapidly increasing yet the gender gap still persists in varying measures from country to country in the context of south and west Asian countries. Access to schooling was also seen as one major factor that lead to greater disparities in education. China and Indonesia had achieved gender parity in primary and secondary education by 2002.

**Table 4.3: Literacy rate by sex in the selected countries (2000-2004)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>India</th>
<th>Indonesia</th>
<th>Thailand</th>
<th>China</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UNICEF (http://www.unicef.org/info by country/... statistics.html)

International organization in the past decade has played an important role in bringing gender issues to the forefront of education, especially in adult
literacy. The countries under study have especially benefited in reducing the gender gap.

The countries under study had inherited high illiteracy rate among women, it identifies them as the key target and potential beneficiary of literacy programmes. Gender differences in literacy always had evoked concern in the literacy policy and practice in the selected countries. These gender concerns be translated into practice by putting efforts to mobilize and motivate women to join literacy classes and organize centers for women learners. Women are given preference to participate in political process. Literacy curriculum and teaching learning material have been geared toward women’s reproductive and productive work (skill development). For example as mentioned earlier, literacy programmes in India have stressed a lot on women’s empowerment in their literacy curriculum.

In conclusion, women had become an important group of beneficiaries for literacy programmes of the selected countries.