PREFACE

As a student of Rural Development, as a research scholar in Rural Development, as a development functionary in a local voluntary organisation for some time, and as a member of faculty of Rural Development and Social Work, I had the opportunity of taking part in adult education activities for a considerable period of time. Since then, I developed a keen interest in adult education, and consequently I decided to make an indepth study of the impact of adult education on the learners for my thesis.

It is observed that the influence of the ongoing development programmes on the beneficiaries has been reduced remarkably for want of literacy and general comprehension among the beneficiaries. Often, the beneficiaries failed to utilise the loan or grant properly, wasted the resources made available to them, unable to understand the technology and tools and ultimately quit the developing process. On certain occasions, their efforts ended with outstanding debts, unfinished goods and damaged tools. It was all due to their illiteracy and ignorance. It is in this context it has been recognised that adult education is the basic requirement for the success of any attempt for rural development.

Adult education by itself cannot sustain the interest of the learner in education process as long as it confines itself to the
community hall in which the classes are held. Social awareness and functionality cannot be taught in a class room. The learner in actual setting is acquainted with various socio-economic and functional issues under the constrained influence of instructors and supervisors. Adult education combined with community organisation is the only way through which literacy, social awareness and functionality of the adults can be promoted.

Major adult education programmes such as National Adult Education Programme and National Literacy Mission have realised the need for promoting adult education on a massive scale in India. The targets set were gigantic. The specified time in which the results are to be achieved is limited. In the process, the programmes concentrated upon reaching the target in quantity but ignored the qualitative aspects. Previous studies on adult education repeatedly pointed out that the programmes did not create qualitative impact on the learners especially in the arenas of social awareness and functionality. It is in this context that the present study is initiated and conducted. Some of the suggestions offered by the learners and the instructors engaged in adult education have offered practical solutions to the existing lacunae in adult education programmes.
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