CHAPTER VII

PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

Education has been emerged as a powerful weapon to eradicate the evils of ignorance and illiteracy and acclaimed as potent instrument to bring about a desirable change in the social, economic, cultural and political life of the masses. The civilization of any country is also reflected through the rate of literacy and the latter is a dependent factor on the growth and emergence of the quantum of these institution as such. In other words education is the backbone of a progressive nation.

India is a country where majority of the people live in rural areas and most of them are poverty stricken and tradition bound. The chance being educated or attracted to the programme of literacy was lost to majority of the adults in the country which has drawn the society to a state critical social as well as economic problem. As a result the Government of India realised and importance and need of educating all these unfortunate adults through adult education programmes. Adult Education is one of the important issues of Indian Education. It is the process by whereby persons who no longer attend schools on a regular and full time basis undertake sequential and organised activities with a conscious intention of bringing
about changes in information, knowledge, understanding or skill, appreciation and attitudes or for the purpose of identifying and solving personal or community problems.

The launching of the National Adult Education Programme on October 2, 1978 marked a new era in the educational history of India. Adult education which was promoted by the Voluntary agencies. Social reformers and Christian Missionaries received new twist with this programme and finally culminated into a national programme and covered the entire nation. The Five Year Plans of the country also promoted for adult education programme in a phased manner through starting of literacy centres and night schools. Later the National Literacy Mission was launched in 1988 to impact education to eighty million illiterate persons in the country is also a big boost to the literacy programme. The Eight Five Year Plans later aimed at human development with considerable emphasis on education and literacy programmes. Universalisation of education and eradication of illiteracy in 15-35 age group are the two priority objectives of this plan and to literate 11.08 crores illiterates in the country. In this programmes of adult education in addition to the Government departments wedded with the responsibility of eradication of illiteracy the Universities and various other
Voluntary Organisations have been involved in this task. It is in this context aforesaid that the importance of adult education is being realised by the Government of Andhra Pradesh.

Of all the movements which have brought revolutionary change and brought enlightenment among the Telugu speaking people in India is the Adult Education Movement. The National Policy on Education of 1986 which gave a new education policy to the country made various agencies to participate more effectively with commitment in the spread of education in the State. The agencies like State Government, Universities and Voluntary Organizations have been functioning in Anantapur District of Rayalaseema Region.

The district administration of Anantapur has rightly responded to the signals of the State and Central Governments to take up the task of Adult Education Programmes to transform the illiterate masses into literate inorder to bring them into the main stream of Social and Cultural fabric of the country.
The literacy rate of Anantapur district is lower than that in the State as a whole. It has recorded a literacy rate of 35.68 per cent as against 36.46 per cent in the State and 42.86 at all India level as per the latest census reports. The National Adult Education Programmes were also launched by various agencies like Government, University and Voluntary Organizations. In order to achieve the objective an organisational structure has been evolved and put into action to implement the programme. Crores of rupees have been spent so far for the success of the programme in the district. At present as many as 1320 Adult Education Centres have been running under the supervision of both Government (900) Sri Krishnadevaraya University (60) and the Voluntary Organisations (300+60) one at Hindupur and the other at Gorantla. All the sections in the district like Scheduled Castes (10452), Scheduled Tribes (2313) Backward Castes (17126) and Other Castes (7932) are being enrolled so far in these centres. It is also revealed that the utilisation of Government grants for Adult Education Programmes in the district is more by Government Departments followed by Voluntary Organisations and the S.K. University. A total of 1,89,59,227 rupees have been received by the above agencies from 1986-87 to 1990-91 and an amount of Rupees 1,61,98,335 have been spent by them.
In fact the National Adult Education Programmes launched by these three agencies are no doubt good attempts to eradicate illiteracy and to create awareness among all the illiterate masses. But however, in spite of various efforts made by these agencies, this programme suffers from various problems. The attempt made to study the administration of adult education programme in Anantapur district revealed interesting facts and problems which need immediate solutions as suggested hereunder.

It is clear that we are trying to gain success in a programme that is being conducted in difficult conditions to say the least. The district administration is expected to go around all the blocks where the programme is operating without a conveyance of their own. They find it quite difficult doing this and naturally do not relish walking in the nights to remote villages for seeing Adult Education Centres. On the other hand, their frequent visits to Adult Education Centres would greatly enhance the image of the programme, increase their control over the supervisors which in turn would strengthen the programme and also help in establishing more contracts with other government agencies in the rural areas.
The supervisors are the link between the district administration and the field. This link should be used as a communication channel to facilitate flow of information about the experiences of the field and about its needs and problems. Yet, we find this channel blocked in the district due to a variety of reasons. The supervisors are a disillusioned lot because they do into find the increase in income in their present jobs proportionate to the increase in workload. Added to this are the dangers of night work. A feeling that the district administration has an unhelpful attitude and should be streamlined prevails in supervisory circles. The district administration feels that supervisory are not keen on submitting their reports, tour programmes and dairies of the field.

The instructor is the man who ultimately runs the show. He is expected to do a lot in terms of removing people's superstitions, motivating the learners to join a people's movement, effecting social change and engineering a silent revolution. All this and more is told to the instructor during the training sessions. The programme also specified that the instructor should be from the community of his learners, preferably a well-educated youth or a school teacher possessing the noble philosophy of social service. But the instructor we find is a man of limited knowledge,
inadequate training and far from realising the twin objectives of social awareness and functionality. In meagre sum of Rs.100/- does not attract capable persons who can earn twice the amount in half the time for the same effort elsewhere. The existing instructor is yet another simple farmer with some knowledge gained upto middle school which enables him to teach literacy and numeracy.

The Adult Education Centre is usually a drab village room. The mud walls made to look even more gloomy by the dim light cast from the learners. Many of them were devoid of the charts, maps and colourful posters supposed to be stuck on their walls. The centre offers no incentive to the learners for learning or even getting together at its location. The problems of kerosene supply often extinguish the light provided by the lanterns.

These facilities provided for the rural peasant, the man whom the programme hopes to benefit. He is the learner whose major concern is to tend his land, which will provide the food he is to eat. He toils from early in the morning to late in the evening in the hope of seeing a good harvest. He returns tired but not without the urge to do something more. This urge
beings him to the AECs initially but as time progresses his interest wanes. He comes occasionally but not with the curiosity to gain knowledge. Instead he is compelled to come by the instructor.

The programme expects the community members to participate and encourage the learners. The community members do not see any utility in the programme which they believe to be a plan on paper inadequately implemented. This is definitely not because the programme has been running very well or because AECs are flocking with learners. The community members cannot see any tangible benefits resulting from this programme. They do not raise a big voice against it because it provides the unemployed youth of the village with an opportunity to earn some amount per month.

This is the diagnosis of the situation for which the researcher putting forth some suggestions and recommendations.