

PREFACE

Education is concerned essentially with the future. It has a holistic character. Therefore, everyone capable of contributing to it has a duty and responsibility to do so. If the new generation entering the 21st Century finds itself ill-equipped, it will hold the present generation responsible for its inadequacies. It will not accept the alibi that the shortcomings in their education and training stemmed from the constraints of a particular framework of Centre-State relations or departmental responsibilities. Education is a National responsibility.

In our conditions, the role of education is to transform a static society into one vibrant with a commitment to development and change. An important ingredient of this metamorphosis is the emergence of a learning society in which, people of all ages and all sections not only have access to education but also get involved in the process of continuing education. In this environment, open, non-formal, part time and adult education become as meaningful as formal education; in fact, the two streams reinforce each other.

The Revised Policy Formulations (RPF), which is referred to as Programme Of Action (POA), 1992, had established that the policy framework of the National Education Policy, 1986 of India is robust and can guide the educational development of the country for a long time to come. The total literacy campaign approach is a post-POA innovation which has emerged as a viable model and has transformed the perception of universal adult literacy from one of hopeless dream to an achievable prospect.

The National Literacy Mission (NLM) was launched as a Societal and Technological Mission on 5th May 1988 with the objective of imparting functional literacy to 80 million illiterate adults in 15-35 age group by 1995.

In West Bengal, since its implementation of the Total Literacy Campaign (TLC), by the Government of West Bengal alongwith State Resource Centre and District Administration, a number of districts have been declared as fully literate districts by the NLM, on the basis of evaluation. But often, there are questions about these

evaluation systems only because there were hardly an objective criteria or presence of any standard scientific materials for these evaluations. An attempt has been made in the present study to meet the said need with reference to a particular district a representative one in the southern part of West Bengal, very close to Calcutta; but with significantly large rural and industrial population and an international border with the neighbouring Bangladesh. For designing the present work, I followed the approach and method of Dr. Surendra Nath Banerjee of Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta, whose pioneer study in this area earned appreciation and recognition. I record my debt, without any reservation, to him. At every stage of the study I received his help, advice and guidance.

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I have no tall claim but I sincerely hope to get valuable suggestions from the learned examiners for my future guidance to undertake similar research projects in future.

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