CHAPTER -1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Adult Education: Meaning

The term "Adult Education" was first coined in England in the early nineteenth century "Definitions of Adult Education are as multitudinous as the autumn leaves. Yet none satisfies many persons engaged in it" (Robert Blakely).¹

The phrase "Adult Education" is sometimes deplored today as being vague, meagre or redundant. Its detractors should, however, remember that this concept embodies, in the opinion of John Powell, the core of the vital optimism, which has built up the western civilization.²

The term "Adult Education" has come into the general use for the past fifty years. It identifies two different but related phenomena: a field of social activity and an emerging discipline in social sciences. These phenomena although different are independent. The discipline finds its subject of study in the field, which is, in turn, dependent upon the discipline for its development.

²"ibid.
The field of Adult Education has been identified and defined in various ways. Most definitions include all learning activities by adults, from the casual incidental learning that may occur in the natural societal setting to the systematic learning accomplished in a formal instructional setting. Thus, the field of Adult Education may include all activities with an educational purpose that is carried on by people. This aspect of Adult Education may be designated by several alternative synonyms—continuous learning, adult schools, education of adults, life-long learning, night schools, further education, extension and continuing education.

The discipline of Adult Education is concerned with the study of those educational activities for adults that occur in the formal instructional setting. Consequently, it can be defined more precisely.

"Adult Education is the action of an external educational agent in purposefully ordering behaviour into planned systematic experience to whom such activity is supplemental to their primary role in society and which involves some continuity in an exchange relationship between the agent and the learners so that the educational process is under constant supervision and direction."

1.2 Definition of Terms

Adult: A person who has completed his or her formal or informal education and who has assumed the responsibility and a productive role in society.
Education: To Swami Vivekananda (1858) Education is life-building, man-making, character-making and assimilation of ideas and values. Education aims at fostering an integrated development of personality and a positive change in one's own outlook. Education is a manifestation of perfection already in man. It makes man humane.

John Dewey (1916) states "Education is life, education is growth, education is social process". Democracy can not function without education.

The Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi says that education is "Knowledge of the self".

The National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 defines education as that which liberates.

Adult Education: Any activity or programme deliberately designed by a providing agent to satisfy the learning needs and interests of persons who are of statutory school leaving age and whose principal activity is no longer in Educational process. Adult Education spans non-vocational, vocational, general, formal and non-formal studies, as well as education with a collective social purpose. It is also known as continuing education, extension education, lifelong learning, permanent learning, recurrent education.

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10 University Grants Commission, Report of the Review committee appointed by the UGC on university system as a third dimension, New Delhi, 1987, p. 17.
Long (1980) has defined Adult Education as a process of learning by and for any one who possesses the biological civil and cultural characteristics of adult.\textsuperscript{12}

Liveright and Haygood say Adult Education is the process whereby persons who no longer (or) did not attend school on a regular and full time basis undertaken sequential and organized activities with a conscious intention of bringing about changes in information, knowledge, understanding skills, appreciation and attitudes for the purpose of identifying and solving personal or community problems.\textsuperscript{13}

Mukerji defined Adult Education broadly so as to include all instructions, formal or informal imparted to adults.\textsuperscript{14}

1.3 Need and Importance of Adult Education

Adult Education is one of the most important and formidable issues of Indian education. More than 70 percent of our fellow countrymen still vegetate in the darkness of ignorance and illiteracy’. Gandhiji, the Father of the Nation said, "Mass illiteracy is India's sin and shame and must be liquidated".\textsuperscript{15}

There is no doubt that Adult Education is directly linked with the economic, social, cultural and political progress of a country. A comparative study of the leading nations in the world shows that nations in the highest scale of literacy are able to achieve *the highest scale of per capita national income. To quote V.K.R.V. Rao., "Without Adult Education and adult literacy, it is not possible to have that

\textsuperscript{13} Bhattia et.al., Modern Indian Education and its Problems, Prakash and printers, Ludhiana, 1982-83 p.6.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{15} The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol.68, The Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broad-Casting, Government of India, New Delhi,1970, p.34.
range and speed of economic and social development that makes it worthwhile in terms of value and welfare. New Ideas and practices can not be communicated to them who are untrained to receive them".

Regarding the political aspect of this problem it will have to be admitted that adult franchise without Adult Education is a paradox. This is why Gladstone raised the slogan "Educate your masters" and Lenin stated emphatically that an illiterate person can have no

According to Gandhiji, "Adult Education has been woefully neglected by Congressmen. Where they have not neglected it, they have been satisfied with teaching illiterates to read and write. If I had charge of Adult Education, I should begin with opening the minds of pupils to the greatness and vastness of their country. The villager's Indict is contained in his village. If he goes to another village, he talks of his own village as his home. Hindustan is for him a geographical term. We have no notion of the ignorance prevailing in the villages. The villagers know nothing of foreign rule and its evils. What little knowledge they have picked up fills them with the awe the foreigner inspires. The result is the dread and hatred of the foreigner and his rule. They do not know how to get rid of it. They do not know that, the foreigner's presence is due to their own weaknesses and ignorance! of the power they possess to rid themselves of the foreign rule. My Adult Education means, therefore, first true political education of the adult by word of mouth".17


17 (iandhî.MK., Constructive Programme: its meaning and place, Navajeevan Publishers; House, Ahmedabad, 1975. p 17
Again illiterate womanhood negates and frustrates all efforts educating children. In fact, the finest schemes of education for the young will prove largely abortive unless backed by comparable scheme of education for the adult. According to Gandhiji, "A child can receive education in the home and that too from mother herself. Hence, children receive elementary education from their mothers." 18

"While underlining the importance of women's education, Jawaharlala Nehru said "Education of a boy is education of one person, but education of a girl is the education of entire family," 19

It is clear that Adult Education is of great importance not only for the development of children but also for that of the nation. In a country where the demons of casteism, communalism, parochialism, provincialism and poverty are quite powerful, Adult Education of a fairly high standard is an urgent imperative.

The present study was conducted in the selected villages of Dindigul district of Tamilnadu when the Post-Literacy Campaign was going on. The data related to the study were collected by Direct Interview method, using pretested schedules from the three categories of respondents and they were classified as

1. Learners
2. Animators / Instructors / Volunteers
3. Supervisors/Preraks/Project Officers/Assistant Programme Co-ordinators / Co-ordinators, N.S.S

Among the three categories of respondents, the learners were the beneficiaries of Adult Education programmes and they were 420 in number. The study analysed the socio-economic conditions of learners. The learners were asked about the benefits of Adult Education programmes, reasons for drop-outs, their opinion about the programmes and personnel involved in the programmes and suggestions to improve the programmes.

Above all, the present literacy, numeracy (both reading and writing) and awareness levels among learners were tested.

The Animators were 60 in number and they were the grassroots level workers in all the Adult Education programmes. Regarding the Animator category, their socio-economic conditions were studied. They were asked about their training which they had received and its uses. They were enquired about the help and support received from the learners, Government Officials, Adult Education committee and Personnel who have served in the Adult Education programmes. They were enquired about the supply of teaching and learning materials to the centres and their quality. Further they were asked to give suggestions to improve the Adult Education programmes.

There were 54 persons in the category of Supervisors and they were the personnel to monitor and evaluate the Adult Education programmes organised in the Dindigul district. They were asked about their programmes and the agencies in which they have been serving at present and also served earlier. Their socio-economic conditions were also studied. The hurdles faced by them in organising the programmes were listed out. The study also reveals whether they have received sufficient training and they were able to monitor and evaluate the programmes. The motivating techniques adopted by them towards the learners were also identified from them. The suggestions to improve the Adult Education programmes were also collected from them.
Totally, the strengths and weaknesses of seven Adult Education programmes conducted by the three agencies in the Dindigul district were studied. The strengths of the programmes should be kept in mind and the weaknesses should be elucidated when further programmes are designed.

Above all, the valuable and practicable suggestions received from all the categories of respondents were listed out in the chapter dealing with the findings and suggestions. The researcher hopes that they will be of much importance for the designers of various Adult Education programmes.