THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK
The Janata Party which came to power in 1977 attempted major policy changes in some spheres of public policy except perhaps foreign policy. In pursuance of its election manifesto a radical re-alignment of priorities was attempted within the education. For the first time since independence a national policy to educate adults was formulated to educate an estimated 100 million in the age group of \(15-35\) by 1983-84.\(^1\) The commitment of the government to adult education is reflected in policy statement on National Adult Education Programme issued in 1978. It says "exclusion of a vast majority of the people from the process of education is a most disturbing aspect of educational and social planning. This has been upper most in the consideration of the present government ever since it assumed office in March 1977".\(^2\)

Recognising the role of primary education in checking illiteracy, the policy statement says that "while determined efforts must be made to universalise elementary education upto the age of 14 years, educational facilities must be extended to adult population to remedy their educational deprivation and to enable them to develop their potentiality. Indeed universalisation of elementary education and of adult literacy are mutually dependent".\(^3\)
The policy statement further adds that "the government have resolved to wage a clearly conceived wall planned and relentless struggle against illiteracy to enable masses to play an active role in social and cultural change".4

Adult Education policy thus has been visualised as a major policy input to bring radical socio-economic and political changes. The report of the working group on adult education further confirms the government's intention on role of adult education as a 'change agent' when it says that Adult Education - looked upon as a method of human resource development, including literacy, functional development and creation of awareness among the poor regarding their inherent power to determine their destinies, should become the method in the new development process. It can contribute to the new development strategy in three significant ways: firstly, by making a substantial part of the work-force literate and better skilled; secondly, by involvement of people in various developmental programmes which would make it possible to achieve optimum potential and minimize wastage; and thirdly, by creation of awareness among the poor regarding the laws and policies of government, where by it would be possible to implement the strategy of re-distributive justice".5

Touching on the various aspects of problem of illiteracy the policy statement clearly stated that "a massive programme should be launched to cover the vast segment of population in the 15-35 age group as early as possible".6 The planners of this programme dwelt at length on the
organizational aspects of the National Adult Education Programme. The role of non-governmental and semi-governmental agencies in the implementation of this programme was recognised.

In fact the policy document makes it very clear that "Adult Education must cease to be a concern only of the educational authority. It should be an indispensable input in all sectors of development, particularly where participation of the beneficiaries is crucial to the fulfilment of development objectives". Further it was stated that "A pre-requisite of an adult education movement is that all agencies, governmental, voluntary private and public sector industry, institutes of formal education should lend strength to it". Thus it can be seen that the policy planners recognized the importance of non-governmental agencies in the implementation of qualitative public policy like adult education.

Another unique feature of the National Adult Education Programme is the special place given to voluntary agencies. The policy statement emphatically stated that "voluntary agencies have a special role to play and necessary steps shall have to be taken to secure their full involvement".

Thus the goal liquidating illiteracy in the country through a National Adult Education Programme is being planned and this programme was launched in 1978 throughout the country on Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary i.e. 2nd October. It was planned to cover 100 million illiterates in the 15-35 age group within five years. The following table gives yearwise phasing of the programme.
Table - 8

Target fixed for the coverage of adult illiterates under N A E P

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Annual coverage</th>
<th>Cumulative coverage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1978-79</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979-80</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-82</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982-83</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>65.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-84</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Establishment of National Board of Adult Education:

It may be recalled that the National Adult Education Programme was started as a result of the initiative taken by the Janata Government which was ruling at the centre then. The preliminary work relating to the programme began with the establishment of a National Board of Adult Education in 1977. The Chairman of the Board was Sri Morarji Desai who was the Prime Minister then. The composition of the board includes some ministers of Central
Government, a minister dealing with adult education from each of the regions of the country, heads of organizations such as University Grants Commission, Central Social Welfare Board, Khadi and Village Industries Corporation, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Indian Adult Education Association and a host of other non-officials and field workers.

The National Board of Adult Education has set up five committees to attend to specific tasks relating to adult education programme.

1. The committee on Preparatory action.
2. The committee on Motivation.
3. Committee on Voluntary Agencies.
4. Committee on Post-literacy and follow-up
5. Committee on Evaluation.

It was stated in one of the publications of the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare that "all important decisions taken by various committees are generally endorsed by the National Board of Adult Education."

The overall responsibility for the administration of the national adult education programme rests with the Ministry of Education. It provides secretariat to the National Board of Adult Education. The Ministry also deals with the various inter-ministerial matters and is charged with the responsibility of overseeing the implementation of National Adult Education Programmes in various states. The scheme of assistance to voluntary agencies and Shramik Vidyapeeths is directly administered by the Central Ministry.

The organisational chart drawn here gives a picture of the administrative work of the National Adult Education Programme.
NATIONAL ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMME

National Board of Adult Education

- Shramik Vidyapeeths, Nehru Yuva Kendras, N S S, Voluntary Organisations

State Board of Adult Education

- Dev. Ministries/Departments.
  - Agriculture, Labour Information and Broadcasting,
  - Cooperation, Industry Home (Tribal Dev.) Etc.

State Departments of Education (or Dept.
Dealing with Adult Education),
Directorate of Edu/Adult Education,
State Resource Centre,
Universities,
Voluntary Organisations

District Adult Education Committee

Dist. Edu/Adult Education Office

Dist Offices of Dev. Depts.

Project Officer

Supervisors

Instructors

Field Functionaries

As can be observed from the chart the programme is being planned to be implemented through a variety of governmental, semi-governmental and non-governmental agencies.

The administrative structure for the programme extends from the central to the field level (i.e. Adult Education Centre). At the Central level, as has already been discussed, the Ministry of Education and the Central Directorate of Adult Education are in the overall in-charge of the programme management. The Ministry and the Directorate have a special responsibility for involvement of various agencies like voluntary agencies, Universities and colleges. The specific functions of the Directorate include arrangement of training programmes, production of teaching/learning material and evaluation. These two agencies are also charged with the responsibility of involving other developmental ministries like Agriculture and other autonomous agencies in the programme.

State Level - State Board of Adult Education

At the state level the State Board of Adult Education (SBAE) is regarded as an apex body for the entire state. It is usually chaired by the State's Chief Minister or the Education Minister. The main function of the board is to provide policy guidelines, creating a favourable environment and reviewing the progress of the programme.

A Steering Committee to aid and advice the state board of Adult Education is also created with the such functions like working out implementation strategies like location of centres, target of coverage as well as
co-ordination of the programme besides involving other developmental departments. Further this agency also takes steps to involve all governmental, semi-governmental and voluntary agencies and the implementation. Monitoring of the progress of the programme is yet another task entrusted to the Steering Committee.

The government's determination to give a place of precedence to Voluntary Agencies was reflected in the terms of reference of the Working Group on Adult Education for Medium Term Plan (1978-83). One of the terms of reference to this committee was "to apportion the areas of responsibility among the centre, states and voluntary agencies".  

Thus the policy makers envisaged almost a secondary role to voluntary agencies after the State Government's in the implementation of National Adult Education Programme. Delineating on implementation agencies, the 'Outline on National Adult Education Programme' states that "the programme which gives importance to flexibility and diversity in organization as well as its content can be best implemented through voluntary agencies". Noting that the involvement of voluntary agencies is not much, then the policy planners of National Adult Education Programme recommended several steps for increasing their participation in National Adult Education Programme which include (1) to involve all voluntary agencies working at present in the field of adult education or having the potentiality to do so and (2) to create circumstances for emergence of new agencies, particularly in areas where such agencies are few. Further, the programme
planners of N A E P visualised partnership role to voluntary agencies along with the State Governments and recommended the association of the voluntary agencies at all decision making levels particularly in matters which affect the work of these agencies, like the procedures for applying grants.

The report of working group on Adult Education appointed for medium term plan 1978–83 also identified the areas where voluntary agencies' participation was relevant and necessary. The report says that "these agencies should organise field adult education programmes, including post-literacy and follow-up programmes, resource development particularly training, production of teaching and learning materials and evaluation". The report further says that "the all India voluntary organizations should be encouraged to organize orientation programmes for voluntary agencies".

Commenting on the rigid procedures in government which may drive away the enthusiastic agencies from the programme the working group recommended that "the government must also replace the mechanisms which obstruct involvement of the voluntary agencies by enabling mechanisms". However, the group struck a note of caution regarding the selection of voluntary agencies in the implementation of N A E P and recommended that only those agencies should be selected for financial assistance to implement the programme.

The functional agency of the State Government for implementation of National Adult Education Programme is the Directorate of Adult Education,
with specific tasks such as (1) preparation of plans, (2) encouraging voluntary agencies to participate, (3) direction and overall supervision over government programmes, (4) overseeing and co-ordination of programmes taken up by various agencies other than the government, (5) selection and placement of personnel, (6) monitoring and evaluation of the programme.

The next important agency in the National Adult Education Programme is the State Resources Centre which is entrusted with such essential functions like preparation of teaching/learning material, (2) organization of seminars (3) development of methodological guidelines for curriculum preparation, (4) training support to the programme, including post-literacy programmes, evaluation, research and publications.

District Level:

At the district level the primary responsibility for the implementation of National Adult Education Programme is vested with the district Collector. He occupies this position as the Chairman of District adult education board/committee. The government projects are supervised by the District Collector who would organize, co-ordinate and supervise the implementation of National Adult Education Programme through all agencies - governmental, voluntary and other agencies at the district level. The Collector assisted by the District Adult Education Officer, now styled as Dy. Director of Adult Education in Andhra Pradesh. The District Adult Education Officer/Dy. Director of Adult Education acts as member secretary of the District Adult Education Committee/Board which first of all scrutinises the proposals
for starting Adult Education Programme in the district. All the government project officers and some representatives of voluntary agencies, Universities, Nehru Yuvak Kendras are members of this committee. The committee is also charged with an important responsibility of processing the applications of voluntary agencies for financial assistance and also to assess progress of their work periodically. Besides, the district adult education committee also monitors and evaluates the work of all agencies in their jurisdiction.

A key unit for planning and implementation of national adult education programme is a project which consists of about 300 adult education centres headed by project officer. He/she is assisted by an Asst.Project Officer. In Andhra Pradesh the geographical area of a project generally is co-terminous with that of a block. A project in National Adult Education Programme frame work is visualised as an autonomous unit with Project Officer vested with vast powers of project administration, financial, appointing, training (which was since passed on to State Resources Centre) preparing teaching/learning materials and organizing post-literacy and follow up activities.

For every 30 Adult Education Centres in a project, a supervisor is appointed who is expected to assist the Project Officer in resource development centre particularly in training instructors. Besides these functions the supervisors discharge such varied functions like liaison with developmental functionaries, Mahila Mandals, ensuring regular support of teaching/learning materials and payment of honorarium to instructor,
and in organizing post literacy operations.

The critical unit of the administration in the organisational framework of National Adult Education Programme is the adult education centre under the charge of an instructor. The instructor's main functions, besides teaching, are: Survey, ensuring co-operation with village level developmental functionaries, establishment of rapport with villages and sending periodical reports about the progress of the programme.

Thus, it can be seen that a vast administrative machinery at various levels was created to implement National Adult Education Programme.

The voluntary agencies are also being encouraged to participate in the national adult education programme. The State Governments are required to mobilize larger number of voluntary agencies in the implementation of national adult education programme.

**Instructional Cadre**

The policy planners of National Adult Education Programme have identified six categories of people as instructional cadre of this programme. They are; (1) The School teachers, (2) Students (3) Village youth, (4) Ex-serviceman and other retired personnel, (5) Field level government and other functionaries and (6) Voluntary social workers.

The planners of the programme visualised that the school teachers would be one of the main persons to come forward to take up the job of instruction in adult education centre. The students as part of the National Service Scheme activities were marked as another source of
instructional cadre. The policy planners also gave a place to the village youth with some educational background in conducting the adult education centres. With an expectation that the retired people would be free and would accept a job which would yield a supplemental income to them, ex-serviceman and retired person are identified as one of the sources for the teaching part of the programmes. The village level workers and Gram Sevikas and voluntary social workers are yet another category who were identified for the job of instructors.

**Resource Development:**

The conceptual position spelt out in the policy statement implies creation and development of a resource base for National Adult Education Programme, the priority being given to diversified and need based learning material.

The National Resource group consists of such agencies like the Central Directorate of Adult Education, various other agencies of Central Government and National level voluntary agencies.

The next important unit in resource development is the State Resources Centre (S R C) which in co-operation with the National Resource Group and by continuous interaction with the field, entrusted with the task of resource development. Some of the important functions of the S R C include (a) development of competence in curriculum construction, (b) preparation of diversified teaching/learning material to suit the learners' needs and (c) organization of training programmes to key level functionaries.
Financial Arrangement:

An amount of Rs. 200 crores had been allocated to this programme in the draft five year plan (1978-83) by the Janata Government. To cover 65 million adult illiterate, the total cost worked out to Rs. 686 crores. The following table gives the details of the yearwise expenditure outlay for N A E P from 1978-1983.

Table - 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1978-79</td>
<td>15.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979-80</td>
<td>48.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>95.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-82</td>
<td>190.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982-83</td>
<td>336.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total cost</strong></td>
<td><strong>686.40</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The Planning Commission at that time explained that the remaining money of Rs. 486 crores would become available from other developmental sectors. The estimate has been worked out on the basis of cost per
person enrolled. It has been calculated that the cost for 'educating' an adult illiterate would be Rs. 60 per year. Since they expected that one third of the participants would dropout the cost per learner comes to Rs. 90/-. It was also expected that some funds would be available in the form of contributions and the final cost per learner was put at Rs. 80/-. This estimate however does not include expenditure on administrative structure and other activities connected with the programme.  

Summary:

An impressive administrative structure was provided at national, state and district levels to implement the H E P. A number of state governments have created separate directorates of Adult Education. The State governments send their proposals to the Ministry for starting projects. The Central Directorate is also associated in scrutinising such proposals. A set of guidelines were formulated which facilitate easy scrutiny of the proposals. Projects sponsored by the Central Government are known as Rural Functional Literacy Programme (R FL P), projects funded by states are known as State Adult Education Programme. The Central Ministry of Education directly sanctions the grants to voluntary agencies for running adult education programme. The State Governments are duly informed about the grants sanctioned to voluntary agencies by the Government of India. However, we notice snags in the organisational design. In the earlier years of the programme some voluntary agencies got the financial sanction bypassing the
State Governments, the Directorates of Adult Education and District Adult Education Committees. Some agencies got financial sanction for running the programme by using the political linkages. Such situations gave rise to infiltration of undesirable elements into the programme. Monitoring of N A E P is stated as an important component of programme management. Elaborate procedures have been evolved to monitor the progress of the programme. It was stated in one of the handouts released by the Central Directorate of Adult Education, that qualitative reporting is desirable rather than reporting of mere quantitative data. One of the aspects of the reporting procedure is a column relating to the achievement of learners in terms of the main objectives of the programme viz. literacy, functionality and social awareness. However, except in the year 1979-80 we donot find it in the annual reports brought out by the Ministry of Education and Culture in the subsequent years.

The States are not coming forward to take up the programme on the scale expected. For the last five years the Central Government's share in the programme is very much higher compared with the other agencies.

Coming to the personnel policies most of the staff of State Directorates are brought on deputation. The discussions with some officials reveal that the staff lacks the required commitment that is so necessary for the success of the programme. The visits by them to the Centres is routine, their reactions to the problems is passive. Thus the personnel policy with regard to the State Directorates warrants reconsideration.
While about two Deputy Directors are required for effective supervision of the programme, there are about four or five Deputy Directors which indicates absence of commitment on the part of the State. The supervisory recruitment policy was marked by ad-hocism and shortsightedness. It is to be noticed that there is a lot of gap between what policy planners visualised and what is actually happening now in the States. The point is that since the over-all management of both centrally sponsored and other agencies programmes rests with the State Governments, the Education Department of the State and the Directorate of Adult Education needs to be properly equipped in terms of staff and other requirements.

Coming to the District level administrative framework the much burdened District Collector is further loaded with the Chairmanship of the District Adult Education Committees in which besides District Education Officer and Deputy Director of Adult Education the voluntary agencies participating in the programme, are also members. Most of the District level Education Committees are inactive for one reason or other. Curiously enough, the Andhra Pradesh State Government made the District Education Officer the Convenor of the District Adult Education Committee. While the field representative of the Directorate of Adult Education is just a member. In this superior-subordinate power relationship sometimes a junior District Educational Officer may act as a boss to the senior Deputy Director of Adult Education. The power conflict between them has an adverse effect on the effectiveness of the programme.
As already pointed out the National Board of Adult Education is not meeting regularly to give a higher policy direction. This has sometimes created vacuum in policy making. Even the meetings of State Boards of Adult Education and the State level Steering Committees are not held regularly as they are expected to. With the result of a clearly conceived policy on Adult Education is suffering from ad-hocism. The progress of the programme in terms of number of adult education centres opened from 1979-80 to 1983-84 for the whole country can be gleaned from the table below.

Table - 10
Total number of Adult Education Centres opened

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Rural Functional Literacy Programme</td>
<td>28,996</td>
<td>37,643</td>
<td>48,369</td>
<td>63,602</td>
<td>99,574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(35.56)</td>
<td>(41.44)</td>
<td>(52.55)</td>
<td>(49.55)</td>
<td>(59.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>State Adult Education Programme</td>
<td>19,644</td>
<td>38,178</td>
<td>37,352</td>
<td>59,840</td>
<td>59,015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(24.1)</td>
<td>(41.72)</td>
<td>(40.58)</td>
<td>(46.62)</td>
<td>(34.97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Voluntary Agencies</td>
<td>19,029</td>
<td>11,293</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>822</td>
<td>5,873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(23.34)</td>
<td>(12.34)</td>
<td>(.36)</td>
<td>(.64)</td>
<td>(5.48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Nehru Yuvak Kendras</td>
<td>7,129</td>
<td>1,514</td>
<td>4,884</td>
<td>1,519</td>
<td>527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(8.74)</td>
<td>(1.65)</td>
<td>(5.31)</td>
<td>(1.1835)</td>
<td>(0.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Universities &amp; Colleges</td>
<td>3,684</td>
<td>2,640</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>899</td>
<td>644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.91)</td>
<td>(2.56)</td>
<td>(.64)</td>
<td>(.69)</td>
<td>(0.381)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>3,049</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>1,662</td>
<td>3,087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.74)</td>
<td>(.59)</td>
<td>(.50)</td>
<td>(1.3)</td>
<td>(1.83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>81,531</strong></td>
<td><strong>91,510</strong></td>
<td><strong>92,045</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,28,344</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,68,720</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Annual Reports (Figures in parentheses indicate percentages)
The table is self-explanatory. A yearwise analysis of the agencies reveal that Central and State Governments are the major implementors of the programme. The role of the voluntary agencies is shrinking year by year as can be seen from the table. Even the role of Nehru Yuvak Kendras, Universities and Colleges and others had decreased. Thus that the present government does not attach high priority to Adult Education Programme is clear as reflected in the table.

Thus, the programme is not satisfactory or achieving expected progress. The time limit for coverage of 110 million illiterates was extended by the Government to 1991 from 1983. About 6 lakhs adult education centres have to be opened every year in order to achieve the goal of liquidating illiteracy among the target group in India. The institutional framework as envisaged by the policy makers of education thus is suffering with ad-hocism, low priority to the programme as well as lack of desired political will to achieve the objective. Now, the process of implementation of National Adult Education Programme of the selected areas and agencies is examined in order to appreciate the impact of the programme. To start with, an analysis of instructional cadre will follow.
FOOTNOTES


2. Ibid, p. 2.

3. Ibid, p. 3.

4. Ibid, p. 3.


7. Ibid, p. 3.

8. Ibid, p. 3.

9. Ibid, p. 3.


15. Ibid, p. 12.


19. Ibid, p. 16.


21. The Janata Government had allocated about Rs. 200 crores in the Draft Sixth Five Year Plan for 1978-83. It was reduced to Rs. 128 crores by the Congress-I Government in its Sixth Plan for 1980-85.


26. The financial arrangement of the programme is that the matching grants are provided by the Central Government under Rural Functional Literacy Programme to the States to supplement their efforts. But the projects sponsored by the Central Government are always higher than the States.

27. The Supervisor of a Government Project remarked that most of the deputationists continue to carry their parent department culture. In his opinion the greatest damage was from those deputationists who rarely bothered to work with commitment.

28. The response from them is particularly disturbing as a good number of them seemed to have joined new jobs thinking that provides relief to them. Moreover it takes fairly long time for them to get over their bureaucratic culture. The adult education work demands different style of functioning.

29. The government cancelled written test and interviews for the post of supervisors when allegations of leakage of question papers were made in 1982-83. The High Court stayed the selection later. The point is that on both occasions the government as well as the State Directorate of Adult Education do not seem to have anticipated such contingencies like leakage of question papers. This short sightedness led to doubts about the legitimacy of the selection process.

30. The Deputy Director of Adult Education attends to regular work concerning the programme in his zone (A zone may consist of 2 or more districts). The District Education Officer is the convenor of the District Adult Education Committee. In some areas the D E Os are juniors to the Dy. Directors. The relationship is often marked by conflict for power. The meetings of the District Adult Education Committees when convened were postponed on a few occasions without valid reasons. When the investigator probed it was revealed that Dy. Director it seems felt insulted when a junior officer tried to boss over him. All this shows how the administrative culture internalized by the administrators will have an adverse effect on the smooth running of an important programme.

31. The figures are collected from the various annual reports of the Central Education Ministry from 1979-80 to 83-84.

32. Various reasons are cited for the decreasing role of the V.A in N A E P. Most important is the suspicion of the present Govt. that the V.A with their political learnings may misuse the funds. The review Committee appointed to go into all aspects of N A E P in 1979 strongly recommended increased involve of the V.As. This report itself was put in cold storage for nearly two years. The word 'national' was dropped from the title of the programme. It is now referred as AEP with reduced priority. V.As are thoroughly screened before being admitted for grants-in-aid. Some agencies vexed up with the attitude of the government and abandoned the idea of running programme with the aid from the government.