CHAPTER - VIII

Problems of Adult Education in Manipur.

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CHAPTER - VIII

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The problem of illiteracy was a great impediment in the social and economic upliftment of India, since her independence. The problem remains unsolved even now, although she enters 50 years of her independence. More than 48.81% of our population are illiterate i.e. 404 million people according to 1991 census. Launching National Literacy Mission (NLM) in New Delhi on May 5, 1988, Rajiv Gandhi, the then P.M. of India announced that the programmes launched by the Government to eradicate illiteracy could not yield the desired results due to lack of firm political and administrative support and absence of proper post literacy and continuing educational arrangements (Yojana Vol. 32 No.11, 1988 P.9). The State of Manipur is not an exception in this situation. Hence, the problems of adult education may be discussed in relation to the Central Government Level, State Level, District and Local Level or village level.

8.1 Some of the problems at the Central Government Level are given below:

1. The fund allocation for adult education in each plan was very meagre. It was only 0.4%, 0.1% and 0.056% of the Major head of education during third, fourth and seventh five year plans respectively. So, no major schemes can be taken up for adult learners. During sixth five year plan period (1980-85), per learner cost was fixed at Rs. 80/- which is too meagre(GOI, 1979, P.32). Due to lack of fund, no plan for post-literacy and follow-up programme can be taken up in a big way.

2. The second plan envisaged to give besides literacy an emphasis on health, recreation, economic activities and citizenship training. But as the plan out lay for adult education was only Rs. 15 crores, which could meet the expenses of literacy alone.
3. While operating Farmers' Functional Literacy Programme, there was lack of integration among the three Ministries of Agriculture, Education and Information and Broadcasting. Farmers' Functional Literacy was not a mere literacy programme, but was an effort in human resources development. So, without integrating these three Ministries the functional literacy component cannot really be functional. It needs a wide spread vertical and horizontal coordination from the national level to the village level and among several ministries and departments as well to pave the way for the proper development of adult education.

4. There was multidimensional development of Adult Education in India during 1950's and the percentage of the literacy increased from 16.67 to 24.02 during 1951-61 (Source: Census Reports on India, 1981). But most of the States of India failed to fully utilise the sanctioned outlay for Adult Education for reasons best known to the States. These States include Andhra Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland, Rajasthan, etc.

5. During the Second Five Year Plan, the committee on plan projects observed that nearly 50% of the states could utilised less than half of the provision made for social education. Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar with literacy percentages of 14.7, 16.9 and 18.2 had shortfalls in expenditure to the extend of 78.8%, 73.8% and 73% respectively (Source: Report on Social Education Committee on plan projects, 1963, PP.11-12)

6. In the production of literature, the shortfall in the plan expenditure was 61.9% in the state schemes. In the case of the central schemes, the shortfall in expenditure was 20%, as against the plan allocation of Rs. 62.50 lakhs, the expenditure was Rs. 49.76 lakhs during the second plan. It was observed that the main reasons for shortfall were - (i) defective planning and (ii) defective financial administration (India Adult Edn. Directorate of Adult Education, 1993, P.26).
7. The follow-up programme for the neo-literate was found to be weak. Suitable learning and reading materials cannot be supplied at present. Practically neo-literate should be encouraged to read adequate reference books so that they may acquire permanent reading habit, and not to relapse themselves into illiteracy once again.

8. Non-Formal Education should form an indispensable link with life, work and learning. The programme of NAEP should be appropriately designed to have link with life and work, so as to make education a continuous and life-long process.

9. It is observed that there was no interim evaluation of social education programme during the first and second five year plans. The states could not utilise fully the sanctioned budget. Had there been full utilisation, achievement in the field of social education would have been remarkable in India as a whole.

10. Although India got able leadership of Maulana Azad, the first Education Minister of Government of India, with the active participation of NGO's and eminent adult educators like, Mohan Singh Mehta, Sohan Singh, T.A. Koshy, B.N. Jha, M.C. Monavathy, A.R. Deshpande etc. along with the support of UNESCO and Ford Foundation (America), the programme could not reach effectively in rural areas. (India Adult Education, Directorate of Adult Education, 1993, P.226).

11. It is to be noted that the social education officers were over burdened with diverse and immense responsibilities which unable them to work from the key grass root level. There were also not suitable literature, expert guidance and adequate research support for the proper development of social education at a global scale.
12. The official policy during 1950's was for the expansion of elementary education. Our educational planners assumed that by providing free and compulsory Education to all the children by up to the age of 14 by 1960, the problem of illiteracy could be tackled more effectively. Paucity of resources, limitations of social education, lack of nation wide literacy campaign were some of the problems during that period. At present, too much emphasis was given on traditional literacy approach without relevance to the specific needs of the learners, their life situation and environment. This irrelevancy makes adult education programme out-model and uninterested to the adult learners.

13. Central Government should shift its emphasis from the traditional 3R's concept of reading, writing and arithmatic to the new 3 F's programme i.e. Functional literacy, food production and family welfare. The poverty of small and marginal farmers will be solved by this 3F's programme. Incentive is necessary to achieve success in the functional literacy programme, so as to link literacy with development programme.

14. For the success of NAEP, there is need for mutual support and synchronisation of programme elements with various media including electronic media. The flow of fund from the centre must reach finally to the project level. If it does not reach the project level, the national goals of increasing agricultural and industrial production cannot be achieved as per the expectation of the majority of the people including the deprived and distressed sections of the people of Manipur.

8.2 Problems in Manipur (State Level):

1. In Manipur State, there are State Level, District Level and Project Level administrative set-ups functioning for the effective implementation of the NAEP. There is no Block Level Organisation in the State. Block Level Organisation is equally important for the successful implementation of NAEP.
2. Out of 12 (twelve) projects, 6 (six) are under RFLP and another six are under SAEP. There are six projects in hills and another six are in the valley areas. Six voluntary organisations are taking up adult education programmes in different districts of Manipur. Only 30 (thirty) adult education centres are opened under Adult Continuing and Extension Education (ACEE) Manipur University. Orientation Courses and population education programmes are also undertaken by ACEE, M.U. for the benefit of the instructors. There is no supervisor in this department.

3. There are many difficulties in the production of standard primers under IPCL and other reading materials in Manipur. Writing of reading materials in major tribal dialects is still difficult. Lack of expert personnel is the major problem. Special Resource Cell of Directorate of Adult Education cannot produce adequate reading materials for neo-literates.

4. Supply of teaching - learning materials and allocation of funds to the Project Officers (P.Os) by the Directorate of Adult Education is characterised by in-ordinate delays. This report comes from the side of instructors who are at the field staff. Effective implementation of the programme largely depends on the timely distribution of materials to the centres.

5. The fund allocation per learner for SAEP is very low. In 1980-81, the six projects opened 1,437 centres with 40,538 learners and the amount invested was Rs. 7,82,953.55 p. So, expenditure per learner was only Rs. 19.31p., which is too low. In 1985-86, the expenditure was Rs. 35 lakhs for 666 centres with 19,194 learners. So the expenditure per learner was increased to Rs. 182.00p. This was due to decrease in number of learners from 40,538 (in 1980-81) to 19,194 learners. The end result of making literacy for the year 1985-86 was 6,927 making the pass percentage to 36%, which is much below the satisfaction of the instructors and organisors of adult education project.
6. The adult education organisers have been facing the shortage of staff. Only one instructor for a centre has made certain disadvantage during illness and unavoidable personal works of the instructors. In such cases, classes were not held for days together and the adult learning was affected adversely. Almost all the project officers (P.O’s) had no office vehicle, as per record available to the researcher, this had hampered the progress of the NAEP in Manipur to a great extent.

8.3 Problems at the project level:

1. At the project level, the attendance of the Project Officer, Assistant Project Officer, Supervisors and Clerical Staff are not regular. It was found out when the researcher visited the office every now and then. Their negligence had some effect on the instructors.

2. Interference of the political leaders at the time of appointment of some instructors has demoralised the authority of the adult education department as well as sincere social workers actually working for the development of adult education by all possible means with a missionary zeal.

3. In hill areas, the leader of the village like village chief, play an important role in giving recommendation for the selection of instructors in their respective villages. Hence, really efficient persons will not be selected due to favouritism, nepotism at the grass-root level.

4. Each and every adult education centre could not receive teaching and learning materials issued by the authority either at the project level or village level due to the shortage of fund at the disposal of administrative department. This disadvantage is clearly seen in hill districts where supervisors had to travel at least two days on foot to inspect some A.E. Centres.
5. The orientation training course of the instructors for 5 - 7 days is short. It is found that the instructors lack proper training experience expected of them, due to short period of training course meant for them. The NPE 1986 recommended for training 20 days, training programme for instructors in the first year and 10 days training in the subsequent years. Hence, a problem arises at the adult education centre due to lack of training facilities for instructors. Most of the instructors do not have proper idea of using teaching aids like Maps, Charts, Globes, Diagrams etc.

8.4 Problem at the level of Adult Education Centre:

1. Selection of Adult Education Centre was a problem. Adult Education Centres are organised at the central place of the village, at the out-houses, Mandops, Community Halls, Pauchayat Houses or at Club or Association Office. Seating and light arrangements for night classes are some of the problems faced by the instructors personally for the effective organisation of an adult education centre.

2. All the instructors are rendering part-time services. The honorarium of Rs. 100 plus Rs. 30 as contingency, are not enough for any service in these days of high price of essential commodities. Some of the instructor thought it to be a source of income without rendering any service to the community as the amount of honorarium is not commensurate with the expected services to be rendered by them in the real sense of the term.

3. Some of the potential learners cannot be attracted to the adult education centres as they are heavily engaged in their day to day household works. Instructors must have thought of them so as to attract them to the adult education classes.

4. Drop-out of adults are very high in some rural adult education centres, specially in the hilly areas. The main reasons are given below :-
i) Unattractive nature of the adult education programme.

ii) Family burden of the adult learners.

iii) Lack of profitable use of leisure-time, illness, etc.

Most of the drop-outs are from the economically backward section of the population in Manipur. They wanted earning for their livelihood while they are still in the process of learning. As such learning by earning has been encouraged in the scheme of Adult Education.

5. Attendance to adult education centre was very low during cultivating season i.e June - August and harvest season i.e October - December. Instructors are likely to visit the house of adult learners to know their specific problems. Adult learners must be motivated to resume to their studies by all possible means.

6. Introduction of vocational courses, which are directly linked with life; like, agriculture, weaving, knitting, pottery, bamboo and cane work etc. to the centre has been recommended by almost all the educationist working in the field of adult education. This will increase the functional knowledge and skill of adult learners to a great extent.

7. Increase in functional skills in the use of fertilisers, insecticides, pesticides, soil conservation, health and sanitation, small family norms, etc. are initiated by the various adult education programmes so far taken up in this country. Because they will attract more adult learners to the adult education centres organised for their benefit.

8.5 Problems at the level of voluntary organisations:

1. From 1992 onwards, most of the voluntary organisation working in the field of adult education could not continue adult education programme. This was due to the reason that they could not get financial assistance from National and International funding agencies for the adult education programmes taken up by them. Most of the voluntary organisation
up other programmes which will help in vocational efficiency, economic development and social awareness leaving aside adult education programmes. Mention may be made of the activities organised by Wangjing Women and Girls' Society, Manipur Vocational Institute, Rural Development Organisation and C.V.T.C. etc. in this regard.

2. Voluntary Organisations in Manipur State faced many problems regarding lack of financial assistance from the State, Central and Foreign funding agencies. They need to convince the various funding agencies regarding their programmes of action. They will get the financial help only when their schemes have been approved by the various funding agencies, that too, submitted to the state department. This negotiation is a difficult problem faced by every voluntary organisation working in the field of adult education with the hope of ameliorating the deprived and distressed conditions of the illiterate adults.

3. Regarding vocational training and self-employment programmes which formed an integral part of adult education the actions taken by the voluntary organisations are very effective, Self-Employment Programmes taken up by C.V.T.C., W.W.G.S. and R.D.O. etc. can be mentioned in this regard, specially for the State of Manipur.

4. Voluntary organisations are more effective in organising adult education projects than the government organised SAEP and RFLP projects regarding distribution of teaching learning material to the adult education centres. Honorarium of the instructors was given regularly by the voluntary organisation to the instructors and supervisors, thereby making a marked improvement from the style of functioning of the State Machineries.

5. There are 30 (thirty) adult education centres under the Adult Continuing and Extension Education, M.U. These centres are running smoothly and effectively with UGC financial assistance. The instructors are getting Rs. 100/- as honorarium and Rs. 50/- as contingency
charges per months regularly. Contingency charges are not high for SAEP and RFLP Centres organised with Central and State functioning. As such, the learners are also facing a lot of problems, in the adult education centres.

Problems faced by the learners consisted of :-

i) Shortage of reading materials.
ii) Inadequate seating and lighting arrangement.
iii) Inadequate accommodation.
iv) Weak curriculum transaction, etc.

These are some of the problems faced at the level of adult education centres.

6. Problems of not properly utilising adult education fund may be regarded as one of such problems adversely affecting the proper development of an adult education centre.

7. Problem of post literacy and follow up programme is not taking up properly to prevent the neo-literates from relapsing into illiteracy is also another problem. Problem of lack of firm political and administrative support and absence of proper post literacy and continuing educational arrangements are some of the problems which seriously affect the proper development of adult education in this State. The problem and necessary suggestions are studied in the next Chapter.