CHAPTER IV

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India is a country blessed with a rich cultural heritage and a historical past which dates back to 3,500 B.C. It is the second most populous and the seventh largest country in the world today. Learning has always been popular in this land. It is really a fact that adult education is not a new phenomenon in India. In the days of yore, the tradition of adult education was in vogue. There were Gurus (teachers) in Ashrams and Madarasas to improve the adults of those times qualitatively. It was an education which was highly need-based. The sole aim of the adult education of the past was to make the learners perform their committed duties in a better way so that the community could be improved.

Several popular and interesting forms of non-formal education have been in vogue over the centuries. This enabled an Indian illiterate who had no formal education to be considered a man of culture and civilization. The system of education that prevailed in ancient India was purely incidental. It was largely dependent on home and society, and other popular media like folk-dramas. The village bards who were eminent singers fascinated the villagers and the Royal Court by singing episodes of the remote past. Through these songs, people not only learned the village


history but also the language of the land. Instruction in religious, civic and social branches were given by professional story tellers. In ancient India literacy was confined to kings, priests, nobles and merchants. Though education was mostly confined to classical Sanskrit, the use of popular languages like Pali and Prakrit widened the scope of adult education.  

A look into the past reveals the fact that the practice of adult education programmes in India was popular from 1881-82. The report of the Indian Education Commission, 1882 discloses that in 1881-82 there were 134 vernacular night schools, purely meant for educating the adults of India. Further, there were 223 night schools connected with different schools. The English administrators had little concern for the education of adults and they provided grant for night schools. In Bombay, during 1877-1878 Walker took the initiative in opening Jail schools. In the year 1909, there were 775 institutions imparting adult education in Madras, 1082 in Bengal and 107 in Bombay. These schools imparted adult education to illiterate boys who had turned out to be labourers as a result of their indigent conditions. Unfortunately, the number of these schools decreased in course of time.

In the beginning of the 20th century, India marched into a new era in the field of adult education. The seeds of nationalism sown by the National Movement developed an intense feeling of patriotism among the people of India. The vociferous demands of the popular leaders stressed the need for national education from the British Government. They always forced the British Government to expand and popularise education in every nook and corner of India. Their demands included not only to educate children but also to popularise education among the illiterate adults of India. Consequently, efforts in respect of the expansion of adult education started from 1910. Gradually some progress in this sphere was seen. It made rapid strides after 1919 when education was entrusted to the provincial governments.

The struggle for freedom under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi became intensified in the year 1919. It became a 'mass movement' and the abundant energy released by the movement was felt throughout the country. The movement found a temporary halt in 1923 and Gandhiji who was always keen on using this stupendous energy for constructive work, turned towards organisation of night schools and literacy classes. In cities, towns and villages, there was a mushroom growth of literacy classes for illiterate adults as according to the direction of the great leader. But there

was a temporary set-back in the year 1929 due to financial stringency caused by the prevalence of deflation, and occurrence of political upheavals and social disparities. This resulted in the closing of many adult education centres. However, some missionaries, despite this set-back, continued to work for adult education in a dedicated manner.

The formation of popular ministries under the Government of India Act, 1935 paved the way for the expansion of the literary work on a large scale. Adult education got its due importance and it was deemed an inevitable responsibility of the Government. The formation of mass literacy committees in Bihar from the State level down to the village was an important development. In Punjab and Bengal provinces and in the princely State of Mysore there were remarkable efforts in the field of adult education. During the decade 1931-41 there was a rise of six per cent in the literacy figures and this rise to a greater extent was due to the mass literacy movement. In 1939 the resignation of the popular ministries took place and the movement also came to an abrupt halt. All the spirit of fervour and enthusiasm connected with it got evaporated. In the light of the growth rate of literacy coming down to 0.57% in the decade 1941-51 it can very well be assumed that a large number of adults who became literates during the movement as well as school drop-outs relapsed into illiteracy.

8. Ibid. p. 6
During the post-cesa literacy movement period (1939-48) a number of significant experiments took place in adult education initiated by various organisations, such as, Idara-e-Talim-o-Taraqi, Delhi, Bengal Social Service League, Calcutta, Bombay Literacy Committee, Mysore City Literacy Council and the like. As a result of these experiments, the fact that the scope of adult education centres should not be confined to literacy education discerned on the experimentalists. It brought home the idea that these centres should be equipped with essential facilities to meet the educational needs of the literates, neo-literates and illiterate adults of the community. It was realised that general education was an important activity of the adult education centres to create political awareness and civic consciousness among the people. The lack of motivation and urge for literacy among the adults was also understood by the adult educators.

Voluntary efforts in adult education were taking shape in the pre-independence period. An important example is the establishment of Indian Adult Education Association in 1939 as an apex body of voluntary organisations.

Though the adult education movement had started before the dawn of independence, the national leaders felt the importance of adult education in national life only after the attainment of independence. Keeping this view in mind, a committee was set up by Central Advisory Board of Education
to frame some scheme for adult education in 1948. The committee came out with a report initiating a definite change of government policy with regard to the content and material of adult education. It proposed that adult education instead of being confined to literacy should include education in citizenship, health and even agriculture and handicrafts. Being inspired with this view point and realisation, the prominent leaders of the country gave a new form to the adult education and made it more extensive and wide by calling it social education.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the first Education Minister of free India, in his address at the fifteenth meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education in Allahabad held in 1949, emphasised that adult education should not be limited to giving three R’s to the adults. It should prepare every citizen to play his part wisely in a democratic set-up. With this view in his mind, he called adult education as "Social Education."

The budgetary provision during the first five year plan for social education, excluding the allotment under community development, was Rs. 50 millions and less. These amounts were spent on expanding social education through literacy centres, community centres and libraries. The

National Fundamental Education Centre was installed with the high hopes of training adult education personnel facilitating research and evaluation and trying out better type of material. Further, it was to act as a clearing house of ideas and information. In 1960–61, there were as many as 43,053 adult literacy centres which transformed 7,40,110 illiterates into literates.

During the Third plan period, though social education was emphasised, literacy was considered to be the most important concern. For massive adult literacy campaigns, pilot project on adult literacy were planned as advance action but these plans were put to rest till 1969. Here is a table pointing out the expenditure on adult education during the Third plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Total expenditure on education (Rs. in million)</th>
<th>Expenditure on adult education (Rs. in million)</th>
<th>Percentage of expenditure on adult education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Plan</td>
<td>1,580</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Plan</td>
<td>2,780</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Plan</td>
<td>5,979</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Education Commission (1964–66) recommended the use of selective approach along with mass literacy drives for combating


13. Ibid, p. 92
illiteracy in the country and a delay of more than 10 or 15 years in liquidating the problem on a massive scale will defeat its very purpose. The literacy programmes, according to the Commission should have three essential ingredients:

1. It must be, as far as possible, work-based and aimed at creating attitudes and interests and imparting skills and information which will help a person to do efficiently whatever work he is engaged in.

2. It must help the illiterate to interest himself in vital national problems and to participate effectively in the social and political life of the country.

3. It must impart such skills in reading, writing and arithmetic as would enable him, if he so wishes, to continue his education, either on his own or through other available avenues of informal education. 14

The Government of India constituted a committee of Members of Parliament in 1967, with a view to preparing the draft of the national policy on education. 15 This resulted in the adoption of a resolution on National Policy on Education by the Government of India in 1968. Fortunately, adult education got its shape in that policy, because the National Government has been convinced that a radical reconstruction of education on the broad lines, recommended by the Education Commission


(1964-66), is essential for economic and cultural development of the country. This has naturally led to the transformation of the system of education to relate it more closely to the life of the people. So, along with multifarious items related to the development of Indian education, the National Policy on Education, 1968 has given due importance to the spread of literacy and adult education.

In the wake of the green revolution the Government of India started a programme called Farmers' Training and Functional Literacy Programmes (1967-69) which was an inter-ministerial project. It can rightly be called a selective approach to adult education. Under this scheme, a comprehensive programme of development was to be launched in certain selected areas, and later to be expanded to include some other areas, and so on. The Ministry of Education was to take care of functional literacy, whereas the Ministry of Agriculture was to shoulder the responsibility of training the farmers and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting had the responsibility of giving media support through radio-farm-broadcasting in this programme.

Some adult education projects based on selective approach were launched in urban areas. One such programme was started in 1957 by the Ministry of Labour for industrial workers under the Central Board of Workers Education. The Regional Centres of the Board organised leadership

training courses for trade union leaders to make them aware of the important role that workers can play in the socio-economic development of the country. At the end of the First Five Year Plan there was another project organised by the Ministry of Education which was experimental in nature. It was known as 'Workers' Social Education Institute' which included organisation of various programmes for workers. In the same fashion another scheme of urban adult education was initiated in 1967 by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation. It had the chaste view of establishing Polyvalent Adult Education Centres to organise integrated educational and training courses of varied duration after finding out the specific needs of a particular group of industrial workers.\(^{17}\)

There was an effort to evolve a new strategy to extend educational facilities to the disadvantaged and the deprived sections of the society who were unfortunate in not having the formal education. A major scheme was launched in 1975 to develop a large scale programme of non-formal education at all stages meant specially for under-privileged children, youths and adults. These programmes were aware of the needs and aspirations of learners and they were to be based on local environmental conditions.\(^{18}\)

\(^{17}\) Ibid., p. 13

In March 1977, the Government of India "resolved to wage a clearly conceived, well planned and relentless struggle against illiteracy to enable the masses to play an active role in social and cultural change." Thus started the National Adult Education Programme and literacy was recognised as an integral part of an individual's personality based on the following assumptions:

(a) that illiteracy is a serious impediment to an individual's growth and to country's socio-economic progress;
(b) that education is not counterintuitive against schooling but helps in most work and life situations;
(c) that learning, working and living are inseparable and each acquire meaning only when correlated with others;
(d) that the means by which people are involved in the process of development are at least as important as the ends, and
(e) that the illiterates and the poor can rise to their own liberation through literacy, dialogue and action.

The formal inauguration of the programme got underway on October 2, 1978 on the occasion of 110th Gandhi Jayanti Celebration. The eradication of illiteracy has been emphasised as the learning process involves emphasis on literacy. Moreover, literacy is not a mere liberation of mind

20. ibid.
but an unmistakable equaliser of economic opportunities which lead to an investment towards the ideal of increased production and income.

Consequently, a committee was born in October, 1979 under the Chairmanship of Dr. D.S. Kothari to review the working of the National Adult Education Programme in all its aspects and recommend some modifications that would improve its implementation. The Review Committee came out with the view that nothing should be done to weaken the momentum generated in the community for the programme. It suggested that proper steps should be taken to radically modify and strengthen the programme.

In this connection, the Committee made the following observations: 'the programme so far has been largely confined to literacy which is not so effective as it should be. It could not be linked up with development programmes. Its functional aspect is almost non-existent. As far as the awareness is concerned, even the functionaries lack clarity about its meaning. The programme is not making any contribution to popularisation of science. The programme, despite its intention is in practice, not flexible, diversified and decentralised enough. On the whole the instructors are working enthusiastically. There is a need to take a fresh look at their honorarism.'

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The Central Government after a thorough examination of the recommendations in consultation with the consultative committee of the

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Members of Parliament attached to the Ministry of Education and Culture broadly accepted the recommendations of the Review Committee. The Government gave top priority to the Adult Education Programmes by including it under the Minimum Needs Programmes in the Sixth Five Year Plan. The Programme got such an importance that it found its due place in the 25-Point Economic Programme of the Government.

The policy document entitled 'Challenge of Education', put out by the Ministry of Education in August, 1985, deals with adult education in India. The issue is referred to at several places and almost invariably in the context of India having the largest number of illiterates in the world. The following statement, for instance, is illustrative of the approach adopted in the document.

"According to World Bank estimates, India would have the largest concentration of illiterate population in the world by the year 2000 A.D., the country will have 54.8 per cent of world's illiterate population in the age-group 15-39. This indicates roughly the magnitude of illiteracy in the country and the urgency and importance that should be attached to removal of illiteracy in the context of taking the country to the threshold of the twenty-first century. It is in this context that major emphasis is being laid on non-formal and adult education."22

The foregoing pages bear testimony to the fact that India had a tradition of education and culture in the ancient times. It also shows that several noble efforts have been taken before and after independence to eradicate this scourge. Even new efforts are still on to combat illiteracy. Despite all these efforts, the rapid growth of illiterates in the country gives a warning signal. The years between 1971 and 1981 found about 48 millions being added to the number of illiterates in our country. Addition in the number of illiterates is a constant feature every year in India after independence. The growth of literacy rate is rather slow and it could achieve a meagre percentage from 16.67% in 1981, to only 36.74% in 1991. In this rate it is estimated that some our states would take 77 years in the case of males and 275 years in the case of females to achieve 90% literacy. This shows the magnitude of the problem that confronts us in our efforts to achieve universal literacy.23

Any developing country cursed with such a big percentage and figure of illiteracy cannot imagine of moving forward in any field. Undoubtedly India is a developing country possessing all the important characteristics such as, (a) low per capita income, (b) capital deficiency and low rate of capital formation, (c) excessive dependence on agriculture, (d) rapid population growth, (e) unemployment and under-employment, (f) industrial

backwardness, (g) prevalence of backward technology, (h) under-utilisation of natural resources, (i) unsuitable political and social structure and the like. All these items are prevalent in India making it a developing country. Its per capita income is very low, masses of India are economically very backward being illiterate, subject to ill-health and condemned to a state of semi-starvation. Poverty reigns supreme in their lives and their standard of living is unspeakably low. The Planning Commission has come out with the view that in 1979-80, 48.4 per cent or nearly a half of the total number of Indian people lived below the poverty line being unfortunate to have the minimum recommended nutritional intake of 2,400 calories per person per day in rural areas and 2,100 calories in urban areas. It is really unfortunate to have such a sorry situation prevail in India.  

In the development of a nation adults play a major role. They are the backbone of a developing country and they can rightly be deemed as a national asset. "Illiteracy is a mass phenomenon" observes the Education Commission (1964-66), which blocks economic and social programmes, affects economic productivity, population control, national integration and security and improvement in health and sanitation. 25 To face all these challenges with a brave front, the illiterates of our country must be educated through adult education. Without adult education, the illiterate masses of India

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can never uplift themselves socially, economically, politically, individually and morally. In the absence of adult education, it can never find the range and speed of economic and social development required at present. Further, the lack of adult education makes it impossible to have that content or quality or tone to our economic and social development that makes it worthwhile in terms of values welfare. Therefore, a programme of adult education should get prime importance in any programme for economic and social development of a developing country like India. With this stand in view, let us discuss the importance of adult education programme in a developing country like India:

**Democracy and adult education:**

Democracy is a way of life in which every citizen is enabled to participate to the best of his capacity on a footing of equal dignity and parity of opportunities. It is a culture where persuasion instead of coercion, and freedom instead of constraint are the basic features. 26 Therefore, every citizen of a nation must be enabled to be in constant touch with the main springs of democratic philosophy and the technical aspects of democracy. But in the case of adult illiterates it can be imparted only through adult education.

Though India is a developing country, it is one of the largest democratic countries in the world to-day. To make this experiment a

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success, an all-round development is of prime importance. Eminent persons in all spheres of life are of the view that the development of a country relies mainly on the quality and effectiveness of its people. Democracy has no meaning in a country of illiterates. It has no value if the people who take part in a democratic set-up are unaware of the institutions that a democracy offers to them.

To bring about an all-round development of a dynamic modern society there is no other way other than educating the adults. It was an act of faith that the makers of our Constitution gave us universal adult suffrage. To redeem the faith we have to educate the Indian men and women for democratic way of living. Adult franchise amidst illiterates defeats the very purpose for which it is meant. Democracy based on adult franchise implies that the electorates are aware of the democratic principles and values. If the majority of the electorates are illiterates, they are really a threat to the very existence of democracy. They pose far-reaching social and political problems of the functioning of democracy. As the common men and women are deprived of participating in the functioning of democracy, in the process of government in an effective and meaningful way, it is sure to fail. So, it is obvious that adult education is an indispensable part of a democracy. Having this purpose in mind, adult education must be geared up to certain well-defined practical goals and purposes for insinuating democratic values and attitudes, and awareness of the realities of the Indian situation, and for acquisition of certain skills of management, organisation and income-generation.
If one thinks that adult education for parliamentary democracy is synonymous with adult education in general, it is quite wrong. There is a difference between these two. Adult education for democracy is specialised education. It implies (i) a basic comprehension of the idea of society and political organisation, (ii) a basic understanding of institutional concepts, such as, Parliament, State Assembly, Panchayati Raj institutions and (iii) a clear idea of how the democratic process is supposed to serve the interest of the common man and women and the society in which majority of the people live below the poverty line.

Though most of these ideas will get their due share in a normal well-conceived, well-organised and systematic adult education programme, it is to be emphasised that adult education for Parliamentary democracy must foster the growth of faith in the minds of the people in the values of democracy, and impart an understanding of the basic rights and duties of citizenship. While reiterating the inevitability of adult education for democracy, the comprehensive concept of adult education which covers all these ideas and many more things should be kept in view. The Education Commission (1964-66) in its report pointed out:

No nation can leave its security only to the police and the army; to a large extent national security depends upon the education of citizens, their knowledge of affairs, their character and sense of discipline and their ability to participate effectively in security measures ...... . Thus viewed, the function of adult education in a democracy is to provide
every adult citizen with an opportunity for the education of the type which he wishes and which he should have for his personal enrichment, professional advancement and effective participation in social and political life. 37

This makes it abundantly clear that adult education should be considered as a way of preparing men and women for social, civic and economic roles and help the adult to interest himself in major national problems and to participate effectively in social as well as political life of the country.

Economic development and adult education:

Countries all the world over have come to realize that illiteracy contributes to an increasing poverty, and together they impede, injure and even nullify the prospects of economic development. For us in India, illiteracy and poverty have been our vital problems over the years, for one of them holds the people by the horns while the other milks them dry. As a result, India's share of the persons below the poverty line is over 300 million and of the illiterate population is over 430 million. 28


Economic development is the result of two factors viz., the human factor which contributes a little more than 50 per cent of the economic growth and the development and application of science and technology. This human factor is sometimes identified with science and technology, sometimes with education and sometimes with organisation but often with all the three. The human factor is responsible for a very large share of economic growth so it becomes important to identify the elements that promote the efficiency of the human factor. Planning can only create facilities for economic development but its utilisation depends on the human factor, the will and opportunity to use these facilities. It is true that an illiterate person is not able to respond to the facilities that are created for him. If he is not motivated he is not able to use those facilities. So, adult literacy is most essential in the context of social and economic development.

The positive correlation between literacy and national income or per capita income is not a new thought. It is not the new phenomenon of twentieth century; rather education has become the essential condition for economic development. The same fact has been accepted by Adam Smith, the famous economist. Alfred Marshall has considered skill as the base of production and education as the ways and means of bringing economic development. The modern educationists and economists have also supported the above fact. 29

It is well-known fact that 82 per cent of the population of our country lives in villages which constitute a major part of the people who live below the poverty line. 30 Uptill now we have not been able to make villagers think of the economic development of the country. They have not been able to recognise their responsibility for development of their villages. Ultimately, the rich minority of large land owner's and industrialists in the country have become richer and the poor constituting more than 60 per cent, who are small and marginal farmers, landless labourers etc., have become poorer. Because of illiteracy they have never been able to have the desire for better life. If any one has the desire to have a better way of life, he cannot get it by charity, gift, agitation or by a mere talk. It can only be achieved by hard work and employing improved methods of production in the field and factories. Moreover, better production is only possible when the people have an up-to-date knowledge of farming techniques. They should be ready to give up the old and traditional methods of production and prepared to adopt new and scientific methods of production. So, through adult education we must make our people aware about the availability of these methods which can teach them to improve their skill and it will ultimately improve the economy of the country.

30. *Lbid.*, p. 21
Really, it is a fact that due to illiteracy and ignorance of the common people, a large majority of them are living as half-starved, ill-clothed and with poor health. Their standard of living is very poor. These people are provided with no education. Consequently, it has become impossible to establish social justice, and equality of opportunity for all. It indicates that to improve such situation, there should be provision for proper development of adult education for the economic development of our nation. For the same we must take literacy programme as the basic thing, because whether in agriculture or in industry, a person's success in his occupation depends on his ability to use, to utilise modern scientific knowledge. Thus literacy is an important tool of development and the education of illiterates is important both for the conquest of poverty and for the economic development of the country. Gunnar Myrdall has therefore, rightly said that adult education should not be separated from the child education, because they are, rather, inter-related. The primary teachers may also devote a portion of their time for adult education, which is essential for the development of primary education as well. For the developing country like India, it is really important.

It is obvious that through adult education, people may get some knowledge of what is better life and how it can be maintained properly. For the improvement of their economic condition and standard of living, the mass

people should take new ways of production in place of old traditional types. So, the implementation of adult education programme with functional literacy is very essential in this respect. In fact, a better way of life can be obtained by more production with new scientific methodology and the change of attitude of the illiterate people which can be expected only through successful implementation of adult education programme.

Agricultural development and adult education:

Agriculture forms the backbone of the Indian economy and despite concerted industrialisation in the last over two-decades, agriculture occupies a place of pride. Being the largest industry in the country, agriculture is the source of livelihood for over 70 per cent of population in the country. Agriculture dominates the economy to such an extent that a very high proportion of working population in India is engaged in agriculture. According to 1981 census figures, 59.4 per cent of working population in India was engaged in agriculture.

But there are some problems in the agricultural system of India which form the agricultural backwardness and the farmers are also facing maximum difficulties. The Indian farmers, generally speaking, are illiterate, ignorant, superstitious, conservative and bound by outmoded customs and institutions. Superstition and belief in fate are the curse which keep the farmers fully satisfied with their primitive system of cultivation and

do not like to adopt the modern methods which are so widely adopted in the countries of the West and in Japan. Only in recent years and to a limited extent, the farmers have started adopting improved implements like steel ploughs, small pumping sets, water-lifts etc. Moreover, most of the Indian farmers are quite ignorant about the non-farm services as provision of finance and marketing. For instance, most of the farmers have to depend upon the village moneylender and have to pay rates of interest so high that if a farmer borrows, he is bound to lose his land and becomes a landless labourer. Likewise, most of the Indian farmers do not know the banking and co-operative system and for which they are cheated by the wholesaler and commission agents. Unless this atmosphere which supports backwardness and stagnation is changed, there is no possibility of agricultural progress.

Since the mid-1960's, the traditional agricultural practices are gradually being replaced by modern technology and farm practices in India and a veritable revolution is taking place in our country. Initially, the new technology was tried as a pilot project during 1960-61, under Intensive Agricultural District Programme in seven districts. Later, the high-yielding varieties programme was also added to Intensive Agricultural District Programme and the strategy was extended to cover the entire country. Instead of calling it a green revolution, it would be better to call it modernisation of Indian agriculture.

34. Ibid, p. 302
But the adoption of new technology depends upon the level of literacy of the farmers. Dr. D.P. Chandhuri in his study, Education and Agricultural Productivity in India has shown that large farmers, invariably are always early adopters of yield-raising, cost-reducing innovations, while small farmers, who are generally illiterate, are among the laggards. The spread of the new technology, therefore, depends upon the extent of information and this in turn depends upon the level of literacy. A programme of removal of illiteracy can, therefore, become the chief vehicle of the spread of green revolution.\(^{35}\)

Adult education has been seen to be the very key to agricultural development. It can upgrade illiterate farmers through training by practical demonstrations, informal dissemination for increasing agricultural knowledge. It may be stated that adult education is germane for agricultural development. So, every developing country like India should implement adult education programmes for agricultural development of the country. Development in agriculture is indicated by increased quantity and improved quality of agricultural products. This, in turn, depends upon intelligent adoption of agricultural innovations. Intelligent adoption of agricultural innovations is a function governed by a number of variables, such as socio-economic status, education, landholding as well as attitudes. Any programme, such as the one stated above, will be affected by all or most of the

\(^{35}\) Ibid, p. 509
above functionally relevant variables. Programmes of economic assistance will therefore have to be accompanied by the adult education programmes, to enable people to meet the challenges of farming life.

Proper application of scientific knowledge, optimum and timely utilization of available resources and facilities, and appropriate management practices in the sphere of agriculture, as in any other intelligent enterprise, require certain minimum characteristics. People have to acquire knowledge and information, practice skills, take appropriate and timely decisions, collect materials, lay their hands on resources, take timely action in agricultural operations and apply scientific knowledge. Literacy is one such characteristic, as it is supposed to equip men with abilities to function better, not only in adoption of agricultural practices recommended by agricultural experts and scientists, but in most of the above aspects of their functional life. Literacy, which equips men with trans-personal memory, is one of the modernisation variables. The extent of literacy being helpful and meaningful with respect to adoption of improved agricultural practices, depends to a great degree, on the level of literacy skills a farmer-adopter has developed. But to develop literacy skill of a farmer, adult education has a very significant role to perform.

For instance, literacy or the capability to read and write with a certain amount of understanding may expose a person to the influences of new ideas, at least by enabling him to read newspapers, farm magazines,
periodicals and books, as well as labels on the containers of seeds, fertilizers, insecticides and pesticides and also have necessary skills to maintain farm accounts and prepare farm budget and cropping schemes. Likewise, functional literacy programme with which the study is concerned, is specifically designed for illiterate farmers to help them in acquiring new knowledge, skills and attitudes that may contribute to their better performance in agriculture and enable them to live a more meaningful life. So, there should be some provision to help the farmers through adult education, so that they may acquire knowledge and skill for agricultural development. And it is really necessary, for a developing country like India.

Rural development and adult education:

India is the country of villages. Nearly 70 per cent of its population is those of only rural. They have remained mostly illiterate because of the villages. Although a satisfactory headway has been made in educational field since the attainment of independence in our country, but its progress in rural sector is of very low level as against that of the educational achievements made in the urban sector.

In order to have an overall development of the country as a whole, it requires to place its maximum emphasis on the organization and management of the rural education. Unless this aspect is pinpointed and

concentrated efforts are made in this direction, one is not going to achieve its early aim of developing rural adults and their children as three fourths of the population determining India's progress. A desired change in the minds, attitude, knowledge and skill that are responsible for shaping the behaviour of an individual, is best possible through education.

Education has a dual function of promoting rural development and of enabling people to receive the benefits of the programmes of rural development. Moreover, the explosion of knowledge in science and unprecedented advancements in technology have created a pressing need for recurrent learning both general and in vocational aspects of life.

Formal education has done very little to enable the rural masses to upgrade their socio-economic status, to understand what is going on in and around their community, to improve their living condition and to tap Government resources. For example, no school syllabus includes a section on the existing Government schemes which would be useful to the students and their parents, nor have the teachers been trained or supplied any useful materials for dissemination among the students and the community. The major weakness of our present formal schooling is that it is aimed at children, and is also subject-oriented which means that it will be many more years before they can take part in the decision-making process. And by that time, it is likely that they have forgotten whatever they had learnt.
Rural education to be effective must therefore start with adults. This can be imparted to adults through adult education. Adult education is essential in any rural development programme for the diffusion of information and knowledge of new ideas, and for their adoption by the rural people. This is particularly significant in agriculture and family planning. The main purpose of adult education activities is to prepare rural men, women and youth for a new and better life in their families and communities.

Education for adults is the key element in the rural development endeavour to involve rural masses to a point where they can run their own affairs, and to enable them to become self-reliant by increasing productivity through their own dedication and hard work.

Adult education is a means for a true and permanent development for the rural people, and to enable them to become conscious of the reasons as to why they have remained so long in poverty, and to help them organise themselves for action deriving from the reflective consciousness so that they can make sure that political power is exercised in a more just and equitable way. The creation of awareness among the masses will make them see that the resources of the country are to be distributed equitably and not to be arrogated to themselves by a small percentage of people for their own benefit. This awareness will enable them to take organised action to get what is their right.
Thus it can be said that adult education should focus on improving social and personal living, occupational capability and vocational competency which are basic to rural development. It should aim at socio-political and economic growth of individuals as well as the nation.

The present adult education programme should not be allowed to become another literacy programme but should be made relevant to the rural people and local needs. It should enable the rural masses to pick up functional literacy as well as a knowledge of the tenancy and related laws that affect them, social welfare, developmental and other governmental programmes operating in their area, civic affairs, some basic commerce, social customs, technological improvements that affect rural life, viz., improved transport, farming, animal husbandry, social conservation, small and village industry know-how and some general knowledge of local and other issues.

Adult education should be integrated with various rural developmental programmes in such a way that the people are able to improve the quality of their life and increase their earnings by taking care of the following areas:

— Improvement in economic conditions.
— Improvement in the methods of farming and introduction of technology.

— Encouragement for developing cottage industries.
— Development of community life through people's participation programmes.
— Spread of functional education and training.
— Healthy recreation.
— Removal of social malpractices such as untouchability, superstition, and bad habits like drinking.
— Anti-liquor campaigns.
— People's courts
— Construction of drains for the outlet of dirty water in the village lanes.
— Creation of social awareness among the rural people.

Thus rural development is a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people — the rural poor. It involves extending the benefits of development to the poorest in the rural areas. It also recognizes that improved food supplies and nutrition, together with basic services, such as, health and education, cannot only directly improve the physical well-being and quality of life of the rural poor, but can also indirectly enhance their productivity and their ability to contribute to the national economy. The adult education programmes should, therefore, aim at helping the rural people to form themselves into effective learning-cum-productive groups, with emphasis on skills needed for economic, political and social development.
Population education and adult education:

The phenomenon of population explosion generates serious concern about the social, economic and political consequences in the developed and under-developed countries of the world. Concerned persons and the policy makers are aware of the grave consequences of the high growth rates of population on the quality of life of men and his environment. The gravity of the problem is such that it needs war footing control and precaution to maintain peace and security of the world. Population growth raises the hunger and want, sickness and worries affecting the socio-political aspect of the nation. Hence for the development of the nation the choice before the citizens is to raise the productivity and stabilize population growth. Our country India is also suffering from the above mentioned problem where population education needs priority for the national development.

According to the Census of 1961, the total population of India was put at 585 million as against 545 in 1971. It is the second largest population among the countries of the world, next only to that of China. The population pyramid in India with such a very broad base, poses a very big problem for the rapid socio-economic development of the country. Because education is no longer simply concerned with earning a livelihood or becoming a good citizen, it is now much more concerned with the quality of life, both of an individual and of the people on the whole. Therefore, at present,

population education needs the priority along with the awareness aspects of other areas of education. The problem of population is not confined to the narrow boundaries of the family. It is not the only solution. It has to be a full-fledged family welfare programme. Population education growth through its close interaction with the social, economic and political aspects of human life which influences the quality of human beings.

Population education is a comprehensive concept that looks into multi-dimensional aspects of population dynamics. This innovative scheme covers the birth control, the comforts of the family life such as, education, health, nutrition and higher standards of living. The World Development Report has rightly pointed out that "mitigating poverty, improving health and nutrition, promoting family planning, raising educational levels and enhancing other living conditions are inter-related goals." 39

Being constantly aware of the above-mentioned circumstances, the Government of India has reacted readily by initiating certain schemes and trying much to make people understand about the schemes. The family planning programme and health education can be cited as examples. But these programmes have failed to yield the expected result inspite of the Government's sincere efforts in propagating and popularising these with the help of mass media.

The lack of success may be due to such factors as the high level of illiteracy among the people, the low status of women, social and religious preferences, and the absence of any system of social security. The materials produced for advertisements by the Government to popularise these schemes are clearly understood by the educated people whereas the illiterate remain blind to these facts due to their illiteracy.  

In the past half-a-decade, there has been a tremendous change in the idea of adult education. As it no more means teaching the alphabets to a group of old people and teaching them how to write their names only, so, the above mentioned programmes should be included in adult education. The Policy Statement on adult education issued by the Union Government of India rightly states that "Adult Education should also be relevant to the environment and learners' needs." While discussing the above, the population situation in India, one of the typical characteristics of the environment in which the adults have to live, learn and work, was brought out clearly. The living, learning and working conditions of the adult learner are crowded with people and congested. Under these circumstances, one of his main needs is to learn to lead a healthy, happy and responsible family life. And here comes the importance and necessity of integrating population education with adult education.


So, there should be a pragmatic strategy of adult education to make the illiterate masses deeply involved in the programme with the help of discussions, seminars etc. and top priority must be given to the ethical and religious attitudes of the people in traditional social order. In the light of the prevalence of high illiteracy among the Indians, it is imperative for our educational planners to concentrate on the population education programme for the illiterate adults.

In this way the importance of population education has become significant in view of a large section of the adult population of India being illiterate. In view of the existing trend, population education must find its place in adult education and it must be made an important component of adult education. In this context, it is needless to point out that the adult education curriculum should be revised so as to meet the demands of the present in controlling the population.

Employment and adult education:

There has always been a serious degree of unemployment as well as of under-employment in India and it has constituted one of the most serious problems facing the country. The solution of the problem of unemployment requires that manpower, we want to use, should be made quite fit for utilisation for the development projects, we have in view. 42 In other

words, man-power utilisation is to be connected with the man-power training programme. This indicates that the education of the working adults should be properly organised and implemented.

It is obvious that in the light of the facts mentioned above, it includes not only the formal education offered in schools and colleges but also other kinds of educational programmes like adult education. In a country like India, though education has a value in itself, it is indirectly assumed to take a lead in accelerating the development of economy. This leads to the placement of employment as its objective in the forefront of educational programme. It is to be noted that the types of products coming out from the educational system can be befitting with the economy of a developing country like India. It implies the idea that education specially adult education, should remain work-oriented.

It is also a fact that with advancement of civilisation, the twin problems of education and employment have become closely connected. And it seems that education helps a man in two ways.43 Such as:

1. Initiation into social heritage.
2. Training for employment.

Education should keep pace with the growth of civilisation. But contrarily education in most of the modern societies is shaped under the

exerted pressure of employment. It is saddening to note that the future employment opportunity has become a major aim of education. So, at present, any discussion about education, divorced from the employment opportunity becomes meaningless. This has resulted in the domination of employment over education. It has become quite common in the modern materialistic world where everyone vies with each other in being fully blessed with material necessities. Accordingly, everyone wants to be self-dependent and in this context, it has become inevitable to make education employment-oriented.

Of late, it has been felt that like other phases of education, adult education should also be linked up with some employment opportunities, though it should not be the main purpose of it. The Education Commission (1964-66) also viewed: "If we are to continue our dependence on this programme alone for the liquidation of illiteracy, we may not reach our goal even by 2000 A.D." So, at the time of planning the adult education programme, the perspective of life-long learning, and provision of employment, shall have to be kept in mind.

A vast number of Indian illiterate adults find their abodes in villages and their main engagement is agriculture. Though a small section of them have their involvement in small crafts, handicrafts, cottage industries, weaving, poultry, milk dairy and so on, their main source of livelihood is agriculture-related activities. Being illiterates, they are not in a position to execute

their duties in a proper way. So efforts must be taken to make these items of work an integral part of adult education. Further, steps should be taken to integrate persons working in different professions for rural development. The basic factors for integrated rural development should be self-reliance, self-effort and full accountability. To achieve this, adult education should be popularised in villages.

The illiterate Indians who are engaged in several professions, business, agriculture etc. must be given adult education which will enable them to contact other persons working in different professions. This will lead them to integrate themselves along with their job. This may lead to many benefits. "The first task in the developmental effort specialists believe," is that of creating and developing skills. Several plans are being drawn up in developing village or small scale industries, cottage industries, ancillary industries and so on. Help and guidance will readily be available to the illiterate adults engaged in various professions and they can uplift themselves in their respective fields by getting pieces of advice and suggestions for solving problems in their fields of work.

It should be an integral part of adult education to motivate the rural youth to work in their respective occupations co-operating with others who are involved in other occupations. There are innumerable

village youth in our country with some education who are either unemployed or under-employed. They should be trained to upgrade their academic level and the same village youth can also be trained to take care of the adult education centres by being organisers.

In this respect, a co-ordination between various professions must be affected through adult education and it would enrich their knowledge in their professions. By doing so, better results would be expected in various development programmes like integrated rural development, the marginal farmers and agricultural labour projects, the rural industries projects and rural artisans programmes and schemes relating to silk, coir, handicrafts, poultry, dairy and so on.

In the same way as mentioned above some other programmes can also be planned in various fields as business, handicrafts, small crafts and a co-ordination among them will yield better results and will give employment opportunities. The Education Commission in this reference recommends that, "literacy programmes should be carefully planned with due regard to local conditions and requirements. In addition to imparting skills in reading and writing, they should help to improve knowledge and skills relating to the profession of the illiterate adult, make him aware of the important problems of the community, his country and the world." 46 But

this is possible only when persons involved in various trades, business, crafts, and handicrafts are given proper academic training through adult education which would enable them to maintain their livelihood properly.

In the light of the above discussion it is discernible that adult education is very important for a developing country like India as the success of all the schemes of a developing country depends upon it. It is needless to point out that all the developmental schemes of a developing country will fall through in the absence of adult education. "Adult education is, therefore, an impelling need, a need so imperative and overpowering that all men and women must be helped to acquire the skill and knowledge that would enable them to properly fit into the new pattern of community life into which they are fast moving. Adult education is an indispensable necessity for the people of the developing countries." 47