CHAPTER VII

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE EXPANSION OF THE ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN ASSAM
CHAPTER VII

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE EXPANSION OF THE ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN ASSAM

Research is directed towards the solution of a problem. So, in order to solve a problem, some suggestions should be put forward. First of all, the researcher must delve into the problem of the research subject and after that no effort should be spared in solving the problem through proper suggestions.

The previous chapter has pointed out the existence of various socio-economic problems in the implementation of the adult education programme in Assam. It deals mainly with two major sections of population prevalent in Assam. As mentioned earlier, they are those who can afford economically but lack the willingness to have adult education, specially the tea-garden labourers and those who cannot afford to have adult education without monetary benefit. The present study has made it clear that numerous socio-economic problems abound among these two sections of people and these socio-economic problems stand in the way of implementing the adult education programme. In addition, it has probed into the existence of serious problems like instructional strategies, improper and inadequate training of the functionaries, lack of proper motivation and evaluation, organizational problem and the like

in the field of adult education. The case being so, it is the need of the hour to put forward some suggestions so as to solve such problems for the speedy expansion of the adult education programme in Assam. The following paragraphs will cover such discussions.

More involvement of the adults through various activities:

Both illiteracy and poverty are inter-connected hurdles for adult education. It is a known fact that the degree of poverty increases due to the existence of illiteracy. Most of our people belong to the culturally deprived and economically exploited sections of the society. They are in the midst of numerous socio-economic problems and the persistence of this condition is due to their lack of knowledge in setting right their conditions. These people are in a dire need of revamping their conditions and a raise in their level of income.

In this context, it is necessary to suggest that no effort should be spared in asking the government to take some proper steps in this regard. Besides the governmental efforts, voluntary organisations are to be mobilised to speed up the educational activities in areas where the people are not so alert. In this connection, motivation should be sought after to make them aware of various developmental schemes. So, it is the responsibility of the government as well as the voluntary organisations to create motivation through audio-visual-aids like radio, television and film shows. Moreover, awareness must be created among the illiterate and the poor through some concrete activities like other
 auxiliary services, supporting services for women, special efforts for the tea-garden labourers etc. should be organised for more involvement of the adult learners in the following ways:

(a) Need for community welfare complex and other auxiliary services:

With a view to making the adult education programme a phased, co-operative venture, efforts should be taken to set up a community welfare complex, covering a group or groups of villages which in turn will serve as agencies of rural change. This is to say that along with setting up adult literacy classes of various forms, formal and non-formal, other auxiliary services like extension of agriculture, co-operative stores, social welfare centres, health and hygiene programmes, recreational and child development centres and the like are to be introduced so as to convey ideas related to integrated development in a solid and sound manner.

(b) Mobilisation for more participation of women through supporting services:

In Assam, women lag far behind in matters of literacy. Though in urban areas social taboos against women taking equal part in social activities is fast fading into oblivion, the situation in the rural sector is still the same. So, it is to be mentioned here that the process needs to be extended to rural areas by offering certain benefits of urban life to rural areas as well. That is to say that plans should be evolved to
save women from the day-long drudgery of household work. To achieve this, supporting services for rural women like good water supply, nutrition, nursing, maternity and child care must be rendered. To enable them to lead a better life, they should be taught to have a scientific way of living. In this regard, they should be provided with gas for cooking, huller mill for paddy husking, electricity for power and so on as recommended by the National Perspective Plan for 1982–2000 A.D. In this connection, co-operatives could come in a big way in modernising some aspects of social life in rural areas through organised efforts on a voluntary basis. There must be ample provision for the women to play an active and meaningful role in the Gaon Panchayat. In addition, seats must be kept reserved in Gaon Panchayat for women candidature. The fruits of this action will be manifold. It will create social awareness leading the prospective learners to improve their living conditions based on self-reliance.

(e) Organisation of other services for changing the outlook and life pattern of the adults:

An important point in this connection to be noted is that along with the educational programmes, concentration should lie mainly on the reversal of poor economic conditions of the illiterate. Attention must be paid to the social reconstruction of the entire community so that the outlook and pattern of their life can be changed. They must also be helped to achieve other services like balanced food, decent clothing,
healthy shelter, good citizenship and ethical conduct and enjoyment of arts, music and drama.

(d) Special efforts for the tea-garden labourers:

In case of the tea-garden labourers, tea-garden authorities and the tea-garden unions besides the government and voluntary organisations should come forward to take special efforts in order to reverse the present trend of illiteracy and poverty. The Labour Welfare Department should also lend a helping hand in introducing the above mentioned activities for the poor and illiterate among the tea-garden labourers. It is a pity that the present wages of the tea-garden labourers is paltry and it varies from zone to zone. So, steps should be taken by the tea-garden authorities, the tea-garden unions and the Labour Welfare Department to increase their wages and to bring about equality in wages among all zones. Moreover, there should not be any classification among the tea-garden labourers. Both the Basti labourers and the Faltu labourers should be employed permanently and besides their daily wages, other facilities available to the permanent labourers like free quarter, water, ration, medical etc. should be provided to them. This will save them from the exploitation of the planters. So, the Labour Welfare Department and the tea-garden unions should specially be alert in this regard.

Integration of different developmental programmes:

The adult education programmes must give some scope to the adult learners to take part in some special activities sponsored by the
programme along with the three R's. At present, there are many special programmes for the people below the poverty line. The special programmes include programmes like the Integrated Rural Development Programme, the National Rural Employment Programme, the Drought-Prone Area Programme, the Desert Development Programme and the Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme. These programmes are largely useful to the illiterate adults as they provide them with some basic facilities in the field of education, health, drinking water, electrification, roads and house sites in rural areas. Moreover, the Integrated Rural Development Programme has the sole aim of standardizing the economic conditions of the people below the poverty line through household approach by providing them with a host of productive assets for land and water-based activities and for industry services and business. There is also ample provision for promoting skill formation among rural youth below the poverty line. Therefore, it is the need of the hour to create awareness among the illiterate adults, so that they could actively participate in such programmes for their various benefits. These programmes, if successfully executed would help them economically as well as lift them up from their low levels of being. In this regard, the adult education functionaries can play a significant role by providing information to the illiterate adults about the government schemes and also about how to approach the concerned authorities for deriving benefit from such schemes.
Mere co-operation from the adults:

Co-operation of the adults in the adult education programme is a very important factor because without the presence of this, the programme is sure to fail. Unfortunately, non-co-operation of adults prevails in Assam and such trend has adversely affected the programme.

The section of population in Assam who can afford economically but are not willing to have adult education, specially the tea-garden labourers and the people alike are fond of whiling away their leisure by drinking, gambling and cheap merrymaking. To do away with this trend, the government should take legislative action in prohibiting them from indulging in trashy activities like gambling and drinking. In the light of the adverse trend existing at present, in addition to the efforts of the government, the representatives of the Gaon Panchayat and the Municipal Board should be made more concerned in this regard. They should frequently visit their own areas and public opinion should be created by them against such adverse trend. The voluntary organisations, authorities of the tea-garden and the tea-garden unions should take necessary action to put an end to these evil practices through mobility and mutual exchange of ideas. The adult education functionaries should also function with a missionary zeal to win over the adults instead of being disheartened by the existence of such an evil trend.
There is another section of population who cannot have adult education without monetary gains. The adult education centres do not seem to be a source of attraction to them as their centre of attraction lies in profitable activities. So, the inclusion of some activities in the adult education programmes related to the livelihood of the adult learners would pave the way for the removal of non-co-operation of adults. It cannot be denied that this section of population has to keep themselves engaged in some profitable work during their leisure for their livelihood. The case being so, there must be some provision for the training of income-oriented activities which would help this section get the idea of earning something for their livelihood along with the knowledge of three R's. The programmes of adult education, therefore, should have a direct bearing on the genuine needs of the adults. It cannot be expected that a hungry adult will attend the programme with all sincerity after a day's hard labour and without a morsel of food. But supplementary income for the adults can be obtained through improved agriculture, poultry, duckery, dairy, fishery and the organisation of cottage industries and handicrafts. The literacy component should therefore be supplemented by a suitable economic programme through vocational training programmes like carpentry, maintenance and repair of agricultural and other implements, setting up of craft workshops in the backyards of rural houses where village wives meet everyday, tailoring, cutting and sewing, knitting, weaving, etc.
Removal of social backwardness and evil customs through various media:

The existence of social backwardness and evil customs like traditionalism, casteism and superstition is a source of trouble detrimental to the expansion of adult education in Assam. There are some people, specially in rural areas, who do not welcome and follow new ideals and beliefs as they are fond of clinging fast to their worn-out and ancient customs.

As an effective step towards solving this problem, it may be suggested that some genuine movement should be floated to get the sponsorship of the Central Social Welfare Board and the State Social Welfare Board in order to create an atmosphere to smash social barriers and to bring the people on a common platform.

The educated too should co-operate to bring about the required result. It is the duty of the educated people to highlight the moral and ethical values preached by different religions so that people professing different religions understand and appreciate the positive aspects of other religions and there is no discrimination on the basis of religion, caste and creed and they should respect other religions in addition to their own. The common elements of moral and ethical values in various religions should be conveyed to the masses by the educated people through translations in different languages.

The life and teachings of well-known religious leaders, social reformers, thinkers, poets, patriots, freedom fighters, places, events
and movements which have contributed towards realisation of traditionalism, casteism and superstition should be communicated to the people through the mass media and departments of Information and Broadcasting, Text-book Production unit of the government and other allied agencies. In this regard, suitable literature needs to be produced to promote emotional integration among various sections of our society.

The voluntary organisations like youth club, Mahila Samiti and other social organisations like school and college, Panchayat and Municipal Board should play an effective role to root out the social backwardness and evil customs organizing special training programmes on secularism, socialism, democracy, integrity and cultural heritage. It becomes inevitable in this context that religious, social and cultural functions should be observed with the co-operation of the people of different caste, creed and religion jointly.

The various departments of the government such as health, irrigation, agriculture, co-operative, industry, fishery and the like should try to enlighten the masses in this regard. The concerning departments should mobilise the masses to follow new ideals and beliefs instead of their worn-out and ancient customs through practical demonstrations, seminars, booklets, posters etc. so that they may be able to follow the new ideals and beliefs like population control and various programmes of family welfare, scientific methods of agriculture, income-generating
programmes like small savings, small industries, co-operatives, banking, fishery and so on.

At this critical juncture, the adult education functionaries have also a vital role to play for mobilising the adults to eradicate such social backwardness and evil customs through seminars, meetings and individual contacts.

Step towards running the adult education centres:

Assam, to her credit accommodates people of different ethnic groups, tribes and religions. Accordingly, as mentioned earlier, numerous differing social customs as well as religious functions are in vogue in Assam. As a result of the existence of various and numerous social customs and religious functions, the attendance of adult learners is gravely affected. Sometimes, this trend leads to the permanent abolition of some centres.

Under the above circumstances, it can very well be suggested that some clear cut policy of running the adult education centres with a convenient time schedule should be chalked out. Further, it can be suggested that the time schedule should be prepared in consultation with the adult learners and in relevance to the local conditions at the beginning of every new session. This would change the adverse trend and there would be no decrease in the rate of attendance.
Provision for development of socio-cultural condition of the adults:

The socio-cultural condition of the illiterate adults of Assam is also one of the major hurdles of the adult education programmes. The illiterate adults of Assam are not only educationally and economically backward but also lag far behind in matters of culture. As a result, they are far away from the socio-cultural mainstream of the state.

To put an end to this socio-cultural aloofness, efforts should be made by the government, local bodies like panchayats, municipalities, voluntary organisations, adult education functionaries and the educated people. There must be a common platform and the illiterate adults of all categories should be allowed to air their grievances and suggestions. The above mentioned organisations must also help them in bringing them out from their isolated conditions. Red letter days and other social as well as cultural functions must be celebrated with the ready participation of all classes of people in a common platform.

The voluntary organisations and the adult education functionaries should select different types of educational endeavour like equality of status for illiterate adults in decision making, full participation of illiterate adults in public activities, rights and duties of a citizen and participation in local welfare activities, so as to improve the illiterate adults socially and culturally. Moreover, other social organisations like Namghar, Mohila Samiti, Youth clubs, recreational centres
must co-operate in imparting music, drama, games and sports and the like.

It is regrettable to mention here that though the tea-garden labourers play a significant role in the growth of state's economy being accountable for a sizeable cut of foreign exchange, they remain isolated from the socio-cultural mainstream of the state. So, in addition to the suggested measures for the socially and culturally, deprived section of adult illiterates, some concrete measures should be floated in order to help the tea-garden labourers. There must be genuine aids coming from the government for their economic as well as educational development. It can rightly be suggested that government should provide them with seat reservation in educational institutions and job reservation in various government departments and in public undertakings. The practice of exploitation of labourers by the planters should be checked by the voluntary organisations and the adult education functionaries. The local 'babus' engaged in the clerical cadres should not indulge in creating class feeling between the labourers and the local people. The local Assamese people also should shed the inhibitions and should come forward to have social as well as cultural contact with the tea-garden labourers. This will make them remain in the socio-cultural mainstream of the state.
Moreover, to achieve socio-cultural development of a state, attention should be paid to the unhindered growth of varied culture of different sections of people of a state. Therefore, the voluntary organisations, other social organisations and adult education functionaries should find out the various culture of different sections of illiterate adults and there must be ample provision for respect and growth of such culture through cultural activities like drama, songs, observing cultural festivals, practical demonstrations, lectures and discussions.

Measures to maintain universalisation of admission, universalisation of retention and universalisation of attendance at primary education stage:

Though the constitution of India directs free and compulsory primary education for all children upto the age of fourteen years, yet, even after the 41st Independence Day in 1968, it has become clear that it is the lack of compulsory primary education which has paved the way for the failure of the adult education programme in Assam in particular and in India in general. The main reason for this state of affairs is the enormous increase of population in the state and the total failure of the implementation of compulsory primary education in the state. As a result of this, the number of adult illiterates has increased and it is an extra problem for adult education in Assam. A combined effort is suggested to be taken by the authorities of primary education as well as adult education in the state to make both the programmes successful as both the programmes are inter-related.
The government must take genuine steps in setting things right. They must expand compulsory primary education by adopting a practical and realistic attitude. It is suggested that the law must come down with a heavy hand on the guardians who are reluctant to send their children to the primary school. The government should take the initiative in organising local committees to be formed in every Gaon Panchayat and Municipal Board areas to enforce attendance of the children of school going age. Further, it is important to maintain universalisation of admission, universalisation of retention and universalisation of attendance through such local committees to avoid wastage and stagnation.

It is to be pointed out that emphasis on adult education should not mean any neglect of compulsory primary education. Therefore, it is not wise to allow a child to grow into an illiterate adult avoiding compulsory primary education and afterwards try to salvage the situation by imparting adult education.

Development of communication system:

The communication system in Assam is not good. In rural areas it is worse. There are many places in the plains of Assam which have no direct link with other places of the state. No vehicular roads exist in these areas and these places are fated to be isolated forever. The condition in the hilly regions is also worse. During the
monsoon the situation becomes very serious as most of the places become inaccessible. In such a situation, the adult learners and the instructors are practically prevented from attending the classes for a long time. Consequently, many adult education centres down their shutters. Sometimes, they are closed forever.

Here it can very well be suggested that all the interior road communication should be improved first. Communication should be restored in such a way that it does not hamper the growth of adult education in the state. There must be a survey of the existing conditions by the authority concerned before a centre is installed. If the communication situation is not found to be favourable, it must be intimated to the Public Works Department for necessary improvement of the situation. Moreover, such a situation can be improved through the National Rural Employment Programme and the Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme under the Directorate of Rural Development Agency. As these programmes are meant for the development in the rural sector and improvement of the economic condition of the people below the poverty line, the roads leading to the rural areas can be improved with the help of the concerned adult learners who are below the poverty line. It will achieve double results as it will improve the condition of the roads as well as benefit the adult learners economically. It is also to be remembered that it is not possible to improve all the interior road communication as it would necessitate the spending of a large amount of money. So, for
the time being adult education centres may be organised during the winter season which will facilitate the adult learners in attending the classes with enthusiasm.

Removal of organisational problems:

As the urgency of the adult education programme has been recently felt, some organisational problems surface in the field of adult education. As a result, such organisational problems really hamper the expansion of adult education in Assam.

It is suggested in this context that there must be a clear-cut National Policy of Adult Education in the country with a definite target. Efforts must be made to achieve the goal within a stipulated period and unless the target is reached there should be no changes in the names, ideas, objectives and principles of adult education. It is to be remembered that mere changing of names, ideas, objectives and principles will not bring about the required result.

It may be mentioned here that in Assam, the adult education programme is headed by an additional director under the Directorate of Education, Assam. History shows that not a single additional director stays in this post for three years at a stretch. As a result, the officer cannot naturally make any serious long-term planning and take initiative in the field of adult education. So, it may be suggested that there should
be a separate Directorate of Adult Education in the State with sole responsibility of the programme. Such a separate Directorate will certainly remove the gulf of difference between policy and its implementation which is prevailing in Assam at present. Moreover, it will help in making any serious long-term planning in the field of adult education.

Finance helps a lot in successfully implementing the programme. To succeed in the implementation of the adult education programme, proper attention should be paid by the Centre and the State in this regard. A separate fund should be allocated to the programme both by the Centre and the State and this fund should be kept exclusively for the adult education programme without transferring the fund to any other department on any occasion. In addition to the creation of this exclusive fund, it must be seen that the instructors and supervisors who are the key functionaries of the adult education programme are properly paid. Their scale of pay should be increased. Presently, the instructors and supervisors are appointed on a temporary basis and this trend should be changed. They must be made permanent and they should also get the facilities given to the government employees. It has been found that there are many supervisors who have been in service since 1979 on consolidated pay without any future hope. In some states, such supervisors are placed on regular scale but not in Assam. The plight of these graduate supervisors with great responsibility entrusted
to: then working on a salary of less than that of a fourth grade employee has become miserable with each passing day.

Need for the formation of Adult Education Association:

In Assam, an Adult Education Association should be started which will be greatly helpful in accelerating the growth of the adult education programme in Assam as it is happening in several States. The voluntary organisations also can do a lot in this regard if they do it with a missionary zeal. To cite as an example, reference can be made to the Adult Education Programme of Maharashtra, known as 'Gram Bikash Mohini'. Under this programme, all the educated people of a particular village render their service free of cost in educating the illiterate adults in small groups. In this way, the people of Maharashtra have been able to accelerate the growth of adult education. This good example can also be followed by the people of Assam with the support of the State Government. For this, the formation of an Adult Education Association is very essential in Assam to organise all these things.

Development of proper motivation:

Motivation has an important role to play in adult education as the mode of teaching of adults and adolescents vary entirely from the mode of teaching of children. An adult is ripe in experience and interest and he is a person with fixed notions. Having set ideas and impressions of his own in his mind, he may be reluctant to accept the ideas
of others. So, it becomes a difficult task to induce and persuade an adult to accept and assimilate new thoughts and information. However, inspite of the presence of troubles as mentioned above, it is not out of the way to identify some of the prominent factors that arouse motivational state in the adult learners.

It can very well be suggested that motivation should be resorted to, to make the adult learners learn. They can be motivated to learn only when they are enabled to perceive that the items offered by the adult education programme is very useful to them. The best result of motivation can be seen where efforts are undertaken to make an understanding of the socio-economic milieu among the adult learners or when the programmes help them in solving their daily problems and in bringing about some or the other kind of change in their life. The programme must be well-organised catering to the needs and interests of the adult learners. New methods of teaching should be sought after to make the process of learning interesting and exciting. At the same time, there must be a clear and warm understanding between the instructors and the taught. In addition, a positive link between literacy and development at the area level is also very important. In one sense it means extreme flexibility of the programme with regard to duration, time, location or instructional arrangements and complete diversification to suit the needs and capacities of the individuals or groups participating the programmes.

It is obvious that the planning of the exact content of the curricula needed by specific groups or individuals cannot be done centrally. It must be confined to the local area and should be dialogic in the sense that
they should be made in a highly decentralised form in consultation with the adult learners. At the same time workers dealing with other areas or development at the local level who have the requisite knowledge of the problems should also be taken into account.

It is to be remembered that problems do crop up during the process of learning and to cope with the emergence of various problems there should be understanding and co-operation between the motivated and those who come forward to help them. The first thing to be done for a complete and comprehensive adult education programme is to initiate an intensive desire among the illiterate for reading and writing before launching a regular programme of direct teaching. There must be ample provision for the adults to become aware of their sorry condition and the need for increased skill for efficiency and a change of outlook and mode of living, thinking and behaviour conducive to social justice. To enable the adult learners get motivated, suitable media like film shows, radio broadcasts, dramas, songs, lectures, discussions and practical demonstrations should be made use of. It is to be remembered that it is futile to start literacy classes initially when they are not convinced of their importance. Arrangements should be made to bring together adult learners to a particular centre where practical demonstration related to their daily life pattern can be performed. When the process of motivating the adult learners is over, the literacy classes should be started. Now they would be in a good position to understand the value and importance of the adult education programme.
Further, to achieve greater motivation among women, separate adult education centres purely meant for the use of the womenfolk should be installed and the location of such centres should remain within, walking distance of about a mile or so.

Development of instructional strategies:

Defects abound in the instructional strategies of the adult education programme in Assam. Literacy is given greater importance whereas the programme includes functionality and awareness besides literacy. It is to state that only the traditional method of imparting knowledge of three R's is the basic component of the programme at present. The adult learners are taught lesson after lesson in the primer and nothing more is imparted. Generally, the components of awareness and functionality are conveniently neglected in the programme.

It is worth remembering that instruction of the adult education programme should not be based on literacy only. There should be equal importance given to functionality and awareness along with literacy. Efforts should be made to make the adult learners aware of their social, environmental and civic orientation, employment and vocational development, health and sanitation, food production, distribution and nutrition, home and family life. The instruction of the adult education programme should be closely linked with the day-to-day life of the adult learners. Steps should be taken to impart functional literacy related to
the livelihood of the adult learners. This can at least be imparted to the section of population who cannot afford to have adult education without economic benefits. In addition, some modern lucrative items like co-operative system, bee-keeping, fishery and the like should be included in the programs of adult education.

It is to be pointed out that the adult education programme cannot flourish without the presence of improved material conditions. So, the factors like dearth of suitable teacher and accommodation, shortage of instructional materials, want of suitable time schedule, dearth of suitable syllabus and the like are to be considered in connection with the instructional strategies of the adult education programme in Assam.

Uses of audio-visual-aids:

The importance of audio-visual-aids in learning is unquestionable. The worn-out and old methods of learning have given way to the modern methods of learning supplemented with the use of audio-visual-aids. It is because of the reason that these materials make the process of learning less rigid and also reduce the monotony of verbalism. These in general can offer a variety of experiences, which in turn can stimulate self-activity on the part of the learners. That is why, the policy statement of the government on adult education in India proclaims that importance should be given to learning rather than to teaching and it also recommends the use of spoken language in literacy programme and the full utilisation of the mass media.2

Unfortunately, there is no use of audio-visual-aids in the adult education programme in Assam. So, this trend should be changed. There must be provision for some mobile vans sanctioned by the authority concerned fitted with necessary equipment like cinema projector, to fulfil the various requirements of adult learners by producing items like health and hygiene, agriculture, trade and commerce, several educative and moral items and so on. In addition, other audio-visual-aids like radio, tape-recorder, television etc. should be made ready for use in the adult education centres. In this context, reference can be made to the Department of Adult and Continuing Education, University of Madras which has launched a literacy programme through Television since 2nd October, 1978 in collaboration with Doordarshan Kendra, Madras and the Directorate of Rural Development of Tamilnadu. Under this programme 1,500 adult illiterates belonging to the nearby districts of Madras like Chingleput, South Arcot and North Arcot situated within the radius of 90 kilometres from Madras get benefitted. These programmes are set in such a way that it transmits knowledge and skills to create self-fulfilment for those who have never attended any formal school and for those who have left the formal educational institution. 3 Programmes like this should be made available in Assam.

---

3. **loc.cit.**
Involving committed persons:

As the adult education programme is a novel and important scheme, committed persons must be brought and involved in this programme. Persons like the social workers, village youth, school teachers, students, ex-servicemen, retired personnel of various categories, political leaders, trade union leaders, educated people and the adult education functionaries must be devoted to their work and must be ready to serve for the successful implementation of the adult education programme.

It can very well be suggested at this juncture that committed persons must be singled out and must be engaged in the adult education programme. The selection of the functionaries must be done with care. If repeated meetings, seminars and systematic appeals are made, they are sure to become conscious that they have a greater responsibility towards the successful implementation of the programme. They must have full devotion and attention considering the adult education programme as not mere a programme but as a movement. The social workers must also realise the fact that without eradicating illiteracy from the society, their social work cannot reach its right destination. The educated people also should lend a helping hand in solving the problem of illiteracy. They must also understand that a great majority of the people of Assam are illiterates and the educated minority of various sections like village youth, school teachers, students, ex-servicemen etc. as mentioned above has the onus of taking the lead in eradicating illiteracy.
In the same way, efforts should be taken to arouse enthusiasm among the functionaries of the adult education programme for taking an active part in it. Of course, it is necessary on the part of the authorities to make their job lucrative, so as to attract more people towards it.

In addition, the student and teaching community, the volunteers of the National Service Scheme, National Cadet Corps, Scouts and Guides and other such organisations should also get involved in the promotional work of adult education.

Development of training of the functionaries:

Training has a very important role to play in the adult education programme. Though an eight-day pre-service training and a six-day in-service training is in vogue for the instructors, it is not adequate. It has been found in Assam that many agencies come forward to arrange for training after a lapse of one or two months. Many agencies even do not arrange for in-service training programmes. Those who arrange for such programmes do not make use of it for training.

The common method prevalent in training is lecture method. Those who give training are mostly pre-occupied with the knowledge content. Sometimes those who have been appointed as resource persons for the programmes do not turn up. The continuity of the programme is also lost as some other person suitable for the occasion becomes difficult to be found out.
In the light of the above mentioned trend prevailing in Assam, it is the need of the hour to take the necessary steps to change the present improper and inadequate training system. There must be scope for the extension of the period of both the pre-service and in-service training for the instructors. Every month, or once in three months in-service training of 2 to 3 days duration should be arranged. These sessions should concentrate on developing special skills with the help of suitable resource persons.

The trend of losing the continuity of the training sessions for want of resource persons should be changed. The organisers must have foresight and must be ready to meet the challenge with the help of resource persons locally available. The resource persons appointed for a particular session must get a clear picture of what they are expected to teach and what is the standard of the trainees. It will be wise on the part of the organisers to get a synopsis of the topics from the resource persons so that copies could be taken and distributed to the participants.

Organisation of the programmes of supervision and guidance:

It is unfortunate to point out that there is lack of proper supervision and guidance of the adult education programmes in Assam. Even those who are on duty, have little faith upon the programme and they cherish a very indifferent attitude towards the implementation of the programme.
This apathetic and indifferent attitude of the supervisors towards their duties serve as an impediment to the progress of the adult education programme in the State. The mere records of their visits to the centres will not do any good to the growth of adult education in Assam. It can neither improve the performance of the instructors nor can it offer proper guidance to them.

It is the crying need of the hour to change the present trend among the supervisors. They must be induced to take their own initiative for proper supervision of the adult education centres. The blame cannot entirely be laid on the shoulders of the supervisors as they are not even provided with the basic amenities like travelling allowance. There is no mode of conveyance, not even bicycles. As the situation is like this, the supervisors have become a frustrated lot cherishing an indifferent attitude towards the implementation of the adult education programme.

Under the above mentioned circumstances, it can very well be suggested that the authorities concerned must come forward to make a sincere attempt to satisfy the supervisors for the sake of the successful implementation of the programme.

Supervisors should also cooperate in this regard. They should make it a point to spend some time in every centre. The supervisor should observe things in such a way that the instructors and the adult learners are not disturbed. They must discuss positive as well as negative points with instructors later. If it is necessary, they can also
serve as models by taking some classes. If it is done so, the supervisor can inculcate the feeling of being a partner among the instructors.

Development of the process of proper evaluation:

In any programme, evaluation gets prior importance because it will bring about improvement in the quality and efficacy of the programme. To make adult education suitable and effective, evaluation of the programme should be undertaken from time to time. Evaluation should have continuity covering from the planning stage to the follow-up stage. It must make a thorough assessment of the programme, from the beginning to the end. Data in connection with the learners' age, interest, background, knowledge and experience, language, occupation, attitudes and aspirations should be collected. It is necessary to analyse the content of the programme, methodology, materials, media and other inputs and feedback so that necessary correctives for the development of the programme can be made. Unfortunately, in spite of the presence of ample provision for evaluation in the adult education programme in Assam, nothing concrete has been done in this regard.

It is the Directorate of Adult Education which is expected to plan an important role at the Central level by establishing co-operative relationships with a number of appropriate research agencies and institutions on the one hand and by preparing agencies in the states to develop
capability for evaluation and research. It is clear that the Directorate of Education, Assam should come forward initiating efforts to involve various agencies and organisations for evaluating the training programmes as well as the trainees and trainers.

In addition, it is to be pointed out, that evaluation should not be confined to achievements only, but should be extended to the entire field of operation. To say otherwise, it should not deal with the outcomes of learning alone, but should include the means of achieving these. In this way, efforts should be made to evaluate the results of the performance as well as the performance itself. Cherishing the above said view, tools have to be developed and special procedures as well as pro-forma designed for recording the data which need to be interpreted and reported for further action. Evaluation of the performance in terms of awarding of marks only does not have any meaning. It can rather be used as a guideline for determining the level of their achievement, identifying the areas where they need to devote more time and energy and where they have more capabilities and inclinations, the speed of their progress, the material or media in which they are more interested, and so on. The results and findings are sure to provide adequate feedback for further progress and planning.

Need for proper reporting:

It is a widely known fact that without proper report of the progress of any project or centre, it will collapse as the monitoring system will become functionless. As far as reporting in Assam is concerned, it is not only inadequate but also improper in spite of the government's efforts in having provided the concerned with systematic reporting procedure.

To change the present trend, the functionaries of the adult education programme should come forward realizing the fact that reporting is very important in any system, as it is a tool for monitoring and evaluation. To make monitoring correct and easy, reporting forms should be filled in only, correctly and in time. The authority concerned also should come forward to help the functionaries learn how to fill up the forms correctly. Some kind of training in this regard can be given to the functionaries. They must also be made to realise that improper or incomplete filling-up of the report forms will lead to total failure of the programme.

Creation of suitable literature and follow-up programmes:

The responsibility of the adult education programme does not end with the process of making the adults literate. The mere teaching of three R's is not sufficient. If the adult learners stop receiving education after having received this type of education, they are sure to
fall into the vicious cycle of being illiterates. It is essential to provide them with some suitable literature and creation of some follow-up programmes after giving them preliminary education. It is generally found in Assam that there is no proper literature for the neo-literates. Due to this fact, the adult education programme in Assam is getting a set-back.

The problem of the lack of suitable literature and follow-up programmes can very well be overcome by publishing some suitable literature for the neo-literates. To execute this work, the help of learned writers should be sought after. The learned writers should be encouraged to prepare suitable books and booklets for the adults. Newspapers and magazines having colourful illustrations should be published. Monthly magazines covering local administration, trade and commerce, games, health, culture etc. should be published. The neo-literates will be greatly benefitted by going through these periodicals. When the language of the periodicals remains simple, the neo-literates are sure to cultivate the reading habit. For the beginners in adult education too, interesting literature should be prepared. Books must be simple and it must be in the mother tongue based on the socio-economic conditions of the learners.

A laudable effort has been made by the Department of Adult Education of the Directorate of Education, Assam. It has published some books and a monthly journal, 'Jana Sikha'. The State Resource Centre of Assam is also publishing once in every two months a magazine called
'Sasal Barta' for the neo-literates. In this context, it can be suggested that in such books and periodicals, some creative attempts made by the neo-literates should find some place. The block of the handwriting of the neo-literates should be used for this purpose. This will give encouragement to the adult learners who have written and also to the other adult learners.

In the world to-day, education through pictorial has become popular and it is considered as a part of world literature. The use of pictorial as a means of mass communication is widely popular. Pictorials can enable the learners to learn things easily with enthusiasm. India has also followed suit in this regard. Pictorial has been used in India as a part of child literature since the year 1909. Here, it is suggested that such pictorial should be published for the adult learners also and it must be based on their various needs and aspirations. The adult education programs in Assam also should include such pictorial and these should be used as a means of learning materials for the adult learners. This will definitely turn out to be a source of attraction to the adult learners in the process of amassing knowledge.

Moreover, refresher course should be organised time to time as a means of follow-up programme for the neo-literates to convey them the new ideals of the society.

The library is an integral part of any system of education. It can very well be called as People's University. There is enough scope for the library playing a vital role in the field of adult education. It can provide the adult learners with reading materials, especially the neo-literates. This will create an educational atmosphere among them. Unfortunately, the number of libraries in Assam is very few and they too are not well-organised for the purpose of adult education. These libraries are generally useful to the educated section of the population and not to the neo-literates. These libraries generally accommodate novels, short stories and some biographies. They do not have any book specially written for the adult learners. As such, these libraries do not provide the adult learners with any kind of assistance.

A library does not mean a mere stock of books. It is supposed to cater to the needs of all kinds of learners. It is suggested in this context that the readers category should include all kinds of educated persons, neo-literates, semi-literates and even illiterates. The libraries of Assam can play a lead role in the eradication of illiteracy from the state. In every village, there should be a well-organised library for imparting adult literacy permanently. In one way, a library can act as a permanent adult education centre. It is because of the reason that after the expiry of ten months, there is no existence of an adult education centre and in such a situation a library could take the responsibility of the neo-literates by imparting follow-up programs.
The librarian can also play a vital role in the adult education programme by reading out new books to the adults. Posters and pamphlets can be printed for the sake of neo-literate on some projects like better farming, good health, small savings, planting trees, family planning and so on. There should be provision for mobile library service made by the Department of Adult Education of the Directorate of Education, Assam for rural areas. To put all these into practice, a lot of money will be necessary and both the State and the Central Governments should come forward to sanction the amount in the interest of adult education in Assam.

An encouragement for more research activities:

Though several problems of the adult education programme in Assam have been discussed with some probable suggestions, it is not possible to get the quality and effectiveness of the programme without proper research. It is to be understood in this context that the successful implementation of the adult education programme in any region depends upon the results of some proper research. To make the adult education programme successful in any region, there must be some investigations, field studies and experimental findings on some specific problems of adult education based on proper research study. Really speaking, a great deal of research study is essential for the improvement of the various aspects of adult education. Our efforts are sure to go futile if we merely start the programme with some principles.
Research beforehand is essential for the successful implementation of the programme. But research in adult education is still at its infancy, not only in Assam but also in India.

In the light of the above circumstances, it can be suggested that at the Central level, the Directorate of Adult Education, the University Grants Commission and the National Council of Education and Research Training and at the State level, the Department of Adult Education of Directorate of Education, the State Resource Centre and the Universities should come forward to undertake research projects on various aspects of adult education. They must also encourage the willing researchers by providing them with maximum facilities. If it is done, Assam in particular and India in general will be saved from the grip of illiteracy. In the same way, at the field level, adult education officers can collect data and draw samples to enable the concerned departments to conduct research studies in respect of the impact of various programmes and strengths as well as weaknesses of their components. But it is unfortunate to mention that in Assam the research work done in this regard is quite limited. The case being so, some important areas of research are suggested below and these areas of research must be investigated to boost the growth of adult education in Assam.

(1) A study on the indifferent attitude of the landless labourers and slum dwellers towards the adult education programme.
(2) A critical study on the physical and mental blockings in the way of accepting the programme of adult education.

(3) Factors affecting the progress of the adult education programme among the tribal population.

(4) A study on the motivational techniques of adult education.

(5) A study on the instructional strategies of adult education.

(6) A study on the impact of functional literacy in adult education.

(7) A study on the development of curriculum of adult education.

(8) A study on the psychology of adult learning and its practical implications.

(9) A study on the impact of the audio-visual-aids in the adult education programme.

(10) A study on the implementation of diversified curriculum in the adult education programme.

(11) A study on the development of evaluation techniques of adult education.

(12) A study on the organisation and administration of the adult education programme.

(13) A study on the problems of women illiterates and educational strategies.
(14) A study on the post-literacy and follow-up programmes in adult education.

Some more pages can be covered by suggestions for the expansion of the adult education programme in Assam. But before making any suggestion it can be considered that the aspect of feasibility of implementing it is obvious. The foregoing paragraphs include only such discussions which are possible to be implemented under the present set-up and circumstances.