CHAPTER II

ADULT EDUCATION IN INDIA

Britishers, who gave a special plan for adult education movement in their home land, brought the concept of adult education in India too. The report of the Education Commission of 1888 recorded the presence of many night schools for adults in a few towns. During the years 1896-97, 1,587 night schools in Bengal, 1,437 in Madras and 239 in Bombay provinces were educating more than 35,000 adults. Bordia (1980) says that adult education centres were established in several provinces by the provincial governments concerned. In 1927, there were 288,932 adult pupils attending 11,171 literacy class, of which over 80,000 pupils and over 3,000 classes were in Punjab alone.

Some of the impressive adult education programmes were launched in the beginning of the century in the princely states of Mysore and Baroda. M.Visveswaraya, the Dewan of Mysore, established a massive programme in the state with nearly 7,000 literacy classes running regularly. He also set up a public library system and sponsored the publication of a magazine, Vigyan, to popularize scientific knowledge among neo-literates. A large adult education programme, including "library system, was also started by Maharaja Sayaji Rao Gaekwad in the state of Baroda.
Rabindra Nath Tagore, while implementing the Sriniketan Rural Reconstruction Programme (1920) in the villages in Bengal, encouraged the promotion of Siksha Sastras for imparting education to children and adults. Spencer Hatch of the Martandum Rural Development Project (1921-22) promoted adult literacy centres in 40 villages in the Travencore district. Mass education was carried out in 40 villages in Martandum area for the benefit of people in the weekly market places. Voluntary efforts to promote adult education were spearheaded by V.T.Krishnamachari in Baroda in 1926, Col. Bryne in Gurgaon district, and Mahatama Gandhi in Sewagram in 1930.

In 1937, popular ministries were formed in several states and they showed keen interest in adult literacy. Under the leadership of Dr. Syed Mahmud an impressive campaign was launched and conducted in Bihar. Mass literacy committees were set up at the state, district and village levels. The achievements in Bombay, Mysore and the Punjab were also significant. The table below would give an account of gains of the campaign started by popular ministries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of classes held</th>
<th>No. of adults attending classes</th>
<th>No. of adults made literate</th>
<th>Total expenditure</th>
<th>Govt. contribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1938-39</td>
<td>50,820</td>
<td>909,081</td>
<td>450,000</td>
<td>121,431</td>
<td>80,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939-40</td>
<td>18,878</td>
<td>1,168,325</td>
<td>413,482</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>180,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940-41</td>
<td>17,294</td>
<td>456,682</td>
<td>321,393</td>
<td>208,504</td>
<td>198,811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941-42</td>
<td>13,534</td>
<td>240,507</td>
<td>203,264</td>
<td>203,764</td>
<td>203,764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100,526</td>
<td>2,774,595</td>
<td>1,388,149</td>
<td>733,699</td>
<td>662,575</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 1938, the Central Advisory Board of Education appointed an adult education committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Syed Mahmud. The adult education committee strongly recommended for launching serious efforts in adult education and declared "No Government can make any appreciable headway with its schemes for the promotion of socio-economic welfare of its people unless the people are prepared to meet the government half way and offer its responsive co-operation. The responsive co-operation is only feasible when the people possess some amount of education".

POST INDEPENDENT PERIOD

Independence in India brought about rapid national development movements. One of the developmental programmes adopted by the Government of India was Community Development which visualized an integrated developmental process, with considerable emphasis on participative learner involvement. The Central Advisory Board of Education appointed a sub-committee to report on adult education. The sub-committee recommended for a greater effect on 'general education' for bringing about a new social order. The concept of general education was modified and given the name Social Education. It was the educational counterpart of community development and land reform legislation. Social education was accepted as the goal of adult education in 1949 and making a reference to its goals, Abul Kalam Azad, the Union Education Minister,
We may say that adult education has three aspects, namely, (a) the induction of literacy, (b) the production of an educated mind in the masses in the absence of literacy, (c) the inculcation of a lively sense of rights and duties of citizenship, both as individuals and as members of a great nation. We may say that social education is synonymous with adult education, but lays more emphasis upon the two latter aspects of education.

Social education is, in fact, adult education with greater emphasis on its social implications. The objectives of social education are to bring about a desirable social change by acquainting people with the ever-changing currents in social, economic and political life and to instill in them a faith in themselves and in the future of the country.

Social education is 'informal' as against 'formal' education and is meant for adult men and women both as individuals and as members of their communities, for ensuring for them a fuller and more useful and productive life. Social education, using the infrastructure provided by the community development programme, gained popularity in educating the rural masses in India.

The First Five Year Plan (1951–56) made a provision of Rs.5 crores for social education. During the first plan 55 lakhs adults were enrolled in the adult education classes.

The second Five Year Plan (1956–61) enlarged the scope of social education by providing Rs.15 crores for the
implementation of the programme. The major media adopted for instilling the massages of social education was radio and it reached the villagers through the provision made for community radio sets. Towards the end of the second Plan, the emphasis began to shift from community development to industrial development.

The Maharashtra government, launched on experimental basis in 1959, in Satara district, a programme known as 'Gram Shikshan Mohim'. It was a village education movement to make all persons in the age group 14-50 literate in the identified villages. During its peak years 1961-63, the Mohim covered 25 districts and made all persons in the age group 14-50 literate in 1,019 villages. Over a million people became literate as a result of the efforts made by the Mohim and in the state of Maharashtra, literacy rate increased from 34.27% in 1961 to 44.94% in 1971, though the increase in national average was from 27.7% to 34.08%. Later, there was a follow up evaluation undertaken by Planning Commission and it revealed massive relapse into illiteracy due to insufficiency of post literacy programmes.

The Third Five Year Plan period witnessed a greater effort with a financial outlay of Rs.25 crores for social education. A significant contribution to promote literacy was made by opening libraries at the community level in villages. However, despite the efforts made, much could not
be done to raise the educational standard or literacy level among the masses in India. The failure of social education programmes to meet the challenge gradually resulted in promoting diversified adult education programmes aiming at educating different sections like farmers, industrial workers, women, and so on. During the subsequent Plan periods expenditure on adult education was reduced as the main concern shifted to agriculture and industry, where the outlay was considerably increased.

Expenditure on Adult Education During the Earlier Plans (In million rupees)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Total expenditure on Education</th>
<th>Expenditure on Adult Education</th>
<th>Expenditure on Adult Education in %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Plan</td>
<td>1,530</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Plan</td>
<td>2,730</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Plan</td>
<td>5,970</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Plan</td>
<td>7,860</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The year 1967-68 saw the introduction of a new innovation in the programme of adult education. The Farmers Functional Literacy Programme was jointly launched by the Ministries of Education, Agriculture, Information and Broadcasting. The Ministry of Education was made responsible for functional literacy, the Ministry of Agriculture for
farmers' training and the All India Radio for farm broadcasting. The efforts of these three-pronged programmes were to be integrated so as to educate the illiterate farmers about high-yielding varieties of seeds and a package of improved agricultural practices. In fact the Government of India planned for 'Green Revolution' with new technologies and methods. The programme aimed at helping farmers to adopt themselves to new requirements of development. The literacy component of the programme included:

- Read and write simple letters;
- Complete simple application forms for loans;
- Maintain simple farm accounts;
- Read and identify labels on fertilizer bags and pesticide bags; and
- Follow programmes on radio.

The necessary reading materials were prepared and distributed in villages all over the country. The programme used the technologies of oral instruction, audio-visual communication, village meetings, dialogues, discussions, demonstrations and practical manual training.

The programme was evaluated in 1977-78 by a Committee. The Committee supported the idea of integrating literacy with training and the use of mass media as a supportive activity. The Committee observed that finances provided for the implementation of the scheme in each district were insufficient, supervisory structure almost non-existent and co-ordination
among ministries far from satisfactory. The Committee also observed that monitoring system was almost a failure and that the correct data about implementation were not available.

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

The First Five Year Plan's educational strategy was built on the assumption that formal and non-formal education be correlated and integrated since mere reliance on formal education could not cover all educational needs in India. Hence it became inevitable to develop non-formal education for all categories of learners. The Central Advisory Board of Education, at its meeting held in November, 1974 lent strong support to the non-formal education and made a number of recommendations which spelt out the objectives and scope of non-formal programmes for adults. The Central Advisory Board of Education suggested starting of non-formal education with multiple entry and part-time education programmes.

In 1975-76, a major programme of Non-Formal Education was launched for the youth in the age group 15-25. The programme was flexible, diversified and functionally related to the needs and interests of youth and to equip them for participation in developmental activities. To begin with the programme was set up in one district in each state with central assistance and efforts were also to be made to persuade the states to set up one additional district with state funds.
By the end of 1977-78, 60 districts had been covered in the country. This programme also suffered from inadequate financial outlay, poor supervisory arrangements and poor monitoring and evaluation of the programme.

NATIONAL ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMME

The National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) was formerly inaugurated on 2nd October, 1978 to provide literacy to about hundred million illiterates with special attention to the age group 15-35. The programme was emphasised when new government assumed office in March, 1977. At that time, the Planning Commission was trying to spell out priorities of the Sixth Five Year Plan and the ministry of Education emphasised to change the priorities on education - to shed the excessive pre-occupation with higher, technical and secondary education and adopt a more balanced approach to give a place of importance and significance to elementary and adult education. The draft Plan for 1978-83 emphasised upon adult education to promote human resource development and was considered a new developmental strategy. An outline on National Adult Education Programme was developed and the first draft was widely disseminated and discussed by educational organisation, voluntary agencies, universities, teachers and students besides by Parliament's Consultative Committee on Education and at the first meeting of the National
Board of Adult Education in November, 1977. Meanwhile a working group on Adult Education was appointed to work out the details of the National Adult Education Programme. The report of the working group was available for discussion in 1978. This along with the outline of the National Adult Education Programme was discussed and approved at the Conference of Education Ministers of the states, held in July, 1978. We have now as a result of this a nationally accepted programme of adult education.

The National Adult Education Programme beginning from April, 1979, aims to impart literacy to about one hundred million illiterates in about 5 years time. However, the targets become illusive. The programme is however a reflection of the Government's resolve 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. Besides imparting literacy, the programme aimed at providing the learners with skills for self directed learning leading to self-reliance and active role in their own development and in the development of their own environment.

The conceptual framework of the National Adult Education Programme includes three aspects, i.e. literacy, Functionality and Social Awareness. Literacy includes reading, writing and numeracy, at a level which would enable learners to continue to learn in a self-reliant manner.
Functionality is viewed as the acquisition of knowledge, information and skills that one uses for carrying out day to day life in a meaningful and purposeful way. It includes the role of an individual as a worker, member of the family and citizen in the civic and political system.

Social Awareness includes knowledge and understanding of broad Government policies, of laws, broad issues of social justice and the need for the poor and illiterate to organise themselves for group action to pursue their own interests.
The Programme is to be implemented in the form of compact projects. The project is expected to be coterminus with one Community Development Block. The project is to be headed by a Project Officer to be assisted by 5-10 supervisors for every 20-30 adult education centres.

The activities of adult education shall be organised through a number of centres in each project. In setting up these centres priority is to be given to the needs of the disadvantaged groups, i.e. women and persons from Scheduled Castes and Tribes. The centre is to be organised by an instructor who could work for 1-2 hours a day on an honorarium of Rs.50/-p.m. It has now been raised to Rs.100/- . It is expected that each learner will spend 300-360 hours or a period of 8-10 months at the adult education centre to acquire basic literacy skills.

Post-literacy and follow up is another integral part of the programme of the project and is organised for a period of 3-4 months to strengthen the basic literacy skills acquired by the neo-learners.

ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT OF NATIONAL ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMME

For efficient management and implementation of the National Adult Education Programme, an organisational structure has been introduced from the level of Central Government to
adult education centre at the grass root level. The Central Government has the responsibility of providing finances and to co-ordinate the activities of the various ministries of the Government and of governmental and non-governmental agencies. At the apex of the structure is the Directorate of Adult Education at the centre for providing resource support to the programme. At the level of the state the identical structure is State Resource Centre. These bodies have the responsibility of providing technical resource support in the form of preparation of curricula, teaching-learning packages and providing training to various functionaries of the programme in their jurisdiction. The support of the universities has also been enlisted for performing the jobs similar to the State Resource Centre, i.e. evolving suitable curriculum and to provide training to the basic workers. The universities' support has also been enlisted to provide expertise in the preparation of teaching-learning material by the State Resource Centres.

The National Adult Education Programme differs from previous adult education programmes in that it provides for adequate administrative and resource support and emphasises need-based curricula and teaching and learning materials besides emphasising evaluation at all stages on a continuing basis.

The National Adult Education Programme covers a population of one hundred million adults during 1979-84, the
requirements of funds for the purpose is worked out to be Rs.10,560 million. However, during the Sixth Plan (1978-83) only 2,000 million were allocated against the requirement of Rs.6,860 million during 1978-83 and the balance of Rs.4,000 million during the year 1984.

The coverage of the National Adult Education Programme planned during the Sixth Plan is as follows:

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

To achieve the target of providing literacy to 100 millions illiterates in the age group of 15 to 35, the National Adult Education Programme was implemented through different agencies, such as Government departments, voluntary organisations, Nehru Yuvak Kendras, universities and colleges, N.S.S. Units, Social Organisations and through individual efforts.

To achieve these targets, resource development was extremely essential. As such, the Central Directorate of Adult
Education (DAE) was strengthened. State Resource Centres (SRCs) were set up to cover fifteen out of twenty-two states in the country. The DAE took the responsibility of training the key senior personnel, while SRCs shouldered the responsibility of training project officers and supervisors. The responsibility to train the instructors was that of the implementing agency itself. Teaching and learning materials were prepared by State Resource Centres in the local languages and efforts were also made to prepare materials in important tribal languages and in several dialects. The Resource Centre of the Panjab University prepared teaching learning material in two important dialects, the Dogri and Chamyali for use in Kangra and Chamba districts of the Himachal Pradesh respectively besides preparing material in Hindi and Punjabi languages.

The Government of India appointed a Review Committee after one year of implementation of National Adult Education Programme under the chairmanship of Prof. D.S. Kothari. The terms of reference of the Committee are:

(a) to review the working of the National Adult Education Programme in all its aspects, and to recommend any modifications that would improve its implementation, quality and impact;

(b) to recommend any change in the priority assigned to adult education that may be called for in the light of the review by the Committee; and
(c) to examine if any economy could be effected in the allocations for the National Adult Education Programme by better implementation, and more effective participation of educational institutions and non-official agencies.

The Committee observed that the present programme has both strengths and shortcomings. Despite commendable work done in several areas, the review also brings out many weaknesses. For example, more careful preparation is needed in the formulation of state and district Plans, training of functionaries, annual projections and greater participation of all priority groups. The duration of the programme is too short and provisions for follow up activities is inadequate.

The programme needs to be modified and strengthened. The specific recommendations of the Committee are:

**PRIORITY**

(a) In the plans of national development, along with universalisation of primary education, adult education should receive the highest priority. Adult education should be an integral part of the Basic Minimum Needs Programme.

(b) All illiterate persons in the age group 15-35 should be covered in the shortest possible time. Nothing should be done to weaken the momentum generated for the National Adult Education Programme. Immediate steps should be taken to radically modify and strengthen the programme.
PARTICIPATION

(a) Emphasis should be laid on the participation of women in the programme.

(b) In the organisation of the programme, special attention should be paid to creation - sustenance of motivation among the learners.

(c) The programme should pay special attention to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. They should also be represented in all advisory committees.

NATIONAL/STATE BOARDS

The Committee recommended the constitution of autonomous boards at the National and State levels. The responsibility of the Board at the National level would be that of planning, financing and implementation of the programme at the National level. It would support the State Resource Centres.

Autonomous Boards of Adult Education should be established in every state and should be responsible for planning, financing and implementing the programme and for its co-ordination at the State level.

Further, every district should have an Adult Education Committee. These Committees should have adequate powers to plan and implement the programme at the district level.
IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES

The Review Committee recommended that the voluntary agencies, universities and colleges, schools, Panchayati Raj Institutions, co-operatives, employees, individuals and other groups such as Mahila Mandals and Sainik Boards should actively participate in the programme for its implementations.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

The review committee had earlier observed that duration of the programme, i.e. 10 months is too short and it should be increased. Another recommendation is to produce literature needed for post-literacy and continuing education. A nation wide network of libraries should be organised and closely linked to the adult education programme.

FINANCES

The Committee worked out the cost of making 100 million persons literate around Rs.15,000 million. The existing arrangement of equal sharing of expenditure between the central and state plans should continue. However, special additional provision should be made in the central plan to provide support for tribal, hill and desert regions and for such priority groups as women, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and the physically handicapped.

The programme must take into account the economy and an important method of economy is to improve the efficiency
and quality of the programmes. Other means would include the involvement of the Community and harnessing the idealism, dedication and commitment of the people.

Summarisingly, it may be stated that Committee recommended improvement in training of functionaries, instructional material and emphasised special attention on priority groups, greater involvement of voluntary agencies, local bodies, co-operatives and employees and expansion of the participation of teachers and students.

NATIONAL LITERACY MISSION

In 1988, promotion of literacy was identified as one of the five national missions with a view to applying technology and scientific research for the benefit of the deprived sections of society and the areas which are critical to the country’s development. The National Literacy Mission (NLM) is a societal mission which implies that there is a political will at all level for the achievements of the goals of the mission, that a national consensus can be created for active participation of the people through energisation of their latent potential with the ultimate objective of promoting a qualitative change in their living and working conditions.

The objectives of the mission are to impart functional literacy to 80 million illiterate persons in 15-35 age group - 30 million by 1990 and additional 50 million by 1995.
Functional Literacy implies

- Achieving self reliance in literacy and numeracy;

- Becoming aware of the causes of their deprivation and moving towards amelioration of their condition through organisation, and participation in the process of development;

- Acquiring skills to improve the economic status and general well being;

- Imbibing the values of national integration, conservation of environment, women's equality, observance of small family norms, etc.

The mission further states that to derive optimum results from eradication of illiteracy, a nation wide network of continuing education will be established - through new institutional structures, better utilisation of existing infrastructures, open and distance learning, etc.

The mission outlined that the nation wide strategy would be to increase motivation, secure people's participation, significantly increase involvement of voluntary agencies, substantially improve ongoing programmes, launch mass movement, institutionalise continuing education, ensure availability of standard learning material, universalize the outreach, undertake technology demonstration and establish mission management system at different levels.

The critical level in the management of National Literacy Mission is the project. The National Literacy Mission modified the earlier concept of project with 100-300 adult education centres spread over the entire district to one or two contiguous community development blocks in a district and the
projects were to be organised for complete eradication of illiteracy in the project area in specified period of time with adequate provision of continuing education programme so that neo-literate may not relapse into illiteracy after some time of acquisition of basic literacy skills in the absence of provision for retention, continuation, strengthening and application of the skills.

To achieve the objectives as laid down in National Literacy Mission, adult education centres will be operational units in each project or shall be organised at the level of a village/mohalla and the organiser of the centre will be a local worker acceptable to the community. About eight adult education centres will be overseen by a supervisor/prerak. Prerak will be selected from the local area, preferably an experienced and successful organiser of adult education centres and he will also organise post-literacy and continuing education through Jana Shikshan Nilayams.

At the district level, District Board of Education will be responsible for overall planning and administration of all educational programmes. District Resource Unit (DRU) as part of District Institute of Education and Training will provide technical resource support to the District Boards of Education.

The District Board of Education will plan for eradication of illiteracy in whole district and allocate
responsibilities among the various agencies implementing the programme and also ensure co-ordination of all programmes of adult education undertaken by different agencies.

At the state level, there will be an authority headed by Chief Minister, with responsibility for planning and implementation of the programme on the same lines as indicated for the national level below. State Resource Centres would provide technical resource support to the adult education programme. State Resource Centres will also assist the state level authority.

At the national level, there will be national Authority on Adult Education (NAAE) headed by the Minister of Human Resource Development. This will have functional autonomy and full powers to take all decisions not requiring reference to the cabinet. A Mission Task Force headed by Director-General National Literacy Mission of the rank of Additional/Joint Secretary will be set up for implementing the mission. At the national level an apex body National Institute of Adult Education (NIAE) will be set up for providing technical resource support to the Authority and to State Governments, etc.

The implementation of the mission will be in a phased manner.

The first outstanding achievement of the National
Literacy Mission was to get successfully implemented the mass campaign for total eradication of illiteracy from Ernakulam district.

The Adult Education Programme was implemented in a campaign move first in Ernakulam (January to December 1989) and thereafter the whole of Kerala State (February 1990 to February 1991) and Union Territory of Pondicherry implemented it. The State of Kerala was declared totally literate in March 1991. The experiment of campaign approach is based on twin principles of mass mobilisation and voluntarism and has demonstrated that it is possible to -

- arouse and awaken the illiterate masses and generate a demand for literacy among them;
- mobilise and motivate the educated to participate in the literacy work voluntarily; and
- forge a link between the illiterate and educated volunteers with community development and support.

The experiment of Ernakulam, whole of Kerala and Pondicherry has subsequently been extended to about 65 districts of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, West Bengal, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. Total literacy projects in a campaign mode have been launched in 65 districts by the district administration with the support of people from all walks of life.

It is also heartening to note that along with district administration providing the leadership for launching and
implementing such campaigns, about 20 voluntary agencies have also come forward to implement the voluntary total literacy campaigns with a block or portion of block as unit.

Such campaigns are area specific, time bound, cost effective and result oriented. The National Literacy Mission now considers Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) as its principal strategy for eradication of illiteracy from the country.