



Recent exertions towards expansion of Adult Education in India

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Abstract: An attempt is made in this paper to analyze the concept of adult education, including dimensions, decadal adult literacy scenario of India including states and rate in rural areas, strives of National Literacy Mission Authority, the major activities under advertising and publicity and up-gradation of existing AECs as model. It is found that during post-independence, Adult Education aims at extending educational options to those adults, who have lost the opportunity and have crossed the age of formal education, but now feel a need for learning of any type, including literacy, basic education, skill development (Vocational Education) and equivalency. It is evidence that on the recent, National Literacy Mission Authority strives to raise the literacy rate to 80per cent and reduce the gender gap to less than 10per cent. In this regard, of the 410 districts which qualify for coverage under Saakshar Bharat Programme, 393 districts in 26 States and 1 Union Territory covering about 1.62 lakh Panchayats have been selected over the nation. It is concluded that to eradicate the social and economic evils, cent per cent literacy is essential.

Key words: Light of knowledge, National Literacy Mission, Saakshar Bharat

1. Introduction

Society and education are inextricably intertwined. No society, whatever its stage of development, can be conceived of, which could exist and sustain bereft of the influence of education formal, non-formal or informal. Learning had its role from the abysmal times with its crudities in the society, no matter whether school existed or not. The society has become exceedingly complex with an upsurge of peoples boundless needs and aspirations, which has rendered abortive and infructuous efficacy of the informal learning, on the other hand, a vast potential mass stands outside the bound of the formal system who have no taste or very little taste of its fruits. This "human capital to be developed since undoubtedly holds rich promise and prospects for individual and societal growth. Besides, the major source

of evil in our country is illiteracy. It lies at the root of everything that hinders the progress of our country. Light of knowledge unites people to agitate for their demands. But illiteracy keeps people in darkness. They fail to unite and demand what they really want. It is not merely necessary to carry the torch of education to all the corners of the land, but also to people of all the ages. The main cause of the sufferings of the people is not at all their lot, but ignorance and illiteracy lead them to suffer so much. All our adults are engaged in the drudgery of earning their living. They cannot afford the luxury of attending schools. Even attending night classes is too much for them. For they get hardly two square meals a day. Adult education without offering job and food is almost a mockery.



The concept of adult education embraces different dimensions. As such it is very difficult to arrive at an all-inclusive definition. In its broadest sense adult education signifies any form of learning, undertaken by or provide for both men and women. The term adult education has had many interpretations on account of variations in objectives and method of application. The concept of adult education is generally applied for those entire programme which aims at educating the adult illiterates.

“A process where by persons who no longer or did not attend School on a regular and full time basis, undertake sequential and organized activities with a purpose of identifying and solving personal and community problems” (Live Right & May Good 1968:9)

2. Dimensions of Adult Education in India

Adult Education in India has diverse colors-the country's ancient and rich oral tradition for the transmission of scriptural knowledge; Emperor Asoka's dissemination of the teachings of the Buddha through inscriptions on rocks and pillars; royal patronage in the medieval period to scholars, saints, teachers, artists and artisans for the spread of messages of peace and harmony; adult schools set up by British missionaries in an evangelical spirit, their efforts and those of 'enlightened Indians and socially committed British officials' to promote adult education; the adult education policy initiatives of the colonial government; the importance given to adult education by the leaders of the freedom movement; and post-independence.

During post-independence, Adult Education aims at extending educational

options to those adults, who have lost the opportunity and have crossed the age of formal education, but now feel a need for learning of any type, including literacy, basic education, skill development (Vocational Education) and equivalency. Directorate of Adult Education originated from National Fundamental Education Centre (NFEC), which was set up by Govt. of India in the year 1956. This Centre was renamed as Department of Adult Education and made part of the National Institute of Education under the N.C.E.R.T. in 1961. Following the Government thrust on adult education resulting in substantial increase in adult education activities/programmes in the country, this department separated from N.C.E.R.T. and was given an independent identity in the year 1971. For some time, it was also known as Directorate of Non-Formal (Adult) Education and ultimately the Directorate of Adult Education. Over the years, the Directorate has considerably expanded both in size and coverage of activities in the field of adult education/literacy. At present this Directorate enjoys the status of a subordinate office under the Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development and Govt. of India. With the objective of promoting adult education, a series of programmes have been introduced since the First Five Year Plan, the most prominent being the National Literacy Mission (NLM), that was launched in 1988 to impart functional literacy to non-literates in the age group of 15-35 years in a time bound manner. In order to promote Adult Education & Skill Development through the voluntary sector, a modified scheme, namely, Scheme of Support to Voluntary Agencies for Adult Education and Skill



Development has been put in place with effect from 1 April, 2009.

Eradication of illiteracy has been one of the major national concerns of the Government of India since independence. In 1959 a special programme for the eradication of illiteracy namely Gram Shikshan Mohim was launched by Maharashtra Government. In 1975-76 nonformal education programme was launched to educate the adults in the age group of 15-25years. *It is the first major adult education programme after Independence.* After that Krishi Vigyan Kendras' were established to provide integration education and training courses for urban workers. The first nationwide attempt for eradication of illiteracy was made through the National Adult Education Programme in 1978. But it remained a tradition centre-based programme and it suffered due to various weaknesses. As a flagship programme of NAEP, Rural Functional Literacy Project (RFLP) was initiated in 1978. Farmers Functional Literacy Project, Shramik Vidya Peeth and National Adult Education Programme (NAEP), Rural Functional Literacy Project (RFLP), National Policy on Education (1986) Approach to Adult and Continuing Education, National Literacy Mission etc were established.

Decadal Literacy scenario of India:

Census 2011 revealed that Literacy in India has made remarkable strides. Literacy rate of India stands at 72.98per cent. Overall Literacy rate has grown by 8.14 percent points in the last decade (64.84per cent in 2001 & 72.98per cent in 2011). The male literacy rate has grown by 5.62 percent points (75.26per cent in 2001 & 80.88per cent in 2011) whereas

female literacy rate 10.96 percent points (53.67per cent in 2001 & 64.63per cent in 2011). Number of illiterates (7+ age group) decreased from 304.10 million in 2001 to 282.70 million in 2011.

States reported with literacy rate greater than 90per cent: Kerala (94per cent), Lakshadweep (91.85per cent) and Mizoram (91.33per cent).

States with literacy rate between national average (72.99per cent) and below 90per cent: Tripura (87.22per cent), Goa (88.70per cent), Daman & Diu (87.10per cent), Puducherry (85.85per cent), Chandigarh (86.05per cent), Delhi (86.21per cent), A&N Islands (86.63per cent), Himachal Pradesh (82.80per cent), Maharashtra (82.34per cent), and Sikkim (81.42per cent) Tamil Nadu (80.09per cent), Nagaland (79.55per cent), Manipur (76.94per cent), Uttarakhand (78.82per cent), Gujarat (78.03per cent), Dadra & Nagar Haveli (76.24per cent), West Bengal (76.26per cent), Punjab (75.84per cent), Haryana (75.55per cent), Karnataka (75.36per cent) and Meghalaya (74.43per cent).

Literacy rate in rural areas stands at 67.67per cent with rural male literacy rate 77.15per cent and rural female literacy rate 57.93per cent. Whereas literacy rate in urban areas stands at 84.11per cent with urban male literacy rate at 88.76per cent and urban female literacy at 79.11per cent. Literacy rate of SCs stands at 66.07 per cent (Male SCs 75.17per cent & Female SCs 56.46per cent).Whereas Literacy rate of STs Stands at 58.95 per cent (Male STs 68.51per cent & Female STs 49.36per cent).Gender disparity in literacy rates declined by 5.34 percent points from 21.59 percent points in 2001 to 16.25 percent points in 2001-2011. There has



been a continuous decrease in gender gap in literacy since 1991 (24.84 percent points).

Strives of National Literacy Mission Authority

During 11 Plan, Saakshar Bharat, a centrally sponsored scheme was launched in September, 2009 with prime focus on women and other disadvantaged groups in rural areas of low literacy districts of different States/UT. It lays emphasis on quality. Through large scale countrywide environment building and Mass Mobilization Campaigns, voluntary teachers/preraks have been motivated and trained in large numbers and community has been mobilized.

During the 12 Five Year Plan, National Literacy Mission Authority strives to raise the literacy rate to 80per cent and reduce the gender gap to less than 10per cent. Saakshar Bharat have been revamped and aligned to new paradigm of lifelong learning. To promote a systematic lifelong learning, the country might require comprehensive legalization. Of the 410 districts which qualify for coverage under Saakshar Bharat Programme, 393 districts in 26 States and 1 Union Territory covering about 1.62 lakh Panchayats have been sanctioned. During 2014-15 the programme has been continued in these 393 districts. Preparatory activities like Formation of Management Committees, Opening of Bank Accounts and Conducting the Survey have been completed in most of the districts. About 25.8 lakh Volunteer Teachers, 1.98 lakh Master Trainers and more than 11.8 thousand Resource Persons have been trained so far. About 42.6 million Basic Literacy Primers in 13 languages and 26

local dialects have been printed and distributed. Adult

Education Centres (AECs) have been set up in over 1.52 lakh GPs to organize Continuing Education Programme. About 10.12 lakh literacy learning centres are currently functioning in different States of the Country with an enrolment of about 54.21 million learners in basic literacy. About 43.28 million learners have appeared so far in the biannual assessment tests conducted by The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS). About 31.30 million learners have successfully passed the assessment tests conducted under the Programme up to August, 2014. Till December 2014 an amount of ` 276.68 Crores was released as Central Share to State Literacy Mission Authorities (SLMAs) for the implementation of Saakshar Bharat Programme during 2014-15.

State Resource Centres (SRCs) are mandated to provide academic and technical resource support to adult and continuing education in the areas of development of teaching learning material, training of functionaries, environment building activities, action research, monitoring and evaluation etc. Presently there are 32 SRCs in the country.

The major activities under Advertising and Publicity Unit during 2014-15 were focused on Interpersonal Media Campaign for on-ground activation of Saakshar Bharat Programme. Saakshar Bharat Programme has provision for setting up of Adult Education Centres (AECs) at Gram Panchayat levels to provide institutional, managerial and resource support to literacy and life-long education at grass-root level.



Table -1: Year-wise annual expenditure incurred Adult Education

S.No	Scheme	9th Plan	10 th	11 TH
1.	Literacy Campaigns & OR	97.66	131.11	NA
2.	Continuing Education	232.27	704.71	NA
3.	Jan Shikshan Sansthan	54.26	159.60	NA
4.	Cultural Exchange Programme*	0.10	NA	NA
5.	National Literacy Mission Authority	3.37	2.79	NA
6.	Directorate of Adult Education	62.84	48.93	NA
7.	Population Education in Adult Education**	9.06	5.11	NA
8.	National Institute of Adult Education	2.30	0.50	NA
9.	Support to Non-Governmental	48.72	NA	NA
10.	SAS	9.00	NA	NA
11.	MPFL	0.22	NA	NA
12.	RFLP	1.40	NA	NA
13.	Technology	0.00	NA	NA
14.	Total	521.20	1148.12	6,000

Source: National Literacy Mission, Govt. of India

Up-gradation of existing AECs as Model

In order to attract learners and to support active Gram Panchayats, concept of Model AECs has been introduced by up-gradation of existing AECs as Model AECs through provision of additional infrastructure such as Computers, PA system, LCD Projector etc. in such AECs. Since, Saakshar Bharat programme does not have provision for such additional infrastructure, National Literacy Mission

Authority have signed MOUs with Public Sector Enterprises such as Container Corporation of India(CONCOR), Power Finance Corporation(PFC) and Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) under which these PSEs have provided financial assistance to various State Literacy Mission Authorities (SLMAs) and State Resource Centres (SRCs) under their Corporate Social Responsibility(CSR) initiative for up-gradation of AECs as Model AECs. These PSEs have so far provided a total financial assistance of



Rs.2275 lakhs to SLMAs/SRCs for setting up of total number of 904 Model AECs. Out of these 458 Model AECs have reportedly been set up so far. The remaining Model AECs are in the process of being set up by SLMAs/SRCs who have been provided financial assistance for the same. They have been advised to accelerate this process.

Conclusion

In Post-Independent era a number of significant programme have been initiated to eradicate illiteracy among adults. In early years of Independence adult education was known as social education. During the first five year it was widely implemented. The Total Literacy Campaign's activist leanings, which galvanized participants in the adult literacy classes to mobilize against the evils of drunkenness, leading eventually ban on the manufacture and sale of liquor. Notwithstanding its promise, the Total Literacy Campaign, or TLC, was plagued by serious deficiencies. It struck a responsive chord in regions with a history of social reform movements, peasant organisations and working class struggle, but mobilisation was hindered by barriers of caste, class, gender, and feudalistic fetters in parts of the country; there were limits to how radical a government sponsored programme could be; bureaucratisation had taken firm root, with development issues eclipsed by the total literacy declaration; and while the TLC was civil-servant driven, the civil servant's training was not geared to inculcate the qualities that were needed to tap the potential for social mobilisation in a participatory mode. Thus, to eradicate the social and economic evils, cent per cent literacy is essential.

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