



INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY
School of Extension and Development Studies

MAE-001
UNDERSTANDING
ADULT EDUCATION





Block

1

DEVELOPMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION

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COURSE MAE-001 UNDERSTANDING ADULT EDUCATION

Block 1 Development of Adult Education

- Unit 1 Adult Education: The Basic Concept, Terms, Features and Objectives**
 - Unit 2 Indian Adult Education: A Historical Perspective**
 - Unit 3 Global, Regional and National Scenarios on Literacy**
 - Unit 4 Policy on Adult and Lifelong Learning: International and National Perspectives**
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COURSE MAE-001 UNDERSTANDING ADULT EDUCATION

Introduction to the Course

Having got ready to read this course, your mind must have already encountered many questions such as who is an adult?, what is adult education?, how is it different from school, college and university education?, how are adult educators different from the teachers in the above institutions?, what are the areas of operations of adult educators?, what is the scope of adult education?, what shall I be doing as adult educator after doing this programme? and so on. You may be having some ideas or perceptions about these, but not necessarily correct. This course will help you in broadening your perspective on adult education and help you in searching systematically the right answers to the above questions, amongst many others. Of course, from the title of the course you must have got an idea that it will enrich your understanding of adult education. It focusses on:

- the basic concept of adult education and other terms related to it,
- its philosophical, psychological and sociological foundations, and
- the development, transaction and evaluation of its curriculum.

Adult education is lifelong and life-wide process and encompasses the elements of human development, democracy, critical citizenship, social justice, cultural diversity, social inclusion, human rights, peace, gender equality, etc, and promotes social, economic, political, and cultural development and transformation, amongst others. The course is divided into the following three blocks.

Block 1 “Development of Adult Education” attempts to provide you a comprehensive picture of the concept of adult education, some specific terms and concepts along with those related to it, its relevance, characteristic features and objectives. The discussion on the components of adult education and the historical perspective of the programmes a present clear picture of the operationalisation of its different components in the field. It presents national, regional and international scenarios of literacy, the changing trends in literacy and its broader conception. Further, it highlights the international and national perspectives of the policy on adult and lifelong learning and divergent approaches that have emerged in practice.

Block 2 “Foundations of Adult Education” deals with the philosophical, psychological and sociological foundations of adult and lifelong learning. It presents the philosophical traditions and trends. The nature of educational phenomena presented in this Block are aimed at broadening your understanding of the educational problems and issues, and the application of theories of educational intervention and adult learning, for development of adult education. It discusses the concept, nature and scope of psychology; relevance of psychology to (adult) learning; theories and principles of learning; concept of motivation, its functions, types and techniques for promoting continuous learning among adults. The discussion on the sociological background of adult education focusses on the use of sociological theory and method in analysis of education with particular reference to current thought in sociology that have led to a better grasp of the

Block 3 "Curriculum Development, Transaction and Evaluation" presents an overview of different aspects of curriculum in adult education with emphasis on the concept, principles, need, process and approaches to curriculum development. It highlights the importance of community participation in developing community-specific, context-specific and learner-centered curriculum to accommodate in it the community needs, assets and power dynamics that operate at the community level. It discusses different methods and techniques of teaching and training in adult education along with the criteria, factors or considerations that determine the choice of their use or application in different contexts. This discussion and the overview of the basics of communication, conceptual framework, role of communication in adult education, communication systems and strategies, and the role of information and communication technologies in adult education and development together throw adequate light on transaction of curriculum in adult education. Further, it highlights the dimensions of curriculum planning for social action, purposes and functions of evaluation, and the concept and tools of participatory evaluation of curriculum in adult education.

BLOCK 1 DEVELOPMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION

Introduction to the Block

This Block deals with the concept of adult education, its historical, international and national perspectives with an emphasis on significant shifts in its policy discourse and operationalisation of its programmes. It presents national, regional and international scenarios of literacy, the changing trends in literacy and lifelong learning with divergent approaches to its practice. This Block consists of 4 units.

Unit 1 discusses the concepts of 'adult' and 'adult education'; some specific terms used in adult education and certain other terms related to it. It also discusses the need, nature, characteristic features and objectives of adult education. The basic understanding of all these will help you in your smooth and interesting academic journey through the succeeding units.

Unit 2 presents a historical perspective of Indian adult education and highlights four main concepts that can be discerned from its history, viz. basic literacy (1882-1947), civic literacy (1948-67), functional literacy (1968-77) and developmental literacy (1978-till date). It explains how these concepts were operationalised in a variety of schemes, programmes, projects and campaigns.

Unit 3 attempts to provide you an overview of the literacy scenario. It discusses the need for literacy, different forms of literacy, the theoretical debates and international initiatives on literacy that go beyond the traditional definitions of literacy. It enables you to relate your understanding of adult literacy to global, regional and national scenarios on literacy and to build your own perspective of it in achieving universal literacy. It promotes your critical appreciation of literacy, its complexity, interdisciplinary nature and close link with development.

Unit 4 highlights significant shifts in international and national policy discourse on literacy and adult education and promotes broader understanding of how literacy has emerged, over the years, encompassing 'conscientisation', multiple literacies, literacy practices and lifelong learning. It focusses on growing recognition of the social context in which literacy is acquired, developed and sustained not merely as a skill, but as socially and culturally determined approaches and practices that have emerged over the years. It explains how the lack of sustained and concerted effort has led to the marginalization of adult education programmes and continuing problem of adult illiteracy in India.

UNIT 1 ADULT EDUCATION: THE BASIC CONCEPT, TERMS, FEATURES AND OBJECTIVES

Structure

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- 1.1 Objectives
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Right now you are beginning your academic journey through your programme. You are in Unit-1 of Block-1 of Course-MAE-001 of the programme. When you had decided to choose this Programme (PGDAE) you must have had your own concept or meaning of “adult” and “adult education”. Your concept of ‘adult’ could be right or wrong or partially correct and you will so appreciate it after you understood these concepts clearly in this Unit.

To begin with, we all know that, as human beings, we go through four important stages in life - childhood, teenage, adulthood and old age. We further know for certain that the teenage stage is between thirteen and nineteen, while adulthood, in general, is the longest, most productive and significant stage falling in between teenage and old age. Thus, adults constitute a large chunk of most of the societies and perform diverse and dynamic roles in various spheres of their life. Historically, it is they who have contributed to the growth, transformation and transmission of civilisation over the ages. It is all the result of their (adult) education and hence adult education is as old as human civilisation itself. Therefore, in simple terms, the entire education received by, and spread over the adulthood of, any individual is nothing but adult education. We are all adults with different levels of maturity – biologically, socially, economically, politically, culturally, morally, and so on. As adults our place, role and contribution remain significant and dynamic in every sphere of life. Adult education, as an essential and integral part of overall education of an individual, is dynamic and begins with the onset of adulthood and is co-extensive with the adult life of an individual. Thus, its forms, relevance, meaning, nature, objectives, functions, approaches, curriculum, duration, coverage, etc keep on changing from time to time in a given society or country. The changing socio-cultural, geographic, economic, political, cultural, moral and other conditions determine its overall place and organisation in a society. It is also important for you to know that although adult education, as an academic subject and as a field of specialisation of the discipline of education, has emerged only recently it has now established itself as a discipline and a profession in its own capacity. You will realise all this by the time you complete your journey through this programme.

In this unit we will discuss in detail about adult, adult education, its features, goals and objectives, relevant terms used in adult education and other related matters.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, it is expected that you will be able to:

- Understand the concepts of ‘adult’ and ‘adult education’;
- Explain the meaning of different, but relevant terms used in adult education;
- Distinguish between and among different terms used in literacy and adult education;
- Describe the need, significance and characteristic features of adult education; and
- State the goals and objectives of adult education.

1.2 CONCEPT OF ADULT EDUCATION

You can understand the concept “adult education” better if you first understand the concept ‘adult’ very clearly. We will therefore focus first on “adult”. In simple terms, we can define “adult” as a person who has attained physical, mental, emotional and social maturity or legal age for marriage, or for franchise or voting right. But can we say for certain that every person who has attained physical maturity only, or legal age of adulthood can be considered to be mature adult of that society or country? Or can we say at what age a person will definitely become

an adult, in terms of maturity? The answer is 'No'. But at the same time, as mentioned above, we can be sure of one thing that we are all adults with different levels of maturity and belong to the most significant and productive age group – physically, socially, mentally, economically, politically, morally culturally, and so on. Nevertheless, we need to remember that maturity is an endless process and in general it increases with one's age, experience and knowledge.

In the context of adult education, the concept '**adult**' remained inadequately defined because of the multiplicity of criteria used in defining it. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1995) defines adult as: 1. (a) grown to full size or strength; (b) intellectually and emotionally mature; 2. Legally, old enough to vote, marry, etc. Various other definitions given by different adult educationists (Wiltshire, 1966; Cameron, 1969; Apps, 1979; Shingi, 1980; Knowles, 1980; Legge, 1982; Jarvis, 1990) have also taken into account different criteria, often two or more, like age (legal or otherwise), experience and/or maturity (physical/biological, social, psychological, etc), citizenship with full rights and duties, and so on. Also, the legal age of adulthood for franchise, marriage, etc of males and females varies from country to country. For instance, the legal age of adulthood in the United Kingdom is 18 years. In India, the legal age for franchise (voting right) is 18 years, while the legal age for marriage of males is 21 years and for females it is 18 years. All these definitions reveal that it is very difficult to define the concept 'adult', theoretically or draw practical boundaries, and thereby render it to remain 'ideal' rather than practicable. Notwithstanding the fact that no one definition defines 'adult' adequately or exhaustively, some have classified adulthood into stages and defined each stage separately (Erikson, 1963; Sheehy, 1976). This is mainly because of the fact that the transition from childhood to adulthood is gradual, not sudden, and the rate of transition varies throughout life from individual to individual and from environment to environment. Therefore, drawing clear demarcating lines between childhood – when it ends, and adulthood – when it starts and ends – by any one criterion or all criteria together, is a very difficult task. Thus, adulthood by itself is not definitive because of its continuous transition throughout life. In this context, we need to consider the question whether it is essential to have such distinction between child and adult as raised by Legge (1982, p.3). It is also important for us to recall some actions of a few children, wherein they reflect maturity of an adult and some actions of some adults which reflect immaturity of a child. You can thus see "child-man" or "man-child" in terms of their maturity. But, cybercoitus interruptus (May 9, 2007, see <http://ask.metafilter.com/>) draws one clear distinction between adults and juveniles - "I think real adults take responsibility for and clean up their own messes (emotional, domestic, culinary, environmental, whatever), unless physically or mentally incapacitated. Juveniles, whatever their physical ages, make someone else clean up after them".

Characteristics of an Adult: At this juncture, we need to have a clear understanding of the diverse and comprehensive traits or characteristics by which a person can be called an adult. An adult, therefore, is a person who:

- i) is of certain age (legal or otherwise);
- ii) is mature (physically, mentally, emotionally, intellectually and morally);
- iii) is sensible and has the ability to act rationally and responsibly by understanding his/her own rights and limitations and of others;

- iv) can exercise self-control or restrain oneself;
- v) can focus with partial or full personal sacrifice on public cause of great importance;
- vi) can make balanced choices in picking and choosing actions involving not only gains and pleasures, but also loss, danger and pains;
- vii) owns up responsibility for his/her own actions;
- viii) can get to be a kid, youth, adult or the old as and when required and continue to exist as adult;
- ix) identifies one's own strengths and weaknesses; and
- x) acts and reacts with kindness, compassion and reason and with long-term perspective/goal towards self-actualisation.

Reflection

With your understanding of the concept of “adult” and based on your observations of the members of your community, can you identify the persons who are adults by:

- a) physical maturity; b) mental maturity; c) legal age for marriage, and d) legal age for franchise.

Compare the characteristics of each of the above identified persons with the characteristics of an adult mentioned above and arrive at the conclusion as to who is/are really adult(s).

How to become an adult? Here comes the role of education – adult education. Remember that becoming an adult is not a one-time affair, and it is a life-long process as it comes mostly from age, observation and experience over the lifetime of an individual. This in a nutshell is the crux of adult education. You will now agree that adult education has always been there in every society and country; may be in different forms. Thus, adult education is not of recent origin, but has gained currency in recent times because of its growing need, significance, organised presence, acceptability and popularity. Every man and woman feels familiar with their own concept of adult education, but when asked to define it, a majority of them feel real difficulty. Don't you also feel so? Perhaps, yes. So what then is adult education.

Misconception about adult education: In the developing countries where illiteracy is a major problem, the meaning of the term ‘adult education’ is widely misconceived only as adult literacy i. e. something to do with imparting of only literacy to adults. Thus, it is not surprising that, in practice too, adult education is more often referred to as ‘adult literacy’ in developing countries. Literacy generally refers to reading, writing and arithmetic skills of a person with understanding, in the language (s)he normally speaks or uses. In fact, adult education is literacy plus many other things. It includes the development of functionality and awareness in relation to various different aspects of life. Another misconception is whether adult education comes under formal education system (school, college, university, etc) or under non-formal education system, that is outside the formal education system or under both. Surely, the scope of adult education is very wide and includes both the systems and more. Its activities range from leisure time spent in reading to attending classes as remedial learning, from learning literacy to achieving or acquiring a formal certificate, a diploma or a university degree;

from learning on the job to free-lance learning, etc. So, different people in different countries have called adult education by different names such as liberal education, basic education, remedial education, vocational education, avocational education, literacy education, continuing education, lifelong education, and so on. But, the term “adult education” has, in fact, become a generic or more common term to mean and include a wide range of things for adults. Nevertheless, adult education has currently come into wide use throughout the world; yet, the concept is among the most problematic ones in the field. Therefore, Sharan and Phyllis (1989, p.15) are right when they say “It is rare to come upon a single sentence that will do justice to the full range of this phenomenon of adult education, or that will satisfy the many different kinds of practitioners who call themselves adult educators.” This is so because all these practitioners feel that this need not be considered a problem at all.

Although different countries use different terms, ‘adult education’ has been recognised as an acceptable term for many. As mentioned above, the term ‘adult education’ has been used to refer to different things in different countries. For instance, it is used to refer to ‘liberal education for adults’ in the United Kingdom, whereas in the United States it has the wider connotation of ‘education of adults’, whether it be vocational or otherwise. In India the populace has widely (mis)conceived it as literacy education for adults (old people), because of the magnitude of illiteracy. The Government’s literacy drives are also concentrated more on eradication of illiteracy. ‘Government of India has also called it by different names at different times – community education, adult literacy, adult education, workers’ education, etc. As early as 1952 UNESCO had stated in its “International Directory of Adult Education” that, in essence, adult education is so closely related to the social, political, economic, geographic and cultural conditions of each country that no uniform or precise definition can be arrived at. As Aggarwal (1989, p.1) rightly points out, “adult education cannot be explained or understood in a vacuum. It has to be seen in the cultural context and in the nature of the activity.” Added to this, the concept is expressed through different terms — ‘adult education’ ‘education of adults’ and ‘education for adults’. One may wonder, whether they mean one and the same or are they different!

1.2.1 Adult Education

‘Adult education’ has been variously defined by different people and institutions. It is more useful for us to have a look at a few definitions quoted and analysed by Lakshmi Reddy (2000, pp.4-8) from different view points. According to him, some have defined it as education that starts at a particular stage or level of education. According to Lindeman (1961) adult education, more accurately defined, begins where vocational education leaves off. Adult education offers some, who were not privileged, a last chance to learn. Some feel a need for training in basic skills of learning so they enroll for learning, reading, writing and arithmetic. If we examine this definition we will find the following essential elements that characterise it.

- i) It is post-vocational education.
- ii) It is education for the deprived classes.
- iii) It is training in basic skills of learning i. e. literacy.

Some others have defined adult education by looking at it as a process. The Exeter Conference 1969 defines it as the process whereby persons who no longer (or did not) attend school on a regular and full-time basis (unless full-time programmes are especially designed for adults) undertake sequential and organised activities within a conscious intention of bringing about changes in information, knowledge, understanding or skills, appreciation and attitudes, or for the purpose of identifying and solving personal or community problems (Liveright and Haygood, 1969, p.8). In this definition, we can observe that there are two elements that characterise it, viz.

- i) Part-time or full-time process.
- ii) Sequential and organised activities.

On the contrary there are other definitions which do not link adult education with any level and treat it as an activity or a programme or a process that encompasses so many things. According to Paulo Freire (1970) adult education "is a cultural action for freedom." It means, it is a liberating force for adults. Freedman (1972, quoted in Jarvis, 1990) considers adult education as a process which is part of cultural development, primarily the establishment of a means of communication between the cultural systems of transmitters (inventors, research workers, creative minds) and the cultural system of the receivers, i. e. groups for whom adult education is intended. We will find that there are two important elements in this definition.

- i) A process which is part of cultural development.
- ii) Communication between transmitters and receivers.

According to Faure et al (1972) the normal culmination of the education process is adult education. There is one characteristic element in this definition i. e. terminal education for adults. But, in view of the Education Committee of the OECD (1973) "adult education refers to any learning activity or programme deliberately designed for adults. Its ambit is taken as spanning non-vocational, vocational, general, non-formal, and community education and it is not restricted to any particular level." As we can see this definition includes three essential elements:

- i) All activities and programmes for adults.
- ii) General, non-formal, vocational and non-vocational education.
- iii) Not-restricted to any particular level.

The General Conference of UNESCO (UNESCO, 1976) comprehensively defines adult education as the "entire body of organised educational processes, whatever content, level and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their attitudes or behaviour in the two-fold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development". We can very clearly notice the following essential elements in this definition:

- i) It includes all organised educational processes;
- ii) It encompasses all content, levels and methods;

- iii) It includes formal or non-formal education for adults;
- iv) It prolongs or replaces initial education in schools, colleges and universities;
- v) It develops abilities, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours; and
- vi) It develops adults in two-fold manner – full personal development and participation in development process.

Adult education is also regarded as the provision of largely, non-vocational education for people who have left school and are not formally registered for a college and university course leading to certification. Day-time or evening tuition may be provided by an Extra-Mural or Extension Department or a college or a university or by other institutions such as trade unions or the Workers Educational Association. It may take place in college or secondary school premises and may cover wide range of cultural, recreational, community and sporting activities. Some writers have defined adult education by viewing it as a self or others-directed efforts aimed at finding solutions to certain problems. Self-directed in the sense that it is a voluntary, serious and frequently organised effort of adult individuals and groups to find, through educational means, information, attitudes, understanding and skills helpful in diagnosing and solving their vocational, personal, familial and civic problems. According to Sharma (1984, pp.15-16) adult education takes into itself both self-education whereby a learner is responsible for management of his/her learning activities, and others-directed education whereby a teacher, leader, media, or some other educational agent is primarily responsible for the management of learning. While recognising this enlarged application of the term 'adult education', most writers limit their investigation to those activities of men and women, who are guided and shaped for a definite period of time by the desire to learn. This definition is characterised by three essential elements.

- i) Self-directed or others-directed.
- ii) Guided by desire to learn and shaped to teach.
- iii) Problem-solving.

Kundu (1986, p.16) states that "adult education is a development oriented education which can be planned and designed by others as well as the learners themselves. The adult learner, to a great extent can assert in regard to content, methodology, place and time of learning." The three characteristic elements that we can notice in this definition are:

- i) Organised by adults themselves or by others.
- ii) Learner-centred.
- iii) Development-oriented.

In Eire the 'Murphy Committee' defined adult education as the provision and utilisation of facilities whereby those who are no longer participants in the full-time school system may learn whatever they need to learn at any period of their lives. Adult education, thus, is the organised provision of learning situations to mature men and women with the purpose of enabling them to enlarge and to interpret their own living experience for solving their own and the community problems (de Castell, et al. 1989). In this definition one can observe two approaches.

- i) Cafeteria education, a choice based provision and utilisation of learning situations.
- ii) Learning throughout life of mature people for solving their own and community problems.

Thus, some of these definitions of adult education restrict it to mere provision of educational facilities out of which the learners pick and choose according to their needs, interests, etc making for a *cafeteria approach* to education. If we go on to quote and analyse, we have many definitions offered by other adult educationists. Hence, for the present we accept the widely accepted definition offered by UNESCO which was the result of some collective international thinking of the adult educationists. What then is education of adults?

1.2.2 Education of Adults

Like many academics, you too might have got a doubt as to whether there is any difference between adult education and education of adults. It is, of course, interesting too to know whether there does exist any difference in the usage of these two terms. Can these be used interchangeably or are they different? Perhaps, it is not even out of context to look at different views expressed in this regard. According to Jarvis (1990a, pp.29-32) the term 'education of adults' tends to be used to refer to all 'education' of 'adults'. In other words, its meaning relates to the conceptual understanding of both 'education' and 'adult'. The term 'adult education' carries specific connotations in the United Kingdom, which imply that it is liberal education, and carries a stereotype of being middle-class, leisure time pursuit. It must be recognised that the term 'adult education' has a social definition as being a form of liberal education undertaken by those people who are regarded as adults. Therefore, it is more a social rather than a conceptual definition, and that is why it is important to distinguish between 'adult education' and the 'education of adults'. In this view 'education of adults' is wider than 'adult education'. However, the definition of 'adult' still complicates this discussion. Nevertheless, he ends up saying that what is called 'education of adults' in the United Kingdom is synonymous to 'adult education' in the United States. What then is education for adults?

1.2.3 Education for Adults

According to Deleon (1970) adult education includes all kinds of education for adults – in schools and out of school, formal and informal, full-time and part-time, for persons who no longer attend schools as well as for those who never attended a school, and so on. We can see through this definition that it is more precise, comprehensive and all embracing. Ansari (1996, p.56) views adult education as education for adults outside the formal system not leading to qualification; education for adults outside the formal system leading to qualification; and deliberate provision of education for adults within the formal system. According to Lakshmi Reddy (2000, pp.7-8) "adult education is part-time or full-time education for men and women of all ages either organised by themselves or provided by schools, learning centres, or other agencies which enable them to improve their general or professional knowledge, skills and abilities by either continuing their education or resuming their initial or incomplete education of previous years. Adult education is, thus, usually more flexible in its structure than traditional, mandatory education. Adult education may offer credits towards higher education degrees or do not offer any degrees or credits. Its

clientele include all those adults who have never been to school, who have dropped out of school or who are continuing their education in formal, non-formal or vocational educational institutions of different kinds or who are seeking employment or who are engaged in different occupations or professions”.

As Lakshmi Reddy, (2000, pp.28-29) further puts it “Though UNESCO’s (1976) definition of adult education is widely accepted, the concept ‘adult education’, like the concept ‘adult’ has yet to have a universally accepted definition. The different definitions of adult education (Lindeman, 1961; Liveright and Haygood, 1969; Deleon, 1970; Nyerere, 1971; OECD, 1971; UNESCO, 1970a) include adults who are: i) illiterates and literates, irrespective of their occupation, socio-economic background, etc, and ii) undertaking educational activities in non-vocational, vocational, general, formal, non-formal and/or informal education system on full-time or part-time basis organised by adults for themselves or by others for adults. These definitions embrace education leading or not leading to degrees, certificates, etc, covering a wide range of subjects and activities. Most of these definitions are concerned with promotion of knowledge, skills, attitudes, capacities, etc. for the development and/or welfare of individuals, society and/or nation. However, there is no unanimity on definition of adult education either from the view point of class of its clientele/target groups, nature, aims, objectives, form, type, subjects, scope, stages or levels.”

Having looked at different views on definitions of ‘adult education’ and ‘education of adults’, we understand that though they are generic terms, they are used in different countries to include a wide variety of activities, experiences, efforts, approaches, processes and programmes for adults, which cover different spheres of lives of different groups or cultural systems. They, therefore, reflect the differences in the historical, political, social and cultural conditions of different countries.

But, we need to be very clear that whichever of these three terms — ‘adult education’, ‘education of adults’ and ‘education for adults’ — is used by any one, in general it includes all kinds and forms of education for adults i. e. for their growth, development, welfare and transformation. So, we should not have any confusion about these terms or about the distinction between and among these terms as they are used interchangeably by different people in different countries, either inadvertently or intentionally to mean one and the same. In this course material also hereafter use of any one of these three terms wherever used, means one and the same, unless it is specifically mentioned otherwise.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Space given below the question is for writing your answer.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit under “Answers to Check Your Progress”.

- 1) Define adult education. Explain the difference, if any, between the terms ‘adult education’, ‘education of adults’ and ‘education for adults’.

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1.3 RELEVANT TERMS EXPLAINED

In this section we will focus our discussion on some terms and concepts related to adult education. This would help you in dispelling misunderstanding or any confusion you have about them. However, our discussion does not go into the details of the origin and growth of these terms and concepts, as it is mainly meant to familiarise you with these terms and concepts and the difference, if any, between them.

1.3.1 Fundamental Education

It is the responsibility of the parents, society and/or the State to see that all human beings in a modern society acquire or achieve a certain minimum level of education. This is generally called elementary education and offered to the individuals during their childhood starting with their formal schooling. In reality, due to some reason or the other, many individuals either get deprived of the opportunity to have access to formal school or after access to it they may fail to acquire the desired level of elementary education. In such a case, it is more the State's responsibility to provide them with remedial opportunities/measures in their later years or adult life to promote in them this elementary education as remedial education. Such education is called, by UNESCO, fundamental education. Fundamental education is preparation of children or adults who have not had an opportunity for traditional formal schooling, for effective participation in community life through instructions in basic facts and skills as of literacy, agriculture, dwelling, health and hygiene and citizenship and so on.

1.3.2 Formal, Non-Formal and Informal Education

Hartnett (1972, p.14) and Coombs et al (1973, p.10) define *formal education* as the hierarchically structured, chronologically graded 'education system' running from primary school through the university and including, in addition to general academic studies, a variety of specialised programmes and institutions for full-time professional education and training.

Non-formal education, as the name itself indicates, is education without formalities or with relaxed formalities. It refers to education which reduces or relaxes formalities and rigidities with the purpose of avoiding hindrances in

making education more accessible to different kinds and types of learners. In other words, non-formal education, as implied by the term, is supposed to be available outside the formal or conventional system with enhanced access to many learners. While Hartnett (op. cit) calls it non-traditional education and defines it as a “set of learning experiences free of time and space limitations”, Coombs et al (op. cit) call it non-formal education and define it as “any organised educational activity outside the established formal system – whether operating separately or as an important feature of some broader activity – that is intended to serve identifiable learning clientele and learning objectives”. To clarify this definition further, the same authors distinguished non-formal education from informal education. They defined *informal education* as “the truly lifelong process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experience and the educative influences and resources in his or her environment – from family and neighbours from work and play, from the market place, the library, and the mass media.” However, Radcliffe and Colletta (1989, p.60) state that “in practice no hard lines of demarcation exist between formal, non-formal and informal education: while many activities may be perceived as falling exclusively into one category alone, many share aspects of two or all of them.”

Non-formal education, like formal education, can also be organised at any level, ranging from primary education in schools to higher education in Universities or institutions of higher learning. It can be offered by existing formal institutions by relaxing the formalities or by establishing specialised structures or institutions outside these institutions. You are, perhaps, aware of Institutes of Correspondence Courses, Directorates of Distance Education in conventional Universities, and Open School, State Open Universities, State Resource Centres for Adult Education and so on outside the formal system. All these are examples (and part) of non-formal education system in India. Of course the Open University is the more current term coined to refer to an institution providing higher education in more open, flexible or non-formal manner through the distance mode.

1.3.3 De-schooling

Population growth on one hand and lack of commensurate expansion of school system with its rigidities on the other, amongst many other things, have deprived many people of their access to education. It is in this context some educational thinkers have focused their thinking on taking education out of the physical environs of the school. Ivan Illich (1971 – Deschooling Society) was the main exponent of such school of thought called ‘de-schooling’. De-schooling is the philosophy that underlines non-formal or open education. In simple terms it means bringing education out of the confines of school. In other words, it espouses free education shorn of all rigidities of formal system such as one point entry or single point admission, regular attendance, definite and common syllabus, rigid timings/periods of teaching and learning, examinations and so on. It prescribes relevant, flexible, systematic and diversified education for the learners with diverse needs and interests.

You may have a doubt here. What is the difference between non-formal education, open education and de-schooling? In fact, these terms are synonymous and espouse the same philosophy. Open learning/education emphasises openness of leaning/educational opportunities, non-formal education emphasises freeing of education from all the formalities/rigidities; while ‘de-schooling’ emphasises on

bringing education outside the physical environs of the schools, which in broad sense includes all the educational institutions.

1.3.4 Lifelong Education

In its broadest sense lifelong education includes all processes by which an individual acquires formal, non-formal and informal education continually or continuously throughout adulthood, for necessary career development and valuable personal enrichment. It is far from being limited to the period of attendance at a school for education and learning. It extends throughout life, includes all skills and branches of knowledge, uses all possible means and gives the opportunity to all people for full development of their personality.

Life-long education is the provision and utilisation of educational experiences throughout a person's life. It implies learning throughout life and, therefore, denotes an overall scheme aimed both at restructuring the existing education system and at developing the entire educational potential inside and outside the education system. Its rationale is in part the same as that for adult education, except that it intrinsically involves a radical reform of organisation, form and content of all other phases of education, and also implies a greater recognition of the educational functions of non-educational agencies.

The UNESCO report 'Learning to Be' (Faure et al, 1972) is the leading policy document on lifelong education. It contains a coherent philosophy developed about man, education and society to which the idea of lifelong learning was related. It adopts an optimistic view of education to change society. Eagerness to learn, 'libido sciendi' is deeply rooted in human nature and once external obstacles are removed it will provide the necessary motivation for lifelong learning. The society of the future will be a 'learning society' the culture of future society will be 'scientific humanism'. Every individual must be in a position to keep learning throughout life. The idea of life-long education is the key-stone of the learning society. Life-long education will be the master concept for educational policies in the years to come for both developed and developing countries. Life-long education in the fullest sense of the term means that business, industrial and agricultural firms will have extensive educational functions.

There appear to be two approaches to lifelong education in contemporary literature. One that stretches 'initial education' to what is termed 'further education' and the other that stretches the concept even forward throughout life using the concept of 'continuing education'. It thus stretches from initial education to further education to continuing education.

It is a process that begins in childhood and continues throughout life. It includes formal, informal and non-formal education received by the individual. The educational and learning processes in which children, young people and adults of all ages are involved in the course of their lives, in whatever form, should be considered as a whole constituting into lifelong education (UNESCO, 1976). Lifelong education is the concept that education is not a once-for-all experience confined to the initial cycle of full-time education commenced in childhood, but a process that must continue throughout life. Life itself is a continuous learning process, but each person also needs specific opportunities for further and new education, both vocational and general, throughout life. In order that an individual may adapt to change in his own circumstances (marriage, parenthood, professional

situation, old age, etc.), may achieve his fullest potential for individual development and may keep abreast of technical and social change. Lifelong education comprehends both individual's intentional and incidental learning experiences.

Dave (1976, p.34) regards lifelong education as 'a process of accomplishing personal, social and professional development throughout the life span of individuals in order to enhance the quality of life of both individuals and their collectives. It includes formal, non-formal and informal patterns of learning throughout the life cycle of an individual for the conscious and continuous enhancement of the quality of life of his own and that of his society.' According to Jarvis (1990, p.35) lifelong education is any planned series of incidents having a humanistic bases directed towards the participants' learning and understanding that may occur at any stage in the life span. Reviewing certain approaches and underlying philosophies he expresses that lifelong education is a concept and an idea which remains rather meaningless unless it is actually implemented.

Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century (Delors, 1996) reiterates the role of education in personal and social development, particularly in the context of globalisation. It proposes learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be as the four pillars, the foundations, of education which can tap all the hidden talents of every person in any society. It emphasises that such lifelong learning will be one of the keys to meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century.

What then is *Education Permanente*? It is, in fact, a French term for 'lifelong education'. French law specifies that higher education must be open to former students as well as mature students who have not previously had the opportunity of higher education, even if they do not have necessary entrance qualifications i.e. through a system of lifelong education. It implies that the education system needs to be remade to meet people's lifelong but discontinuous needs, which might recur in personal, social, academic or vocational life. In this sense lifelong education means the same as recurrent education? Let us look at the concept of recurrent education.

1.3.5 Recurrent Education

Recurrent education and its affiliated concepts have been the most debated educational issues. They have been presented as the panacea of all the ills of ailing educational systems and of old ideas.

Recurrent education has been called 'the first new idea in education in this century' (Houghton, 1974). Recurrent education, organised in Europe, is understood primarily as the development of a national policy that would provide citizens with opportunities to alternative periods of work with periods of formal training throughout their lives. In general the learning experiences are to be related to goals. But according to Kallen (1979, p.45) the only new thing about recurrent education is its recurrence. The concept of 'recurrent education' has been launched as an alternative strategy in 1968, first by Olof Palme, at that time Swedish Minister of Education, in his address to the conference of European Ministers of Education held at Versailles, and later in many Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reports.

There is some argument about the definition of the term 'recurrent education' which is perhaps summarised by the following rather tautologous suggestions that recurrent education is 'the distribution of education over the lifespan of the individual in a recurring way' (OECD, 1973, p.7). This means lifelong education is nothing but recurrent education over the life span, interspersed with work and/or leisure. However, this is a little broader than the earlier definition proposed by OECD that recurrent education 'is formal and preferably full-time education for adults who want to resume their education, interrupted earlier for a variety of reasons' (Jarvis, 1990, p.40). Does it mean second chance formal education to those deprived of education? According to Kallen (1990, pp.45-6) there are two major risks that have to be avoided in writing on definitions and distinctions' in the field. The first relates to the temptation to see distinctions where there are none or where they are irrelevant to educational policy and practice. Much of the literature about the issues ignores the distinctions between recurrent, permanent and lifelong education and even treats the terms as interchangeable. The second risk that must be avoided is that of reconstructing history.

One of the most significant features of recurrent education is that the individual is regarded as having a right to a specified amount of formal education during his life-time, and that this need not all be completed during the formative years, within the period of initial education. It is also regarded as a radical, moral strategy for lifelong education. Unlike continuing education which appears to occur in piece-meal manner in response to expressed or perceived needs, etc, recurrent educationists regard their approach to be a comprehensive alternative strategy for what are at present three unrelated sectors: a) conventional post-literacy educational system, b) on the job training of all kinds, and c) adult education (OECD, 1973, p.25 quoted in Jarvis, 1990, p.41).

Recurrent education is the organisation of lifelong education into periods of systematic study alternating with extended periods of other activity, e.g. work or leisure. Policy instruments of recurrent education fall into two categories: educational and non-educational. The educational strategies are to some extent elaborated. It is stressed that 'the introduction of recurrent education ... must be part of a wider policy for educational change in which all types and levels are carefully coordinated. Recurrent education will necessitate reforms in curricula and structure, both at the compulsory and post-compulsory levels. It also implies bringing upper secondary and post-secondary education together into one flexible and integrated system. The non-educational measures include financing policies, educational leave and measures on the labour market and inside industry, as well as impact on transport, housing, medical care and culture (Kallen, 1979, pp.49-52).

According to (Jarvis, 1990, p.35-44) recurrent education has two major strands of philosophy: a more radical one that regards it as a strategy for the reform of the whole educational system and the other, perhaps also a conservative stand, is less ambitious in its claims preferring rather to regard it as a reformist approach to implementing lifelong education. There is, therefore, a marked difference in the philosophy of the two stands and yet they both recognise that while education may not be co-terminus with initial education, it should be lifelong, a right that all people should receive and that sufficient provision should be made for them to do so. He raises three major questions: To what extent is continuing education conceptually different from lifelong education? Is continuing education actually

synonymous with further education? What is the relationship between continuing and recurrent education?

Here, we feel it necessary to understand the concepts 'further education' and 'continuing education', at least to see through the substance in the above questions raised above by Jarvis.

1.3.6 Further Education

Indian Education Commission (1964-66) observes that education does not end with schooling but it is a long process. The adult today is in need of an understanding of the rapidly changing world and the growing complexion of society. Even those who have the most sophisticated education must continue to learn or else, the alternative is, face obsolescence.

In the United Kingdom further education is a general term used to describe full-time or part-time education for those who have completed their secondary education, higher education (i.e. academic or professional education for students over 18 with university entrance or equivalent qualifications) and adult education. Traditionally this refers to the 16-19 years old 'young adult' but now it is much broader. 'Liberal adult education' is often a sector of further education and many 'colleges of further education' have departments of adult education. Additionally, a great deal of 'continuing education' with 'vocational' education is provided by these colleges. But, in the Federal Republic of Germany further education covers 'adult education', 'continuing education' and 'vocational retraining', and is defined as all forms of continuation or resumption of studies after completion of the first educational phase of varying duration and, as a rule after, taking full-time employment. It is for adults of all age groups and educational qualifications, and may be 'vocational' or 'general' (Jarvis, 1990a). Further education is, thus, offered primarily for adults of all ages at post-secondary levels; it includes extensive programmes designed to keep such professionals as attorneys, physicians and engineers up-to-date in their fields. It also includes many varieties of degree programmes designed especially for adults, career counselling and counselling for career change services, and programmes of non-credit courses. Thus, further education is treated as education for the professionals and for those seeking counselling for careers.

Let us now see how further education is different from continuing education.

1.3.7 Continuing Education

We know that knowledge is not stagnant and constant, it is ever growing, expanding, exploding and multiplying. All individuals whether literate or illiterate, student or teacher, employer, employee or unemployee require endless education throughout life in order to keep abreast of new knowledge for their survival, growth and development. At the present rate of growth in knowledge, it is calculated that knowledge doubles every five years. This necessitates constant learning on the part of an individual to keep himself up-to-date in his field or the developments in general.

Venables (1976, p.19) defines continuing education as inclusive of all learning opportunities which can be taken up after full-time, compulsory schooling has ceased. They can be full-time or part-time and will include both vocational and non-vocational study. According to Legge, (1982, p.8), "Continuing education

seems to have reference to some kind of retraining when needed, for example, in a new job. It certainly presupposes that some education has gone before, presumably initial education, which has first to be completed.” According to these definitions it is clear that continuing education starts after certain level of schooling while lifelong education is broader as it subsumes continuing education.

Continuing education includes those learning opportunities that are taken up after full-time schooling has ended, or those learning opportunities that are taken up after the completion of initial education. It is, in fact, an all-embracing term and it has assumed currency in the 1980s, although ‘continuing professional education’ is also employed in the case of post-basic vocational education’. The German Education Council define it as ‘the continuation or resumption of organised learning after the completion of an initial educational phase of varying length’ (Jarvis, 1990a).

Continuing education is education offered to or undertaken by persons who have completed the cycle of full-time education in childhood. It is a synonym of adult education. It is a term used in the United States to denote the entire range of elementary, secondary and post-secondary educational opportunities offered by public and private agencies, whereby participants of any age engage in academic, vocational, leisure time and personal development activities (DAE, 1992, p.13).

Mandatory Continuing Education is the practice by which members of a profession are compelled to attend ‘continuing professional education’ in order to retain the license to practice. Usually the profession stipulates the extent of their obligation, e.g. at least one ‘refresher course’ every five years. In America, a large number of professions are introducing mandatory continuing education, and in some states it is required to register to practice in that state. *Open Continuing Education* is the term used in the Federal Republic of Germany to mean the continuation or resumption of *organised* learning after the completion of any kind of primary or secondary education. This definition is very close to that of ‘continuing education’ in the United Kingdom although in practice in Germany this term appears to be closer to ‘initial adult education’.

In India and in the United Kingdom Departments or Centres of Adult and Continuing Education exist in different Universities. What then does the term ‘Adult and Continuing Education’ denote? Is it different from adult education and continuing education? In fact, it is a fusion of the two terms ‘adult education’ and ‘continuing education’. It is an attempt to end the historic division between ‘adult liberal education’ and ‘vocational education’ in the United Kingdom, and to illustrate that both are about the ‘education of adults’. Conceptually this is valid, but it was seen by some as a sign that ‘liberal adult education’ had little future. (Jarvis, 1990a).

Is there any difference between life-long education, further education and continuing education? According to Jarvis (1990, pp.36-7) lifelong education makes no distinction between initial and post-initial education where as continuing education refers only to the later part of life-long education and is, only one branch of education. Continuing education, however, is not the same as further education for a number of reasons: further education is post-compulsory but not necessarily post-initial; further education tends to imply a specific level of study whereas continuing education does not; further education is usually pre-vocational, vocational or academic while conceptually continuing education need not be directed towards any course assessment or award.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Space given below the question is for writing your answer.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit under
“Answers to Check Your Progress”

2 i) Explain the difference, if any, between ‘De-schooling’, ‘Non-formal
Education’ and ‘Open Education’.

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ii) Explain ‘Lifelong Education’ and ‘Recurrent Education’.

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While technological advancements have come to the aid of policy makers and promoters of education for all, the adults with ability to study on their own or independently are the most benefited ones. There are now different modes of education that have interface with technology. Let us discuss a few such current concepts of adult education, which are the results of technological interface.

1.3.8 Correspondence Education

Correspondence education can be said to be one of the earliest and institutionalised means of providing distance education. Learning materials prepared by a few trained subject experts are supplied to the learners by post for reading, alongside giving them some reading and writing assignments. To develop in them the feel of formal school/classroom atmosphere, contact classes/programmes are conducted at some convenient places where the learners and the instructors come together for face-to-face personal interaction. At the end of the course, examinations are conducted and certificates, degrees, or diplomas are awarded to successful candidates.

Correspondence education, a form of education organised through the written medium, began in Britain as early as 1840. Pitman started teaching shorthand through correspondence in England towards the end of the nineteenth century. In America there were attempts to introduce it in 1873 but it really began with Chautauqua in 1879 (Jarvis, 1990a).

Correspondence education consists of “batches of study materials sent by post to the student who then completes the required reading and exercises, and returns the latter to the college for assessment by an appointed personal tutor. The exercises are marked and the student receives comments, advice and general guidance” (Legge, 1982, p.86). From the above definition, the following essential elements can be observed.

- i) Supply of study materials along with writing exercises/assignments by post to students.
- ii) Returning of written exercises/assignments by the students.
- iii) Assessment of and feedback on exercises/assignments by the tutor.

We can thus find in this definition that there is an organised educational instruction and interaction made possible through printed and/or written material sent by post.

Correspondence education is education conducted through postal services with or without face-to-face contact between teacher and learners. Teaching is done by written or tape-recorded material sent to the learner, whose progress is monitored through written or taped exercises sent to the teacher, who corrects them and returns them to the learner with criticism and advice. It is also called correspondence study (Titmus, 1989). This definition is slightly more advanced in the sense that it brings in electronic media within the purview of correspondence education.

From the above definitions it is very clear that correspondence education is a means of education for those who are literates and with certain level of basic skills of self-reading and writing as well as with some kind of mastery over the written language, and also with some educational qualifications already possessed by them. Usually these learners are relatively more mature and are in a position to learn on their own through self-study or self-understanding of the printed materials and/or the electronic materials supplied to them. It is, thus, education mainly for adults or others who are literate with ability for self-study. To be brief and precise, it is an education offered for literates with certain educational qualifications through correspondence mode of teaching and learning. There may or may not be provision for face-to-face contact between the teacher and the learner.

1.3.9 Distance Education

In simple terms, the system of education in which education is imparted from a place to a distant learner is called distance education. The institutionalised education offered by or received from the correspondence/distance education institutions and open universities falls under ‘distance education’. Now, let us look at some of the definitions of distance education for clarity and better understanding about it, and also of the subtle differences, if any, between correspondence education and distance education.

Different definitions of distance education have been offered by different distance educationists. Distance education has been variously described as correspondence education, open education, open learning, etc. According to Dohmen (1967, p.9 quoted in Keegan, 1986, p.39) distance education is a systematically organised form of self-study in which student counselling, presentation of learning materials and securing and supervision of students' success is carried out by a team of teachers, each of whom has specific responsibilities.

Moore (1972, quoted in Tight, 1990, p.156) defines distance teaching as "the family of instructional methods in which the teaching behaviours are executed apart from the learning behaviours, including those which in a contiguous situation would be performed in the learners' presence, so that communication between the teacher and the learner must be facilitated by print, electronic, mechanical or other devices". According to him transactional distance is a function of two variables called 'dialogue' – which describes the extent to which the learner and educator are able to respond to each other, and 'structure' – which measures an educational programme's responsiveness to learners' individual needs. Combining dialogue and structure he developed four types of distance teaching programmes: i) programmes with no dialogue and no structure (-D -S); ii) programmes with no dialogue but with structure (-D +S), iii) programmes with dialogue and structure (+D +S) and, iv) programmes with dialogue and no structure (+D -S). +D and +S represent dialogue and structure respectively and -D and -S represent no dialogue and no structure.

But, according to Boyd, et al (1980) distance between the teacher and learner is not merely geographical and educational but psychological as well. It is a 'transactional distance' in the relationship of the two partners in the educational enterprise. Borah (1990, pp.vii-viii) opines that distance is not to be seen as a poor relation or distant cousin of the formal system. It is a system of non-formal education in its own right. It has its own philosophy, its own goals and its own methodology. If the formal system has served the society fruitfully, so does the system of distance education hope to do so. It does not compete with the formal system, but supplements it. It caters to those sections of society which, either being located in far-flung remote areas or because of economic compulsions, cannot take advantage of the formal system. It also provides another opportunity to those members of the community who have had to discontinue their education at one point or the other because of any reason whatsoever. It provides the support services, guidance and counselling, and libraries through study centres. This definition is, perhaps, more general in nature and its approach is based on philosophical point of view.

According to Peters (1973, p.206 quoted in Keegan, 1986, p.41) distance teaching/education is a method of imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes which is rationalised by the application of division of labour and organisational principles as well as by the extensive use of technological media, especially for the purpose of reproducing high quality teaching materials which makes it possible to instruct great numbers of students at the same time wherever they live. It is an industrialised form of teaching and learning. In this context, you can compare this definition with IGNOU as an educational industry so that you can better understand and appreciate this definition. You can engage your fellow student as well in this discussion, whenever you find a chance to meet them.

Erdos, (1975) defines distance education as a 'method of teaching in which the teacher bears the responsibility of imparting knowledge and skills to a student, who does not receive instructions orally, but who studies in a place and at a distance determined by his individual circumstances. According to Homberg (1977) distance education include various forms of study at all levels which are not under the continuous, immediate, supervision of tutors present with their students in lecture rooms or on the premises. Nevertheless, the distance education method benefits from the planning, guidance and tuition of a tutorial organisation.

Distance education is a means of providing learning experiences for students through the use of self-instructional materials and access to educational resources, the use of which is largely determined by the student and which allow the student for the most part, to choose the time, place and circumstances of learning (Gough, 1981, p.10).

Keegan (1986, p.49) describes distance education as a form of education characterised by:

- the quasi-permanent separation of teacher and learner throughout the length of the learning process; this distinguishes it from conventional face-to-face education;
- the influence of an educational organisation both in the planning and preparation of learning materials and in the provision of student support services; this distinguishes it from private study and teach-yourself programmes;
- the use of technological media; print, audio, video or computer to unite teacher and learner and carry the content of the course;
- the provision of two-way communication so that the student may benefit from or even initiate dialogue; this distinguishes it from other uses of technology in education; and
- the quasi-permanent absence of the learning group throughout the length of the learning process so that people are usually taught as individuals and not in groups, with the possibility of occasional meetings for both didactic and socialisation purposes.

Though we may feel difficulty to call it a definition, his (Keegan's) above description of distance education is very comprehensive and includes all the essential elements that characterise distance education. He further points out that, it is important to be able to say whether distance education is to be regarded the same as or different from University without walls, extra-mural studies, experiential learning, off-campus education, open learning, extended campus, etc.

The term 'distance education' has now become a generic term for forms of education in which the teachers and students are separated by geographical distance and communication is through correspondence or other forms of technology, e.g. satellite, computer, electronic mail, etc. The distance and open education interfaced with interactive technology is a major advance in the provision of part-time higher education for adults. It provides open access to higher education and has no formal entry requirements. It aims at utilising multi-media resources for enhancing access to education.

The latest among the distance teaching institutions of higher education are the open universities. You being a student of IGNOU, a national open university in India, it is of some interest to you in this context to know that the first University to engage in distance teaching was the University of Queensland in Australia, which began its distance education programmes in 1911. In the 1950s the University of New England in Armidale, Australia had included within its charter a 'distance education' remit. This later has become the model upon which some other universities have developed. Thus, the developments in distance education led to the establishment of a more evolved or advanced institution for adult education called Open University. There is a real sense in which the Open University in the United Kingdom acted as a catalyst in the formation of these institutions, with many of them being founded in the 1970s and 1980s. Throughout the world there has been a remarkable development of these universities, all offering various degree programmes.

Nevertheless, what we can notice is that these Open Universities are in turn establishing separate distance education units and offering specialised programmes through distance education. You may be further aware that there are Directorates/Schools of Distance Education established even in the conventional universities. It would be meaningful and contextual for you to understand the concept of open education/learning and distinguish it from distance education.

1.3.10 Open Learning/Education

Open learning is the title given to more flexible methods of study, and teaching in which there is openness in access, content, delivery system and assessment. There are colleges or provider-based systems in which learners attend centres; local-based systems with 'flexi-study' and support but the learning is undertaken in the learners' homes; and 'distance learning systems' (Jarvis, 1990a). From this we understand that open learning/education underlines a philosophy which provides for open education or open teaching and learning which can be offered either through distance learning system or the contiguous system by introducing an element of openness or flexibility in it. The learning/teaching can be either at the provider (individual or institution) of learning opportunities, or at home or the place where the learner is. In the case of the provider-based system, it refers to the formal or conventional institutions and in the latter case it refers to the distance methods and modes. According to Borah (1990, p.vii) open education is characterised by relaxed or no rigid entry qualifications, learning according to one's own pace and convenience, flexibility in the choice of courses, and use of modern and appropriate educational and communicative technology. It means open learning/education can be offered either through distance learning systems or the contiguous system by introducing an element of openness or flexibility.

You may ask an important question here - whether open education is part of distance education or vice versa? Or, are there differences between the two? Escotet (1983, p.144) distinguishes open education from distance education. According to him open education is particularly characterised by the removal of restrictions, exclusions and privileges; by the accreditation of students' previous experiences; by the flexibility of the management of the time variable; and by substantial change in the traditional relationship between professors and students. On the other hand, distance education is a modality which provides education without the necessity of regular class participation, where the individual is responsible for his own learning.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Space given below the question is for writing your answer.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit under “Answers to Check Your Progress”.

3) Explain the difference between the following:

i) ‘Correspondence Education’ and ‘Distance Education’.

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ii) ‘Distance Education’ and ‘Open Education’.

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1.4 SOME SPECIFIC TERMS USED IN ADULT EDUCATION

You may recall that in Section 1.2 above, we have defined the term ‘literacy’ in our attempt to define adult education. As you move on further into the subject or discipline of adult education you will come across many different terms related to literacy. We will, however, confine our discussion here to some specific terms that you may come across very commonly in the literature of adult education.

1.4.1 Literacy: Literate, Illiterate, Numerate and Innumerate

As we have discussed in section 1.2, adult education in developing countries has often concentrated on promotion of literacy, amongst others things. The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (1995) defines literacy as ability to read and write. Definitions of *literacy* given by Laubach (1971, p.536), Bormuth (1978, p.125), Oyedji et al (1982, p.1), Directorate of Adult Education (1992, p.29)

commonly refer to reading, writing and counting or arithmetic skills of a person with understanding in the language (s)he normally speaks or uses. So, there is not much hesitation for many to accept that a *literate* is one who has the ability to read, write and compute, with understanding in one's language. And, an *illiterate* is one who does not have the ability to read, write and compute.

It does not stop there. We also find terms 'numerate' and 'innumerate' based on the term 'literate'. A person who can use paper and pen/pencil (includes slate and slate pencil) for arithmetic purposes is called *numerate*, and the one who cannot do so and solely depends on mental/oral calculations is called an *innumerate* (Carraher et al., 1985; Graham and Ellika, 1991). A vegetable vendor who is an illiterate but has good ability to do mental calculations in dealing with his customers is a perfect example of an innumerate.

1.4.2 Functional Literacy, Functionality and Literacy Diversity

Having understood literate and illiterate, you need to remember the fact that all literates may not be functional literates, i.e. not able to use literacy in their living and working conditions. *Functional illiterate* is one 'who has not acquired the basic skills in reading, writing and arithmetic and, thus, is unable to participate actively in those activities within society which require such skills' (DAE, 1992). Some are good in using their literacy skills and some are not good (or bad) in using them. Perhaps, in view of this Lakshmi Reddy (2000, p.31) introduces the terms *ill-literate* and *well-literate* as synonymous to the terms 'functional illiterate' and 'functional literate' respectively.

In simple terms, literacy that is functional can be called functional literacy. *Functional literacy* has also been defined in various ways. The final report of the World Conference of Education Ministers on the Eradication of Illiteracy organised by UNESCO in Tehran in 1965 (UNESCO, 1976, quoted in St. John Hunter, 1987, p.25) contains the following statement which can be considered as its official definition of functional literacy:

The very process of learning to read and write should be made an opportunity for acquiring information that can be used for improving standards; reading and writing should lead not only to elementary general knowledge but to training for work, increased productivity, a greater participation in civil life and a better understanding of the surrounding world and should ultimately open the way to basic human culture.

Other definitions considered functional literacy in terms of:

- a) the goals to be accomplished by literacy in life (Heath, 1989, p.17);
- b) the ability to use literacy and engage in such activities which require literacy skills (Jarvis, 1990);
- c) self-reliance in literacy and numeracy coupled with awareness of and participation in the wide range of development and welfare activities (National Literacy Mission, GOI, 1988, p.14);
- d) the completion of certain years of schooling (Cairns, 1977; Cipolla, 1969);
- e) occupational and life skills for economic, social and cultural development and liberation (Freire, 1970), and so on.

It must, however, be noted that there it is not easy to compare functionality of literacy across different cultures because of the differences across cultures in the process, methodology of acquisition and its measurement and comparison. Hence, Resnick and Resnick (1977) has rightly noticed that the concepts of literacy and criteria for its achievement have varied significantly over time, place and populace.

Notwithstanding the above, serious attempts have been made to distinguish literacy from functional literacy. Kundu (1986, p.40) and Okenimkpe (1992, p.34) argue that functional literacy follows literacy, implying thereby that functional literacy is later stage of literacy. The World Conference of Education Ministers held in 1965 used functional literacy for designating second form of literacy. To avoid confusion even between basic literacy and traditional literacy Okenimkpe (1989) uses the term initial literacy in place of basic literacy. The Education Commission (1964-66) in its report 'Education and National Development' expresses the view that if literacy is to be worthwhile it must be functional, indicating thereby that, literacy should promote functionality. The UNESCO report (1976) on the Experimental World Literacy Programme questions whether functional literacy can be applied in a society with diverse vocational interests. In its publication, *Functional Literacy – Why and How* (UNESCO, 1976a, pp.9-10) attempts to provide an understanding of the distinction between traditional and functional literacy. According to it *traditional literacy* is a separatist activity which is diffuse, non-intensive, standardised and rigid, while functional literacy is (not an end in itself) integrative and intensive which aims directly for knowledge of practical/technical utility and promotion of development. We can see here that this may, theoretically, seem sound, but in practice the distinction is always an illusion.

Okenimkpe (1992, pp.32-42) discusses at length the theoretical soundness, practical difficulties and unconvincing victories of functional literacy, and advocates the promotion of traditional literacy expressing the belief that it is capable of achieving the same goals as is functional literacy. Thus, all the exercises to define and differentiate literacy and functional literacy seem to be futile, more particularly, from the practical point of view as there appears, hardly, to be any clear distinction between the two. Hence, till today, the two terms are used distinctly by some and interchangeably by others, leaving no scope for any sort of discussion. Furthermore, making out absolute differences between illiteracy and functional illiteracy may indeed be a difficult task.

Moreover, if functional literacy is considered as a later stage of literacy, it seems to differ very little from another term 'post-literacy'. One of the working groups during the First International Orientation Seminar held at Nairobi from 16-27 August, 1982 (Dave et al, 1985, p.320) defined *post-literacy* as "an integrating learning process to assist literates to retain, improve and apply their basic knowledge, attitudes and skills for the satisfaction of their basic needs, and to permit them to continue education through a self-directed process for improvement of their quality of life (personal and societal)". By comparing this with the definitions of functional literacy one may struggle in vain to differentiate between the two terms because both functional literacy and post-literacy stress integrating and applying learning for improving quality of life.

Recent literature on literacy lists many types of literacy (literacy diversity) such as computer literacy, legal literacy, visual literacy, information literacy, communication literacy, scientific literacy, social literacy, multi-cultural literacy,

global literacy, etc used in different contexts. You will learn about them if you start discussing with others, or reading some material related to these concepts.

1.4.3 Pedagogy, Andragogy and Humanagogy

You will find the word 'pedagogy' commonly used in the literature of education. Pedagogy (derived from the Greek word *paid* meaning 'child' and *agogy* meaning 'leader of') literally means the art and science of teaching children. But, in many people's mind and even in the dictionary, pedagogy is defined as 'the art and science of teaching'. Thus, the children part of the definition got lost. Even in books on adult education references are found on the pedagogy of adult education, without any apparent discomfort over the contradiction in terms (Knowles, 1985, p.53).

Some adult educationists prefer to use the term andragogy instead of adult education. 'Andragogy' (from Greek word *aner* meaning 'man') was first used in Europe. Eventually, the term andragogy was introduced by Knowles, called the father of andragogy, for the first time in adult educational literature in the United States. Presently, andragogy is in vogue parallel to pedagogy and synonymous with adult education. Knowles (1990, p.55), defines andragogy, as 'the art and science of helping adults to learn'. Titmus et al (1979) put it as "... the art and science of helping adults to learn, and the study of adult education theory, processes and technology to that end." There is now, considerable amount of literature available, and growing on andragogy and adult education.

There has been, however, enough debate on the use of the term 'andragogy' as parallel to pedagogy implying that pedagogy includes andragogy. While Cross (1981, pp.220-228), with his criticism on andragogy, questions the use of 'andragogy' saying that it is not a theory at all, Jarvis (1990) defines **Educational gerontology** and **penal andragogy** almost in a similar way as the scientific study and practice of education among and about the elderly or the older adults. 'Kapp distinguished andragogy from **social pedagogy** (basic education for the disadvantaged or handicapped adults) referring to andragogy as the normal and natural process of continuing education for adults' (Jayagopal, 1985, p.17). You will find many more terms like **social andragogy**, **family andragogy**, **military andragogy**, **industrial andragogy**, etc.? To put an end to this debate Knudson (1979, pp.281-284) proposes '**Humanagogy**', as a solution to the pedagogy-andragogy issue. If we accept this, from the growing literature and practice we can say that humanagogy encompasses child education (pedagogy), adult education (andragogy), special education (social pedagogy/andragogy), education of the old/aged, (educational gerontology) etc., as its divisions. All this is to suggest you that the growing literature is presumably an indication of pace of conceptual development in the field of adult education.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Space given below the question is for writing your answer.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit under "Answers to Check Your Progress"

4) Distinguish between:

i) Traditional literacy and functional literacy

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ii) Literate and Numerate

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE, NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF ADULT EDUCATION

Having understood the concept of adult education, some related terms and some specific terms used in adult education, you are perhaps now in a better position to appreciate the significance of adult education and also understand its characteristic features.

1.5.1 Significance

Adult education is a *sine qua non* (that is absolutely necessary) for survival of adults of all age groups in modern society. Illiteracy, poverty, ignorance, population growth, advancements in science and technology, ever growing knowledge, developmental pursuits of individuals, communities, societies and nations have been creating an increasing demand for adult education. It is very essential to address the diverse issues and problems in different spheres of life — social, economic, cultural, political, environmental, health, developmental, etc . Learn or perish has become the order of the day and adult and lifelong learning is the only solution to survival, growth, development and welfare of individuals, families, societies and nations at large.

1.5.2 Nature and Characteristics

Adult education is very dynamic in its nature. Its role, purposes and functions will change with changing situations and conditions of adults. Accordingly its nature and character also undergo changes. Broadly, the nature and characteristic features of adult education are as follows.

- i) **Adult education is purposive:** It (adult education) has a definite purpose specific to the given context. Without purpose it does not have any existence.
- ii) **It is community-specific:** Adult education is community-based and assumes great significance in particular context(s), and it need not be equally relevant to other communities in similar contexts.
- iii) **It is culture-specific:** The nature, objectives and types of adult education required for adults would vary from culture to culture.
- iv) **It is need-based and problem-solving:** Adult education takes into account the dominant needs and prevalent problems of the communities and aims at addressing them in effective ways.
- v) **It is participatory:** It involves adults at different levels and stages of planning, implementation and evaluation of adult education activities meant for their progress, development and welfare.
- vi) **It is flexible and relevant:** In many respects adult education incorporates the element of flexibility so that the adults would feel at home and comfortable to acquire education that has relevance to their living, working and development.
- vii) **It is action – oriented:** Adult education is not simply education for the sake of education. Education for action is the motto, if adults have to act for transforming their own situations or conditions.
- viii) **It is dynamic, change-oriented and transformative:** Adult education is very dynamic and, change-oriented, primarily aimed at bringing in social, economic, political and cultural transformation of the adults, their society and nation.
- ix) **It is an awareness building and conscientisation process:** It helps to enhance the level of adults' awareness and conscientisation and prompts them to action for change. It helps in emancipating or liberating adults from their current problems and situation.
- x) **It is experiential:** It is basically conceived and offered taking into account the experiences of adults.
- xi) **It is welfare and development oriented:** It promotes rational and informed decision with a view to promote the welfare and development - social, economic, political and cultural - of individuals, groups, society and nation.
- xii) **It is goal-directed:** It is directed by the goals set by adults for themselves, or by others for them, or by the nation for them and helps in achieving them.
- xiii) **It is learner-centred, systematic and flexible:** It is a systematically organised process, using diverse methods and techniques of teaching and learning with an in-built element or component of flexibility for promotion of more learner-centred educational activities.

- xiv) **It is a network building activity:** It is very effective in building the network of adults, their groups, activities and associations in the particular context and situation in which the adults live, earn and learn.
- xv) **It is quality-of-life or standard-of-living oriented:** It aims at enabling the adults to use all their networks – personal, social, professional, political, etc – for raising their quality of life and standard of living.
- xvi) **It is an education for empowerment:** Adult education is an effective tool for empowerment of adults.

1.6 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF ADULT EDUCATION

While goals are long-term targets, objectives are more immediate ones.

Major objectives of adult education include:

- i) **Imparting literacy of diverse types** – It includes basic literacy, scientific literacy, economic literacy, technological literacy, visual literacy, information literacy, multicultural literacy, global literacy, legal literacy, computer literacy, and so on. You have learnt about language literacy or basic literacy. You will learn about other types of literacy at higher levels of your educational pursuits.
- ii) **Generating Awareness on various matters/subjects** – It includes awareness about one's self, community, society and the nation; about individual, relational, and collective roles and responsibilities; about social, economic, political, cultural, environmental, developmental, health, hygiene, etc; about peace, welfare, and harmonious growth and development of the individual, family, community, nation and the world, amongst other things; and
- iii) **Promoting Functionality** - It includes application of individual, collective, community, corporate, national and international knowledge, skills, attitudes, practices, resources, etc for addressing the felt needs, for solving the problems, for promoting larger public participation in various activities and for bringing out social, economic, cultural, political transformation for raising the general level or standard of living of the individual, community, nation and the world.

The goals of adult education are: to increase the quality of life of an individual and enable him/her to realise his/her full potential for self-realisation; to raise the standard of living of the families, communities, societies and nations; to promote peace and communal harmony in the multi-cultural global village; and to enhance the pace of development and welfare of the individual nations and the international community as a whole.

1.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed the concepts of adult, adult education and literacy, different terms related to adult education, some specific terms used in literacy and adult education. We have also discussed the significance, nature and characteristic features, goals and objectives of adult education. It is hoped you are very clear about what we have discussed here.

1.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- 1) Adult education has been variously defined by different adult educationists. The definition offered by the General Conference of UNESCO held in 1976 is the widely accepted definition, if not universally accepted. It elaborates the term adult education and comprehensively defines it as the “entire body of organised educational processes, whatever content, level and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong, develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their attitudes or behaviour in the two-fold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development. In other words, the essential elements of adult education are as follows:
- i) It includes all organised educational processes;
 - ii) It encompasses all content, levels and methods;
 - iii) It includes formal or non-formal education for adults;
 - iv) It prolongs or replaces initial education in schools, colleges and universities;
 - v) It develops abilities, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours;
 - vi) It aims at two-fold development – full personal development of adults and their participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development.

The three terms — ‘adult education’, ‘education of adults’ and ‘education for adults’ — are used interchangeably or distinctly by different people in different countries either inadvertently or intentionally to mean one and the same and each term includes all kinds and forms of education for adults i.e. for their growth, development, welfare and transformation in particular and their societies, nations and the globe in general.

- 2) i) The terms open education, non-formal education and de-schooling are almost synonymous and espouse the same philosophy. Open learning/education emphasises openness of learning/educational opportunities - non-formal education emphasises freeing of education from all the formalities/rigidities; while ‘de-schooling’ emphasises on bringing education outside the physical environs of the schools, which in a broad sense includes all the educational institutions.
- ii) Life-long education is the provision and utilisation of educational experiences throughout a person’s life. It implies learning throughout life and, therefore, denotes an over all scheme aimed both at restructuring the existing education system and at developing the entire educational potential inside and outside the education system. Its rationale is in part the same as that for adult education, except that it intrinsically involves a radical reform of organisation, form and content of all other phases of education, and also implies a greater recognition of the educational functions of non-educational agencies. Recurrent education, organised in Europe, is understood primarily as the development of a national policy that would provide citizens with

opportunities to alternative periods of work with periods of formal training throughout their lives. Life-long education is thus broader in its concept than recurrent education as the latter appears to be primarily meant for periodical training of those engaged in some kind of work through conventional institutions, while the former is meant for all the people in general, through out life through diverse institutions – formal, non-formal and informal.

- 3) i) Correspondence education is one of the earliest and institutionalised means of providing distance education in which learning materials prepared by a few trained subject experts are supplied to the learners by post for reading, alongside giving them some reading and writing assignments. To develop in them the feel of formal school/classroom atmosphere, contact classes/ programmes are conducted at some convenient places where the learners and the instructors will have the chance for mutual interaction. In other words, correspondence education is education conducted through the postal services with or without face-to-face contact between teacher and learners. Teaching is done by written or tape-recorded material sent to the learner, whose progress is monitored through written or taped exercises sent to the teacher, who corrects them and returns them to the learner with criticism and advice. At the end of the course, examinations are conducted and certificates, degrees, or diplomas are awarded to the successful candidates.

According to Keegan (1986) distance education is a form of education characterised by:

- the quasi-permanent separation of teacher and learner throughout the length of the learning process; this distinguishes it from conventional face-to-face education;
 - the influence of an educational organisation both in the planning and preparation of learning materials and in the provision of student support services; this distinguishes it from private study and teach-yourself programmes;
 - the use of technical media; print, audio, video or computer to unite teacher and learner and carry the content of the course;
 - the provision of two-way communication so that the student may benefit from or even initiate dialogue; this distinguishes it from other uses of technology in education;
 - the quasi-permanent absence of the learning group throughout the length of the learning process so that people are usually taught as individuals and not in groups, with the possibility of occasional meetings for both didactic and socialisation purposes.
- ii) Open education is particularly characterised by the removal of restrictions, exclusions and privileges; by the accreditation of students' previous experiences; by the flexibility of the management of the time variable; and by substantial change in the traditional relationship between professors and students. On the other hand, distance education is a modality which promotes learning without the necessity of regular class participation, where the individual is responsible for his own learning. Open education underlines a philosophy while distance education is a form or mode of education.

- 4) i) Literacy means the ability to read and write. *Traditional literacy* as defined by Laubach (1971, p.536), Bormuth (1978, p.125), Oyediji et al (1982, p.1), Directorate of Adult Education (1992, p.29) commonly refers to reading, writing and, counting or arithmetic skills of a person with understanding in the language (s)he normally speaks or communicates. According to UNESCO functional literacy is defined as follows:

The very process of learning to read and write should be made an opportunity for acquiring information that can be used for improving standards; reading and writing should lead not only to elementary general knowledge but to training for work, increased productivity, a greater participation in civil life and a better understanding of the surrounding world and should ultimately open the way to basic human culture.

- ii) *Literate* is a person who has the ability to read, write and compute with understanding in his/her language. A person who can use paper and pen/pencil (includes slate and slate pencil) for arithmetic purposes is called *numerate*, and the one who cannot do so and solely depends on mental/oral calculations is called an *innumerate*.

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UNIT 2 INDIAN ADULT EDUCATION - A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Structure

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

Your understanding of current Adult Education programmes in India would not be complete without knowing how the concept of Adult Education evolved over the years and was operationalised. A brief overview of different programmes implemented during the past would help you appreciate the continuous efforts made in the field of Adult Education. Historical records show that the concept of Adult Education has undergone several but significant changes in the past. It has been observed that the organised and systematic instruction of adults long preceded the formal organization of schools for children. However, such practices rarely led to institutionalization or gave rise to any specific term during ancient times. Transmission of knowledge was an integral part of socialisation and cultural process. Although the term- “Adult Education” was first coined in the English language in 1851, the provisions for the education of adults were available since time immemorial (Hudson. 1851).

Being renowned for its learning and educational institutions from ancient days, a wide variety of educational opportunities were available to the people of India. The sacred literature especially the *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, *Dharma Sutras* and the *Aranyakas* bear testimony to the importance accorded to the acquisition of knowledge. The word *Veda* is derived from the word, *Vid* which signifies ‘knowledge par excellence’. Notwithstanding the importance accorded to the acquisition of knowledge in ancient India, the prevalence of caste system among Hindus greatly restricted its access to the priestly class (Dube, 1990). The colonial

policy of encouraging the education of upper classes was also not conducive for spread of education among the masses (Shah, 1999).

The history of Adult Education in India may be broadly studied in two parts: pre-independence and post-independence. The growth of Adult Education before independence may be divided into the pre-colonial and colonial periods. Over the years a number of initiatives were taken by the state, civil society and religious organizations and individuals to promote Adult Education. Several programmes, viz; Night Schools, Social Education Programme, Farmers' Functional Literacy Programme, National Adult Education Programme, Total Literacy Campaigns, and Continuing Education Programmes have been implemented in India at various points of time.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

The main purpose of this unit is to provide you an overview of the emergence and growth of Adult Education Programmes in India during the last sixty years (1947-2007). However, an attempt is also made to familiarize you with the origins of Adult Education and its growth prior to 1947 as a backdrop.

After studying the unit, you are expected to be able to:

- Understand the conceptual changes in the policy and programmes during the last sixty years;
- Examine the differences among various programmes;
- Identify the reasons for changes in the programmes; and
- Study the impact of different programmes.

2.2 ORIGIN OF ADULT EDUCATION: AS A SOCIALISATION AND CULTURAL PROCESS

Adult Education formed an integral part of socialization and cultural process during ancient and medieval period. Although, there were no formal or specialized institutions imparting literacy or education to adults, the social and religious centers specially the temples, market places, community halls, etc served as centers of non formal education for adults. In this section below, you will get a brief overview of Adult Education programmes during ancient and medieval periods.

2.2.1 Adult Education in Ancient India

The origins of Adult Education in India may be traced to the oral tradition prevalent in ancient society. The ancient world being an 'oral world', the mode of transmission of knowledge was through discourses and discussions. Compared to secular knowledge the acquisition of sacred knowledge was held in high esteem as it widened the individuals' horizon of understanding to achieve "dharma" (moral), "artha" (wealth), "kama" (pleasure) and "moksha" (salvation) (Graff, 1987).

Written texts, although not many, were kept secret and access to sacred knowledge was not the right of everyone. "The craft of reading and writing remained the sacred monopoly of small circle of elites" (Cipolla, 1969). The tradition of Vedic learning was to impart it in the ear as a secret doctrine to be contemplated and

realized and not intended for the profane (Mookherji, 1951). According to the ancient Indian theory of education, knowledge was technically called *Sruti* or what was heard by the ear and not what was seen in writing (*Smriti*). It was the system of oral tradition by which learning was transmitted from teacher to pupil in an unbroken chain called *Guruparampara*. Learning was also promoted through discussions at public meetings which were regular feature of rural life. Masses were addressed by wandering scholars known as *Carakas*. There was also equality between the sexes in the field of knowledge (Altekar, 1944).

Unlike the Christians and Muslims whose desire to read the holy scriptures like the *Bible* and the *Quran* served as a strong motivational factor for the acquisition of basic literacy, there were no such urges among the Hindus. Hinduism being not a religion of Book, reading from the holy books like the *Gita* and the *Ramayana* was not an essential religious requirement for the Hindus. Thus if religion became an enabling factor in the spread of literacy among Christians and Muslims, it was an inhibiting force in the Hindu society. Besides there was a fear that failure to recite the Vedic hymns properly would lead to disaster; and this prevented many from venturing into it. Even writing appeared to be a "sacred act of worship carrying with it the supernatural powers and fraught with mystical dangers". "Tendencies to secrecy, proprietorial exclusiveness and the greater valuation of what is learned orally from a *Guru* over what is read in books- all these have served to limit the resort to writing" (Goody, 1975). Thus, in a society where access to knowledge was ascriptive and the privilege of a few, it was quite natural that large sections of people remained illiterate not by choice but due to circumstances. Education in ancient India was dominated by religion and the concept of universal basic literacy was alien to the ancient Indians. This inbuilt resistance of the Hindu religion was a great stumbling block to the wider spread of literacy. Hence, one of the root causes of illiteracy in India may be traced to the prevalence of rigid caste system in the country.

The pattern of 'restricted literacy' fitted in with the segmentation of ancient Indian society. In the absence of scriptal literacy, visual graphic aids and art forms were resorted to, but literacy practices were not institutionalized. This early stage was termed as 'craft literacy'. A number of temples served as effective channels of adult education, though the terminology of adult education was not in vogue. Temple architecture, sculpture, and paintings preserved the knowledge of the pre-literate world. In many of the South Indian temples and *mathas* reading of the epics, the *Puranas* and other religious texts took place even from the days of the Pallavas and continued to be practiced on a large scale in the subsequent periods. The *puraniks* with good pronunciation and oratory recited the stories of the *Puranas* in temples or in the mansions of rich persons. The *Haridasas* and *Kathakaras* gave sermons accompanied by music and singing and were popular among masses. Every important temple had a *kathakara* attached to it who acted as teacher-musician to the adults. They organized *keertans*, *bhajans*, *jagran* and *satsang* which were a powerful source of education for the adults from ancient days and these continue even today (Gurumurthy, 1979).

Notwithstanding the importance accorded to education in ancient India, the demand for education was restricted. It was due to the *varna* system which empowers Brahmanical class to inherit and transmit learning. Most of the occupations practiced by the masses did not require any formal learning except on the job training which they acquired at home through observation and imitation. The elite character of education began to change with the advent of Buddhism,

since Buddhist monks and *viharas* did not differentiate people on the basis of caste and were open to all irrespective of caste taboos. "Buddhism envisaged the democratization of education." The sermons of Buddhist monks were the main source of education to the masses who flocked to their assembly. The Buddhist philosophy recognizes the potential of all human beings to develop their resources to their ultimate till one reaches the final state of perfection. The teachings of Buddha which were inscribed on iron pillars, stones and rocks which served as non-formal channels of education for the common people, especially during the reign of Asoka. The dynasty of Gupta (A.D.320-647) witnessed the flourishing of Hindu culture when books came into common use. While in the north books were written on birch-bark, in the south palm-leaves were made use of. In this period, libraries were also established. Drama, lyric poetry and prose were assiduously cultivated and they served as channels of adult education (Keay, and Karvey, 1973).

2.2.2 Adult Education in Medieval India

The tradition of oral transmission of knowledge, values and culture of society continued even during the medieval period when the rulers of India provided considerable political patronage and financial support to scholars, saints, teachers, artists and artisans who were actively involved in the spread of the messages of peace and harmony through various art forms, music, preaching, and writings. Temples became dearer to people as social centres. They were the meeting places and centres of village ceremonies and religious and social discourses, besides imparting 3R's to children. "As the temples spread, literacy spreads." (Patwardan, 1939). The spread of education in medieval India was mainly dependent on the interest of the rulers. The growth of popular education was hindered for want of a popular medium of instruction. Mughal rulers considered education to be a handmaiden of religion and hence State encouragement to education was sporadic. However, due to the egalitarian philosophy of Islam, access to education was open to all during the Mughal regime. The sayings of Prophet Mohammed and the teachings of the *Quran* placed great emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge from the cradle to the grave. During Akbar's time, there were no printed books and important handwritten books were read aloud in the Court and discussions were held which benefited the aristocracy. Aurangzeb was the first Mughal Emperor who championed the cause of free and compulsory education for the masses. Though he could not enforce it throughout his kingdom, on an experimental basis he enforced it in Gujarat among the Bohra community, which seems to have paved the way for the high rate of literacy in this community (Ahmed, 1987).

2.3 EMERGENCE AND GROWTH OF ADULT EDUCATION IN INDIA BEFORE 1947: BEGINNING OF INSTITUTIONALISATION

Prior to the independence of India in 1947, the process of institutionalization in Adult Education had already begun in the form of Night schools. These schools emerged in different provinces of British India. While the colonial rulers encouraged them, several Christian Missionaries, social reform organizations and the Nationalist leaders also set up Night schools. This section will provide you a brief overview of the colonial policy towards adult education, various provisions and efforts made by eminent leaders.

2.3.1 Adult Education in Colonial India

The colonial period witnessed several interesting developments in the field of Adult Education. While the economic policies of the colonial rulers impoverished the landed aristocracy which was providing financial support to a large number of vernacular and adult schools, the limitations of financial resources and the Anglo-oriental controversy gave a new twist to the British policy towards education in India. According to the downward filtration theory adopted by the British in 1830's "education was to permeate the masses from above. Drop by drop from the Himalayas of Indian life, useful information was to trickle downwards, forming in time a broad and stately stream to irrigate the thirsty plains" (Mathew, 1926). The policy was to concentrate on the education of upper classes who have "leisure for study and whose culture would then filter down to masses". In practice, it was observed that most of the educated who usually came from the higher castes got comfortable jobs and became absorbed in bettering their own prospects than sharing their learning with the masses. In fact some of the middle classes who were the beneficiary of English education opposed the attempts made by the social reformers to spread mass education, since it would lead to an increase in the ranks of those demanding a "share of the cake." (Majumdar, 1972). On the other hand, due to downward filtration theory, the British administrators did not consider it necessary to develop any programme of Adult Education or of universal primary education in British India during the first half of the nineteenth century.

The practice of downward filtration theory was soon criticised by the Education Despatch (1854) which suggested several measures for spreading mass education and also for preserving and encouraging indigenous education. The Despatch stated that the masses were "utterly incapable of obtaining any education worthy of the name by their own efforts", and recommended a system of grant-in-aid which materialized at a much latter date. Although illiteracy among Indians had attracted the attention of British statesmen in 1860's when Lord Lawrence noted that "among all the sources of difficulty in our administration and of possible danger to the stability of our government, there were few so serious as the ignorance of the people", the colonial rulers did not develop any specific programmes to liquidate adult illiteracy as there were neither the resources nor the trained personnel to take up Adult Education programmes (Shah, 1999, Op. Cit).

The main thrust of Adult Education in India during the 19th Century revolved around basic literacy. Night schools were the key adult education institutions in British India. They were few and modeled after British Adult Schools and were mainly set up by the Christian missionaries, nationalist leaders, socio-religious organizations and intellectuals. The official policy was to encourage them wherever practical and permit as much flexibility as possible in school hours. The core curriculum included rudiments of reading, writing and numeracy, covered within a minimum of 100 days. Average instruction per day was of 2-3 hours duration. The Indian Education Commission (1882) observed that every province in British India had provisions for setting up night schools and Bombay and Madras had 134 and 312 night schools with an enrolment of 4000 and 7000 adults respectively (Report of the Indian Education Commission 1882, 1883).

The challenging task of educating illiterate adults was taken up by the missionaries, enlightened Indians and socially committed British officials. In the absence of adequate professional literature, replicable models and limited number of dedicated adult educators in British India, the growth of Indian adult education was extremely slow. British models like the Mechanics Institute, Working Men's College were not of much relevance to the socio-economic requirements of Indian society since the 19th century India and Britain were at different stages of growth. In England adult education institutions like the Mechanics Institutes and Working Men's Colleges had emerged partly as a response to the particular needs essentially created by industrial capitalism. In the case of India, such developments came at a much later period. Arguably then, the educational needs of adults in colonial India were quite different, which made it difficult to transfer any of the British models and philosophies to the Indian situation. The adoption of the policy of expansion of primary education as a strategy for curbing the growth of illiteracy in India also seems to have led to the negligence of adult education. It was argued that "adults cannot be given the cake when the child remains without bread and hence the government preferred the policy of encouraging primary education to adult education since 1880's." (Siqueira, 1960).

Although the concept of basic literacy remained unchanged all through the British period, a variety of attempts were made to educate illiterate adults by Indian intellectuals, nationalist leaders, social, religious and political organizations during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Some eminent Indians like Dadabhai Naoroji, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Ranade, Keshub Chandra Sen, Vidyasagar, Rabindra Nath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, Veerasalingam, Sayyid Ahmad Khan not only opposed the idea of restricting the access to knowledge to the upper and middle strata of society, but also pleaded for the promotion of mass education through vernacular languages. While Keshub Chandra Sen wrote a series of open letters to Lord Northbrook depicting the "painfully ignorant and pitiable condition of the dumb millions in India", Vidyasagar stressed that the extension of education to the masses was the immediate need of the country. Being a great champion of mass education Keshub Chandra Sen set up a society "Sangat Sabha" in 1859, with the co-operation of Devendra Nath Tagore to discuss spiritual and social problems of the day. He pleaded for the establishment of evening schools for the benefit of agricultural and working classes to free themselves from popular prejudices and blind beliefs and suggested that Government should award special honours to those landlords who establish such schools. Systematic attempts were also made by Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Mary Carpenter, and leaders of Brahm Samaj, viz., Sashipada Banerjee to educate illiterate women in Bengal during the nineteenth century. Keshub Chandra Sen also established *Bama Hitaishini Sabha* (Society for the Welfare of Women) where learned women read newspapers and held discussions to arouse social and intellectual consciousness among the Indian women so that they could respond readily to the schemes of social and educational reforms introduced for their upliftment (Shah, 1999. op.cit.).

Of all the nineteenth century intellectuals, Swami Vivekananda's ideas on adult education are noteworthy. Observing that the chief cause of India's ruin has been the monopolising of all the education by a handful of men, he stressed the need for spreading education among the masses. He believed that "a nation is advanced in proportion as education and intelligence spread among the masses; and the only service to be done

for the lower classes is to give them education to develop their lost individuality.... They are to be given ideas; their eyes are to be opened to what is going on in the world around them; and then they will work out their own salvation". According to him the greater part of education to the poor should be given orally and in vernacular languages. To quote Swami Vivekananda, "education is not the amount of information that is put into brain and runs riot there, undigested all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated fine ideas and made them your life and character, you have more information than a man who has got by heart a whole library." (Advaita Ashram, 1990).

The social reform societies, viz., the Brahmo Samaj, Prarthana Samaj, Arya Smaj and Indian Social Conference did pioneering work by educating the masses through publications and public lectures. The organisation of literacy classes and setting up of libraries was also recognised by Indian social reformers as crucial for the progress of their movements. Some of the Indian universities like Madras and Mysore organised extension lectures for the benefit of masses following the extra mural tradition of British Universities.

A number of the enlightened rulers of Princely States of Mysore, Baroda, Cochin and Travancore had taken special interest in the promotion of literacy among masses. In 1912 Sir M. Visvesvaraya, the Dewan of Mysore, organised 7000 literacy classes throughout the State with a network of circulating libraries. A magazine-*Vigyana*- was also published to popularise scientific knowledge. Several non-Governmental organisations, social reform societies and political parties played a significant part in the promotion of adult education during the first quarter of the twentieth century. In 1915, Dr. D. N. Maitra founded the Bengal Social Service League in Calcutta for the amelioration of the condition of illiterate poor through a variety of community development programmes. With the establishment of a rural centre at Sriniketan by Rabindranath Tagore in 1922 and initiation of rural reconstruction activities by the Y.M.C.A. at Marthandam, social reconstruction programmes by Subba Rao at Rajamundry and by F.L. Brayne at Gurgaon and launching of the constructive programme by Mahatma Gandhi during 1920s, there was tremendous expansion and diversification adult education activities in India (Mohisini, 1993).

The growing nationalist movement in India, the prospects of Swaraj and the introduction of constitutional reforms in 1919 further brought home the danger of entrusting power to an ignorant electorate and highlighted the importance of literacy for political and economic reasons. Nationalist leaders like Lala Lajpat Rai and B.G. Tilak organized night schools for illiterate masses and summer schools for literate adults. The Congress Socialist Party of Andhra established peasant schools in Guntur and West Godavari to train workers for the peasant movement. Most of the political parties organised schools to train young men for local leadership so as to enable them to carry on the struggle for freedom of India. The overwhelming concern of Indian nationalist leaders being the freedom movement, they had initiated a process of mass mobilization and conscientization through public lectures and discussions with a view to making the masses aware of their rights and motivate them to fight for the freedom of India. Hence, the freedom struggle of India may be viewed as the biggest and the most successful adult education movement in modern times. While some of the nationalist leaders

like Dadabhai Naoroji, Surendra Nath Bannerjee and Gopal Krishna Gokhale had pleaded for universal literacy; B.G. Tilak and Lala Lajpat Rai set-up night schools and summer camps for the political education of freedom fighters. Although Rabindra Nath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi tried to tackle the problem of illiteracy by integrating literacy with rural development and constructive programmes, their efforts were rather limited. The interest and involvement of eminent Indian leaders in literacy, however, drew the attention of masses towards the gravity of the problem.

The active interest of non-officials and non-Governmental organisations in the promotion of adult education received a boost when the Royal Commission on Agriculture (1928) and the Auxilliary Committee of Indian Statutory Commission (1929) reiterated the importance of adult education as a tool for the socio-economic development of the nation. Observing that "illiteracy presents the most formidable single obstacle to rural development in the widest sense" and the movement for adult education in India had hardly begun, (with the exception of the efforts made by the Indian Army School of Education at Belgaum), the Royal Commission recommended that adult education should be promoted mainly through non-official channels. *During 1920s there were four important channels of adult education in India: (i) night schools, (ii) awareness programmes through films, public lectures and discussions organized by social, cultural and political organisations, (iii) libraries and (iv) community development projects including constructive programmes. It was estimated that in the four provinces of Bombay, Burma, the Central provinces and the Punjab, there were 3450 registered night schools with an enrolment of 1,17,000 learners. Bengal, Bihar and Madras had 7768 night schools with an enrolment of 1,87,000 learners. Of all the places in India, Punjab was in the forefront of literacy efforts. As early as 1921, a literacy campaign was launched in the province of Punjab which catapulted it into the forefront of adult education movement. Starting with 630 night schools with an enrolment of 17,776 adult learners in 1922-23, the number of night schools increased to 3784 with an enrolment of 98414 by 1926-27. Apart from official initiatives, the non-Governmental organisations like the Y.M.C.A. in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, Servants of India Society of Pune, Seva Sadan Society of Bombay, Devadhar Reconstruction Trust in Madras, Bengal Society for the Improvement of Backward classes, Bengal Social Service League and co-operative schools of the United Provinces had also shown considerable interest in the promotion of adult education. Some of the professional societies, viz., Economic Association of Kanpur, Rural Reconstruction Association of Benaras, Bombay Sanitary Association, Saksharta Prasarak Mandal, Bombay Literacy Association, were engaged in educating the masses through public lectures, films and slides on various aspects of health, society, economy and polity (Shah, 1999. op.cit.).*

The policy of creating rural libraries was first inaugurated in Baroda State in 1894, where 661 out of a total of 706 libraries were rural in 1927. In small provinces of Ajmer, the Punjab and the United Provinces there were vernacular libraries attached to rural schools and a school teacher functioned as librarian. In 1928, there were 1,769 village libraries in the Punjab. Besides these there were circulating libraries in certain districts of the United Provinces. Madras Library Association and the Christian Literature Society brought out a number of books for neoliterates and supplied them in tin boxes to several villages during 1930s. In fact, the Adult Education Committee of the National Christian Council of

India and its 14 Provincial Councils in Assam, Andhra, Bengal, Bihar, Gujarat, South India, Mid India and United Provinces were very active in the preparation and publication of literacy and post-literacy materials in a number of Indian languages. They were financially supported by the Churches of America, Canada, Australia, Britain, Ireland, etc.

Some of the enlightened British officials like F.L. Brayne (Punjab) introduced an innovative rural reconstruction campaign. A large motor van fitted with a travelling library, a radio-set, a cinema projector, a dispensary and public address system was sent to rural areas with a view to educating and entertaining the masses and also providing them medical help. An adult educator, a doctor, a cinema technician, a driver, a cleaner and a peon travelled as a team. Not only did they exhibit the books and lent them for reading to villagers but the selected books were also read out to the illiterate masses. Rural reconstruction activities were also initiated by some of the British professors with the active co-operation of college students. An experiment on rural reconstruction was undertaken by T.F. Fernandes of King Edward College at Amraoti in Central Provinces on the lines of the Young Farmers Club in England in which the college students were actively involved in a variety of rural development activities (including literacy) in co-operation with governmental and non-governmental agencies (Fernandes, 1939).

During 1930s several attempts were made by individual adult educators to evolve effective literacy materials and methods in various Indian languages. While S.R. Bhagwat was actively involved in the development of literacy primers in Marathi, Dr. J.J. Lucas, Dr. J.H. Lawrence and Dr. S.G. Daniel - Gijubhai Phadke, Mrs R. Dongre experimented in Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi and Tamil languages. However, it was Dr. Frank C. Laubach, an American Missionary who developed the technique of Each One Teach One in the Philippines during 1930, provided the professional leadership to Indian adult educators to develop innovative literacy primers (based on keywords and pictures) in a number of languages, viz. Hindi, Marathi, Telugu, Kannada, Tamil, Gujarati, Bengali, Assamese, etc. through a series of literacy workshops. Addressing a number of adult education conferences in India during 1935-39 he tried to promote the cause of adult education, in which he received the support of Mahatma Gandhi, Tagore, Sayed Mahmud, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajagopalachari, and others. His work on *India Shall Be Literate* which throws light on Indian adult education during 1930s, is an important publication on adult education in India (Laubach, 1940).

Apart from programmes, attempts were also made to set-up adult education institutions in India. Two eminent adult educators of India, Shafiq-ur-Rahman Kidwai and N. G. Ranga set up adult education institutions, viz., *Idara-o-Talim-o-Taraqqi* (Institute of Adult Education) in Jamia Millia Islamiya (1938) and Rama Needu Adult Education Institute in Andhra (1933). While Ranga was influenced by the Bayer Summer School, Workers' Education Association and Wood-broke's Settlement of Birkenhead in England, Kidwai drew inspiration from the Indian National Movement. These institutions not only brought out a number of publications but also organised a number of adult education activities during 1930s (Indian Journal of Adult Education, 1964).

During the early decades of twentieth century the colonial rulers adopted the policy of promoting adult education as a non-Governmental activity and focusing

on elementary education as an effective means of achieving literacy. Such a policy was not very conducive for the emergence of adult education as a distinct field of activity. However, certain international developments during 1920s and 1930s aided the growth of adult education in India. The formation of the World Association For Adult Education (1919) and the organisation of the first World Conference on Adult Education in Cambridge (1929) which drew together 300 representatives from 24 nations including nine from India, the publication of the *Report of Auxiliary Committee of Indian Statutory Commission* (1929), the visit and ground work of Dr. Frank Laubach in different parts of India during 1930s, the political support to literacy given by the Congress government in power during 1937-38 and the publication of the *Report of Adult Education committee* and the formation of Indian Adult Education Association in 1939 - all have been instrumental in promoting adult education as a distinct field of activity by late 1930s. In fact, in pre-independent India, apart from certain Indian intellectuals a number of British adult educators and adult education organizations have played a key role in shaping the character and growth of adult education.

There was tremendous expansion of adult education programme since mid-1930s. With the transfer of power to the elected representatives of Indians as a result of the 1935 Act and the assumption of power by the Congress in several provinces, a series of Provincial Mass Literacy Campaigns were organised in different parts of India during 1938-39 viz, Bihar, United Provinces, Bengal, Bombay, Madras, Punjab and Assam. The duration of these campaigns varied from 4 to 6 months and the age-group of target was 10-50 years. There was consistent expansion of adult education during 1938-42. It was estimated that during 1938-42 nearly 2.77 crores adults attended literacy classes of whom 1.38 crores became literate. Though these campaigns were launched by different provincial governments, there was active participation of students, teachers and all sections of society. Of the different provinces in India, the literacy campaign of Bihar was the most successful in terms of coverage as well as setting up of libraries (Shah, 1987).

Post-literacy programmes followed the literacy campaign and a large number of village libraries were set up. During the period 1940-44, nearly 8,000 libraries were established and about one million people were made literate. It was observed that 60 percent of the literacy centres were set up by the Education Department and more than 60 percent of the instructors were either student volunteers or non-professional teachers. The success rate was also high. The Government policy of implementing the literacy programme mainly through the involvement of volunteers was extremely successful in pre-independent India (Shah, 1987. *op cit*).

In enhancing the scope and status of adult education in India, the non-governmental agencies, nationalist leaders and social reformers played a key role since 1920s. The launching of literacy campaigns all over India and the active association of eminent Indians created a conducive atmosphere for the development of adult education movement in India and also led to the formation of professional societies. Though a few adult education agencies like the Bombay Presidency Adult Education Association, South Indian Adult Education Association and Bengal Adult Education Association had already been formed to co-ordinate and extend adult education work in their respective areas, the need for a central organization was increasingly felt by some of the adult educators who founded the Indian Adult Education Society in Delhi in 1937. The initiative

taken by this society in organizing the first All India Adult Education Conference in Delhi in March, 1938 to confer and explore the possibilities of bringing into being a central organization yielded result in December 1939, when the Second All India Adult Education Conference held in Bhagalpur adopted the Constitution of Indian Adult Education Association, setting it up with the objective of promoting the development of adult education movement in India (Indian Adult Education Association, 1952).

In view of the urgency of the problem of illiteracy and lack of resources, the *Report of the Post-War Educational Development in India, 1944* (Sergeant Committee), suggested a 25-year plan for the development of Indian education mainly through a campaign approach and highlighted the importance of devoting the first five years to necessary preparations. The committee observed that the responsibility of adult education must rest with the State but every effort should be made to enlist the aid of suitable voluntary organizations wherever available. While there was a basic shift in the official policy towards adult education, the concept remained the same during the pre-independence era. If adult education was recognized as a non-official activity in 1920s, it became an official programme by 1940s. It seems that the success of the Provincial Mass Literacy Campaigns and the initiatives of non-officials and social-reformers and the increasing intensity of freedom struggle and the awakening of the masses were the crucial factors that moulded the British policy towards Indian adult education. With the intensification of freedom struggle, the recommendations of Sergeant Committee could not be operationalised. Throughout the colonial period, adult education programmes continued with varying intensity in different parts of India.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Space is given below is the question for writing your answer.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit under “Answers to Check Your Progress”.

- 1) What was the main thrust of Adult Education in 19th century India (100 words).

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2.4 GROWTH OF ADULT EDUCATION IN INDIA AFTER 1947: GROWTH OF INSTITUTIONS

The emergence of India as an independent and democratic nation brought about certain basic changes in the policy and programmes of adult education. Not only the prevalent colonial policy towards adult education was reviewed by the Government of India but also new programmes were developed to cater to the changing needs of a democratic nation. The Constitution of India which defined the role of the Government of India (centre) vis-a-vis the State Governments made the latter responsible for the adult education programmes. Since the Centre designed the adult education policy and programmes for the entire country, and provided the major share of funds to States for its implementation and coordinated the overall activities, it assumed a dominant and decisive role in shaping the character of adult education in independent India.

The development of a new policy towards adult education in independent India was necessitated due to a variety of socio-economic and political factors. The adoption of the welfare approach to development necessitated extensive and intensive involvement of Government and bureaucracy in carrying out structural reforms in various fields and also the creation of infrastructure. However, it could be argued that more than these factors, it was the leadership in adult education, especially of the then Education Minister of the Government of India that was responsible for moulding the new adult education policy. The successful operation of the Mass Literacy Campaign during the period 1938-47, had awakened the masses, their organisations and leaders - both within and outside the Government - to the role of adult education in development and made them conscious of the need to strengthen the programme. Since India at the time of independence was economically backward and extremely underdeveloped and had a low literacy rate of 12.2 per cent, the leadership realized that freedom had no meaning for the ignorant and poor masses unless it was made tangible through activities which helped them improve their social and economic conditions. Although Adult Education formed a part of several development programmes of the Government of India and recognised as one of the two top priority programmes in education, it was felt that the prevalent colonial pattern of adult education was too inadequate to meet the growing needs and aspirations of a democratic nation where every adult would have certain rights and responsibilities which they would find difficult to discharge without basic education. How to design a dynamic adult education programme was one of the challenges before the professional adult educators as well as the Government of India.

The issue of adult education remained sidetracked during 1947- 48 mainly due to the partition of the country which paved the way for the displacement of millions of people, disruption of social life and depletion of resources. Although the main attention of the Government and leaders was focused on the problem of rehabilitation of refugees, the idea of developing an appropriate adult education programme for the refugees as well as non-refugees continued to be the concern of officials and non-officials in the early years of freedom. The Indian Adult Education Association, a non-official organization of professional adult educators, took up the task of "reviewing the role of adult education and reinterpreting its functions in a democratic set up in their annual conference held in Rewa during 29-31 December, 1947. It was observed that "adult education must aim at enabling

the common man to live a richer life in all its aspects - social, economic, cultural and moral” and for the first time, the social aspect of adult education was emphasised by the professional adult educators.

2.4.1 Social Education Programme (1948-1967)

The recommendations of the non-official body - Indian Adult Education Association - were taken seriously by the official body, the Central Advisory Board on Education (CABE), which appointed a sub-committee under the chairmanship of Mohan Lal Saxena, the then Minister for Relief and Rehabilitation, Government of India, on 15 January 1948 to work out a detailed “scheme for adult education and literacy”. The Committee comprising of seven eminent educationists of India, viz. Humayun Kabir, Mata Prasad, K.G. Saiyadain, V. S. Jha, M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar and M.K. Sidhanta, felt the need for giving a new orientation to the scheme of adult education and suggested the importance of laying “greater emphasis on the social aspect” and coined the term social education. Defining the objectives and operational details of the programme of social education, the committee aimed at achieving the target of 50 per cent literacy among 12-45 age group within a period of five years. These recommendations, which were accepted by the CABE with minor modifications at its meeting held at Allahabad during 6-9 January 1949 and reiterated by the Conference of Provincial Ministers of Education held in New Delhi during 19-20 February 1949, formed the basis of the social education programme in India during 1950s. However, the credit for popularising the idea and translating it into a programme goes to the then Minister for Education, Maulana Azad, who evinced special interest in the programme and was keen to make “an immediate start with the new scheme” notwithstanding the financial stringency. The fact that a decision was taken to earmark a sum of one crore of rupees for social education (out of the total education budget of Rs.20 crores) shows the official concern for and commitment to adult education. It was stated that 90 per cent of the proposed budget for social education should be distributed among States in proportion to the number of illiterates while the remaining 10 per cent should be reserved for central activities. The deteriorating finances caused by the failure of crops in 1950-51 and rehabilitation of refugees restrained the Government of India from honouring the commitment, and instead, the actual expenditure incurred by the Provinces was reimbursed (Shah, 1995).

The following were the objectives of Social Education as recommended by the Mohan Lal Saxena Committee: a) To instill a consciousness of the rights and duties of citizenship and foster a spirit of service to the community; b) To develop love for democracy and impart an understanding of the way in which democracy functions; c) To disseminate knowledge of the outstanding problems and difficulties facing the country and the world; d) To develop love for the pride in our cultural heritage through the knowledge of our history, geography and culture; e) To teach the simple laws of personal and community health and develop habits of hygiene and cleanliness; f) To foster the growth of the co-operative spirit as a way of life; g) To provide training in crafts both as a hobby and as a means to economic betterment; h) To provide cultural and recreational facilities by way of folk dances, drama, music, poetry, recitation and other ways of spontaneous self-expression; i) To provide through these various activities as well as through reading and discussion groups, an understanding of

the basic moral values; j) To give a reasonable mastery over the tools of learning - reading, writing, simple arithmetics and to create an interest in knowledge; and k) To provide facilities for continuation of education through libraries, discussion groups, clubs and institutions like peoples' Colleges.

The committee also identified five aspects of social education to be the core-curriculum viz., (1) Health and Hygiene, (2) Family and Community living, (3) Vocations, (4) Literacy and Cultural activities, and (5) Recreational activities. In short, the social education defined as a "course of study directed towards the production of consciousness of citizenship among the people and promotion of social solidarity among them" had three aspects: (i) The spread of literacy among grown-up illiterates, (ii) the production of an educated mind in the masses in the absence of literacy education, and (iii) the inculcation of lively sense of rights and duties of citizenship - both as individuals and members of a powerful nation.

The implementation strategies were worked out by the different State governments. The duration of the programme was 180 hours to be spread over 90 days - on an average of 2 hours per day. The teacher-student ratio was 1:30. The programme was to be undertaken especially but not exclusively by the primary school teachers who were paid an honorarium of Rs.10 per month and a recurring allowance of Rs.25, and Rs.11 per year for contingencies. The target group was 12-40 years. A detailed syllabus for the training of instructors was also prepared. The scheme was flexible enough to enable each State to develop a variety of operational strategies. Delhi introduced the education caravan, consisting of four vans, one to serve as a mobile stage, another as a moving cinema and the remaining two as exhibition vans for the promotion of social education in rural areas. The caravan toured 300 villages holding three-day educational melas at one centre during 1949-50. West Bengal and Bihar also emphasised recreational and cultural aspects of social education, while Madras and Bombay concentrated on setting up libraries. U.P. and M.P. organised social education camps during summer vacations. Almost every State had its own programme of social education during 1949-50 (Government of India, 1963).

The programme picked up with the launching of the First Five Year Plan which made a provision of Rs.5 crores for social education. With the creation of a full fledged Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation in 1952 and the integration of social education with the community development programme, more systematic attempts were made to tackle the problem of illiteracy. The integration of social education with the community development programme was based on the premise that any large scale and effective programme for adult literacy must be based on the closest possible co-operation at every level of personnel engaged in education and in community development and for that, social education and adult literacy have to be developed as extension activities undertaken by educational institutions, especially village schools in collaboration with Panchayats, co-operatives and voluntary organisations. The community development programme aimed at "community uplift through community action", covering agriculture, irrigation, communication, education, health, social welfare, etc. The First Five Year Plan emphasised that social education approach must permeate all the programmes of State aid to the people (Government of India, 1952).

The Community Development Programme was conceived as a centre-based programme at block level. A number of blocks constituted a project. Each block on an average covered a population of 66,000. While the Block Development Officer was responsible for the overall implementation of the project in the area, a chief social education officer supervised the social education programme which was carried out at grassroots level by a male and female social education officer. Programme of social education in the blocks included formation of community centres, youth clubs, Mahila Mandals, adult literacy centres, farmers' groups, recreation centres and training of gram sahayaks. While the course content of social education programme under community development did not differ from the earlier one, the duration of the programme was increased from 6 to 10 months and divided into two stages of five months each. Although the main course was completed in the first stage, follow up activities were taken up in the second stage. The basic approach towards social education and budget allocation remaining the same during the First and Second Five Year Plans, there was strengthening of the administrative infrastructure, expansion of training facilities, library system and increased production of audio-visual programmes.

There were several significant achievements in the field of Social education during 1950s. Beginning with 55 selected blocks in 1952, the community development movement extended to 4 lakh villages by the end of the Second Plan. It was estimated that during the First Five Year Plan, nearly 35 lakh illiterates became literate (out of 67 lakhs enrolled in adult literacy centres) whereas during the Second Plan nearly 40 lakh attained literacy. Besides, 63,000 community centres, 454 school-cum-community centres, 55,000 youth clubs, nearly 100 libraries and five Social Education Organisers Training Centres were also established during the First Five Year Plan. Some of the key national level institutions also came up during the 1950s, viz., Literacy House, (1953), National Fundamental Education Centre (1956) and National Book Trust, Central Board of Workers Education (1957).

The Government of India accorded due importance to the production and distribution of suitable literature to neoliterates through a centrally sponsored scheme which provided assistance to several agencies, viz. Mysore State Adult Education Council, Jamia Millia, Indian Adult Education Association, etc. Besides this, the Ministry of Education instituted prizes for authors of best books for neo-literates in different languages and organised workshops in literacy journalism. Central assistance was also provided to voluntary organisations, for production of audio-visual aids, promotion of workers' education, development of rural radio forums and setting up of permanent adult schools on experimental basis (Mohisini, 1993).

Notwithstanding the well defined concept of social education, well conceived programme package and effective leadership of Maulana Azad, the first Education Minister of Government of India, active participation of NGOs and eminent adult educators, viz., Mohan Sinha Mehta, Sohan Singh, T.A. Koshy, B. N. Jha, M. C. Nanavathy, A. R. Deshpande, and the support of UNESCO, and America (Ford Foundation) the programme did not make a dent in rural areas. "Except for certain isolated examples here and there, a large percentage of the rural community has by and large been impervious to the influence of adult literacy

programme.” It was calculated that the benefits of social education programme was actually derived by 0.3% of the population. It was noted that since the key grassroots level workers – Social Education Officers, were overburdened with diverse but immense responsibilities, they failed to cope with the demands specially in the absence of suitable literature, expert guidance and adequate research support (Shah, 1987).

During 1950s, India received international support towards the development of adult education. While a number of Indian adult educators were trained by the American team led by Dr. Frank C. Laubach and Dr. Wealthy Fisher, the Ford Foundation provided grants for setting up Social Education Training Centres. The Indo-American cooperation in adult education did not last long due to political reasons. The only exception being the World Literacy Inc. which continued to provide financial support to Literacy House at Lucknow. Subsequently India received funds from UNESCO for setting up a National Fundamental Education Centre and organisation of a regional seminar on reading materials for neo-literates. While all these international inputs strengthened Indian adult education, it remained basically a centre-based programme and did not develop into a popular movement. Although Dr. Frank Laubach submitted a proposal to the Government of India for launching an All India Literacy Campaign in 1950, it was shelved due to paucity of funds. The official policy revolved around the expansion of elementary education. It was argued by the policy planners that by providing free and compulsory education to all the children by 1960, the problem of illiteracy could be tackled more effectively. The failure to achieve universalisation of elementary education by 1960, the successful emergence of *Gram Shikshan Mohim* and the paucity of resources, limitations of social education programme and the proclamation of Education Policy (1967), all paved the way for change in the adult education concept and policy by mid-1960s (Shah, 1991).

The *Gram Shikshan Mohim* (Village Education Campaign) was the first successful literacy campaign undertaken in independent India during the late 1950s. Masterminded by an enterprising official of the Education Department of Maharashtra-Shri B. R. Patil - the campaign was a resounding success, and gradually spread over the entire state of Maharashtra during 1960s and significantly contributed towards increase of literacy in the state. During 1961-71, the literacy in the state increased by about 10% i.e. from 29.82% to 39.18% as against the 5% increase (from 24.02% to 29.45%) at the national level. It is estimated that about 10 million adults became literate through the campaign. The campaign not only won international recognition in the form of UNESCO Pahalavi Prize for literacy in 1963, but was also considered worth replication in other states by the Planning Commission (Dutta, 1986).

2.4.2 Functional Literacy Programme (1968-1977)

The concept of functional literacy emerged during 1960s. While, the Second World Conference on Adult Education held in Canada in 1960 reaffirmed the importance of closely linking adult education to productive activity, work and development, the World Conference of Education Ministers on “Eradication of illiteracy”, held in Tehran in 1965, defined functional literacy with greater precision and the close link of literacy and social and economic progress was discussed in detail. The conference observed that:

adult literacy, an essential element in general development, must be linked

to economic and social priorities and to present and future need for labour... Rather than an end in itself functional literacy should be regarded as a way of preparing man for a social, civic and economic role that goes far beyond the limits of rudimentary literacy training consisting merely in the teaching of reading and writing. The very process of learning to read and write should be made an opportunity for acquiring information that can immediately be used to improve living standards; reading and writing should lead not only to elementary general knowledge but to training for work, increased productivity, a greater participation in civic life and a better understanding of the surrounding world, and should ultimately open the way to basic human culture (UNESCO, 1965).

The international thinking on adult education had its impact on Indian policy planners. Dr. V. K. R.V. Rao, an economist and a member of the Planning Commission in 1965, ardently supported the idea of functional literacy. The Conference of State Education Ministers organized by the Planning Commission in June 1965, noted that “one of the reasons for the failure of many development schemes like agricultural production, family planning, cooperatives, panchayat raj institutions was the lack of functional literacy among the majority of the population in rural areas”. This new emphasis on the functional approach to adult education was fully endorsed by the Fourth Five Year Plan and the Education Commission (1964-66). To quote the report of the Education Commission:

We do not equate literacy with the mere ability to read and write. Literacy if it is to be worthwhile, must be functional. It should enable the literate not only to acquire sufficient mastery over the tools of literacy but also to acquire relevant knowledge which will enable him to pursue his own interests and ends (Naik, 1968).

Defined as “literacy integrated with the occupation of the learner and directly related to development”, the concept of functional literacy was translated into action when UNESCO designed the Experimental World Literacy Programme (EWLP) which provided an opportunity for India to develop the Farmers Training and Functional Literacy Project (FTFLP). This project, which was in operation during (1968-1977) aimed at improving the efficiency of the farmers in the implementation of the special programme of High Yielding Varieties of wheat that was selected by the Government of India for enhancing agricultural production and development in the context of the Green Revolution. The project had three components viz., (1) farmers training (2) functional literacy and (3) farm broadcasting. Under each, a number of activities were undertaken. Under farmers training, five-day training courses were organized for selected farmers by specialists, besides organizing Charcha Mandals (Discussion Groups) Mahila Mandals (women's groups), conducted tours and periodic field demonstrations. Under farm broadcasting, half an hour programme on technical information was broadcast daily by the All India Radio. The functional literacy programme was woven around the selected themes related to high yielding varieties of seed and farm practices. These three activities were planned in an integrated manner with a view to educating and informing the illiterate farmers about the high yielding varieties of seeds and the details of improved agricultural practices (Government of India, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, 1972).

It was observed that neither the farmers training nor the increased or improved physical inputs could by themselves achieve much if the farmer remained illiterate and hence functional literacy was in-built into the project as a key component with the following objectives. To enable the farmers to (i) read and understand labels on fertilizer bags; (ii) fill up loan application forms, input cards (iii) keep simple account of operations, and (iv) read and make use of simple extension bulletins, rural newspapers, etc. The FTFL project was jointly undertaken by three Ministries - Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Information and Broadcasting, and Education and Culture, and it aimed at training about 5 million farm families in 100 Selected H.Y.P.-districts and imparting functional literacy to one million adults at the cost of ninety million rupees. Apart from Government of India funds, the project also received the UNDP and UNESCO assistance. During the Fourth Plan, Rs.60 million by the Ministry of Agriculture for the farmers training, Rs.20 million by the Ministry of Education for functional literacy and Rs.10 million by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for farm broadcasting were provided for this project (Shah, 1991, *Op. Cit.*).

*The organizational structure and programme components of FTFL project were worked out in detail by the Government of India. The FTFL project was conceived as a centre-based programme with an instructor learner ratio of 1:30. The project was confined to 3 H.Y.P. districts in a State and the maximum number of centres per district was limited to 60 and they were under the charge of a project officer who was assisted by six part-time supervisors (each with 10 centres) or two full time supervisors (each with 30 centres). The duration of the functional literacy programme was one year and it was organized in two phases of six months each. Each phase had 150 hours of effective teaching. The programme was implemented on all working days and on an average of one and half hours daily. The learning materials were region specific and problem oriented and the Directorate of Adult Education, New Delhi, prepared the first book entitled Kisan Saksharata-Pehli Pustak, Teacher's guide and supplementary readers. These materials were prepared as prototypes for easy adaptation to different situations. More than 70 titles were brought out in India. A combination of methods was used in curriculum transaction, viz., demonstration, practical training, oral instruction, audio-visual communication and discussions. The detailed guidelines for the implementation of the project were prepared by the Government of India and the states were requested to follow the directives of the Centre (Government of India, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare. 1972, *Op. Cit.*).*

Commenced as a pilot project in three districts in 1968, the programme expanded during the next ten years and by 1977 covered 144 districts out of 397. It was estimated that on an average 50,000 farm families attended the functional literacy classes each year. During the Fourth Plan nearly 30 lakh farmers joined the functional literacy classes as against the target of 100 lakh, and an expenditure of Rs.80 lakh was incurred as against the proposed outlay of Rs.200 lakh. The project was evaluated at different points of time by national and international agencies. The Pilot evaluation study conducted by the Directorate of Adult Education in 1970 revealed the utility of the functional literacy programme in contributing to agricultural production. The drop-out rate was only 17.5%. The subsequent evaluation conducted by a committee in 1977 noted that funds

provided for the scheme at district level were inadequate and the inter-departmental coordination was far from satisfactory. Besides, the supervisory system was almost non-existent. It was observed that a substantial proportion of the grassroots level workers had no training and in many districts, the follow-up programmes for the neo-literates were found to be weak (Directorate of Adult Education, 1973).

The programme was implemented exclusively through official channels. Although it succeeded in developing skills and disseminating knowledge of improved agricultural practices, among farmers, it had certain limitations since the beneficiaries were mainly from relatively well-off and enterprising farmers who were desirous of introducing new agricultural practices. The programme touched only the fringe of the problem, leaving the mass of the illiterates - exploited marginal farmers and landless agricultural workers - outside its scope. Notwithstanding these limitations, the operationalisation of the project over a decade, did enable a section of Indian adult educators to enhance their professional skills in the integration of the components of literacy and functionality. It also revealed the problems likely to be encountered in any inter-departmental development programme besides upholding the importance of decentralisation of powers and strengthening of the monitoring system.

The concept of functionality found a place in several programmes during 1970s. Functional Literacy for Adult Women was an important project introduced during 1975-76. By 1977, it covered 23 States/Union Territories. Its aim was to impart non-formal education using functional literacy as the means, besides accelerating the participation of adult women in the developmental efforts of the community so as to bring about attitudinal changes among them which would enable women to play their role as citizens. The scheme was conceived as a package of services to adult women in the 15-45 age group and was implemented jointly by the Department of Education and Social Welfare in the experimental Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) project areas. The functional literacy classes were organized by the *Anganwadi* workers of ICDS who were given an additional honorarium of Rs.50 per month. The programme contents included the elements of health and hygiene, food and nutrition, home management and child care, civic and vocational education (Naik, 1968, *Op. Cit.*).

The phase of functional literacy also witnessed the establishment of National Board of Adult Education (1969), Directorate of Adult Education (1971) and emergence of non-formal education programmes. The Central Advisory Board of Education at its meeting held in November 1974 recommended that the exclusive emphasis on formal system of education should be given up and a large element of non-formal education should be introduced within the system. Multiple entry and programmes of part-time and correspondence education should be developed. Besides, the C.A.B.E recommended that functional literacy programme should be planned in relation to various developmental schemes appropriate to rural and urban situations. Hence during the Fifth and Sixth Five Year Plans, efforts were made to integrate adult education with a number of developmental programmes. Directorate of Adult Education identified 65 Schemes/Programmes in different departments of the Government of India which had a substantial component of non-formal education. Some of the significant schemes were *Krishi Vigyan Kendras*, Workers Education programme, Nehru Yuvak Kendra, Satellite Instructional Television Experiment, *Shramik Vidyapeeth*,

Rural Welfare Extension, and Family and Child Welfare project, etc. While the *Krishi Vigyan Kendras* were concerned with technical literacy and aimed at imparting education through work experience to rural youth in agriculture and allied subjects, the *Shramik Vidyapeeth*, were intended to provide integrated education and training courses for different categories of urban workers with a view to improving their professional competency and also enriching their lives.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Space is given below is the question for writing your answer.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit under “Answers to Check Your Progress”.

2) Briefly describe the salient features of Farmers Functional Literacy and Training Programme.

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2.4.3 National Adult Education Programme (1978-1987)

By early 1970s two significant events, Paulo Freire’s writings on conscientisation approach and the deliberations of International Symposium on literacy held in Persepolis in 1975 seem to have influenced the concept of adult education. Viewing education as an element in the process of human liberation, Freire considered that the main task of adult education is to bring about a process of critical reflection that leads to action and change. According to him dialogue and participation are key elements of liberating education and the role of adult educator is to enter into dialogue with illiterates about concrete situations and offer them the instruments with which they can teach themselves to read and write. Freire’s ideology was reaffirmed in the Declaration of Persepolis, which considered literacy to be “not just the process of learning the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic but a contribution to the liberation of man and to his full development.” Further, the Declaration clarified that:

“the concept of functionality must be extended to include all its dimensions political, economic, social and cultural. Just as development is not only economic growth, so literacy must aim above all to arouse in the individual a critical awareness of social reality and to enable him or her to understand, master and transform his or her destiny” (Bataille, 1976).

These overseas ideas had their impact on Indian Adult Education. The scope and significance of combining the twin components of functionality and liberation was realised in 1978 when the then Government in power (Janata Government), emphasised "re-distributive justice" to alleviate poverty and liquidate illiteracy. The Government of India gave top priority to adult education and issued a Policy Statement on Adult Education and formulated the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) in 1978. The conceptual framework of NAEP laid equal emphasis on literacy, functionality and social awareness and visualised adult education as a "means to bring about a fundamental change in the process of socio-economic development, from a situation in which the poor remain passive spectators at the fringe of the development activity to being enabled to be at its centre and as active participants". Emphasising that "literacy ought to be recognised as an integral part of individual's personality, it was assumed that the illiterate and the poor can rise to their own liberation through literacy, dialogue and action". In fact, considering education as a means of man's liberation and tool for human development, was in conformity with ancient Indian adage (*Sa Vidya Ya Vimuktaya*) and the educational philosophies of Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindra Nath Tagore.

The NAEP was mainly conceived on a project pattern with adult education centres functioning as grassroots level units and each of them catering to 25-30 illiterate adults. Initially (1978-80), the duration of the programme was for 10 months (300-500 hours). However, it was extended to three years after the review in 1980 and renamed as Adult Education Programme, according to which the programme was to be operationalised in three stages to be spread over three years. While the first stage of basic literacy was of 300-350 hours' duration, the second and third stages were of 150 and 100 hours respectively. The contents of the first year programme included basic literacy, numeracy, knowledge about health, family life, vocations related to the learners' background and laws relevant for family life. Since the focus of the second and third year programme was on reinforcement of literacy and improvement of vocational studies, no specific content was laid down and freedom was given to the organizing agencies to introduce locally relevant reading materials for the neo-literates. Subsequently the duration of the programme was reduced to two years (Government of India, 1978).

Though equal emphasis was laid on literacy, functionality and social awareness, in the course of operationalisation, functionality was relegated into background. The Review Committee on NAEP observed that:

"the programme so far has largely remained confined to literacy, the development orientation of the programme has been superficial and the functional components in the course almost non-existent... while the importance of functionality and awareness as integral parts of the adult education programme is being increasingly recognised, much efforts would be needed to achieve this integration into practice" (Government of India, 1980).

The subsequent operationalisation of adult education programmes revealed several drawbacks. The study conducted by the Programme Evaluation Organisation of the Planning Commission found that in as many as 45 per cent of centres, the functionality part of curriculum was not being followed though over 90 per cent of the learners reported increase in social awareness. A number

of evaluation studies sponsored by the Department of Education (MHRD) during 1980s revealed that “functionality and awareness component generally got neglected or poorly reflected” and achievement level of learners varied from 40 to 60 per cent (Mathur and Jambhulkar 1985). Since large sections of the poor and illiterate masses identified NAEP as their programme, “the drop-out rate has been much lower than was feared”. The high level of participation of women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, involvement of voluntary agencies have been a significant achievement of the NAEP. Besides, the resource base of adult education was also strengthened by setting up the State Resource Centres. The involvement of the selected Social Science Research Organisations in the evaluation of adult education programmes gave a tremendous boost to the expansion of adult education research. During 1980s as many as 56 evaluation studies were conducted by different institutions in India (Anil Bordia, 1982).

The 1980s also witnessed the expansion of University Adult Education in India when the University Grants Commission (under the leadership of Dr. Madhuri Shah) provided hundred percent grants to universities to take up adult, continuing education and extension activities with the active participation of university community. Of the 226 universities, deemed universities and institutions of national importance in India (during 1995-96), 93 set up separate Departments of Adult Continuing Education. The expansion of University Adult Education since 1978 had its impact on the progress of research. Compared to 41 Ph.D. theses on adult education brought out during 1946-79, as many as 139 theses came out during 1980-98. With the launching of the Mass Programme of Functional Literacy in 1986, the scope for participation of students, both college and schools, increased tremendously. The expansion of Nehru Yuvak Kendras provided an opportunity to non-student youth to participate in literacy programme and other developmental activities (Shah, 1990).

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Space is given below the question for writing your answer.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit under “Answers to Check Your Progress”.

3) What were the salient features of National Adult Education Programme?

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2.4.4 Programmes of National Literacy Mission (1988-2007)

Upholding literacy as an important component of human resource development, the Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90) stated the need for strengthening the programme for training in functional skills relevant to economic activities and adopting the strategy of mass movement to cover the huge target of illiterates. The importance of literacy was reiterated by the *National Policy on Education* (1986) which envisaged that adult education would be a means for reducing economic, social and gender disparities, and nation as a whole would assume the responsibility for providing resource support. Working out the implementation strategies, the *Programme of Action* recommended that “emphasis in adult education programme should be on skill development and creation of awareness among the learners of the national goals, of development programmes, and for liberation from oppression.” Subsequently, when promotion of literacy became an important national mission, the document on *National Literacy Mission* (NLM) specified that the objective of NLM would be to impart functional literacy to 80 million illiterates in 15-35 age group by 1995 through a variety of means and with the active involvement of all sections of society. The concept of functional literacy envisaged under NLM was much broader than the earlier concept and included the following four aspects: (i) achieving self-reliance in basic numeracy, (ii) becoming aware of the cause of one’s deprivation and moving towards amelioration of conditions through organisation and participation in the process of development, (iii) acquiring skills to improve the economic status and general wellbeing and (iv) imbibing the values of national integration, conservation of the environment, women’s equality, observance of small family norm, etc. This expanded concept of functional literacy may be termed as developmental literacy in view of its coverage of all aspects of human life and emphasis on the promotion of national concerns. Thus, developmental literacy may be defined as literacy for all round development of human beings and nations. By enabling individuals to lead an enlightened, productive and socially conscious lives, the developmental literacy aims at the development of nation as a whole (Government of India, 1988).

With the change in the concept, the operational strategies were also modified to make it a mass movement through total literacy campaigns. However, the breakthrough came with an experiment in mass literacy campaign spearheaded by an NGO, Kerala Shashtra Sahitya Parishad, in Ernakulam District in 1989 with the objective of making the entire district fully literate within a period of one year. The campaign was implemented with the active cooperation of the district administration and all sections of society in a time bound, volunteer-based and cost-effective manner. The campaign approach was characterised by large scale mobilisation through a multifaceted communication strategy which fully exploited the traditional folk culture. The instant success of the campaign approach had a snowballing effect and similar campaigns were launched in quick succession all over the country. Of the 525 districts in India, more than 80% (447 districts) launched Total Literacy Campaigns (TLC) by March 1998. During the decade 1988-98, 68.5 million learners were made literate as against the target of 100 million by 1999, which is a remarkable achievement given the size of the country and its diversities in terms of region, religion and culture. Although a perusal of the 130 evaluation reports of TLC districts, shows that only 25% of districts have succeeded in achieving a literacy rate of above 80%. The *Census Report of 2001*, reveals that the literacy percentage increased from 52 to 65.38

during 1991-2001. Besides, the cumulative number of literacy volunteers mobilised since the launching of the literacy campaigns has exceeded ten million. Thus, the literacy campaign represents the largest ever civil mobilisation in the history of the country (Report of Expert Group, 1994).

Consequent upon the successful implementation of literacy campaign in the Ernakulam District in Kerala state and its emergence as the first fully literate District in India, the Total Literacy Campaign has been adopted by the NLM as the principal strategy for eradication of illiteracy in the country. As on March 2000, the TLC had been launched in 526 districts (out of 588 districts) in the country. Besides, the NLM supported the Rural Functional Literacy programme (RFLP) in 30 districts (located in six states, viz. Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur, Nagaland and Sikkim), which are sparsely populated and hilly areas where campaign mode could not be adopted. The RFLP is a centre-based programme where an instructor imparts literacy to 20-30 illiterates for two hundred hours spread over a year. Apart from these two major programmes several state Governments, voluntary agencies and educational institutions have been implementing various types of small scale projects and innovative programmes. During the period 1988-2000, NLM succeeded in imparting literacy to 849.39 lakh persons through various programmes (National Literacy Mission, 1998).

With a view to consolidating the gains of literacy campaigns and programmes and providing the neo-literates further opportunities for learning, the NLM launched a scheme of Continuing Education in 1995 (which was revised in 1999), which envisaged the setting up of a Continuing Education (CE) Centre for a population of 2000-2500. The CE Centre is conceived as an institutional mechanism which would provide a range of basic literacy, post literacy and target specific programmes covering equivalency, income generation, special interest and skill oriented programmes. Each Centre is managed by two part time functionaries, viz. *Prerak* (Facilitator) and an Assistant *Prerak*. For every 8-10 CE centres, one Centre is designated as a nodal CE centre whose functionaries are entrusted with the overall responsibility of monitoring and supervision of the centres. As on December 2006, there were 2,18,000 CE Centres in 321 districts in India. Further details of the CE programmes are given in the unit on Current Policy and Programmes (Planning Commission, 2007).

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Space is given below the question for writing your answer.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit under "Answers to Check Your Progress".

4) What were the objectives of the concept of functionality envisaged under National Literacy Mission?

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2.5 INSTITUTIONALISATION OF ADULT EDUCATION: AN OVERVIEW

The history of adult education bears testimony to the development and demolition of infrastructures at different periods. During 1950s, a national level institution, National Fundamental Education Centre and several regional Training Centres for Social Education officers and a number of Janata Colleges were set up only to be folded up within a decade due to the change in the policy of Government of India. Since institutions take a long gestation period to develop professional excellence and ethos, the continuation of the National Fundamental Education Centre and its development into a full-fledged national institution would have strengthened the professional base of Indian adult education. One of the reasons for the slow pace of the growth of adult education as a distinct profession may be traced to the absence of special institutions during 1960-80. This trend changed in 1980s when several State Resource Centres and University Departments of Adult Education were set up. Although several State Governments had developed adequate administrative infrastructure for the Social Education Programme during 1950s, they were dismantled during 1960s when the programme was terminated. The process of redeveloping the infrastructure at State level began only in 1980s. At the national level, though a National Institute of Adult Education was established in 1991 to undertake research, training and publications, it was closed by mid-1990s. In fact, there has been no long-term vision of institutional development in the field of Indian adult education. This is mainly due to the policy of conceiving and implementing adult education as short-term activities or plan projects. Unless adult education is planned as a regular ongoing activity consisting of basic literacy, post literacy and continuing education with a provision for permanent professional institutions for the training of manpower at national and state levels, Indian adult education will remain as a marginal activity with an uncertain future.

2.6 LET US SUM UP

The growth and development of adult education in India during the last hundred years reveal certain trends and raises a number of issues. During the past, the concept, policy and programmes of adult education in India have undergone several but significant changes. Of the various national and international forces and factors that have influenced the character and development of Indian adult education, the changing policies of Government of India, role of International Organisations like UNESCO, the ideas of Paulo Freire were crucial. Besides several key individuals viz; Humayun Kabir, A.R. Deshpande, Sohan Singh, V. K. R. V. Rao, P. C. Chunder, Madhuri Shah, Anil Bordia, Lakshmidar Mishra, Mohan Sinha Mehta, S. C. Dutta, Malcolm S. Adisheshaiah, Chitra Naik, Ramlal Parikh, Bhaskar Chatterjee have also played significant role in the promotion of Adult Education programmes at different points of time.

Four main concepts can be discerned in the history of Indian adult education, viz; basic literacy (1882-1947), civic literacy (1948-67), functional literacy (1968-77) and developmental literacy (1978-till date). Evolved at different points of time, these concepts were operationalised into a variety of programmes, projects and schemes, viz; Night schools, Social Education, Farmers' Education and *Functional Literacy, Rural Functional literacy, Mass Programme of Functional*

Literacy, National Adult Education Programme, Total Literacy Campaigns and Continuing Education. Besides these, a number of innovative projects were also implemented by official and non-governmental organizations, the most noteworthy being *Mahila Samakhyas* Project.

Of all the events, the launching of the National Literacy Mission in 1988 and the emergence of Ernakulam as the first fully literate district in India in 1989 stand out. While the former enhanced the status of adult education programme and assured political and policy support, the latter sparked off a series of literacy campaigns which led to the eradication of illiteracy from a number of districts. Of the several literacy campaigns four (Ernakulam, Burdwan, Pondichery, Bhav Nagar) have received UNESCO Literacy awards and recognition during 1990-1994. As observed by the Arun Ghosh Committee, these campaigns had a positive impact on the enrolment of children in primary schools, improving caste and communal relations, empowerment of women, besides sensitising the bureaucracy to the concerns of common man and above all placing literacy on the national agenda. The positive impact of literacy on development becomes clear when we examine the census data of 1981-1991 which brings out the correlation between literacy and a number of developmental indicators. The National Family Health Survey of 1999, bears testimony to the positive impact of literacy on several social and economic factors such as health and nutrition in relation to women.

Two clear trends are evident in the history of adult education in India. While Indian literacy campaigns are characterised by short periods (1-2 years) of intense activity followed by an uncertain interlude and final tapering off, the centre-based programmes have followed a slow but steady path for about a decade. Of the different major centre-based programmes, projects and schemes viz., Social education, Farmers Education and Functional Literacy, Rural Functional Literacy; the first one had the longest run spreading over the first three Five Year Plans. All the three programmes were characterized by ambitious plans, targets and outlays. Their achievements were, however, modest. Though during the decade 1979-89, the Rural Functional Literacy Project enrolled 249.14 lakhs adult learners, the number of those made literate was only 99.38 lakh. There was a wide variation in coverage of different programmes during 1980s. Against the target of covering 110 million adults during 1981-82 to 1985-86, only 16 million were reported to have been made literate. The average number of persons rendered literate per year declined from 49 Lakhs in 1985-88 to 44 Lakhs in 1988-90. Of the 38 million adults estimated to have been covered during the Seventh Five Year Plan, only 23 million (61 per cent) were made literate. In short, there was considerable variation in the achievements of adult education programmes. It seems that there was an official obsession with targets since most of the evaluations and reviews hardly provided any details of qualitative achievement. It may be argued that one of the causes for the failure of adult education programme may be due to its poor quality and hence the collection of qualitative data becomes all the more important.

2.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- 1) The main thrust of Adult Education in India during the 19th Century revolved around basic literacy. Night schools were the key adult education institutions in British India. They were few and modelled after British Adult Schools and were mainly setup by the Christian missionaries, nationalist leaders,

socio-religious organisations and intellectuals. The official policy was to encourage them wherever practical and permit as much flexibility as possible in school hours. The core curriculum included rudiments of reading, writing and numeracy and was covered within a minimum of 100 days. Average instruction per day was 2-3 hours duration. The Indian Education Commission (1882) observed that every province in British India had provisions for setting up night schools and Bombay and Madras had 134 and 312 night schools with an enrolment of 4000 and 7000 adults respectively.

- 2) Defined as “literacy integrated with the occupation of the learner and directly related to development”, the concept of functional literacy was translated into action when the UNESCO designed the Experimental World Literacy Programme which provided an opportunity for India to develop Farmers’ Training and Functional Literacy Project (FTFLP). This project, which was in operation during (1968-1977) aimed at improving the efficiency of the farmers in the implementation of the special programme of High Yielding Varieties of wheat that was selected by the Government of India for enhancing agricultural production and development in the context of the Green Revolution. The project had three components, viz., (1) farmers’ training (2) functional literacy and (3) farm broadcasting. Under each, a number of activities were undertaken. Under farmers’ training, five-day training courses were organized for selected farmers by specialists, besides organizing Charcha Mandals (Discussion Groups) Mahila Mandals (women’s groups), conducted tours and periodic field demonstrations. Under farm broadcasting, half an hour programme on technical information was broadcast daily by the All India Radio. The functional literacy programme was woven around the selected themes related to high yielding varieties of seed and farm practices. These three activities were planned in an integrated manner with a view to educating and informing the illiterate farmers about the high yielding varieties of seeds and the details of improved agricultural practices.
- 3) The NAEP was mainly conceived on a project pattern with adult education centres functioning as grassroots level units and each of them catering to 25-30 illiterate adults. Initially (1978-80), the duration of the programme was for 10 months (300-500 hours). However, it was extended to three years after the review in 1980 and renamed as Adult Education Programme according to which the programme was to be operationalised in three stages to be spread over three years. While the first stage of basic literacy was of 300-350 hours’ duration, the second and third stages were of 150 and 100 hours respectively. The contents of the first year programme included basic literacy, numeracy, knowledge about health, family life, vocations related to the learners’ background and laws relevant for family life. Since the focus of the second and third year programme was on reinforcement of literacy and improvement of vocational studies, no specific content was laid down and freedom was given to the organizing agencies to introduce locally relevant reading materials for the neo-literates. Subsequently the duration of the programme was reduced to two years. Though equal emphasis was laid on literacy, functionality and social awareness, in the course of operationalisation, functionality was relegated to the background.
- 4) The objective of NLM was to impart functional literacy to 80 million illiterates in 15-35 age group by 1995 through a variety of means and with

the active involvement of all sections of society. The concept of functional literacy envisaged under NLM was much broader than the earlier concept and included the following four aspects: (i) achieving self-reliance in basic numeracy, (ii) becoming aware of the cause of one's deprivation and moving towards amelioration of conditions through organisation and participation in the process of development, (iii) acquiring skills to improve the economic status and general wellbeing and (iv) imbibing the values of national integration, conservation of the environment, women's equality, observance of small family norm etc...

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UNIT 3 GLOBAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL SCENARIOS ON LITERACY

Structure

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Objectives
- 3.2 Global Scenario
 - 3.2.1 Need for Literacy
 - 3.2.2 Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE)
- 3.3 Regional Scenario
 - 3.3.1 Differences in Regional Literacy Rates
 - 3.3.2 Narrowing of Gender Gap in Literacy Rates
 - 3.3.3 Numbers of Illiterates High in Some Regions
- 3.4 National Scenario
 - 3.4.1 Literacy Practices in India
 - 3.4.2 Long-term Objectives and Commitments for Literacy
 - 3.4.3 Issues of Language and Gender
- 3.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.6 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 3.7 References

3.0 INTRODUCTION

Unit 3 provides learners with an overview of the state of literacy world wide. It discusses the vision and need for literacy especially in contemporary knowledge societies, and the necessity of working for literacy for one's well-being. It guides you to develop your own definition of literacy, describe different forms of literacy, and to apply your understanding of adult literacy learning to global, regional and national scenarios. It is assumed that as an adult educator you are already aware of the national scenario on literacy in India. For example, you are of course familiar with the facts that starting from Mahatma Gandhi's basic education in 1937 (when he called for a coordinated teaching-learning process of hand, body and soul and learning by doing) and the Kothari Commission Report in 1966, to the Education for All (EFA) Declaration of Government of India in 2005 – all emphasized the importance of literacy. This is why Unit 3 attempts to lead you to build your own perspective of literacy in the light of global, regional and national developments to achieve universal literacy.

3.1 OBJECTIVES

You may already know that various stages of evolution in explaining and defining literacy as per the needs and demands of the period, have taken place and they have been influenced by academic research, international policy agendas and national priorities from time to time. You also know that a commonly held viewpoint is that literacy means developing or acquisition of reading and writing skills and numeric skill. Unit 3 provides more value addition to your perspective of literacy.

After studying this unit, you are expected to be able to:

- Explain the concept of literacy and its importance at the global, regional and national levels;
- Explain the need for literacy;
- Identify the various forms and types of literacy;
- Apply various approaches to implement adult literacy programmes; and
- Develop your own understanding of issues related to literacy.

3.2 GLOBAL SCENARIO

Before we start our overview of global scenario on literacy, it is essential to build a perspective on literacy discourse. In the field of literacy, we are much used to dividing the world into illiterates and literates. Generally we tend to follow the global pattern of perceiving in society such binary oppositions as between underdeveloped and developed, between primitive and modern. Just as there are worldwide programmes to remove underdevelopment and thereby usher in modern development so are there many plans to end illiteracy. In this sense for most of us the distinction between illiteracy and literacy is the same as between primitive and modern or between underdeveloped and developed. This perception makes universal literacy as a first condition for development. Such a view of literacy begs questions like: 'How does one define literacy? Do underdeveloped countries wait till they achieve universal literacy before they can engage in development activities? Why have traditional adult literacy learning initiatives not brought in any significant way either universal literacy or enabled participants to acquire new skills to improve their well-being? These are some difficult questions that we need to consider as we construct our perspective on literacy. For academic debate on this subject you may like to go through Box 3.1.

Box 3.1 Debate on Literacy

In academia, social scientists like Goody (1977) and Olson (1977) found a link between cognitive abilities and learning to be literate and then they pointed out how through times immemorial literacy has been important for the way a society works. Global concerns with literacy campaigns also reflect the popular assumption about utmost importance of literacy for functioning of a society. Such ideas as promoted by Goody, Olson and Farrell were in the past a basis for planning literacy programs but in contemporary conditions, differences between literates and non-literates do not follow the assumptions of the metaphor of the "great divide" between literates and illiterates.

The results of the tests Scribner and Cole (1981: 13-17) carried out in three areas of communicative skills, memory and language analysis during their study of Vai peoples of Liberia made clear that 'specific practices promote specific skills' and that is why the claims of literacy thesis are not tenable. In the light of the hold of cognition thesis of literacy and its sway over policy makers, the doubt arose in the mind about literacy being over-rated.

Findings of Scribner and Cole (1981: 13-17) that the distinction between illiteracy and literacy may not be appropriate under conditions when reading and writing of a text is not the sole source of information and knowledge, are tenable because today people receive information and knowledge from

innumerable sources, including those that do not require the ability to read and write. In view of the sophistication of “oral” culture in India (also see Finnegan 1999), it is not surprising to find the entire corpus of Vedic literature surviving for centuries without being written up by its creators. Mahatma Gandhi once said, “Illiteracy is a curse in our country.” At the same time he went on to proclaim, “Literacy in itself is no education.” For Gandhi, “Literacy is not the end of education or even the beginning.” He elaborated that “Literacy must be one of the many means for intellectual development, but we have had in the past the intellectual giants who were illiterate.” Gandhi espoused a well-integrated concept of cultural literacy.

It is important that we do not ignore the findings of new researches while re-formulating our plans for literacy on the ground that these are simply academic discussions and have nothing to do with actual practical work of achieving the goal of universal literacy. In fact so called academic discussions of assumptions underlying literacy programs help us to escape the route of unproductive activities and gain control and knowledge of what we plan to do.

An international perspective on adult literacy and post-literacy is indeed a guide for developing one’s own ideas on how to go about your professional work as an adult educator. Reading through UNESCO documents gives a feeling of satisfaction that the international organization has elaborate plans of large-scale collaboration to bring about universal literacy by 2015. However, in the light of utter hopelessness of the situation on the ground, UNESCO documents appear to be full of false hopes. Adult educators have begun to raise basic questions and articulate their views in the context of literacy that can pull people out of poverty.

You are an adult educator. As you know, Professor Amartya Sen, the 1998 Nobel laureate in Economics, recalled in his message at the celebrations for 2002 International Literacy Day, “There is an old Bengali saying that knowledge is a very special commodity: the more you give away, the more you have left. Imparting education not only enlightens the receiver, but also broadens the giver - the teachers, the parents, the friends.”

Some questions arise in the mind. Is Amartya Sen referring to adult educators? Do you have confidence in the role of adult education as it exists today? Or, is it necessary to go beyond its current status? With a co-learner, discuss the following quotation from the speech by John Daniel (2003). What does he mean by these statements?

“... adult educators have a reputation for being boring, sanctimonious, backward looking and paternalist. They have a propensity to miss the boat when new developments of importance in adult education appear on the scene. This is not a good reputation to have, especially if we want to influence governments and the wider society.”

You may not agree with what John Daniel has to say about adult educators. In fact, I too do not agree with him. All the same let us try and make out what he meant when he spoke the above words about adult educators. Do they ring a bell in our minds? Is there some truth lurking behind them? About twenty Delhi-based adult educators participated in a workshop, held in January 2006 at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Well, some participants looked bored

if not boring, while some were making a show of being keen, serious and committed. In their responses to questions about contemporary social reality, many of them were backward-looking and paternalistic. Adult educators have been described to me as a 'lazy lot' who would not be up to 'reflecting' and answering the 'check your progress' questions. So may be John Daniel was just being blunt and calling a spade a spade. Or, he may be simply trying to shake us up and exhort us to take up the challenge of universal literacy. Whichever way it is, I suppose the test is right here. Let us find out how many learners of Unit 3 actually work on defining literacy.

You can also compare John Daniel's statements with those of H. S. Bhola (2005: 67). He is well known among adult educators in India and abroad and he said,

Adult educators in India have to understand Globalization in general and how it has influenced Indian politics, economy and health services, education—and adult education—in particular. ... As activists, Indian adult educators must work to ensure that the position regarding its political economy India is indeed protected; and that the state is not allowed to withdraw from its functions that have traditionally become a part of the social contract between the state and its citizens. They must re-commit themselves to adult education and lifelong education and press on the state to allocate enough resources to revive the objectives and operations of the National Literacy Mission and design and launch new programmes and projects of adult education for poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

Do Bhola's words inspire you to carry forward your professional pursuits with new ideas about adult literacy learning? Alternatively, would you like to form your own perspective on global, regional and national scenario on literacy? Let us proceed to initiate the process whereby you construct your own perspective.

It is well known that in the international arena UNESCO started supporting the spread of adult education as part of a concerted effort to advance basic education after the Second World War. The first global survey of adult literacy, covering over sixty countries, was published in 1957. By then the world leaders and policy makers realized that education and literacy could better enable individuals to participate in and benefit from a modernizing economy. The second-half of the twentieth century witnessed international policy community stressing on the role of literacy in economic growth and national development especially in newly independent countries. In the mid-1960s, in trying to cope with the development hopes of Third World nations, economic functionality came to be the focus, though mention was also made of social, and cultural needs of human beings. The Teheran Conference of 1965 asked that functional literacy - now defined as economic functionality - be in the centre of global efforts. The Teheran Conference Report (1965) accepted functional literacy "as an essential element in overall development ... closely linked to economic and social priorities and to present and future manpower needs".

In 1978, the General Conference of UNESCO adopted a definition of functional literacy which is still in use as 'A person is functionally literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his (or her) group, community and also for enabling him (or her) to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his (or her) own and the community's development.'

In 1958 at the General Conference of UNESCO the standard definition of literacy emerged which is: 'A person is literate who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his (or her) everyday life.' The definition of literacy sometimes extends to basic arithmetic and other life skills. This definition became a yardstick for measuring literacy in national censuses. As you are well aware, this understanding of literacy which emphasized on an exclusively skills-based view captured the attention of researchers during 1960s and 1970s. Further elaborated to use and apply skills in meaningful ways, the notion of functional literacy gained ground on the basis of linking literacy to productivity and overall socio-economic development. To use literacy in social and cultural context has also been a perspective among recent developments. Literacy has also been viewed by many educators as an active process of learning involving social awareness and critical reflection which in turn would promote social change. The Brazilian educator Paulo Freire advocated integrated notions of active learning within a particular socio-cultural set up, as he wrote: 'Every reading of the word is preceded by a reading of the world'.

But, some of you may say that in order to cope with the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) age of the twenty-first century we need to have something more than the basic skills for survival. Isn't that so? The answer to this question will depend on how you wish to define literacy. Some of you may have come across the concept of 'multiple literacy' which is related to technological, health, information, media, visual, scientific and other contexts and more suited for life in the twenty-first century. Emphasis is placed not only on reading and writing, but also on skills and practices relevant to the changing demands of community life. With the emphasis on adult literacy skills in evolving labor markets and knowledge-based societies during the 1980s and 1990s, the Jomtien Conference at Thailand in 1990 for Education for All (EFA) placed literacy within the broader context of meeting the basic learning needs of every child, youth and adult. It stated that these needs comprise both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeric, and problem solving) and the basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning.' This concept of basic learning needs in terms of learning tools and learning content is invariably subject to interpretation by implementing agencies. In this sense, no one definition of literacy can reflect all its aspects. Even the EFA Global Monitoring Report's matter-of-fact definition of literacy does not lend itself to a universal and standard measurement of literacy. Also in normal process of learning one measures achievement by carrying out and completing a task, while in formal system of adult literacy learning there are formal tests to measure success. In a way we may speak of the need to enlarge the scope of externally planned and assisted adult literacy learning to include informal learning whereby literacy learning becomes a part of our social skills learning.

The above approach to learning alludes to the concept of lifelong learning that has now become the buzz word in discourse on education. As a result many adult education departments in educational institutions of higher education have even converted themselves into departments of lifelong learning. So you have now 'lifelong learning discourse' (See Rogers, 2002 and 2003) in which adult literacy learning has to be contextualized in terms of adult learners' perception of themselves and their self-created goals.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit under “Answers to Check Your Progress”.

1. *Design*
 2. *THE DESIGN*

3.2.1 Need for Literacy

At present, 85 per cent of populations with insufficient literacy competencies live in thirty-five countries (see Annex 1 of LIFE,2006). Planners and policy makers consider that relevant policy measures, well-planned programs and

sustained allocation of sufficient resources are needed to ensure that effective learning opportunities are provided to those without literacy competencies. They do not as such mention the actual use of new skills. It is recognized that women and girls are the largest group without access to education and they need focused attention, for their personal development and for their role as mothers, and as citizens. But we do not find any mention of women and girls encumbered with the responsibilities of collecting firewood, water for sheer survival. Will reading, writing and numeric help them getting firewood and water with less exertion? Of course, we need to also give priority to other excluded and disadvantaged groups, such as ethnic minorities, rural populations, indigenous people, people living with HIV/AIDS and disabilities. Conventional literacy programs with their focus on reading, writing and numeric can help only a few while focus on effective developmental activities can address most of those mentioned above. In a way, if we were to give the need for just literacy a back seat and concentrate on effective developmental activities, it would be easier to promote the cause of universal literacy.

Given the fact that literacy is a low priority on the development and the education agendas in many countries and consequently is a weak link in the global movement towards achieving Education for All (EFA), we may rather consider a model of multiple adult literacies whereby participants engage primarily in different activities and learn reading, writing and numeric in the context of those activities. The following statements reflect a similar view.

“Literacy is not a pre-condition for the spread of some form of basic knowledge however much it would be facilitated by literacy.” (UNICEF, 1990: 53-54).

“Literacy is neither an entry requirement, nor necessary for the clientele to learn. ... the facilitation of adult and continuing learning can be provided without first teaching learners to read and write.” (Bas, 1991, cited in Lynch, 1997: 90).

“While literacy is a pre-requisite to ‘schoolability’, it is not crucial to either the ability or the need of non-literates to learn.” (Grandstaff, 1976: 300).

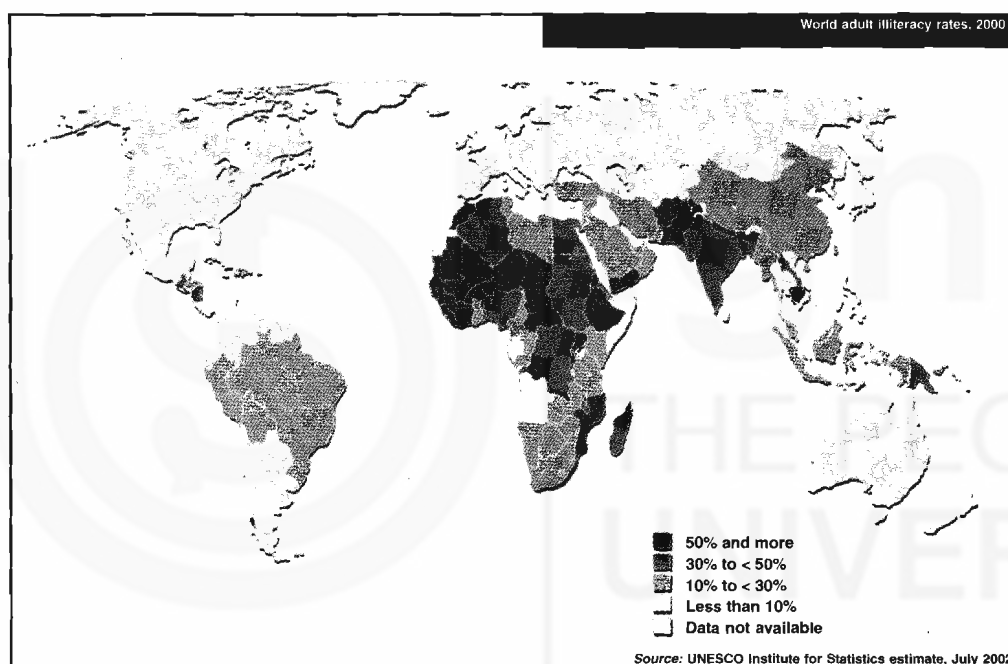
In view of the idea of multiple literacies, let us have a critical look at Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) which is a global strategic framework for the implementation of the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD 2003–2012). It is supported and led by UNESCO. As an integral component of EFA, UNLD provides both a platform and an impetus for achieving all six goals of the Dakar Framework for Action, promoting literacy under the banner ‘Literacy as Freedom’. The UNLD reaffirms ‘that literacy for all is at the heart of basic education for all and that creating literate environments and societies is essential for achieving the goals of eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy’ (United Nations, 2002).

3.2.2 Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE)

Let us recognize the fact that despite the importance of literacy for the achievement of global development objectives, many countries do not have enough resources and capacity to address the challenge. LIFE will be supported over ten years to implement some of the recommendations highlighted in the UNLD framework.

LIFE specifically aims to contribute to the empowerment of women, out of-school girls and their families, especially in rural areas, and of those with insufficient or no literacy skills – often the poorest and most marginalized members of society. Their empowerment in turn can have a positive impact on the quality of the lives of their families, poverty reduction, socio-economic development, and school enrolment of their children. Taking into account the principles put forward by the Delors Commission, LIFE will promote literacy throughout life so that women and men can engage in ‘learning to be’, ‘learning to live together’, ‘learning to do’ and ‘learning to know’ (UNESCO, 1996). LIFE will be planned and operationalized alongside other EFA initiatives, especially the Teacher Training Initiative in Sub-Saharan Africa and EDUCAIDS, the Global Initiative on HIV/AIDS and Education.

The map given below shows the world adult literacy rates in 2000. You can see at a glance your country’s adult literacy status. Obviously, we begin to feel a little uncomfortable when we look in global terms at the current status of adult literacy in India.



This situation brings home the important concern of training adult educators so that they can improve the current growth of literacy in our country. In order to operationalize plans for creating a literate society, the initiative of training adult educators is as important in India as it is in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is so because new developments of importance in adult education have appeared and it is time to make sure that we do not miss them. Adult educators cannot afford to project the image of ‘being boring, sanctimonious, backward looking and paternalist’ (Daniel, 2003) and not notice new developments occurring in their field of activities.

Literacy meets a wide spectrum of individual needs and development goals. Your definition of literacy (hopefully already worked out by you in Activity 1.2) most likely reflects a much broader understanding of literacy where literacy stands for several types of skills. The concept of ‘multiple literacies’ can be used if you think it fits your description of literacy.

The term ‘literacy’ is often used as a metaphor, as we say computer literacy or environmental literacy or legal literacy or gender literacy, etc. Here, literacy is

used more in the sense of skill. Is literacy something different for adult educators? Does it mean only the ability to read and write texts? Is literacy the same as 'awareness'? Is it not that one can be aware but not literate or one can be literate and not aware? To answer these questions we need to consider and be clear about the discourse on various approaches to literacy. For this purpose you may put your thinking antennae up and look into the current and previous practices of operationalizing the concept of literacy. For achieving tangible results, you would need to look into objectives of adult literacy learning programmes and the measures for deciding on their success.

The following examples show that literacy is important but not a pre-requisite. It can take place as and when required.

- In Nirantar a group of women have learnt about maintaining water pumps and in the process they learnt literacy skills as well.
- In Bangladesh, a group of men organized and operated a tempo service and as they made profits, they learnt also how to read and write so they could sustain their operations.
- In Nepal, a group of women wanted to learn to sew but they could not read the sewing manual so they were told to first learn to read and write. They lost their interest in sewing and their efforts to acquire literacy skills did not also proceed well.
- Lalita Ramdas found that literacy classes could continue only as long as the activity helped to find work. If no remuneration was found, adult educators were told to go away and teach children only. As a result Ramdas had to re-think her approach to literacy.

Let us now turn to the regional scenario on literacy.

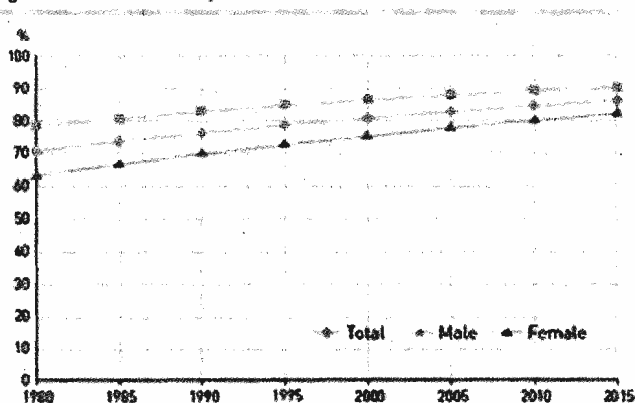
3.3 REGIONAL SCENARIO

It is well known that the overall world adult literacy rates do not reflect regional variations and we need to separately discuss the regional scenario on literacy.

3.3.1 Differences in Regional Literacy Rates

The *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002* estimates that the overall world adult literacy rate in 2000 was 79.7% – women 74.2% and men 85.2%. Past and projected improvements in world literacy rates are shown below:

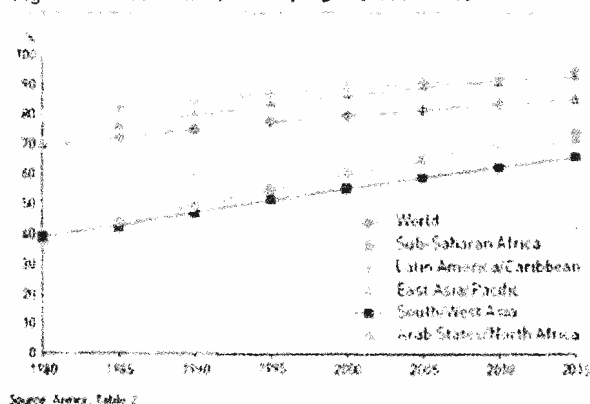
Figure 3.1: Adult literacy rates worldwide (1980-2015)



Source: Annex, Table 2.

As indicated above, the figures mask large regional differences, with the lowest overall rate in South and West Asia (55.3%), and the highest in Central Asia (99.6%). Sub-Saharan Africa showed the biggest increase over two decades. The following chart projects trends to 2015 on the basis of past experience:

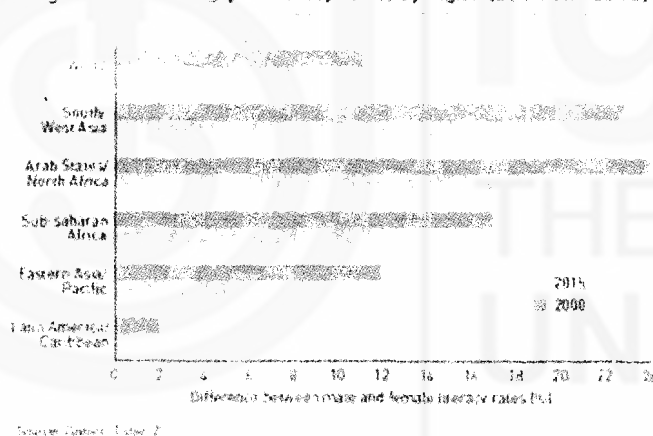
Figure 3.2: Adult literacy rates by region (1980-2015)



3.3.2 Narrowing of Gender Gap in Literacy Rates

It is noteworthy that the gender gap in literacy has narrowed in all regions, and it is expected that the trend will continue to 2015:

Figure 3.3: Gender gap in literacy rates, by region (2000 and 2015)



These trends and projections give us reason for hope and optimism regarding progress in literacy. Though gender differences in literacy rates are more marked among adults, there is now almost no gender difference in literacy rates of 15-24 year olds in many regions of the world. However, the absolute numbers of illiterates remain obstinately high. Of an estimated figure of 875 million illiterate adults in the year 2000, nearly two-thirds were women. It has been projected that the fastest increases in literacy rates among adult women will take place in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab States.

Interestingly, in the Indian state of Rajasthan it is found that there is no positive correlation between high literacy and low gender gap. The situation of higher gender gap that prevailed in 1991 has changed and some of the high-literacy districts now show a lower gender gap. A stage has been reached where overall literacy cannot increase without a significant increase in female literacy. The emphasis therefore has to shift to women's education.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Space given below the question is for writing your answer.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit under "Answers to Check Your Progress".

- 2) Which one of the four so-called 'bimaru' states of India made a steady progress in rates of female literacy and reflected a relatively lower degree of gender gap?

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3.3.3 Numbers of Illiterates High in Some Regions

Literacy efforts have not kept pace with population growth – in South and West Asia and in Sub-Saharan Africa numbers of illiterates have increased since 1990. The following table compares numbers of male and female illiterates by region for 1990 and 2000.

	Numbers of adult illiterates - 000's					
	1990			2000		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
World	879130	324914	554216	861966	3133231	548643
Developed countries/countries in transition	21970	6660	15311	14895	4862	10033
Developing countries	857159	318254	538905	847071	308461	538610
Arab States	62400	23118	39282	67473	24310	43162
Central and Eastern Europe	16519	3833	12686	12518	2857	9661
Central Asia	480	98	383	222	73	149
East Asia and the Pacific	232904	71924	160979	186404	53412	132992
Latin America and the Caribbean	41932	18243	23689	39254	17436	21819
North America and Western Europe	11363	4024	7339	7873	2935	4938
South and West Asia	382151	151980	230171	412242	159705	252538
Sub-Saharan Africa	131380	51693	79687	135980	52595	83385

For the sake of gaining a comparative perspective, the statistics quoted above from various sources speak for themselves. We need to form a comparative perspective for locating our country's status in the regional scenario. This exercise is useful for looking beyond our noses and spotting where and what is happening and if there is something for us to learn from others' experiences. In this context we may also glance at figures on youth literacy in our neighboring countries (see the Table below). Adult literacy rate in this table is for the age group 15 years and above. Youth literacy rate is for the age group 15-24 years. The youth literacy rate for India relates to 2001. The table has been taken from UNESCO in the National Literacy Mission Website.

Country	Adult Literacy Rate	Youth Literacy Rate
China	90.9	98.9
India	61.3	73.3
Nepal	44.0	62.7
Pakistan	41.5	53.9
Sri Lanka	92.1	97.0
Bangladesh	41.1	49.7

3.4 NATIONAL SCENARIO

We will now turn to the national scenario. Your task here is basically to discover the links between global, regional and national scenarios on literacy and then generate a profile of the local scenario on practical dimension of adult literacy learning in India.

Practicing literacy or its practical aspects have to be understood in terms of what we consider to be the ways of learning or in other words theories of learning. With respect to the practice of adult learning and practical activities for spreading literacy, we need to have a clear understanding of theories of learning, which are subject to varying points of view, including 'collaborative learning', 'distributed learning' and 'communities of practice'. Some of these ways of looking at learning do not focus on individual learner, rather they emphasize group learning and social practices around which communities build their knowledge structures. Making a paradigmatic shift from cognitive approach to understanding literacy practices in their socio-cultural contexts, we need to go into what is known as New Literacy Studies (see Barton and Hamilton 1999, Collins 1995, Gee 1999, Street 1991) and think about the everyday meanings and uses of literacy in their cultural contexts. We can also critically assess the claims of cognitive approaches to literacy and explore the potential of findings made available in New Literacy Studies.

Street's (1984) draws distinction between an 'autonomous' model and an 'ideological' model of literacy. Autonomous model of literacy deals with practices that impose western conceptions of literacy on other cultures (see Street 2001). The autonomous model of literacy assumes that literacy in itself, autonomously, will influence other social and cognitive practices. This model of literacy hides its cultural and ideological assumptions and presents them as though they are neutral and objective. Research in the social practice approach has challenged this view and shows that in practice dominant approaches relying on autonomous

model impose western notions of literacy on other cultures. Instead of imposing an alien conception of literacy on your society, you may like to look at an alternative model for planning literacy programs in your area. You may like to first give a critique of the cultural and ideological assumptions of autonomous model of literacy and then look at literacy as a social practice that is embedded in socially constructed principles of knowledge. The ideological model of literacy provides a more culturally sensitive perspective of literacy practices as these practices differ from one culture to another and from one context to another and therefore each particular version of literacy would be always ideologically rooted in a particular worldview. The ideological model of literacy has premises different from autonomous model and posits that literacy is a social practice and not just a technical and neutral skill and that it is basically rooted in socially constructed ways of how one knows something. Clearly, literacy in this sense is always contested with regard to its meanings and practices. Working in the field of literacy is always a social act that influences the nature of the literacy being learnt and the learners already hold some ideas about literacy and about their position in relations of power.

In the light of above discussion, it is not tenable to hold the view that 'literacy' can be 'given' neutrally and its social impact can be measured afterwards. Traditional literacy programmes, based on autonomous model of literacy, have largely failed because they did not use appropriate intellectual tools to understand the diversity of literacy practices around the world and did not design literacy programmes to suit the particular needs of adult learners. You can argue that organizing a literacy programme is to be a part of a power relationship and how adult learners take hold of such a programme depends on socio-cultural practices and not just on pedagogic and cognitive factors.

Adult educators need to address, in a literacy programme, all the questions about power relation among the participants, about the resources and their sources, about choices available to learners for learning one literacy rather than another type of literacy, about how learners challenge the dominant points of view of literacy. It is worth asking about what literacy means to the concerned adults and which social contexts the use to drive meanings of literacy. Often, one has come across the fact that even non-literate persons engage in literacy activities and therefore the dividing line between literate/ non-literate is not all that obvious (see Doronilla, 1996).

The new concepts of 'literacy events' and 'literacy practices' have been commonly used in New Literacy Studies. Heath (1982: 50) has explained the concept of 'literacy event' as 'any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of the participants' interactions and their interpretive processes'. Street (1984: 1) has elaborated the term 'literacy practices' as a means of focusing upon 'the social practices and conceptions of reading and writing' and also that the term includes the social models of literacy that participants bring to bear upon those events and that give meaning to them.

The questions posed about literacy practices make one feel like going further into the complex nature of debates around literacy issues. Bringing enlightened perspectives to what an adult educator can do for achieving universal literacy is possible by questioning one's own understanding of the nature and meaning of literacy.

Check Your Progress

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit under “Answers to Check Your Progress”.

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live births is only 10 in Kerala against 61 in Bihar. Also birth rate (per 1,000) is 16.9 in Kerala against 30.9 in Bihar and death rate (per 1,000) is 6.4 in Kerala against 7.9 in Bihar. All these indicators highlight the social differences in the two states and the differences show that literacy is the key to improving the quality of life (see Sen, 2005). The literacy rates in different states for 1981 and 2001 reflect considerable variance throughout the country. Leaving aside a few states at the top and bottom, most of the states are either a little above or below the national average.

With this national scenario, adult educators in India would certainly wish to re-think the current practices in the field of adult literacy in order to achieve better results. Should we continue to borrow the formal learning methods of school? If we were to focus on informal learning methods, surely we would then need to alter our use of curricula and text book and also the way of formative and/ or summative assessment of literacy programs. For making a shift from formal learning methods to informal learning methods, or combining the formal and informal methods, we need to examine our assumptions about how one knows. Secondly, we would need to consider the cognitive consequences of learning literacy and talk about cognitive approaches to literacy.

As has been pointed out by Street (2005) both meaning of literacy and its mode of operation for research and action are highly contested issues. In order to run an adult literacy programme for attaining long-term success, we need to probe into these contested domains. Adult educators need to seek and become aware of alternative approaches to literacy work. It is only then it would become possible for them to tell their adult learners to acquire literacy for becoming aware, more critical and in control of their own development. We may also consider what Levi-Strauss (1961: 291-292) argued about literacy that it is not the royal route to liberation and it is many times a means of enslavement. This may be a polemical view but coming from a great thinker of our times it needs to be seriously considered by adult educators of the twenty-first century.

3.4.2 Long-term Objectives and Commitments for Literacy

In the light of EFA goals and targets set up in Dakar Framework for Action and clearly aligned to social and gender equity thrusts, NLM felt the necessity to effect a certain re-focusing of its strategies pursued since 1999. The EFA-NPA's new "thrust areas" in literacy include (MHRD, 2003: 85):

- Achievement of 75 per cent literacy level by 2007.
- A multi-pronged strategy to address regional, social and gender disparities in literacy.
- Refocusing literacy, post-literacy and CE programmes to increase and strengthen women's participation, so as to bridge the gender gap in literacy.
- Encouraging PL and CE districts to pay special attention on mobilization and organization of women into neo-literate and self-help groups (SHGs).
- Special attention to socially disadvantaged groups like SCs/STs and women.
- 45 districts with <30% female literacy rate selected for a multi-pronged strategy to raise female literacy.
- Special stress with ZSS to specifically highlight strategies to take up literacy and skill upgradation programmes for SCs/STs and women in particular.

Achievement of 75 per cent literacy seemed a doable pursuit in 2003 but in December 2006, does it appear to be an achievable goal?

Let us remind you that it is important to be aware of what is real and what is rhetorical in the field of literacy. Only then one is able to realistically plan for achieving some tangible results. Do you really believe some of the following claims made by various agencies on behalf of literacy drives?

- 1) Literacy changes the way human beings think.
- 2) Literacy leads to human modernization and to the changing attitude about development.
- 3) Literacy fosters democratic ideals and increases national productivity.
- 4) Literacy will be eradicated by fifty-per cent by the year 2015.
- 5) It is possible to initiate an innovative literacy programme in a modest way and sustain it through local efforts.

3.4.3 Issues of Language and Gender

If we are to be more culturally sensitive and in line with specific literacy practices required for specific cognitive skills being targeted, we need to reflect on issues of both language and gender. Explicit language policy guides the use of mother tongue in adult learning and this remains a topic of debate because access to the economic market place may require learning to take place in a language that is not one's mother tongue.

Often general views on literacy rates hide large inequalities with higher illiteracy rates among girls and women because literacy varies dramatically by gender, ethnicity and urban-rural living. However, it is worth reflecting on the fact that whether mere increase in number of women and girls can make any noticeable impact on achieving the ideal of a self-directed adult learner who is able to define her learning needs and to face the challenges of new ways of doing things with fast shifting epistemologies of workplaces. Do we not need to plan for some kind of revolution in our cultural and political settings?

The language of teaching-learning (or medium of instruction) in adult literacy programs has, as a conscious policy, been the mother tongue from the beginning. After TLC became the dominant approach and strategy, NLM adopted the approach of leaving the issue of language of instruction, to ZSS — the reason being the language preference of learners, their numbers and feasibility of literacy primers development and transaction as the main considerations. Within a State there are many languages and dialects with or without a written script, spoken by sizeable number of people. There are cases of TLCs that used primers in 6-7 languages, as per their demographic composition and language preference of the learners. In some cases, learners not knowing regional language — language of administration — may like to become literate in that language. There are also districts with large tribal population, speaking a dialect that may or may not have a written script. In such cases, learners are initiated into literacy by using the first primer in the local dialect and switching over to regional language in second and third primers used in TLC. The reading materials in PL and CE stages are generally in regional languages.

The gender focus (to reduce gender gaps in access/provision, participation, achievement, etc., that have a more quantitative dimension) and addressing the

gender bias i.e., age-old socio-economic and culturally embedded gender inequities, have been the two distinct, but inter-related dimensions of India's literacy movement since early 1990s. Gender focus was obviously warranted by their two-thirds share in illiteracy. The gender focus of TLCs (viz., paying greater attention in proportion to their number), however, did not come by a pre-design. It emerged from actual experience seen in the massive response of women who perceived the social sanction for their participation as an opportunity to realize their aspirations for literacy, empowerment and improvement. But the hurdles of gender inequities were pervasive, in the socio-cultural outlook, in the content of literacy primers about the role of women in society, in development, position within family, solidarity and collective assertion for their equality, and so on. The literacy movement was the first to address these issues of gender in early 1990s which lent an effective model for the gender focused primary education programmes later.

3.5 LET US SUM UP

You have in this unit developed your skill of working out an explanation of the concept of literacy by defining it from the input given in various sections of this unit. You had an opportunity of also checking if your effort was along the right lines and that is how you could also improve your effort in case you felt that your definition missed out on any relevant aspect of literacy.

Secondly, you discussed various forms of literacy. Prevalence of ever-widening types of literacy makes each one of us illiterate in one sense or the other and we all try to learn new skills, making literacy a lifelong endeavor.

Thirdly, you tried to work out the importance of literacy in various ways by looking at the global, regional and national scenario on literacy and thereby you were able to derive lessons for applying better literacy practices in your region.

3.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- 1) The definition of literacy is dynamic, evolving, and reflects the continual changes in our society. Literacy has, for instance, expanded to include literacy in information and communication technologies and critical literacy. Literacy is a complex set of abilities needed to understand and use the dominant symbol systems of a culture – alphabets, numbers, visual icons - for personal and community development. The nature of these abilities, and the demand for them, vary from one context to another. In a technological society, literacy extends beyond the functional skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening to include multiple literacies such as visual, media and information literacy. These new literacies focus on an individual's capacity to use and make critical judgements about the information they encounter on a daily basis.

Some examples of definitions of literacy (taken from the internet) are given below for you to compare your own definition of literacy.

- The condition or quality of being literate, especially the ability to read and write. In the international arena UNESCO started supporting the spread of adult education as part of a concerted effort to advance basic education after the Second World War. The first global survey of adult literacy, covering

over sixty countries, was published in 1957. By then it was realised by world leaders and policy-makers that education and literacy could better enable individuals to participate in and benefit from a modernizing economy. In 1958 at the General Conference of UNESCO the standard definition of literacy emerged which is: 'A person is literate who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his (or her) everyday life.' The definition of literacy sometimes extends to basic arithmetic and other life skills. This definition became a yardstick for measuring literacy in national censuses.

- The condition or quality of being knowledgeable in a particular subject or field: *cultural literacy; biblical literacy*.
- The second-half of the twentieth century witnessed international policy community stressing on the role of literacy in economic growth and national development especially in newly independent countries. In 1978, the General Conference of UNESCO adopted a definition of functional literacy which is still in use as 'A person is functionally literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his (or her) group, community and also for enabling him (or her) to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his (or her) own and the community's development.'
- The Dakar Framework for Action 2002 on the eve of the United Nations Literacy Decade, 2003-2012 recognized literacy as the heart of life-long learning. It says: 'Literacy is crucial to the acquisition, by every child, youth and adult, of essential life skills that enable them to address the challenges they can face in life, and represents an essential step in basic education, which is an indispensable means for effective participation in the societies and economics of the twenty-first century'. It further added that ' literacy is the heart of basic education for all and creating literate environments and societies is essential for achieving the goals of eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy.'
- Most dictionaries define literacy as the ability to read and write. Today the definition has been expanded. Many now consider literacy to be the ability to locate, evaluate, use, and communicate using a wide range of resources including text, visual, audio, and video sources.
- The traditional definition of Literacy is the ability to read and write. In modern context, the word means reading and writing at a level adequate for written communication and generally a level that enables one to successfully function at certain levels of a society if that society is one in which literacy plays a role in providing access to power.
- The standards for what level constitutes "literacy" vary among societies. Other skills such as computer skills or basic numeracy may also be included, as there are many people who cannot read letters but can read numbers, and even learn to use a computer (in a limited way) while remaining unable to read text. These and the increasing inclusion of sound, still and moving images and graphical elements in digitally based communication call for an even broader concept of literacy. (See: Literacy in the Information Age: Final Report of the International Adult Literacy Survey, OECD,2000. PDF). Recently the National Council of Teachers of English and the International

Reading Association have added “visually representing” to the list of communicative competences that are considered to constitute literacy.

- Many policy analysts consider literacy rates a crucial measure of a region's human capital. This claim is made on the grounds that literate people can be trained less expensively than illiterate people. Policy makers also argue that literacy increases job opportunities and access to higher education. In Kerala, India, for example, female and child mortality rates declined dramatically in the 1960s, when girls schooled to literacy in the education reforms after 1948 began to raise families. Recent researchers, however, argue that correlations such as the one listed above may have more to do with the effects of schooling rather than literacy in general.
 - In broad terms, literacy is the ability to make and communicate meaning from and by the use of a variety of socially contextual symbols. Within various levels of developmental ability, a literate person can derive and convey meaning, and use their knowledge to achieve a desired purpose or goal that requires the use of language skills, be they spoken or written. A literate person can mediate their world by deliberately and flexibly orchestrating meaning from one linguistic knowledge base and apply or connect it to another knowledge base. For example, knowing that letters symbolize sounds, and that those sounds form words to which the reader can attach meaning, is an example of the cognitive orchestration of knowledge, a literate person conducts. Literacy is “not in isolated bits of knowledge but in students' growing ability to use language and literacy in more and broader activities” (Moll, 1994: 202).
 - However a culture defines it, literacy touches every aspect of individual and community life. It is an essential foundation for learning through life, and must be valued as a human right.
- 2) During the 1990s the problem of illiteracy was quite acute in the four States of the Hindi heartland - Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh - which have the derisive adjective of Bimaru. But, the statistics provided by the Census of India 2001 show that the rate of improvement has been faster in each of these States than in India as a whole. In 1991, the gender gap in Rajasthan increased in 24 of the 27 districts but in 2001 it increased only in 13 of the 32 districts. In 19 districts the gap decreased. While the increase is nominal, the decrease is substantial. The highest decrease was recorded in Jhunjhunu, followed by Sikar. Whereas the highest increase was in Jalore, followed by Bhilwara. Interestingly, there is no positive correlation between high literacy and low gender gap. Although the situation that prevailed in 1991 has changed and some of the high-literacy districts now have a lower gender gap, the overall position is not positive. This may be a temporary phase. A stage has been reached where overall literacy cannot increase without a significant increase in female literacy. The emphasis therefore has to shift to women's education.
 - 3) According to Street (2005), this approach would involve use of ‘real literacy materials’ that come from everyday social life. This does not mean that we need not do anything beforehand. As Street says we need to carry out pre-programme research on what adults already know and also find out what the learners would like the programme to provide. This is quite a lot for adult educators to prepare before they take up any of the provisions made

available by the government in the field of adult learning. Such advance preparation is likely to initiate the process of building your own perceptions about the national scenario on literacy.

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UNIT 4 POLICY ON ADULT AND LIFELONG LEARNING: INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

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- 4.1 Objectives
- 4.2 The International Perspective
 - 4.2.1 Fundamental Education (1950s-1960s)
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 - 4.2.3 Paulo Freire's Radical Approach to Literacy (1970s)
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 - 4.2.5 Growing Emphasis on Adult Literacy and Learning (2000-present)
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4.0 INTRODUCTION

After understanding the global, regional and national overview of literacy in Unit 3, it is now time to talk about the national and international perspectives about policy on adult and lifelong learning (for a simple explanation of the terms 'lifelong learning' see Units 1 and 5). As will become clearer, much of the action on adult learning has always been based on policy directives and for this reason, it is necessary to become familiar about issues entailing different policies in the international and national contexts. Unit 4 has two parts. Its first part deals with the international policy discourse while the second part provides a historical overview of the national perspective on adult education.

4.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, it is expected that you will be able to:

- Discuss the shift in international policy perspective from fundamental education to adult literacy and learning;

- Describe the gradual transformation in national policy discourse from marginal status of adult education in national planning to integration of literacy, functionality and social awareness in adult learning programmes, and
- Articulate your own views on the current status of policy perspective on adult education in India.

4.2 THE INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Since the 1950s, there has been significant shift in the international policy discourse on adult education. It has been influenced by the changing perspectives put forth by the United Nations Education, Social and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Discussion in this section gives an overview of international perspective on literacy and lifelong learning (UNESCO,2005:153-55).

4.2.1 Fundamental Education (1950s-1960s)

In the post-Second World War period, UNESCO recognised the acquisition of literacy as fundamental aspects of individual development and human rights and supported literacy as part of its efforts to promote basic education. It advocated fundamental education to eradicate illiteracy. The focus of fundamental education was primarily on imparting the basic literacy skills of reading and writing. Subsequently, interest in the worldwide campaign for universal literacy weakened due to the Cold War. Although the international community recognised the need to eradicate illiteracy and finding ways to promote acquisition of a basic set of autonomous literacy skills, only isolated national literacy campaigns were undertaken in developing countries.

4.2.2 Functional Literacy (1960s-1970s)

In the 1960s and 1970s, international organisations advocated human capital models of education that perceived education as one of the key inputs for economic development. Within this perspective, literacy was viewed as a necessary condition for economic growth and national development. UNESCO proposed the concept of functional literacy and emphasised interrelationships between literacy and economic development. The Experimental World Literacy Programme (EWLP) was introduced in 1966 and implemented with financial and technical assistance of United Nations Development Organisation (UNDP) and other international agencies in eleven countries till 1973, to enhance efficiency and productivity of individual farmers. In 1978, UNESCO adopted a broader definition of functional literacy, which is still used today:

A person is functionally literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his (or her) group and community and also for enabling him (or her) to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his (or her) own and the community's development.

Subsequently, the broader concept of functional literacy has incorporated divergent human concerns and a range of people's functions encompassing the whole life. Lifelong education is implicit in the expanded concept of functional literacy.

4.2.3 Paulo Freire's Radical Approach to Literacy (1970s)

In the 1970s, UNESCO's conceptualisation of literacy and other international agencies was also influenced by Paulo Friere's radical approach to literacy. In this approach, acquisition of literacy skills of reading, writing and arithmetic were not seen as an end in itself, but as a means to create conditions for developing critical consciousness about one's social reality and take necessary action to challenge and change it. Freire's influence on UNESCO's conception of literacy was reflected in the Persepolis Declaration (1975) that acknowledged that literacy must go beyond the process of acquisition of basic literacy skills and underscored transformative potential of literacy. In practice, however, pseudo-Freirian approach was adopted in many literacy programmes in developing countries for imparting development oriented literacy skills and knowledge, while maintaining the status quo.

4.2.4 Broadening the Concept of Literacy (1980s-1990s)

During 1980s to early 1990s, international investment and interest in promoting adult literacy programmes declined substantially. With growing pressures of the World Bank's economic reforms on the education sector, investment in primary education was favoured at the cost of adult education. UNICEF and UNESCO voiced concerns against such trend throughout the 1980s and put the focus on literacy and education for all. Over the 1980s and 1990s, the definitions of literacy were broadened in response to the growing demands created by new technologies and other information media in the developed countries for increased levels of knowledge, skills and understandings. The concept of literacy was broadened to encompass not merely the ability to read, write and count, but also a broad set of information processing competencies and multiplicity of skills. The International Literacy Year (1990) and the World Declaration on Education for All, adopted in Jomtien, Thailand placed the challenge of literacy within the broader context of meeting the basic learning needs of all children, youth and adults. Furthermore, the Hamburg Declaration (1997) also endorsed literacy as essential for lifelong learning and as a catalyst for active community engagement.

4.2.5 Growing Emphasis on Adult Literacy and Learning (2000-present)

Involvement of the international community in literacy since 2000 has revolved around two goals articulated in the Dakar Framework of Action:

“ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes, and achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults”.

Following the World Education Forum in Dakar (2000), there has been renewed interest among international planners in improving literacy levels. Many international organisations (for example, ILO, World Bank, OECD, UNICEF, UNESCO, and UNDP) have acknowledged the challenge that illiteracy poses for development. While renewed interest and commitment to literacy has emerged, there are marked differences in understanding about literacy across organisations. The United Nations Literacy decade (2003-2012), launched in 2002, perceives literacy as essential life-skills for every child, youth and adult to participate in

the societies and economies of the twenty-first century and as an essential step in basic education (UNESCO. 2003). In the recent years, the World Bank has advocated Adult and Nonformal Education (ANFE) that focuses on not merely literacy but all the possible learning needs of children and adults (Easton,et. al., 2003).

Education is one of the key goals in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of 2000 dedicated to reducing poverty. Despite renewed interest in adult literacy and learning, it is important to underscore that adult literacy and education is not explicitly included in the MDGs. Focus on adult education is implicit in the Goal 3 related to promoting gender equality and empowering women.

In summary, international perspective of literacy has broadened considerably since the mid-twentieth century. It has moved away from fundamental education with limited focus on basic literacy skills to functional literacy for economic development to critical literacy of Freire for social and political change. Over the years, broader understanding of literacy has emerged, encompassing multiple literacies, literacy practices and lifelong learning.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Space given below the question is for writing your answer.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit under “Answers to Check Your Progress”.

- 1) What are the key shifts in the international policy discourse on adult literacy and lifelong learning?

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4.3 THE NATIONAL POLICY PERSPECTIVE: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

In India, the educational policy provides a broad framework for education planning, and gives direction for overall educational development in the country. Adult education in India is planned within the broader context of the general educational policy (Patel, 2000). The central government plays a leading role in policy formulation and planning to direct overall educational development in the country, while individual states are responsible for the expansion and growth of education in their respective areas on the basis of specific directions and guidelines provided by the central government. This section highlights divergent approaches to adult education since independence.

4.3.1 Marginality of Adult Education in Development Planning (1947-77)

Despite massive illiteracy and low level of education in the workforce, the central government after independence in 1947 neither took any constitutional responsibility for educating the adult illiterate population nor emphasised adult education within the general educational policy. The major thrust of the general educational policy in the first three decades of planned development was on the expansion of the pyramidal system of formal education. It was implicitly assumed that expansion of the general educational system, particularly elementary education, would solve the problem of illiteracy in the adult population. Hence, adult education was relegated to an unimportant position, both in terms of the educational policy and finances.

During the first three decades of planned development (1947-77), adult education programmes with limited coverage and funds characterised the state's approach to educating the vast population of adult illiterates. Each programme followed a different strategy and approach to adult education (see Box below).

Major Programmes of Adult Education during 1947-77

Social Education Programme: The First Five Year Plan (1951-56) rejected the term "adult education" as narrowly confined to literacy work and proposed social education as a comprehensive approach to educating adult illiterates. The major thrust of Social Education Programme was to make illiterate citizens conscious of their rights and responsibilities for building a democratic nation, while incorporating the components of health, recreation, and economic life. Imparting basic literacy skills was not assigned priority in the social education program.

Farmers' Functional Literacy Project: In the early 1960s, the focus of adult education shifted from citizenship training to skill-training for development. The Farmers' Functional Literacy Project (FFLP), known as Kisan Saksharata Yojana, was launched as a centrally-sponsored scheme in the Fourth Plan (1969-74) in three districts as an experimental project under the Experimental World Literacy Project of UNESCO. The FFLP was one of the three components of the Farmers' Training and Functional Literacy Project (FTFLP), which aimed at upgrading human resources to improve agricultural productivity of the farmers. The focus of the FFLP was on upgrading the occupational skills of farmers and inculcating among them modern attitudes, values, and behaviours to attain self-sufficiency in food production. It advocated the concept of functional literacy and emphasised imparting basic literacy skills along with practical and technical agricultural knowledge.

Scheme of Non-formal Education for Youth (15-25 years): The Fifth Plan (1974-79) advocated non-formal education for several categories of learners—unschooled children, youth, and adults at all levels of education. It also launched the Non-formal Education Programme for young adults who had missed schooling to provide them second chance for learning. The primary goal of the programme was to provide them functionally relevant education in order to prepare them as producers as well as responsible citizens. The underlying assumption was that acquisition of appropriate skills and knowledge about the welfare-oriented development programmes would increase their participation in this development and help improve their economic conditions. In practice, the programme remained a traditional literacy programme and its overall implementation was poor.

4.3.2 Towards the Nationwide Programme of Adult Education (1977-84)

It was with the shift in the direction of general educational policy in 1977 from higher levels of education to basic education, that eradication of illiteracy came to the forefront of development planning (Planning Commission, 1978:219-29). A draft policy statement on adult education was issued for the first time by the government in 1979, which was operationalised in the form of a nationwide programme of adult education, known as the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) (Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, 1979). The NAEP aimed at covering an estimated 100 million illiterates in the age group of 15-35 over a period of six years (1978-84). The conceptual framework of NAEP integrated literacy, functionality and social awareness. Adult education projects were implemented nationwide under the NAEP by voluntary agencies, educational institutions (universities and colleges), local bodies (for example, panchayats and municipalities) and the central and state governments. Launching of the NAEP led to creation of administrative and organisational structures for adult education at the national, state and district levels.

However, the promise of the NAEP was not fulfilled (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1980). Though the NAEP was intended to be a mass programme of adult education, it never assumed the mass character as envisaged in the policy statement. The coverage and intensity of projects under the NAEP remained rather limited. In practice, the NAEP remained a traditional centre based, honorarium based and hierarchical programme of adult education, which was funded and controlled by the government. With the fall of the Janata government in late 1979, the NAEP continued with minor modifications as Adult Education Programme (AEP) without making a significant dent in eradicating illiteracy.

4.3.3 The Shifting Approach of Adult Education

The National Policy on Education (NPE), introduced in 1986 (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 1986a and 1986b) and revised in 1992 (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 1992a and 1992b), has been a major landmark in the history of adult literacy education as it articulated for the first time the national commitment to addressing the problem of eradication of adult illiteracy in a time-bound manner with planned, concerted and coordinated efforts. The policy also provided impetus to development of a mass approach to eradication of literacy with mass mobilisation and support of divergent sections of society. The NPE (1986) contributed to widening the scope of adult education in order to provide flexible learning opportunities to out-of-school youth and adults. Specifically, it advocated the following:

- a) Expansion of non-formal, flexible and need-based vocational education programmes for neo-literates, youth who have completed primary education, school drop-outs, and adults;
- b) Provision of non-formal vocational education and training for workers of the unorganised sector through the existing institutions and agencies. For example, community polytechnics, *shramik vidyapeeths* (polyvalent adult education centre), rural institutes, Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and Training for Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM) of the District Rural Development Agency.

- c) Promotion of continuing education as an indispensable tool not only for human resource development, but also for the creation of a learning society. Besides advocating distance and open learning for higher levels of formal education, the policy recommended continuing education for neo-literates and school drop-outs through Jana Shikshan Nilayams, and proposed need-based non-formal vocational education programmes and training for divergent groups (workers, youth, farmers, etc.) to upgrade their knowledge and skills to improve their productivity and their skills.

4.3.4 The Campaign Approach to Literacy

It was in pursuance of the mandate of the NPE (1986) that the National Literacy Mission (NLM) was launched in 1988 as a societal and technological mission with the objective of imparting functional literacy to 80 million adult illiterates in the age group 15-25 years by 1995 (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 1988). (Note: For details on the NLM refer to its website – <http://www.nlm.nic.in>.) The NLM assigned priority to eradication of illiteracy among women, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and other disadvantaged groups through mass mobilisation and support of the wider sections of society.

The launching of National Literacy Mission in 1988, and the subsequent emergence of Total Literacy Campaigns in different parts of India, led to the emergence of the concept of developmental literacy which included the components of self reliance in basic literacy and numeracy, social awareness, acquisition of relevant skills and imbibing the values of national integration, conservation of environment and gender equity.

The NLM also introduced a technocratic pedagogic approach, known as Improved Pace and Content of Learning (IPCL) to address the problems of slow pace and poor quality of learning among adult learners (see Ministry of Human Resource Development, 1993). In TLCs, curriculum and pedagogy were guided by the IPCL approach that gave priority to learner-centred teaching-learning process. It was assumed that higher quality pedagogic inputs would improve the pace of learning and enable learners to acquire the expected level of literacy in about 200 hours during 8-12 months as per the NLM norms. Zilla Saksharata Samiti (ZSS) was entrusted with the responsibility of internal evaluation of learning outcomes as per the NLM procedure and norms with the help of functionaries and volunteers. The IPCL curriculum was operationalised in three literacy primers. Besides imparting minimal basic literacy skills and functional knowledge and skills, the content of IPCL primers covered 'core values', prescribed by the NLM, to create social awareness about various development issues. In practice, however, the focus of TLCs remained on transmitting basic literacy skills through the conventional approach.

Until 1989, the NLM continued with the centre-based approach of the earlier adult education programmes. The major breakthrough came in 1990 with the success of the literacy campaign in Ernakulam district, spearheaded by Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP), a voluntary organisation based on the people's science movement in Kerala. The NLM adopted the campaign approach and introduced Total Literacy Campaign (TLCs), area-specific and time-bound literacy campaigns with total coverage for the given age group, as a viable strategy for promoting literacy on a mass scale. The key and unique features of TLC strategy were:

- environment-building and mass mobilisation through *kala jathas* (cultural caravans), folk media, radio and television, personal contact, conventions, rallies, etc. to generate social demand for literacy and involve wider sections of society in promoting literacy;
- large-scale involvement of volunteers for literacy work, and
- planning, monitoring and implementation of TLCs at the district level through decentralised administrative and organisational structure of Zilla Saksharata Samiti.

The underlying assumption of the TLC approach was that intensive literacy campaigns would eradicate illiteracy across the country irrespective of the structural context of underdevelopment, deprivation and the history of social movements.

Although NLM policy document envisaged nationwide expansion of post-literacy and continuing education through new institutional structures, better utilisation of the existing infrastructures and open and distance learning, post literacy and continuing education for neo-literates was neglected as the major focus of NLM strategy remained on mass literacy campaigns till the mid-1990s. In practice, the focus of TLCs remained on imparting rudimentary literacy skills and not functional skills and knowledge (Ministry of Human Resource Development 1994).

4.3.5 From Literacy to Post-literacy and Continuing Education

With most districts covered under TLC in the late 1990s, the focus of NLM in the Ninth Plan (1997-2002) shifted towards post-literacy and continuing education. In 1999, the NLM modified its approach to attain the goal of 'total literacy', i.e. sustainable threshold literacy rate of 75% by 2007 and expansion of continuing education programmes to cover all districts by 2007. The revised approach of NLM is reported in EFA 2000 Assessment and Dakar Declarations as a reference point. The Tenth Plan also endorsed and adopted the changes made in the NLM strategy (Planning Commission 2002). The revamped policy of NLM continues to focus on imparting functional literacy to non-literates (women, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes) in the 15-35 age group, but also includes other age groups interested in literacy and other programmes.

Based on the premise that the TLCs succeeded in making a large adult population literate, NLM has shifted its attention to tackling the problem of residual illiteracy.

The focus of NLM's strategy has changed from mobilisation approach to managerial approach for implementation of literacy campaigns. Volunteers are no longer the backbone of literacy campaigns as emphasis has shifted to paid workers (*preraks*) with low wages. With loss of people's movement characteristics in literacy campaigns, TLCs have become routine and target oriented programmes.

It has adopted an integrated approach, amalgamating all the features of earlier TLC/post-literacy phases under one project, called 'Literacy Campaigns in Operation Restoration'. This new approach envisages integration of basic literacy teaching-learning with post-literacy activities to ensure a smooth transition from TLC to post-literacy on a learning continuum (see Daswani, 2002). It assumes that such an approach would achieve continuity, efficiency and convergence and

minimise necessary time lag between the two. The Post literacy programme is also treated as a preparatory phase for launching continuing education that aims at creating a learning society. In other words, NLM has de-linked post-literacy from continuing education and linked it closely with TLC. Continuing education programme is envisaged to link literacy with actual life situations by imparting relevant technical and vocational skills.

Furthermore, NLM has changed its approach to promote decentralisation. Specifically, it has promoted decentralisation of financial and administrative powers to the State Literacy Mission Authorities for sanctioning literacy-related and continuing education projects. It continues to involve non-government organisations (NGOs) in environment building for TLCs, but assigns them a major role in implementation of continuing education projects. NLM has strengthened State Resource Centres (SRCs) to increase their involvement in continuing education programme. It has also enlarged the activities of Jan Shiksha Sansthan so that they could function as repositories of vocational/technical skills in urban and rural areas not only for youth and workers with low level of education, but also for neoliterate youth and adults.

4.3.6 Marginality of Adult Education in Legislation

The Constitution of India recognises the significance of education for social transformation. During the last decade, two major changes have taken place in the Indian Constitution, which have far reaching implications for education. The 86th Constitutional Amendment Act (2002) makes free and compulsory education a justifiable fundamental right for all children in the age group 6-14 years. It guarantees eight years of elementary education to each and every child in the country. However, the focus of Constitutional amendments in education is primarily on elementary education of children (6-14 years), and not on adult education and lifelong learning for youth/adults. The underlying assumption is that universal elementary education among children (6-14 years) will automatically tackle the problem of adult illiteracy. Hardly any efforts are made to justify adult literacy being a part of the Constitutional provisions and guarantees. The right of the vast population of non-literate youth and adults for basic literacy education and learning has remained invisible in the government policy.

On the other hand, enactment of the 72nd and 73rd Constitutional Amendments has paved the way to decentralisation of educational governance at the local level. The new legislation will have far reaching consequences for the provision of adult/non-formal education for women as well as the roles and responsibilities of central government, state government and local bodies in governance of non-formal education, and adult education.

4.3.7 Conclusion

Despite widespread illiteracy and limited formal education among the adult population, adult education remained a marginal sub-sector of the general educational policy until the late 1970s. The government's policy towards adult education was characterised by the sporadic programmatic efforts with limited coverage. The first nationwide programme for adult education, known as the National Adult Education Programme, was introduced in 1978. However, the promise of the NAEP was not fulfilled. Though it was intended to be a mass programme of adult education, it never assumed the mass character as envisaged

in the policy statement and did not contribute to tackling the problem of widespread illiteracy. It was the National Policy on Education -1986 that widened the scope of adult education, and brought adult literacy to the forefront of educational planning.

The mandate of the NPE (1986) was operationalised through the National Literacy Mission (NLM), which was launched in 1988. The NLM adopted the mass literacy campaign model as the key strategy for eradicating illiteracy on a mass scale. Initially, the NLM did not pay adequate attention to devising appropriate strategies for linking literacy with post-literacy and continuing education.

In the late 1990s, the revamped policy of NLM introduced a significant shift in the direction of adult education. While continuing with the target-oriented approach, the NLM adopted an integrated approach, encompassing literacy, post-literacy, and continuing education. Overall, the focus has shifted to removal of 'residual illiteracy', and from mobilisation approach to managerial approach in implementation of literacy campaigns. Continuing education is viewed as a key strategy for creating a learning society. On the other hand, the revised policy advocates devolution of financial and administrative powers from NLM to SLMA, and decentralisation of management of various programmes at the district level, and the expanded role of NGOs and community in programme implementation for efficient delivery of various programmes of adult education. The government has not yet paid adequate attention to promoting literacy and meeting divergent learning needs of the vast population of non-literate and neo-literate youth and adults on a sustained basis.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Space given below the question is for writing your answer.

- b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit under "Answers to Check Your Progress".
- 2) Describe major changes in the policy direction of adult education in India since independence.

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4.4 LET US SUM UP

In summary, there have been significant shifts in international and national policy discourse on literacy. The international perspective of literacy has changed from defining literacy as technical and discrete skills to functional skills for economic growth to human capabilities for social-cultural and political change. Over the years, broader understandings of literacy have emerged, encompassing 'conscientisation', multiple literacies, literacy practices and lifelong learning. There is now growing recognition about the social context in which literacy is acquired, developed and sustained. Literacy is not merely perceived as a skill but as socially and culturally determined practices.

In India, despite massive illiteracy and low level of education among the adult population, promoting adult literacy and learning has remained a low priority in the educational policy. Nevertheless, divergent approaches to adult education have emerged since the 1950s. Adult literacy did not receive adequate attention in the first three decades of planned development in India. Until the late 1970s, the government's policy on adult education was characterised by sporadic programmatic efforts through pilot projects, which were linked with the government's development strategy. It was with the shift in the direction of general educational policy in 1977 from higher levels of education to basic education, that adult education received some attention in the educational policy. NAEP, the first nationwide programme of adult education, proposed to integrate literacy, functionality and social awareness. However, it did not succeed in making a dent in promoting adult literacy as it remained a traditional, honorarium-based, hierarchical and government-funded and controlled programme.

It was the NPE (1986) that provided impetus to development of a mass approach to eradication of literacy with mass mobilisation and wider support of divergent sections of society. The NLM, introduced as a technological and societal mission, adopted the campaign approach to eradicate illiteracy on a large scale, but did not pay adequate attention to post-literacy and continuing education. Since the late 1990s, there is a noticeable shift in NLM's policy towards integrated approach to amalgamating literacy, post-literacy and continuing education phases, devolution of financial and administrative powers from national to state and local levels, and strengthening and revamping of existing institutions. Nonetheless, marginality of adult education has continued in legislation, and development planning. It is critical that adult literacy and learning is placed at the heart of the agenda of basic education for all.

4.5 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- 1) There are significant shifts in the international discourse on adult literacy and lifelong learning, influenced by the United Nations Education, Social and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), since the 1950s. Table 1 gives an overview of the changing international perspective.

Table 4.1: Overview of International Perspective on Literacy and Lifelong Learning.

Key Trends	Policy Perspective
Fundamental education (1950s-60s)	• Literacy acquisition as essential aspect of individual development and human rights. • Fundamental Education for imparting basic literacy skills (reading and writing).
Functional Literacy (1960s-70s)	• Human capital model of education. • Literacy as a necessary condition for economic growth and national development. • Functional literacy for enhancing productivity. • Lifelong learning implicit in the expanded concept of functional literacy that incorporated divergent human concerns and functions encompassing the whole life.
Radical Approach to Literacy (1970s)	• Influenced by Paulo Freire's approach to literacy. • Acquisition of basic literacy skills not as an end in itself but as a means to create the conditions for developing critical consciousness about one's social reality and for taking necessary action to challenge and change it. • Emphasis on transformative potential of literacy.
Broadening the Concept of Literacy (1980s-1990)	• Broader concept of literacy encompassing basic literacy skills along with a broad set of information processing competencies and multiple literacies. • Literacy as part of the broader agenda of Education for All for meeting basic learning needs of all children, youth and adults. • Endorsement of literacy as indispensable skill for lifelong learning and community engagement.
Growing Emphasis on Adult Literacy and Learning (2000-present)	• Recognition of the challenge that illiteracy poses for social and economic development. • Literacy as essential life skills for all in the 21st century. • Literacy as an integral part of basic education that focuses on learning needs all.

In summary, there has been a significant shift in the international perspective on adult education. Adult literacy and learning is not perceived as an end in itself for economic development, but as a means to develop human capabilities for bringing socio-cultural and political change.

2) The policy approach to adult education could be divided into four distinct phases as follows:

1) Marginality of Adult Education (1947-77): During the first three decades of planned development (1947-77), educating the vast majority of adult illiterates was neglected in the educational policy. It was assumed that expansion of elementary education would address the problem of illiteracy. Marginality of adult education was evident in development planning and legislation despite massive illiteracy after independence in 1947. The government's policy in this period was characterised by sporadic programmatic efforts through pilot projects, which were linked with the development approach of the government. There were three major programmes; each followed a different approach to promoting adult education: Social Education Programme linked with the Community Development Programme, Farmers' Functional Literacy Project initiated in 1967-68, and the Scheme of Non-formal Education for Youth (15-25) from weaker sections, launched in 1975-76.

2) Emergence of the Nationwide Programme of Adult Education (1978-84): With the shift in the direction of general educational policy in 1977 from the higher levels of education to basic education, eradication of illiteracy received some attention in development planning. NAEP, the first nationwide programme of adult education, was introduced to educate 100 million illiterates in the age group 15-35 years over a period of six years. It brought three important changes in the government's approach to adult education. First, NAEP broadened the conceptual framework of adult education to integrate literacy, functional literacy and social awareness. Second, it paved the way for participation of voluntary agencies, educational institutions (universities and colleges), and local bodies (for example, *panchayats* and municipalities) in implementation of the programme under the central and state governments. Third, NAEP established for the first time administrative and organisational structures at the national, state and district levels for implementation of the nationwide programme of adult education. In practice, however, NAEP remained a traditional centre-based, honorarium-based and hierarchical programme of adult education without making a significant dent in eradicating illiteracy.

3) The Campaign Approach to Literacy (1988-1998): It was the National Policy on Education- 1986 (revised in 1992) that widened the scope of adult education to address the problem of widespread illiteracy and promote continuing education to create a learning society. It also provided impetus to developing a campaign approach to eradication of literacy with mass mobilisation and support of divergent sections of society. In pursuance of the mandate of the NPE (1986), the National Literacy Mission (NLM) was launched as a societal and technological mission to promote literacy among socio-economically disadvantaged sections of society through mass mobilisation and support of the wider sections of society. Table 2 highlights the salient features of NLM's campaign approach to literacy.

Table 4.2: Major Elements of the NLM's Campaign Approach to Literacy

Target Groups	Adult Illiterates (15-35 years) – priority to women, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.
Conceptualisation of Literacy	Development Literacy: • Self-reliance in basic literacy (reading and writing) and numeracy; • Social awareness; • Acquisition of relevant functional skills; and • Imbibing the values of national integration, conservation of environment and gender.
Curriculum and Pedagogy	• Improved Pace and Content of Learning (IPCL) for improving pace and quality of learning. • Emphasis on learner-centred teaching-learning process. • Three literacy primers based on IPCL approach for imparting basic literacy skills, functional knowledge and skills, and awareness about social and developmental issues.
Implementation Strategy	• Time-bound, areas-specific, mass campaigns – Total Literacy Campaigns - with total coverage for the given age group; • Environment-building and mass mobilisation to generate social demand for literacy and involve wider sections of society in promoting literacy; • Large-scale involvement of volunteers for literacy work; and • Planning, monitoring and implementation of TLCs at the district level through decentralised administrative and organisational structure of Zilla Saksharata Samiti.

As the major thrust of the NLM's policy remained on expansion of TLCs across the country, adequate attention was not paid to devising appropriate strategy for provision of post literacy and continuing education for neo-literates.

4) The Integrated Approach of NLM (1999-present): With coverage of a large number of districts under TLCs in the 1990s, the government assumed that TLCs succeeded in making a large population literate. The NLM's approach was modified to pursue the goal of attaining higher level of literacy (75%) and expansion of continuing education programme. The shift in the policy approach is evident in the following areas:

- The primary target group continued to be non-literates in the age group of 15-35 years from socio-economically disadvantaged groups, but the other age groups interested in literacy and other programmes are also included.

- The NLM has proposed an integrated approach to promote literacy, post-literacy and continuing education. In the new approach, basic literacy teaching and learning is integrated with post-literacy under 'Literacy Campaigns in Operation Restoration' project to ensure a transition from TLC to post-literacy. Continuing education programme is envisaged to link literacy with lifelong learning.
- For implementation of literacy campaigns, the NLM has adopted the managerial approach, based on paid functionaries and not volunteers. The NLM continues to emphasise the role of NGOs in environment-building for TLC, but envisage greater involvement of NGOs in implementation of continuing education projects.
- There is devolution and decentralisation of financial and administrative powers from the NLM to State Literacy Mission Authorities for sanctioning of various programmes. Zilla Saksharata Samities are expected to mobilise various government departments and agencies, panchayats and NGOs for implementation of the projects.
- Strengthening of and revamping of existing institutions, such as the State Resource Centres (SRCs) and Jan Shikshan Sansthan to increase their involvement in providing technical support to the continuing education programme.

Despite recognising literacy as a key indicator for social and economic development, marginality of adult education has continued in legislation, and development planning. It is critical that adult literacy and learning is placed at the heart of the agenda of basic education for all.

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