

CHAPTER-II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Adult education is not altogether different concept. In one form or in other form it was present from a very long period of history in India. It was prevalent in ancient time. At the same time it is a fact that the future of mankind has been tagged with education of this sort or of that sort. Hence an attempt of taking a bird eye view has been done in the following lines.

2.1 Adult Education before Independence :

The tradition of adult education in India is as old as the civilization of the whole world particularly Greece and Rome. But the nature of the adult education in ancient India was not as same as it has been today. The old social and religious institutions were not related to economic striving of the community and did not flourish under the state patronage as it has been at present.

In the middle ages, the same pattern of adult education was prevailed throughout India. Its nature was rather different than that of ancient one. The agencies imparting adult education also were changed. Under the Mohamaiden period the agencies were Dargas, Madresas and Fakirs. During the Maratha period the agencies were Gymnasiums, temples and kattas. These were the prominent centres imparting adult education and educators were wise old guards in the social strata.

During the middle period India was divided into too many several states. But from A.D. 1818 onwards these small states were

consolidated under one state namely the British Raj except six hundred prince. The Britishers had a long domestic experience beginning from 1215. They had done progress in all walks of life. Therefore, the earliest definite figures in respect of literacy in India are available in the Report of William Adams on the basis of specific survey in some urban and rural areas in Bengal and Bihar. Adams came to conclusion that the literacy in India in the year 1836-37 was about 6%. It means 94 percent adults were illiterate.

The British rulers had more concern for consolidation of power. So they had little interest for the education of natives. In every British province, some financial provision was made for giving grant to night schools and Hunter Commission (1882-83) the Indian Education Commission has written in its report that police education schools were set up in Central province in 1885-86. The most significant feature of the adult education programme during this period was the emergence of 'Jail Schools' The idea of Jail Schools was initiated by Dr. Walkar in 1851 at Agra in Uttar Pradesh province.

The co-operative movement was giving impetus to start adult literacy classes from 1905 to 1920. When the Indian freedom movement was at its peak in the year 1937, then adult education was accepted for the first time as definite responsibility by the Government. The Central Advisory Board of Education in its fourth meeting in December, 1938 appointed an Adult Education Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. Syed Mahmud. In his address to the Committee Dr. Mahmud identified adult literacy as the chief plank of the adult education

movement and declared "No Government can make any appreciable head way with its scheme for the promotion of socio-economic development and welfare at its people unless the people are prepared to meet the Government half way and its responsive cooperation. This responsive cooperation is only feasible when the people possess some amount of education."

Shri B.G. Kher, the Education Minister established Adult Education Committee under his Chairmanship in the city of Bombay for the spread of literacy. The literacy classes were run by school teachers for one hour in all week days. A standard of literacy expected was the ability to read and write simple language and to count upto 100 numbers.

The Mysore University Union launched a literacy campaign in 1940 and the Mysore State Literacy Council was formed in 1941. The Council gave special attention to production of primers and other literature. It had taken the co-operation of well known Kannada writers for writing books for new literates and also published a weekly 'The Delaku'.

In Punjab in the year 1937, Dr. Frank Laubach inspired a large number of teachers at Moga and launched the campaign 'Each One Teach One'. The result of this campaign was literacy leagues sprang up in almost all districts and the Government chalked out a five year literacy programme starting with 1939-40.

2.2 Adult Education after Independence :

2.1 Social Education -

The first important post-independence development was the emergence of the concept of social education for adult education. The concept of social education includes literacy, extension of general education, leadership training and social consciousness. Eradication of illiteracy was given a place as special importance in the concept of social education. The method of social education laid emphasis on imparting education through an organised community of learners and teachers. Mass communication media like radio or films were emphasised from the beginning alongwith the traditional media of exhibitions, puppetry, the rural theatre etc.

2.2 The First Five Year Plan 1951-56 :

The programme of social education was divided between the Government of India and the State Governments. The budget provision for social education was Rs. 5 crores. This amount was divided among literacy centres, community centres, libraries in the Community Development Programme.

In this first Five Year Plan, significant advances were made in production of literature. A beginning was made in 1950 in collaboration with Majia Millias Idrac-Talim-O-Tarraqqi. A programme of prizes and awards was started in 1955, for writing good books for adults.

2.3 The Second Five Year Plan (1956-61) :

A provision of Rs. 5 crores was made for social education schemes in the second Five Year Plan. In addition an amount of Rs.10 crores was provided for this item under the Community Development Programme. Under this scheme, the Ministry of Education awarded prizes to authors and organised training programmes for authors in the technique of writing for new literates.

2.4 The Third Five Year Plan (1961-66) :

The significant feature of the third Five Year Plan was that while emphasising social education it considered literacy as the matter of the most important concern because the percentage of literacy in the country had increased only from 17 percent to 24 percent in the first decade of planning.

Gram Shikshan Mohim was started in the Maharashtra State in 1959. It was first experimented in Satara district with the idea of taking the literacy movement to the masses and to make them accept. The aim of that Gram Shikshan Mohim was to eradicate of illiteracy in the age group of 14-50 years.

2.5 The Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-74) :

The Government of India made a provision of Rs.11 crores for adult education. The Ministry of Education sponsored programmes for the youth. It was administered through State Governments and aimed to organise functional literacy classes and farmers training on the assumption that training of farmers was essential input for the success of agriculture production programme.

National Board of Adult Education had been established in 1970. The Board aimed at co-ordinating the programmes of Adult Education between the various State Governments and the Central Government. The Board tried to enlarge its aims at promoting adult education and functions to promote adult education and to create public opinion in favour of adult education.

In 1970-71 Directorate of Adult Education was established as a part of the Ministry of Education on Youth Services. The Directorate served as the Secretariate for the National Board of Adult Education and administered all programmes of adult education of the Central Ministry of Education.

In this period there was emphasis on production and development of literature for neo-literates. The scheme of giving prizes for books for neo-literates had been prescribing since the first Five Year Plan. The Ministry felt that this scheme has not proved sufficient for production of literature for neo-literates. It had, therefore, decided to set-up a Central Unit to organise and guide the production of literature. This unit promoted production of literature by organising writer's 'Workshop' by providing guidance in book production with financial assistance for translation work by research and evaluation.

For liquidation of illiteracy the recommendations of the Kothari Commission (1964-66) are as follows :

1) All possible efforts should be made to remove illiteracy from the country as early as possible. The national percent^{age} of literacy should be raised to 60 by 1971 and to 80 by 1976.

2) Adult education has an enduring function in the national system of education.

2.6 The Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-79) :

In this plan the Government realised that adult education is the foundation of economic and social development of the nation. So it should be given to a large section of the illiterates. The Government had related adult education with agriculture, health, social education and family planning. It was decided that adult education should be vocation oriented so that adults would get more and further skills and gain knowledge of their vocations. Adult education programme was also related with all national development programmes.

The following programmes in the adult education in the fifth plan were taken up :

1) Publications of various books for illiterates in Indian language through National Book Trust.

2) Starting of District and village libraries.

3) These libraries helped the spread of literacy among the neo-literates. The Government of India spent Rs. 35 crores for adult education programmes.

2.7 The Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85) :

Janata Party came into power in 1978 and the Janata Govt. prepared a draft of the Sixth Five Year Plan. The Government made provision of Rs. 200 crores in the budget for adult education. The programme was started from 2nd October, 1978 i.e. birthday of late Mahatma Gandhi, the father of nation. The target was to make literate 10 crores of adults between the age group 15-35 years during the period 1978-84. The main object of the plan was functional one.

The Congress Party came to power in 1980. The Central Government newly drafted Sixth Plan 1980-85. The Government made provision of Rs.128 crores for adult education. Teaching of 3 R's was given importance without considering age, sex, caste, creed and colour. Priority was given to the age-group 15-35 while imparting non-formal education. The reason to select this age-group was that it affects economical development of the nation. In this adult education programme priority was given to the weaker section of the society as women, scheduled caste and tribes Adivasis, Nomadic tribes, slum-dwellers, farm workers etc.

2.8 The New Education Policy had been presented in 1986 by the Minister of Human Resources Development. The policy has given the highest priority to universalization of primary education and to spread out adult literacy in 15-35 age-group within the shortest possible time.

Our young Prime Minister late Rajiv Gandhi gave message on 9th May, 1986 that literacy is essential for personal and national progress. "We have, it is true, millions of illiterate people in our land who are imbued with wisdom. But if they were able to read, they would be even better persons less liable to being exploited and missed by others. Education gives greater inner strength to people. It also helps them to improve their skills."

Our Seventh Five Year Plan and our New Education Policy have attached great importance to programmes of literacy and social education.

Hence, the researcher has determined to take a review of the related literature concerning to the illiterate adults between the age group of 15-35 years.