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ADULT LITERACY AND DEVELOPMENT

Report of a Seminar

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PREFACE

Literacy and development are dialectically inter-related. More so in the case of developing countries where the pace of development is severely hampered by the encumbrance of adult illiteracy. India, being one of them, is determined to achieve total literacy by the year 2000 A.D. The role of literacy as a development tool involves interactions with a wide range of disciplines. As a result, various structural socio-economic and cultural factors critically impinge upon the success of literacy efforts, and vice versa. Fortunately, latest efforts seek to involve all institutions, individuals and agencies in promoting literacy and in providing an organic link to development.

Recognising the intimate connection between education and socio-economic development and individual well-being, a two pronged strategy was adopted. This involved universal elementary education for the 6-14 age group and foundational and functional literacy to adults in 15-35 age group within a time bound framework.

Even in the pre-independence era it was realised that literacy should be an integral component of the Purna Swaraj, not only because it was crucially linked to development, but also because it was critical to democracy by creating an informed citizenry, conscious of its rights and obligations.

Despite significant achievements on many fronts, the goals sought by the adult literacy efforts still elude us. More than half of the population is illiterate and this number has increased from 300 million to 480 million between 1951 and 1990. Political rights and empowerment have made a significant mark, but their economic and social counterparts have eluded the majority.

India International Centre during November 20-22, 1990 organised a seminar to focus on the issues arising out of the inter-relationship between literacy and human development. The Seminar, organised in collaboration with the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India and UNESCO, was held to mark the 80th birth anniversary of Dr. Malcolm Adiseshiah, eminent educationist and economist, and a Life Trustee of the Centre. It was a tribute to his pioneering contribution to the Adult Literacy movement in the country. Dr. Adiseshiah had a long association with the UNESCO and was its Dy. Director-General.

The Seminar was inaugurated by Dr. Manmohan Singh, eminent economist. Shri Anil Bordia, Secretary, Ministry of Education, presided. More than 60 participants from India and abroad attended the Seminar.

Five areas in which literacy plays an important role were selected for discussion: (i) Literacy and Communication, Cultural and Community Development; (ii) Literacy and Population Planning; (iii) Literacy and Removal of Disparities - Class, Gender; (iv) Literacy and Rural Development; (v) Literacy and Economic Growth. This discussion was preceded by a review of the current status of literacy programmes.

This report of the proceedings of the Seminar "Adult Literacy and Development" has been prepared by Dr. A. Mathew of the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration. It addresses itself to the major issues raised, the concerns expressed and the recommendations arising therefrom. The effort in this report has been to reflect the salient points of the presentations and the discussions under different thematic sessions. Our grateful thanks to Dr. Mathew for his help.

I would also like to place on record our sincere thanks to the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India and the UNESCO for their financial assistance and to the distinguished paper contributors and participants which made this seminar possible and successful.

The rich tributes paid at the inaugural session to Dr. Malcolm Adiseshiah and the list of participants and papers circulated are appended to this report.

1.10.1991

E. Gonsalves

Chapter I

THE SEMINAR PERSPECTIVES

Tools of Empowerment

In his welcome address E. Gonsalves, Director of the India International Centre, stressed the importance of the connection between literacy and development, and literacy as one of the tools of empowerment.

Dr. L.M. Singhvi, President of the Centre, in his address said that the increasing number of illiterates despite the growing percentage of literates indicates that we are still behind our constitutional obligation. Thus, there is an urgent need to reflect on the reasons for this failure, as well as on the true and full meaning of literacy and its relation with different dimensions of development.

In his inaugural address, Dr. Manmohan Singh focussed on the various issues to be discussed in the seminar. In this age of knowledge explosion, he said, it is only those societies with the capacity to generate and assimilate new knowledge who emerge as world leaders in science and technology and economic advancement.

Literacy is also vitally linked with socio-economic advancement but it is difficult to delineate the relationship of cause and effect because human beings are both instruments as well as the purpose of development. Even if literacy does not lead to economic growth, it is still valuable and needed. For an active and functional democracy we need a citizenry well informed of its rights as well as obligations. During the Green Revolution, it was literate farmers who understood the message of agricultural modernisation and took full advantage of new technologies. If the benefits of the Green Revolution remained confined to a few regions and sections, it was probably because of the large proportion of illiterates. This lacuna needs to be rectified. The role of adult education and literacy in accelerating the process of modernising the rural economy should be recognised.

Dr. Singh further cautioned that adult literacy cannot be achieved if elementary education is not made universal. Why is it that even after years of effort this goal still eludes us? One of the reasons may be our inability to allocate adequate resources. The nineties are going to be still more resource scarce and we thus need more innovative technologies to make more effective

use of the limited resources. For this, a comparative study of basic social services like elementary education and adult literacy in different states would be useful.

Decentralisation

Dr. Manmohan Singh stated that an excessively centralized system of social services, even in the advanced countries, is proving to be extremely expensive. This is true of advanced countries and applies even more so to India which is not so well endowed in resources and in administrative capabilities. Therefore, the challenge of the future in India is to move towards a decentralized system of social services management. That would bring greater accountability in spending, and provide opportunities to people to interact with others so that we get adequate mileage for the money and also generate a new momentum for the creation of new resources.

Voluntary agencies have played an important role in adult education and in some cases even in health education. But the efforts needed are clearly far beyond the resources of a few well-intentioned organisations and individuals. In his view what is needed, therefore, is a national movement with the community playing a larger role at district, block, village levels.

Literacy as Empowerment

Dr. Malcolm Adiseshiah spoke on the "indissoluble link" between adult education, literacy and development. Economists like A.C. Pigou and Alfred Marshall described Economics as a subject which "deals with the ordinary business of life". Dr. Adiseshiah said that he used to tell his students in Calcutta, how he found absolutely no relation between what he taught in economics and lives of ordinary people. In Shantiniketan he found people were steeped in poverty and deprivation, and were often without food and shelter.

As a Lecturer in Madras Christian College, he used to visit the neighbouring villages with his Economics students - K.N. Raj being one of them. There he saw how literacy could be a means of empowering people to fight for their rights and to improve their lives. It was this which heightened his realisation of adult education as an empowerment of people for development.

When he was in UNESCO, Julian Huxley, the then Director-General, enquired from Dr. Adiseshiah whether and how he could make use of the \$2 million offered by the United Nations for Technical Assistance to Member States. Dr. Adiseshiah replied that if Technical Assistance had anything to do with removal of poverty, a subject with which he was familiar, he would be eager to use the Assistance for that purpose. Being given the money, he not

only channelized the funds for this purpose, but also used UNESCO as an international instrument for empowering the poor of the world, through adult literacy. It is in this process that he came to imbibe the role of education as an instrument of economic development and poverty alleviation and it was this belief which underlay his persistent endeavours in the cause of literacy.

Literacy, adult education and development, to him, was a matter of faith and every effort in this direction was like adding one more brick to the unfinished edifice in our country.

Some of the perspectives that were evident in the deliberation of the Seminar were presaged in this inaugural session. These include that literacy is a unique tool of empowerment; the socio-economic advancement of the nation and each citizen depends on the acquisition of this skill; the bedrock of democracy is an informed people; enlarging the role of the community in a decentralized programme management is the most effective way of increasing the adult literacy effort; and eradication of illiteracy needs to become an article of faith.

Chapter II

LITERACY PROGRAMME - CURRENT STATUS

Introduction

Despite India's 50-year old anti-illiteracy campaign, it still has a near one-third of the world's adult illiterates. This gives rise to several questions relating to the perceptions, objectives, policies, approaches and strategies of implementation of the literacy programme, the role of the government and voluntary agencies.

The strategy of nation-wide literacy movement should be assessed for the extent to which it incorporated the recommendations of the comprehensive evaluation of the National Adult Education Programme launched in 1978. An appraisal of the past efforts and present status will help in formulating a strategic programme to strengthen the literacy-development link. By tracing the current status of the literacy programme in India, the seminar attempted to focus on the past efforts as a point in continuum and as directives for the future.

Three papers, covering the literacy experiences, were presented. Rajni Kothari chaired the session.

Fluctuating Perceptions in Literacy Objectives

Suresh Shukla's presentation provided a critical appraisal of the changes in perception of the goal of literacy over the last fifty years and an analysis of the factors influencing the spread of literacy in India.

The literacy drive as advocated by the Indian nationalist movement in the 1930s was inspired by human, egalitarian and reform motives, but certainly not development objectives. It was the UNESCO's Tehran Conference in the 1960s which introduced development - actually economic development - as the objective of literacy. The first decade and a half of post-independence policy discussions saw little emphasis on literacy. Social education aligned to community development programmes were marginal tributes to the idea of adult education, sidelining substantial literacy effort as such.

With the commencement of the Intensive Agricultural Development Programme in selected districts in the 1960s, the initial 'pure' and perhaps

universal literacy appeal of the independence movement and the Tehran conference was modified to three concentric circles (i) universal literacy, (ii) pre-take off overall, say 40% for sustained economic development, and (iii) work-oriented literacy programme covering about 3 to 5% of the population. It is this last which received the most attention.

Literacy policy stagnated thereafter until the Janata regime's National Adult Education Programme 1979 which embodied a more comprehensive concept as well as scheme of operation. This, however, proved, relatively speaking, infructuous on account of the change of government and consequently government policy.

The successive post-Independence Census enumerations have shown national literacy percentage figures to be 17, 24, 29.5 and 36. Until 1971 thus there was a decline in the literacy growth rate. The somewhat higher growth of 6.5% for 1981 Census would be attributable to (a) increased elementary schooling, (b) successful agriculture enlarging the size of rural and urban groups above the poverty line, and (c) the higher tendency towards girls' schooling among those rural and other social groups where social conservatism and gender bias rather than economic deprivation had been responsible for keeping them out of school.

Obstacles in the path schooling and literacy are in the form of absolute poverty and deprivation to the point of a substantial proportion of the population being below the poverty/starvation line.

A much more rapid growth in schooling accompanied by even more accelerated growth among girls and other socially but not economically handicapped groups could account for accelerated growth in literacy. For this, again, one required breakdown by gender, rural-urban and similar other variables.

A new area of literacy deficit that is emerging - and could unfortunately grow - is the urban poor.

While literacy and adult education workers have concerned themselves with matters of content and medium, the common people's language and standard language of literacy materials have tended to diverge.

Being basically a centralised diffusion without any basis in the grassroots, adult literacy movements have a fragile relationship with local society and culture. This reflects in a way some wider dilemmas of India's social perspective.

Evaluation for Effectiveness

In his presentation on "Evaluating Adult Education Programmes: Effectiveness and Renewal: Some Lessons from the Past", T.V. Rao points out the gaps in the evaluation studies of adult literacy programmes and makes suggestions for future monitoring and development.

Performance appraisal, considered a taboo earlier, is now an accepted tool for learning.

The initiatives of the seventies to get an unbiased assessment of the National Adult Education Programme led to important assessment studies. But these evaluation studies related mainly to information or details regarding enrolment, performance, facilities, etc., without giving importance to the impact of the programme on people. In the past, literacy was evaluated as an end rather than as a means to development.

Evaluation should be aimed at development and this requires that the methodology and instruments such as case studies, etc., should be employed so that its impact on the improvement of life could be measured.

National level institutions, hitherto used as evaluation agencies, should also be harnessed to develop the programme. In future, the adult education agencies should evaluate each other's programmes. By studying the strengths and weaknesses, the agencies can learn from one another. And this inter-agency, inter-community, inter-region evaluation and learning could lead to the net-working of the whole region and all the agencies involved in the programme being networked for programme monitoring and development.

There is the need for national level agencies - the Development and Extension Departments - to coordinate with adult education programmes, and make literacy and adult education an integral part of their programmes.

The enormous potential and resources available in the country, such as the potential contribution of college and university students, have not been sincerely tapped so far. But their motivation and voluntary participation depends much on that of the teachers. The scope to learn from experiences in rural areas and the challenges in organising the unorganised in rural areas are immense.

The vast network of highly organised HRD networks in industry and the national level professional bodies have a lot to contribute to the development of adult education. Many of them are also keenly interested, and their expertise could be utilized. The Ministry of HRD and Development Departments

should harness the expertise of interested companies through minor financial incentives such as tax rebates for HRD investment.

"When The Pen is Heavier than the Plough"

The third presentation of the session by Poromesh Acharya reflected on the dichotomies inherent in policies and their implementation, and people's attitudes and perceptions of the programme.

The new approach to adult education is heralded by the National Literacy Mission's spirit towards quickening the pace of learning. However, the recent attempt to emulate the Ernakulam model of achieving universal literacy would lead to disastrous consequences, unless it is preceded by a proper evaluation of the situation and related aspects.

Past experiences reveal that the will to promote functional literacy and participation of the people was weak among the programme functionaries and opinion leaders in local areas. This accounts for the fact that the adult learners, who after a day's hard toil find the 'pen heavier than the plough', continue to be indifferent and consequently the achievement remains poor.

Planning adult education without a proper understanding of agrarian relations, manifest in class, caste and communal conflicts, and their mode of thinking would only lead to people's apathy and a sceptic view of officials' perception of the potential of adult education. Field experience shows that adult education centres typify many of these structural and attitudinal problems and people's scepticism.

The culture of political favouritism of elected panchayats influences the recruitment of instructors/supervisors and the monitoring/supervising of their performance. The resultant lack of a committed or competent cadre of functionaries is not surprising.

It is in the above context and without any stock taking that decisions are taken to launch mass campaigns along the Ernakulam model. Volunteers could be mobilised in thousands but the questions regarding their training, the mechanisms to avert relapse into illiteracy of new literates, the incompatibility of programme objectives in the context of socio-economic constraints, all remain unanswered. The government's failure to find answers to these questions will only result in their inability to convince the people.

Discussion

On a theme like appraisal of literacy perspectives of the past and the present, the perceptions are bound to be varied. The points raised in the discussion clearly bear out this range and variety.

The assessment that the evaluation of these programmes were only concerned with statistics and facilities is wrong. These studies do give a great deal of qualitative information about important socio-economic profiles of the learner groups. It is quite another matter why the findings of these studies were not harnessed to improve the programme.

The premise that literacy leads to scientific and technological advancement, socio-culturally enlightened outlook, and that the educated play the vanguard role against socio-economic and political oppression and injustice and so on - all these are only partially true. There are numerous instances to the contrary. It was after all the literates who marched to Ayodhya, and fought for and against the Mandal Commission Report's implementation proposals. It is the educated and literate who exploit the illiterates; it is among them that dowry and patriarchy are more widespread; and, in a sense, even education is instrumental in perpetuating inequities such as the stereotyping of women's role.

Without taking into consideration the socio-political and cultural ethos and milieu behind the Kerala literacy movement, attempts to blindly transplant the Kerala model in other parts of the country is unrealistic. It could lead to people's apathy, disillusionment and great waste of scarce resources. Rather than an all India model, it would be wiser to learn from the successful literacy experiences of States like Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, which have comparable socio-economic, political and cultural situations.

The Tanzanian experience is a case in point where the government used literacy as the instrument in bringing out the productive potential of people, leading to economic development. An increase in the scale of literacy in turn requires more formal education at primary and secondary levels.

The equation of literacy with development tends to overlook the need to universalise elementary education which could have put an end to adult illiteracy.

The mode of campaign - totally voluntary, the short duration efforts, the level of literacy achievement and its inference that literacy is the main tool for social change - have all contributed in making the Ernakulam experience a model for emulation. The success of the Ernakulam literacy campaign lies more in the objective social conditions, evolving over a long period of time. The struggle for socio-economic and educational equity has been more concerned and all pervasive in Kerala than in any other part of India and it is this that was readily accepted as weapon against illiteracy.

A political climate wholly favourable to the promotion of literacy would make all the difference in literacy movements. But even where it is not there in full measure, a concerted effort by the people to adopt a holistic approach to promote literacy has met with considerable success - the Coimbatore district being an instance. These micro successes in literacy and improvement in the living conditions of the people deserve serious study. This gains added significance, given the fact that poverty and other socio-economic constraints affect literacy, adult education as well as elementary education. Tackling these constraints would help both literacy and elementary education.

At present the government, the people or local organisations are incapable of measuring upto the task, nor are they in a position to mobilize themselves to launch a literacy movement. That leaves the voluntary agencies as the only viable agency to bridge the gap. The policy of active encouragement to voluntary agencies must be accompanied by the Central Government's role in coordinating and progressive decentralization of planning, management and monitoring to lower levels.

Chapter III

LITERACY AND COMMUNICATION, CULTURE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

Efforts over the last six decades to spread literacy have proved two points. Literacy is not the immediate need of the poverty stricken millions. At the same time, when (i) it has been presented through cultural-traditional medium of the society; and (ii) it relates to the realities of their lives, the response to such initiatives has been overwhelming.

The dismal failure of literacy drives which, both in methodology of presentation and in content, remained alien to the illiterate poor is a warning to change the approach. The National Literacy Mission aims to achieve cent per cent adult literacy through mass campaigns. It lays premium on the use of people's cultural forms and institutions as an effective tool to communicate the need and to promote and develop literacy.

There is a wealth of experience in using the tools of culture for literacy and community development now available. This was evident from the session, in which M.P. Parameswaran, S. Anandalakshmy and Richard Morse presented papers under the Chairmanship of B.G. Verghese.

Cultural Forms for Awareness and Action in Literacy

The first presentation by M.P. Parameswaran on "Communication, Culture and Literacy: The Kerala Experience", was based on the experience of Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP) in the field of communication and literacy.

Print medium is still the KSSP's foundation. The KSSP brings out three science monthlies for different age groups and 40-50 new books every year, and has also launched a fortnightly in Malayalam for the neo-literates. These magazines and books are sold by the KSSP activists through door to door and school campaigns, and the annual sale proceeds, Rs. 4-5 million, are used to finance the regular activities of the KSSP.

Besides using written literature, the KSSP has been making an effective use of oral communication through lectures on themes like Nature, Science

and Society. The abandonment of the Silent Valley Project is an example of the impact of mass sensitization by KSSP.

The Sastra Kala Jatha - science through 'art procession' -- is a non-traditional mode of synthesizing songs, street plays and folk art forms, especially through theatre, to create awareness. Literacy is a recent addition to the range of issues (e.g. environment, drug abuse, etc.) about which Keralites have become concerned; this is due to the combination of Kala jathas with print media, oral and printed polemics, posters, etc.

Identifying lack of motivation among learners and cynicism on the part of the educated as key obstacles in the path of literacy programmes, the KSSP launched a massive campaign of motivation creation through the Kala Jatha. It succeeded in mobilising 2 lakh adult learners, 50,000 organisers and 22,000 voluntary instructors and achieved cent per cent adult literacy by February 1990 in Ernakulam. The secret behind the programme's success lay in the integration of government and people's efforts in a carefully planned programme.

With careful planning and implementation, and an unusually committed district administration, the programme highlighted among others, the necessity of government and people interaction to nurture the programme; the need for sustaining literacy both among learners and instructors; keeping the duration to the barest minimum; the need to ensure the voluntary nature of service of instructors, master trainers and resource persons; and keeping the project personnel on deputation to avoid "vested interest" in the continuation of the project.

The Ernakulam literacy movement started a chain reaction of enthusiasm all over India. The Bharat Gyan Vigyan Jatha with the slogan of "science and literacy for national integration and self-reliance" is one such effort emulating the Ernakulam approach. With its objective of enrolling at least one million volunteers and generating 20-30 'Ernakulams', it covered about 30,000 villages directly and another one lakh indirectly. Having achieved this target, the effort now on is to treble the number of areas, volunteers and adult learners. The role of 'saturation propaganda' or the creation of an atmosphere of intense communication through the Kala Jatha medium is an excellent example of using communication for literacy and vice-versa leading to social change.

Using Cultural Forms for Literacy and Community Development

The second presentation by S. Anandalakshmy on "Literacy and Development" was prefaced by a caution against the use of ill-advised terms like the semantics relating to the terms "illiterate" and "eradication of illiteracy". Although illiterate should mean non-literate and illiteracy, an

inability to read and write, the concept of ignorance is also linked with it as is often seen in descriptions of populations as “ignorant and illiterate”. The speaker contended that they may be “non-literates”, but “not ignorant”. A non-literate farmer may be more well versed in agricultural and cattle care tasks and should not be labelled as ignorant. Those of us who are not “music-literate” or “ecology-literate”, would hardly appreciate being described as ignorant.

Secondly, the term “eradication of illiteracy” likens it to the “eradication of Malaria or Small Pox”. The non-literates are only the under-privileged and not diseased. Literacy workers should, therefore, adopt the role of builders who enrich the lives of under privileged rather than function as illiteracy eradication squads.

The curricular content for the non-literates needs to be different from that used in child literacy. It should be based on their real life situations. When they become aware of the connection between the literacy level of a group and its quality of life, they would begin to question the power structure and demand justice, social and economic.

Another major pre-requisite for the success of adult literacy endeavours is to insist on and ensure that all the adult learners send their children to school.

The strong oral tradition, especially folk songs and folklore, widely prevalent among unlettered people, should be harnessed, nurtured and used for adult education.

Literacy programmes using the local dialect have proved to be successful. This approach takes care of two vital principles in education, namely, of proceeding from the known to the unknown and of enhancing the self-esteem of the learners.

While the educated consider awareness raising an appropriate goal, the consequences are often not anticipated. Unless there are some support systems, and some channels of further action for the newly educated, the exercise may be futile, if not frustrating for them. Literacy has potential for developing other aspects of life, **provided** that it is related coherently to them. As an isolated activity, it has **limited effect** on improving the chances of deprived groups.

The problems of finding the right people for being trained as adult education workers, etc. are vital as they constitute the right step to community development.

The third paper presented in the session was "Values in Development: The Village Satsang as Means of Promoting Participatory Learning and Development" by Richard Morse, Varun Vidyarthi and others. The presentation highlighted the potential of traditional institutions like Satsang - the village get-together - as a people's forum and vehicle of participatory learning and development. Manavodaya - human awakening - is a voluntary agency situated in Lucknow which makes use of the Satsang for the spread of ideas and knowledge among the villagers. It also helps in emergence of new leadership and local talent from among the people.

Discussion

The ensuing discussion reflected the variety of perceptions about the role of literacy and the approaches to literacy activities.

A recurring point in the discussion was the need to adopt local - cultural and linguistic forms on a mass scale as the most effective means to communicate the literacy message and activities. Two aspects of the literacy campaigns were emphasized: one, the use of language especially the media and use of appropriate local dialect. The other, and the more direct suggestion related to the need and value of using the varied local cultural traditions, like the village melas, and culturally popular forms of communication.

Decentralization of the literacy programme from state to district, block, village and ethnic group levels based on cultural diversities was recommended. This would also serve as a reinforcement to harnessing local cultural traditions and media for the same end.

The potential of literacy in solving the socio-economic problems confronting individuals was reiterated. Approaches for promoting participatory learning, thinking and decision-making have greater sustaining impact on national development and individual well-being.

The need to identify deficiencies in perspectives, approaches and methodologies followed in the past, whether in respect of development or literacy, as feedback for improvement was stressed.

Sharing their experience, Chinese delegates pointed out that in China, literacy activities are concerned not only with teaching, reading and writing but also with improving the skills so that the adults can improve their functioning in day-to-day life. The literacy rate varies from province to province and among different age groups. Different agencies, both voluntary and government as well as women's organisations, are involved in contributing to this mission. In China they are also trying to link literacy programme with the primary education programme.

Summing up the discussions, the Chairman remarked that it is time that media and local culture are used to strengthen the literacy mission. The private sector and government agencies should work together and literacy should be taken up as a central issue and not as peripheral.

Chapter IV

LITERACY AND POPULATION PLANNING

Introduction

In all countries, literacy levels, especially among women, have positively contributed to a sustained decline in fertility rates, better health of the children and the overall standard of living. Conversely, it has also been clear that an unmitigated population explosion can throw even the best organised economies out of gear. But the consequences could be even more devastating in societies characterised by large scale illiteracy, economic backwardness, socio-economic deprivations, lack of population control, poverty, and lack of health facilities. India is one such country where while there is definite proof of the positive association between literacy and population growth, there is also the evidence of factors like poverty, social attitudes and socio-economic background of the family playing a greater determinant role in influencing fertility behaviour.

The issues of how the population message should be projected and what should be the role of literacy in disseminating the population message formed the crux of deliberations in this session chaired by M.V. Mathur with a lead presentation by K. Gopalan.

Positive Messages of Population Management

Presenting the main points of the paper Gopalan noted that the problems of population started attracting the attention of demographers and educationists early this century. The evidence of various research studies across countries, including India, points to the positive correlation between higher literacy, especially women's literacy, and lower birth rates. There has been an increase in illiterates especially in the developing countries over the last decade. This is despite the fact that education has been treated as crucial input for the national economic development and all national endeavours. In developing countries the expenditure on education suffered serious cuts due to economic crises leading to an education crisis.

The essential purpose of population education is creating an awareness of, and understanding about, the nature, causes and consequences of uncontrolled population growth. The success of population control programme depends on

the degree to which social acceptance has been achieved. India had for long recognized that a planned population is vital to improve the quality of living. The NCERT, since the seventies, has been seeking to sensitise the younger age group through school curriculum on the problems of uncontrolled population and values of small family norms. The efforts in population education at school level, especially after the introduction of National Population Education Project (1980), have also been taken up in all sectors of formal and adult education. In view of the fact that three-fourths of school going children do not complete their elementary education, there is need to spread population related messages through non-formal education and other literacy programmes, and NCERT has been active in this front.

Literacy and controlled population growth mutually reinforce each other. To achieve this end there should be coordination among different agencies like health and education. Similarly, it is necessary to rectify the bias against female child through population education.

It is through a multi-media approach that the pace of change can accelerate. In the sensitive area of establishing small family norms, the approach must not be based entirely on political and economic considerations, but must have social sanction. Side by side with modern communication technologies, we must also develop and use traditional media to communicate.

Discussion

The tenor of discussions revealed a concensus on literacy's positive impact, especially of female literacy and education, on population control, birth and infant mortality rates. But many doubted the adequacy of literacy as a condition for population control.

The exclusive onus placed on women for population control and the image and role of women as projected in population education and the media were also questioned by many. The need to address the population message to men is all the greater in the Indian socio-cultural milieu where men have more say in matters such as number of children, etc.

Like the close nexus between illiteracy and fertility rate, particularly among the females, poverty and illiteracy are also entwined. Pervasive female illiteracy and poverty, as evident in the Hindi belt of India, are likely to continue. Even here, where it is not clear what kind of improvement is possible, there are cases of solutions to population problems and essentials of population education available, as for example, among the Santhal tribes.

The reason for the limited success of population control through education is the failure to place it in the socio-technological context. The need to change the content of population education programmes, to project a more positive image of women and the need to adapt the messages of literacy and population education from the point of view of the illiterates was emphasised, especially because the images and messages the literates portray are not understood and assimilated by them. Having done this, the decision regarding their fertility choices is best left to them. It is the economic factor which determines the number of children, and it is the poor who see the necessity of having more children to supplement their meagre family income for survival.

Development would be a better contraceptive for population control, but even more important is the necessity to identify the dominant and the crucial variables affecting population in rural areas and devise appropriate strategies. The participants agreed that population message dissemination should adopt multiple approaches and channels.

Population education in school and college books should focus equally on improvements in quality of life. This approach, unlike the clinical approach and family planning, highlights the value, the responsibility and the gains of small family norms during the formative years of early childhood and adulthood. The print medium and the primers, readers, melas and street corner plays should be used to reach large audiences in order to reinforce the message of population education. There are 5 million students in India to communicate the benefits of regulated population growth and simultaneously create awareness among the students themselves.

The acute need for inter-sectoral coordination among agencies involved in adult education, health and other sectors was stressed. Legislative solutions to population control were also suggested, e.g., raising the minimum age of marriage to 20.

The value of better quality of life through fewer number of children should form the main content in the adult and elementary education programmes. It was noted that socio-economic considerations of population growth to convey the value of spacing and health needs of children, as well as the training of the volunteers, are given serious consideration by the adult education programme.

The tendency of literate women paying more attention to boys than to girls, and the tendency to overrate the role of female literacy in fertility rate were brought up in the discussions. In the cause of

population education, pressing retired people into service was recommended.

Some unorthodox suggestions were also made, such as trying out a policy of increasing disincentives to parents with more than two children. This could be started with the educated community, especially the teachers in the schools and colleges.

It was noted that a cautious approach in consonance with the social traditions is called for in disseminating population management messages.

Chapter V

LITERACY AND REMOVAL OF DISPARITIES - CLASS AND GENDER

Introduction

The role of literacy in national development, and the socio-economic improvement of individuals and social groups has been demonstrated in India and in many countries of the world. This is even more so in the case of female literacy. The evidence is not that conclusive about its contribution to removing class and gender disparities. This is of particular importance in India partly because of the constitutional safeguards and measures in favour of removal of class and gender disparities. The reasons for disparities of class and gender and the role of literacy and other factors influencing these gender disparities were highlighted in the presentations of Anita Dighe, Vasudha Dhagamwar and Amar Kumar Singh. The session was chaired by Anandalakshmy.

In her presentation Anita Dighe observed that at the individual level, literacy has a proven impact in building self-esteem and confidence by raising socio-political awareness of barriers. Like levels of education, literacy is correlated with quality of life, particularly in the case of women.

The role of adult education in reducing class and gender disparities had two divergent schools of thought among sociologists of adult education. One school representing the consensus paradigm viewed disparities as a necessary and beneficial product of society. The other school, of conflict paradigm, viewed education as an instrument of domination perpetuating the existing class, cultural and gender inequities in society; adult education and literacy are no exceptions and have serious limitations in removing these disparities.

The adult education programme in India which evolved in the 1950s, became the National Adult Education Programme in 1978. It sought to increase the level of awareness among adults so that they could organise themselves better, articulate their needs and secure a more equitable position. These objectives remain unachieved as the stress in implementation continued to be on literacy skills. In fact, by seeming to be radical, literacy has only heightened the frustrations of the poor, lowered their aspirations and thereby helped to perpetuate existing class-gender disparities. Despite the increased

participation of women in the initial stages, their drop out rate has exceeded that of men, as literacy per se is not their felt need.

The attempts to motivate and sustain functional literacy among women through income generating activities failed on all accounts. It only sharply brought to the fore the issue that women have no control over the planning and management of these literacy activities, leave alone questioning the gender stereotyping in the contents and activities of the functional training.

The content of the literacy primers in India not only mirrors but also perpetuates existing inequities in society. For the most part, the primers leave out women or portray domestic life as the female domain, thus betraying patriarchal values. And the existing adult education programme tends to reproduce and perpetuate class and gender disparities in society.

Disparities can be reduced only when adult education highlights socio-economic contradictions and struggles of the oppressed, and plays the role of empowerment. To be specific (i) literacy must be used for empowerment leading to collective action against injustice; (ii) literacy not being the priority need of the poor and deprived or women, should not be forced on them till they themselves feel the need for it; (iii) the role of education in releasing the potential of the people, and mobilising the disadvantaged to action, has been illustrated by the Ernakulam and Bharat Gyan Vigyan Jatha experiences; these emphasise the need to associate adult education programme of the deprived with on-going socio-economic struggles; (iv) women's issues should be addressed as part of this struggle.

The second presentation on "Impact of Literacy on Removing Disparities of Gender, Caste and Class" by Vasudha Dhagamwar highlighted the following.

Literacy increases the spatio-temporal map of the universe of the literate. The various constitutional provisions have not resulted in any significant change to socially disadvantaged sections. It is here that equality of access to information as a fundamental right could have made a lot of difference.

The differences in the position of life and treatment of the literate tribal man as compared to his illiterate counterparts illustrates the value of equality of access to information.

Though literacy and access to information reduced social disparities considerably, its impact will rest upon the scale of literacy.

Literacy should not be viewed as the panacea for removal of all socio-economic disparities considering their mutually reinforcing role.

The impact of literacy on removing gender disparities is difficult to assess. But the skills of communication possessed by a literate woman would be superior to her non-literate companions and she might be able to use them to advantage.

Literacy can raise the individual's standard of living.

The third presentation by Amar Kumar Singh highlighted the main trends found in the relationship between social disadvantages and academic achievement. Some of the main points of the presentation are: (1) lower levels of society are negatively associated with low levels of intelligence, academic achievement and personality traits; (2) the academic achievement of socially disadvantaged group is lower than that of the advantaged group even when the two are matched on intelligence; (3) socially advantaged group is characterised by parental income, education, occupation and caste/ethnicity; (4) the lower academic achievement of the socially disadvantaged group is influenced by adverse familial factors, such as parental attitudes to, and support for, the academic pursuits of the child. To improve the academic achievements of socially disadvantaged children corrective action should be taken at the primary school level. The medium could be Ashram schools, neighbourhood schools or a more unstructured school system. Teachers should be properly trained for the purpose. Parents and the community at large should be involved in the educational process.

Discussion

The discussion that ensued highlighted the following points.

Literacy per se has no significance till it is combined with programmes related to health, hygiene and occupational skills. In this regard the role of voluntary organisations is quite important and their efforts should be supported by the state governments.

Class and gender disparities are two separate issues and should not be clubbed together. Strategies to reduce gender disparities will not necessarily be relevant and appropriate to reduce the class disparities also.

While planning for reducing gender disparities through literacy, the social causes of such disparities need to be kept in view. Female literacy should not be seen in isolation and attempts should be made to make the whole population literate which would automatically have a positive impact on female literacy also.

The question regarding the adoption of the feminist ideology from the West came in for a heated discussion. It was contended that western feminism

would not be relevant to India which has a long tradition of man-woman harmony and complementarity in struggles for equality. Social conflict and gender inequities owed more to the failure to use the cultural ethos and determine the development path which does not discriminate against gender. The suggestion that tackling the cultural ideology of the development path may lead to gradual elimination of gender inequities in society and in literacy, came in for sharp contest.

In reality the position of women in India mocks at the myth of man-woman harmony model. The male-female ratio is 100:93, and this ratio begins to worsen with development; the dowry deaths and sexual oppression of women both within the family and in society are starkly evident. Feminism is the most painful 'ism' in the world. Ideologies of democracy or Marxism of men stop at the door step. Within the home the ideology of equality is rarely applied where women are concerned.

On the issue of importing feminism, it was argued that in India women's equality has been a priority struggle from Rammohan Roy to Mahatma Gandhi. But what is wrong in borrowing global ideas--democracy, Marxism? The language the educated speak, and the clothes they wear are borrowed from the West. The impediment to the removal of gender discrimination and inequities in society and in respect of literacy lies entrenched in the values and outlook of the society and not in adopting western feminism.

The question, therefore, is where do we go from here in the matter of tackling gender inequities. It is keeping the above in mind that the need to change the content of literacy primers is highlighted. Not only is there a need to purge gender stereotyping seen in the primers and school text books, but it is also equally necessary to see the difference in rural and urban settings. Besides equal sharing of domestic chores between males and females, it is also necessary to rewrite the children's rhymes, stories and create new mythologies which project women sharing the same travails and contributing to the same degree as men at home and in society. Feminism does not lead to break up of the family, but rather to a better and democratic family, where equality exists and sharing is equal to men and women.

From this defence of feminism it was agreed that the educational curriculum needs total recasting. Primers and textbooks should be changed and their contents should be reviewed, removing any inbuilt bias of gender, class or caste. Unauthenticated books should be banned as they damage the minds of children.

The expansion of literacy in any form and even at the most rudimentary level will help in overall development. It was suggested that the 5 million students and quarter million teachers should compulsorily be asked to share the responsibility.

Chapter VI

LITERACY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

Despite many hurdles an attempt was made in India to bring education within easy access to all children and this has definitely contributed to national development and individual progress in urban areas. The limited educational progress in rural areas did nothing for rural development and improvement of the rural poor. It is only when literacy becomes a tool of conscientisation, empowerment and liberation that peoples' participation in the policy making, planning and management process of development will be possible. Though it will take time, it is literacy that would help initiate the process. It was in this context that Lakshmidhar Mishra and Bhupinder Singh, on behalf of Sanjit (Bunker) Roy, presented their papers in the seminar chaired by L.C.Jain.

Literacy's Crusade against Rural Poverty

The first paper presented by Lakshmidhar Mishra assessed the existing reasons of rural poverty, which results in the denial of the opportunity of schooling to the children of rural poor, especially girls. The reasons for this pervasive and entrenched rural poverty include the skewed distribution of land and other assets, absence of avenues of durable employment, denial of remunerative prices to workers and agricultural labourers, indebtedness, bondage, humiliation and exploitation. More important, the highly stratified rural society and an artificial division of labour based on caste, have helped to perpetuate the culture of inequality and accentuate an oppressive and inequitable system.

The following steps for strengthening literacy were suggested.

The educational process must infuse a culture of self-confidence, self-assertion and self-efficacy. Besides enabling them to perceive their strengths and weaknesses, it must impart tools and techniques to grapple with and overcome them. It should point out the merits and weaknesses of different forms of organisation, help choose a particular form and eventually help organise themselves along the selected form.

The deprived sections will have to be enlightened on the causes of their deprivation, poverty and exploitation, the greater value of human capital

through education than immediate short term gains, and long term consequences of non-enrolment, premature withdrawal or denial of education to children. It is equally necessary to conscientise those responsible for perpetuating outmoded social customs and practices.

For education to be an instrument of liberation for the oppressed, a homogenous, open, informal educational environment is required. The existing culture of acquiescence must be replaced by that of inquisitiveness and critical scrutiny. The content of learning must shift from slavish veneration of the past to recognition of objective conditions and the need for improvement. The right attitudes, approaches and perceptions of the problems explaining social and individual differences must be adopted, and education must help to understand and appreciate these differences with empathy and sensitivity.

Literacy - Impediment to Rural Development

Bunker Roy's paper on "Literacy and Rural Development: The Tilonia Experience" highlighted some of the regressive features of education vis-a-vis rural development.

The regressive role of education in rural areas has not only produced educated unemployment but also unemployability. Perennial deficiencies of resources - human and material - and the lack of commitment to education is another question.

The educated have become misfits for rural development and education and literacy means migration and loss of a set of hands to work in the house and fields. Even if they come back to the village as teacher, compounder, or agricultural extension worker, they invariably belong to the influential families. They support the patwaris and create hurdles in redistributing surplus land to the landless, and misuse the free distribution of government medicines.

Exploitation in rural areas is a way of life that the poor constantly live with. To get over this, they need constant assurance and some one to give that staying power. It is here that literacy plays an important role in identifying ability and confidence for rural development.

The Tilonia experiment is an example of voluntary agencies scoring where the government has miserably failed in bringing about rural development through literacy. It illustrates how (i) educational administration, scientific and technical and health related jobs and tasks are being handled by those either without any or much formal or professional education and training; and (ii) mass awareness on socially relevant themes was aroused through the use

of cultural forms such as puppets. This led to a petition being filed in the Supreme Court and its verdict forcing the State of Rajasthan having to pay minimum wages.

The Tilonia experience, in short, highlights that--

- (i) literacy and education should create self-confidence and self-reliance; and
- (ii) it represents low cost community based efforts that reduces the dependence on government.

Discussion

Several suggestions came up in the discussion.

Rural poverty is an impediment for participation in development, especially for women. Therefore it is necessary to link literacy with vocational training as an enhanced income will promote and sustain a response to literacy.

It is much more cost-effective to use people nearer home than university and college students in literacy work.

The need to use the enormous resources of those willing to contribute, like the ex-service personnel, retired persons, etc. was strongly emphasised.

Participants supported the introduction of incentives to agencies which demonstrate cost-effective literacy models.

A coordinated method should be devised in which all workers at the rural/grass root levels, could be linked.

Literacy helps to reduce dependence, enables people to decide for themselves, and minimises deprivation. The need to go in for a multiplicity of approaches along with the present mass mobilisation and campaign approach was noted. While the mass approach has its merits, some felt that the central approach or teach-on-site need not be abandoned since it is capable of providing the basic services in an organised manner.

The area development approach at the micro-level has been successful in achieving cent per cent literacy, self-employment, decline in birth rate, enhanced political consciousness, increased awareness of rights and legal provisions, and greater participation in development. Progressive outlook of committed activists, without disturbing the unity of village, has involved all sections of people. A replica of this on a larger scale is difficult without decentralisation of political and financial powers to the Panchayati Raj through a constitutional amendment.

Voluntary agencies should be used for extension and development activities such as health, family planning, animal husbandry, production and use of bio-gas, smokeless chula, forest preservation, etc. The educational values of these would further the cause of literacy.

Communication to poor unlettered rural people regarding development and income generating schemes available, such as IRDP and rural credit banks, will reduce their dependence and improve their lot.

Chapter VII

LITERACY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Introduction

Motivation of illiterate adults is bound to evoke poor response unless it is linked with development and economic incentives. There are many countries which found this method leading not only to phenomenal success in adult literacy but also in national development, and considerable improvement in the living conditions of people. The case of China is an example and was presented by H.S. Bhola in the session chaired by Amrik Singh.

H.S. Bhola's presentation on "Adult Literacy for Development: The Logic and Structure of Economic Motivation" highlighted four major issues (i) the nature and process of building and sustaining human motivations; (ii) the logic and structure of using economic motivation in adult literacy for development; (iii) an evaluation of the Chinese experience of using economic motivation in adult literacy for development; and (iv) the possibilities and ways of applying economic motivations for literacy promotion in India.

Dialectical Link: Chinese Example

Economic rewards and incentives as motivations for adult literacy should lead to economic development of the country besides improvement in individual's life, both material and cultural. The point at which literacy should be introduced will depend upon the nature of the development programme.

The case of China illustrates the example of concrete rewards-linked incentives policy for literacy being honestly and vigorously implemented through a rigorous system interfacing economic, political and educational structures. Economic motivations for development in China are realised through economic motivations for literacy. Again, the use of literacy to popularise science and technology for the purpose of modernizing agriculture and production enterprises, with the provision for private ownership, has led to phenomenal progress in literacy and adult education programmes. With the mythological tradition of the Chinese wish to be rich, the policy of using economic rewards as motivation for literacy has succeeded in liberating a large majority of the Chinese people from poverty and deprivation.

Emulating China's Literacy-Development Model

What are the possibilities and prospects of replicating this success in India? This needs to be examined in respect of certain parameters common to both countries in terms of the similarities and differences. The large scale poverty and poor quality of life, the political philosophy of equity and improvement in living standards of the deprived, and literacy and education as central to human resource development, and hence productivity, these are features which make India ideal for emulating the Chinese experience.

Literacy workers need to show personal commitment to development and literacy and demand similar commitment from the elected representatives. The imperative of using motivation for literacy, economic motivations in the beginning, gradually including political, social and cultural motivations, was stressed. Within the normal framework of policy, planning and programming, literacy should be central to the logic of the development programme, although the point at which literacy should enter would vary according to the nature of the programme or the existing social conditions and literate environment.

Discussion

The efficacy of economic motivation in the Indian context was doubted by many for various reasons. Some of them believed that motivation is crucially linked with the economic and socio-cultural milieu and the individual's position thereof. Among the deprived sections, in rural areas, alienation and fatalism are major determinant factors. These negative motivations need to be neutralised.

Some of the participants emphasized that there is greater need to use cultural rather than economic motivation. This is imperative in view of the enormous response that cultural symbols have evoked in India. The need for using cultural motivation is all the greater, given our inability to meet even the basic needs of the masses. While recognising the value of invoking cultural symbols for literacy promotion, it is also important to remember that these symbols need to be handled with care.

The use of industry in the literacy promotion could help to take the load off the government. There is need to view education as the responsibility of the people of the area and to mobilise local resources for the purpose. Literacy needs to be seen as a mobilising movement and many agencies need to be utilised for making people literate. It is only when literacy is linked to skill formation, continuing education and continued professional education, it could lead to economic development.

Indian industry is the biggest gainer from literacy, education and trained manpower. Barring a few exceptions, industry's contribution to literacy is negligible. Therefore, a strong movement within industry is essential, and it would even be justifiable to tax the industry for this purpose.

Planning and management of education of the country does not receive serious and sincere attention from decision-makers at the political and bureaucratic levels. Purposeful and sequential training and orientation of these people is not only urgent, but would also be immensely useful for educational development and literacy promotion.

Chapter VIII

MAJOR CONCERNS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SEMINAR

Socio-economic inequities, deeply entrenched in social values and economic conditions, have crept into the educational policies and implementation strategies and in the very content and process of education. The role of literacy therefore needs to be reviewed in the context of Indian experiences. Literacy's contribution to the following five areas of development were delineated for indepth examination in this seminar: (i) Communication, Culture and Community Development; (ii) Population Planning; (iii) Removal of Disparities - Class and Gender; (iv) Rural Development; and (v) Economic Growth.

The structural and attitudinal impediments in the path of literacy, the travails at the grass root level and the correctives are the **crux** for remedial action in literacy promotion and in strengthening its interface with all forms of development.

Past experiences and current status of the literacy programme were examined in relation to the perceptions, policies, approaches, implementation strategies, contents and methodologies. It was believed that only by making literacy an integral part of all the developmental and extension programmes and involving these agencies in the coordination and monitoring of the literacy programme can the literacy drive be made effective.

The enormous potential of university and college students and the services of industrial sector should be harnessed for promoting literacy by giving incentives if needed.

Socio-economic constraints on literacy continue unaltered at grassroot level. People doubt the conscientisation motives of adult education policies, and the sincerity of the functionaries, and opinion leaders as well as the government as agents of conscientisation. Attempts to launch mass campaigns, without proper stock taking, will only erode people's faith in the government and the campaigns are bound to fail. A favourable government and bureaucratic will is a pre-requisite for the success of literacy programme.

The socio-cultural milieu and other objective conditions conducive for literacy must form the cornerstone of the methodology of literacy movement.

An effective universal elementary education (UEE) has a greater guarantee of arresting adult illiteracy and, therefore, should be pursued vigorously.

The message of population education, both in educational institutions and to specific target groups, should highlight the positive contribution of regulated population growth for both national development and improvement in the quality of life.

A multi-media approach to disseminate population management message is particularly effective, both to complement the educational inputs in schools and colleges as well as to reach out to the target group, not amenable to the print media.

The relation between literacy and fertility is not causal and linear as the socio-economic conditions of the family and community have a greater influence. Thus, the socio-economic conditions of the target groups must influence the population management messages. Gaining the social acceptance is as important as devising population management technology more suited to the social, rural and economic conditions.

The tendency to view women as the exclusive target group in respect of population management should be revised. It is equally necessary to address population messages to men. There is also need to rethink the philosophy and approach of incentives to promote small family norms by combining incentives and disincentives on non-orthodox lines.

The use of cultural forms and institutions to create awareness and action for literacy has proved effective in most cases all over India, among the illiterate people in rural areas, as well as the educated. Forms which demonstrated proven successes were emphasized. These include local cultural, art, music forms, socio-cultural institutions, language and dialect, or even the oral traditions.

That culture is the motivating force behind literacy, and an effective tool in mobilising the collective action of people in development, has been demonstrated in numerous micro level success stories of literacy and development. The use of traditional cultural institutions has been found to be particularly effective for participatory learning, thinking, decision making, organising and working collectively for literacy and development.

There was a consensus regarding the positive contribution of the use of cultural forms in methodology' for the success in literacy and also in development actions.

The seminar also underlined yet another connection to the advantage of literacy, namely, between decentralisation of the methodology and management of the programme and use of local cultural traditions. The conviction in the efficacy and the fervent plea for the use of culture, through its varied manifestations, to reach the message and content of literacy, however, was seen not to be a substitute of the role of the mass media.

Mass media should continue to spearhead communication. This preference for indigenous cultural forms and traditions as well as the use of mass media was also emphasized in respect of population education, in communication for literacy and development actions.

The ways in which the potential of literacy could be enhanced to reduce socio-economic disparities include:

- using literacy for empowerment through the process of critical education, mobilisation and collective action against socio-economic oppression;

- associating the collective action and literacy movements of the disadvantaged with on-going socio-economic struggles and addressing the women's issues as a part of this struggle;

- eliminating the sex bias and gender stereotyping in the curriculum and adopting target related educational interventions to bring the children of the deprived sections on par with others in academic achievement.

The methodologies need to be diverse yet focussed for linking literacy to rural development, and these include:

- multiplicity of approaches including mass mobilisation and campaign and the centre based approach being continued simultaneously;

- multiple agency involvement and coordinated effort of development and extension agencies and of adult education, and involvement of retired personnel of armed forces, other superannuated persons, educated youth - men and women - to name only a few;

- holistic approach towards adult education favours a change in its pedagogy. It should be seen as a process of collective learning, thinking and actions towards socio-economic and educational development than mere literacy;

- decentralisation of political power at the grass root level and introduction of Panchayati Raj, both of which are essential to achieve literacy and reduce poverty in rural areas.

Literacy, in rural areas, should be linked with identifying ability and confidence for rural development. It is here that the government has miserably failed. Moreover, field experiences also reinforce the feeling that bureaucracy and the government are just not the right agency to use literacy for conscientisation, empowerment and development. On the contrary, voluntary agencies, in touch with the grass root realities, showed greater propensity for the task and hence the need to align them in this task.

There is also an urgent need for a drastic change in the attitude of the intelligentsia and the bureaucracy with regard to devolving the political, economic and financial power, as well as the responsibility of planning and management of rural development.

There is no escape from a constitutional amendment providing for decentralisation of political, economic and financial powers to the Panchayats, and total autonomy to plan and manage development according to their needs.

The use of economic motivations for literacy and using literacy for development has paid very rich dividends in countries like China not only to eradicate adult illiteracy but also to liberate people from poverty and deprivation. Simultaneously it also led to significant economic development. After careful consideration of the similarities and dissimilarities between India and China, the Chinese experience still offers valuable emulation messages for India. These include: (i) the need for literacy workers, political leaders and bureaucratic machinery to show personal commitment to development and the role of literacy in development; (ii) the imperative need of combining economic motivations for literacy with political, cultural and social motivations; (iii) placing literacy at the centre of any development programme, even in the process of planning and programming; and (iv) extending encouragement to the industry to enter the literacy movement in a big way.

Dr. Malcolm S. Adiseshiah

TRIBUTES

Highlights of tributes paid at the Inaugural Session

L.M. SINGHVI

Dr. L.M. Singhvi, President of the India International Centre, recalled his long association with Dr. Malcolm Adiseshiah, describing him as the "cultural and intellectual salt of the earth and quintessence of the world" and a "world citizen". Some critics may point out that a seminar as a tribute may seem alien to Indian tradition. This seminar is a tribute to Dr. Adiseshiah, not as an idol, but to remember this quintessential Indian - "not so much the man but his message" and what he stood for.

Dr. Singhvi recalled a seminar on adult education in which Dr. Adiseshiah presented the key note address. This paper had been published many times because he believed that what Dr. Adiseshiah said some 22 years ago in that seminar is valid even today. Dr. Adiseshiah's indefatigable persistence in the literacy movement can well be adopted as the basis of a blue print of national reconstruction. Thus the Centre and Dr. Adiseshiah's circle of friends and admirers felt that the greatest functional tribute to his life and work would be to review and assess the tasks that remain to be done. That was the rationale behind this two-day meet.

P.L. MALHOTRA

On behalf of the Director-General of UNESCO, Dr. P.L. Malhotra, presently in the Unesco Regional Office for Education in Asia and Pacific, said that few people have shown so much commitment to education and the ideals of Unesco or have made so much intellectual contribution to the building and strengthening of Unesco than Dr. Adiseshiah. During his 23 years association with Unesco, Dr. Adiseshiah had deeply influenced all areas of Unesco in the field of education, culture and science, his single minded attention to literacy continued to be his foremost concern. It is thus appropriate that "Literacy and Development" be the theme for this Seminar as it is of critical concern to people of Third World countries and Unesco looks forward to the outcome of the deliberations of this meet. Dr. Malhotra recalled how in his previous appointment as Director of NCERT, in its series of "Perceptions

of Visionaries and Doers”, the NCERT had brought out Dr. Adiseshiah’s contributions entitled “Education - A Point of View”.

On behalf of UNESCO, and personally, Dr. Malhoura wished Dr. Adiseshiah many more years of distinguished life and appreciated the thoughtful gesture of this Seminar as an attempt to “remember the man as well as his message”.

MANMOHAN SINGH

Dr. Manmohan Singh, eminent Economist and a former Secretary-General, South Commission, expressed his happiness in being associated with the felicitation seminar. He recalled Dr. Adiseshiah’s reputation as a professional economist, his services to the cause of education as a Member, Rajya Sabha, as well as his reputation as an international civil servant. On Dr. Adiseshiah’s contribution as an economist Dr. Manmohan Singh felt that Adiseshiah belongs to the generation of economists who represent the best of the profession, exemplifying what A.C. Pigou said that knowledge is an instrument of social emancipation. This Seminar is an occasion of joy especially as it combines the felicitation of Dr. Adiseshiah with the movement that he represented and spearheaded, viz., Literacy and Development. Dr. Manmohan Singh wished him a long and happy life and yet another innings in the services of the people.

ANIL BORDIA

Felicitation address

“I feel greatly honoured to be called upon to address this distinguished gathering in felicitation of Dr. Adiseshiah. I am fully conscious of the fact that I do not have sufficient power of language at my command to do justice to this great and extraordinary son of Bharat Mata.

Malcolm Sathianathan Adiseshiah’s service to the cause of education spans an unbroken 60 years during which time his achievements range from planning for education of small villages and urban slums to the well-being of all the countries of the world.

Although I have not met any of his colleagues or students from Calcutta’s St. Paul’s College, which he joined as Lecturer in 1930, his students and faculty colleagues at the Madras Christian College recall his qualities as a leader, thinker and educationist. These qualities have characterised his work for the rest of his life. Always particular about detail, testing his ideas at the hard rock of Indian rural situation, but at the same time holding the vision of the future of mankind he has been as exacting in his expectations towards his colleagues as he has been towards himself.

He was selected by Julian Huxley, the first Director General of Unesco, as a Divisional Head in 1948 and he continued to serve this organisation till 1970. It is often said by people who knew Unesco well, people like Prem Kirpal, Raja Roy Singh and Asher Deleon, that between 1955 and 1970, Dr. Adiseshiah was the most important officer of Unesco, serving the first half of this period as Assistant Director-General and the second half as Deputy Director-General. By sheer hard work, capacity to get the best out of his colleagues and keeping in view always the great ideals of this great Organisation, he came to be depended upon by all the Directors General with whom he worked, as well as by members of the Executive Board and all the representatives of the Member Countries. Although his main interest was Education, his impact was felt equally in the sectors of Science, Culture and Social Science. Almost all the decisions which brought glory to Unesco and established its place in the UN system are attributed mainly to him. These decisions included steps for preservation of the Temple of Abu Simbal and Ankor Vat and establishment of the International Commission on Education headed by Edgar Faure. He strongly believed in keeping Unesco free from the acrimony of international politics, as he spelt out in his book **Non-Political UN**. The last two Directors General-Amadou Mahtar M'Bow and Federico Mayor have personally told me of the great respect in which they held Dr. Adiseshiah. In his recent communication Dr. Mayor said that he has always treated Dr. Adiseshiah as his guru, and was, therefore, most regretful that he was not able to come to Delhi on this occasion. It is owing to Dr. Mayor's insistence that Dr. Adiseshiah has not been able to transfer responsibility as Chairman of the Governing Body of IIEP, a position he has held for ten years, and Chairmanship of the Jury for International Literacy Prizes.

Even more hectic and fruitful period was to begin after his return to India, almost immediately after demitting office as Deputy Director General of Unesco. Making a generous personal contribution, he set up Madras Institute of Development Studies and provided it the initial leadership. I do not want to move to the area of Social Sciences, which has already been covered by Dr. Manmohan Singh, but do wish to acknowledge the great role played by Dr. Adiseshiah in strengthening the movement of social science research in India and Asia. As Member of Rajya Saha between 1978 and 1984, he was the most effective and eloquent advocate for education, particularly primary education and adult literacy.

His period as Vice-Chancellor of Madras University between 1975 and 1978 was truly an epoch-making period, not only for the University, but for the system of higher education itself. There is not enough time to recall those heady days when all of us looked with disbelief at what Dr. Adiseshiah went ahead with. With a view to subverting the system of affiliated colleges, with

the archaic and feudal relationship between the University and the colleges, he started on a fairly large scale the system of autonomous colleges, which still serves as the model for emulation. He was able to push, in the not so progressive environment of Tamil Nadu, the idea of compulsory social service for all students. Being particularly concerned about illiteracy, he asked all the students to devote themselves to struggle against illiteracy as a priority programme.

Although Dr. Adiseshiah's contribution to education extends to all areas it has always been Literacy and Adult Education to which he has given particular attention. In several of his books, he has expressed anguish about widespread illiteracy in our country, has advocated the concept of life long education and has worked tenaciously to support organisations and individuals working in this sphere. Along with Julius Nyerere and Roby Kidd, Dr. Adiseshiah was the founder of the International Council for Adult Education and remained its Chairman from its founding in 1973 till 1979. He succeeded Dr. Mohan Sinha Mehta as President of the Indian Adult Education Association in 1974 and served in that capacity for six years. Although the Association itself could not benefit very much from Dr. Adiseshiah's leadership, he did inspire and guide a number of State Adult Education Associations and tried to get new ones set up in States which did not have such Associations.

But perhaps the greatest contribution of Dr. Adiseshiah is in seeing that significant development takes place in the field, i.e. in the rural areas and urban bastis. He has done this through a variety of means. By founding the Tamil Nadu Board of Continuing Education and providing it leadership for the last 15 years, he has given concrete shape to the role voluntary agencies can play at the field level, providing resources support, advocacy and defence if any activist group gets into difficulty with the authorities. More recently, he accepted to be the Chairman of Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti, which perhaps is the most momentous development taking place in the world of literacy in our country. When Yash Pal and Rajni Kothari decided to take an initiative to mobilise youth and students for literacy work, for Chairmanship of the Group, their choice also naturally fell on Dr. Adiseshiah, along with P.N. Haksar.

Dr. Adiseshiah's contribution in the form of publications is so large that only a library catalogue will do justice to it. In 1969 Roby Kidd and I were jointly editing a book on Indian Adult Education. On a late autumn evening he and I grappled to reduce the length of a somewhat long article sent to us by Dr. Adiseshiah, entitled "Living to learn together, Learning to live together", and after going over it again and again, we came to the conclusion

that we cannot delete even a word out of it. Such is the quality of Dr. Adiseshiah's writing.

This Seminar, which has just been inaugurated by Dr. Manmohan Singh, is only a small tribute which we wish to lay at the feet of Dr. Adiseshiah - by bringing together his passionate commitment to two areas, Literacy and Economic Development.

It would be a fitting tribute to his toil and travail if all of us could join in our own way in his endeavour to create a new world, a new India, which will not be divided between the rich and the poor, the powerful and the powerless, and between illiterates and the educated. Let us together wish him many more years of service of the people of our country and the mankind."

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Date.....
Papers Presented/Distributed at the Seminar

Acharya, Poromesh	When a Pen is Heavier Than A Plough - A Descriptive Discourse.
Anandalakshmi, S.	Literacy as Development.
Bhola, H.S.	Adult Literacy for Development: The Logic and Structure of Economic Motivations.
Dhagamwar, Vasudha	Impact of Literacy on Removing Disparities of Gender, Caste and Class.
Dighe, Anita	The Role of Adult Education in Reducing Class and Gender Disparities.
Gopalan, K.	Literacy and Population.
Mishra, Lakshmidhar	Literacy as a Tool of Liberation and for Rural Development.
Morse, Richard, et.al.	Values in Development: The Village Sastang as a Means of Promoting Participatory Learning and Development.
Parameswaran, M.P.	Communication, Culture and Literacy: The Kerala Experience.
Parikh, Ramlal	Literacy - An Unending Debate.
Rao, T.V.	Evaluating Adult Education Programmes for Effectiveness and Renewal: Some Lessons from the Past.
Ramdass, Lalita	Women and Literacy: A Quest for Justice.
Roy, Sanjit (Bunker)	Literacy and Rural Development: The Tilonia Experience.
Singh, Amar Kumar	Social Disadvantage and Academic Achievement: An Intervention Strategy.
Shukla, S.	Literacy and Development: Retrospect and Trends/Tendencies.
Taleyarkhan, Homi, J for the Ideals of Education.

