

Farida Khan

**EXPERIMENTAL AND INNOVATIVE
PROJECTS
IN
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION**

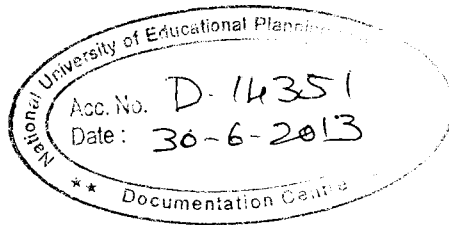
**EVALUATION REPORT ON THE PROJECTS
SUPPORTED BY THE
MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
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Preface

National initiatives in bringing every child in the age group of 6-14 years within the fold of elementary education have to respond to varying hopes, aspirations and expectations. These also have to take into account the social, cultural and other region-specific aspects. While awareness for elementary education has definitely increased, the possibility of providing effective and relevant response still needs to be explored in different situations. One of the major issues is to identify steps that would ensure retention of all the enrolled children in schools or other learning centres for at least 5 to 8 years. It was with such specific considerations that the Scheme of Experimental and Innovative Projects in Elementary Education was planned and launched by the Ministry. Voluntary agencies and institutions were persuaded to initiate experimentation in areas of specific policy needs in elementary education. The response was encouraging and several initiatives were undertaken with sincerity, commitment, understanding and dedication.

There is hardly any problem faced in large scale educational expansion anywhere which does not exist in India. At the same time, there is no innovation taking place anywhere which has not been attempted or tried in this country, either after independence or prior to independence by voluntary agencies and organisations. It has often been felt that many innovations which have identical practices leading to greater, higher and better achievements, have remained confined only to a few limited areas. The process of dissemination of replicable innovative features needs to be strengthened. Such features could best be identified by those who have the experience of and sensitivity to the field level realities; have participated at different planning and decision-making stages and are also aware of the global scenario in educational expansion with thorough understanding of all the issues and alternative solutions. We were fortunate to persuade Prof. M.C.Pant and Dr. T.N.Dhar to accede to the request of the Ministry to visit some centres of innovation and bring forth such features which could be of interest and relevance to others as well. Both of them are internationally renowned educationists who have seen the progress of educational development and growth not only in India but in most of the developing countries. Their effort was ably supported by Shri B. Kaul. The present Report would indicate how incisively, precisely and clearly they have made their points and indicated the extent of success achieved in various innovations.

The projects have been categorised into five main areas. Area-specific microplanning surveys and studies, before expanding educational infrastructures, is one of these. Others include education of the handicapped, which along with the strengthening of non-formal education would be crucial at least during the next decade to bring every child to elementary education. Development of materials and other aspects could provide viable alternatives. The write-ups in this Report very clearly emphasize and project the need to try different alternative strategies in terms of access, improvement of learning environment and training aspects. Development of materials relevant to the learner and of

subsequent utility in the adult life requires considerable understanding, initiative and effort. These aspects have been brought forth eloquently in this Report.

The Ministry would like to place on record its sincere appreciation of the contribution made by Prof. M.C.Pant and Dr. T.N.Dhar. They visited centres of innovation, ignoring inconveniences and hardships. They have observed the 'action' with an evaluative eye. The Bal Bhavan Society of India provided the necessary infrastructural and logistic support to this project and also for printing the Report for which they deserve appreciation. The proposal was enthusiastically approved by the former Secretary of Education, Government of India, Shri Anil Bordia. It received active encouragement from Shri S.V.Giri, the present Secretary of Education, whose keenness has resulted in publication of this Report. Mrs. Preet Verma and Dr. Sadhna Rout, from the Bureau of Elementary Education assisted creditably along with other colleagues. This effort would be worthwhile if it could generate interest amongst those interested in and concerned with the universalisation of elementary education.

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Forward and Acknowledgements

The report represents an effort to evaluate the experiences of innovative/experimental projects which the Ministry has been supporting for the last few years. The Projects fall into five main categories:

Survey and Studies
Education of the Disabled
Non-Formal Education
Materials Development
Others

The report is based on the study of proposals submitted by various organisations, materials made available by them, on-site discussion by project evaluation team with personnel of the organization and community leaders and observation of projects. In all nineteen out of thirty projects were visited. The report describes the main features of the projects, highlighting their objectives and approaches and makes a general assessment of their potential for replication. The lack of data or of data in the form needed for evaluation has made it difficult to make definitive judgements on the experiences of the projects. Nevertheless, the report discusses the experience of selected, worthwhile and exciting educational activities.

The team would like to express the debt of gratitude that it owes to persons who facilitated the study of the projects. At the outset, we would like to express our gratefulness to Prof. J.S.Rajput, Joint Educational Adviser, Ministry of Human Resource Development, who conceived the idea of fielding the team. His frequent discussions facilitated the team members' understanding of the context and perspective of the Ministry's scheme. We are grateful to Ms. Preet Verma and her colleagues for facilitating our visits to project sites and frequently reminding us of the deadline for submitting the report.

But for the support which we received from Bal Bhavan, New Delhi, particularly its Director, Dr.(Smt.) Madhu Pant and her two colleagues, Shri Rajiv Gupta and Smt. Sudesh Gupta, it would have been difficult to undertake, much less complete, the task. The Bal Bhavan chalked out the team's itinerary, communicated the dates of visits to various organizations and arranged for transport and so on. We are grateful to them for the support extended without which the team would have found it extremely difficult to operate. The Bal Bhavan also took the responsibility of maintaining accounts, arranging for local meetings of the team and providing assistance in numerous ways which are difficult to enumerate.

We are deeply indebted to the voluntary organizations who arranged for our visits to actual project sites and arranged transportation from the nearest Railway station/airport. All along they showed graciousness to put up with the team's requirements. They put up with specific requirements of individual team members often at considerable inconvenience. Most of all, we are grateful to them for the learning experience that they provided to the team. The report incorporates in a very significant way the perceptions of the voluntary organisations with whom the team was privileged to come into contact.

M.C.PANT

T.N.DHAR

BRIJENDRA KAUL

1. INTRODUCTION

1. Although, as a result partly of the governmental efforts and partly because of the rising aspiration levels of people, education facilities have expanded considerably, a substantial number of children still remain outside the reach of educational institutions. Free, compulsory and universal elementary education, stipulated to be achieved within ten years of the introduction of the Constitution of a free India in 1950, continues to remain unrealized.

2. The reasons for large number of children not participating in the education system can be seen in the social and economic handicaps from which they, their families and their communities suffer. Poverty adversely affects children's attendance in schools in many ways: the compulsion to join family occupations or as casual workers to supplement the family's meagre economic resources; the need to free parents from domestic and other chores (for instance, care of siblings and of cattle); the inability to meet costs of education (for instance, proper clothing, textbooks and stationery); the social status of the family which also contributes to non participation and irregular attendance on the part of children.

3. Among the scheduled castes, many of whom are poor, the family support for education is generally low. The non-availability of schools in sparsely populated habitations and social prejudices against girls' education among some communities also affect participation of children in education.

4. There are also school-related reasons. These include: the distant location of schools, particularly in hilly, tribal and sparsely populated areas, school timings unmatched with the life style of the communities; teacher absenteeism; absence of a smooth transition of children from the informal family environment to a formal and structured environment of the school; the irrelevance of curriculum to community needs and so on. These factors not only adversely affect participation but also contribute to repetition of grades and premature withdrawal from schools.

5. Taking note of the inability of some children to enrol in, and attend primary schools on a regular basis, and also in view of the fact that in some sparsely populated areas, the establishment of fullfledged primary schools would not be economically viable, the Central Government formulated a scheme for the establishment of non-formal education centres to benefit non-enrolled children as well as the premature drop outs. The scheme was drawn up in pursuance of the recommendations of a Working Group set up with the purpose of suggesting measures for promoting universal elementary education. The main thrust of the Working Group's recommendations was that of enabling children, who found full time attendance difficult, to receive primary education through an alternate channel, with education being provided in a form and at a time most convenient to children, their families and the communities in which they lived. It was also recommended that provision should be made for entry of children completing non-formal education into formal school at different entry points.

6. The State Governments were provided financial assistance to establish non-formal education centres. Since experience of providing education through an alternate channel was scanty, the National Council of Educational Research

and Training decided to establish, on an experimental basis non-formal education centres through its field offices and the four Regional Colleges of Education. Condensed courses, aiming at providing an equivalent of five years' primary education in two to three years time, were developed for these centres as also teaching materials for use of teachers, students and supervisors. Although the centres established by, the NCERT under its auspices were ultimately closed, the experience gained, the materials produced and the training provided to key personnel in the State Education Departments and voluntary organisations proved to be useful. It enabled them to develop further materials and modalities for organising non-formal education in relation to specific conditions of communities/areas. Apart from the State Governments, the Government of India provided assistance to voluntary organisations for the establishment and maintenance of non-formal education centres.

7. Over the years, a large number of centres have come to be established with the assistance of the Government of India. The Report of the Working Group on Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education, set up for the formulation of the Eighth Plan on Education has indicated that in 1988-89 alone the Education Department at the centre had released Rs.35.92 crores for the establishment /maintenance of 2,40,164 non-formal education centres, 2,20,102 by the States/Union Territories and 20,062 by 275 voluntary organisations. The clientele of these centres are "children in habitations without schools, school drop-outs, working children and girls who cannot attend schools". The Working Group has estimated that the additional provision catered to 7.86 crore children of the age-groups 6-10 and 11-13.

8. Information about the effectiveness of the non-formal education system is scanty. The major deficiency is the lack of base line data.

9. It seems, however, that the performance is equivocal. While there are no doubt, many success stories, performance of many centres have not been upto expectation. The Working Group for the Eighth Plan has indicated a number of deficiencies: the tendency to insist on comparability between formal and non-formal systems which has led to an attempt to approximate the curriculum of non-formal education centres with that prescribed for the formal system; the need for "a lot more investment" in the initial training and continuing education of instructors and supervisors; insufficient progress in the direction of technical resource development, need-based curriculum, innovative methods, systematic training, improved techniques of evaluation, etc.

10. The major difficulty could be traced to the pattern and system of grants given for the implementation of the scheme and the lack of provision for flexibility in implementation. The financial support provided, for instance a remuneration of Rs.105 per month to an instructor does not allow recruitment of "instructors" with sufficient commitment, creativity and innovativeness to work in unstructured and difficult situations and with clientele of different ages and varying abilities. Lack of family support to children's education; lack of a prescribed scheme of studies and reading materials, absence of clear-cut directions on evaluation procedures; lack of equivalence determining and accreditation modalities are other deficiencies of the scheme. The pattern of assistance has remained unchanged without taking into account of inflation.

11. Taking note of the difficulties experienced in the implementation of the non-formal education programme, the Working Group for the Eight Plan has suggested a "new NFE Strategy which will promote non-formal elementary education system". The main elements of the new strategy will include:

- a parallel administration for NFE
- While the needs and interests of learners will determine the contents and process of non-formal education, in terms of quality it will be comparable with the formal system

- development of mechanisms for entry from formal system to non formal system and vice-versa
- provision of facilities for continuing and further education for persons passing out of the NFE system in approximately same manner as are available to persons in the formal system.

These intentions are yet to be translated into concrete and specific action.

2. SUPPORT FOR INNOVATION

1. The Scheme for assistance for experimental and innovative programmes at the elementary stage, including non-formal education (1990), aims at encouraging "experimentation and innovation for the achievement of goals spelt out in NFE (National Policy on Education 1986) for UEE (Universal Elementary Education)." As regards non-formal education, "the efforts would be to evolve different models... and agencies implementing the programme will be encouraged to evolve the most suitable model depending upon the requirements of the target group."

2. The specific objectives of the scheme include:

- Identification of agencies which can take up experimental and/or innovative programmes in furtherance of the goals set out in NPE/POA (Programme of Action)
- Provision of financial and administrative support to selected agencies
- Review and evaluation of their work
- Dissemination of findings in respect of methods, processes, and outcomes of programmes of experimentation/innovation.

3. For being eligible to receive financial support under the scheme, non-governmental organisations have to fulfil prescribed eligibility conditions which include:

- Experience of at least three years
- A proper constitution/articles of association
- Existence of a managing body with defined powers and duties
- Ability to secure involvement on voluntary basis of knowledgeable persons.
- Not being run for profit or furtherance of objectives of any political party
- Non-discrimination of persons and/or groups on basis of sex, religion, caste or creed
- Not in any way promoting violence and communal disharmony

4. Besides assisting registered societies, the scheme provides for assistance "in exceptional cases" for the mobilisation, involvement, and provision of financial support to other voluntary organisations, social activist groups and individuals. The eligibility conditions seem quite flexible and allow considerable discretion on the part of the grant-in-aid committee and officials of the Ministry in recommending/sanctioning assistance to organisations. The discretion is particularly evident in respect of the nature of "innovative/experimental" programme that will be supported. The scheme does not define, for the purposes of grant-in-aid what would be the experimental/innovative nature of activities that will be supported.

5. The activities for which support will be provided include:

- Field projects.

- Development of learning materials, learning aids and “other aspects of technical resource development”
- Training of personnel
- Meetings, conferences and seminars to promote innovation and experimentation
- Management of activities
- Evaluation of activities
- Dissemination of information about innovation

The prescribed application for grant asks for “the details of the project including highlights of innovative experimental features etc.”

6. Although assistance will generally be provided “for such duration as the applicant agency may consider appropriate” (for instance for the period necessary for the programme), it will not be available beyond “the balance of a five year plan period at a time”. This stipulation, although pledges assistance for the period considered to be appropriate” by the agency seeking grant, brings in an element of uncertainty about the continuance of a project beyond the five years of the plan. Normally, educational projects find it difficult to demonstrate, within such a short time frame, their impact.

7. A major condition of the scheme and the support provided by the Government of India under it, is “to review and evaluate the work of the agencies taking up experimental and/or innovative programmes”. The present evaluation report on the work undertaken by the organisations supported by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, was commissioned in pursuance of this objective of the scheme. The nature and format of evaluation undertaken by the team is discussed later.

ORGANISATION AND PROJECTS

8. The Ministry has been supporting, under its scheme, thirty organisations. These are spread over 10 States as the table below indicates.

Organisations Supported in Different States

		Numbers
i)	Andhra Pradesh	2
ii)	Bihar	3
iii)	Delhi	2
iv)	Madhya Pradesh	3
v)	Maharashtra	4
vi)	Orissa	1
vii)	Rajasthan	5
viii)	Tamil Nadu	1
ix)	Uttar Pradesh	4
x)	West Bengal	5
	Total:	30

As will be seen, support has been provided to voluntary organisations in only a few States. Of the thirty organisations 18 are in four States of Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. The major reason for this would seem to be the absence of any response from voluntary organisations in other States to the scheme launched by the Ministry.

9. The projects for which support has been or is being provided are broadly categorised as below:

Project Content	Number
Surveys/Studies	4
Education of the Disabled	3
Non-formal Education Centres	13
Materials Preparation/Training	5
Health Education	2
Others	3
Total:	<u>30</u>

10. Most of the projects have been in the areas of non-formal education, an omnibus category encompassing establishment and maintenance of non-formal education centres, development of materials, training of instructors and supervisors etc. The preference for non-formal education seems to arise from the desire to design an alternate mode of delivery of educational services to children who are unable to enrol in formal schools on a regular and full time basis. As regards surveys, the Ministry provided one-time grant to three organisations, two in Rajasthan and one in Madhya Pradesh.

MODALITIES OF EVALUATION

11. It was, as stated earlier, in pursuance of the provision in the scheme for evaluation of the implementation of projects, that the Ministry approached in March, 1991 two team members (Dr.M.C.Pant and Dr.Trilok N.Dhar) to design a suitable innovative/experimental project for which the Ministry of Human Resource Development could provide support. The letter from the Joint Educational Advisor indicated, in broad terms, the context within which evaluation of projects supported by the Ministry had to be undertaken. The letter stated:

“The Ministry is financing nearly 30 such projects (experimental and innovative) for more than two years. These have been initiated by committed individuals, groups of individuals and voluntary organisations. The experience gained during the implementation have been found, in some cases of much worth and value, particularly to those desirous of initiating similar projects and contributing to universalisation of elementary education.”

“It is as such proposed to plan publication of a volume on these innovations. It may include precise, comprehensive and creative details of a project, its objectives, implementation strategies, its strength and possibilities of its replication and further utilization.”

12. A meeting was held on March 22, 1991 between the officers of the Ministry and the two members of the team which had been identified for undertaking evaluation of projects by the Ministry. The Ministry's officers explained the focus of what was expected of the team. The main output expected was a publication, detailing the experiences of those organisations which were implementing projects with Ministry's support. Among other things, the publication would indicate the possibilities of adopting, on a much larger scale, the strategies that had been found effective, for promoting universalisation of elementary education.

13. The team prepared a project proposal and submitted it to the Ministry. The following objectives were proposed by the team:

- To evaluate the experience of these projects, not so much from the point of view of determining the impact of a project as the quality of action which may be of use for policy and programme formulation.
- To bring out for wider dissemination, an anthology of experiences of a

variety of approaches, centred more or less on one major theme

- To find out the commonalities in the different approaches, management styles, etc. adopted in the projects which are being implemented in a variety of social environments
- To suggest, on the basis of the experience of the project implementation, the changes which might be useful to incorporate in the operations, procedures, relative emphasis on various components, etc.

14.It was proposed that the study will be conducted in three phases as outlined below:

- First phase consisting of a detailed study of the proposals submitted by various organisations.
- Second phase to consist of detailed study of write ups asked from the organizations in connection with the evaluation study.
- Third phase to provide for visits to as many project sites as possible for an on-the-spot study of experiences, discussion with implementors and other relevant persons to be followed by detailed write up on each project.

15.The proposal submitted by the team was accepted by the Ministry and sanction issued on August 26, 1991. In the sanction letter the Ministry informed that the “focus of the project would be on evaluation of Experimental Projects which have been in existence for the last two years with reference to their objectives and aspects of innovation; documentation of findings including processes and outcomes of programmes including aspects of innovation and dissemination of the same by means of small booklets.” In the annexure to the letter the Ministry quoted the decision of the Grant-in-Aid Committee of bringing out “an illustrated booklet of about 100 pages for wider circulation.” “The Publication would specifically focus on the processes and outcomes of programmes being undertaken.”

DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

16.As does happen in most studies of this type, a number of problems were encountered by the team. These tended to affect the time schedule that the team had worked out and proposed for completion of the study. The problems that were encountered are briefly discussed.

17.On the basis of the preliminary study of materials supplied by voluntary organisations to the Ministry, the team felt that the information given was not sufficient to deal adequately with the terms of reference proposed for the study. The team, therefore, designed a comprehensive schedule for being sent to various voluntary organisations. The main focus of the schedule was to elicit information on the competence of the organisations to undertake innovative/experimental programmes, their conceptual formulation of innovation in education, the resource base particularly of professional expertise, of the organisations, the processes and strategies adopted by them and so on. Since the Ministry had separately sent a proforma to these organisations, it felt that “forwarding another information sheet to be filled in form the Ministry may create confusion in the field.” The Ministry’s proforma did not, however, adequately deal with the above aspects. The team was advised to seek further information from the organisation during their visits to project sites.

18.The time schedule worked out by the team for visits to project sites could not be maintained. Often, the dates suggested by the team were found to be not convenient to the organisations. In some cases the organisations even failed to confirm whether the proposed dates suited them. The disruption of traffic due to Indian Airlines Pilots’ strike resulted some times in cancellation

of journeys on dates proposed by the organisation. Information about the location of projects was not always precise. Most of the projects are being implemented in rural and tribal areas quite distant often at a distance of 60-70 kms. - from the headquarters of the organisations. At times, therefore, the proposed duration of stay at the project site proved to be inadequate for a more indepth study of the experiences.

19.The advice given by the Ministry to obtain the necessary information during visits was not found to be practicable. In most cases, the information maintained by the organisations was found to be either non-existent or inadequate. For instance, the base line data against which outcomes of the project could be compared did not exist for any of the projects visited by the team. Similarly, no information was available about the entry behaviours of children admitted to non-formal education centres. What was available were the impressions and perceptions of the personnel of the voluntary organisations about the changes that had been brought about in the community and/or children as a consequence of the activities organised by them. These impressions while significant, could not be accepted as a substitute for empirical data for making definite conclusions about the impact of the projects.

20.The same difficulty has arisen in respect of the information about what has ensued as a result of the intervention made by the organisation. In most cases, either the information was not available or was in a form which would not allow meaningful conclusions about the effectiveness and efficiency of the approaches. No mechanisms have been established for follow-up of the target group completing the prescribed course/activity. Consequently, it is difficult to find out whether the change - for instance, literacy skills learnt - has been permanent.

21.The major reasons for non-availability of information in usable form would seem to be:

- Non-prescription in the scheme of the nature and format for data maintenance with the organisations
- Non-availability of suitably qualified manpower with the organisations
- Inadequate appreciation of the utility of data for drawing meaningful conclusions.

22.Since the scheme did not prescribe the compilation of base line data and/or any specific format for maintenance of records, the information compiled by voluntary organisations is scanty and in a form which prevents meaningful generalisations. Further, barring a few, manpower resources of the voluntary organisations, particularly in respect of expertise in research and in data compilation, maintenance and analysis, are scarce and in fact, not available. The need for rigorous research in interventions which aim at behavioural changes - knowledge, skills and attitudes - cannot be over-stressed. Without proper investigations and analysis of the findings, there is a tendency to make tall claims of the results achieved. Except one study which compares the performance of students in non-formal education centres with that in formal schools, the team did not come across any systematic investigation of what had been achieved. A more specific guidance in this respect would have been useful.

23.In respect of non-formal education centres, however, some organisations have compiled and maintained information, particularly in respect of:

- Students' performance
- The attendance and dropout rates
- The numbers joining the formal stream

24.While information on the first two parameters is often systematic, the last leaves much to be desired. The information based on the numbers entering

the formal schools and their performance in tests administered by the schools to determine eligibility for entry is not systematic in all cases. Nor do the numbers relate to the relevant batches of students of non-formal education centres.

3. PROJECTS AND THEIR EVALUATION

INNOVATIVE FEATURES OF PROJECTS

1. While there are differences in various approaches depending upon the objectives, clientele etc. - some common characteristics indicated by the organisations in their approaches can be identified. These are discussed below. It needs however, to be recognised that in their perception of the nature of an approach, the implementors of various projects are likely to differ.

2. Most projects highlight "working with the community" as a distinctive approach which has been adopted. It is asserted that without community support, the work could not be initiated. Work with the community takes many forms: discussion with people, discussion with community leaders, mobilization of community support, community participation in undertaking various activities and so on. For voluntary organisations, who have operated in a community for many years, implementation of the project with community support has been relatively easy. These organisations have over the years built a credibility for themselves in the community and a legitimacy for their aims and modes of operating. In other cases, creation of community understanding and appreciation of what is proposed to be done and why, has not been an easy task.

3. The disadvantaged communities in which most of the projects are located - tribal areas, slums, villages inhabited by backward communities, etc. - seem to show a considerable degree of apathy for innovations, most probably borne out by "unpleasant" experience of earlier interventions which have not resulted in any tangible gains to them. Their experience with interventions make them wary of new approaches, particularly when the advantages cannot be demonstrated and/or the approach proposed calls for adjustment in life styles and modes of behaviour which is not easy to make. In non-formal education projects, for instance, the young are taken away from the habitual chores for an activity the benefits of which are not immediately apparent.

4. The second basic element indicated is the flexibility that has been built into the operations of programme and delivery of services. The timings, for instance, of non-formal education centres are adjusted in relation to the family's life styles. Classes function only when children, particularly girls, are free from various chores that they have to perform in the household or in the field. In some cases services are delivered at home sites, in slums and in a place which is not only close to the community but also does not bear any resemblance to the formal and "detering" structure of a school. Although many of the non-formal education centres that the team visited had the time table it was flexible in so far as it was not completely binding on instructors and students.

5. Being non-homogeneous, both in respect of age composition of the target group and its ability levels, the activity schedule is flexible and individuals participate in an activity as they desire and learn at a pace which they are able to manage. This flexibility accounts for the wide variations in the achievement of children enrolled in non-formal education centres.

6. In selection and training of personnel, the approach adopted is different from that of formal institutions. In "innovative" programmes, the emphasis is more on commitment than on competence while selecting personnel. Often, a

person from the village community is selected, even when not fully qualified - since he/she is known and acceptable to the community, knows the community and its problems and is trusted.

7. Thus in many non-formal education centres, the team came across instructors who had passed only the middle school/junior high school examination (VIII Standard). Considering the highly unstructured character of the programme, non-homogeneity of the target group and the insistence on relating education to community concerns it is debatable whether "under-qualified" instructors can perform effectively. Without adequate competence, therefore, the approach adopted in teaching children was the one through which they had themselves been educated. The recruitment of personnel from "local" sources is dictated mainly by the limits of financial support provided under the scheme. With the remuneration available and the difficult living conditions in which they have to work, it is difficult to motivate "qualified" persons from outside the community to work in difficult circumstances.

8. As regards training, the emphasis initially is on exposure to teaching/learning materials used in the centre, discussions and learning on-the-job. Since organisations being supported have limited expertise, training arrangements are generally based on what the "managers" consider the most desirable content of training. There is no systematic theory underlying the approaches that are adopted. The position is, however, different in the case of organisations which have qualified manpower with considerable expertise. For instance, in the case of the education of disabled, the programme is organised by competent personnel. Similarly, some organisations are able to train their instructors for non-formal education more systematically.

9. While in some cases materials produced are a condensed version of what are available for formal institutions, effort has been made to develop "innovative" teaching and learning materials for instructors and students. In the case of non-formal education centres, the materials developed by the National Council of Education Research and Training, New Delhi have played a significant part in enabling voluntary organisation to design their materials. In some cases, the materials - often in the form of guide books for instructors - have evolved as the programme operations has progressed. Innovative approaches to material production - teachers' diaries, news letters, community handouts - have been adopted in a large number of cases.

PROJECT CATEGORIES

10. In the sections that follow, we describe the main features of the projects and the approaches adopted and where possible, the results achieved or claimed to have been achieved. The discussion of projects has been organised on the basis of the categories identified earlier. These include:

- Surveys and Studies
- Education of the Disabled
- Non-formal Education
- Materials Production and Training
- Other Projects

11. There is considerable overlap in the activities undertaken by organisations in respect of their projects. For instance, materials production and training of instructors and supervisors are important aspects of almost all the projects. Similarly, projects with main thrust on materials production, do have educational institutions - formal and/or non-formal - where materials are being tried out and personnel trained in the use of materials.

4. SURVEYS

1. Under the Scheme, the Ministry provided one-time grants for undertaking field surveys to four organisations: viz.

- i) Sankalp, Kota (Rajasthan) for a study of the Needs of Elementary Education of Saharia Tribal Children
- ii) Rajasthan Legal Support and Social Action Committee, Udaipur (Rajasthan) for undertaking a survey of tribal children in Sarada block.
- iii) Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur (Rajasthan) for a study by a Working Group to Acquire an Undertaking of their Existential Situation with a view to securing a Better Delivery System for Basic Services.
- iv) Sanskar Shiksha Samiti, Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh) for Undertaking a survey and Micro-Planning Exercises in one Block of Tikamgarh (Madhya Pradesh).

Of the four the team was able to hold discussions in respect of (ii) and (iii) above.

2. In both cases the project team could not visit the project sites mainly because the information about the location of the two surveys proved to be incorrect. It, however, held detailed discussions with personnel connected with the two projects, in the case of the former at Udaipur with Shri Ramesh Nandwani, Coordinator of the project and in the case of the latter with Faculty of the Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur. In the case of the latter the process of social mobilization for social action has been documented in the Report on Delivery Systems of Poverty Alleviation Programme for the Rural Poor; A Study in Bhim and Devgarh Tehsils of Rajasmund Districts, Rajasthan.

SURVEY OF TRIBAL CHILDREN

3. The Legal Support and Social Action Committee operated the project. The Coordinator of the project, who is a lawyer by profession, functions in Udaipur. The team was informed during discussion with the Coordinator that the survey of tribal children which had included information on social and economic status of household had been more or less completed. The villages where the survey was conducted were tribal villages with people dependant predominantly for their economic sustenance on the wages paid by the zinc mine owners.

Assessment

4. The processing of data had not commenced when the project team visited Udaipur to discuss the nature and characteristics of the supported project. The team could, therefore, not make any judgement as to the worthwhileness of the survey since the report had not been prepared. Subsequent action would probably be taken only after the data had been analysed. The support that the Ministry might consider providing will depend upon the kind of project for which assistance will be sought by the Legal Aid Society.

STUDY BY WORKING GROUP

5. The report indicates that the major objective of the project team was to work for and organize the poor. The first phase of the project began in June 1987. The team lived in the village, adopting the life style of the community. This facilitated the adoption by the community members of the team as participants in the programme of community action.

6. The project interpreted education from a broader point of view where "educational and democratic processes become almost synonymous in a situation of inequality, poverty and exploitation" and where "learning should lead to definitive action enabling those involved in the process to make the shift from one position to another, be it ideological, emotive or physical where conditions are better". Thus, education is seen as empowerment not only "through the input of one programme but the change of perception of one's existence in a socio-political context.

7. The work with people began with a survey, undertaken mainly through the people of the villages. The findings of the survey indicated the nature of the problems faced by them: landlessness, poverty, debt burden, exploitation, migration out of the village for work and so on. The information obtained was discussed in and with communities, thereby leading to crystallization of issues and the nature of community action that could ensue. The formation of community action groups such as Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan and Mahila Van Vikas Evam Anusandhan Samiti, facilitated community mobilization and community action. Rallies, protest marches, fasts unto death etc. were resorted to with a view to securing collective rights to common land grabbed by the local zamindar and entitlement to minimum wages fixed under various schemes of the government for drought/famine prone areas etc. The main conclusion drawn is that the people were able to bring about change in modes traditionally followed in dealing with problems of rural people.

Assessment and Potential

8. The documentation of the experience provides extremely useful information on important strategy and process for bringing about transformation in attitudes, procedures and practices. By and large, the strategy would seem to be of universal applicability in rural areas which face, across the country, a commonality of problems - endemic poverty, exploitation by local feudal elements, unconcerned bureaucracy from village to the central level etc.

9. It must, however, be recognised that change agents, particularly those from external sources, need to have resources for mobilising and sustaining community action. These resources can be of different kinds - charismatic leadership, expertise and experience, linkages with decision makers at different levels, commitment to and motivation for change and so on. Although this aspect has not been explicitly dealt with in the Report, it was emphasised in the team's discussion at the Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur.

10. It seems that those who worked at the village level for mobilizing people for action possessed these qualities and resources, the latter being more important. The fact that bureaucracy at the district and State levels gave a helping hand is indicative of how linkages with decision makers can help. The local zamindar, realizing the support that the change agents were/would be able to count upon from political and bureaucratic system at different units of administration tended to make compromises and even accept change as a fait accompli although it adversely affected his authority and influence. In commu-

nities where such source of power is not available to change agents, the experience might be different. As Ramesh Nandwani informed, the tribals of Sarada block find it difficult to fight exploitation of the mine owners since the latter can close the mines and dispense with the services of the miners for whom working in a mine makes all the difference between starvation and a meagre meal.

11. The grant provided by the Ministry was for the documentation of experience of a group and, therefore, represented one-time assistance. No further support, it seems, has been sought. While the objective was not to implement an action programme, the documentation of the experience of social mobilization for social action has been quite innovative. The part that the Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur played did not come out clearly in the discussion that the team held with the faculty. It seems that the Institute's direct involvement was minimal and the intervention was more on individual than on institutional basis. It would be useful to support the replication of the strategies adopted, so that experience is available in respect of a number of socio-economic situations.

5. EDUCATION OF THE DISABLED

1. The three projects concerned with the special needs of children with disabilities - mental retardation and physical handicap - are managed by :

- Jan Madhyam in New Delhi
- Department of Child Development of the Lady Irwin College, New Delhi
- Spastics Society of Eastern India, Calcutta.

All the three organisations were visited and detailed discussions held. Actual work done with children/adolescents was also observed. The work being done and the approaches adopted are discussed below.

JAN MADHYAM, NEW DELHI

2. Jan Madhyam, a voluntary organisation, was registered under the Societies Registration Act in 1987. A few individuals - "The core group of media educationists" - had, however, begun "work in a couple of institutions in 1983 under the name of Madhyam". Over the years, the organisation has been able to acquire, on a voluntary basis, the services of what its information material states "media educators, special educators, child development specialists, paediatricians, management consultants and legal advisors". "The group is committed to working for children with special needs" - those who have learning difficulties and suffer from intellectual disabilities.

3. Jan Madhyam works through institutions with which it has established some forms of linkages. "On a weekly basis a team of 2/3 people visit Special Schools and Day Care Centres for Children with Special Needs. The team takes one hour multi-media module consisting of a small puppet story, games, songs, movement/dance. The module involves and stimulates the children creating a good learning situation". The major objectives, which seem quite ambitious, considering particularly the time devoted, as indicated by the Jan Madhyam, "is to support and reinforce the ongoing syllabus, stimulate development of language, enhance attention span, behaviour modification, improve memory skills, improve specialization skills, facilitate learning of abstract concepts and teachers' sensitization."

4. The other activities include:

- i) Vocational training undertaken on a weekly basis by crafts persons/staff at the institutions linked with it
- ii) Intensive structural vocational training at the Jan Madhyam Centre
- iii) Teacher training
- iv) Creation of community awareness

In 1990-91, the Jan Madhyam was working with 22 centres/localities.

Assessment and Potential

5. It needs to be stated at the outset that the short visit to the institution and observation of the work done in its institutional facility (vocational training in cooking, clay work etc.) which the team's schedule allowed, did not provide enough data to make a valid assessment of the usefulness and validity of activities and approaches. No impact studies have been undertaken by the organisation. No baseline data about beneficiaries are available. The usefulness of its activities/approaches has been judged mainly by the opinions of individuals, many of whom are connected with the organisation. An impact study would require baseline data, particularly about the individuals whose needs were being met. It might be useful to begin preparing profiles of its clients etc., with emphasis on recording changes that take place in the behaviour of children.

6. Jan Madhyam has very meagre physical facilities. The organisation has rented premises in Zamrudpur, which are partially occupied by the landlord. The organization has, therefore, by necessity, to work at institutional premises with which it has developed linkages; most of its activities are organised in these institutions. The lack of adequate transportation facility also handicaps its effort to reach a larger number of needy children or institutions. However, the commitment and enthusiasm of the organizers seem to overcome, to some extent, these handicaps/deficiencies.

7. While commitment and enthusiasm can compensate for many deficiencies as it has in this case, the team would like to stress the desirability of a sound knowledge base for these activities/approaches. Education of children with special needs has acquired extensive conceptual underpinnings. Approaches/activities should generally be based on the knowledge and experiences that have accumulated through work done by professionally competent workers and institutions. Commitment of workers cannot be a substitute for their professional and research competence. While in the absence of adequate facilities, one might tend to accept the existing practice of organizations and institutions providing services according to what they feel to be the 'correct' approach, it is not a situation which should be preferred. The tendency on the part of these individuals/organisations is often to assume, without much valid justification, the correctness of their approaches. Consequently, one detects in these attempts, a resistance to accept alternative suggestions.

8. Jan Madhyam's physical facilities are not adequate. In fact, these facilities are not suitable for the tasks that the organizations plans and claims to accomplish. It has also no adequate transportation arrangements, which seem to handicap free and regular access to institutions/communities. The grants that are given do not generally cover these items. In fact, they should not. Government grants should normally be for programmes/activities. The organization/institution to be assisted should have the basic infrastructural facilities and sufficient resources to carry out its programmes when government assistance is no longer available. Whether Jan Madhyam can fulfil these criteria is difficult to say in the absence of detailed information about the organization and what it has been able to achieve.

ENABLING CENTRE, LADY IRWIN COLLEGE, NEW DELHI

9. The Lady Irwin College, an institution of many years' standing, specialising in courses particularly preferred by girls - Home Science, Child Development, Textile Designing, Nutrition etc. - has a pre-school programme which includes special centre for children with disabilities. The educational needs of about 35 children of ages 3-8 years are being catered to. "The disabilities covered are mild to moderate mental retardation, cerebral palsy, speech handi-

caps, auditory handicaps, multiple handicaps due to brain damage and behavioural disorders.”

10. In the context of the constitutional provision of free, compulsory and universal elementary education, the College felt the need for a programme for disabled children of primary school ages, the main objective being “to develop strategies, materials, modalities, etc. to provide primary level education to young handicapped children in an integrated set-up where both the normal and disabled can mix”. The integration was expected to be “across socio-economic groups, with normal children and across handicaps”. The proposal submitted by the College was in respect of 20 children to be admitted in the first phase of the experimental project lasting two years of 1988-90.

11. The Enabling Centre begun functioning from November, 1988 with the admission of five children, the number increasing to 11 by January, 1989. Children for the programme were identified on the basis of the names and addresses collected from various hospitals, child guidance clinics and other institutions. The main criteria adopted for selecting children for the services of the Enabling Centre were: the distance of the home from the centre, family’s economic level and manageability of the child. Preference was given to children from under-privileged socio-economic groups “as they have minimal access to these services”. Programmes that provide a variety of services at one place are suited to the needs of children who come from the disadvantaged section”.

12. The designed educational programme aims at facilitating cognition, motor, emotional and social development of children. Play is being used as the media for enhancing children’s learning which is organised in the areas of language and communication skills, mathematics, social studies, science, music, art and drama, motor skills, health and safety. Support services, in the form of regular medical check-up, occupational therapy and speech therapy, are being provided. Regular meetings with parents are organised to enable them to understand the special needs of their children. Some pre-vocational training is being provided to children in textile printing. A considerable amount of material has been brought out; it includes a work book, language comprehension kit, kit to assess and develop spatial orientation, and format for assessing children’s development. A monthly bulletin is also being brought out.

13. No formal assessment of the programme, particularly from the point of view of determining its impact, has been carried out. The observations of those who are incharge of the Enabling Centre or work in it, indicate a marked change in the behaviour of children, particularly in communication and social skills. Greater awareness on the part of parents of their children’s special needs was also reported. The experiences of the centre have been documented in the form of materials which others can use.

Assessment and Potential

14. The great advantage which the Centre enjoys and which might not be available to many other organisations/institutions, is the support that it is able to get from a highly qualified trained faculty of the College and also the services of its post-graduate students who are admitted into various specialities. The Centre would need to carry out an assessment of the approaches that it has adopted and the activities it implements. The findings from such an assessment would be useful to design a programme of integrated education which has wider coverage. Considering that integrated education of the type adopted by the ‘Enabling Centre’ becomes significant, the need is for upward extension of the project, covering older children.

SPASTICS SOCIETY OF INDIA, CALCUTTA

15. The Spastics Society of Eastern India started its services for the cerebral palsied in 1974 and set up a school called "Centre for Special Education" for the purpose. Over the years, the Society has multiplied its activities and presently it encompasses clinics, an Out-Patients Department and an Institute for Research and Training. The Institute of Cerebral Palsy, established in 1987, conducts regular courses in collaboration with the Adult, Continuing Education and Extension Centre, Jadavpur University, Calcutta. The Society has nine affiliates in Eastern India.

16. Financial assistance is received from the State and Central Governments, foreign agencies, voluntary organisations and well wishers in India and abroad. From time to time, fund raising activities are also organised by the Society.

17. The Centre for Special Education is a demonstration centre in the region. Initially, its aim was to make its students as independent as possible, keeping in view the limitations imposed on them by their disability. Later the aim was modified to include vocational orientation keeping in view the needs both of society and the disabled. The Centre is run by professionals, educators, speech and language pathologists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and social workers.

18. For imparting education and training to them, systematic study of children and their families is made to ensure that programmes for each student are tailor-made and are specific to the individual child's needs. The medium of instruction is the mother-tongue of the child-Hindi, Bengali and English being generally used. Emphasis is on promoting mobility of a child with the help of various walking aids. Moreover, models for rehabilitation have been developed keeping in view the family environment. In imparting training to a child the main emphasis is on use of creative techniques such as learning through discovery, role play, observation and simulation. Moreover, discussions with parents are also held. Deaf and dumb are taught alphabets and words by showing photographs, lip reading and encouraging them to react to noises. The focus is mainly on developing creative and lateral thinking of a child so that he/she can apply the knowledge and skills acquired to lead a complete life.

19. For teaching purposes the Centre has developed educational resources, using mostly locally available materials. Over the years these resource materials have been modified and also multiplied. The Centre is currently developing curriculum for children who suffer from multiple handicaps. The draft of the curriculum deals with core areas such as (a) functional academic skills (literacy, numeracy and general knowledge), (b) self care skills (eating and drinking, dressing and undressing, domestic skills and personal hygiene), (c) physical ability training (posture mobility, use of support, etc.) (d) language communication skills and (e) occupational skills (consumer skill, leisure time skills and vocational skills). The emphasis is on all round development of the child. The teachers can adapt, change or innovate in the light of a child's needs.

20. The Extended Education Department of the Centre imparts job oriented training to young adults. Functional education is geared to the acquisition of basic skills in language, number, communication and social interacting. Necessary work habits are inculcated among adults through specific training in activities such as hanger making, printing, embroidery, home management, etc. The Department is not only a vocational training unit, but also a unit for developing self employment schemes. Presently, three schemes viz., pickle making, muri packets and phenyle making have been introduced. The products were marketed by children. It was reported that there was a great demand for such products in the market.

21. The Institute of Cerebral Palsy is responsible for training, research and extension services. Besides coordinating activities related to cerebral palsy in different parts of Eastern India, it trains key personnel. In collaboration with the Jadavpur University a one year Diploma in Teaching Children with Multiple Handicaps has been introduced. In addition, short duration training courses are also organised, such as Parents Training Programme (two days in a month), Home Based Training Programme for Cerebral Palsied Children (4 weeks), Training Course in the Education and Management of Children with Multiple Disabilities (4 weeks), Application of Computers in Vocational Rehabilitation (5 days), etc. A Regional Conference on Cerebral Palsy is held annually to provide a common forum for exchange of experience and information for its affiliate organisations and non-government and government organisations working in the field of multiple handicaps.

22. In addition to the Education Centre, professional help is also rendered to parents by the Out Patients Department of the Society. On Thursday, a Diagnostic Clinic for disabled children is organised. In addition, Infant Screening Clinic and the Baby Clinic benefit the affected children. Social Services Division provides counselling services and family support for children who come to the Out Patients Department and the Centre for Special Education.

Assessment and Potential

23. Spastics Society is doing a commendable job for rehabilitation of the disabled children. At present the Education Centre has 140 students of different age-groups. The programme is tailored to individual needs depending upon the disability of the child and the environment of the family. Emphasis is laid on developing creative and lateral thinking so that disabled children can lead a full life. To meet the growing demand for rehabilitation of disabled children, the Out Patients Department renders valuable services. Home Management Programmes are worked out involving parents; although the primary responsibility of carrying out the programme lies with the parents, professionals guide and motivate them. Disability camps are held at various places in Eastern India where cerebral palsy cases are diagnosed and counselling given. Services are also provided through outreach clinics involving local people and local organisations. "Action Oriented Research" studies are undertaken for the benefit of parents and professionals working for people suffering from cerebral palsy.

24. The Institute of Cerebral Palsy has brought out a booklet on 'play' which teaches parents and guardian of the disabled children how to organise structured play. The booklet is presently being field-tested. Another contribution is the project on development of a Voice Output Device called 'Alaap', which will enable non-vocal children to communicate more easily. A great deal of work has been done in curriculum development for disabled children. Pamphlets have been prepared for core areas, such as Functional Academic Skills, Self Care Skills, Physical Ability Training, Language Communication Skills and Occupational Skills. These core areas attempt to cover the entire range of skills and sub-skills needed by a disabled child to lead a normal life. Curriculum is being developed on the basis of experience gained over the years and is presently being finalised. This should be of assistance to other institutions working in the field of multiple handicaps. Moreover, for dissemination of information to other organisations in the field as well as parents, a regular newsletter called "Deep Shiksha" is brought out by the society. The centre for special education has built up adequate educational resource materials for teaching purposes. These have been modified and multiplied over the years.

25. Two students of the Extended Education Department have been able to secure jobs, one in a small silk screen printing establishment and the other in

a provision store. The computer has provided opportunities to explore and expand abilities and potential of disabled children. Mithu Kapoor, non-verbal and totally wheel chair-bound student, has benefitted from the computer programme. She uses the alphabet/word board, which has been fixed on her wheel chair to communicate, and access to the board is through her head pointer. While studying for the class X examination, she also completed two year's part-time computer course at the Nehru Children's Museum, Calcutta. Raja Sen has also finished Class X at the Centre and has joined the computer division. It is reported that with research, development and innovation, new technology can meet the individual needs of the disabled children. Consequently, the Spastics Society is contemplating to expand the Computer Division in order to provide training to more adults.

26 The Spastics Society of Eastern India is an organisation of long standing. It has resources - both financial and manpower - to deal with a problem that affects a large proportion of our children. What is important to note is the fact that it can call upon the resources of affiliates to carry out a much larger programme of providing services to spastic children. In order to reach a much large number, the efforts of the Society need to be supported.

6. NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

1. As indicated earlier, by far the largest number of projects supported by the Ministry is in the area of non-formal education. The common and major objective of these projects is to develop models of alternate delivery systems of elementary education. The basic assumption is that the formal system, as available, does not adequately meet the educational needs of a large proportion of children of school-going age.

2. The projects on non-formal education which the team could visit are being implemented by the following organizations:

- Digantar Shiksha Evam Khel Kud Samiti, Jaipur (Rajasthan)
- Bodh Shikshan Samiti, Jaipur (Rajasthan)
- Literacy House, Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh)
- Indian Institute of Education, Pune (Maharashtra)
- Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, Narendrapur (West Bengal)
- Sidhu Kanu Gram Samiti, Paharhati, Burdwan (West Bengal)
- Samanvay Ashram, Bodh Gaya (Bihar)
- Antyodaya Lok Karyakram, West Champaran (Bihar)
- Institute of Psychological and Educational Research, Calcutta
- Krishnamurti Foundation India, Rishi Valley (Andhra Pradesh)
- Bhagvatulla Charitable Trust, (Andhra Pradesh)

3. Some of the projects attempt to meet the educational needs of non-school-going children through a delivery system not directly linked to formal schooling. In case of two projects viz. those run by Bodh Shikshan Samiti and Digantar, there is considerable mutual collaboration.

DIGANTAR, JAIPUR

4. The beginning of an alternative strategy for providing basic education was provided by the Digantar School which was established in 1978 in Jaipur. The school provided free education and allowed experimentation with curriculum, teaching methodology etc. It was soon realized that, while in metropolitan areas, like Jaipur, parents could support education of their children, both in terms of meeting material requirements and creating motivation for education, the position was different in rural and semi-urban areas.

5. A new Samiti was set up in 1989 and a school started on the Jagatpur Farm of Shri J.P. Singh - who is engaged in export business. Apart from the support provided by Shri Singh for school building, hostel and teachers quarters funds were raised from public for running the school. The school started with an enrolment of 7 children and has now nearly 120 children on its rolls. Shri Singh has established on the same premises a health centre and a veterinary centre. The services are provided to villagers free.

6. The Society has established another school with 27 children in another village. It has also submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Human Resource Development for establishment of Schools in the neighbouring areas for children who are yet not in a school, their number being nearly 800. During the visit the team was informed that the establishment of 2 schools with enrolment capacity of 200 each had been approved.

7. The school on Jagatpur farm "has no fixed curriculum", although the basic objectives of providing education - knowledge and cognitive competencies : (observation, categorisation, association, analysis, synthesis, etc.), skills and attitudes determine the learning experiences for children. The initial entry to school does not require a child having attended a formal class room. Children, whose ages range between 3 and 17 are allowed to interact with their peers. Learning is integrated. Teaching is upgraded and children move from one level to the other at their own pace. A rough breakdown of the distribution of time indicates the daily time allocation to various subjects to be :

	Hours
Language	1-30
Mathematics	0-30
Environment (Social & Physical)	0-40
Singing	0-40
Handicraft	0-40

There is no rigidity in the allocation of time. It varies in relation to the needs of children who, at any particular time, are engaged in learning the subject.

8. Teachers, who might not have undergone any formal training, meet frequently for mutual learning and reinforcement of efforts. The sessions for teachers, which are frequent, are often devoted to the introduction and discussion of ideas, correcting each other, analysis and solution of problems and so on. These sessions become, in a way, training sessions and teachers learn from each other and from children. Since teachers live on the campus, there is enough time for discussion and "planning of activities for children". Based on the experience in the school, teachers' guides have been prepared on various subjects. A set of charts and learning kits have also been produced. Frequent meetings with parents take place and teachers inform them of the competencies that their wards have acquired. Evaluation of students' progress is done informally - orally as well as on the basis of written exercises that students complete.

Assessment of Potential

9. The data about the level of competency attained by students in various "subjects" have not been systematically compiled. Without the base line data, it is also difficult to say whether what is claimed to have been achieved is solely or predominantly the consequence of the approaches that have been adopted in the Digantar School. Study materials that the team looked at, indicated that achievement of children in various skills is quite substantial. Since teaching is ungraded and learning is at child's own pace, students show varying levels of achievement in different subjects. Many students seem to want to join the formal system. In their case, the team was told, the school makes available text-books of the grade to which a student seeks admission. He/she reads the materials and prepares for the examination that might be required by the class to which entry is sought. In the case of some students, text-books have been provided for self study and preparation for the examinations conducted by the Rajasthan Board of Secondary Education. Figures as to how many were able to enter formal school and/or pass the Board examination were, however, not available. It must, of course, be recognised that the criteria of entry to formal school and/or passing the formal

school's examination are not necessarily relevant for judging the effectiveness of the approaches of Digantar School, although at some point of time parental/children's desire might require more formal certification of children's achievements.

10. The organisation of tasks and making teaching and learning "absolutely" non-formal (or even informal) require considerable skills on the part of teachers, more so on the part of the Head master. Digantar has a band of committed teachers and an innovative Head master who share each others' perspectives and views on what education should consist of and what kind of and how learning experiences should be provided to children. They also share a frame-work which although not explicitly stated allows them to ensure that children's learning is not "chaotic", but follows a pattern which enables them to develop competencies of different levels as they move from one set of learning experiences to another set which might be hierarchically higher.

11. The effort being made by Digantar is indeed innovative and requires support. The major question, however, is whether the philosophy and practices advocated will at some point of time permeate the entire system of education. This will depend upon a host of factors: the acceptance by the society of the view that education need not take place in formally structured classrooms established by the state or under or under its patronage; the extent to which existing educational structures can, all along the lines, be changed to make them flexible and open; the relative value that is placed on acquiring of competencies irrespective of how they are acquired rather than on certificates testifying to the grades completed by students. The implementation of the programmes depends substantially on the commitment and competence of teachers. Their selection and training assume importance. What and how teachers' qualities and "qualifications" can be determined will need spelling out.

BODH SHIKSHAN SAMITI, JAIPUR

12. The Bodh Shikshan Samiti, Jaipur has established non-formal education centres for those children of slums, who cannot, for various reasons, join the formal school. At present 5 centres with 600 children and 25 teachers are managed by the Samiti. The team was able to visit the centres in the Guru Teg Bahadur Basti, an area largely inhabited by Scheduled Caste Sikhs who engage in iron mongering. Children spend part of their morning hours in picking rags and other articles from the streets. Afternoons are spent by them and their families in sorting out these articles. In between children attend non-formal education "classes".

13. The different centres of the Samiti function at different hours depending upon the convenience of children and their families. It was 8.45 a.m. to 12.00 (noon) in the case of the Basti that the team visited. The Samiti has also established centres for women, which function between 12 to 2 p.m. where women, after completing domestic chores, are given basic literacy and numeracy skills, information on health, hygiene and population control and taught crafts, like tailoring, embroidery etc. The centre's distribution of time devoted to various subjects, which is flexible in the case of various centres, was indicated to be :

	Hours
Teachers' Discussion	1-30
Music	0-40
Creative Art	0-40
Language	0-40
Mathematics	0-40
Handwork (clay modelling, paper work, puppetry, stitching etc.)	0-40

The music teachers rotate between centres as there are not many of them. This also enables the Samiti to have adequate work load for music teachers.

14. The Bodh Sikshan Samiti has collaborative arrangements with Digantar and, therefore, there is a large degree of commonality of ideas and approaches to education between the two. The former, however, feels "that there must be a conceptual framework about the work in the centres for, otherwise there can be wasteful energy and resources". There is no fixed curriculum. Children learn at their own pace and acquire competencies in reading, writing, oral and written expression, fundamentals of mathematics and craft skills. They also learn social skills of working in groups and helping each other with centre-related and other chores. Records of behavioural changes of children are maintained.

15. Teachers for the centres were recruited through an open advertisement; they were selected on the basis of their educational qualifications and performance at the interviews. Before they commenced teaching, they had to undergo a three months' training course which, apart from exposure to pedagogy and teaching-learning materials, involved a survey of the community to determine its needs and perceptions, the number of children who are out of schools and adults who would be willing to attend centres, community's occupational pattern and so on. Effort is made to mobilise involvement and support of the community which being poor and without resources, extends support by which giving items like durries, and services like cleaning of premises, etc.

16. The opposition from vested interests is often faced by groups which want to bring about social change. In the Basti that the team visited, the Samiti experienced considerable opposition from the local Granthi of the Gurudwara, who felt that children's and adults' attendance at the centres will reduce attendance and thereby the income of the Gurudwara. For a few days, therefore, the premises of the Gurudwara were not made available for holding classes. The community was, however, able to find an alternative place and by boycotting the Gurudwara for some time was able to "persuade" the Granthi to make the premises available for teaching.

Assessment and Potential

17. No formal evaluation of the project has been carried out. Evaluation of children is done on the basis of diaries that are maintained by teachers. That it serves a useful purpose is no doubt obvious in so far as it meets the educational needs of a community which the formal school has tended to ignore. Another indicator of the acceptance of what the centres aim at is the support that the community extends.

18. Some significant lessons have been learnt in the two years that the project has been in operation. These include :

- For an effort of this kind, interest, involvement and support of the community is essential. It is, therefore, necessary that before commencing the implementation of an action plan, there is extensive contact, with the entire community and not only its "leaders". The primary purpose should be that of explaining the basic objectives and approaches of the plan and what it will, hopefully, achieve for the community. An identification of what the community needs and what its potentialities are is important.
- Parental support is very significant for creating and strengthening children's motivation and opportunity to learn. An educational project must bear this in mind and make every effort to involve parents in the education of their children.

- Teachers' commitment to objectives and strategies is significant for an innovative project which adopts an approach to which teachers are traditionally not used. Considerable thought needs to be given to the criteria that will determine the selection of teachers. While professional competence is important, motivation and commitment on the part of teachers determine considerably the success that they will achieve. Enough time needs to be devoted to "orientation" of teachers to the new framework and what it expects of them.
- There is likelihood of opposition from vested interest. The need is to understand the nature of opposition and mobilize sources within the community to "fight" it.

19.The Bodh Shikshan Samiti has so far not considered the possibility of some of the children wanting to join the formal education system for further education. This, it might have to do in not so distant a future and determine the changes that it might have to incorporate in its educational objectives and strategies to facilitate children's entry at various points to the formal education system.

20.Like the Digantar school, the centres opened and managed by Bodh Shikshan Samiti represent an innovative approach to the education of non-school going children. What is needed is to generate flexibility and openness in formal schools so that the entire system develops the competence to meet educational needs of communities with differing capacities, socio-economic situation and expectations. The Samiti could, with the collaboration of Digantar begin exploring how these innovative approaches could be adopted in the larger system which at present leaves out from its ambit a large segment of school-age children. There is need for establishing some sort of relationship with the Education Department for the purpose.

LITERACY HOUSE, LUCKNOW

21.In 1989, the Department of Education of the Ministry of Human Resource Development approved the proposal of the Literacy House, Lucknow to open 400 non-formal education centres. The centres were to cater to the educational needs of the children in the age-group; of 9-14 who could not enrol in primary schools during the hours the schools functioned. The proposal's main innovative feature was to attempt an "Integrated educational development covering children of age-groups 3 to 6 and 9 - 14 years and adults of 15 - 35 years simultaneously in specified areas". The main reason for the proposed strategy was the assumption "that the running of Early Childhood Education Centres and Non-formal Education centres, was necessary in the same area where Adult Education Centres were running to achieve speedy total educational development of the project area, particularly in the fields of girl's and women's education. This will also be a sound mechanism of universalising primary education in the area as it attacks all areas of present and potential illiteracy". One of the measures proposed to be adopted for integration was to allow adult education instructors to also teach, in different shifts, children and adults of the three age groups. "Indeed flexibility in appointment of instructors for single or double or triple courses was to be resorted to as the situation locally demanded".

22.The four hundred non-formal education centres sanctioned by the Ministry are located in the two districts of Unnao and Barabanki in Uttar Pradesh. The educational programme for the centres is divided into four semesters, of six month each. The courses, which attempt to provide five years of primary education in two years through a condensed curriculum, is divided into four capsules:

- Capsule I-II Covering grades I-II
- Capsule II Covering grade III
- Capsule III Covering grade IV
- Capsule IV Covering grade V

23. The teaching learning materials consist of Niketan Bharati and a chart for teaching basic literacy material have also been prepared. A science kit has been developed along with a guide. The centres have been supplied with maps (U.P., India, World), school bell, black board, teaching chart, curriculum guidelines, evaluation and attendance register, charts etc. Instructors, who are generally selected from the villages where non-formal education centres function, are given six days training which primarily consists of, exposure to materials which are to be taught in the centres. The progress of the centres is regularly received through meetings with supervisors and assistant project officers. Evaluation of children's achievement is done on the basis of a printed card, which evaluates on a three point scale, a child's attendance and performance in various curricular and co-curricular activities (sports, cleanliness, etc.)

24. The enrolment in the first two semesters in centres in two locations is indicated below:

	Districts			
	Barabanki		Unnao	
	Ist Semester	IInd Semester	Ist Semester	IInd Semester
No. of Centres	200	191	200	185
No. of Children:				
Total	5778	4918	5922	4146
Boys	2942	2401	2993	1956
Girls	2836	2517	2929	2190
Average attendance (per centre)	20	15	21	17

The table shows a depletion in the number of centres, enrolment in them and average attendance.

25. The dropout in enrolment between two semesters has been particularly serious in Unnao centres as is indicated below:

	Dropout in Enrolment (In percentage)	
	Barabanki	Unnao
Boys and girls	15	30
Boys	18	35
Girls	12	25

Part of the dropout can be accounted for by the closure of the centres in places where, it was reported, enrolment was not sufficient to sustain the continuance of a centre.

Assessment and Potential

26. For want of information about the exact location of centres (the assumption having been made that at least some of them were located closer to Lucknow) the team's itinerary did not allow visits to a very large number of centres. However, it did visit a representative sample of non-formal education centres in the interior of the Unnao Districts. It also observed a supervisors training camp, where two batches were being provided basic orientation in the methodology and materials being used in non-formal education centres. The assessment made below, is therefore, based on a small sample of non-formal education centres and the detailed discussions held with Director, the Faculty of the Literacy House and meetings with Parents/Guardians of children during visits to non-formal education centres.

27. The centres visited were mostly in villages with large population of Muslims. The enrolment in non-formal education centres consisted mostly of girls. The obvious reasons for their not attending formal schools had been their utility for domestic chores and hesitation on the part of parents to send them to the formal schools which "was at a distance from the village". Quite a few of the girls enrolled in the centres were engaged in Zari work which supplemented their family's income.

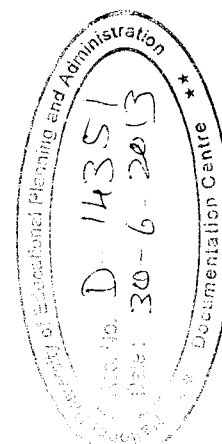
28. In the report for 1989-90, the Literacy House has provided the following data about the competency achieved by children after two semesters of attendance:

	Districts			
	Unnao		Barabanki	
	Ist Semester	IInd Semester	Ist Semester	IInd Semester
Enrolment	5992	4146	5778	4918
No. of children who could take dictation	1996(34)	2506(60)	1956(34)	1921(40)
No. of children who could write multiplication tables from 1 to 20	754(13)	1961(47)	603(11)	955(22)

(Figures in paranthesis indicate percentage to total enrolment) The instructional programme in centres located in Unnao has been more effective. This was corroborated by the Director and the project incharge.

29. Since the major aim of the two years' condensed course of non-formal education centres is to provide an alternate means of attaining competencies which children should normally acquire in five years of a primary school and to enable them to enter the formal stream, the Literacy House has, in collaboration with the State Education Department, conducted examination of children who have completed all the four semesters. The team was informed that from Barabanki centres, 2748 (out of an enrolment of about 6000) took the grade V equivalent examination, 2520 or 42 percent passed, 324 or 13.5 percent joined the VI grade of the junior high school. The proportion passing the examination is small and those joining the formal system still smaller.

30. It must, however, be recognised that the criteria applied to non-formal education centres percentage passing the V grade equivalent examination and/or entry into the formal system - are not strictly relevant. A comparison with the



results of V grade examination of the regular primary schools might indicate a similarity in the proportions passing. The measure of success achieved should be in terms of the functional competencies attained by children. The team's assessment of reading, writing and arithmetical competencies of children in all the centres that it visited in District Unnao, indicated a very satisfactory achievement level on the part of children of non-formal education centres.

31. The other important points observed were: the enthusiasm and motivation of the instructors who, being from the villages, were committed to the welfare of the community and the interest and enthusiasm of the communities most of whom wanted the centres to be "upgraded to junior high school level so that their children (particularly girls) could continue education".

32. The scheme of non-formal education was formulated in 1977. The norms of expenditure then proposed, have remained unchanged, including the remuneration paid to an instructor, which does not bear any relationship to what a primary school teacher gets (for 4-5 hours of work compared to 2 hours in a non-formal education centre). The realization, that the tasks of a non-formal education centre instructor are more complex and difficult, compared to a primary school teacher, is yet to grow. It would seem that the scheme does not allow any flexibility, for instance, in terms of the pattern of expenditure incurred on different items, the educational programme to be implemented, etc. The Literacy House was facing some problems in getting its expenditure regularized.

33. The team feels that the most innovative features of the proposal was that of catering to the educational needs of the total community. This was not allowed, thereby denying the Literacy House the opportunity of implementing an innovative strategy. Without this the project has lost much of its innovativeness since the condensed course version of non-formal education has been implemented, with mixed achievements, since 1978, by State Education Departments and non-governmental organisations. There is need to support the effort of the Literacy House to design and implement innovative strategies of non-formal education, related to the needs of the total community and for bringing out community transformation. With the experience and the expert resources that it possesses, the Literacy House could be encouraged to undertake research/experimentation in non-formal education - its conceptual framework and potentiality for bringing about communities transformation.

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION, PUNE

34. The Indian Institute of Education (IIE), Pune is a post-graduate institution affiliated to the University of Pune for inter-disciplinary research in education. The Institute studies educational problems, particularly those relating to weaker sections of the society. It has evolved a system of non-formal primary education, known as "IIE Model", for universalisation of primary education. The first phase (1979-85) of the three phase project covered 100 villages in five agro-climatic areas in Pune District; the second phase covered 20 villages in drought prone region and 15 small habitations in the hills and the third phase (1988 to 1992) covered 137 villages and habitations in three agro-climatic areas. In the third phase a comprehensive action-oriented research project, "Promoting Primary and Elementary Education (PROPEL)", was launched.

35. The first phase of the project was financed by the UNICEF and the State Government and the second phase by the Ford Foundation. The Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, sanctioned the establishment of a non-formal Education Cell at the IIE in 1988 for providing resource support for non-formal education activities of non-government organisations in Maharashtra. It also financed the third phase of the project.

36. In the first phase innovations were evolved in non-formal education for the age-group 8-14. These included "curriculum development, production of learning and teaching materials, pedagogical techniques, selection and training of teachers, monitoring, supervision, evaluation and collaboration among various agencies and community members". In the second phase emphasis was placed on "establishing and strengthening of Village Education Committees (VECs) as local motivators and managers of primary education", besides testing the impact of innovations evolved during the first phase. Additional responsibilities were assigned to the VECs after "orienting them to the problems of universalisation of primary education, the approach to non-formal education and methods of community participation". The PROPEL seeks to non-formalise the teaching process in order to make it possible to retain a child till he/she achieves a minimum level of learning. The goal is universalisation of primary education in the project area. Moreover, it aims at decentralisation of education system and involvement of local bodies and communities in the running of these centres, project staff providing guidance and training. The interconnected programmes organised at the community level during the third phase included establishment of Child Recreation Centres (30), Adult Literacy Centres (50), Jana Shikshan Nilayams (20), Women's Development Groups and Training for women and Youth Animators.

37. For administrative purposes, the project area has been demarcated into 3 sub-areas known as planning circles. Planning facilitator, who is assisted by 5 or 6 education coordinators, looks after all the activities of a sub-area. Presently, there are 3 planning facilitators and 17 education coordinators in project areas. Planning facilitators have been provided with mopeds and education coordinators with bicycles.

38. The team visited a recently opened non-formal education centre in village Sonde Sarpale - an interior village in hilly tract with no proper approach road. The enrolment of children (age group 9-14) at the centre was 15 (13 Girls and 2 Boys). The children first tidied themselves by washing face, hands and feet and combed their hair for which arrangements exist at the centre. This ensures attention to personal hygiene. Most of the children were drop-outs who had earlier studied upto class I/II in the nearby school. Every child wore a name badge. The class began with the singing of a prayer, followed by a folk dance in which manjiri (brass instrument), and tipari (a pair of sticks) were used. Thereafter, one of the girls narrated a story which was also dramatised by children. This was followed by lessons on environment and mathematics. At the end children expressed themselves through free-art work on slates. The team also visited Maroasani village where discussions with members of the Village Education Committee were held. Classes are held in the evening from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. In order to make the atmosphere at the centre congenial, the male teacher is called "Bhai" (Brother) and female teacher "Tai" (Sister).

39. The Project has evolved a cumulative external evaluation system by organising children's Fair (Bal Jatra) after every six months. During the fair, children's progress in each area of learning is assessed in informal atmosphere. Central village covering about 5-6 villages and habitations, is selected for the purpose. The community of the Jatra Village makes arrangements for games, sports and cultural activities. Children from different centres come to the fair in processions singing songs. First half of the day is devoted to competitions in games, story-telling, elocution, singing, dancing and painting. In the second half of the day achievements in language, mathematics and general information are tested in small groups. Specially devised graded evaluation tools have been prepared for the purpose. The performance of each child is observed by external teachers who fill up evaluation sheets for different activities and skills. In two years course children are expected to achieve the level of literacy

Assessment and Potential

40. Before establishing non-formal education (NFE) centres, the project staff conduct a house-hold survey in the village with the help of the local educated people. Findings of the survey are discussed with villagers and the communities concerned are stimulated to look into their educational and other problems. NFE centres are established when there is demand for them, for which villagers generally provide accommodation and make lighting arrangements. The centres are set up to suit the convenience of children who work in domestic chores as well as in fields to add to the family income.

41. The Institute has developed curriculum for non-formal education. It lays emphasis on language, mathematics, science, social awareness, creativity and aesthetic sensitivity. Booklets on language, mathematics and village environment, story books, exercise books and short-poems have been prepared, main emphasis being on developing the spirit of enquiry and reasoning. Self-learning is stimulated through games, peer-group interaction and continuous self-evaluation through graded materials. Learning about health, hygiene and nutrition are related to daily life. Cultural, social and aesthetic sensitivity are promoted through activities like stories, songs, free art-work, decoration, Yogic exercises, etc. In short, curriculum has been designed in such a way that a child not only attains literacy in two years but also ensures his/her all round development.

42. Teaching-learning materials have been prepared by the research team and field staff of the project after trial in field situations. For science teaching, the Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education (HBCSE), Bombay, helped in designing simple scientific equipments. Illustrated science folders prepared by the HBCSE are also used for science teaching. A science kit, costing about Rs.30/-, has been provided by the HBCSE which covers science curriculum upto class IV. Each teacher is provided with 'carry all' canvas bag containing small blackboard, khadi-graphs, box containing wooden alphabet letters and numerals, slates, adding, subtraction boards, foot-rule, science experiment kit, note book, coloured paper, pencils, ointment and medicines for scratches, scabies, lice, etc. The 'carry all' bag and the necessary equipment cost Rs.325/- which generally last for two years.

43. Being acceptable to villagers locally available educated persons are selected as teachers. Mobile teams train teachers at a central place covering a cluster of centres. Initial training is for 5 days, the aim being to raise the educational level of teachers as well as to impart training in pedagogy. Training sessions are conducted like seminars and lay stress on group work. Teaching plans for 4 to 6 weeks are also prepared. Improving teaching learning materials, writing reports of classroom happenings and maintaining classroom records form part of the training programme. A package of comprehensive reading materials on every day science, health, food, nutrition, environment, agriculture, horticulture, water supply, nature study, solar system, etc. are supplied to them for their own information and as material for reading out to children. A booklet on Teacher's Guide is given to each teacher. A monthly remuneration of Rs.105/- is paid to the teacher.

44. Decentralisation of administration is provided for through involvement of officials and non-officials at all levels viz..village, block and district. Blocks have been further sub-divided into circles (about 30,000 to 35,000 population) and Advisory Committees constituted for each circle. Community mobilisation for education and development is secured through Advisory Committees. All educational institutions and professionals in the circle constitute the Education Complex and work closely with the Advisory Committee. The Village Education Committees mobilise local resources for non-formal education centre and also supervise its functioning. The project staff only

provides guidance and training. In order to boost education and development of women and girls, orientation camps (Women Animators Camps) are organised for women and youth of the villages. Jana Shikshan Nilayams provide reading materials to neo-literates and recreational opportunities to the community.

45. Intervention in the regular primary schools, classes I, II & III is secured through the programme of Minimum Level of Learning (MLL). However, the programme is restricted to language and mathematics only. For this, regular training programmes for teachers of primary schools (Classes I, II & III) are conducted. Teachers are encouraged to use new teaching techniques in classes and widen the horizon of children. Periodic tests are conducted to ascertain the competency levels of pupils. It was reported that the intervention had improved the competency level of pupils.

46. Non-attendance of children residing in the interior parts of rural and tribal tracts is a phenomenon and is attributed to lack of proper roads. Moreover, the problem of drop-outs is also there, mainly due to migration of children to other places for work, early marriage, lack of time due to work at distant places, household work in the evening, apathy towards study, etc.

47. As regards replication and dissemination, the "IIE Model" of non-formal education is presently being implemented by 65 voluntary agencies in Maharashtra State. The Non-Formal Education Cell of the IIE conducts regular training and orientation programmes for the teachers of these organisations. Moreover, teaching learning materials and the "Teacher's Guide" prepared by the IIE are widely used. In addition, a booklet on the "IIE Model" on non-formal education, which is available in English, Hindi and Marathi has been widely distributed. A documentary on the IIE Project has been prepared by the Films Division in 14 languages and film and slide shows have been prepared by the UNICEF for international orientation in universal primary education efforts.

48. The IIE has already submitted proposals on (a) PROPEL Phase II and (b) MLL Project (Class III) for implementation during 1992-93 to 1996-97 to the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. It seeks to continue the action for universalisation of primary education, and to intensify and broaden the MLL Programme in the project area.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAM, NARENDRAPUR, WEST BENGAL

49. Ramakrishana Mission Ashram, Narendrapur, is rendering services to the poor, down-trodden and illiterate people through various developmental programmes. Rural development work, actually commenced with the welfare programmes launched in slums at Rambagan in North Calcutta (Pathurighata) in 1952. The work was initiated by 'Students Home' which was later shifted to the present site (Narendrapur) in 1956. Since then the Ashram has diversified its activities and grown into a large complex of institution. Presently, its activities include: general education (Residential Degree College, with Higher Secondary School Unit, Residential Secondary School, Primary School and Central Library), technical and vocational education (Junior Technical School, Commercial Institute, Automobile Training Centre and Motor Mechanics Training Centre), education for the visually handicapped, Lokasiksha Parishad Institute of Social Welfare and Integrated Rural Development), harijan welfare, medical services, relief work, etc. Lokasiksha Parishad has become a National Resource Centre for various activities both for State and Central Government programmes.

50. From the very beginning, the Lokasiksha Parishad has placed emphasis on "building-up local leadership, local organisations and identification of local resources". Consequently, the Parishad took active part in organising rural youth clubs. Developmental activities in the villages are implemented through 376 youth organisations. Initially, emphasis was on adult literacy; over the years the Parishad diversified its activities, including early childhood education,

non-formal education (NFE), night high school (for working people), mobile library, mass literacy programme, vocational training, integrated child development service in slums, environmental sanitation, social forestry, etc.

51. The staff employed for non-formal education (NFE) consists of one Programme Coordinator, 18 Supervisors and 25 Resource Persons, besides administrative personnel.

52. Till recently (1989-90), the Parishad organised non-formal education (NFE) for children of age-group 9-14, through 676 centres as against 348 centres in 1982. The district-wise distribution of centres and beneficiaries in 1989-90 is given in the table below:

Number of NFE Centres and Beneficiaries (1989-90)

District	No. of Centres			No. of Beneficiaries		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Calcutta	--	48	48	-1	1,287	1,287
24 Parganas	148	156	304	4,038	4,254	8,292
Midnapore	100	84	184	2,782	2,204	4,986
Burdwan	12	8	20	311	219	530
Purulia	96	24	120	2,397	632	3,020
Total	356	3	676	9,528	8,596	18,124

53. The average enrolment per centre works out to about 27. About 47% of the total number of centres were exclusively for girls. It was reported that the problem of drop-outs existed mainly due to domestic chores, migration to other work places, early marriage, etc. A limited number (3.5% in 1989-90) of students of regular schools also attended the centres. In 1989 about 17% of children of the centres attended regular schools. The timings of the centres are fixed in accordance with the convenience of children in an area. Presently, the Parishad is running 24 centres with 750 children on roll from its own resources. The reduction in the number of centres was reportedly due to the new policy of the State Government by virtue of which the implementation of non-formal education programme has been entrusted to panchayat and municipal bodies.

54. The main objectives of the programme are: "providing literacy and numeracy equivalent to standard V, facilitating entry into the formal system at any stage, making it become a process for long life education and providing for need-based and environment related education". The curriculum includes teaching of language (Bengali), mathematics, geography, history, general knowledge and health, social awareness, cultural education and vocational education. The curriculum (for 3 years) has been developed to "help children to develop as persons, as learners, as workers, as responsible citizens and at the same time enable them to enter into the formal system with adequate literacy and numeracy, knowledge, skills and attitudes equivalent to class V of the formal system". In the beginning the Parishad developed a curriculum for its centres. Later on, the curriculum prescribed by the Directorate of Secondary Education, Government of West Bengal, was incorporated in the syllabus. Education is related to the environment of the child and lays emphasis on - social awareness, creativity and aesthetic sensitivity, health, hygiene, nutrition, etc. Cultural, social and aesthetic sensitivity are promoted through activities like stories, songs, sports, simulation games, drama etc. Skill development programmes include: hobby loom, agriculture, fishery, poultry, dairy, condiment preparation, bidi binding, stitching, clay-modelling, bamboo craft, net-knitting, kitchen, gardening, etc.

55. Educated persons from the locality are generally appointed as teach-

ers. Initial training for teachers is for 7 days, the aim being to raise the educational level of teachers as well as impart training in pedagogy. Besides, problems faced by teachers in implementing the programme are discussed in monthly meetings. In these meetings experiences are shared and programme for the next month chalked out. Supervisors also visit centres and help teachers in implementing the programme. The Parishad also organises training courses for teachers of non-formal education centres run by State Government and other voluntary organisations. The Parishad has prepared a guide book "Deepan" for teachers. Teachers are paid a remuneration of Rs.105/- per month.

56.Lokashiksha Parishad has prepared follow-up books on geography, agriculture, kitchen gardening, dairy development, poultry, bee-keeping, life and teachings of great men, etc. Besides, it also publishes a monthly journal "Samaj Siksha", on integrated rural development programmes. Teaching-learning materials viz.. charts, puppet plays, simulation games, role-play models, etc. have also been developed. In addition, film and slide shows, etc., are also organised at the centres.

57.Registered youth organisations of tribal areas, affiliated to the Lokasiksha Parishad, take active part in selecting areas for opening centres, arranging accommodation for them; they help in the proper functioning of the centres. They also motivate parents to send their children to centres. Cooperation of the community is secured through Centre Management Committees and meetings with the villagers. The Parishad setup a Jana Siksha Gabeshana Vibhag in 1984 for better implementation of the programme. It not only provides necessary feed back but also helps in developing innovative materials like primers, supplementary readers, guide books and evaluation tools.

58.The Lokasiksha Parishad has set up a Night High School for working people and drop-outs at the Agricultural Training Centre premises at Narendrapur. It enables students to complete secondary stage (class X) within 7 years instead of 10 years as per traditional system. Working hours of the school are 3 hours in the evening (6 p.m. to 9 p.m.). The syllabus of the regular schools is followed. The school which started with 50 students has now a strength of 273. On enquiry by the team it was revealed that occupational profiles of the students were: cultivators, agricultural labourers, domestic servants/attendants, industrial labour, rickshaw puller, petty traders, shop establishment workers, electricians, etc. However, some were unemployed, particularly those in lower age-groups. Students generally belong to the age-group 10 to 25 years. The school provides tiffin as supplementary nutrition to the deserving students, besides books and teaching aids from the Book Bank of the Institution.

Assessment and Potential

59.Ramakrishna Mission Ashram has been working in the field of adult education since 1952. The Parishad implemented literacy programme through voluntary instructors during the year 1984 to 1988. With support from the National Literacy Mission, the Parishad launched (1991) universal literacy drive in 5 districts, covering 492 villages, of the State through its youth clubs. The Mobile Library Unit is extending the services to the neo-literates in villages. In all, there are 107 distribution points in 5 districts. Voluntary workers organise "Patha Chakra" (Study Circle) for upgrading the knowledge of neo-literates. The books are distributed to readers through affiliated youth clubs. The Audio Visual Unit of the Parishad is an important unit for social education programmes in the rural areas.

60.Assessment of children's achievement is made through monthly, quarterly, half-yearly and yearly tests. Half-yearly and yearly tests are conducted on cluster area basis. At the instance of the Directorate of Education, Government of West Bengal, the Parishad conducted a comprehensive evaluation study

of non-formal education in West Bengal from December 18 to 22, 1989. The project "Evaluation of NFE Learners" was taken up with the financial assistance from the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. The sample consisted of 4,335 learners of NFE centres and 530 learners of formal schools covering all the districts of the State. The evaluation was restricted to two subjects only - Language and Arithmetic. The findings of the study were:

- (a) non-formal learners in general scored better than their formal counterparts;
- (b) within the non-formal group, rural learners performed better than their urban counterparts
- (c) girls in both the groups (NFE and formal education) scored better than their counterparts (boys) in Language, where as in Arithmetic boys in both the groups did better than their counterparts (girls). On the whole, Non-Formal learners fared better than the formal school counterparts;
- (d) the performance of SC/ST learners was practically identical to their counterparts of other castes in Language, where as in Arithmetic they were very close to other castes in NFE group and surpassed their counterparts of other groups in formal school group.

61. Lokasiksha Parishad "tries to help the local youth to manifest their leadership potential, to identify their resources and to organise themselves so that they play their role in national development". Emphasis is on improving the socio economic conditions of the people by imparting a large variety of skills to them. The Shramik Vidyapeeth helps in skill formation and upgradation. Youth clubs in several villages operative banking system. Financial support, in the form of loans, is given to the unemployed youth, for self-employment. The team visited one of the banking centres at Narendrapur. A youngman was operating the same on voluntary basis. The team also visited non-formal education centres in Gopalpur and Kelaser Villages and one Balwadi Centre in Araparah Village. The team also visited various vocational training centres viz. weaving, carpentry, low cost latrine, lathe, radio and television, motor mechanic and computer. The Parishad conducts various training courses of short duration, both at and outside Narendrapur, for imparting and upgrading skills of the people. Presently, the Ashram is running 24 non-formal education centres (as against 676 centres in 1989-90) in backward areas with its own resources. A view was expressed that reputed voluntary organisations of long standing should be funded by the Government for operating the centres.

62. The State Government's decision to entrust non-formal education to local government institutions is likely to affect the Ashram's worthwhile initiatives in non-formal education and other community development activities. It would be a pity if the work being done by the Ashram is stopped and the people, particularly underprivileged ones are denied the opportunity for self-employment.

63. The requirement of the scheme for entertaining proposals for financial support only if forwarded through the State Government needs to be applied selectively. In the case of voluntary organisations with established credentials and meaningful social work stretching over decades, this requirement is likely to jeopardize their initiative and motivation as is likely to happen in the case of Ramakrishna Mission. One of the reasons for delay for approval of programme and release of grants is the insistence of State Government's recommendations.

**SIDHU KANU GRAM UNNAYAN SAMITI, PAHARHATI,
BURDWAN, WEST BENGAL**

64. Sidhu Kanu Gram Unnayan Samiti, Paharhati, Burdwan, was registered in 1980. It is engaged in welfare activities for the upliftment of scheduled

castes, scheduled tribes and other backward communities in Memari Blocks I and II of Burdwan District. Various welfare activities undertaken in the villages include: mother and child care, immunization, training of family level volunteers for health education, curative services, adult education, non-formal education and skill development programmes (weaving, tailoring, poultry farming etc.) The programmes relating to health are funded by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (Government of India), those pertaining to education by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (Government of India) and skill development programmes by CAPART.

65. The Gram Unnayan Samiti is implementing the non-formal education project: "Experimental Approach in the Development of Strategies for Effective Transaction of Non-formal Education in a Holistic Frame" with assistance from the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. The three years project commenced in 1989-90. Under the programme, 58 non-formal education (NFE) centres, as against 60 originally proposed, were opened. The enrolment of children of the age-group 6-14 has increased from 1,793 in 1989-90 to 1,910 in 1991-92, an increase of about 7%. The category-wise break-up of learners in 1991-92 is given in the table below:

Position in 1990-91

No. of children			
Category	Boys	Girls	Total
Scheduled Castes	295	375	670
Scheduled Tribes	496	557	1,053
Others	98	89	187
Total:	889	1,021	1,910

It will be observed that 55% of the total learners were scheduled tribes and 35% were scheduled castes together they constituted 90% of the total enrolment. Girls accounted for 53% of the total enrolment. Presently, 45 Centres are functioning in the area. Classes are generally held in the evening for two hours daily.

66. The curriculum includes teaching of language (Bengali), arithmetic, geography and environment. Emphasis is laid on health related topics, lives of great men and cultural activities viz., drawing, painting, folk songs, folk dances, dramas, stories, games, etc. For language and arithmetic, text books brought out by the State Resource Centre and Shishu Sahitya Parishad, Calcutta are used. It was reported that the primer developed by the State Resource Centre was not suitable and needed modifications in the light of local situations. The Samiti has developed a Bengali Primer for children of the age group of 6 to 8 years.

67. Educated persons of the locality are appointed as teachers. Initially, selection is made by the Gram Committee, which recommends two candidates for appointment as teachers. The Samiti makes the final selection after assessing them thoroughly. In the beginning, teachers attend 7 days' training course at the headquarters of the Samiti to increase the educational level of teachers and impart training in pedagogy. In the monthly meetings experiences are shared and problems faced in the implementation are solved. In addition, lesson plans for the next month are also discussed. Supervisors also render on the spot guidance to teachers. Qualifications of teachers range from Class-VIII to B.A./B.Com., whereas supervisors are graduates. There are 5 supervisors and each supervisor looks after about 10 centres. Teachers are paid a remuneration of Rs.105/- per month.

68. The Samiti has developed teaching-learning materials such as charts, posters, models, flannel graphs, letter cards, games etc. Moreover, teachers design teaching-learning materials from locally available materials for use in the class room. It was reported that there was need for good quality teaching-learning materials and SCERT and SRC should be involved in developing the kits. The Samiti has also conducted socio-linguistic-cum-economic surveys of villages concerning local vocabulary, traditions, festivals, folk songs and folk dances, cropping pattern, occupations, etc.

Assessment and Potential

69. It was reported that the average daily attendance varied from 50 to 55 per cent. Low attendance at the centres was attributed to lack of interest in education, parental apathy, observance of various festivals in the villages, seasonal diseases, etc. Drop-out rate was 33 per cent, mainly due to lack of interest in studies, migration to other places for work, early marriage, domestic chores, etc.

70. Evaluation of non-formal education activities was conducted by the Gram Unnayan Samiti in 1992. The sample consisted of 427 learners from 39 centres. Achievement levels of the learners as reported are given in the Table below:

No. of Learners	Grading Range (marks obtained)
41	above 70 %
169	50-69 %
120	30-49 %
97	20-29 %

It will be observed that 10% of the learners secured marks above 70%, 40% learners between 50 to 69%, 26% learners between 30% to 49% and 22% learners between 20% to 29%. It was reported that some of the learners joined various classes in regular schools. The number of such students was 422 in two years (1991 and 1992). Presently, the Gram Unnayan Samiti is running 45 non-formal education centres in remote villages. Due to State Government, policy to entrust this programme to Panchayats and municipalities there is an apprehension that the centre of Samiti would have to be closed down in case financial assistance was not forthcoming. Visits to non-formal education centres could not be undertaken due to Durga Puja Festival. However, discussions with teachers, supervisors and research staff were held at the Project Office, Amadpur. It was emphasised that for universalisation of primary education it was essential that voluntary organisations should also be involved in implementation of the programme. Moreover, remuneration of teachers needs upward revision in view of the considerable increase in the cost of living index. It was also mentioned that there should be adequate provision for (a) purchasing good quality teaching learning materials in order to make teaching interesting and (b) for conducting educational tours and cultural programmes.

SAMNVAY ASHRAM, BODH GAYA, BIHAR

71. Samanvay Ashram, Bodhi Gaya, was set up in 1954 to carry out programmes of the Sarvodaya movement in Bihar. It has 3 acres of land at Bodh Gaya and 31 acres in Bagha village. The land was donated to the Ashram by the Mahants. The Ashram is rendering services to the poor, down-trodden and illiterates living in the villages of Fatehpur, Mohanpur and Barachatti blocks in Gaya District. These villages are

inhabited mostly by low caste communities, such as Bhuiyan, Bhogta, Kumhar, Paswan, Chamar, Musahar, Kurmi etc. The land is rocky and uneven and cultivation is dependent on the rains. Consequently, people in forest areas live on roots and leaves for about 4 months in a year. The 'Musahar' community consumes rats. The Ashram helps villagers in digging wells, constructing ponds, levelling land, providing good quality seeds, improving sanitation, etc. In addition health camps are organised by the Ashram.

72. The Ashram runs non-formal education centres in remote villages, develops teaching learning materials, conducts training courses for teachers/supervisors and participates in Adult Education Programme under Total Literacy Campaign. The staff for implementing the programme consists of one Coordinator, 10 supervisors, one Clerk and one Accountant. The Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, is funding the non-formal education programme.

73. The first non-formal education (NFE) Centre was set up in sixties in Bagha village, 40 kms. away from the Ashram, with 10 children. They all belonged to 'Musahar' (rat eaters) community. However, the Project "Running of Non-formal Education Centres under Innovative Programme" commenced from April, 1989. Under the project 150 centres, covering 93 villages of Mohanpur and Barachatti Blocks in Gaya District, were functioning till May, 1992. The total number of children enrolled in these centres was as under:

Position in 1991-92

Category	No. of Children		
	Male	Female	Total
Scheduled Castes	1,400	673	2,073
Scheduled Tribes	195	75	270
Backward Classes	884	533	1,417
Others	140	70	210
Total	2,619	1,351	3,970

74. It will be observed that one-third of the children were females, whereas scheduled castes and scheduled tribes constituted 59 percent. At present, the Ashram is maintaining 50 NFE centres, including two residential schools (95 children) - one for girls at Samanvay Ashram at Bodh Gaya and the other for boys at Samanvay Vidyapeeth, Mohanpur Block. The total enrolment at the centres is 1,470. Children belonging to age-group 6-14 attend centres. Classes are held for 2 hours daily, some during morning hours while others function during the day and/or in evening. Timings have been fixed in relation to the convenience of children. Sometimes centres are held at work-places of children. Attendance at the centres varies from 70 to 80 percent.

75. The Ashram has developed a curriculum which provides education equivalent to standard V, enables children to enter formal system, provides for need based and environment related education. Text books have not been prescribed. However, teachers are provided with a syllabus outline covering language, mathematics and environment. Emphasis is laid on local traditions viz., folk dances, songs, stories, festivals, games, etc. Education lays stress on 'Yog' (development of body, mind and intellect), 'Udyog' (self-reliance) and 'Sahyog' (cooperation). In the beginning emphasis is laid on activities such as games, folk dances, folk songs, drama, puppet shows, stories, cleanliness, etc. Thereafter, learning of language and numeracy commences. Each child is provided with a slate, pencil, pen, card board and an exercise book. In 3 years

achievement level upto standard V is ensured. After completing the course, some children join class VI of the regular schools. Some children join schools even earlier. A 'Bal Mela' is organised annually in the month of March in which children present cultural programmes such as dance, drama, songs, stories, etc. This not only provides an opportunity to children for cultural participation, but also for better socialisation. The children of the two residential schools participate in activities such as farming, dairy farming, for two hours daily. All expenses are borne by the Ashram.

76. Educated persons from the local community are generally appointed as teachers and supervisors. Initially, teachers are imparted 10 days' training for upgrading their educational level as well as imparting training in pedagogy. Training is field based and practical. Besides, monthly meetings (2 days) are also held where experiences are shared and problems faced by teachers discussed. Lesson plans for the next month are also prepared in these meetings. Supervisors guide teachers in implementing the programme. Qualifications of teachers vary from class VIII to Inter (Arts) Inter (Science). They are paid an honorarium of Rs.105/- per month as provided for in the Ministry's scheme. Being a District Resource Unit, the Ashram conducts training courses for supervisors and teachers of non-formal education centres maintained by the State Government and other voluntary organisations. Between August, 1990 to June, 1992 seven supervisors training work-shops were held in which 500 teachers received training. The NCERT has conducted 10 workshops at the Ashram during the last 3 years.

77. Teaching-learning materials have been developed which include charts, posters, models, letter cards, simulation games, puppet plays etc. Moreover, teachers are given training in designing simple educational kits from locally available materials for use in the class room. Puppet shows are organised for the benefit of children and villagers. It was reported that currently a primer on language (Hindi) is being finalised and efforts are on to develop a booklet on mathematics.

Assessment and Potential

78. An evaluation of non-formal education programme was conducted by Shri A.H.Khan, Assistant Director, Adult Education, Magadh University and Dr. Sachidanand Sinha, Ex-Vice-Chancellor of Ranchi University in December, 1991 and January, 1992. It revealed that performance of learners in reading, writing and numeracy was generally satisfactory. During the team's visit to the centres in villages (Kahudag and Barandi in Barachatti Block and Charkeria in Mohanpur Block) it was observed that performance of learners was in no way inferior to those studying in formal schools. In fact these children were more well equipped compared to those studying in formal schools. Children take active part in co-curricular activities such as folk-dances, dramas, puppet shows, etc. Through songs, stories and puppet shows, traditions of the society are commented upon. It was reported that as a result of these activities youth in many villages had given up drinking. The staff of the Samanvay Ashram maintain good rapport with villagers. The Ashram distributes vegetable and "Papaya" seeds to each child (250 gms.) for cultivation, mainly with a view to enriching their diet with protein and vitamins. Besides, refreshment in the form of "Churma", containing sugar, milk powder, suji and oil, is given to each child at the centre. These measures help in increasing enrolment at the centre, besides adding to the income of the family.

79. Involvement of people for smooth running of the centres is ensured through Village Education Committees. Villagers arrange suitable accommodation for the centre and render help in organising community programmes.

Buildings of the centres have generally been constructed through "Shramdan" with financial support from the Ashram.

80. The Ashram organises several welfare activities, such as digging wells, constructing ponds, supplying good quality seeds, levelling land, etc., in the villages. Besides, potassium permanganate and bleaching powder are also supplied to the people for purification of drinking water and keeping their surroundings clean. These measures have reportedly helped in decreasing the incidence of disease, viz., malaria, diarrhoea, cholera, etc. in these villages. Vocational training is also imparted to youth in farming, animal husbandry, horticulture, dairy farming, tractor repairing, etc. It was also reported that a number of boys got employed after completing the training courses at the Ashram. Every year eye camps are held at the Samanvay Ashram free of cost.

81. Samanvay Ashram is a non-governmental organisation of long standing. It has been undertaking community development/welfare activities of diverse nature including education of communities in the broader sense of the term. The Ashram has independent sources - income from cultivable land, government grants, donations etc., and has, therefore, the capability of undertaking programmes in a large number of villages/communities. Such organisations should have greater flexibility in operating the programmes in relation to the needs of the communities where they operate. A rigid insistence on following the norms prescribed in the scheme and also the items of expenditure tends to handicap an organisation of this kind in tailoring their programmes more closely to community needs.

82. While support for non-formal education has helped, the activities have tended to be isolated in relation to Bawaria community needs. In fact, non-formal education activities - with or without support from the Government - should be conducted in relation to the total programme of community improvement and as an integral input in the process of bringing about community transformation. The Ashram has the experience and capability of undertaking specific area development programmes where educating the community is given an important place.

83. Rigorous evaluation of the processes and impact of activities is needed. The Ashram would need to augment its resources for undertaking empirical studies of the changes that are taking place in individuals and communities. For instance, during its visit the team discerned considerable political awareness among the youth as well as a determination to end exploitation by vested interests. The extent to which the activities of the Ashram, including non-formal education - have resulted in bringing about these changes ought to be documented.

ANTYODAYA LOK KARYAKRAM, WEST CHAMPARAN, BIHAR

84. Antyodaya Lok Karyakram (ALOK) originally started as a communication group for creating political awareness among people by organising them at the village level. The group was initially involved in development work in West Champaran District by a missionary organisation. In late seventies and early eighties, adult education centres were started. In 1985, the group delinked itself from the church and functioned as a sub-centre of the SWRC, Tilonia, Rajasthan. In 1987, it got registered as an independent society. In December 1988, 10 non-formal education centres were opened in villages. The number increased to 20 in January, 1990.

85. Each member of ALOK is in charge of one activity which comprise (a) non-formal education, (b) school education, (c) library, (d) 'natak', and (e) 'mahila vikas'. One member functions as an overall coordinator looking after day to day administration and other miscellaneous activities and the other as Cashier. The organisation also helps in strengthening the Panchayat institutions

in villages and making them effective. The Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, provides funds for non-formal education centres. Help, in the form of materials and labour, is given by villagers. Awareness generation camps have been funded by the CAPART.

86. Presently, 19 non-formal education centres are functioning in 17 villages covering Jamunia, Jagdishpur, Jhakaria and Bishanpura Panchayats. Two centres are exclusively for girls, one for boys and the remaining 16 are mixed centres. Jamunia Dakshin centre was closed in March 1992 because of non-availability of educated female teacher from local sources. However, efforts are on to restart the centre.

87. The enrolment at a centre varies from 25 to 40 and the total strength in 19 centres is over 540. However, the daily attendance per centre varies from 15 to 30. Children are from the age-group 6-14 and are classified in three groups: Group I consists of freshers, Group II of those who can read and write alphabets and know a little of mathematics and Group III of those who can read the primer, write simple sentences and solve simple mathematical problems. Some of the children also attend regular primary schools and the total number of such students was reported to be over 100, including both boys and girls. Centres are held in the evening from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

88. Children are taught language and mathematics; emphasis is also laid on personal hygiene and environment. For language teaching 'Bal Bharti', which is also taught in primary schools, has been prescribed and for mathematics 'Aage Badho', is taught. For language teaching the method followed is from words to alphabets and for mathematics from objects to abstraction. Help is taken of educational materials, such as blackboard, charts, models etc. For the third group of children (who can read the primer) library books are given for reading.

89. Teachers (called Anudeshaks) are locally recruited and their academic qualifications range from 5th to 12th standard pass. Preference is given to females as this helps in increasing the attendance of girls. Intensive training programmes are held for teachers from time to time to upgrade their knowledge - the total period of training being a month in a year. Besides, weekly and monthly meetings of teachers are held for discussing individual experiences and problems. Some of the teachers also teach in six regular primary schools for 2 hours daily. This arrangement has been resorted to in order to motivate and encourage children enrolled in the centres to join regular schools. It was reported that this arrangement had helped in increasing enrolment of regular schools.

90. ALOK is also running two library centres, one in Jagdishpur village and the other in Jamunia village. The latter also functions as a mobile library. Reading room facilities are available at both the centres. Timings of the library are 12 to 4 p.m. at Jamunia centre and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. at Jagdishpur centre. There are 2500 books at the mobile library centre. These books have been procured in collaboration with Allarippu, Delhi.

91. ALOK is providing educational facilities to such children who for various reasons, mainly socio-economic, cannot attend regular schools. During the day these children work both at home and in fields and as such school timings do not suit them. They are also not in a position to meet educational expenses such as for purchasing of text books, exercise books etc. Centres have been opened in backward areas and at remote places which are not even connected with pucca roads. People in villages are illiterate and most of them work as farm labourers.

92. In order to create awareness among people for various welfare programmes such as prohibition, dowry, health-care, family planning, literacy, brotherhood, etc., as well as problems of the people, ALOK organises plays (Nukkud and Stage), puppet shows, patriotic and other songs, meetings, etc., in the villages. Local youth are also invited to participate in the programmes. These programmes not only provide entertainment to people, but also educate them to

solve their problems. This medium is very popular in villages, besides being effective in conveying useful messages.

93. Jan Kalyan Samiti of respectable men/women of the village has been constituted for each centre. They see that the centre runs smoothly and also provide material help to it. Problems faced are sorted out and remedial measures taken. They also act as motivators and persuade parents to send their children to the centre. The Samiti also acts as a check on the teacher. There is continuous interaction between the community and the centre.

Assessment and Potential

94. During the team's visits to the centres it was observed that the language book prescribed is the same as that which is taught in regular schools. Presently, a new primer (text book for language) is under finalisation which is expected to make learning more enjoyable. Moreover, centres are in no way different from regular schools as regards teaching methods. Some rote learning takes place with conceptual understanding on the part of children receiving less emphasis. These centres, however, render useful service in spreading literacy in the area. Children are provided with a primer, exercise books, slates and pencils. Some of the children have reportedly joined regular schools for further education.

95. The problem of drop-outs is there, which is mainly attributed to migration of male children to other places for jobs. Early marriage of girls is another contributory factor. During the months of March and April attendance at the centres is generally thin, mainly due to harvesting of crops and marriage season. However, whenever there is a drop in attendance at a particular centre, ALOK organises puppet shows or natak (plays) to make people understand the importance of education. Jan Kalyan Samiti in the village also persuades parents to send their children to the centre. It was reported that these measures had greatly helped in reducing the incidence of drop-outs.

96. Most of the centres are held in the open and as such are prone to weather disturbances. At some places villagers have provided accommodation for the centre. Even ALOK had no office accommodation and was operating from different places depending upon the availability of accommodation. Only recently it has constructed an office building in village Bahurawa on the land donated by a Muslim family in the village. Villagers helped in the construction of the building.

97. As the centres operate in the evening (6 p.m. to 8 p.m.) kerosene lanterns provide the only light needed. Apart from emitting smoke these lanterns do not provide sufficient light for reading and writing purposes. At times, non-availability of kerosene creates problems for the centre.

98. Non-availability of locally available educated female teachers is a problem being faced in the implementation of the programme, particularly in villages dominated by low caste communities as they prefer female teachers from their area. Even at other places, preference is for female teachers as this helps in increasing the enrolment of girls. One centre at Jamunia Dakshin was closed for non-availability of a women teacher. No doubt, teachers are not well qualified, but they are given sufficient training to make them effective and also to upgrade their knowledge. Each teacher is paid Rs.200/- per month as remuneration.

99. Library facilities are available to both children and adults. Mobile library covers about 91 villages of five panchayats. Two teachers have been deputed for carrying books on cycles. This enables children to develop reading habits. On an average 30 to 40 persons visit the library daily, mostly children, and about 20 books are issued daily. The reading room in Jamunia village is also used to promote cultural activities such as Kavi Sammelans, debates, natak, etc.

100. Villagers expressed satisfaction over the functioning of NFE centres.

ALOK has maintained a good rapport with the villagers as it has been instrumental in solving most of their problems pertaining to land and other disputes. Besides, it has helped in organising women in Jamunia Dakshin to fight for their rights. About 10 women have joined non-formal education centre.

It was reported that delay in receiving grant from the Ministry causes a lot of hardship as ALOK has no reserves to fall back on.

INSTITUTE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH, CALCUTTA

101. The Institute of Psychological and Educational Research (IPER) founded in 1971, is primarily engaged in the promotion of research in psychology and education. It has also launched action-oriented welfare programmes for deprived and under-privileged children in Calcutta. For implementing various welfare projects, the Institute receives financial assistance from the State and Central Governments, several non-government institutions and international organisations like LWS, UNICEF, NCC and others. Bulk of the revenue comes from membership fees and regular contributions from well-wishers. In addition, fund raising campaigns (for specific projects) are also organised from time to time.

102. In March, 1993, the Institute launched the project "Provision of Educational Facilities and Improvement of Health Conditions of the Child Workers" in Calcutta with the objectives of (a) imparting general education at least upto the primary stage; (b) providing health care through regular medical check up; (c) providing nutritive food; (d) arranging cultural participation for better socialisation of child workers; and (e) improving working conditions and environment of child workers. In the first phase 12 Holiday Schools for child workers were set up in South Calcutta with subsidy from the Ministry of Labour, Government of India. Apart from health care, nutritional development programme was also launched benefiting about 700 child workers. The second phase of the project, covering North and Central Calcutta, was launched in 1986. Presently, about 1800 child workers are receiving education and health care services under the project in 36 Holiday schools. The average attendance in each school ranges from 40 to 45. The IPER provides educational services through Open learning System to street children in Calcutta. There are at present 10 Open Learning Units each catering to 40 to 45 street children. Besides, talented children (girls) with potential for various skills and crafts are imparted training in (a) Drawing and Painting, (b) Tailoring and Embroidery and (c) Music. Presently, about 100 children are undergoing this training. Apart from imparting education to them, medical check-up and treatment of child workers is also undertaken by project doctors, who visit schools once every week. The IPER runs a clinic for this purpose: it functions twice a week from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Free medicines are supplied to children and referral services arranged wherever necessary. Child workers are also provided with nutritious food such as milk/snacks/fruits.

103. For drug addicts, the Institute has set up a Counselling Bureau under a project supported by the Ministry of Welfare, Government of India. The Bureau has on its staff qualified psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, social workers and other necessary personnel.

104. Holiday Schools are held for two hours (4 p.m. to 6 p.m.) on Saturdays and three hours (8 a.m. to 11 a.m.) on Sundays, when most of the child workers are usually free. In addition, classes are also held on two more days, usually in afternoon, in the middle of the week. Children enrolled in them belong to the age-group 6-15.

105. Before starting a school in a particular locality, project workers undertake household survey covering particulars of the child and his family.

educational background, nature of employment, health conditions and nutritional aspect. Simultaneously, ground work is also done for starting a centre in the locality for which local participation is ensured. Sometimes accommodation for running the school is provided by the local people.

106. Education imparted in these schools is in conformity with the courses taught in regular schools in the State and includes teaching of Language, Arithmetic, History and Geography and Natural Science. This has been done with a view to enabling a child to join the regular school system in case he/she wishes to do so.

107. In place of conventional text-books, the system of lesson sheets is followed. The entire course prescribed for a particular grade is divided into a number of printed lessons (units). The lessons consist usually of two parts: exposition and testing. In the first part, the content of the subject, to be taught, is presented to children and in the second part the attainment of children on the same content is tested. As such teaching, assimilation and testing are covered by a lesson. The lessons are usually cyclostyled and in place of reading textbooks, children work on lesson sheets. All lessons are based on text books. Educational aids, such as blackboard, models, charts, etc., are used by teachers to facilitate learning. Children are provided with lesson sheets, slates, pencil and exercise books. Educational profile or record of progress of each child is maintained. Classes are held in school buildings, which act as a major incentive to child workers who feel proud of going to a school. Wherever school buildings are not available, private accommodation is utilised for the purpose.

108. Educators, programme masters, field workers, social workers and teachers are working on the project. Teachers are given necessary training in presenting lessons to the class. For this, services of experienced teachers are utilised. Besides, monthly meetings are also held at the IPER headquarters where experiences and problems faced by teachers are discussed.

109. In addition to academic instruction, child workers are provided with the opportunities for participation in cultural activities and for better socialisation. This is done through outings, such as visits to zoological garden, museum and other places of educational value.

110. In case of street children, each group, comprising 40 to 45 children in the age-group 6-15, is placed under the charge of one contact person, who is usually a female teacher. She meets the group thrice in a week at a street corner/temporary shed. The contact person distributes the specially prepared lessons to each child in the group and explains how to work out lessons with demonstration. The next day children hand over the worked out lessons to the teacher who checks them and hands over new lessons to children. Progress report of each child is maintained. These children, like Holiday Schools children, also undergo medical check-up and receive nutritious food.

Assessment and Potential

111. The IPER is providing educational services to children who for various reasons are unable to join a regular school. In view of the fact that these children are compelled to do some odd jobs for augmenting household income, school timings of regular schools do not suit them. Moreover, their parents are not in a position to meet educational expenses such as purchasing text-books, exercise books, etc.

112. Education imparted to children covers courses taught in regular schools in the State. The project has many innovative features; instead of text-books, lesson sheets are prepared which contain essential aspects of the regular text-books: teaching, assimilation, and testing are covered in a lesson: educational aids facilitate the learning process.

113. During our visit to some of the centres it was noticed that children do

take interest in the lessons and can be favourably compared with the students of regular schools, this being so in spite of their socio-economic conditions. Moreover, parents expressed their satisfaction over the functioning of such schools. Added advantage of the system is that talented children can cover the whole of primary school course in less time than what is normally prescribed in regular schools.

114. It was also noticed that teachers work hard and take interest. However, they are overworked, mainly because they have to pay individual attention. This becomes somewhat difficult as different grades of children are in the same class and time available at their disposal is limited. Dedicated teachers with necessary zeal and enthusiasm are often difficult to get, particularly in view of low remuneration that they receive.

115. Drop-out of children is a major problem, the main reasons being apathy of parents, resistance of employers and lack of interest on the part of children. Frequent change of location of child workers, who often move from one place to another in search of jobs, is another contributory factor for leaving the school.

116. Project authorities expressed the view that along with academic education, vocational training should also be imparted to children to enable them to develop vocational efficiency and subsequently establish themselves as skilled workers. It was also suggested that there was need for coordination among various voluntary organisations working in the area of non-formal education in the city of Calcutta.

117. The IPER has prepared a project "Freedom Schools for Deprived and Under-privileged Children". Under the project, it is envisaged to work out an integrated educational service programme to meet the needs of street and working children, the idea being to take school to children who are not in a position to go to schools. Each Freedom school will be in charge of a teacher-cum-facilitator who will be known as the Freedom Teacher. Such a centre will have two components; instruction through free or open learning lessons and visual presentation of educational materials through prepared video cassettes and planned television broadcasting.

KRISHNAMURTI FOUNDATION INDIA

118. The Rishi Valley Trust was set up in 1928 as a charitable institution by J. Krishnamurti, Dr. Annie Besant and five others. In 1953 its name was changed to the Foundation for New Education and then to Krishnamurti Foundation India (KFI) in 1970. The Foundation has set up centres at various places (Madras, Bombay, Varanasi, Rishi Valley, Bangalore and Uttar Kashi) for studying Krishnamurti's teachings. Besides, centres for education have been established at Bangalore, Madras, Varanasi, Rishi Valley and Bombay.

119. The Rishi Valley Education Centre (RVEC), Rishivanam, is located in Chittoor district in Andhra Pradesh. It is surrounded by hills, including "Rishi Konda". The 240 acre campus has a modern dairy, a farm, a vegetable garden and fruit orchards. In spite of perennial shortage of water, the campus has grown a variety of trees. The campus has a residential school (the Rishi Valley School) with about 350 students (classes IV to XII) which is affiliated to the ISC Board, Delhi. The Rural Education Centre, which was set up in 1976, is located on 14 acres of land and is quite near the Rishi Valley School. It prepares students upto standard VII of the Andhra Education Board. The Centre has a network of ten satellite schools within a radius of 15 kms., preparing students upto class V. The population whose needs are catered to, consists largely of shepherds and marginal farmers. The RVEC also runs a clinic at Rishivanam. The Centre receives grant under "Experimental and Innovative Programme for Education"

from the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

120. The main objective of the Rural Education Centre (REC) is to revitalise rural education by extending educational resources to the neighbouring villages. The focus is on: (a) evolving innovative methods for teaching first generation learners (Classes I to V); (b) enrichment of training programme and development of educational aids (pre-primary and primary stages); (c) learning of crafts viz., pottery, carpentry, weaving, dyeing, bee-keeping, batik work and art of puppetry; (d) afforestation and management of environment (e) agriculture and cattle care; and (f) health care, sanitation and family planning.

121. The centre has on roll 100 students from the neighbouring villages. It is a day school and provides a free mid-day meal, free health care and two sets of clothes to children. The enrolment in each satellite school varies from 25 to 30 students; it is a full time day school. Three satellite schools also function in the evening for working children.

122. Students are taught in groups and work at their own pace. Teachers act as facilitators. It lays emphasis on language (Telegu), mathematics, environmental science. Besides, craft learning, permaculture and puppetry. Self learning is stimulated through games, peer-group interaction and continuous self evaluation through graded materials. Learning about health, hygiene and nutrition are related to daily life. Cultural, social and aesthetic sensitivity are promoted through activities like stories, songs, artwork, puppetry, exercises, decoration etc.

In short, curriculum has been designed to ensure all round development of the child. Over the years, the centre has developed an innovative educational kit consisting of 1500 graded cards, 500 cards on each subject, for language (Telegu), mathematics and environmental science for classes I to V. These have been developed in collaboration with educationists, teachers and writers. A teaching manual for teachers has also been prepared. The card contain questions to test the comprehension power of a student. The education kit costs about Rs.1200/-. The language kit develops reading and writing skills, whereas mathematics kit aims at explaining theoretical concepts through concrete examples. Environmental science kit lays emphasis on both nature and social study. Here stress is on group projects for conducting surveys. Emphasis is on promoting an atmosphere of easy and relaxed learning. Local folk lore has been incorporated in the curriculum. Each child is provided with appropriate instructional material depending upon his/her level of development. Children also learn from their seniors. 'Melas' are held for demonstrating various mathematical concepts such as money transactions, metric system, multiplication tables, etc. At the upper primary stage (Classes VI to VII) courses prescribed by the State Government are taught as the parents are keen that their children should pass the State Board Examination.

123. Locally available educated persons (matric/intermediate pass) are selected as teachers. They are imparted training at the Rural Education Centre, its duration varies from 6 weeks to a year depending upon a trainee's educational background. During the training period, trainees are taught to manage a satellite school and design and prepare low cost teaching aids. Teachers also learn a craft such as carpentry, embroidery, bee-keeping, farming, paper making, papier-mache, puppetry, first-aid, community health and sanitation. Weekly meetings of teachers are held at the REC for the benefit of teachers as well as for getting the feed back from the field. Teachers remuneration ranges from Rs.200- to Rs.600/- per month.

Assessment and Potential

124. The team visited the Rural Education Centre and two satellite schools- Valmikivanam School in Eggyaboyapalle Village, and Chandanavanam School in Harijanavad Tettu Village. The Valmikivanam School is the oldest satellite school established in April, 1986. The village has 250 households. A majority of the villagers are daily wage earners, some are share-croppers whereas others are shepherds. The school compound has fruit trees (Jamuns, tamarind, mango, papaya and guava) all planted by children. The school consists of one room and has an enrolment of 30 students. It also runs a nursery school and which has 20 children on roll. It was reported that children are eager to attend school and consequently attendance was near hundred percent. Even on Sundays children come to school. The teacher who has developed good rapport with villagers acts as an advisor to them on various matters. Two batches of students of this school have passed the standard V examination conducted by the Andhra State Board. Most are reported to have joined the local government school for further education. In the evening the school functions as an adult education centre. Consequently, village has high percentage (75) of literacy. The school has a small library for neo-literates. The doors of the school are not locked. At the Chandanvanam School also the attendance was near total, with only one absentee due to health reasons. Record of children's performance in each subject is maintained.

125. The school session begins with teachers and students conducting village surveys: collecting data on flora and fauna; demographic pattern, types of soil and land use, resources available, occupations, trade etc. Whereas the REC is a resource centre for satellite schools, the latter are resource centres for villages providing programmes such as adult literacy, information on land reclamation, afforestation, bee-keeping, health and hygiene, puppet shows, etc. It is envisaged that the school will become in due course a nucleus for the development of the village. Land for the school is donated by the villagers and they also provide labour and material for the construction of the school building. It was reported that there was persistent demand from other villages for opening schools, but because of financial constraints the REC is not presently in a position to do so.

126. Both staff and students of satellite schools are involved in rearing nurseries for afforestation work. Rural Education Centre also imparts training to students in organic farming techniques. In Eggyaboyapalle Village, common degraded land on the banks of the village stream has been fenced and planted with fuel and fruit bearing trees, besides shrubs for attracting bees and drought resistant grasses for fodder purposes. It is proposed to undertake small check dams, excavating percolation ponds, contour bunding and afforestation in drought prone areas.

127. Didactic theatre, including mime and puppetry, has become an important educational tool in the REC and satellite schools for imparting education, conveying information on socially useful themes such as afforestation, danger of indiscriminate use of pesticides, population control, attention to health care etc. Besides, social evils prevailing in the society are also highlighted. The talent of locally available folk artists is tapped for educational purposes the intention being eventually to create a troupe of artists. Basic techniques of puppetry (making and manipulating) are taught to students and teacher trainees.

128. Students and teachers of the Rishi Valley School interact with students and teachers of satellite schools, particularly in collecting folk songs and local legends, conducting surveys, tree plantation etc. "Vennla Vindu", a selection of poems and songs for children, written by Jaiseetharam and illustrated by Bangadhar, was published in August, 1991. The other publication is a musical-cum-puppet version of the Panchatantra. Currently, work on 'Birds of

Rishi Valley' is in progress.

129. The innovative educational techniques developed by the REC can be replicated in other primary schools as well as in non-formal education centres. Other voluntary organisations in the State have been motivated by the innovative techniques developed by the REC and some of them have deputed their teachers for training/studying the techniques at the REC. The Bhagavatula Charitable Trust, Yellamanchili, which is engaged in rural development work in Vishakhapatnam for the past 25 years, sent its officials and teachers for training at the Centre. A pamphlet on "Education Kit - A School in a Box" - has been published for the benefit of voluntary organisations. Reportedly the demand for training of teachers is increasing.

130. Students of standard VII, who appeared in the State Board Examination in 1991, passed with distinction and the first four places in the Kurabalakota Mandal were secured by the students of the REC. Consequently, villagers have faith in the innovative system as the students are more adequately equipped than those studying in government schools.

131. It was reported that the grant from the Ministry is generally received very late - the first instalment in October and the second in June i.e. after the close of the financial year. The Rishi Valley School closes its accounts by 31st March, with the result that the second instalment remain unutilised. It was emphasised that timely release of grant would ensure better implementation of the programme. Moreover, it was also suggested that the innovative scheme should be sanctioned for a period of five years at a stretch so that there is no uncertainty regarding its continuance.

132. The REC has developed innovative materials which facilitate children's understanding of concepts and their use in practical life. These materials can be useful to other organizations, engaged in meeting the educational needs of the disadvantaged particularly. The materials which the team saw, would be of considerable utility to the formal system. Their availability on a wider scale would be one of the important ways by which innovation can be introduced in and made a part of the education system. Rishi Valley has no resources to produce these materials for dissemination on a wider scale. There is a need for the scheme to have a provision for supporting the dissemination of innovative materials and strategies.

• **BHAGWATULA CHARITABLE TRUST (BCT)
VISAKHAPATNAM DISTRICT.**

133. The Bhagwatula Charitable Trust (BCT) was established in 1976-77 with the objective of revitalizing rural communities and rural poor in the village of Dimili in Visakhapatnam District of Andhra Pradesh. Since then it has expanded its activities to cover many important areas of integrated rural development e.g. social forestry; cattle development; salt farms; prawn culture; exploitation of ground water; training of village youth as animators and organizers or community development work; mahila mandals as agents of change and for promoting income generating skills among women belonging to weaker sections of the society; developing a school for training in traditional and modern skills; health care and health education.

134. Recognizing that for any meaningful and self-sustaining development to occur, a good base of literacy and education is essential, the Trust included "non-formal education for school drop-outs and the adults" as another important areas to its activities. The Trust has obtained financial support from the Ministry of Human Resource Development for starting a project to achieve this objective.

135. The Trust seems to have a distinct advantage on drawing on the expertise and resources that it has developed in organising various activities

thus enabling it to adopt a holistic approach to the concept of integrated rural development. The chart below illustrates various activity areas of the Trust and the possibilities of drawing on various resources and expertise to make an effective non-formal programme possible.

**Activity Areas under BCT
Rural Service
(Main Objective)**

Integrated Rural Development			
Wasteland Dev.	Health Services (Gram Arogyalay Trust)	Animal Husbandry	Community work (Through Mahila Mandals)
Educational Programme (Fruit Research Project)		CARTEC	
Skill Dev. School	NFE	Indian Lit. Project	Animators Training
100 Centre Project (sanctioned by HRD in May'88)		360 Centre Project (sanctioned by HRD in Sept.'88)	
(Started January 1989)		(Started April 1989)	

136. This report deals with the project under which 360 non-formal education centres are functioning with the support of the Ministry of Human Resource Development. Its objective is to impart non-formal education to the children of the age-group 6-14 years, who either could not get enrolled in the formal primary schools or dropped out from them. The project, however, has been examined in the total atmosphere of the BCT as compartmentalization would be unrealistic and overlaps are inevitable when one looks at a small segment of the activities of the Trust.

137. The project is operating in 21 'Mandals' of Visakhapatnam District. The BCT is working in collaboration with ten (10) other voluntary organisations to implement the project and is itself serving as a nodal agency to co-ordinate and implement the programme.

138. The distribution of Centres among voluntary organisations the Mandals covered by each and the number of students attending various stages (as on March, 1992) is shown in the Table below:

Sl. No.	Name of the Organisation	Names of Mandals	No. of centres allotted	Total strength	Stage wise break-up			
					IV	III	II	I
1.	Bhagwatula Charitable Trust Yellamanchili.	1. Rambilli 2. Atchutapuram 3. Yellamanchili 4. S. Rayavaram 5. Munagapaka 6. Kasimkot	60	1320	11	132	257	920

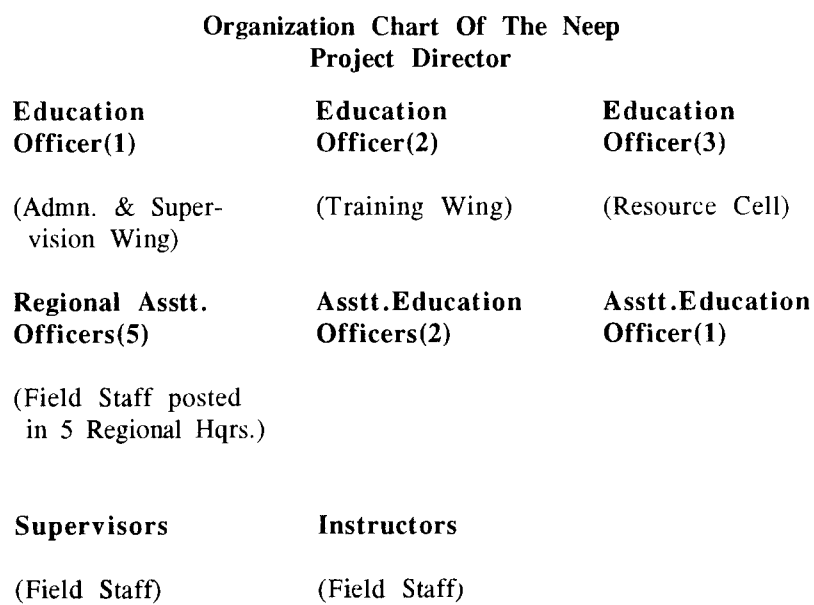
Sl. No.	Name of the Organisation	Names of Mandals	No. of centres allotted	Total strength	IV	Stage wise break-up		
						III	II	I
2.	Wava Chaitanya Development Society Pendurthy	1.Sabbavaram 2.Chodavaram	30	759	-	99	252	408
3.	Nehru Yuva-Jana Sangam Thimmarajupeta. I	1.Atchuta- 2.Munagapaka 3.Parawada	30	731	-	122	192	416
4.	Nature	1.S.Rayavaram	30	825	-	110	172	543
5.	Organisation for Rural Reconstruction, YLM.	1.Kasimkota 2.YLM 3.Butchiyyapeta	30	875	-	225	213	487
6.	Sarada Valley Development Samiti, Thummapala.	1.Anakapalli	30	750	-	268	56	25
7.	Spandana, Krishnapuram.	1.Nathavaram	30	747	-	102	212	433
8.	Sri Triveni, Yuvajana Sangham, Roluganta.	1.Roluganta	30	754	-	202	206	340
9.	Sri Vidya Trust, Devipuram.	1.Sabbavaram	30	728	-	106	253	369
10.	Vikasa, Chodavaram.	1.Madugula	30	764	-	155	239	370
11.	Visakha Zilla Nirmana Samiti, Nathavaram.	1.Koyyuru 2.Golukonda 3.G.Kothaveedhi	30	749	-	156	249	344

139.The non-formal education programme of the Trust, which includes the 360 centres under the experimental and innovative project and 100 other centres under another non-formal education scheme sanctioned of the HRD Ministry, has three main operative wings: (a) Administration and Supervision (b) Training and (c) Resource Cell.

140.A Project Director controls and co-ordinates the activities of these

three wings. He exercises overall administrative control of the project, plans activities and provides guidance. During the visit of the team, the post of the Director of the Project was vacant, the previous incumbent having left at the end of March, 1992. The Head of the Resource Cell was looking after the work of the Project Director.

141. The chart below shows the organizational set for the non-formal education programme (NFEP), of which the project under report is an integral part.



142. Each of the above three wings is under the charge of an Education Officer, who has a post-graduate degree. Education Officers are assisted by a team of Assistant Education Officers (eight at present) who have a B.Ed. degree. All these officers are located at the Headquarters of the project at Yellamanchili, except the five Assistant Education Officers (AEO) who have been posted to five regions. This arrangement ensures and strengthens a close system of supervision and on the spot guidance. Each AEO visits and supervises about 75 centres.

143. There are 40 Supervisors in the field, 10 of whom directly work under the BCT and supervise 100 centres of the other scheme and 60 centres of the Project. The remaining 30 Supervisors look after the 300 centres of the project which are run through ten other voluntary agencies mentioned earlier. Each Supervisor is expected to visit each centre at least once in a fortnight. The minimum qualification for Supervisors is an Intermediate pass. Many of them are university graduates with a B.Ed. degree.

144. For actual organisation of the teaching-learning activities, each centre has an Instructor who normally is a senior secondary school certificate holder. However there are a few exceptions who do not fulfil this minimum qualification. They are posted in difficult and remote locations. Normally, it is preferred to have a local person or a person from the nearby village for non-formal education centre.

145. In order to facilitate smooth running of the Centre and ensure maximum achievement, each voluntary agency is provided with a Project Officer to oversee that work of all the centres under it.

146. The project uses the syllabus and instructional materials developed by the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) for its Phase I of the non-formal education programme. This phase is divided into four stages

covering the five year of formal primary school course. In addition to this and due to non-availability of materials from the SCERT, the Resource Cell of the project has developed its own instructional materials which are the subjects. A New Text Book for Telegu and Mathematics for stage I has also been developed by the Resource Cell, got printed and distributed among the centres.

147. An elaborate scheme of pupil evaluation has been developed by the Resource Cell. Evaluation is conducted at regular intervals and results are analysed and feed-back is used to improve instruction and materials.

148. The approach for locating the centres is flexible. The main modality adopted is to determine the felt need of an area in terms of the drop-outs of formal system and those who never had an opportunity to go to a formal school and are thus potential learners in the age group. Centres are housed in temples, panchayat buildings, Government school buildings, huts built through villager's cooperation and the home of the instructor if it has a space like a verandah to spare. The average student strength of a centre ranges between 20 to 25. Centres operate between 6.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m. About half an hour is devoted to cultural activities, such as songs, dramas etc. and about 3 hours for academic work.

149. An important component of project activities is the training of various personnel. Training of Supervisors and Instructors is planned, organised and conducted by the Education Officers and the Assistant Education Officers of the Headquarter team with the Training Wing taking the main responsibility of coordinating the activity.

150. An interesting innovation in the BCT's training programmes is an initial training for animators for a period of 9 days. This training is not only for Supervisors and Instructors of the NFE project but also for workers of other projects being run by the Trust. The main objective of training is to create an awareness of the problems of rural development and poverty, and to motivate prospective field workers for work in these areas. Some of the topics covered are analysis of the existing village situations in terms of socio-economic, political, environmental, cultural and health aspects; poverty and its causes and alleviation; social change and development; people's organisations and their role and activities; role of the youth as change agents; self-development; grass-roots level workers and characteristics of organisers; case study of a poor family; health care; leadership development; skills development; project; project formulation etc.

151. In addition to the 9 day animators training, Supervisors and Instructors are put through a 21 day intensive orientation course. The main topics covered are: objectives of NFE programme; instructor and the tasks to be performed; growth and development of the child; learning conditions; slow learners; self-learning methods; single teacher schools; multiple class teaching in NFE centres; role of motivation in learning; need for content enrichment; use of teacher modules; approach to teaching difficult subject areas; study of the syllabus in languages and mathematics; problem solving; use of student modules and other instructional material; methods of teaching Telegu and mathematics; demonstration lessons; evaluation - its meaning and importance; teaching aids and their importance utilization of local resources for teaching and learning; importance of monitorial system etc.

152. Apart from the above two initial training programmes of a total duration of 30 days, a 24 day "Reorientation Training" is organized every year in two blocks. The first block comprises a 12 day centralised training at BCT's training centre at Haripuram and the second block is a decentralized activity of 12 days, one day each month, during the instructors monthly meeting where instructor's common difficulties are analysed and remedies developed. It thus appears that an elaborate training programme has been designed and directed to meet the specific and felt needs of a non-formal education delivery system.

Assessment and Potential

153. This assessment of the "Experimental and Innovative project for imparting Non-Formal Education" is based on a visit to the Administrative Office of the BCT at Yellamanchili, where the acting Project Director Dr.K.U.K. Vijayendra Babu, who also heads the Resource Cell of the Project with his other colleagues (E.Os and A.E.Os) briefed about project activities, responded to various queries and provided clarification on many issues raised during the discussion. Two NFE centres, located in remote and backward areas were visited to observe teaching/learning activities on the spot. A night halt at the Training centre at Haripuram and two detailed meetings the next day with Supervisors and Instructors respectively provided valuable insight and experience regarding problems and how they are being dealt with through innovative approaches. Formal evaluation, found, was neither attempted nor was feasible in the limited time and absence of valid tools.

154. One of the major strengths of the project is that, though a recent addition, it forms an integral part of a total programme of integrated rural development which is being run by the BCT for the past decade for rural poor and socially disadvantaged groups. The experiences gained and a congenial climate created through the implementation of other activities of other projects and a broad spectrum of expertise available within the BCT provide the much needed support for the success of the NFE project, where the clientele is mainly the rural poor, tribals and other backward classes.

155. In the case of a voluntary organisation like BCT which has been operating in the area since 1976-77, harnessing of community support has been relatively easy in motivating people to send their wards to NFE centres. The Mahila Mandal's have been of great help in this respect as also the local school committees and a group of trained animators.

156. Another factor contributing to the success of the project is that BCT, over the years, has built a credibility for itself and a legitimacy for its aims and modes of operation.

157. The BCT is fortunate in having a committed and dedicated leadership with a scientific bent of mind and empathy for rural poor and the disadvantaged population. They firmly believe in "self-sustained endogenous development" and the message passes down to the grass-root workers through a well trained group of animators.

158. BCT's past experience has shown that it is essential to motivate people, if not the entire population, then atleast a fraction of them to generate an environment conducive for acceptance and propagation of universalisation of primary education, using the non-formal education approach.

159. The NFE project has a very well planned administrative and organisational infrastructure which makes it possible to reduce to a minimum the transmission losses of the "intended actions" conceived by the Headquarter staff, to the perceived actions" as understood by supervisors to finally : "Implement actions" as undertaken by the Instructor in the actual class-room situations.

160. A research base provided by the Resource Cell through surveys to determine the size of the population to be covered, the location of the centres, identification of potential animators etc. has provided the project a sound planning programme.

161. Monitoring and evaluation of centres is being done by the Resource Cell in a scientific manner. Necessary data have been collected and analysed in all aspects such as enrolment and dropout patterns, student performance in examinations, centre location etc. Generally projects tend to neglect this

important aspect of utilizing feed-back from research studies for improvement of the programme.

162. The Resource Cell analysed the performance of students at examination conducted in February-March, 1992. The analysis, showed that examinations were conducted in 343 centres only; 81.70 per cent students appeared for the examination as against 62.2% in the previous year: 62.6% passed the examination as against 56.6% of previous year. There was an increase of 11.2% in terms of girls appearing in the examinations; the percentage of girls passed in the examination was more than that of boys (55.9% vs. 44.0%); 14.4% students secured above 70% marks, 18.2% above 60% etc. This data clearly shows the progress made by the project since its inception.

163. The involvement of other voluntary organisations to become equal partners in managing and implementing the project has a distinct advantage. These agencies are more familiar with ground situations and cultural socio-economic conditions of their area and can implement the programme more effectively.

164. The training programme for animators is a very useful idea and can be shared with other organizations engaged in NFE programme. It would be a good idea if BCT could organise some training programmes for the "Trainers of Animators".

165. The initial orientation training programme for Supervisors and Instructors is very comprehensive and well designed. However, based on discussions with Supervisors and Instructors and observing actual teaching/learning situation in the field, it is felt that the duration of 21 days for such a programme is too short and too much is being attempted within a short period with the result that the desired competencies are not fully developed. Additional emphasis on content matter (subject matter of primary school syllabus), is needed. This appeared to be a weak point.

166. The lack of suitable teaching/learning materials and aids needs attention. Even a good chalk-board could help a teacher to make his class room teaching more interesting.

167. As the centres function during night, proper lighting arrangements pose a real problem. In the centre visited it was very difficult for children to see clearly what was written on the chalk-board or even in reading their books. Some urgent action is needed in this regard.

168. The cultural activities (songs, skits, etc.) were found to be a good strategy to attract students and help them concentrate on their academic subjects which generally follow these activities.

169. Selection of suitable instructors is a very important task. "commitment" versus "competence" is a difficult question to decide. Perhaps a judicious combination of both will need to be attempted, as ultimately it is the "instructor" who is the main organiser of class-room instructions and what a child will learn will depend most on his/her effort.

7. MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT

1. As has been indicated in the description and assessment of projects, in most of them materials development is an essential element. Apart from adapting the materials already available, attempts have been made to develop new materials in relation to the specific requirements of the projects. In this section, we discuss three projects which emphasize materials development;

- Experimental and Innovative Programme for Education at the Elementary Stage: Centre for Learning Resource, Pune.
- Diffusion of Educational Innovation from Micro to Macro: Eklavya Foundation, Bhopal.
- Abacus Project, Avethi Public Charitable (Educational) Trust, Bombay.

CENTRE FOR LEARNING RESOURCES, PUNE

1.(A) The Centre for Learning Resources (CLR), Pune, established in 1984, is engaged in educational improvement and innovation at pre-primary and elementary stages. The Centre has developed low cost innovative instructional materials in various curricular areas, the target group being children of the age-group of 3 to 14 years, belonging to socially and economically backward sections of society. The Centre does not work directly with children but provides qualitative inputs by way of consultancy, training and learning materials. In this endeavour, the CLR collaborates with government and voluntary organisations working at the grass-root level.

2. The main objective of the CLR is to introduce educational innovation and change at the class-room level and thereby improve the quality of education in urban and rural schools and non-formal programmes. The scope of its activities includes:

- in service training of rural and urban teachers, balwadi workers, field-level supervisors, social workers and teachers trainers;
- designing, production and distribution of low cost learning and instructional materials for urban and rural children
- development and production of training materials for teachers, balwadis and anganwadi workers and teacher trainers;
- consultancy and other academic inputs to educational programmes/projects of schools, non-government organisation and government institutions.
- awareness-raising exhibitions for parents and adults.

3. The Centre received financial assistance from the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, for the project "Experimental and Innovative Programmes for Education at the Elementary Stage including Non-Formal Education", for the period 1988 to 1992. The Project was also funded by

Child Relief and You (CRY), a voluntary organisation.

4. As already stated, the CLR acts as a support organisation to voluntary agencies and government. Many voluntary organisations maintaining balwadis and non-formal education centres in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Delhi have benefitted from the Centre by way of in-service training of their supervisory staff and use of educational inputs. The training is designed according to the needs of individual organisation and is participatory in nature. Moreover, approach is pragmatic with emphasis on making and using low cost teaching-learning materials. The training period is spaced out so as to allow for implementation and feedback in between the sessions. Usually the duration of training is 9 to 10 days. The supervisory staff is trained at Pune and they, in turn, train the staff under their charge at their places of work.

5. During 1989 and 1992, the CLR conducted a number of training programmes for both government and non-government organisations. The teachers of Pune Municipal Corporation schools were imparted training with a view to improve the teaching and learning of mathematics in standards I (20 schools in 1989-90 and 100 schools in 1990-91) and II (20 schools in 1990-91), as well as for implementing the project 'Minimum Levels of Learning in Language and Mathematics' in Standard I (10 schools since 1991-92), in Raigarh District, Madhya Pradesh, and Baramati (1990-91) and Haveli Blocks (1991-92), Pune District. It also imparted training to Community Organisers (18 -1990-91) of the Andhra Pradesh Urban Basic Services Scheme, and resource persons (1991-92) in charge of the Total Literacy Programme in Raigarh District. Training programmes were also conducted for teachers of non-formal education and early childhood education centres and supervisory staff of anganwadis/balwadis run by various voluntary organisations, including those working in tribal areas in Maharashtra. The staff of the Education Cell (1989-90) of the Gram Vikas, Orissa, which maintains non-formal education centres for tribal children (5-15 age-groups) and selected staff of the Deepalaya Plan Project (1990-91), a community development organisation working in slum and resettlement colonies in Delhi, were also imparted training by the Centre.

Assessment and Potential

6. Over the years the CLR has developed innovative and low cost educational inputs for early childhood education, mainly with a view to prepare children of the disadvantaged families for subsequent schooling. The teachers' handbook entitled 'Helping Children Learn' describes the objectives and gives step-by-step directions for making and using 100 different learning aids and games. The picture supplement provides all the pictorial materials necessary to enable a trainee to design 60 activities and games instantly and cheaply by following the instructions in the handbook. In Pune, funds for making learning materials, guide book for teachers and pocket chart-cum-bag, costing about Rs.300/-, were obtained from the community.

7. As regards diffusion, the CLR participates in educational exhibitions in and outside Maharashtra for displaying educational materials for creating parent and teacher awareness. Instructional materials are disseminated through the Learning Tree Trust. The handbook and picture supplement for early childhood education is available in Hindi, English, Marathi, Gujrati and Telegu. In addition, the Centre has developed audio-visual materials in Marathi and English on environment, social studies, science and language development (for pre-primary schools). These have been developed with a view to promote environmental awareness and make education more relevant and value based. The guidebooks developed with slide module helps teachers to promote maximum interaction, discussion and analysis on the part of children instead of "learning by

heart' from text books. The Centre is running audio-visual materials lending library for primary and secondary school in Pune City. Training workshops for teachers on the use of audio-visual aids are also held to popularise the scheme. For its services, the CLR charges nominal fees from participant agencies.

8. As regards the project "Minimum Level of Learning (MLL)", the emphasis is on improving the quality of learning in key curricular areas of language and mathematics (Class-I) through in service training of teachers, provision of supplementary low-cost teaching learning materials and continuous evaluation. A pocket chart-cum-storage bag is given to each teacher for use in a class room.

EKLAVYA FOUNDATION, BHOPAL, MADHYA PRADESH

9. Two voluntary organisations, Friends Rural Centre (Rasulia) and Kishore Bharati, initiated the Hoshangabad Science Teaching Programme in 1972. Since 1992, Eklavya has been providing academic support to the programme. It covers 13 districts in Madhya Pradesh through seven field centres in Dewas, Dhar, Harda, Hoshangabad, Piparia, Ujjain and coordination and planning centre at Bhopal. Eklavya has evolved innovative curriculum, teaching methodology, and educational materials for teaching of science and social science to students of standards VI, VII and VIII. An innovative primary school programme (classes I to V) commenced from 1987. Science popularisation and environment activities are also undertaken.

10. Presently, the core group of the Eklavya consists of 50 full time workers consisting of scientists, social scientists, linguists, psychologists, educationists and school teachers. Apart from these, a large number of people are associated with various programmes on voluntary basis. Full time workers are located at field centres.

11. Between 1982 and 1985, Eklavya received financial assistance from the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, and the Madhya Pradesh Government. During 1987-90, the programmes were funded by the Ministry of Human Resource Development and the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India.

12. Eklavya attempts to make a "significant change in the quality of teaching materials, teacher training and evaluation, creating awareness, conviction and motivation amongst administrators, teachers, parents and the public in general to change the quality of education available to children". The aim is to "create a situation in which children can be more active, participative, intellectually stimulated and creative". Its activities include: Hoshangabad Science Teaching Programme(HSTP), Social Science Programme(SSP), Primary School Programme(PSP), Environment and People's Science Movement(EPSM), Library and Publications(L & P). Innovative education programmes are implemented in government and private schools.

13. HSTP was initiated in 1972 in 16 middle schools in Hoshangabad District on an experimental basis. The programme was extended to all the middle schools of the district in 1978. Presently, the programme is being implemented, in collaboration with the State Education Department, in about 500 middle schools covering 14 school complexes spread over 13 districts of Madhya Pradesh. The salient features of the programme are "activity", experiments, discussions, field trips and environment based learning". The pedagogical principles involved in the programme are: "to develop an ability to acquire and analyse information, perform experiments to develop motor skills in children, encouraging questioning attitude, utilisation of the environment and experiences of the child, emphasis on methodology of science as against content of science, participatory mutual learning etc."

14. Under this programme, instructional packages, including text-books, teacher's guide and kit, have been developed. The State Government provides

science kits and other materials developed by Eklavya to schools. It also supports financially the involvement of teachers in the programme. "Chakmak", a monthly science magazine for children, contains information on science topics. Eklavya has formed a group of resource persons from among the teachers for imparting training to other teachers. Resource persons are given initially, 3 weeks' training during summer vacation, which is followed by periodic refresher courses and monthly meetings. The "Hoshangabad Vigyan" magazine enables teachers to share their experiences and also to get ideas from the core group of Eklavya. An interesting feature of the programme is the "Sawali-Ram" which provides answers to children's questions. It was reported that under the programme 80 to 100 letters are received from children in a month.

15. The HSTP was recently evaluated by an Evaluation Committee constituted by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. The Committee has already submitted the Report (March, 1991). Its findings are that the HSTP is "moving in the right direction and the pedagogic principles are sound". However, it has suggested certain improvements in the programme such as re-consideration of the curriculum, its linkage with the curriculum followed in classes IX and X, over-emphasis on the "process" aspect at the cost of the "Product" (facts of science) aspect, etc. It has recommended expansion of the programme throughout the State in a planned and phased manner.

16. The innovative SSP is presently being implemented in 9 schools - 6 in Hoshangabad District, 2 in Dewas District and one in Bhopal - in classes VI to VIII on experimental basis. It covers topics on History, Geography & Civics. Emphasis is on "developing skills of historical analysis, comparative studies, application of principles". The curriculum has been developed on the principles that (a) it should relate to the life of the child; (b) develop in him/her understanding of the present society; (c) develop certain basic skills such as map reading and making, comprehending and analysing information etc. and (d) develop certain values in the context of the prevalent social conflicts. Revised curriculum for classes VI to VIII has been developed. Innovative learning methods have been evolved which ensure better comprehension. Intensive training programmes for teachers are held and feed-back from teachers is utilised for revising the text books. An alternative evaluation system and open book examination system, have been evolved for the subject in the programme schools. The programme is being developed for expansion in more schools.

17. PSP was implemented in July 1987 in 7 government schools, 4 in Shahpur and 3 in Harda, on an experimental basis. The programme has been extended to 25 schools, 16 in tribal areas of Betul District and 9 in Hoshangabad District. The curriculum developed for these classes aims at developing motor skills in a child, besides skill of observation, expression, drawing, writing, numeracy etc., through a variety of activities such as story telling, singing, dancing, playing simulated games etc. Work-books ("Khushi-Khushi") have been developed for these classes, mainly on the basis of field experience and in cooperation with resource teachers. These aim at achieving interaction between the learner, teacher and learning materials, besides tapping the creative potential of children. Moreover, learning takes place through participation rather than by memorisation of numbers and paradigms.

18. Teacher training is an essential part of the system. Workshops for teachers are held from time to time to train them in methodology. Monthly meetings of teachers are held to solve difficulties faced by them in implementing the programme. These also help to provide feed-back from teachers. Teachers are provided with education kits, such as cards for language and maths., crayons, colours, papers, wooden blocks, dice etc. Besides, they are trained to design learning-teaching materials from locally available materials. Evaluation procedures to test skills and understanding in areas such as language, arithmetic, manual, etc. have been designed. Eklavya is developing a model for innovative primary education for further expansion at macro level.

19. Over the years, Eklavya has developed and organised a number of activities with the broad objective of "furthering a rational, cultural and scientific outlook". These include: a net-work of libraries for children and adults, organising "Bal Melas", scientific exhibitions and slide shows, jathas on environment and social issues, etc. Orientation workshops, both for children and adults, attempt to develop skills in art, craft, and cultural activities. Children's activity centres for conducting science experiments, clay modelling, painting, etc., function at various field centres. A net-work of "Chakmak" clubs for children have been set up. Moreover, local youth clubs perform street plays, organise work-shops and hold exhibitions on socio-political issues, 'Kabir Manch' is a forum for bringing together under-privileged groups in society for their advancement. Several booklets have been published for popularising science. Eklavya has a technical workshop at Harda which designs and produces educational toys as well as science teaching kits.

Assessment and Potential

20. The team visited Government Primary School in Pathai Village, Betul District, about 75 kms. from Hoshangabad. It is a tribal area inhabited by Gond and Korcu communities. The school has a small building consisting of two rooms. The enrolment in classes I to V was 107 - 44 girls and 63 boys. Average daily attendance varied from 50 to 60 per cent. The school has 3 female teachers. Teachers expressed satisfaction over the implementation of the innovative programme as it was flexible and calls for initiative on the part of the teacher. Thereafter, discussion with teachers and supervisors was held in Pattawara Village. It was reported that tribal children take longer time in learning language (Hindi) because of the transition that they have to make from the local dialect. Moreover, work-books developed by the Eklavya have some deficiency as compared to text-books followed in regular schools. It was reported that efforts are being made to bridge the gap. It was also mentioned that transfer to teachers in between the session creates problems as the new teacher has to acquire a knowledge of the techniques and skills of the innovative programme. Teachers expressed resentment at the orders issued by the State Government by virtue of which eleventh pass students in the village can evaluate the work of primary schools. At Government Middle School in Jasalpur Village, Hoshangabad District, the team saw the implementation of the innovative programme on social science (standard VIII). Participation of students was ensured through questions and answers. Discussions with resource teachers (science teachers of middle schools) were held at the Girls' High School at Hoshangabad. They had come to attend the monthly meeting. The topic in which information was given related to the anatomy of the stem. The team held discussions with the teachers. Teachers generally appreciated the approach to science teaching developed by the Eklavya as it is practical and action-oriented. It was reported that the science equipment was being used rarely for fear of breakage. The need for timely replacement of consumables was also stressed. It was pointed out that administrative procedures continue to be a major impediment in translating the "intended curriculum" into an "operational curriculum" Besides, teachers face difficulty in attending training courses due to administrative bottlenecks viz., release of teachers for training, delay in payment of travelling and daily allowances for attending meetings/workshops, etc. A view was expressed that for implementing the innovative science programme effectively, a nominal fee may be charged from each student for purchasing science kits, etc.

21. Dissemination of the programme is ensured through various publications (periodicals, booklets), exhibitions, posters, etc. Eklavya staff also partici-

pates in workshops for training science teachers in other States. Besides, awareness about Eklavya's activities is also created through monthly newsletters, which are addressed to newspapers, organisations and individuals/groups interested in the programme.

22. Over the years the attitude of the State administration towards Eklavya's basic philosophy, modes of working and the materials produced seems to have undergone some change. This change is likely to affect the availability of resources for carrying out the work with extended coverage. In fact, unless Eklavya is able to obtain permanent funding, it might find it difficult to retain the professional staff which it has recruited over the years. At present this staff is paid out of the project support that Eklavya receives from different sources.

23. An important point which emerged from the discussion is the absolute importance of administrative support for innovation and its diffusion in the system. Without an appreciation on the innovation on the part of the administrative system, it would be difficult to bring about change in the existing procedures and practices. It is, therefore, absolutely essential that the educational decision makers and those responsible for implementing decisions at various levels of administration are made aware of the significance of innovation for making the system more effective and efficient.

AVEHI PUBLIC CHARITABLE EDUCATIONAL TRUST, BOMBAY

24. AVEHI is an independent society founded under a Trust, the AVEI Public Charitable (Educational Trust). Its aims and objectives are "to provide non-formal education and instruction in a broad sense to the general public". AVEHI has build a resource centre and lending library of audio-visual educational materials and aids. Its service charges are nominal. ABACUS is a project for production of a package of educational materials for children in the age-group 8 to 12 years (standards III to VII). The project is funded by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

25. The objectives of the ABACUS Project are :-

- (a) helping a child to evolve a framework of values and learning strategies to cope creatively with the rapidly expanding world of knowledge and to make him/her aware of himself, his/her environment and the relationship between the two;
- (b) to enable a child to appreciate the diversity of cultures and to live together with others in mutual goodwill and understanding;
- (c) to develop a complete package of methods and materials covering nine subject areas viz., (i) Our Needs (food, shelter, clothing, water air, health, education and work), (ii) Earth's Resources (origin of the earth, life on earth, the web of life and underground resources), (iii) Production Process, (iv) Natural Environment (v) Models of Development, (vi) Change and Progress (vii) The Rhythm of Life, (viii) Who Am I ? and (iv) India; and
- (d) Preparation of teacher's handbook and resource cards.

26. The staff for the project consists of both full time and part time resource persons. Besides the Project Director, Programme Officer, Coordinator, Office Secretary (part time) and two Office Assistants (part time) several curriculum and material development teams work on the project. Each team consists of one Art/Craft person and other with verbal training skills. In addition, resource persons such as content specialists, artists/designers, writers and theatre persons are also involved in designing audio-visuales. ABACUS has set up an office in a Municipal Corporation School in Bombay.

27. Before implementing the programme, orientation of teachers was

undertaken by the Facilitator. So far only one training programme has been held. Each session lasts 90 minutes (3 periods) continuously in a week. This involves introduction of the topic through games/discussion/demonstration, followed by a structured audio-visual presentation. The next step is discussion on the topic between the facilitator and learners, followed by activity stage when children work individually or in groups to express themselves through clay modelling, skits, drawings, poems, stories etc. Thereafter class presentation of activity by each group takes place and is followed by summing up and evaluation by the teacher. A Film on Food, covering all the above mentioned stages was shown to the team.

Assessment and Potential

28. Although actual work on the project commenced from June 1990, the preparatory work viz., assembling of a core team, contacting resource persons, designing of session plans, preparation of audio-visual aids, contacting Education Department of the Bombay Municipal Corporation, etc. was initiated from the beginning of 1990. Presently, the project is being implemented in two municipal schools (Hindi medium) in Bombay as an experimental project. Session plans and materials on 5 topics, involving 30 sessions, relating to Our Needs viz., food, shelter, clothing, water and air, have been completed. Kits have been developed for one topic for 6 class room sessions, only. Moreover, teacher's manual has been developed on 'Bazaar' and Food. Work on reference cards has yet to begin.

Assessment and Potential

29. ABACUS is a project for production of educational materials for children of the age-group 8-12 years (classes III to VII) and is meant for both formal and non-formal systems of education. Although the materials have not been based on school curriculum, they are designed with a view to supplement and enrich children's knowledge. Materials are designed keeping in view different socio-economic backgrounds of the children, thus ensuring effectiveness of the package in different situations. The kit on teacher's manual developed on food has been tested by several organisations, Mobile Creches, Bombay (children of construction workers), Vatsalya (a project of Nirmala Niketan College of Social Work, Bombay - working with street children), Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action, Bombay (working with children living in slums), Doorsteps (a project of Nirmala Niketan College of Social Work - children working as rag pickers). It was reported that response from all these organisations had been encouraging.

30. ABACUS has developed/collected various resource material such as flip charts, pop-up books, folded paper aids, television box, flannelograph, puppets, models, pocket aid, charts/poster books/magazines, card games, board games, toys, masks for role play, models of houses, pop-ups of different types of houses, television box on homes, mobile for "Needs", cards for food game, playcards of different vendors for "Bazaar" game, etc. However, multiplication of the materials has been held up because of paucity of funds.

31. It was reported that shortage of funds has deaccelerated the progress of the project. Besides, long series of holidays in schools from September, 1990 onwards, followed by census activities, examination, etc., delayed the project. Regular work in schools commenced from June, 1991. It was also reported that proposals submitted by ABACUS in September, 1991 had not been approved by the Ministry till the date of the visit. Consequently further experimentation with materials and ideas on prototype kits has been held up. Only one training workshop for teachers was conducted. It was reported that there was a demand

for such programmes from Marathi medium schools also. Because of the shortage of funds such a venture could not be undertaken. Besides duplication of kits has also been held up. Work on reference cards has yet to commence. In short, the work has not proceeded as scheduled.

32. It was reported that response to the programme from children, teachers and authorities had been very encouraging. Moreover, non-formal organisations have commended the programme and are using the kits for non-formal education. However, visits to the schools could not be undertaken due to closure of schools on account of Ganesh Festival.

33. ABACUS is nurtured by AVEHI which is an established institution having essential infrastructure for promotion of the audio-visual programmes. ABACUS intends to build up and organise audio-visual materials in the resource centre for planned dissemination and designing orientation and training programmes for teachers. It is also envisaged that the project should eventually become an integral part of the school system.

8. OTHER PROJECTS

The project which does not strictly fit into the categories, discussed earlier, includes:

School Health Education:
Foundation for Research in community health,
Bombay.

THE FOUNDATION FOR RESEARCH IN COMMUNITY HEALTH, BOMBAY

1. The Foundation for Research in Community Health (FRCH), Bombay was established in 1975 as research Institute for health care. Over the years, it has gained extensive experience in health education for rural adults. The Foundation implemented a four year project "School Health Education (SHE)" from September, 1988 with financial assistance from the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. The staff employed for the project consists of one Project Investigator (Research Officer), one Teacher Coordinator, One Artist, one Project Assistant and one Translator.

2. The project was basically intended and designed to evolve a replicable model of health education in schools. The main objectives were:

- (a) to impart correct knowledge about health and disease to teachers and through them to students and in the process develop simple innovative teaching methods, experiments, demonstrations, visuals, etc.
- (b) to remove fear about health and illness;
- (c) to encourage teachers and students to take active interest in their own body and its health, community health and environment;
- (d) to help them know about existing health services, how best they can be utilised, deficiencies therein, participation in various national health programmes and avoiding indiscriminate use of medicines; and
- (e) to produce manuals on school health education for teachers and students.

3. The Foundation initially implemented a pilot project on health education in a suburban school (classes V and VI) in Bombay for two years (December 1987 to December 1989) in order to get first hand experience of teaching health education to children. The team consisted of a medical doctor and a school teacher. This provided the base for developing curriculum, designing teaching materials and conducting teachers training programmes for health education. Finally, the Project "School Health Education" was implemented in 34 Schools - 20 rural schools in Shahapur Taluka, Thane District and 14 urban schools in

suburban Bombay. In all about 1,467 students of standard V and VI - 656 rural and 811 urban benefitted from the programme. One period in a week was allotted to the programme.

4. A curriculum guide has been developed after discussion with teachers, principals, educationists and research institutions. It tries to give empirical knowledge of health and health perspective. Topics for standard V include introduction to health education, human body, nutrition, social health, respiratory problems digestive problems, teeth, skin and personal responsibilities and for standard VI social health, nutrition, skin, immunisation (measle, diphtheria, polio, tetanus), blood, malaria, eye, ear and first aid. The curriculum aims at developing self-awareness, self help, independence and scientific attitudes. Emphasis is also laid on preventive and curative measures and the use of simple medicines. Topics relate to real life experiences.

5. Training programmes were conducted for both urban and rural school teachers separately for two days in a month. In all 24 training sessions were held in a year for each category. In addition, three workshops, of two days' duration each, were also organised for teachers in which both categories of teachers participated. The first workshop was planned and designed by the research staff of the Foundation, whereas the remaining two were planned according to the teachers' feedback and needs. These workshops provided opportunities for teachers to share their experiences and discuss problems faced in the implementation of the programme. During training, teachers are equipped to conduct routine and simple health check-up and treatment of common ailments with simple remedies. They are given training in designing simple educational kits from locally available materials for use in the class-room. During the training sessions, they are provided with lesson-notes which are exhaustive. Later teachers prepare their own lesson notes taking into consideration the local situation and are required to keep record of each lesson in their note-book.

Assessment and Potential

6. During team's visits to 3 urban and 3 rural schools it was observed that both students and teachers take active interest in the programme. Audio-visual aids such as posters, pictures, charts and models were used by teachers as adjuncts to lessons. Printed charts were provided by the Foundation and the rest were locally made by teachers and students. During the course of a lesson students asked questions which indicated their interest in the subject. Students had made models of human body and also of different organs using raw materials like clay, paper, pulp, cow dung, etc. Foundation had provided T-shirts with anatomy (painted with organs) and other printed materials to each school. Materials on health education, made by teachers, students were displayed in the class-room. They included charts, models, poems, skits, calendar, 'Dhashta - Pushta' (wall paper with pictures, songs and stories in Marathi), etc. Competition for preparing health calendars was reportedly organised for children by the Foundation. It received one hundred calendars, out of which 20 were awarded prizes. Each teacher has been provided with medical kit/first aid box containing some basic medicines for common illness and first-aid equipment. Besides, they are trained to conduct health check-up to screen children ailments/defects and to arrange for referrals. Reportedly sex education was imparted to students in one rural school after discussions with villagers and teachers. 'Hitgaj' (teachers' newsletter) provides on-going training as well as a communication platform for teachers.

7. Evaluation is conducted through written examination of teachers, on the spot assessment of teaching and learning, essays, group discussions, making of teaching aids, simulation exercises during teachers training sessions, pupil achievement tests, feed back from teachers and students, etc. For the purpose,

observation check-lists have been prepared by the Foundation. Evaluation conducted by the Foundation revealed that performance of women teachers was better than men teachers and rural teachers tended to do better than the urban teachers.

8. During discussions with teachers and villagers it transpired that the programme was helpful in creating proper attitude for hygiene in students and through them in the community. Students, through their training, become efficient transmitters of knowledge about improved health practices. It was reported that in a schools text-books discuss health in a very disjointed manner and health check-ups are generally perfunctory. Awareness about health programmes is created among villages through 'prabhat-pheris' by children with playcards and slogans and meeting with parents. Besides, teaching aids are exhibited in schools. At present, health education is taught as an additional subject in class V and VI in selected schools only. A view was expressed that the subject needs to be integrated with the science curriculum.

9. The Foundation is currently finalising manuals on health education for both teachers and children.

10. The Foundation has already submitted a proposal to replicate the programme on the basis of experience already gained, the proposal is to cover 300 schools in 12 talukas of 6 districts in Maharashtra, including non-formal component in 10 villages. One of the aims is to study and suggest as to how health education can be integrated with the present curricula. In view of the achievements already recorded, support for the proposed project would be desirable.

9. OVERALL ASSESSMENT AND OBSERVATIONS

PROJECT ASSESSMENT

1. There are a few observations that the team would like to make at the very outset. They have significance in the context of sanctioning similar projects in future.

2. The first concerns the status of the organisation-in terms of the duration for which it has been in existence and operating in the area, and the competence it has in undertaking experimentation innovation. As regards the life of the organizations, the team found that quite a few had been registered under Societies Registration Act, between 1987-89. The assistance from the Ministry commenced from 1989. The period for which an organisation has existed is significant from the point of view of the experience that it has gained, the legitimacy that it has acquired in the community and the credibility and appreciation for its work that it has generated. It would seem that direction has been used in sanctioning grants in the case of some organisations and projects sanctioned or extended on grounds other than their experience.

3. The second significant point refers to the competence of the organisation and its functionaries to deal with innovative projects and/or undertake experimentation in a complex area like education where many variables intervene. As stated earlier, the present mechanism for processing proposals do not seem to allow a precise determination of the competence of an organisation to implement an innovative project. Apart from the fact that membership of a grants-in-aid committee considering the proposal might be predominantly "official", the difficulty to assess the competence of an organisation arises from a lack of detailed information about it. The team was not able to conclusively determine whether any detailed analysis had been made of the competence of the organisations, particularly in terms of their resources of expertise for the project report. While commitment is important, it cannot substitute for professional competence in implementing innovative/experimental projects. A project has many aspects - administration, design of experiment, training of personnel, production of materials, monitoring and evaluation, etc. Unless an organisation has qualified personnel in these and other related fields, its competence to undertake innovative/experimental projects, can be suspect.

4. The third relates to the material resources of an organization, especially its financial resources. The availability of substantial financial resources with the organisation is important for the following reasons:

- the ability to finance elements of the project other than those that are supported by a grant which might be important for the success of the project.
- the ability to finance operations when releases of instalments are delayed which usually happens.
- the ability to carry on project activities, even those which have had beneficial impact, after the grants cease.

5. The strong impression that the team got from visits to project sites and discussions with personnel of voluntary organisations was that very few of them can fulfil the criterion of financial independence. It was observed that even organisations of long standing and with financial resources available from other sources, would find it difficult to sustain activities for which assistance is being given since their resources are often committed to activities which in their view have a higher priority. In the case of organizations, which have come into existence quite recently, even minor delays in release of grants create difficulties of immense magnitude. Many of the organisations are unlikely to carry on their operations when project assistance stops.

6. In order, therefore, to ensure that not only worthwhile projects are supported and that they are implemented by competent and experienced organizations, there is need for pre-project evaluation of organizations, particularly their resources. There should also be a professional assessment of projects with a view to determining their worthwhileness, coherence, internal consistency, conceptual clarity, etc. Such professional assessment might help in designing projects which provide more definitive data for drawing conclusions. The assessment could be ensured by :

- referral of projects to competent individuals for views.
- preparation of a shelf of projects, with the help of experts, and their allocation to competent voluntary organisations.

NATURE OF INNOVATION

7. The questions as to what constitutes an innovation and what should be the criteria for determining the innovative character of a proposal which the Ministry receives for financial and other support have often not been squarely dealt with. Consequently, projects are sanctioned without determining the extent of their "innovativeness".

8. The Thirteenth Regional Consultation Meeting on the Asia and Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (Jomtien, Thailand June 22 - 26, 1992) has defined an educational innovation thus :

"Educational innovation refers to an idea or practice new to a specific educational context that meets unsatisfied needs. It is the introduction or promotion of new ideas and methods that are devised in education and/or school practices which have a substantial effect on changing the existing patterns of behaviour of a group or groups involved. Innovative strategies imply the development of new ideas which are disseminated and utilised; they usually occur in response to particular problems".

9. The Regional Consultation Meeting suggested the following characteristic of an educational innovation:

- It introduces a new or novel element which deviates from existing structures and/or procedures and is oriented towards the values of the society.
- Its specific objective and/or purpose is relevant to the needs of the community and related to national development.
- It has potential for diffusion on a large scale and is renewable from time to time based on appropriate feedback and the context for adoption and adaptation.
- The innovative process should involve a scientific approach before being either accepted or discarded.
- During the experimental stage, an innovation should permit flexibility on the basis of monitoring and evaluation.
- It should be both cost and time effective communicable and able to be implemented in other parallel situations. Replicability, with or without

adaptation should be a criteria for innovativeness.

10. It is difficult to state categorically that all the proposals or a majority of them for that matter, were sanctioned on any systematic consideration of the above definition and criteria. The existing administrative structure does not seem always to allow a professional assessment of proposals on well defined criteria. Even the scheme does not lay down specific criteria of innovativeness for which proposals would be considered for support.

SIGNIFICANT FACTORS PROMOTING INNOVATION

11. What are the factors which lead to, what might be called the culmination of innovations? In other words, why do some innovations succeed while many fail to fructify? Although this is not an important objective for the team's evaluation, it will like to make a few key observations so that they are kept in view while considering proposals for financial and other support.

12. It would seem that the major factors that affect the possibility of innovative projects succeeding include:

- a realistic assessment of the situation, particularly the needs of the communities and their receptiveness to new ideas and practices.
- credibility of the organisation which depends upon long years of its dedicated work in a community.
- legitimacy and worthwhileness of the proposed actions which should not be seen, at least initially, as disruptive of community's organisation and life styles.
- financial and manpower resources of the organisation which are of particular significance in poor and underprivileged communities where supplementary and complementary action, not provided for in project support, might be needed.
- competence, commitment and ability to innovate on the part of personnel, particularly those who are expected to implement project activities at the field level.
- administrative support of those whose decisions/actions affect the implementation of the projects, particularly at lower levels of administration where appreciation of the significance of innovation may be lacking.

REPLICABILITY

13. An important term of reference for the team was the assessment of the potentiality of the experiences of various projects being multiplied. The possibility of systematic adoption of approaches, the utility of which has been demonstrated should, in fact, be an acid test of innovation/experimentation and support for it. While it has been emphasised as an essential objective of the projects supported by the Government, most of the innovations seem to fail to be incorporated in the system, which result from two broad categories of factors:

- those that are inherent to the innovative/experimental projects
- those which are part of the system which innovative projects aim at transforming.

14. The factors inherent in innovative/experimental projects seems to stem from the fact that:

- these projects are implemented in what might be termed as a contrived situation which might always not be similar to the situation where they have to be incorporated on a large scale.
- the financial inputs provided for experimental/innovative projects are generally larger than are available/affordable on per capita basis in the larger system.
- the personnel available are generally more committed to the success of the project and often with superior expertise than is the case in the system.
- monitoring and supervision of activities is both regular and closer than is found in the system as such
- the innovation generally deals with/manipulates a few elements in an isolated manner rather than effect a large scale change by dealing with/manipulating diverse elements of a total situation with the result that the nature of complementarities and mutual reinforcement is always not in evidence which would provide guidance for a systemwide use.

15.The factors which are part of the system and which adversely affect adoption of innovation would seem to include:

- system's preference for, what might be termed as, approaches which are of "universal applicability" than the distinctive strategies for change which have resulted from innovative/experimental projects.
- general lack of financial and manpower resources for affecting systemwide incorporation of innovation.
- general preference for status quo rather than effect changes since such an attitude does not involve more work on the part of personnel at various levels and prevents uncertainty and the possibility of disruption which threatens the existing hierarchies, structures and relationships.
- lack of research and development effort for adaptation of the innovative approach to suit needs of the system.
- general lack of mechanisms for dissemination of information about innovation down the line.
- absence of systematic arrangements for training of personnel particularly at the grassroots level where elements of innovation have to be incorporated in the system
- lack of state support for innovation since the tendency in administration is not to rock the boat.

16.Both these categories of factors tend to affect not only adoption of innovation on a systemwide basis but also the rate at which the incorporation takes place. Education has always been characterised by inertia and inability to effect changes that would make it more flexible and relevant to societal needs. Lack of financial resources has, no doubt, adversely affected the motivation and willingness to change.

17.In its assessment of projects, the team has made general observations about the potentiality of each project, including the possibility of experiences being duplicated. The projects visited by the team seem fairly easy to replicate since no significantly complex elements have been built into them. The large number of projects are in the area of non-formal education where considerable experience is now available in respect of its diverse elements - community relationships, materials production, personnel training and so on. The major difficulty in replicating the strategies appears to be the system's willingness and ability to adopt new decision making processes. Financial resources to even modestly overhaul the system are another reason which seem to prevent adoption of new approaches. Above all fear of change accounts for a great deal of inaction. The major difficulty is that of overhauling the education system as

it has evolved. People find it easier to live and deal with it since the structures, hierarchies, tasks etc. are well defined and laid out. Any incorporation of changes much less the large scale transformation of the system, would require new modes of thinking and acting which few people are prone to refer.

18. The scheme provides for organisations to disseminate their experiences of the projects. The effort has neither been systematic nor regular. The project managers do bring out newsletters and handouts. These are generally in the nature of a cataloguing of important events - "like visits of dignitaries", rather than an analytical description of approaches at various projects sites, however, the need for mutual exchange of views and experiences was emphasised by the organisation time and again. One of the suggestions made was regular conferences of implementors of projects of a particular category. It was felt that, if held, such exchanges should not be confined only to "managers" of projects but also be promoted among supervisors and instructors. The scheme does not provide for such exchanges.

DISSEMINATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF STRATEGIES

19. The larger question of disseminating the experience to a wider public does not seem to have been considered at any level. Apart from the voluntary organisation which are being assisted there is a list of non-governmental organisations which might like to experiment with new approaches. It would be useful to bring out a publication not only on innovation discussed in this report but the approaches that are being adopted across the country. The task could be dealt with effectively by organisations like the National Council of Educational Research and Training, the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration. NCERT has been supporting and bringing out materials on innovations. It, however, seems that the definition and criteria adopted for identifying innovations have been somewhat restricted.

20. The mode to judge the effectiveness or otherwise of any educational experimentation/innovation, is to determine the extent of impact that has resulted from it will result from it on a more or less permanent basis - for instance, in the form of behavioural changes in the target group judged in terms for instance of responsiveness to new inputs and practices, willingness to experiment and take risks, discarding of dysfunctional practices and attitudes and so on. Considering the short time for which the voluntary organisations have been implementing projects, it is too much to expect that there would have been any radical change in community behaviours. The time that the team had at its disposal did not allow it to undertake a rigorously meticulous exercise to determine the "impact" of the projects. The lack of baseline data was a major handicap. While it is difficult to make definitive judgements as to what the projects have so far achieved, the discussion with community representatives indicated a greater awareness of new practices - for instance, in personal and social health and hygiene, family planning and welfare, women's role, upbringing of children, particularly of girls, etc.

21. As indicated earlier, the measurement of change could have been attempted in relation to the base-line data on communities, their life styles, behaviour patterns, social and economic practices, etc. Information in this respect is either not available or is in the form of "managers" personal impressions which, although valuable, do not help to determine the parameters of the socio-economic situation in which the voluntary organisation had to operate. One needs more precise data - collected through rigorously conducted, social, economic, anthropological and education surveys. It needs also to be recognized that determination of social change, which education attempts to bring about is not easy, partly because change can be incremental, spread out over a long time span and facilitated or retarded by a host of variables other than

those which are being manipulated.

22. While collection of data in respect of community context is always difficult, an attempt should have been made to determine the entry behaviour of children enrolled in non-formal education centres. This could be in terms of that they already knew and the skills like reading, writing and counting - that they already possessed. Not all projects have attempted to do it. No child who enters school is a clean slate on which anything can be written. There is a fund of knowledge and practices which he/she has acquired in the home and the neighbourhood. While it might not be possible for a child to use symbolic notations, children know how to count, add and subtract. They have accumulated substantial vocabulary. In some families, an attempt is also made to expose children to reading and writing.

23. Another difficulty in determining the impact, and its nature, arises from the near impossibility of isolating the effect of intervening variables. Communities - adults as well as children - are subject to numerous influences in the family and the neighbourhood, from media and other sources, which affect and often change behaviours. Unless the influence of these variables is isolated, even partially, it would be difficult to say whether the change has been effected by the experimental/innovative intervention. The lack of baseline data prevented even modest comparison of the communities before, midway and after the intervention. The team had very little time, to undertake detailed statistical analysis.

24. The manipulation of mutually reinforcing and supporting elements in community life could have ensured more or less a permanent change in community behaviour. Except for a few, where a multi-dimensional approach has been adopted, the projects have devoted themselves to single element intervention. For instance, in non-formal education projects, the focus has been on promoting reading, writing and counting skills, the relevance of which and the benefits from which may not be immediate and easily discernible. Without adequate competence on the part of instructors, non-formal education activity is more or less similar to what happens in class rooms of formal schools.

25. The economic activity, being of paramount significance in rural, tribal and slum communities, skill formation and transmission of knowledge on "appropriate" technologies, directly and immediately applicable to economic activities, would help in providing the needed support for activities which are non-economic in character. Without these inputs, educational inputs for instance, seem to have remained isolated and devoid of the community's perception of their relevance and utility to its main concerns. Without this perception, which would ensure support to children's continuous learning, the effects of educational activity might be difficult to sustain over a long period of time. There is need for follow-up studies to determine the extent to which children retain the skills that they have learnt in non-formal education centres.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

26. The team was unable to find evidence on the extent to which the organisations had been monitoring regularly their intervention strategies. There are few instances of their having modified their approaches with a view to meeting a new situation. The inability on the part of the organisations would seem to be partly due to the rigid pattern of expenditure, deployment of resources, evaluation criteria etc., which have been prescribed in the scheme. In the case of some organisations, as has been pointed out, in the team's impressions, this "rigidity affected the very innovativeness of the project".

27. Without adequate professional expertise, no worthwhile evaluation seems to have been undertaken of project approaches and the impact that has resulted. While the scheme formulated by the Ministry provides for it, it does not lay down any guidelines or procedures for evaluation which the organisations

could adopt. Evaluation by external evaluators, as provided for under the scheme is, no doubt, important as it brings into evaluation considerable objectivity and impartiality. However, evaluation by those who are actually implementing programmes should also be an important element, since it not only makes the implementors aware of the pitfalls of assuming the effectiveness of their strategies but also promotes experience which can be of use in undertaking more worthwhile projects.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON CATEGORIES OF PROJECTS

28. As indicated earlier, the projects, by their main emphasis, fall into five main categories:

- Surveys and Studies
- Education of the Disabled
- Non-Formal Education
- Materials Production.
- Others

The team would like to make a few observations on each of these categories, particularly from the point of view of determining their strengths and weaknesses.

Survey and Studies

29. The surveys are easier to replicate since considerable experience exists on conducting studies of communities. What is needed is professional expertise in formulating the design of the study and schedules which are to be used to obtain information on various facets of community life, meticulous administration of schedules and scientific analysis and interpretation of data. Objectivity, to the extent possible, has to be ensured. The team was not able to obtain information about the schedules that were used and the data obtained in respect of the survey conducted by the Legal Aid Society, Udaipur.

30. The other survey conducted in the villages of Udaipur had the objective of promoting among the people awareness of significant community issues and mobilising community opinion and action. In the process, information about some facets of community life was obtained which proved to be useful for initiating the process of bringing about change in community attitudes and practices. The innovative feature of this survey was the mobilising of communities to identify the problems and its source and determine and initiate action to remedy the situation. As pointed out earlier, the transformation brought about became possible, to a significant extent, by the availability, for the group involved, of administrative support from the State bureaucracy. Whether without similar resources, worthwhile change could have been brought about, is difficult to state with confidence unless the experience is replicated.

Education of the Disabled

31. Education of the disabled in an integrated setting is a relatively new area in Indian context. The disabled and their needs have remained generally a neglected area. Considering the numbers and categories of the disabled involved, there is need for much more extensive support for innovation and experimentation for identifying how the needs of the disabled can be effectively met without involving large scale expenditures which would be difficult to meet in the general scarcity of resources for educational development. Coordination

of effort among different agencies is called for. An area of investigation would consequently be as to how this coordination can be promoted.

32. It needs to be recognised that, in many ways, the needs and conditions of the disabled are different from other groups. Any scheme for supporting education of the disabled and/or promoting innovation/experimentation in this area should take note of these "differences". For instance, education of the disabled would need much larger support for infrastructure - such as suitable furniture, equipment to lessen the effect of the disability, workshops for vocational training etc., - than would be the case for other groups whose educational needs the Ministry's schemes expect to meet. These specific needs should be built into the programme of support that is provided.

Non-Formal Education

33. The support so far provided seems to be largely for what might be termed as the condensed version of formal schooling. Considerable experience exists in this respect. What is needed is to design non-formal education as an alternative strategy to promote universal coverage which does not necessarily be akin to what happens in classrooms of regular schools. There is for instance need to design curriculum for promoting competencies for functioning more effectively in communities. These may also include reading, writing and counting abilities. The system - if it might be regarded as a system - should not be designed, as seems to be the case, as a cheaper alternative.

34. In fact those for whom it is advocated - the economically and socially disadvantaged and the girls - need a much richer educational fare, since in their families and communities, there are fewer avenues and opportunities for cognitive stimulation. Education in their case should aim at reducing, if not completely eliminating, their handicaps. Programmes which compensate for the consequences of disadvantage should receive higher priority. Among other things, this requires the recruitment of professionally more competent personnel than is the case now. As stated earlier instructors/supervisors of non-formal education are confronted with a much more complex situation than an ordinary primary school teacher is in whose case the structure and functions are more or less well defined.

35. There is need to extend non-formal education both vertically as well as laterally. As regards vertical extension, non-formal elementary education must be regarded as a "stage" with other stages consisting of such arrangements for distance education as open school, open universities, correspondence courses, etc. for those who desire to follow this path. At the same time, the "formal" system's requirements must be made flexible to allow entry of students at different points. To facilitate this there is need for establishing accreditation and equivalency determination arrangements which need not be dictated by what is done in "formal" institutions. As regards lateral extension, there seem to be need for promoting many more competencies than mere reading, writing and counting skills. For instance, the knowledge and competencies required for improved production practices should receive much greater attention than has been the case so far.

36. The support to non-formal education continues to be lukewarm. Instead of being accepted as a strategy good in itself, it is being regarded as an alternative which has been forced by circumstances, much more a consequence of people's fault (being disadvantaged) rather than of the Government's failure to adequately cater to the interests and needs of those segments who have few resources to look after themselves. A facet of this lack of support came through in the discussions with some of the voluntary organisations who felt that, generally, the worthwhileness of their effort was not appreciated and that without support from local authorities (State and local administration) they

would have to discontinue their operations. Cheapness of the approach - remuneration of instructors for instance - should not be the main or major criterion to consider non-formal education as a strategy to promote universal elementary education. The Ministry should study the various dimensions of non-formal education.

Materials Production

37. A significant effort has been made in developing innovative materials. This effort needs to be promoted further. An important dimension would be the development of materials in relation to the competencies which children and communities should have in relation to community concerns. In non-formal education, the effort continues to be on condensation of what is available for schools. Innovative materials developed under projects supported by the UNICEF did not seem to have percolated down to project levels. The team did not, for instance, come across the use of materials which the National Council of Educational Research and Training had developed under its project Comprehensive Access to Primary Education. Community concerns which were predominant in the materials developed under the project, should remain the primary focus of non-formal education.

38. Most of the material available is in a written form: primers, instructional manuals, guidelines to supervisors, etc. There is need to extend the effort to design non-print materials for supporting and supplementing the effort. The video-materials telecast for primary school children should be of use and interest to children of non-formal education centres. The possibility of providing these materials to the centres - through the extension of Operation Blackboard - needs consideration.

39. The development of innovative materials has been undertaken in most of the projects visited by the team. With a distinctive perspective that each project has developed, the materials produced are unique and would be of considerable utility to other governmental and non-governmental organisations. The scheme should provide for the dissemination of materials on a wider scale. This would require financial support for editing and printing/duplicating of materials.

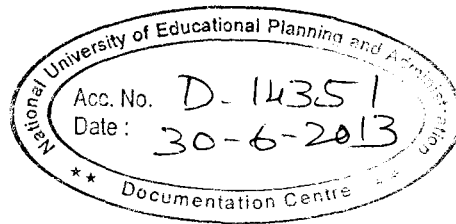
PROCEDURES

39. The team came across instances where releases of grants had been delayed - often for lack of information on a minor point. Considering that many of the voluntary organisations have few resources of their own, delay in receipt of grants puts the personnel - particularly the low-paid instructors and supervisors - in considerable difficulty. While correspondence with organisations will remain the principal means, it might be useful to consider visits to organisations by officials of the Ministry for settling various issues.

40. There is also need to consider the possibility of sanctioning grants for a much longer duration than two three years as is being done at the moment so that the voluntary organisations have an appropriate time frame to adopt for intervention strategies and gauge their consequences. It would also be useful to consider to build into the scheme of financial assistance considerable flexibility - for instance, in terms of diversion of funds within the scheme for items which emerge as needing immediate attention and resources. The system of sanctioning block grants could be considered in this respect.

41. As a general comment, the team would like to stress the need for institutionalising the decision-making process of the voluntary organisations. At present decisions are taken by what could be designated as the head of the

organisation. His/her perceptions of what should and needs to be done determines the nature of action that is taken. There should be a formal structure within the organisation for consideration of options.



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