

TOWARDS A LITERATE



NATIONAL LITERACY MISSION

Ministry of Human Resource Development
Government of India
New Delhi

TOWARDS A LITERATE INDIA

C O N T E N T S

Introduction	1
Brief history of adult education	2
Literacy scenario in India (1951-1991)	7
Factors constraining growth of literacy	13
Steps taken for eradication of illiteracy	14
National Literacy Mission (NLM)	15
NLM objectives	16
Literacy curriculum	17
Improved Pace and Content of Learning	18
Origin of the mass campaign approach	19
Characteristics of Total Literacy Campaign	21
Monitoring and Supervision	23
Evaluation	24
Achievement under National Literacy Mission	26
Impact of literacy campaigns on other programmes	28
Post literacy campaign	29
Continuing education for neo-literates - strategies for the future	31

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INTRODUCTION

India's multiplicity of institutions have ensured a smooth flow of knowledge from one generation to another. The quest for learning, evident in the Vedas, Upanishadas, Jataks and other mythological texts was further reinforced at ancient centres of learning like Nalanda, Takshashila and Vikramshila. Alongside flourished several forms of folk culture and tradition like kathas, kirtans, jatras, palas, daskathas and other forms of traditional performing and plastic arts.

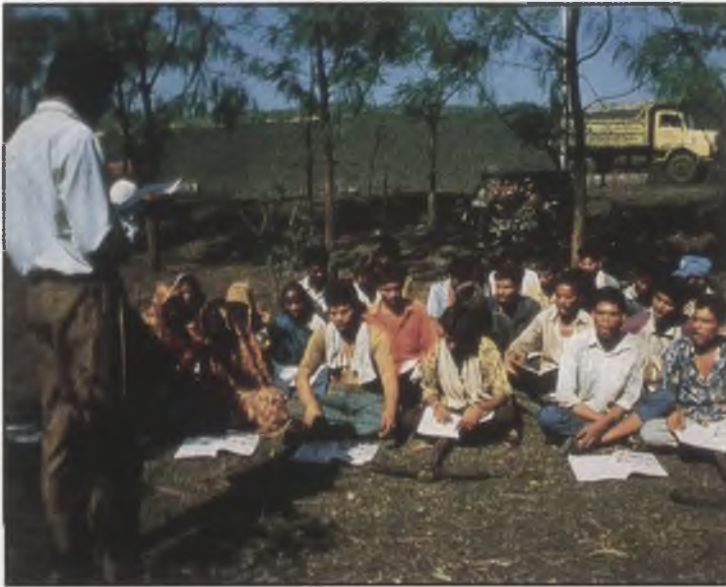
1.2 Over the years, the scenario has undergone a sea-change. The days of 'Sruti' are long over. Tremendous modernisation both in the means of communication as well as the content have imparted a new dimension to the entire process. Phenomenal information explosion and diversification in the means of communication have ensured dissemination of news relating to development and growth is not confined to a particular region.

1.3 While this is particularly evident in the more developed parts of the world, it is not so in the developing ones, where large cross-

sections continue to be illiterate. With hardly any access to information, modernisation and communication and virtually no access to the irreducible minimum survival tools, they remain helpless victims of poverty, deprivation and exploitation. The benefits of plans and programmes do not percolate to them and they remain cut-off from the mainstream.

1.4 Literacy, an important tool for communication, learning and information, is a virtual precondition for an individual's evolution and national development. Research studies on human cognitive development have established that literacy enhances the critical faculties and enables to reflect on the existential reality in which they have been placed. It promotes objectivity, capacity for clear perception, thought, logical and coherent analysis. It promotes a sense of history and helps combine individuality with universalisation. In this sense, literacy can be regarded as an inalienable fundamental right.

BRIEF HISTORY OF ADULT EDUCATION



2.1 Post-Independence India inherited a system of education which was characterised by large scale inter and intra-regional imbalances. The system educated a select few, leaving a wide gap between the educated and the illiterate. The country's literacy rate in 1947 was only 14 per cent and female literacy was abysmally low at 8 per cent. Only one child out of three had an opportunity for enrolment in primary schools. Educational inequality was aggravated by economic inequality, gender disparity and rigid social stratifications.

2.2 Eradication of illiteracy has been one of the major national concerns of the Government of India

since independence. The need for a literate population and universal education for all children in the age group 6-14 was recognised as a crucial input for nation building and was given due consideration in the Constitution as well as in the successive five year plans. A number of significant programmes have been taken up since Independence to eradicate illiteracy among adults. Some of the important programmes have included:

(i) Social Education

The main elements were literacy, extension, general education, leadership training and social consciousness. The programme was implemented in the First Five-Year Plan (1951-56).

(ii) Gram Shikshan Mohim

Movement for literacy in the rural areas was started in 1959 in Satara district of Maharashtra, and was later extended to other parts of the state. The programme aimed at imparting basic literacy skills within a period of about four months and by 1963, it

spread to all the districts of the state. The programme, however, suffered from a lack of systematic follow-up and consequently, relapse to illiteracy was massive.

(iii) Farmers' Functional Literacy Project

Started in 1967-68 as an inter-ministerial project for farmers' training and functional literacy, the project aimed at popularisation of high-yielding varieties of seeds through the process of adult education. The programme was confined to 144 districts of the country where nearly 8,640 classes were organised for about 2.6 lakh adults.

(iv) Non-formal Education

In the beginning of the Fifth Plan, a programme of non-formal education for 15-25 age-group was launched. Although the scope, content and objective of the non-formal project was clearly spelt out, its understanding in the field was very limited and the programmes actually organised

indistinguishable from the conventional literacy programmes.

(v) Polyvalent Adult Education Centres

Workers' Social Education Institutes and Polyvalent Adult Education Centres were reviewed by a group in 1977, which recommended adoption of Polyvalent Adult Education Centres in the adult education programme for workers in urban areas. In pursuance of this decision, Shramik Vidyapeeths were set up in the states.

(vi) Education Commission (1964-66)

The appointment of the Education Commission (1964-66) was a



significant event in the history of education in India. Among several measures, it recommended that high priority be accorded to ending illiteracy. It urged that adult education be promoted both through “selective” as well as “mass approach” and stressed on the active involvement of teachers and students and the wider use of the media for the literacy programme.



The Education Commission also stated that in the world of science and technology, the main objective should be to relate it to life, needs and aspirations of the people so as to make it an instrument of socio-economic and political change.

(vii) Functional Literacy for Adult Women (FLAW)

The scheme of Functional Literacy for Adult Women (FLAW) was started in 1975-76 in the experimental ICDS project areas. It was gradually expanded along with the expansion of

ICDS upto the year 1981-82.

Till then, 300 ICDS projects were approved. Sanctions were also given for FLAW scheme in these project areas. However, the Planning Commission decided to stop

the expansion of FLAW scheme in ICDS project areas mainly due to constraint of resources.

The aim of the FLAW scheme was to enable illiterate adult women to acquire functional skills along with literacy, to promote better awareness of health, hygiene, child-care practices and to bring about attitudinal changes. The target age group was 15-45, with greater attention to those in the 15-35 age group.

(viii) National Adult Education Programme (NAEP)

The first nation-wide attempt at eradication of illiteracy was made through the National Adult Education Programme launched on October 2,

1978. It was a massive programme which aimed at educating 100 million non-literate adults in the age group of 15-35 years within a time frame of five years.

The objectives of the National Adult Education Programme were not merely to impart literacy in the conventional sense, but also to provide learners with functional awareness which were conceived as three integral components of the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic. Functionality implied the ability to utilise and apply the skills acquired with a view to promote efficiency of the neo-literate. The social awareness component aimed at knowing, understanding and taking action on issues which affect the individual, community and society.

(ix) Rural Functional Literacy Project (RFLP)

This was a major centrally sponsored scheme started in 1978 for rural areas. The erstwhile 144 Farmers' Functional Literacy Projects and 60 Non-formal Education Projects were merged into it. Further, projects were added and the number of projects throughout the country in 1987 were 513, each having upto a maximum number of

300 adult education centres and each centre having 25-30 learners.

(x) State Adult Education Programme (SAEP)

The states also similarly took up centre based projects under the state plan funds on the lines of RFLPs.

(xi) Adult Education through Voluntary Agencies

To ensure greater participation of voluntary agencies, the Central Scheme of Assistance to Voluntary Agencies was revived in April 1982. Under this scheme, registered societies were sanctioned Centre-based projects for functional literacy and post literacy, where they were allowed to run projects in a compact area.

Review of the National Adult Education Programme

2.3 Intended to be a mass programme, the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP), however, remained a traditional centre-based programme, which was also honorarium based, hierarchical and government-funded and government controlled. As against the target of 100 million, a total of 44.22 million learners were enrolled in adult

education centres in different years upto March 1988. On the basis of sample evaluation studies, it has been estimated that only about 45 per cent of the enrolled learners attained literacy. Thus, the level of achievement of this programme in relation to the target set for it was only about 20 per cent. The centre-based programme was reviewed and evaluated by several institutes of social science research and later, the Government of India also appointed a review committee headed by Prof. D.S. Kothari to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the programme. The strengths and weaknesses of the NAEP as revealed through various evaluation studies are summarised below:

Strengths

- * Women's motivation and participation had been high;
- * Coverage of weaker sections of the society (SCs and STs) was higher than the target;
- * The project approach to management adopted for adult education programme is feasible;
- * The quality of teaching-learning materials prepared by the National Resource Centre and the State Resource Centres was found to be positive;

- * The programme worked well where special recruitment procedures were adopted.

Weaknesses

- * Quality of training of the functionaries was poor;
- * The learning environment in the adult education centres was poor;
- * Mass media did not provide appreciable support;
- * Voluntary agencies did not receive willing co-operation from State Governments. The existing procedures for their involvement were discouraging.
- * There was no linkage between basic literacy, post-literacy, follow-up and continuing education, resulting in the relapse of large number of neo-literates into illiteracy;
- * Achievement levels of literacy were below the desired level;
- * Training of adult education functionaries at all levels lacked participatory and communicative techniques;
- * Political and administrative support of the State Governments and the Panchayati Raj institutions was not forthcoming.

LITERACY SCENARIO IN INDIA (1951-1991)

3.1 Accomplishments since Independence in 1947 in terms of literacy, spread of institutions, participation and equalisation of educational opportunities have been quite significant. There has been phenomenal increase in the number of educational institutions, faculties, in teachers and students. The number of

teachers has gone up five-fold and the number of schools three fold. Literacy rate has nearly trebled. The decennial census, 1991, saw India cross the 50 per cent mark, achieving the literacy rate of 52.21 per cent. The table below is an indication as to how the literacy rate has increased over the four decades since 1951:

Literacy Rate - India: 1951 - 1991

Year	Persons	Male	Female
1951 ¹	18.33	27.16	8.86
1961 ²	28.31	40.40	15.34
1971 ³	34.45	45.95	21.97
1981 ⁴	43.56	56.37	29.75
	(41.42)	(53.45)	(28.46)
1991 ⁵	52.21	64.13	39.29

PCA 1961 Part II - A (ii)

1. Excluding the population of Jammu & Kashmir, Pondicherry and the then NEFA, Dadar & Nagar Haveli and Goa, Daman and Diu
2. Excluding Goa, Daman & Diu, and the then NEFA
3. Paper 2 of 1983 series I
4. Excluding Assam
5. Excluding Jammu & Kashmir

Note: Literacy rates for 1951, 1961 and 1971 relate to population aged five years and above. The rates for the years 1981 and 1991 relate to the population aged seven years and above. The literacy rates for the population aged five years and above in 1981 have been shown in brackets. The 1981 rates exclude Assam where 1981 census could not be conducted. The 1991 census rates exclude Jammu & Kashmir where the 1991 census could not be taken.

3.2 Quite apart from the rates themselves, it would be relevant to briefly consider the absolute figures of literates and illiterates. During the last four decades, population of the country has been increasing at the exponential growth rate of more than 2 per cent per annum. While the expanded educational facilities pushed up the number of literates in the country, it has not been able to keep pace with the increasing population.

The number of illiterates has simultaneously increased, though at a declining rate of growth. In absolute terms, while the number of literates has increased from about 60 million in 1951 to about 359 million in 1991, the number of illiterates has increased from about 300 million in 1951 to about 328 million in 1991. The statement below illustrates the point:

Number of Literates and Non-literates - INDIA: 1951-91

(In million)

Year	Total Population (All Ages)	Age group	Total Population	Non-literate	Literates
1951	361.09	-	-	300.09	60.19
1961	438.93	5+	372.84	267.32	105.52
1971	548.16	5+	468.60	307.19	161.41
1981*	665.29	5+	581.78	340.75	241.03
		7+	541.04	305.31	235.73
1991**	846.30	7+	688.16	328.88	359.28

* Excludes Assam where 1981 census was not held

** Excludes Jammu & Kashmir where 1991 census was not held

It would also be noticed from the above table that the number of literates has exceeded the number of illiterates for the first time in 1991, thereby taking the literacy rate above 50 per cent landmark.

3.3 Gender disparity in literacy is

a historical phenomenon. In 1901, while the literacy rate for males was 9.83 per cent, it was only 0.60 per cent in the case of females.

Comparative change in literacy rates for males and females during the last three decades has been as under:

Gender Disparity in Literacy Rates - INDIA : 1961-91

Year	Age group	Literacy Rates		Male/Female difference in literacy rate (% age points)
		Male	Female	
1961	5 and over	40.40	15.34	25.06
1971	5 and over	45.95	21.97	23.98
1981*	5 and over	53.45	28.46	24.99
1981*	7 and over	56.37	29.75	26.62
1991**	7 and over	64.13	39.29	24.84

* Excludes Assam

** Excludes Jammu & Kashmir

3.4 The above table indicates that large disparity still continues in the male/female literacy situation. While about two-third of the males in the country were literate in 1991, the landmark of 50 per cent is still far beyond the rate of females. The difference between the male and female literacy rate has been of the order of about 25 percentage points during the last three decades. However, there is a silver lining. While

the literacy rate among males has increased by 7.70 percentage points during the decade 1981-1991, corresponding increase in case of females is 9.34 percentage points.

3.5 There is a large urban-rural differential in literacy rates. This differential is of the order of about 30 percentage points and has continued to remain so over the last several decades as may be seen from the table below:

Urban-Rural Differential in Literacy Rates - INDIA : 1961-91

Year	Age group	Literacy Rate		Difference in rural/urban areas (% age points)
		Urban Areas	Rural Areas	
1961	5 and over	54.43	22.46	31.97
1971	5 and over	60.22	27.89	32.33
1981*	5 and over	64.85	34.04	30.81
1981*	7 and over	67.20	36.00	31.20
1991**	7 and over	73.08	44.69	28.39

* Excludes Assam

** Excludes Jammu & Kashmir

3.6 While about 3/4 of the urban population is literate, literacy rate in rural areas is yet much below the 50 per cent mark. Literacy rate for females in rural areas is still lower, being only 30.62. When it is compared with the literacy rate of 81.09 per cent for urban male population, the gender and rural/urban disparities become glaringly evident.

3.7 Literacy rate at the national level reveals only a part of the story of disparities in literacy situation in the country. Literacy rates among the States/UTs range from 89.81 per cent in Kerala to 38.48 per cent in Bihar. Difference between the highest and the lowest literacy rate among states/UTs is of the order of 51.33 percentage points which is even higher than the literacy rate in Bihar. It is observed that 22 States/UTs have literacy rate higher than the national average. Nine states and union territories besides Jammu & Kashmir where 1991 census was not held are having literacy rate below the national average. On the basis of literacy rate, State/UTs can be grouped as under:

Below 50 pc - Bihar (38.48), Rajasthan, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Arunachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Meghalaya (49.10) and (Jammu & Kashmir).

50 pc to 60 pc - Assam (52.89), Haryana, Karnataka, Sikkim, West Bengal, Punjab, Manipur (59.89).

60 pc to 70 pc - Tripura (60.44), Gujarat, Nagaland, Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra (64.87).

70 pc to 80 pc - Daman & Diu (71.20),



A & N Islands, Pondicherry, Delhi, Goa, Chandigarh (77.81).

80 pc and above - Lakshadweep (81.78), Mizoram, Kerala (89.81).

* pc = per cent

While Lakshadweep, Mizoram and Kerala are having literacy rate of above 80 per cent, Bihar and Rajasthan are still below 40 per cent.

3.8 In terms of the size of

illiteracy, seven states of India, viz. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Maharashtra have more than 20 million illiterates each and account for more than 70 per cent of the illiterate population of the country. The first four of these seven states are in the Hindi belt and besides having about half the illiterate in the country, are faced with the problem of low literacy rate (average of 40.92 per cent).



FACTORS CONSTRAINING GROWTH OF LITERACY

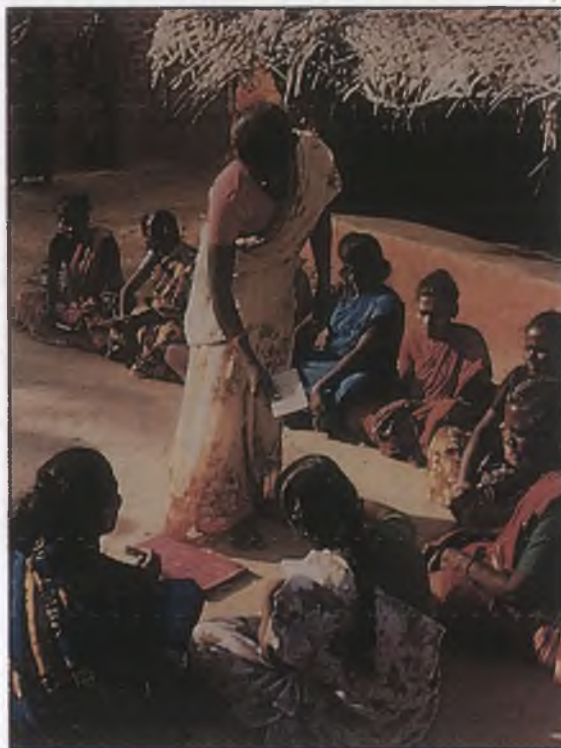
4.1 It is evident from the above analysis of literacy scenario in India that in spite of substantial expansion of infrastructural facilities and a large spatial spread of primary and upper primary institutions, the goal of providing basic education to all has not yet been achieved. While the number of literates of all ages has increased sixfold between 1951 to 1991, the absolute number of illiterates has also increased. India today has the dubious distinction of having the largest number of illiterates in the world. Of the total estimated 900 million illiterates in the world, around one-third reside in India alone. The two factors which primarily contribute to increase in the number of illiterates, are:

- (a) rapid rate of growth of population, and
- (b) failure of universalisation of elementary education characterised by low enrolment (particularly of girls), high dropout and low retention.

4.2 The above two factors in a sense are also inter-related in as much as larger the population, lesser are the resources for education and

educational infrastructure including primary school buildings, libraries, laboratories, teachers' training and research. Larger the size of the family, lesser will be the availability of resources for sending children to schools and greater the propensity to retain them for odd household jobs due to sheer economic compulsions.

4.3 The problem of illiteracy is further aggravated by social constraints which more particularly inhibit female literacy and educational development of women.



STEPS TAKEN FOR ERADICATION OF ILLITERACY

5.1 A two-pronged approach of universalisation of elementary education and universal adult literacy has been adopted for achieving total literacy. The National Policy on Education (1986) has given an unqualified priority to the following three programmes for eradication of illiteracy, particularly among women:

(a) Universalisation of elementary education and universal retention of children upto 14 years of age.

(b) The National Literacy Mission which aims at making non-literate persons in 15-35 age-group literate.

(c) A systematic programme of non-formal education in the educationally backward states.

5.2 The major thrust of these programmes is on promotion of literacy among women, members belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes particularly in the rural areas.



NATIONAL LITERACY MISSION (NLM)

6.1 National Literacy Mission has been conceptualised and built on an objective assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the earlier programmes emanating from the evaluation study reports mentioned earlier. The creation of a mission for literacy represents a national political commitment on the need to harness social forces and channelise the energies of people towards meeting the ultimate objective of effecting a qualitative change in their own lives. Conceptually, the mission focuses on:

- * a new sense of urgency, seriousness and emphasis with fixed goals, clear time-frame and age-specific target groups;
- * firm belief that adults can be made literate according to certain predetermined norms within a stipulated time limit (200 hours) and that it is not too late to learn;
- * emphasis on the close nexus between literacy of adult parents and enrolment of school going children, on the one hand, and literacy and infant mortality, immunisation and child care on the other;
- * a special mission which believes that literacy is not the concern of one ministry or department or agency but is the concern of the entire nation and all sections of society;
- * emphasis on institutionalisation of post-literacy and continuing education in a big way;
- * a technology mission also in the sense that besides emphasis on improvement of teaching/ learning environment, it lays stress on improvement in the content and process of teaching-learning on a continuing basis;
- * envisages creation of an effective mission management system to ensure achievement of the mission objectives within a broad framework of flexibility, delegation, decentralisation and accountability;
- * emphasis is not on mere enrolment of learners but on attainment of certain predetermined norms and parameters of literacy, numeracy, functionality and awareness.

NLM OBJECTIVES

7.1 The mission seeks to impart functional literacy to non-literate persons in 15-35 age group.

7.2 In qualitative terms, functional literacy implies:

- * Self-reliance in 3 R's.
- * Participation in the development process.
- * Skill improvement to improve economic status and general well-being.
- * Imbibing values of national integration, conservation of environment, women's equality and observance of small family norms etc.

7.3 The NLM seeks to achieve these objectives through the following:

- (i) by creating an environment conducive to teaching-learning process, provision of good and relevant teaching - learning materials and facilitating teaching-learning by good training, media and communication;
- (ii) by improving the pace of learning and injecting confidence among the learners about their potential to learn and that the process is not drudgery;
- (iii) by integrating basic literacy with post-literacy and continuing education; and
- (iv) by developing the quality of human resource at all levels such as instructor, supervisor, project officer etc. through orientation and training.



LITERACY CURRICULUM

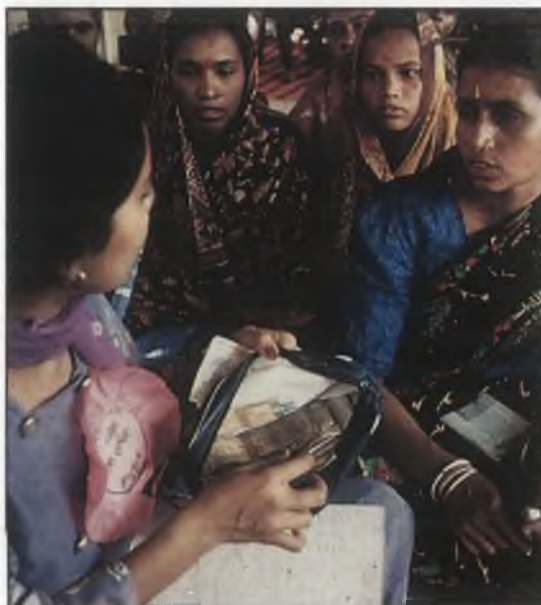
8.1 NLM has defined the desired level of competencies in the 3 R's as follows:

Reading

- * Reading aloud, with normal accent, and at a speed of 30 words a minute, a simple passage on a topic of interest to the learner.
- * Silent reading at 35 words a minute, of small paragraphs in simple language.
- * Reading with understanding the road signs, posters, simple instructions and newspapers/ broadsheets designed for neo-literates.
- * Ability to follow simple written passages relating to one's working and living environment.

Writing

- * Copying, with understanding, at a speed of 7 words a minute.
- * Taking dictation at 5 words a minute
- * Writing with proper spacing and alignment.
- * Writing independently, short letters and applications, and



filling in forms of day-to-day use to the learner.

Numeracy

- * Reading and writing numerals 1 - 100.
- * Doing simple calculations (without fraction) involving addition and subtraction upto 3 digits, and multiplication and division by 2 digits.
- * Working knowledge of metric units weights, measures, currency, distance, area and unit of time.
- * Broad idea of proportion and interest (not involving fractions) and their use in practical situations.

IMPROVED PACE AND CONTENT OF LEARNING (IPCL)

9.1 All adults are not uniformly endowed. They do not also learn at a uniform pace. Their ingenuity for learning, receptivity and retentivity are varied. Research has also established that adult learners are motivated to learn better if:

- * the duration of learning is neither too long nor too short;
- * the content of the materials is in conformity with the learners' needs;
- * the learners are able to perceive the progress of learning from stage to stage.

9.2 Keeping this basic pedagogical constraint in view, a new technique of learning has been formulated and adopted by the National Literacy Mission. It is known as 'Improved Pace and Content of Learning (IPCL)', its characteristics are as indicated below:

- * There are three sets of primers, each primer being an improvement on the other in terms of progression.

- * Each primer is an integrated one in the sense that it combines workbook, exercise book, tools of evaluation of learning outcome, certification, etc.
- * The primers are prepared through workshops involving creative thinkers, writers, linguists and artists, pre-tested and their suitability affirmed before actual application.
- * There are exercises at the end of every lesson and three tests in each primer.
- * The entire exercise is based on the principle of self-evaluation and confidence (rather than competition) oriented evaluation. The tests are intended to be simple, non-threatening and participative.
- * Every learner is free to attain the desired level according to his/her leisure and convenience. It is, however, expected that a learner should be able to complete all the three primers within the overall duration of 200 hours spread over 6-8 months.

ORIGIN OF THE MASS CAMPAIGN APPROACH



10.1 After the launch of NLM in 1988, between 1988 and 1990, the Mission tried to consolidate the earlier centre-based programme to make its implementation more effective. There was no change in the strategy and the centre-based programmes continued. The changes which were brought about in the reorganisation, mainly consisted of streamlining the various activities and correcting managerial deficiencies. Detailed guidelines for project formulation and implementation were laid down and administrative and supervisory control was vested with the state governments.

10.2 However, in spite of extensive revision of guidelines, the deficiencies earlier noticed, could not be remedied

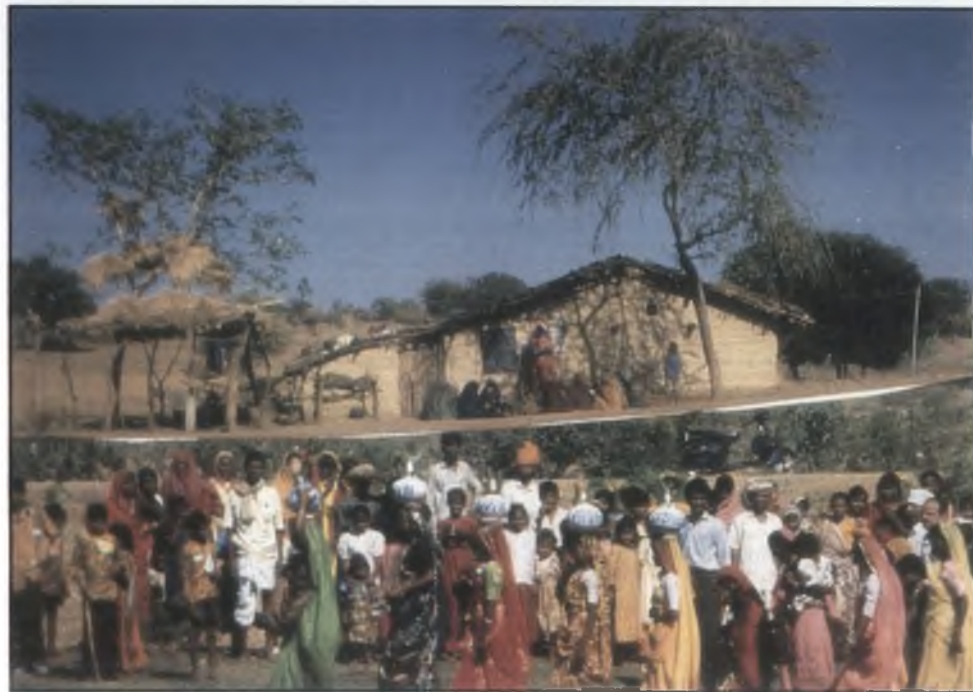
in the implementation process. One notable exception to the centre-based approach and an experiment with the campaign mode was first seen in Kottayam city in Kerala. Here the district collector, by mobilising 200 volunteers from the local university and forging links with 2000 non-literates in the 6-60 age group, succeeded in making them fully literate within three months.

But, the real breakthrough came with an experiment in mass literacy campaign initiated in 1989 and successfully completed in 1990 in Ernakulam district in Kerala. The campaign for total literacy here saw fusion between the district administration headed by its collector, volunteer groups, social activists and

others, and was spearheaded by the Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP). Ernakulam achieved this objective on 4th February 1990 and along with it, the unique distinction of being the first district in the country to become 'fully' literate.

10.3 The principal shift in strategy adopted in the Ernakulam experiment was a change to a well coordinated, comprehensive and identifiable initiative. It also marked a change by altering the social context in order to generate demand for the programme and further to sustain it. It established the feasibility of a mass-based,

community-based, campaign approach with the objective of generating environment and demand for literacy followed by literacy instruction. The subsequent adoption of the campaign has taken firm root and has given rise to the Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) approach. Drawing inspiration from the success achieved in Ernakulam, entire Kerala, Goa, UT of Pondicherry and several districts in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal have taken up the challenge for achieving total literacy in a given time frame. These TLCs had a snowballing effect and campaigns were launched in quick succession all over the country.



CHARACTERISTICS OF TOTAL LITERACY CAMPAIGNS

11.1 The TLC model is now accepted as a dominant strategy of eradication of adult illiteracy by almost all States/UTs. This strategy has been reviewed and endorsed by the National Development Council and also by the conference of chief ministers of states convened by the Prime Minister on February 15, 1994. TLCs have certain features which make them unique and distinguish them from other government programmes:

- (i) These campaigns are area-specific, time-bound, volunteer-based, cost-effective and outcome oriented. The thrust in TLCs is on attainment of predetermined norms of literacy and numeracy. The learner is the focal point in the entire process and measurement of learning outcome is continuous, informal, participative and non-threatening.
- (ii) The campaigns are implemented through district level literacy committees which are registered under the Societies Registration Act as independent and autonomous bodies to provide a unified umbrella under which a number of individuals and organisations work together. The leadership to this body is provided by the district collector/chief secretary and zila parishad (district council). All sections of society are given due representation in the planning and implementation of the programme. On the basis of the Ernakulam experience, an organisational structure for a district TLC has been evolved. The structure rests on 3 pillars of (1) participatory people's committees; (2) full-time functionaries and area coordinators; and (3) a support system provided by government officials. In itself, this may not seem significant, but it exemplifies an interactive and a communicative process of management and implementation.
- (iii) The campaign approach to total literacy is characterised by large scale mobilisation through a multifaceted communication strategy. The success of the campaign rests substantially on the effectiveness with which all sections of society are mobilised.
- (iv) No targets are fixed from the top. The targets emanate from the grassroot level on the basis of a detailed door-to-door survey

conducted by the volunteers. This survey is not only a headcounting exercise, but also a tool of planning, mobilisation and environment building.

- (v) The campaign is delivered through volunteers without any expectation of reward or incentive.
- (vi) The management information system in a campaign is based on the twin principles of participation and correction. It has, to be accountable, credible and instead of being enrolment oriented, it has to be outcome oriented.
- (vii) To enable every learner to



achieve measurable levels of literacy, the new pedagogy known as “Improved Pace and Content of Learning (IPCL)” has been translated in the shape of a set of multigraded and integrated teaching-learning materials and training. The learner is placed at the focal point in the entire process which, through compact duration and continuous ongoing evaluation, helps to heighten the learner's motivation and improve the pace of learning.

- (viii) Training of all functionaries involved in the campaign is crucial to the success of the campaign. Training has to be primer-specific, participative, communicative and a tool of continuous correction, upgradation and human resource development.
- (ix) Though the TLC is meant to impart functional literacy, it also disseminates a ‘basket’ of other socially relevant messages such as enrolment and retention of children in schools, immunisation, propagation of small family norms, promotion of maternity and child care; women's equality and empowerment, peace and communal harmony etc.

MONITORING AND SUPERVISION

12.1 At present, the system of monitoring and supervision comprises the following:

Monthly Monitoring Meetings (MMMs): Every state/UT Director of Adult Education is required to hold a monthly monitoring meeting on a fixed date. In these meetings the progress of literacy campaigns and post literacy projects of each district is reviewed and discussed by the Director in the presence of the Secretaries of the respective Zilla Saksharta Samiti (ZSS) on the basis of a 2-page proforma. The objective of the discussions in these monthly meetings is to reach a consensus on the correct and factual assessment of the literacy campaigns in the districts and the kind of interventions called for accelerating the progress. Minutes of every monthly monitoring meeting conducted by the State Directors of Adult Education have to be promptly drawn-up and copies circulated to all concerned.

The State Directorates of Adult Education have been advised to carefully scrutinise, analyse and compile the district-wise data

and send to NLM a consolidated State Report, in the proforma designed by the Central Directorate of Adult Education, every month along with status report of each district in 2-page proforma.

Visit reports of NLM executive committee members, consultants and departmental officers.

Concurrent and external evaluation reports.



EVALUATION

13.1 The evaluation of learning outcomes of those enrolled has been built in the body of multigraded primers. The primers are in three parts and at the end of every lesson, drills and exercises have been provided which are required to be attended intensively by every learner under the overall guidance of the volunteers. This self-evaluation enables the learner to perceive the pace and progress of learning himself and serves to heighten the motivation and consequently quicken the pace of learning.

Concurrent Evaluation

13.2 In the light of experience gained in monitoring of literacy

campaigns and a review of the evaluation practices, NLM has introduced a system of concurrent evaluation for an ongoing literacy project. This is a kind of quick mid-term appraisal of a project to assess the strength and weaknesses of an ongoing programme and suggest correctives. The guidelines by the NLM for concurrent evaluation require that these not be conducted by the implementing agency but by an outside agency, mostly institutions of social science research, whose panel is maintained by the State Directorate of Adult Education. On being approached, the State Director of Adult Education nominates the agency for conducting concurrent evaluation of a literacy project.





External Evaluation

13.3 Besides concurrent evaluation, each TLC project is now subject to a final evaluation as soon as the literacy campaign is concluded or is about to conclude. The National Literacy Mission has identified a panel of reputed Social Science Research Institutions and these are empanelled as independent external evaluation agencies. The Zilla Saksharta Samitis (ZSSs) are expected to inform the State Directorates of Adult Education when they are ready for the external evaluation. The State Directorate of

Adult Education in turn informs the NLM, who nominates an appropriate external evaluation agency out of the empanelled agencies. The empanelled agencies are periodically briefed and oriented by the Directorate of Adult Education, Government of India, in regard to evaluation methodologies and techniques for realistic assessment of achievements. The new approach to evaluation adopted by the NLM ensures complete transparency of the programme and thus enhances the credibility of the results reported by a district.

ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER NATIONAL LITERACY MISSION

14.1 So far, TLC projects have been launched in 448 districts out of a total of over 550 districts in the country. Of the districts taking up TLCs, 234 districts have completed the first phase of imparting basic literacy skills and are now implementing post literacy and continuing education programmes. Besides the district-wide literacy campaign projects, the NLM has, right since its inception, been promoting illiteracy eradication efforts through literacy projects taken up on a smaller scale under its other schemes, such as, the Scheme of Assistance to Voluntary Agencies, Rural Functional Literacy Programme, etc.

Literacy projects sanctioned so far under all the schemes of NLM are estimated to cover 148 million non-literates in the age group 9-35. Of them, nearly 119 million have been enrolled and over 72.55 million have already been declared literate. The cumulative number of literacy volunteers mobilised since the launching of literacy campaigns exceeds 10 million. The literacy campaigns thus represent the largest ever civil and military mobilisation in the history of the country. The following facts and figures summarise the achievements of the National Literacy Mission:



Number of Non-literates in 15-35 age group (1991)

Total: 121.29 million
 Male: 43.89 million
 Female: 77.40 million

Number of Non-literates 9-14 age group (1991)

Total: 35.55 million
 Male: 13.87 million
 Female: 21.68 million

TLC/PLC projects approved

ACHIEVEMENT

TLC districts 448 districts

UNDER

PLC districts 234 districts

NATIONAL

LITERACY

Identified learners under literacy campaigns where survey has been completed 126.32 million

MISSION

Learners enrolled under literacy campaigns 96.57 million

Achievement (Number of learners made literate under all schemes of NLM) 72.55 million

14.2 Although the literacy campaigns are being implemented with varying degrees of success, it is certain that remarkable progress has been achieved. The focus is now on the four low literacy Hindi-speaking

states which together account for nearly 50 per cent of the total number of illiterates in the country. Now that the process has begun in these states as well, the goal of universal literacy appears closer.

IMPACT OF LITERACY CAMPAIGNS ON OTHER PROGRAMMES

15.1 The mass literacy campaigns and the consequent awakening and recognition of the value of education among the general public has led to a strong demand for universalising primary education. In several TLC districts such as Hooghly in West Bengal, admission figures have registered a sharp increase, and the over 30 per cent upward swing has been attributed to the impact of the TLC in the district.

15.2 Out-of-school children in the 9-14 age group are covered by the TLCs in most districts. Future accretions to adult illiterates are expected to decline to the extent that the target group of 9-14 years is effectively reached by TLCs. On the

conclusion of TLC in an area, it is proposed to take care of the future learning needs of children of the target group through an expanded NFE programme as well as through post-literacy and continuing education centres.

15.3 Some of the spinoffs of TLCs have been improved enrolment at primary level; social empowerment of women; improvement in immunisation and acceptance of the small family norm and organised correction of superstition and social evils. This has generated a great demand for sanctioning projects throughout the country, thereby requiring increasing allocation of funds.



POST LITERACY CAMPAIGNS

16.1 Total Literacy Campaigns have shown that there is considerable enthusiasm to learn as opposed to the traditional view that learners are disinterested or inhibited has proved to be a myth. TLCs have resulted in a positive change in attitude, to upgrade their skills and adopt it for individual development, and eventually for social action.

16.2 Yet, experience all over the world has shown a wide variation in the levels of literacy achieved by individual learners. While a large number achieve literacy levels laid down by the NLM; a significant number do not, and many remain non-starters. Even those who do achieve the prescribed literacy levels, acquire only 'fragile' literacy. Without a meaningful post-literacy programme, many of these relapse into illiteracy. The more backward the region, more deprived the learning environment, and greater the possibility of relapse. Studies have also shown that one of the major causes of relapse is the time-gap between conclusion of the basic literacy phase and the beginning of post-literacy phase.

16.3 Recognising the need for post-literacy programmes, the National

Literacy Mission has laid considerable emphasis on timely planning, preparation and launching of a two-year post-literacy programme for neo-literates soon after the conclusion of the total literacy campaign. Since post-literacy programmes also rely considerably on the campaign mode, these are commonly described as Post Literacy Campaigns (PLCs). PLCs include about 50 hours of guided learning through a volunteer-teacher to enable the learner to reach a self-reliant level of learning. The subsequent phase of the PLC consists of self-directed continuing education through library service, newspapers for neo-literates, group discussions, and other activities such as skill development and vocational training. The PLC addresses itself to the following major objectives:

Remediation

- those not covered by TLC to be made literate.
- those below minimum level of learning to be enabled to achieve it.

Continuation

- stabilisation, reinforcement and upgradation of learning.



Application

- to living and working conditions.

Communitisation

- Group action for participation in development process.

Skill training

- Life skills, communication skills, vocational skills.

16.4 Post-literacy programmes conceived by NLM not just as remedial measures to ensure retention and

stabilisation of literacy skills but in the context of lifelong education.

16.5 NLM has permitted and encouraged high flexibility and innovation in designing and implementation of PLCs. Each PLC project has to take into account the competence levels reached by the learners in the basic literacy phase, cognitive ability, felt needs and other area specific and socio-cultural specific dimensions.

The approach most commonly followed, comprises of providing post-literacy primer/graded textual material to the learners in the first phase of post literacy for a guided study with the help of volunteer-instructors. This phase specifically aims at remediation, retention and consolidation of literacy skills. In the second phase, the learners are provided with a variety of supplementary reading materials and library services to help them continue learning through self-directed processes. In practice, the post-literacy strategies actually being implemented are generally a combination of different approaches, borrowing successful elements from a variety of experiences.

CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR NEO LITERATES - STRATEGIES FOR THE FUTURE

17.1 Currently, post-literacy programmes are being implemented in 193 districts in the country. The remaining districts are expected to take up post-literacy programmes within the next one to two years. The crucial question is how literacy and the learning environment will be sustained once the district taking up TLCs conclude the two year follow-up programme of PLCs. The enthusiasm and confidence generated among learners in the districts which have successfully completed both the TLC/ PLC phases clearly points towards the need to sustain the educational process and to provide learning opportunities on a continuing basis.

17.2 NLM is fully conscious of this need and has designed a scheme of Continuing Education for Neoliterates. This scheme has been approved by the Government of India and has come into force from January 1, 1996. This scheme replaces the existing Post Literacy and Continuing Education Scheme, which was launched in 1988 to meet the post-literacy and continuing needs of neoliterates emerging from centre-based adult education programmes. The main objective of the new scheme is to institutionalise continuing education

for neoliterates and provide considerable flexibility in designing and implementation of a diverse kind of continuing education programmes suited to the felt needs of the neoliterates. The scheme has classified the continuing education programmes broadly into four categories:

- (i) **Equivalency Programmes (EPS)** - designed as alternative education programmes equivalent to existing formal, general or vocational education.
- (ii) **Income Generating Programmes (IGPS)** - participants acquire or upgrade vocational skills enabling them to take up income generating activities.



(iii) **Quality of Life Improvement Programmes (QLIP)** - these aim to equip the learners and the community with the essential knowledge, attitude, value and skills both as individuals and members of the community.

(iv) **Individuals Interest Promotion Programmes** - These provide opportunity for individuals to participate in and learn about their own chosen social, cultural, spiritual, health, physical and artistic interests.

Manner of Implementation

17.3 The new scheme envisages implementation of continuing education programmes for neo-literates through Zilla Saksharata Samitis (ZSS) who would be expected to formulate a project proposal for establishment of a durable infrastructure for continuing education and taking up continuing education programmes in the district on conclusion of post-literacy campaigns. Under the scheme, ZSS has been given considerable freedom to develop its own type of programmes depending upon the prevailing socio-economic conditions, the needs of

neoliterates, resource available, etc.

However, the scheme envisages creation of new organisational structures at the grassroots level keeping in view the need to provide institutionalised framework for implementation of continuing education programmes with active involvement and sharing of responsibility with panchayat institutions, mahila mandals, educational institutions, NGOs, etc.

17.4 Establishment of Continuing Education Centres (CECs) will be the principal mode of implementing continuing education programmes. Continuing education centres will essentially be community education centres (CECs). The scheme envisages setting up one CEC for each village to serve the population of about 1500 which may include about 500 neoliterate, dropouts and passouts from primary schools and NFE stream. CECs will be set up in cluster of 8-10 with one of them being designed as nodal CEC. The principal function of the CEC would be to provide the following facilities:

- (a) Library
- (b) Reading Room

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- (c) Learning Centre - for CE programmes
 - (d) Training Centre - For short-duration training programmes to upgrade skills
 - (e) Information Centre - For various development programmes
 - (f) Charcha Mandal - Community meeting place for sharing ideas and solving problems
 - (g) Development Centre - For coordinating services of government agencies and non-governmental organisations
 - (h) Cultural Centre
 - (i) Sports Centre

17.5 NLM recognises that in the areas completing post literacy programmes, diverse kinds of continuing programme involving alternative and innovative approaches, taking into account the local conditions and resources available, would need to be promoted. The new scheme, therefore, envisages that besides establishment of continuing education centres, ZSS will be encouraged to develop and take up implementation of target specific programmes, catering to the specific needs and interests of neoliterates.

Such programmes would largely be functional in the sense that these would focus on the development of functional knowledge with the aim of making learning relevant to living and working.

17.6 The National Literacy Mission in collaboration with the National Open School has developed a programme of open basic education for neo-literates. Under this programme, an attempt is being made to provide opportunities of continuing education to those young and adult neo-literates who are interested in pursuing learning beyond basic literacy in a non-formal mode but with the aim of acquiring recognition and qualifications equivalent to those available under the formal schooling system. Under the open basic education programmes, the entire range of basic education, i.e., upto class VIII level has been divided into three levels - Level A, Level B, and Level C. Level A is for those who can just manage reading and writing (fragile literates), Level B for those people with stable literacy and little beyond, and, Level C for those whose competencies are equivalent to primary course. Within this framework, the learners



would be offered a large variety of choices of learning tasks and they will be free to choose from a platter of equivalent learning tasks, e.g., language, science, environment, arithmetic and vocational. The district unit or the ZSS would be main implementation agency under the guidance and supervision of state agencies, i.e., State Resource Centres and State Open Schools.

17.7 A significant beginning has been made with the sanction of continuing education projects to 60 districts in the country. State-wise

number of districts sanctioned continuing education projects under the Scheme of Continuing Education for Neo-literates is as follows:

State/UT	No. of districts under CE.
1. Andhra Pradesh	16
2. Himachal Pradesh	1
3. Kerala	14
4. Madhya Pradesh	1
5. Maharashtra	5
6. Mizoram	3
7. Punjab	1
8. Rajasthan	2
9. Tamil Nadu	9
10. Uttar Pradesh	1
11. West Bengal	3
12. Pondicherry	4
Total	60

17.8 The Scheme of Continuing Education for Neoliterates as visualised by NLM is an attempt to provide systematic, organised and well-ordinated mechanisms to mobilise all resources in support of literacy, post-literacy and continuing education, in the perspective of lifelong education.