

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

CRUSADE AGAINST ILLITERACY

VOLUME - II

**A COLLECTION OF SUCCESS
STORIES ON ADULT EDUCATION**

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PREFACE

The first volume of 'CRUSADE AGAINST ILLITERACY' published in October, 1987, was a maiden attempt to put together success stories from the States of Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Tamilnadu based on the visits of DAE Camera Team to these States. This publication was received well and won the appreciation of all those engaged in the adult education endeavour.

Prompted by this result, the DAE deputed the Camera Team to some more States — Bihar, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal during the last couple of years. The Team headed by Shri G. Sivaswamy, Deputy Director, DAE, visited several districts in these States and brought with them a wealth of material. Most of these stories fresh from the field were also published in the different issues of the 'LITERACY MISSION' which was earlier known as 'DAE NEWSLETTER'.

Now in this second volume, an attempt has been made to bring together at one place all those stories from Bihar, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal for the benefit of adult education functionaries and others all over the country. It is hoped that they will find this publication as interesting as the first volume and also useful in tackling some of their problems besides enabling them to know what has been happening in other parts of the country.

I am thankful to Sarvashri G. Sivaswamy, Deputy Director, L.C. Vohra, Senior Artist and G.D. Sharma, Photographer and all other members of the Publication Unit for their efforts in making this publication possible and for its attractive get-up and printing.

This is only the second in the series and we want to add to this endeavour in the coming years. I would, therefore, invite views and suggestions from the readers to improve the usefulness of this publication.

NEW DELHI
30 June, 1989

ANIL. K. SINHA
DIRECTOR

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BIHAR







What is Non-Formal Education? How can it succeed?

Many times such questions are asked by people in regard to literacy programmes. They try to find answers from several sources including literature on adult education. They may also find some satisfactory definitions or explanations. But it will be more interesting and convincing if they can observe the running of AECs and draw their own conclusions about success of the non-formal system of education.

It so happened that in Patna City of Bihar we had occasion to visit a few AECs located in harijan basti. The area is known as Shaikhpura Bindtoli.

Of these centres, one centre for men run by one Lal Babu Das, Instructor, was really engaging, absorbing and matched the 'non-formal' set-up.

Here we could find the learners on time engaged in learning activity and very regular irrespective of the fact the instructor was on time or not. The instructor being a factory worker was some times delayed and not able to reach his centre on time.

But his identification with his clientele group has been such that they come on time and start reading, writing etc. till he arrives.

What should we call this spontaneous move on the part of the learners. No doubt they are motivated. The instructor is held in high esteem. Not only that the group has developed a sense of belonging, a team spirit or whatever one may like to call.

It is a real organised educational activity outside the formal system with identifiable learning clientele and learning objectives.

The instructor through his personal touch and cooperation of his group has developed a range of methods, primarily those built on and using the experiences of his learners. This has helped in making the centre lively, interesting and absorbing.

This is what we really aim in non-formal system but are hardly able to achieve full success.

Instructors like Lal Babu has been able to use the system effectively and successfully for educating their adult learners.





A FACE IN THE CROWD

In our visits to States we have found very many different types of people engaged in literacy promotion activities including teaching and learning. It is such a mass programme there is no end to the different categories of people engaged in it or contributing to its success in one way or other.

Again, in Patna City of Bihar, in Kidwaipura, we met Smt. Gita Dey, Instructor, a very forceful and conscientious worker. She has strided into adult education from yoga. Yes, she is a yoga teacher by profession and earns her living by that and in her spare time she is doing service to her community,



neighbours and others in her locality, by giving, rather imparting literacy to women learners. She finds some fulfilment in this noble task. Her learners have been attracted by her lovable disposition, pleasing manners and personality, they have unknowingly tried to imbibe in them some of her qualities and above all the self-confidence which is foremost in her nature. Smt. Dey's social work is something which is engaging to herself and very useful to others.

This is the spirit educated housewives like Smt. Dey can bring to this programme and help it flourish in their own localities or areas.

A GOAL WORTH ACHIEVING

What is the minimum standard of education?

What AECs should do to promote that?

These are some basic questions before every AE Project and its functionaries.

At Kohila Village in Akbarpur Project of Nawada District we saw two AECs — both exclusive for women belonging to SC community. They all were in the 15-35 age-group.

It was a rainy day. People had several other important things to attend, especially women. Still they had all assembled at the AEC.

We talked to the learners to know their interest in learning, what benefits they could derive from it, etc. What minimum standard they expect to achieve?



They said that they had innumerable problems but with all that they preferred to learn as this would help them in their life.

Even though they could not clearly talk about the benefits, it was evident they wanted to have the minimum necessary learning which would give them **competence to live, work and participate in society**.

It should be possible to achieve this minimum standard or quality of education at the AECs through participatory methods provided the Instructor is well informed, well-trained and brings to the job a very enthusiastic and lively approach.

In fact, people of all ages and conditions are entitled to this minimum standard of education. Literacy promotes several attributes for better living, working and conducting oneself in the society.

A FELT NEED

Why Functionality?

This question is often asked in AECs. What is being done for it? How it is going to help learners, etc. etc.

The same question arose in the women centre at Digha Mainpura in Patna Sadar AEC. Smt. Hira Mani Devi is the Instructor. Learners want to learn useful functional skills so that they can earn a living which is their most compelling need to make both ends meet.

Devi has been imparting tailoring skills, garment

making, embroidery etc. But then this can't be the solution to all their needs.

The learners want something more, something where all of them can work together, some productive endeavour which can benefit all of them.

The Project Officer and the DAEO Patna have promised to arrange for demonstration of some functional skills like envelope making, agarbathi, moombathi (candle) etc. so that the women can choose one that most suits all of them to start a vocation.

The AEC has helped them realise the importance of functionality in life and the vital role it can play in transforming their way of life.

In the absence of functionality, literacy endeavour cannot go far. Mere Literacy is only the initial initiating instrument, but it can grow only as a 'functional instrument'.

In fact, functional literacy programmes have amply demonstrated that learning is faster, more enjoyable, and better retained and applied when the skills and content, and teaching methods grow from the milieu of the learner.



ACCEPTABLE INSTRUCTORS

What an Instructor has got to be to succeed in his/her mission?

Instructor plays a crucial role in the setting up and running the AECs properly. He or she has to be understanding and persuasive, rather than authoritarian. Above all, the Instructor has to be acceptable to the learners and the community at large.

That is why efforts are made to select competent and committed people from the community and locality itself for serving as Instructors. It helps in many ways to motivate the learners and secure community support for the AEC.

We saw two such acceptable Instructors — Sitara Begum and Asha Khatun — in Lakhe locality of Hazaribagh which is a Muslim minority area. Both of them exhibited vigour and freshness and all the learners were thoroughly influenced and motivated to learn Hindi. Most of them could read and write in their mother tongue Urdu.

According to them Hindi is easier to learn than Urdu. Their progress was also very good. They could read, write and calculate in Hindi in a matter of three months.

They have also interest in learning functional skills— tailoring, garment making, embroidery etc. for which arrangements are being made by the Project Officer.





LITERACY IN COLLIERIES

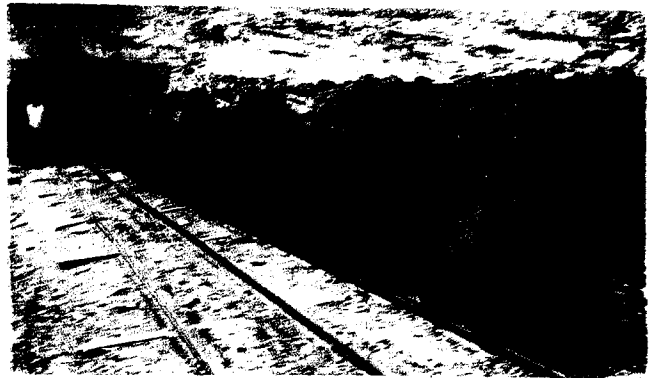
Hazaribagh being a mining district, efforts are now being made to set-up more AECs in the collieries for the benefit of illiterate workers. Three such centres have already started functioning in Mandu project area.

We visited one of them meant for women workers at the Hesagad Colliery on the Hazaribagh - Ranchi road.

Kumari Pushpa Lata Tirkey, a matric pass adivasi girl, is incharge of this AEC, whose learners also belong to adivasi community.

Coal mining on a large scale has brought with it several new problems for the people of this area. Pollution and difficult working conditions form part of these. Wages in the mines are quite reasonable but women still feel they are paid less as compared to the hard labour they have to put in daily. But then there are no other avenues for employment in this area.

It was very interesting and educative to meet Kumari Tirkey and her learners. They have been making good progress and hope to complete their course with high percentage of achievement.





ADIVASI VILLAGE TAKE TO LITERACY

Some 22 kms. south of Mandar town in Ranchi District is a typical adivasi village known as Haril. It is not connected by good roads nor does it enjoy modern facilities like electricity. Most of these



people depend on land for their living. Several of them are unskilled workers, landless labourers etc. A few of them continue their age - old profession of pottery.

Adult education has found its way into this backward area and people have taken to literacy in Mandar Project in a big way. This can be evident from a visit to the three AECs (one for women and other two for men) at present functioning here.

The centre for women is run by a non-Matriculate adivasi girl— Beauty Kajoor. She has been able to muster enough support for the programme. The progress of learners at her centre also speak well of her effort.

Another notable feature of the village life is the warmth and affection. They have not lost these in the process of literacy. They still receive their guests as per age-old tradition, wash their feet and hands, garland them, then sing and dance for their entertainment etc.



Literacy, they say, instills self-confidence — that is what these people seem to have achieved in a short period of 3-4 months. The road ahead is full of promises and prosperity.





COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN CHAHA VILLAGE

What is community participation? How to secure the same for the literacy programme?

These are matters dealt with during training of AE functionaries. Recently, the DAE, New Delhi, has also prepared a film on this topic.

But, if one wants to see real community participation one has to go to Chaha tribal village on the outskirts of Gumla district headquarters. The people have developed an intense community consciousness through helping each other economically, socially and in other ways.

For example, if one family in the village cannot afford to pay for building a house, or changing the roof of tiles etc., other families in the village go to their help. They all together undertake 'Shramdan' at a convenient time and complete the job.

There is a church in the centre of the village. It is the centre for their discussions and activities.

This consciousness among them has helped to forge unity of purpose and action for the good of all. Each family feels it is not alone but the community is behind it. It adds to their strength and confidence.

One should not misunderstand community consciousness as communal feeling. The latter is destructive and far from the mind of these people.

In this background, literacy promotion in this village has found favourable environment and has taken roots in a short time. People are enthusiastic about it. At present six AECs function in this village —one exclusively for women and all others are combined centres both for men and women.





Population	:	756
Men	:	428
Women	:	337
Total Adult Illiterates in 15-35 age-group	:	358
Men	:	105
Women	:	253

Year	No. of AECs	Enrolled	Made Literate
1987-88	4	120	57
1988-89	6	180	continuing

There is no electricity or other modern facilities here. People depend on land and village/cottage industries such as pottery, black-smithy, leaf-up making, mat (chatai) making and so on for their living.

On the day of our visit, in one centre, Shiv Prasad Sahu, the Instructor, was talking to them about evils of drinking. He was asking the men learners to state the reasons why drinking is harmful. The women also participated stating how the family income and health is affected etc. In this tribal community drinking still is a problem though gradually awareness is building-up against it.

The villages are now demanding electricity, why they were being deprived of this facility etc. But so far they have not made any conscious effort because of illiteracy. May be now they would all join together and make a fresh attempt to bring electricity to their village. That will help promotion of literacy in a big way.

The project has plans to make this village fully literate by next year through opening as many centres as possible to cover all the remaining adult illiterates.



Gumla being a TD District, solar packs can be supplied to improve lighting facilities.

Attendance at the AECs can be considered as good though progress even after four months of operation is not that good. This is because the really illiterate have yet to be fully motivated to regularly attend the classes.

Efforts are therefore being made to organise social functions and cultural programmes to increase their awareness and need for literacy. In these functions the whole village, men and women and children participate, sing and dance to gay abandonment and find happiness and fulfilment.

The Project Officer, Miss Tirkey and the project staff all have developed close rapport with the people of this village. In fact, they have identified themselves and could sing and dance with them as also participate in their sorrows and happiness. This

may prove useful and help in the speedy growth of literacy.

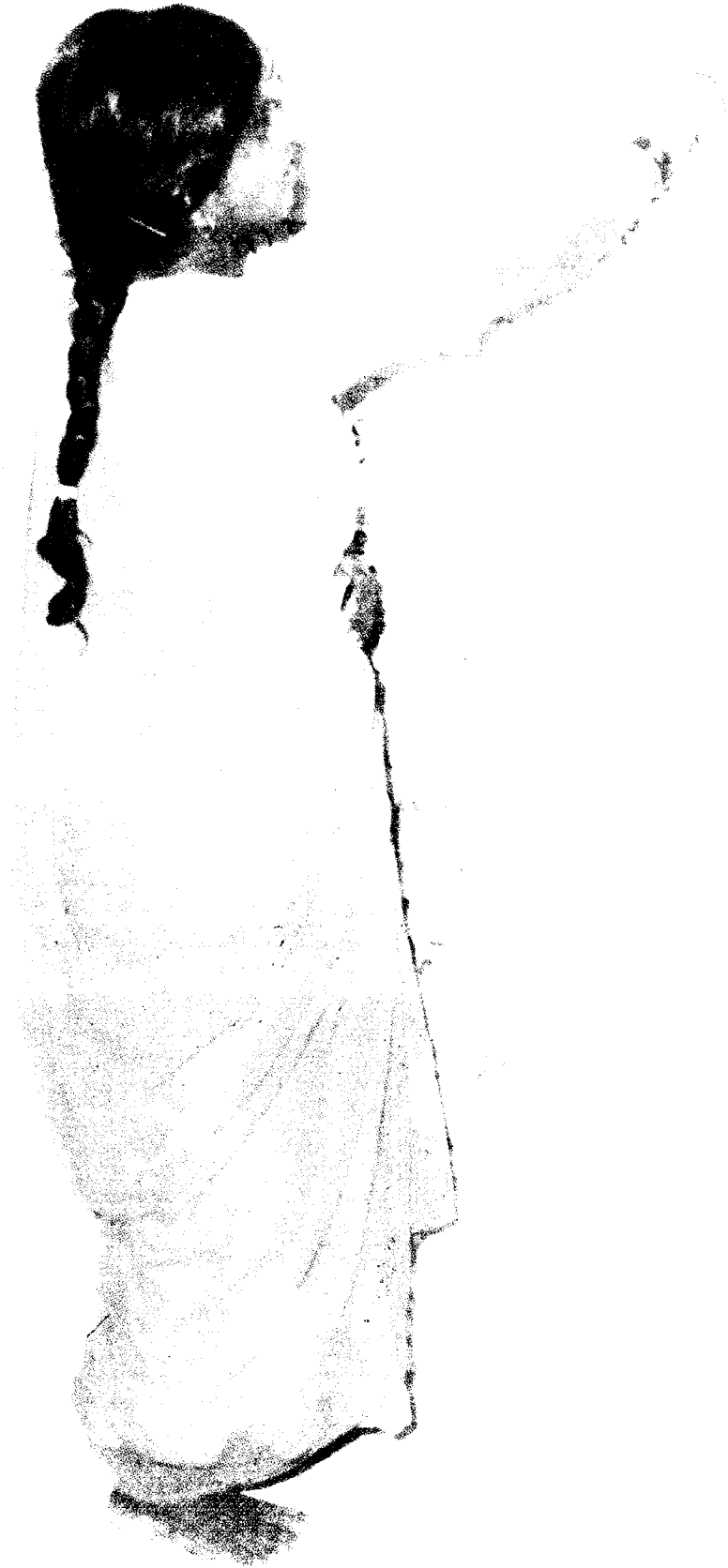
With literacy the community consciousness among the villagers can find better expression and lead to much better common good.





KARNATAKA







LAMBANIS COVERED UNDER ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Lambanis are flourishing people today in Karnataka. They belong to the Scheduled Caste community but are very healthy with good features. Their women are lovely and beautiful.

It is true for centuries this community had no access to education. They also did not enjoy the necessary literacy background. The Lambani dialect is a spoken one only. It has no script of its own; it is however a musical one and their folksongs and dances make them virtually tribals.



Most of their people are landless labourers. Because of the good rains this year there is sufficient work for them. Four adult education centres have been opened this year for their benefit.

At M.H. Kavalu women centre, the learners are regular and happy to learn. Manjulamma, who has passed SSLC and who belongs to this community, is their Instructor. She has been running AECs for the last four years and has acquired enough knowledge and experience in motivating learners and attend to their needs. She has virtually put life into the centre. It was interesting to see them singing and dancing, learning the alphabets and numeracy. None of these learners had even visited Bangalore, the State Capital which is less than 100 kms away from their village.

Such is their simple life. But they have high aspirations to learn and earn more through mat-weaving and other income generation activities.

Manjulamma deserves all our praise and best wishes.



INCOME GENERATION ACTIVITIES AT YELIYUR

Yeliyur is a small village some 10 kms. from Mandya town. There are two AECs functioning at present in this village-one for men and the other for women. Almost all the learners are agricultural workers earning wage of Rs. 6 to 7 per day. They have no other means of supplementing their income.

The RFLP, Mandya, has with the active help and assistance of the local Mandal Panchayat, started income generation activities for the adult learners. They have also arranged for the raw-materials required for training the people in these skills.

For example, the women are today undergoing training in making of envelopes, soap and detergent powder. Envelops are in great demand for use in Government Offices and with Departmental and other stores. It is an activity which is picking up slowly. Soap and detergent powder manufactured

at the AEC are used mostly by villagers themselves. The Mandal Panchayat will be able to ask shopkeepers in the area to promote these in the market.

Smt Puttachinnamma is the Instructor and she is conducting the centre at the local school building. She has developed her own flash cards and other teaching aids. She helps the learners in identifying alphabets, joining them together and build words etc.

Another interesting activity is chalk-making in which men learners are being trained. Chalks are in demand from schools and also needed for the RFLP AECs. They are making coloured chalks also which are used for rangoli purposes in the villages.

Y.M. Puttaswamy, who has passed SSLC, is their Instructor and takes a lot of interest in the activities of the centre.





FOLKDANCERS OF PANCHEGOWDANADODDI

Panchegowdanadoddi is a village on the outskirts of Mandya town. The people in this village are great inheritors of culture and tradition. The adult learners, all men, are no exception. They like to sing songs, dance in unison with 'Kollattam' and do such other pieces of folk music and dance.

In the programme held during our visit, the whole village had assembled to witness the performance of their men. 'Kolattam' is a very intricate item where motion and movement of each member has to be well in unison with others and each one has to play his role as in a team. The sticks move to beat rhythmically and produce a very pleasing sound to the accompaniment of music sung by the

leader of the group and others. There are different ways of performing this folk dance — standing, sitting, moving fast, in reclining position, in twos and threes, so on and so forth.

The 'KURAVA KURAVANCHI' episode enacted in traditional style has had a unique appeal, no villager could perhaps escape its sway.

RFLP, Mandya, has tried to revive these folk arts and dances and use it as a vital medium for securing peoples cooperation and community participation at the AEP. They have plans to arrange more and more cultural programmes in the villages to spread the message of literacy.





SILK THREAD SPINNERS OF CHOKKAHALLI

Chokkahalli is a village, some 8 kms from Chintamani taluk headquarters. The people in this village depend on silk thread spinning and weaving silk sarees through handloom process.

There is an adult education centre for women in this village. It is housed in the local school premises. The women learners are very enthusiastic and regular in attending the classes.

Their Instructor is Subbammal, who has passed SSLC. She has been taking a lot of interest in imparting literacy and other skills to her learners. In four months, most of them have picked-up how to write their names, also to read and write their lessons besides some basic numeracy skills. Subbammal has been endeavouring very hard to make them aware of their plight in life and how to make their life more purposeful and good.



It was interesting to talk to them and know their aspirations in life. Many of them have not ever left their village all their life. It has been a struggle or existence, making both ends meet. All of them work spinning fine silk thread for sarees which will be worn by the rich and well-to-do people. They are paid low wages for their work and remain exploited.

Other avenues of work will have to be found out for them so that they are able to earn more. The Project authorities and Mandal Panchayat have to do lot more work in imparting income generation activities to the adult learners.



AGARBATHI MAKERS OF KITTUR

Kittur village in Belgaum is famous for Rani Channamma who fought against the British who wanted to annex her territory on some flimsy grounds. She gave her life fighting valiantly. She is today remembered along with Rani of Jhansi and other freedom fighters.

There is an SC centre for women in Kittur village run by the able Smt. S.S. Pyatinathi. The learners are also engaged in income generation activities such as making agarbathi, baskets, chalks, soaps etc.

They hope they may be able to supplement their income by taking contracts for agarbathi making or baskets. They are also talking among themselves of possibilities of forming a cooperative and enter in group action. These women exhibit a sense of purpose and are determined to win the battle against illiteracy and social evils such as dowry etc.

They have realised that life could be much better for them than what it is today with self-reliance and support. It is this that will go a long way in fulfilling their urges and aspirations.





VIVEKANANDA GIRIJANA KALYANA KENDRA, B.R. HILLS

"The only service to be done for our people is to give them education, to develop their best individuality. They are to be given ideas; their eyes are to be opened to what is going on in the world around them and then they will work out their salvation."

— Swami Vivekananda

This is exactly what the Vivekananda Tribal Welfare Centre, a voluntary organisation, has been doing for the Soligas of the B.R. Hills. A team of young and dedicated social workers under the able leadership of Dr. H. Sudarshan has been devoting themselves heart and soul to the task of integrated development of the tribals in this area. It is better to call them an activists group because they believe more in action than in talk.

Their twin objectives have been to bring about improvement in the socio-economic conditions of the tribals and also to help them enrich their culture



and values. They have made commendable progress in both these directions.

The organisation has been giving utmost importance in ensuring the subjective participation of the tribal people in all the developmental activities undertaken by them. These include medical facilities, educational opportunities, agricultural activities, social forestry, housing and a number of other things which could help create an awareness towards self-help and at the same time maintain a delicate balance between modern progress and preservation of Soligas cultural identity.

The tribals have been under an intensive screening programme for identification of 'sickle cell anaemia' — a genetic disease prevalent among them. The identified cases are treated with care.



For the 20,000 tribal population, a full-fledged hospital with X-ray and other facilities has been set up in the hills. Promotion of herbal medicine is part of the community health programme besides treatment for leprosy, TB and malaria. There is also a nutrition programme for the benefit of pregnant women, lactating mothers and children.

For the education of the tribals, schools have been opened. There is a residential school for tribal boys and girls coming from far-off villages. Adult education is an important part of the whole education and awareness programme. Two AECs have been opened at the B.R. Hills, one at Bangala Podu and the other at Vasa Podu. The instructors at these centres K. Mahadeva and Sannamada, both of whom have passed SSLC and belong to the Soligas tribal community, have been doing excellent work in organising their people and imparting both literacy and vocational training. These young men, so unassuming and full of human warmth and wisdom are fully participating in the great task of their time. They represent the modern tribal renewal or awakening if one may like to put it that way. With the freshness of their vision, they have been able to strip hypocrisy from cherished ideals and bring a new vitality to the whole endeavour.

Because of limited employment opportunities in the hills and forests, training of tribal people in cottage industries based on local resources is very important. Realising this, the Kendra has started Agarbathi (incense sticks), cane and bamboo handicraft, mat-weaving, bee-keeping, coir-rope, cloth weaving, carpentry, blacksmithy and such other training programmes.

Moral order, especially for the tribals, is a living thing. Since it has been changing fast, the young generation of Soligas are today fighting a crucial battle, to reset the moral order to meet present day needs and life without losing their identity in this process.

As Swami Vivekananda once rightly remarked, education of the people is the only enduring thing so that they may be able to solve their problems and until that is done all other ideal reforms will remain ideals only. The new order of things is salvation of the people by the people. In this context, adult education is crucial to any developing community.

The efforts now being made in BR Hills by the younger generation of Soligas with the active assistance of Vivekananda Girijana Kalyana Kendra therefore needs all encouragement and appreciation.

We are sure a new era in the history of the Soligas, one of prosperity, plenty and cultural identity, will soon be ushered in through these attempts at orienting new frontiers in tribal development.





DEVADASI CENTRE AT MUNOLI

Savdatti in Karnataka is famous for two things—one the Malaprabha dam and project and the other Renuka-Yellamma Temple.

The practice of dedicating young girls at childhood to the Goddess Renuka-Yellamma and their initiation into prostitution when they attain puberty has been thriving for centuries in these parts. The Devadasi system, though now banned by the State government still continues unobtrusively. Several reasons can be attributed to this practice. These include low levels of literacy among women, social backwardness, perpetuation of superstition about the Goddess, conspiracy between feudal class and priests etc. Many of the girls dedicated come from harijan communities, who live below the povertyline.

What is a superstition? The dictionary meaning of the word 'superstition' is 'belief based on ignorance', 'false religion', 'faith in charms and omens'. It seems a harmless thing but its potency for evil is terrible, see how it has ruined lives of innocent people.

The story goes like this. Renuka was the wife of sage Jamadagni. She had four sons including the famous Parasurama. Once she is said to have entertained an unchaste thought and had to pay a very heavy price for it. She was beheaded by Parasurama on the sages orders. Subsequently, the sage brought her to life at the request of Parasurama with the head of harijan 'Yellamma'.

Since then the harijans and others started propitiating her as 'goddess' and there is a temple at Savdatti known as Renuka-Yellamma temple. It is clouded in superstition from the very beginning.

But this superstition was perpetuated by vested interests. All efforts to release these people failed as conditions of these people have not improved appreciably—economically they are still dependent on others.

Perhaps adult education can succeed where others have failed and that is why efforts are now being made to cover the Devadasis under the AE Programme at Savdatti and other places. The centre at Munoli is exclusively meant for them only. There are 30 learners in the centre coming from different villages. Efforts have been made to lift literacy effort with TRYSEM tailoring scheme. Their Instructor is S.C. Angadi.

The problem of Devadasis is not only economical but also psychological. Education and better opportunities alone can help them overcome their innumerable difficulties.

Under the TRYSEM scheme each of them is paid Rs. 200/- per month as stipend for a period of one year. They are also allowed free passes on government buses so that they can travel to and from their villages to the centre which functions from 9.00 A.M. to 5.00 P.M.

After training in tailoring each one will be given a tailoring machine with other equipment so that they can make a living in their village by stitching clothes for the villagers. Other avenues have to be found out for their gainful employment, if they are not to revert back to prostitution.

We talked to several of these learners at Muni Centre. Many of them have children to look after but no ways of earning. They have realised that it



was all superstition that wrecked their lives. Of course, they still sing in praise of Renuka-Yellamma. They are all happy adult education coupled with tailoring has been an immense help in their regeneration. The new confidence they have gained would be of great help to them in their future life.

Fakira of Kallapur has no husband and also no children. In fact she has no one whom she can call her own. But, she has now made many friends in

the AE Centre and hopes to live a useful life in future.

According to a recent survey Devadasis today form about 15 per cent of the total prostitutes in the country and as many as 70 to 80 per cent of the prostitutes in the border districts of Karnataka and Maharashtra. So not all Devadasis can become tailors. Government and voluntary organisations have to do lot more for helping them.





RAJASTHAN







MUNDIYA GAON is an upcoming Mina tribal village today thanks to the literacy drive undertaken by the State Government under the 'Sampoorna Saksharata Karyakram'. It has a population of over 5000 and a Jana Shikshan Nilayam has also been recently established here for the benefit of these people. The Nilayam is at present housed in a room on the main roadside but it will shortly be shifted to the spacious 'Panchayat Ghar' which is under final stages of construction. Hanuman Sahay Gautam, the Prerak belongs to the village. He supervises the running of four AECs — three for women and one for men functioning in this village besides the JSN. He has tastefully decorated the JSN with posters, charts etc. and procured post-literacy books and literature from different sources including DAE, New Delhi.

During 1987-88, 14 Adult Education Centres — 7 for men and 7 for women were established and successfully run under the Complete Village Literacy Programme. There are still 240 adult illiterates in the 15-35 age-group to be covered and another four AECs would be set-up in the near future. Thus, in two years it has been possible to achieve nearly 60 to 70 per cent literacy in the 15-35 age-group in this village.

Now it would be possible for other development agencies to approach the villagers and get their participation and support for their different programmes. This would be especially so in case of rural women — literacy combined with health and child care can yield good results in the long run for the community as a whole.





MINAS OF KHAROLI

Kharoli is a very interior tribal village in the Devli Block of Tonk District. The Mina tribe reside here in their age-old fashion depending on land. These people also work as agricultural labourers and construction workers and move to other parts of the country as far as Punjab, Haryana, Delhi etc. in search of employment. Most of them are illiterate and have been finding it difficult when entire families have to move out due to drought and famine conditions in their native land. This year rains have brought some succour to them and they are happy to be back in their village. There is time for acquiring literacy skills.

The RFLP has opened six AECs in this far-off backward village. It is backward in several respects— there is no jeepable road; the nearest road point is 10 kms. away; there is no electricity or proper health facilities, no post office or bank nearby; scarcity of water during summer and dusty fields and environment. There are very few trees, not even good fodder for cattle. Life is hard and very bitter especially in the summer months. But the Minas are a very hardy lot. They have braved the harshness of nature and the inhospitable terrain. Built and decorated by themselves, their houses are neat and clean. Their men are tall and sturdy wearing colourful turbans and growing long moustashes and their women are healthy and beautiful with anklets and armlets in silver. They veil their faces even now. They are a very chivalrous and flourishing tribe in India today.

The RFLP faced difficulty in finding sufficient educated women amongst tribals to run the women centres. One AEC is run by a male. There is not a single woman in this village who can proclaim herself fully literate. Therefore no

programmes directed towards rural women have reached this village. They are not aware of many things — proper health and child care, care of pregnant mothers, nutrition, family planning, immunisation etc. Some efforts are now being made through the AECs to impart basic knowledge about these and other national programmes. Many of these women have learnt to write their names and simple numeracy skills as well. But they have to go a long way in attaining sufficient literacy to enable them to improve reading and writing etc. The concept of mahila mandal, charcha mandal, organisation of women





FOLK DANCERS OF BARKHANDI KALAN

etc. may then appeal to them as they are all fond of singing folk songs together and talking among themselves their various problems. There is a learning environment so to say because of which they are all keen to learn. It is heartening that in this village both men and women are attending the AECs and trying to become literate simultaneously. This can yield much better results.

However we felt the programme could have been more intensive and action-oriented than it is at present. There is more than one reason for better commitment to action on the part of the RFLP. It is now touch and go affair. Centres have been opened but not properly supervised or run for several obvious reasons. Once having taken up the project it should be pursued relentlessly and a continuous effort is essential in such areas. It could bring more success than what has been possible. If this initial effort to spread literacy in this small village is managed properly it can provide one of the strongest means of motivation for other illiterates in this village to join the AECs.

This village has now been selected for adoption under the Sampurna Saksharata Karyakram. This could be taken as a challenge.

For this literacy work has to move out from its present routine type of project operation to a missionary approach in the real sense and get involved fully with total commitment to the cause. The experience thus gained, the common sense thus developed, the insights and the vigorous spirit etc. could prove to be useful for the country as a whole.

Barkhandi Kalan is a sprawling dusty village in the interior of Tonk block with concentration of SC population. It is about 45 kms. from Tonk proper. The 450 odd families living here can be classified as farmers, leather workers and landless labourers.

Preparing Rajasthani type of joothas (shoes) is a cottage industry in these parts. Whole families are engaged in this profession. They make very attractive shoes to be worn by the local gentry. Now-a-days they have to spend about Rs. 25/- on materials —tanned leather and other items alone for each pair of shoes. They get @ Rs. 40/- per pair. Thus they make hardly Rs. 15/- in a pair as their labour charges. One person has to spend whole day in preparing a pair, which means his earning of Rs. 15/- only per day is very low. As there are no other suitable occupations available, they have been forced to continue their traditional profession.





The RFLP has opened six AECs in this village — three for men and three for women. Five of them are for SCs. All of them are functioning since July this year.

The age group covered is 15-35. Women centres are more active as compared to men centres. In October, a JSN has also been opened in this village. It is housed in a spacious two-storied building. There is lot of space both inside and outside the JSN.

Lines of mud plastered houses, neat and clean, decorated with traditional wall paintings in white attract one to this village.

On the occasion of our visit the adult learners with the help of Instructors and the Prerak had

organised a cultural programme of folk dance. The 'Ghoda Dance' is an important traditional item. People sing songs to the accompaniment of 'Dholak' and the dancers dance to the music and merriment of village audience. Motivational songs on benefits of education and literacy inviting illiterates to join the AECs opened in the village were also sung on this occasion.

Creating a learning environment requires lot of efforts. But once such an environment is created we can ensure lasting literacy. Folk media as in this village with which the potential learners are already familiar can play an important role and provide possibilities for continued involvement and practice in literacy. The JSN would now help in providing the neo-literates with opportunities to enhance their skills, use such skills for their own benefits and for the benefit of the community at large.





AJMER ADULT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Started in 1970, this Association has been working for the promotion of literacy in and around Ajmer for the past nearly 18 years. They have undertaken non-formal education for the age-group 6-14 besides adult education for 15-35 age group. From 1974-75 to 1983-84, they had covered nearly 2872 boys and girls under non-formal education both in the rural and urban areas.

At present they are implementing 100 NFE centres with a total enrolment of 3210 and 300 AECs with a total enrolment of 9000. They are also undertaking Household Industries Programme, SCYTE/TRYSEM Programme, Women Development Programme etc. These programmes have helped in linking literacy with development activities. For example, under TRYSEM, they are running 13 centres for training women in fruit preservation, leather raxine, batik painting, Tie & Dye, Juti/chappal making, Block printing, knitting, card board box making, handicrafts etc. Women learning in AECs get opportunity in these as well.

Under the Household Industries Programme, they have so far trained 315 women in tailoring; 440 in gota Ari-tari work; 369 in fruit preservation and 442 in embroidery.

Of the 300 AECs run by them, 127 are for men, 129 are for women and 44 are combined. Of the total enrolment of 9147, SC and ST were 1779 and 411 respectively.

The team could visit only two centres that of batik painting and a centre for minority community where the medium of instruction is Urdu. There are nine such centres in Ajmer.

URDU CENTRE AT ANDERKOT

These women are learning how to read and write their mother tongue Urdu but at the same time are getting training in gota, Ari-tari, preparation of decorative materials, etc. they are also told about women and child care, immunization, need for family planning etc.





BATIK CENTRE AT NALE BAZAR

Slum women are the beneficiaries in this centre. Fifteen women are learning and earning at this centre. It is both an AEC for women and a centre under TRYSEM programme. The Association has been able to link literacy with TRYSEM.

They are given training in batik painting for about six months. During this period they also get stipend



of Rs. 125/- per month. Batik paintings are in good demand and the learners can earn Rs. 250/- or more per month once they are trained in this art.

UNDER-TRIALS TRAINED BY SAEP

The Banswara District Jail is today humming with literacy activity, thanks to the efforts made by the State Adult Education Project (SAEP) here.

This is the second year in succession an AEC for male under-trials has been functioning in this jail which has accommodation for 90 persons. In all, 27 under-trials are enrolled at the AEC and 30 others who have become neo-literates are provided post-literacy material for their continuing education.

The AEC is run by one under-trial Naval Singh who has been in the jail for the last three years. He had studied upto 9th class and last year he appeared for the 10th class examination as a private candidate





LAMBI PATTI ON WAY TO LITERACY

and has passed. This was possible again due to the sustained interest and effort of both SAEP and jail authorities.

This Centre in controlled conditions has been able to achieve much better results as compared to normal AEC in rural areas. The adult learners have the time and guidance for learning and they learn quickly.

The jail authorities are particularly happy that these under-trials came to the jail as illiterates but shall be returning to their villages as literates, as changed persons with intension to lead a useful and purposeful life realising their duties and responsibilities as citizens of this country. They are also making effort to provide funtionality support to the literacy drive by starting income generation activities and imparting training in such skills.

Most of the under-trials are tribals and when they return they can usefully act as Instructors or Preaks in the literacy programme in their respective villages and contribute to the NLM.

Lambi Patti is a tribal village in the Ghatol block of Banswara District. Adult Education has been going on in this interior area for the past 3-4 years continuously. This year four AECs have been opened - two for women, one for men and one a combined centre. The entire credit for making the village literate goes to Shri Kachru popularly known as Bhagatji. He is aged about 51 years and has been working as Instructor for the last four years. He is loved and respected by everyone in this village and has a great command in the local dialect Wagdi. He had studied upto 9th class in the olden times and can handle his learners effortlessly. He makes them feel easy and at home and explains to them several things about life and living including improved agricultural methods etc. He has a way of his own which is both warm and effective. Under his leadership the village may complete the literacy programme in a couple of years. SAEP have also plans to set up a JSN for continuing education of the people.





MOTA GAON CHOSEN FOR COMPLETE LITERACY

Mota Gaon in Ghatol block of Banswara District has been chosen for attainment of complete literacy under the Sampurna Gaon Saksharata Karyakram.

Under this scheme, literacy will be imparted to all the illiterates in the village irrespective of their age. The non-formal scheme will cover the 6-14 age group, adult education the 15-35 age-group and 'Each One Teach One' the age-group 36 and above.

There are in all 1003 illiterates — 201 in 6-14 age-group, 339 in 15-35 age-group and 463 above 35 age-group.

The villagers are very enthusiastic and have prepared a 'Saksharata Geet' on this programme which they propose to tape and play it to motivate villagers. All the banks, service and educational institutions, Lions Club etc. have all promised help. The NYK and Youth Club are also involved in this effort. The SAEP will be providing teaching/learning materials and other aids. Already 14 AECs have been opened. There are 4 NFE centres also operating in this village which is also under the charge of DAEO with one APO to help him.

It was indeed a wonderful experience to meet and talk to the activists and understand their will and determination to make their village literate fully in a year with people's cooperation.

UNDER-TRIALS HAPPY TO LEARN

The under-trials at the Dansa District Jail in Rajasthan numbering about 25 are happy to learn at the AEC specially set-up for them. Ashok Kumar Mudgil is their Instructor who is a local teacher as well. This is the first time the RFLP, Dansa has opened a centre for the prisoners with the help of jail authorities.

The centre is running very well and the progress is also good because it is functioning under controlled conditions and the learners are motivated and have enough time to spare for studies.

They sing well. The literacy song sung by them depict the pledge of the nation to eradicate illiteracy soon. It is very touching song, very impressive and motivating too.

हम अपने देश को साक्षर बनाके छोड़ेंगे ।
दिलों में ज्ञान दीपक जलाके छोड़ेंगे ।
हम अपने देश को ।

हर अनपढ़ को घर से बुलाके लाएंगे ।
सभी को प्यार से पुस्तक पढ़ाके छोड़ेंगे ।
हम अपने देश को ।



"Mahila Lok Jagriti Samiti" Jaipur is a registered voluntary organisation actively engaged in programmes for the welfare of women and children. The organisation informally came into existence on 15th June 1978 and emerged as full-fledged organised body registered under Societies Act 1961 on 29th March, 1979.

This women's voluntary agency is implementing 60 adult education centres in Muhana area of Jaipur District for the past few months. Their success can be attributed to linking literacy with income generation skill such as textile printing for which Sanganer is famous. Other skills imparted by them under TRYSEM and other schemes for women include garment making, tailoring embroidery etc.

The Grameen Mahila Polytechnic programme helps about 45 women to earn a living besides learning literacy skills.

There is demand for literacy among women because of these and other activities of the society. They also undertake training of rural women in public cooperation, run cresse for women labourers etc. The women learners covered by training programmes get a stipend of Rs. 125/- per month.

IN THE CAMEL COUNTRY.....

One cannot think of Rajasthan without camels. These animals lend their distinctive strength and power and add colour to the rural Rajasthani life. Except for a few districts like Udaipur, Banswara etc. camels help in agricultural operations, in transporting produce to market and in several other ways. They are a great attraction in fairs and



festivals. At the Pushkar Mela alone thousands of camels are brought every year for sale. Their role in guarding the frontiers of the country cannot be minimised. They can carry tonne load of materials and serve as an ally in distress in the desert areas. For a desert Rajasthani therefore camel is both a friend and guide and he could never think of parting with it. He cares for it like his own kith and kin. Several legends in these parts speak of flying camels, escapades and gallantry. No doubt camels have come to be regarded as part and parcel of rural Rajasthani life. For city people like us camel ride even today is a pleasurable experience. Several foreign tourists enjoy camel ride every year in Rajasthan. Camels also help in literacy effort. Balrasmi Society, a voluntary organisation, operating from Jaipur has started a Camel Cart Mobile Library in Bassi block of Tonk District. Fifteen villages are covered by this post-literacy programme. The State Education Minister inaugurated this Camel Cart Library Service recently. The Society has been implementing 30 AECs in this area earlier.



From use of camels for literacy to use of walls in Rajasthan there is a tradition of decorating mu-plastered walls in the villages. The village women are adept in this art. Besides decorating the houses, these days wall writings are used for literacy promotion. Literacy slogans are written on the walls. Where Sampurna Saksharata Programme is on, details of such programme are given in Panchayat Ghars etc. People are proud to proclaim themselves literate. Thus 'Sakshar Parivar' written in bold letters invite one to such a household in villages covered by Complete Literacy Programme.

* * *



AECs in some villages have the look of 'Sat Sangh' with harmonium and other musical instruments. This is because all the adult learners are very good in singing bhajans and once a week they also devote the AEC for his purpose. It is a very motivating and influencing thing. The whole atmosphere is charged with devotion and the urge for purity of body and mind.



Since no set principles can ensure that people would enroll in literacy centres, attend the classes regularly and learn the skills and use such skills in life etc., whatever good 'Sat Sangh' type meetings can do has to be fully utilised in our villages. It can help spread literacy both oral and written. It can also help ensure peace and tranquility essential for learning. Music can also promote community feelings and oneness of purpose. Therefore the Rajasthani attempt is bound to bear fruit and success in the long-run.

* * *



A welcome feature of Rajasthan programme is use of JSNs for cultural activities. In Tonk and other places, JSNs are centres of attraction, where whole village assembles to watch traditional folk dances, hear folk music, watch TV etc. This is a good development and can carry the literacy programme ahead. Whether they immediately become literate or not, the villagers are drawn to the JSNs because of its cultural programmes.

* * *

Another noticeable thing was the crusade against not only illiteracy but social evils like 'Mrityu Bhoj', 'Bal Vivah', 'Sati', 'Dahej', 'Kanyavadh', untouchability etc.

In the AECs efforts are made to tell the learners about these social evils. Many of the AECs have been able to keep under control expenditure on 'Mrityu Bhoj'. People have taken vow not to attend such feasts.

Large scale illiteracy among women is responsible for many of these ills in rural societies. Rajasthan is no exception. With increase in awareness among women there will be perceptible improvement on the social front.

* * *

How an AEP has benefitted the functionaries and others? It is very difficult to answer this question. But from what we could see in the rural areas, we can say with confidence that literacy has made inroads into areas of superstition, untouchability etc. People now think what they propose to do is correct or not. There may be many social and other



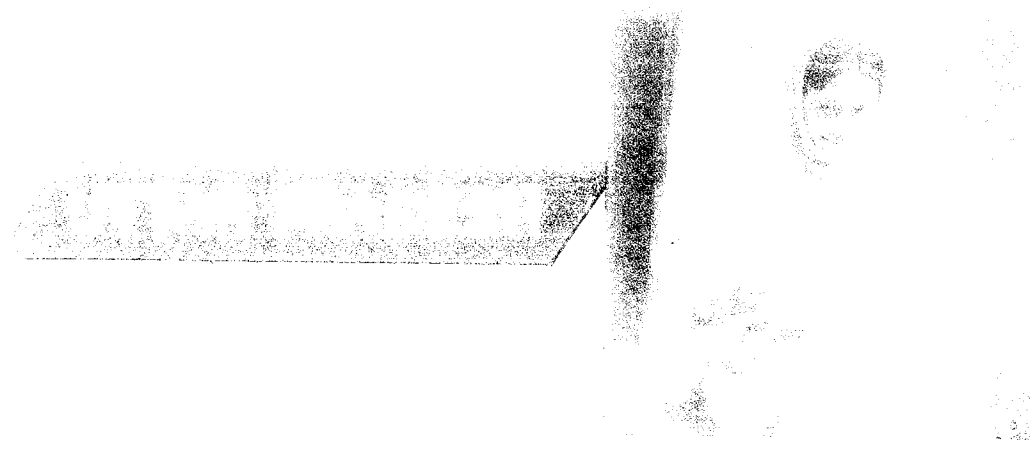


pressures persisting, but the fact that they have started questioning and discussing such issues in the AECs has helped a lot. There have also been some tangible benefits to instructors and others. For example, in the RFLP Project at Dansa 72 lady instructors have been trained as Mahila Pradhans — agents under the Small Savings Scheme. Well, this has helped them to earn 4% commission on total deposits under the scheme. Adult education has paved the way for their earning if not on full-time basis atleast on part-time basis.

In several villages in Tonk District of Rajasthan the former adult education instructors have been elected as Sarpanchs and in their new job they do feel happy and rewarded for the literacy work done by them. They are all taking more interest and initiative to spread literacy in their respective areas.

Another interesting development on the literacy front is the successful programmes in prisons. It is catching up and almost all the District Jails have now regular programmes for under-trials and other prisoners. The success of the programme can be attributed to the controlled conditions under which the prisoners can learn fast. They can help as Instructors, Preak etc. when they become free.

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JHADU MAKERS OF NAYA GAON

'Naya Gaon' is an SC village on the outskirts of Dehru Dun town. In fact, it is a big village inhabited mostly by landless labourers. They engage themselves in collecting tall forest grass, dry the same and prepare the most useful 'Jhadu' which every household needs.



Of course, for all their effort, they are low-paid. They have to obtain licence for collecting forest produce from the Forest Department. Non-licence holders are fined as and when caught in the act of collecting the grass. They have to labour hard to prepare the 'jhadus' (broomsticks) but the middlemen pay them only 60 paise per piece while it is sold in the market @ Re. 1/- or more.

This year after the good rains, there is plenty of grass and also of a very thick variety which can also be used for making ropes. The villagers also make 'Chatais' and baskets when grass is not available for 'jhadus'.

RFLP Dehra Dun has opened a men centre here and it has been running since April this year. The



AEC is located in the centre of the village in a hut which belongs to the Instructor Manjit Singh, M.A. The walls of the AEC have been tastefully decorated with posters. The teaching/learning materials, slates etc. are also kept nicely.

Though thirty adult illiterates have been enrolled in this centre, regular attendance is only 15-20. Manjit Singh, unemployed youth, takes lot of interest in educating his village people. He had participated in 'Each One Teach One' while in college and has also served as Instructor in AEC earlier years as



well. He has also distributed about 50 literacy kits in the village and taking the help of young men and women to spread literacy.

The learners are enthusiastic; they seem to have realised the need for literacy. But unemployment is their immediate problem. They would like to learn useful skills as the traditional skills they know cannot fetch them more income. Moreover their needs and wants have also increased. They must become literate but at the same time should also earn more money. These are their hopes and aspirations.

Literacy with better functional skills, may open up new avenues for their progress and prosperity. They have urge for progress and also the strength to work for it. All they need is some help, guidance and assistance, may be in the form of a co-operative or loan by a public sector bank etc.

DHUP MAKERS OF NIMBUWALA



What an active Instructor can do and how the adult learners can benefit by it can be seen at Nimbuwala, a small village under Kolaghat Gram Sabha in Dehra Dun district.

Smt. Vijayaraja Vanshi has not only been imparting literacy to her learners but has organised them by forming a Mahila Sahakari Samiti. They are now engaged in making dhup and earning some income. The Dhup unit — Mahila Sahakar Udyog, is run by the women's cooperative which has also been registered. The unit was opened by the





District Collector at an impressive function on in June this year. The women learners work for about two hours in their spare time at this production centre and earn Rs. 4/- per day. The production is picking up. They hope to meet local demand and also increase sale by and by. What they immediately need is some financial assistance through bank or by some other development agency.

Smt. Vanshi has very innovative ideas and she has used these in preparing her own teaching aids both for adult learners and their children. For example, for telling the learners about different shapes such as round (circle), square, triangle etc. she has cut such figures in various colours and pasted these in a box. This also helps her to tell them about different colours, especially in case of NFE learners. For teaching numeracy, she has prepared garlands with mud flowers each garland containing ten flowers — a very simple no-cost item which anyone can prepare. Again, for indicating to the learners various fruits and vegetables, she has prepared her own slide picture roll device in a card-board box with see-through window. The picture roll can be moved up and down as required.

Most of her learners belong to backward classes. She has also distributed 19 literacy kits in the village and trying to involve others also in the literacy endeavour.

For a monthly honorarium of Rs. 100/- she has been doing a lot of work — running the AEC and NFE centres, distributing literacy kits etc. For all this she has studied only upto high school but her devotion and commitment to the literacy mission is something worth emulating by other instructors all

over the country.





CENTRE FOR MINORITY COMMUNITY AT KHUSALPUR

Khusalpur is a dusty village in Shahasrapur block of Dehra Dun district. There are about 300 families residing here, most of whom belong to Muslim community. Illiteracy was rampant but adult education has helped in making the village women literate to some extent. An AEC was started in this village some four years back. After one year it was discontinued. Now this year again another centre for women has been started from April. It is functioning well. The learners are very much interested. The regular attendance is roughly 20 out of 30 enrolled.

About 50 literacy kits have also been distributed in the village so that more people can take to literacy.

The women are keen to learn tailoring, embroidery, needlework etc. They have also produced some very useful and attractive lace and embroidered pieces.





The notable thing in this village was that almost all the learners were of the age-group 15-20 and most of them were unmarried. They were not observing any 'purdha' system as such and could express themselves very well. In other words, they were very free and aware of what was happening around them and the world at large and therefore wanted to improve themselves and their status in life. This positive outlook can take them far in their effort to raise themselves up through functional literacy.

THE DISTANT HILLS OF JAUN SAR

Jaunsar tribal area in Khalsi Block of Dehra Dun district is a hilly not very easily accessible region. The Jaunsari tribal people live in these distant hills in isolation and seclusion practising their ageold customs and traditions.

In this age of mass communication and computers, Jaunsar hills are still distant for anyone who wish to go there.

The nearest road point to Athale village, on the summit of a hill, some 6000 ft. above sea-level, is 8 kms. away. One has to walk this distance on a mountain path which is more slippery than steep.

For the villagers the nearest health facility is some 10 kms. away; the nearest Police Station, Post Office, market or bank is also far away.

There is no electricity, no educational facilities worth mentioning except a middle school quite far away. Drinking water is scarce in summer months.



That is why these people have remained isolated, secluded and distant.

There are about hundred such villages in this area. But adult education has reached them, where even the Postman dreads to go, thanks to the effort of active literacy workers of RFLP Dehra Dun. Sixty AECs are now functioning in these distant hills.

No official machinery ever visits these villages, cut off as these are from the main stream of life. Nobody wants to take the pain of walking up several kms. and then trekking down steep slopes.

But as you go up and up the hills on the winding mountain path, you are rewarded by the beauty, serenity and sanctity of the whole environment though most of these hills are bare due to indiscriminate cutting down of trees and exploitation of mineral wealth.

The Jaunsari people have a life of their own. Their life style is suited to their environment. Their houses are made of strong wood and roofs are made of slate rocks locally available to withstand severe cold and snow. They cultivate on hill slopes and domesticate milch animals. Goat rearing is flourishing.



Eventhough several modern scientific and technological advances can be brought to these distant hills, none seem to have thought of such possibilities.

For example, there is problem of lighting and firewood. The solar energy can be usefully tapped as the sun shines bright most of the day. If this is not possible for one reason or other, portable generating sets can be brought. Gobar gas plants can also be thought of with some innovations to suit local needs and conditions. For drinking water, some arrangements exist but these are not enough. In the summer months, women have to walk miles to collect potable drinking water. Small or minor irrigation projects can be thought of. Rain water flows down to the river below. Some of it could be usefully stored in mountain reservoirs and used for drinking and irrigation purposes.

Forest wealth is not much. The whole hills can have a different look by planting more trees.

Small jeepable roads can come up with the help of villagers, most of whom are unemployed.

Unless basic facilities are provided in these distant hills, no visible progress is possible in these villages — the people and their children. Special efforts are required in this direction.

It is heartening that Athale village has taken to literacy in a big way. The motivation has come from the Instructor Mohan Singh, a young and energetic person belonging to the village itself.





All the young men of village are his learners, some of them had relapsed into illiteracy after schooling upto third or fourth class.

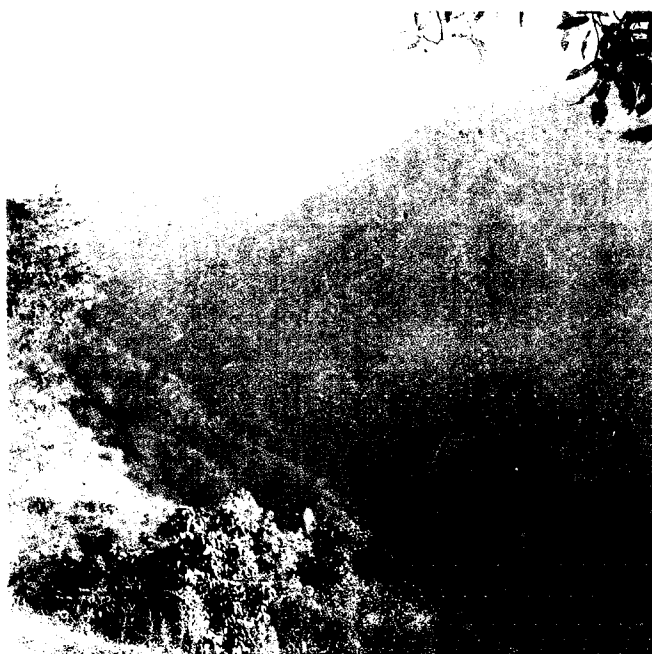
Women are yet to attend the literacy classes. Efforts are being made to open centres exclusively for them as well. But the difficulty is in finding suitable Instructors.

With the coming up of the AECs in these distant hills, the door to progress has been opened. People do not follow 'Pandava Pradha' (polyandry) and

such other customs. This is a great achievement.

The adult education endeavour in these distant hills of Jaunsar deserves all our encouragement and appreciation. Let us hope the authorities would make special efforts to provide basic facilities to these people soon.

Perhaps the day is not far off when these hills will be connected by ropeways and helipads to usher in a new era of progress and prosperity for these deprived sections of community.





CHARKHA CENTRE AT GANJA GAON

Ganja Gaon is a very beautiful village situated in between two mountain slopes with fresh water, fresh fruits and vegetables. The people here are healthy and lively. There are about 300 families of all castes and creeds residing in these green hillocks of bhimtal Block of Nainital district.

The motivation for women to join the AEC was the charkha training facilities extended by the local Khadi Gramodyog. The training was for three months and the adult learners were regular during this period. Thereafter, their interest in the AEC started receding.

Kumari Deepa Bora, the Instructor says the learners have mastered the art of spinning on the charkha and can earn a living by working in their spare time.

Now they are all awaiting arrival of their charkas for which they have also made their applications and loans etc. are being finalised.

In this village one comes across learners with different backgrounds and needs. One learner is a widow and by necessity has to earn in order to support her family. Another is a newly married 'Bahu' who has come from another village. Her husband is a literate and he expects her to become a literate soon.

The story of literacy is thus different to different persons though its aim is to make people literate. We literacy workers have to know who needs what and why and think about how to meet these needs and demands and arrange for literacy to be imparted to learners accordingly.





YUWATI MANDAL, RANI BAGH

What neo-literate women can do; how they can organise themselves and undertake jobs which were once considered monopoly of men; how they can spend their spare time usefully and purposefully etc. can be seen at the Yuwati Mandal.

This organisation came into being nearly three years back by the intensive efforts of some former adult learners. It is today a registered body and over 15 women are engaged in doing regular jobs for the HMT Watch Factory nearby. They are paid wages on contract basis.

Some of them had received training at the factory for three months with stipend etc. on the jobs to be undertaken by them. For this their learning at the AEC was of great help, according to Mrs. Chandrawati, one of the founder members. But for their becoming literate it would have been impossible for them to be selected for training at the HMT.

The HMT has also provided this organisation with tables and chairs and other facilities. The Mandal has two work rooms and women work in their spare time. The jobs performed by them need lot of care and speed. Some of them work on the main plates of the watches. The work has to be done in time and returned to the factory. Women earn from Rs. 150/- to Rs. 350/- per month depending on the jobs performed by each. Some of them have to put in long hours daily to earn maximum amount.

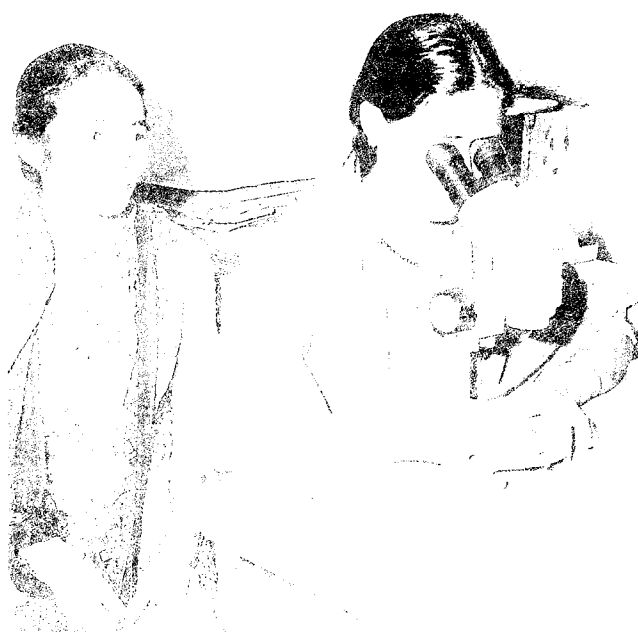
The HMT has provided jobs to women in this area several of whom are neo-literates or adult learners. Jobs are no doubt mechanical in nature— same operation has to be performed again and again. Women by nature have lot of patience and skill at

this. They have to use their eyesight though microscope has also been provided to them by the factory.

The Yuwati Mandal now feels the wages paid to them are low as compared to the wages paid by HMT to their regular employees in the factory. Now they are making an effort to get more wages through collective bargaining.

The AEC at this place is still continuing. More and more illiterate women of the locality are taking advantage of the literacy classes and job opportunities provided by the Yuwati Mandal.

This experience by women in this area has given them self-confidence and through self-help they are on the road to progress and prosperity.





TARAI VILLAGE TOWARDS LITERACY

Lakhanpur is a small village in Haldwani block of Nainital district. It is on the other side of the Gola river and hence known as 'Golapar' like we have 'Jamunapar' in Delhi. The village comes under the Tarai region of U.P. famous for its greenery and crops.

A women AEC has been functioning here for past few months. Most of the adult learners are agricultural labourers. The centre is located in the spacious newly-built house of the Instructor Miss Tara Sambal.

What is noteworthy is the opening of the centre as a first-step in eliminating illiteracy from this prosperous village.



STORY OF BINDU KATHA

The Story of Bindu Katha is the story of thousands of landless labourers and others who have migrated from interior areas of Pithoragarh, Almora and such other places in U.P. to Tarai region some 10-15 years back. They occupied forest lands, cleared the jungles and started cultivation. Even today huge trunks of trees stand amidst fields and backyards of houses as reminders of bygone days. These new settlers from the hills had to undergo lot of difficulties besides facing the wrath of the Forest Department. With no roads, no electricity or water facilities, these people waged a life and death battle against all odds.

The sheer necessity to survive made them go on and on. Several settler families perished to malaria and other diseases. Several left the 'hell of a place'. But those remained and struggled hard have made it; their success is written on their faces. The battle still continues, according to them the battle for basic facilities for a population of over 45,000 men and women spread over 40-50 kms. area.

The settlers have built their huts and live in unison. They have preserved their culture and traditions intact. Most of them however are illiterate belonging to SC and ST communities.

Kheda is one such village in Bindu Katha where adult education is active. The people have taken to literacy as there are no schools or other educational facilities worth mentioning. There are 2 AECs in this area run by the RFLP, Haldwani. Most of these are women centres.

With the help of NYK, they have started tailoring



centre in Kheda village. The local youth have also formed an association known as 'Nehru Yuva Sangatan'. About 30 women learners are enrolled in the Tailoring Centre.

The Supervisors and Instructors in Bindu Katha are very painstaking and always on the look out for ways to promote literacy. One such Instructor is Rekha Rawat; another one is a good singer. They have composed several songs and travel from village to village singing those songs to motivate the settler families to attend AECs.

The people of Bindu Katha live cordially like a family, one helping the other. 'One for All and All for One' spirit seems to pervade among them because they are all up in arms against a common enemy — the Establishment. Literacy has become a vital tool in their battle to win their rights.

The story of Bindu Katha is perhaps an unending story of trials and tribulations, tears and toils, but triumphs at last; it is indeed the sad story of uprooted people, of human misery and human predicament but human aspirations for better life; it is also part of the eternal story of Man in search of new green pastures to lead a life full of joy, mirth and happiness.

The story of Bindu Katha and the literacy effort going on there should be of interest to all of us.





HANDICAPPED GIRL SHOWS WILL AND COURAGE

In Kheda Village we came across a handicapped girl — Kumari Hira Jaggi of 15 years of age. She had lost use of one of her arms in a fire accident during childhood itself.

She is now learning at the AEC and can read and write. She has also learnt the art of chatai making with one hand and earns some money in this way.

All the people at the AEC are full of praise for her will and courage and take particular care to teach her further.

It was very interesting to meet Kumari Jaggi and know about her life and aspirations.



MATCHSTICK PACKERS OF GADI KHAS

Gadi Khas is a backward village about 5 ms from Rae Bareli town. The RFLP runs a women centre here. It has been running for the second year in succession. They have linked literacy activity with income-generation.

The Rana Beni Madhav Jana Kalyan Samiti, a voluntary agency, has a match production centre in this village. They are engaging the women learners in filling the match boxes with prepared match sticks. This packing is a manual operation.





Since the adult learners are doing the job, the production centre has also prepared labels with AEC insignia to be pasted on each match box. It serves two purposes — one to motivate learners and the other publicity for the programme.

Through this labour-intensive activity women of the village earn Rs. 10/- to Rs. 15/- per day depending upon the quantum of work performed by each.

In view of the opportunity to earn and learn at this centre, which is located in one of the rooms of the production centre itself, attendance is also more or less regular. The AEC is quite active and lively as well. Women have realised the need for literacy combined with functionality.

The RFLP is trying to have more such centres especially in the remote rural areas.

MULTIPURPOSE CENTRE AT JHAKHARASI

Jhakharasi is a green village with big trees in the Rahi Vikhas Khand of Rae Bareilly district. Here the RFLP has taken full advantage of the Block training programmes for women. These include training in rope making using a 'Ban' machine with locally available raw material; mat making, grass baskets, hand fans etc.

The adult learners attend literacy classes and learn how to read, write and calculate at this centre and also participate in the training programmes. The centre is located in the spacious Panchayat Ghar. During training period Block provides stipend and other facilities.



The learners are fully motivated and AEC is quite active and lively. This would not have been possible if there was no linkage with functionality programmes.



RANA BENI MADHAV JANA KALYAN SAMITI, RAE BARELI

A voluntary organisation primarily engaged in the field of adult education and rural development, the Samiti was established in the year 1970 as a charitable institution.

From small beginnings, this institution today has grown into a full-fledged training-cum-production unit doing multifarious social, cultural and developmental activities in and around Rae Bareli. They are training aanganwadi workers under ICDS programme; run creshes for CSWB; undertake production of matches etc. under DWACRA.

They started implementing adult education programme in 1983-84 with 30 AECs; in 1985-86 they ran 100 AECs followed by 300 AECs in 1986-87. At present they are implementing 100 AECs in Dalmau block of Rae Bareli district which is very

backward especially in women literacy.

Bhira Govindapur is a typical village in this block where two AECs for women are functioning. According to a survey made by the Samiti out of a total population of 4651, as many as, 2,00 are illiterate belonging to 15-35 age-group and nearly 1,100 are women. Most of these people belong to SC and backward classes.

Both Aanganwadi and AEC have been combined in this village and the Instructors are fully engaged from morning till evening. They also get payment from both schemes.

The Samiti has a good team of young and committed workers and their Secretary Shri B. Shukla is a very dynamic social worker and literacy activist.



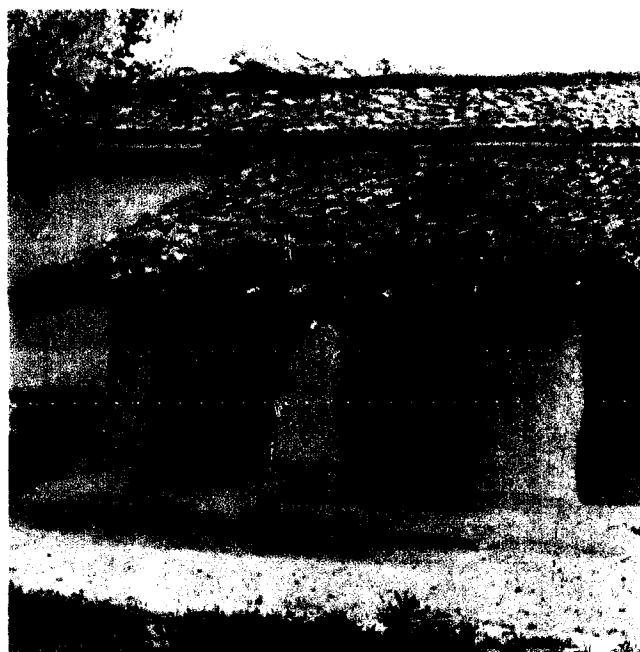


CARPET WEAVERS OF DUMARIA

Dumaria is a peaceful village some 30 kms. from Robertsganj in Mirzapur district. Several Adivasi and SC people like Dongar, Chero, Mushair, Dasar, Harijans etc. live here. The nearest road point is Ramgad 8 kms. away. There is therefore no bus service to this village. It is on the other side of Karamnasa canal. The waters of Karamnasa river are stored in a barrage at Naguva Dam built in 1918 and utilised for irrigation purposes. Paddy is the main crop. Though there is electricity in the Dam and roadside, connections are yet to be given to houses in the area.

Some of the Dongar and other tribal people are engaged in carpet weaving. They are given raw materials and wages by the manufacturing firms. For a carpet of size $10' \times 12'$, the wages offered is around Rs. 5000/-. It takes for four or five people months to prepare a good carpet with a profusion of colour and designs matching international standards. It is both time consuming and tedious job. Children spend several hours daily in this sort of work. They don't get time to attend schools. Finally, when the carpet is ready after months of labour, the manufacturing firm reduces the wages on grounds of not sticking to specifications, for silly mistakes, for this and that etc. etc. and the villagers get around Rs. 3000/- only. This sort of exploitation continues. These people are now aware of this and talk about it. But they also admit that as there are no alternative employment opportunities in the area, they are forced to undertake carpet weaving for their survival needs.

While carpets made in Dumaria and other villages in this area earn lot of foreign exchange for the country and exporting firms earn fat profits by it, poor carpet weavers still rot in poverty and illiteracy.





Their sad plight in life is something to be seen than heard; it is so poignant and cannot be expressed in few words.

Illiteracy is rampant in these villages. The Ambedkar Samaj Seva Mandal, a voluntary organisation, has recently started adult education centres for their benefit. Sixty such centres have been opened in this area. The literacy effort has started yielding some results. It has created among the people some awareness about their rights and duties.

All the houses in Dumaria and other villages are neat and clean, tiled roofs with mud-walls plastered with cowdung. Some of them also work in nearby fields as agricultural labourers.

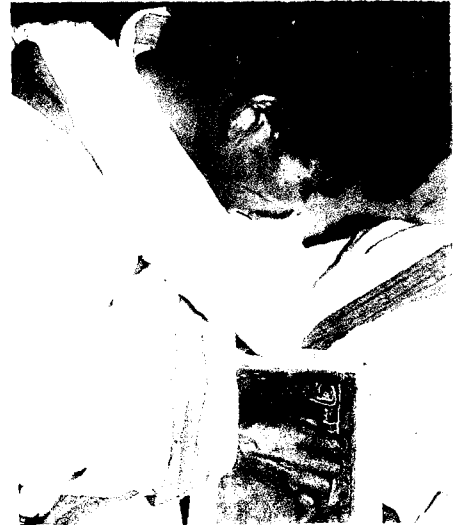
The Samaj has launched a publicity campaign painting the walls in these villages with AEC insignia and slogans. They have promised to take intensive steps to improve literacy instruction in the coming months. Let us hope the carpet weavers of Dumaria really benefit from these AECs.



WEST BENGAL



- * West Bengal enjoys a great heritage and a glorious past both in the freedom struggle of the country and its great idealistic personalities — Vivekananda, Vidyasagar, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Tagore, Subhas Chandra Bose, to mention only a few.
- * It is distressing to see West Bengal still lagging behind in literacy — 40.94 per cent, 50.67 per cent for men and 30.25 per cent for women. The State ranked only 16th position among States/UTs in the matter of literacy.
- * Out of a total of 23 districts, seven were below the national literacy average.
- * There were as many as 79.75 lakh adult illiterates in the 15-35 age group according to 1981 census. But this figure has now gone up to 86.63 lakhs.
- * Of this, nearly 17.76 lakhs had been covered upto June 1988. There remains 68.87 lakh yet to be covered under the AEP.
- * A new Department of Mass Education was formed at State-level for intensifying efforts and new initiatives are on for extending area of operation of literacy programmes in the years to come.
- * Literacy efforts, as can be evident from the stories that follow, seem to have given a fresh impetus to the traditional values and heritage linking them more strongly to their roots.





SLEEPY VILLAGES AWAKE FOR LITERACY

The harvests are over. The fields are vacant. With winter chillness in the air and smoky mists hanging over the entire countryside, rural Bengal presents a sleepy disposition. The sun also sets early and with no electricity, normally many of the Santhal adivasi villages are also in deep slumber by evening.

But these sleepy villages are awake these days. What for? Because they seem to have realised the need for literacy, how it can help them to better their own lives and ensure the bright future of their children.

If that is so, we should all feel happy about it. The tribal peoples' readiness for literacy should find full support from the entire community and literacy workers.

The programme has just started this year in some of these villages for the first time. The enthusiasm and urge of the villagers has been only partially met. There is need for opening more AECs in several of these tribal villages as most of them are steeped in illiteracy. There are very few women who can read or write. Women play a very important role in tribal communities. Virtually all affairs both of the family and outside are managed by them. The children are looked after by them, they work in the fields, attend markets and have greater responsibilities as compared to men. It is therefore, all the more essential to bring literacy to them early.

With literacy they can play a much more crucial role in the affairs of their community and raise their own status and that of others.

Maharishi Devendranath Tagore, father of the great Rabindranath Tagore founded the Shantiniketan

Ashram in Bolpur in 1863. Viswabharati was founded in 1921.

The Viswabharati University located at Bolpur has also been implementing rural literacy programme in Bolpur block. Except this, there have been no other effort outside State-run projects.

According to Rabindranath Tagore one of the chief drawbacks of rural life was lack of education. He also knew that the then existing education system which was meant mostly for the higher classes, was defective, its principal defect being its total divorce from productive activity and life at grass root level.

One of the main objectives of Tagore's educational philosophy was to promote the spirit of enquiry in the receiver providing him with questions relevant to him as a man among men and nature around him.

For the common man in the rural areas education did not appeal as it was neither suitable to him nor practical.

Even today the land of Tagore is steeped in illiteracy. The efforts of Sriniketan and others have limited scope and objectives.

Unless and until mass effort is possible, eradication of illiteracy will remain a distant dream.

Glimpses of literacy effort in some of the tribal villages both in Bhirbhum and Midnapore districts follow :



SANTHAL VILLAGE MOVE TOWARDS LITERACY

Vaga Ban is a Snathal Village in the Khyrasole block. It is a backward village in several respects. There is no electricity. Road communication is also not adequate. A primary health centre and a school are located some distance away from the village. It has a population of about 5000 people. Villagers mainly depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Most of them are however landless labourers. But their houses are neat and clean, so are their surroundings.

An adult education centre for men under State project has been in operation in this village continuously for four year since 1984-85. They have covered nearly 100 men and are yet to open a

centre for women. The Project Officer hopes to make all the adult illiterates literate in this village in another two years time.

Rasamoy Murmu is the active Instructor. He had studied upto 9th Class and has been working as Instructor for the last four years in the village.

We talked to some former learners and it was interesting to hear from them the utility of reading and writing in their day-to-day life. Some of them are now able to read signboards, tickets, newspaper headlines etc. They are able to keep accounts for wages received and so on.





Now they have all learnt how to read and write, it was suggested to them that they may teach their kith and kin, womenfolk etc. to read and write and thus help spread literacy. Some of them felt they could teach their wives in spare time but the difficulty was the women were almost always busy in some job or other. They must find sometime for this.

With the help of former learners it may be possible to cover all the remaining adult illiterates in this village in the next couple of years. Otherwise, it may take much longer time and it would be difficult to persuade women to come to AECs regularly.

If they can be taught in their own homes by their menfolk, preferably husbands, literacy can spread quickly. By teaching others, the former learners would also not relapse into illiteracy. Otherwise, it was noticed many of them had forgotten what they had learnt because there is no follow-up programme in the State-run projects.

Mere literacy has only been attempted in this tribal village. It would have been much better if some effort had been made to link literacy with developmental activities so that the tribal people can find better employment opportunities.

There is both social and political awareness among the people. They are aware of what is happening around and have great aspirations for partaking in all that. The main stumbling block is inadequate opportunities. Spread of literacy has paved the way partly for further development and it is hoped progress will come to these villages sooner than expected.





TREES, TREES AND TREES

The first thing that attracts one to Jhargram in Nidnapur district is the large number of trees seen everywhere in this tribal belt. When other parts of the country are sighing for such a sight and have taken up large-scale planting of trees, in Jhargram trees are so natural and part of the landscape.

Trees, trees and trees, a variety of them, tall and green — sal trees, tamarind, neem, mahuva and others, all enhance the beauty of the countryside, enrich its economy and life. Air is cool and salubrious all through the year. There is no pollution we see in cities. Soil is deep and hard. Plenty of birds and animals add colour to the whole atmosphere which is fresh and healthy. The cooing of birds and the chilly pleasurable breeze in the morning wake you up every day.

Life in these parts is calm and peaceful. Everything seems to move in order, there is no hurry-burry.

Life acquires more meaning and purpose

The Santhal adivasis have their abodes in the villages round about Jhargram forest area. They have been living in these parts for centuries hunting, cultivating, singing and dancing. Many of the tribal people are still illiterates but efforts are on to motivate them and impart literacy to them in their own villages through the adult education programme.

It is a great effort and adivasi men and women have started realising the need for literacy to cope up with the changing times and needs.

We could visit only three AECs in this area but it did give us an insight into the possibilities of extending this programme and widening its scope to include functional skills to make themselves self-reliant as far as possible so that they can lead a better life in their own native land.





PEACOCK DANCERS OF BHANDARUPUR VILLAGE

Bhandarupur Village is about 35 kms. from Jhargram proper. It comes under Velaidiha Gram Panchayat under Binpur II Development block. It is a Santhal adivasi area. There are about 500 adult illiterates in the village according to a recent survey.

Only last year a male centre was opened here and this year again it has been continued.

The attendance at the centre has not however been much, say 10-15 on a regular basis. This is because most of the learners are landless labourers and have sometimes to move out for employment.

The villagers are a happy-go-lucky lot enjoying all sorts of combats. When we visited, cock fights were going on.

The adult learners at this centre not only excel in literacy, but also in physical culture. They all can dance adorned with peacock feathers, clad in

traditional dhothies to the beat of drums. It is a very tiring exercise but the village youth are very proficient in it. They all relish and enjoy and feel happy and contented.





SINGING DAMSELS OF ETHALA VILLAGE

“The Nishad King went for fishing. He went into the deep waters to catch a big fish. The Nishad Queen got panicky. She entreats her husband to come back for her sake” ... so the song goes, a piece from an ancient legend dearer to the hearts of Santhal adivasis, whose life is full only with singing and dancing.

Takur Mani Murmu and Mohini are two adult learners at the local AEC who can sing well and dance. Their centre is located in a primary school, a spacious hut. This interior tribal village is itself located in a deep forest area where wild elephants roam about freely. The villagers depend on the forest wealth for their livelihood. They prepare ‘chatais’ and other useful things, collect leaves of

trees and prepare plates and cups for serving food items etc. There is no electricity or other modern facilities.

This is the first time an AEC has been opened in this far-off village and the villagers are very enthusiastic and cooperating.

Any visitor to the AEC is received with great honour — the traditional cleaning of feet with pure water and garlanding etc. The women learners also perform dances and present other cultural programmes.

It was a great entertainment and education to visit the village and know their great heritage and tradition.





DANCING BEAUTIES OF BARA ARA

Bara Ara is a green hilly area covered with jungles and forests. The Santhal tribal community have been residing here for centuries cultivating paddy, hunting in the forests, domesticating milch animals etc. Piggery and poultry have also come up these days. There is no electricity or other modern facilities. Life is calm and peaceful. The houses are neat and clean.

Mud plastered houses spick and span covered with paddy straw from the fields with ante-rooms for cattle and clean streets, paddy stocked neatly after harvests on the foreground of houses etc. present a very pleasing vision to the visitor.



It is for the second year an AEC for women has been operating in this village. The learners are not only adept in the art of literacy with beautiful hand writing, they are also dancing damsels with great respect for their culture and tradition.

They are not professional singers or dancers but they can compete with any such professional groups as their performance is original, unmixed and inborn to the native soil.

It was thrilling and intoxicating to watch them dance to the beat of big war drums and sing songs of bygone days reminding the history and customs of the tribe.



WHAT IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE METHOD?

What method of teaching is most effective? Can anybody say with authority?

The answer is difficult. What is effective in one place may not be that effective elsewhere. And there are methods, a variety of them in practise in the non-formal system of adult education.

In the AECs it has been a trial and error method. If one does not work, it is changed. But participatory method is always preferred as the Instructor has to treat his learners as equals. He also learns from them. It is not therefore a one way flow of information as in the formal system, particularly in our schools. In AECs the adult learners know so much about many things, only that they have not acquired the ability or skills of reading and writing.

Kusoram Hembram, Instructor, Nanu Bazar Donga Adivasi centre, Mohd. Bazar block, Bhirbhum district seems to know his learners thoroughly and he has developed a very effective method of imparting literacy to them. He has been in this line for the past five years and had made several learners literate during this period. For all this, he has passed only the 8th class. His centre is running in a spacious hut belonging to a leading political party. He has imbibed some of the qualities of the political mission and using his organising skill for literacy development. He takes extra interest and gets himself immersed in his job. Perhaps it is absorbing to him and provide him more strength and satisfaction.

It was indeed a great inspiration to watch him active in his centre with the learners. He is in full

command of the whole situation and talk to them in their native tribal dialect to make them fully understand the meaning of several Bengali words which are taught from the primer.



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