Evaluation of Literacy Campaign in India

Report of Expert Group

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Department of Education
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PREFACE

The Report of the Expert Group, appointed by the Ministry of Human Resource Development to look into the progress, problems and evaluation of the Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) initiated by the National Literacy Mission [together with the nascent Post Literacy Campaign (PLC) being introduced as a follow-up of the TLC], is divided into two parts.

Part-I comprising the Chapters 1 to 3, gives the history and the strategy, as formulated by the NLM Secretariat. Part-II, comprising Chapters 4 to 8, sum up the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Expert Group. The recommendations on TLC are given in Chapter 6, on PL and CE in Chapter 7 and on Evaluation in Chapter 8.

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Chairperson of the Group
New Delhi,

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

0.1. In terms of the Department of Education Notification No.F. 25/91-AE(D.II) dated 16.4.1993, the said Department of Education of the Ministry of Human Resource Development constituted a six member Expert Group to undertake a Status-cum- Impact Evaluation of Literacy Campaigns launched in different parts of the country since 1990- 91. A copy of the relevant Notification is given at Annexure- 1.

0.2. The Expert Group had its first meeting in April 1993. Since then it has met 18 times. In order to assist the Group in evolving appropriate evaluation procedures - as also to obtain deeper understanding, the reliability (or otherwise) of the available evaluation reports, the Group interacted with a number of institutions involved in evaluation of TLCs, including seven new ones (already selected by the NLM) and discussed (a) the research design & sampling procedures being adopted/followed by them, and (b) the conclusions they had arrived at - in two workshops convened by the Department. This helped the Group to build on this collective experience of a fairly large and diverse set of social scientists, with differing expertise, perspectives and approaches, to provide some guidelines for External Evaluation teams in the future. The list of the various institutions/agencies engaged in evaluation of TLC with whom the Group interacted is given in Annexure-1 para 4.

0.3 In addition, the Group benefited significantly from a series of intensive discussions it had with representatives of the Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta (in particular, Professors Nikhilesh Bhattacharya and Samir Guha Roy) and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay (Prof. Denzil Saldanha).

0.4. The Group also interviewed educationists. administrators, and other organisers and participants of TLC/PLCs, experts in social science research, media experts, leaders of major voluntary agencies involved in literacy programmes. The Group also held discussions with the Secretary, Department of Education, Director General (NLM), Heads of SRCs, Joint Secretary (DPEP), Ministry of Human Resource Development, university professors and others interested in the subject, so as to get their expert views on various aspects of TLCs/PLCs. A list of persons interviewed is attached as Annexure-2.

0.5. Different members of the Expert Group also visited several States like Maharashtra, Goa, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, West Bengal, Orissa, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, for an 'on the spot study' of a large number of districts where TLC and PL/CE is in progress. The Expert Group did not visit any of the North Eastern States partly because of the limitations of time, but also because the Group felt that the problems of the North Eastern States are not primarily related to the lack of literacy at this juncture.

0.6 In addition, the Chairman and individual members of the Group have interacted extensively with a large number of Key Persons involved in TLC and PL/CE at the national, State, district, block and village levels.

0.7. Mention should also be made of several written notes and memoranda received by the Group, in particular, notes written by some women activists involved in the literacy movement in Haryana, and West Bengal. The Group is also grateful for the help given by Ms Jharna Jhaveri in Bihar and for the insights received from her and many others who came in contact with the Group, including Shri Ajaykumar Varma of the technical consultancy group of the BGVS, in Bihar.

0.8. The Group owes its thanks to all the individuals/organisations who shared their experiences and provided their expert opinion to the Group during its investigations and field visits; the Education Secretary, DG(NLM), JS(DPEP), Director (DAE) and all others who have facilitated the work of the Group. The Group is grateful for the

PART-I

ADULT EDUCATION IN INDIA

Introduction

1.1 The Constitution of India directs the state to make provision for securing the right of children to education within the limits of its economic capacity, and to provide free and compulsory education to all children upto the age of 14 by 1960. It also lays down that the state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people such as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

1.2 Successive decennial censuses have pointed to a large mass of illiterate people in the country, and from 1959 to 1977 various sporadic and uncoordinated efforts, as indicated below were made in the field of adult education in India. This was followed by the centre based programme under the National Adult Education Programme from 1978 to 1990 by which time the National Literacy Mission had come into existence (in 1988) and based on the initial success of the campaign approach, the same was accepted as the dominant strategy for adult education programmes in India.

The Gram Shikshan Mohim

1.3 This movement was started in the state of Maharashtra in 1959. It was a step towards mass mobilisation in the field of adult education and was launched on an experimental basis in 25 districts of the state. The programme was of a very short duration and there was no systematic follow-up as a result of which there was large scale relapse of neo-literates into illiterates.

Farmers' Functional Literacy Projects

1.4 This project was initiated as part of the Green Revolution with the objective of making farmers functionally literate in high yielding cultivation areas. The three components of this programme were: functional literacy, farmers' training and radio programmes for the farmers. Although the long term objective was to establish one project in each district (400), by 1977 only 140 projects could be covered. This programme had to be discontinued due to very small coverage and lack of financial support.

Workers' Education

1.5 This programme is implemented through the Central Board of Workers' Education and its institutes. However, the efforts under this scheme could not be linked to the literacy schemes/projects being funded under the departments of Education of the states or by the Govt. of India. The scheme of Shramik Vidyapeeths of the Department of Education, Govt. of India is a small scheme in urban areas which links literacy with vocational programmes but on a very limited scale of intervention.

Nonformal Education for Youth

1.6 This programme was started in 1975 with the objective of providing NFE to young people relevant to their environment. It aimed at increasing functional skills of the learners so as to increase their productivity and social participation. On an experimental basis, one project each was started in 100 districts but it received a setback due to inadequate financial allocations.

Education Commission (1964-66)

1.7 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 the liquidation of illiteracy. It urged that adult education should 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 media for the literacy programme.*

NCERT., Education and National Development: Report of the Education Commission, 1964-66, New Delhi, 1970, pp. 784-87

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

1.9 The first nationwide attempt at eradication of illiteracy was made through the National Adult Education Programme (1978), to follow up the recommendations of the Education Commission Report and the subsequent National Policy on Education (1968) announced by the Government of India.

National Adult Education Programme (NAEP)

1.10 A massive programme of Adult Education called the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) for removal of illiteracy in the 15-35 age group was formulated by the Government of India and launched on 2nd October, 1978. The target for this programme was to educate 100 million adults within a time frame of five years.

1.11 The objectives of the National Adult Education Programme were not merely to impart literacy in the conventional sense, but also to provide learners with functionality and awareness which were conceived as three integral components of this programme. Literacy meant acquisition of the skills of reading, writing and numeracy. Functionality implied the ability to utilise and apply the skills so acquired in day to day life 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, the community and the society, so as to improve their quality of life.

Rural Functional Literacy Project (RFLP)

1.12 This was a major centrally sponsored scheme started in 1978 for rural areas. The erstwhile 144 Farmers' Functional Literacy Projects and 60 Nonformal 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, each centre having 25-30 learners.

State Adult Education Programme (SAEP)

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

Adult Education through Voluntary Agencies

1.14 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 and they were allowed to run the projects in a compact area.

Appraisal of Centre-based Programme

1.15 An appraisal of the NAEP programme (1978) as seen through the monitoring reports of the DAE, New Delhi indicate that a total of 44.22 million learners were enrolled in adult education centres in different years upto March 1988 as against the target of 100 million. No figures are available as to how many out of these successfully completed the literacy programme. But, on the basis of sample evaluation studies it was estimated that 45 percent of the enrolled learners would have attained literacy. Thus, the level of achievement of this programme in relation to the target set for it was only about 20 percent, which is considered to be low.

Review of the Adult Education Programme

1.16 In addition, the Centre-based programmes had been reviewed and evaluated by several institutes of social science research and other agencies between 1978 and 1985. 80 evaluation reports were brought out. Their findings - as summarised in the NLM Document revealed the following strengths and weaknesses of the programme.*

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* MHRD (Deptt of Education), Govt. of India, (1988) National Literacy Mission pp. 12-13.

Strengths

- Women's motivation and participation had been high;
- Coverage of weaker sections of the society (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) 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 National Resource Centre and the State Resource Centres were found to b e good;
- 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 cooperation from State Governments.

The existing procedures for their involvement was 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 Goverments and the Panchayati Raj institutions were not forthcoming.

National Policy on Education

1.17   The National Policy on Education (1986) as amended in 1992 and The Plan of Action (POA) thereunder lays stress on following a dual track approach, emphasizing both on primary and non-formal education and adult education programmes.

National Literacy Mission (NLM)

1.18   The National Literacy Mission was set up by the Government of India in recognition of the need for priority attention to literacy for speeding up the development process and was launched by the Prime Minister of India on 5th May, 1988. The objective of the National Literacy Mission in quantitative terms was, to start with, to impart functional literacy to 80 million adult illiterate persons in the age group 15-35 (30 million by 1990 and an additional 50 million by 1995). This target has since been revised to making 100 million persons literate during the VIII Five Year Plan i.e. between 1992 and 1997. The NLM has adopted a campaign approach, the success of which rests on the mobilisation of social forces and on securing people's participation.

EVOLUTION OF STRATEGY UNDER THE NATIONAL LITERACY MISSION

Centre-based Approach

2.1 The National Literacy Mission which was set up in 1988 took over the National Adult Education Programme as it was conceptualised in 1978. The National Adult Education Programme followed the centre-based approach under the Rural Functional Literacy Projects. The centre-based approach consisted of one Rural Functional Literacy Project of 300, 200 or 100 centres and almost each district had one project sanctioned to it. Each centre run by one paid instructor (Rs.100/- per month) was to cater to 30 learners. However, for hilly and remote areas the number of learners per centre could be less.

2.2 As the following exposition will show, the period between 1988 i.e. the launching of the National Literacy Mission, and 1990 when the Ernakulam Model was adopted was very crucial, being the beginning of the life of the Mission, but these valuable three years were lost to the Mission in continuing with the centre-based approach about the inadequacy of which there should have been no doubt in anyone's mind. The goals of the NLM which were set at the beginning were thus not really translated into programme action in these three years since the Mission continued with the same centre-based approach with some changes in the implementation mode/mechanism. The activities of the Mission began in right earnest only 1990 onwards after the successful implementation of the Ernakulam Campaign. In that sense, it can be said that the Mission has really been in existence for the past four years only.

2.3 The strategy for post literacy and continuing education has been an evolving strategy. It has been recognised at the national level that there can be no format or strategy which would be uniformly applicable all over. Different States may follow different strategies and within States different districts may also show variation in the approach that they adopt. This is so because each project has to take into account the specificity of the district, achievement

levels of learners in the literacy phase, learners' needs and aspirations keeping in view their social and living conditions as well as the objectives which can be reasonably set for the project keeping in mind the material and human resources which are available and can be mobilised for the project. Based on the experience gained so far in implementing post literacy projects in different parts of the country, an outline of a strategy for implementation of post literacy campaigns has been endorsed by the NLM.

2.4 The National Literacy Mission was conceived as a societal mission implying political will at all levels for the achievement of the Mission's goals which were to be achieved in a time bound manner. It was set up with the objective of making 80 million persons functionally literate by the year 1995. The launching of the Mission therefore led to a review of all the ongoing programmes at that time. Between 1978-85, the programme was evaluated by a number of professional evaluating agencies. These evaluations had pointed out repeatedly about the ills of the earlier programme out of which the major ones were that

(i) the community was not involved in the programme in fact the entire implementation mechanism was centralised, hierarchical and bureaucratic,

(ii) political and administrative support of the State Govts. and Panchayati Raj Institutions were not forthcoming in adequate and substantial manner,

(iii) learners' motivation and, therefore, the participation was irregular with considerable dropouts and relapse into illiteracy, (iv) quality of training was poor, and (v) there was absence of post literacy and continuing education programmes.

2.5 In spite of these types of deficiencies being pointed out repeatedly in successive evaluation studies, there was lack of adequate effort to

tackle these problems. What the NLM tried to do between 1988 and 1990 was to consolidate the earlier centre-based programmes to make its implementation more effective. There was no change in strategy and the centre-based programmes continued. The scheme of Rural Functional Literacy Projects was reorganised in March, 1988 on the eve of setting up of the National Literacy Mission. The changes which were brought about in the reorganisation mainly consisted of streamlining the various activities and correcting managerial deficiencies. The revised guidelines introduced carrying out of a detailed survey of villages and mohallas, preparation of a plan for phased eradication of illiteracy in the project area, identification of instructors and others interested in adult education, constitution of a Project Advisory Committee consisting- of representatives of the functionaries, local community, people's organisations etc., introduction of proper monitoring, supervision and evaluation of learning outcomes and sending of periodical progress reports, organisation of training and orientation programmes for all adult education functionaries, coordination of management and functioning of JSNs with adult education centres etc. Every project was expected to submit a plan showing yearwise operational details of adult education centres to be opened, enrolment levels, expected achievement rates etc.

2.6   Administrative and supervisory control was vested with the State Goverments and UTs and they were required to lay down norms and procedures for selection, training and placement of different categories of project functionaries. The reorganised projects also envisaged Project Advisory Committtees which were supposed to advise the project officials regarding the location and organisation of adult education centres, bringing the needs of the local community to the notice of the project officials, ensuring coordination with development departments, reviewing and monitoring the implementation of the project etc. The guidelines were quite extensive regarding selection of officers, placement of instructors, placement of Preraks, training and orientation of project functionaries, training of instructors, training of Preraks and monitoring and evaluation.

2.7   In spite of such extensive guidelines the deficiencies earlier noticed could not be remedied

in the implementation process. This is borne out by the fact that the report of the Public Accounts Committee for the period 1985-90 pointed out a large number of deficiencies in the implementation of the Rural Functional Literacy Projects particularly relating to the appointment of permanent project staff in violation of the guidelines, incurring of avoidable extra expenditure, inadequate training, non-supply/ delayed supply of teaching learning materials, lack of adequate monitoring of implementation of the projects from the level of the Ministry, lack of adequate involvement of the State Governments and UTs, absence of Project Advisory Committees as envisaged in the project guidelines etc. Apart from all these deficiencies, the single most important aspect of the inadequacy of the Rural Functional Literacy Projects was the fact that conceptually the Rural Functional Literacy Projects were miniscule programmes in very small project areas and coverage of the entire district or a selected area was not even thought of. There was no concept of involvement of the community or creating an environment for literacy and generation of demand. The mode of implementation was through a bureaucratic process and structure. The teaching learning period was exces sively long leading to substantial dropouts.

2.8   Another aspect was the mushrooming growth of voluntary agencies from 1978 onwards. At one point of time, nearly 650 voluntary agencies were receiving assistance for implementing the centre based programmes under the honorarium payment mode. Encouragement to such agencies, many of which later turned out to be agencies on paper, led to large scale misuse of funds and malpractice and defaming of the centre based programme as well as the National Adult Education Programme. Although many adverse evaluation reports and audit objections were received, not enough attention was paid to the ability of voluntary agencies to implement such programmes and selection of really good voluntary agencies.

Origin of the Campaign Approach

2.9   It is because of these reasons that despite many changes, even subsequent evaluation studies, between 1988 and 1990, also pointed out persistence of the earlier weaknesses of the adult education programmes. One notable exception to

7

the centre-based approach and an experi-ment with the campaign mode was first seen in Kottayam city in Kerala where the District Collector, by mobilizing 200 volunteers from Mahatma Gandhi University, and forging links with the 2000 non-literates in 6-60 age-group in the city, succeeded in making them fully literate within three months (April-June 1989). But, the real breakthrough came, not out of wisdom internal to the NLM but with an experiment in mass literacy campaign initiated in 1989 and success-fully completed in 1990 in Ernakulum district in Kerala. This was not a government sponsored programme implemented by the District Administration but under the leadership provided by the District Literacy Society which had a few persons from the District Administration but also people from all different sections and back-grounds. The campaign for total literacy in Ernakulam district of Kerala saw a fusion between the district administration headed by its Collector, voluntary 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. Ernakulam declared itself 'totally literate' and that declaration led to the launching of a statewide campaign in Kerala, a campaign more challenging in size and complexity. The Kerala State Literacy Campaign covered 18 lakh persons in the age group of 6-60 years within a span of one year.

2.10   The strategy of the Ernakulam Total Literacy Programme itself evolved over the years. The idea was first conceived by the KSSP in mid-80s. The first ever experiment was the pilot project in Mallapuram district. The Mallapuram Pilot Project failed largely due to lack of sufficient ground work. The other experiment was the 19th Century experiment in the then princely States of Travancore and Cochin. In these princely States the programme was taken up after creation of demand for literacy. This strategy was further enforced with the following

a)   Macro level approach with the entire district as a unit.

b)   Comprehensive coverage in which the range of clientele included all eligible persons in the age group of 6-60 years.

c)   Definite and distinct time frame wherein the phasewise target of the programme was to be achieved in one go within the shortest possible time.

d)   Widening of the net of contributors to the implementation process wherein the synergy of community participation and governt mental efforts tended to supplement and complement each other in a manner that the task attracted universal acclamation.

e)   Life related and development and welfare oriented dynamic teaching learning method so as to arouse and sustain learners' interest.

f)   Systematic and comprehensive evaluation and monitoring process in which the fall outs of the programme in the form of findings of reports serve as correctives for the programme.

2.11   The mechanism evolved and brought to bear upon the implementation process in order to assess the intended goals included several measures:

a)   Well laid organisational synergy of govern-mental and community outfits in which both tended to transfer and share initiative and responsibility. Accordingly, a broadbased registered body called Ernakulam District Literacy Society (EDLS) with the Collector as the Convenor and Joint Coordinator spearheaded the programme at the apex level and the voluntary organisations and local bodies at different layers of the administrative structures down to the village level facilitated the implementation process.

b)   In order to assess the clientele thoroughly, multi stage and door to door survey as well as mass contact sought to enlist active participation.

c)   Kala Jathas and Saksharata Pad Yatras were organised in order to attune the social context to the goals of the programme.

d)   Participatory management system was followed where the responsibilities and functions of different layers overlapped and crossed the boundaries of power which sought to bridge the distance between the bottom of the social and adminstrative strata and the policy makers at the apex level.

e) Life related and development and welfare linked teaching learning process in which the KSSP and the State Resource Centre, Kerala jointly worked on the preparation of relevant teaching learning materials and carefully selected and trained instructors and volunteers.

2.12 The principal shift in strategy was, therefore, a change from a scattered and piecemeal strategy 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. The Ernakulam experiment proved to be a breakthrough and established the feasibility of a mass-based, community-based, campaign approach with the objective of generating environment building and demand for literacy followed by literacy instruction. Subsequently sanctioned campaigns have all attempted to replicate, by and large, the strategy and the various phases and processes in the Ernakulam campaign.

Expansion of the Campaign Approach

2.13 The Ernakulam success was immediately followed up with the launching of TLCs covering 13 districts of Kerala, Dakshin Kannada and Bijapur in Karnataka, Chittoor and Nellore in Andhra Pradesh, Midnapur and Burdwan in West Bengal and the Union Territory of Pondicherry. The launching of these TLCs had a snow-balling effect. A perusal of literacy campaign proposals from the districts of Kerala, Pondicherry UT and others which were placed before the Executive Committee of NLM and discussed, shows that the proposals merely mention that they are submitted for campaigns based on the model of the Ernakulam experiment. These discussions and minutes of meetings are indicative of the fact that the Ernakulam campaign strategy was adopted as such by the NLMA in other districts and projects which were taken up and funds were released for implementation. As of August 1994, the Executive Committee of the NLM had approved literacy campaigns in as many as 275 districts and post-literacy campaigns in as many as 100 districts. The basic model in all these literacy campaign projects is the same as in the Ernakulam campaign.

2.14 Literacy campaign projects have generally been sanctioned to Zilla Saksharata Samitis in order to take up entire districts or parts of the districts under literacy campaigns. The funds for literacy campaigns are provided directly to the Zilla Saksharata Samitis which are registered organisations with Collector as the Chairman but consisting of representatives of various sections and interests in the district and there is a balanced representation from both official and non-official categories of persons. The funding of campaign projects has been 2/3rds by the Central Government and 1/3rd by the State Government. Although sanction of district based projects has been the norm, there has been at least one notable and major exception in which the whole of the State of Himachal Pradesh was sanctioned by the National Literacy Mission for taking up campaigns for all the districts in one go. An umbrella project was presented by the Education Secretary of Himachal Pradesh and although doubts existed regarding the viability of taking up the entire State, the project was sanctioned in its entirety.

2.15 The experience gained from Ernakulam, Kerala and other ongoing campaigns had already taught us lessons that have implication on training strategies, organisation of teaching-learning activities, management and supervision etc. Keeping these in view, and also the fact that campaigns for total literacy are the mode of programme implementation today, a set of guidelines were also formulated by the NLM. These guidelines, however, are not viewed as prescriptive or sacrosanct but as suggested principles to enable planners to think through the objectives and the processes involved in the formulation and implementation of the project plans.

Countrywide Jathas

2.16 Initially, NLM placed emphasis on Non-Governmental Organisations and creation of a general ambience or environment for literacy by Kala Jathas or Cultural caravans in different parts of the country. The entire process was set in motion through a Non-Governmental Organisation called the Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti (an organisation funded by the NLM itself) in August, 1989, followed by a countrywide cultural literacy campaign in the International Literacy Year during October 1990 known as Bharat Gyan

Vigyan Jathas (BGVJs). While these Jathas had to contend with major caste and communal events, nevertheless it placed literacy as an issue before the people and on the national agenda. The involvement of thousands of politicians, administrators, educators, media persons taken together with the demand for literacy programmes generated in the villages brought literacy on to the political agenda of the nation as well. The BGVS brought together a number of voluntary organisations and service associations, youth, students groups, women's movement and adult educators. Their network through the Jathas made literacy work a personal and common organisational priority for millions all over the country.

2.17   The impact of BGVJs was not uniform all over the country. It was weak specially in Bihar, U.P. and Rajasthan. In Orrisa and M.P the impact was limited. The limited impact was due to the disturbances caused by agitations and political turmoil when the Jathas were underway in October/November, 1990. In order to make another effort at building up environment favourable to the campaign, particularly in these States, the BGVJ II was launched between 2nd October - 14th November, 1992. The BGVS also organised Samata Kala Jathas between March 8 to April 9, 1993. It addressed the themes of education and equality of women. Explicitly the aim was to draw women and women's organisations into the fold of literacy campaigns and to highlight the need for education of the girl child. The event was marked by 120 young women taking 8 women's kala jathas from different parts of the country and converging at a central place at Jhansi (U.P.) on April, 8-9, 1993.

2.18   During the early years of the National Literacy Mission, the organisational structure of the literacy campaign in the districts, beginning from Kerala was inclined towards the BGVS which played a major role in the districts of Kerala and in some other districts which were having high literacy rates and were taken up initially, whereas the real problem of illiteracy is seen in the low literacy rate districts of the northern belt in the country especially in the States of Bihar, M.P., Rajasthan and U.P., which together with A.P., Maharashtra and West Bengal constitute the majority of illiterates (70%) in India. While it is perhaps true that to build

confidence it is necessary that such high literacy districts be taken up first, since it is easy to show results in such areas, it is much more important to face the major challenge where it lies rather than take credit for covering a large number of districts in the high literacy areas. Yet, this is precisely what happened between 1990 and 1993 in which period only 33 projects out of a total of 138 projects were sanctioned to the four major Hindi-speaking States. In fact, one gets the impression that systematic planning was not done to cover the districts in the four major Hindi- speaking States but the campaigns were pushed in the high literacy and easier districts elsewhere in the country.

RECENT INITIATIVES BY THE MISSION

Shift of Focus to Low Literacy States/areas

2.19   It was only from May 1993 that the trend really shifted from high literacy rate districts to the low literacy rate districts of the northern belt of Hindi speaking States. In these districts, voluntary work is difficult and so District Collectors and their machinery have had to be involved for mobilisation and motivation efforts. Even in such districts, the TLCs are being launched by voluntary organisations called Zilla Saksharata Samitis which generally consist of social activists, Government officials, representatives of Panchayat Samitis, District Boards, women activists, educationists, Principals, teachers and other leading members of the community. Thus, the thrust of the National Literacy Mission in recent times has rightly shifted to venture into more difficult areas, particularly in the Hindi belt mentioned above. This has been in recognition of the widening gap in the development process between these States and the remaining States leading to a situation synonymous with an internal colonisation of these States within India and also the fact that the success of the Mission depends on our success in these States where the challenge really lies. In 1993-94, 107 projects were sanctioned under literacy campaigns out of which 53 were in the four Hindi speaking States of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

Stress on Elementary Education

2.20　As far as elementary education is concerned, the district literacy project incorporates a plan for enrolling all children in the primary schools and for providing non-formal education to those who drop out from the school system due to various social, economic or other reasons. This group generally constitutes children in the age group of 9-14 years. In addition, District Primary Education Projects are also being taken up in the educationally backward states/areas to provide adequate infrastructure for primary education and to bring about improvement in the quality of schooling so as to enhance participation and reduce dropouts.

Emphasis on Post Literacy and Continuing Education

2.21　The NLM is laying stress on consolidation of literacy skills acquired during literacy campaigns in the post literacy and continuing education phase in districts which have completed the literacy campaign phase.

2.22　The strategy for post literacy and continuing education has been discussed in successive meetings of the Executive Committee of the NLMA. The principal features regarding the objectives and the strategy have been envisaged as :

(i)　Mopping up those who could not either be enrolled in the literacy phase or had to drop out midway through the programme.

(ii)　Remediation of those learners who could not attain the NLM norms but achieved a fragile level of literacy.

(iii)　Continuation of learning and upgradation of literacy skills so as to attain retainable levels of literacy which do not permit relapse into illiteracy. This stage also involves a transition from a guided learning mode to a self learning mode.

(iv)　Application of literacy skills which implies their application in their living and working situation. Such applications would be in the areas of communication, vocational, survival skills etc. This also, in a larger sense, implies an awareness of public policy which could lead to a qualitative improvement in working and living conditions.

(v)　The process of internalisation in the community, meaning the process of positive socialisation and use of communication skills/articulation for individual / group assertion.

2.23　The strategy for post literacy for the 9-14 age group provides for these children joining the regular NFE course for the II, III and IV semesters since the content of semester I would already have been covered in the TLC phase.

2.24　The strategy for the 15+ and adult age group aims at providing for basic skills that is, life skills, survival skills, communication skills and vocational/entrepreneurial skills.

2.25　The strategy for post literacy and continuing education has been an evolving strategy. Each project has to take into account the specificity of the district, achievement levels of learners in the literacy phase, learners' needs and aspirations keeping in view their social and living conditions as well as resources which are available and can be mobilised for the project. Based on the experience gained so far in implementing post literacy projects in different parts of the country, an outline of a strategy for implementation of post literacy and continuing education projects has been endorsed by the NLM.

Equivalency

2.26　In order to clearly specify the expected levels of learning outcome at the end of the TLC phase, it is necessary to establish an equivalency level. The State Governments are to be advised to establish such equivalency and provide for conducting of examinations to enable the neo-literates to enter the formal education system. The level of equivalency may be different for learners in the 15+ age groupadoptingonly PL-1 for structured learning and for learners between 9-14 years of age, who would be using the NFE stream during PLC. Large number of children in the age group of 9-14 who would be participating in the PLC phase using the NFE material, may like to enter formal school system or NFE school via National Open School to obtain a certificate at class 5, 8 or 10 level.

11

Strengthening Institutional Support to the Mission

2.27 Another initiative which has been taken recently (1993 onwards) is to broadbase and complement the institutional support to the National Literacy Mission provided by the Directorates of Adult Education, State Resource Centres and State Education Departments. It was considered that as we move towards the more difficult and challenging areas in the Hindi speaking States and also to the post literacy and continuing education phase for the higher literacy States, there is need to mobilise the critical and influential opinion makers in the society. Moreover, literacy or educational programmes cannot be implemented in isolation but the society and the community as a whole has to be mobilised. It was decided that in particular, efforts have to be stepped up with the objective of bringing in eminent social scientists, writers, artists, media persons, social activists and others in all possible manner not only to generate an environment supportive of literacy but also to strengthen the resource support for the National Literacy Mission and its various institutions. In particular, the following initiatives deserve mention :

- Eminent writers, artists and media persons have been made members of governing bodies of State Resource Centres such as S/Shri Subhash Mukhopadhayaya, Rama Kant Rath, Ayyappa Panicker, Chandrakant Devtale, Prasanna, etc.
- Series of writers' and media persons' workshops have been organised by the State Resource Centres for working out a clear strategy for involvement of the intelligentia at various levels in the campaigns.
- For the four-Hindi speaking States, writers' and multi-media workshops have been initiated by the Directorate of Adult Education in collabora- tion with State Resource Centres and eminent writers and media persons.
- The resource available in institutions outside the domain of adult education such as the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, National Book Trust, Sahitya Akademy etc. are also being harnessed in favour of the efforts of the literacy mission.

Ensuring Greater Transparency to the Programmes

2.28 The Directorate of Adult Education, Government of India took up the task of monitoring of literacy campaigns seriously from 1993 onwards and streamlined the monitoring of the literacy campaigns under implementation. However, it is not the objective of monitoring of the programmes to merely provide information for financial or programme audit. The objective of monitoring the programmes has been taken in a much wider sense in the National Literacy Mission in the past one year and the campaigns are also subjected to independent assessments/scrutiny by people from different walks of life and sections of society. The periodical reports and returns that are brought out by evaluating agencies or Joint Evaluation Teams are not the only mechanism of monitoring the programmes. They are supplemented by visits to the campaigns by Consultants to the National Literacy Mission, other non-officials, media persons, social activists etc. The current initiative of evaluation of the literacy campaigns under the guidance of the Expert Group headed by Prof. Arun Ghosh is a pioneering effort in this direction.

STATUS OF LITERACY AND POST LITERACY CAMPAIGNS

Current Monitoring and Evaluation Practices

3.1   The practices of monitoring and evaluation (M&E practices) at the national level consist of the following:

Pre-appraisal of the projects

3.2   Every literacy campaign project proposal, when formulated by a duly constituted district literacy committee, is pre- appraised by a team of Consultants of the NLMA who are generally outsiders to the programme. The NLMA has laid down certain acceptable criteria by which to assess the extent of preparedness of a district/ project to take up a campaign.

3.3   Monitoring of literacy campaigns during implementation - This consists of:-

3.4   Monthly progress reports from each campaign district in a given proforma - The proforma for monitoring the projects is a highly simplified one with the primary objective of monitoring the relevant processes like survey, training, distribution of primers, progress of teaching-learning, achievement of learning outcomes, expenditure of funds and also the outcome of the campaign. The focus of monitoring is on achievement of learning outcomes which is facilitated by the standardised graded set of three primers representing three distinct levels of achievement. The achievement levels (I, II and III) are, therefore, monitored.

3.5   Although the primary focus is on the various inputs, processes and outcomes, the literacy campaigns are regularly encouraged and exhorted to report qualitatively on the strengths and weaknesses of the campaigns as well as the highlights of achievements particularly focussing on functionality and awareness aspects.

3.6   In the collection of consolidated reports, State/UT Adult Education Directorates - State/UT Adult Education Directorates are requested to qualitatively reflect on the implementation of the programme with a state perspective. Such reports whenever received are integrated into the MIS.

3.7   Spot evaluations - NLMA from time to time deputes officials from Ministry/Directorate of Adult Education, Directorate of Adult Education of State or State Resource Centre, other non-officials and Consultants of NLMA to visit districts/projects which do not show satisfactory performance. This is a process of management by exception taking up those districts on priority which appear to lag behind. Such visits are in the nature of spot evaluations at selected representative spots in the district/ campaign area including a qualitative first hand study on the quality of survey, environment building, training, teaching-learning, progress of teaching-learning etc. coupled with discussions at village, community development, block and district levels with officials and non-officials of the respective committees. Based on such extensive feedback, the reports generated are disseminated and programme implemen-tation is sought to be improved.

3.8   Organisation of periodical and regular review meetings to discuss programme implementation at national and state levels - Sometimes such reviews become interesting feedback-cum-orientation sessions to strengthen the implemen-tation of the campaigns. A process of review and discussion on a regular basis has now been initiated at the level of Chief Ministers of States, particularly the four major Hindi-speaking States.

EVALUATION OF LITERACY CAMPAIGNS CONSISTS OF:

Self evaluation of learners

3.9   This, as mentioned above, is facilitated by exercises and tests at the end of each lesson in

the primers, by which the learner is encouraged to undertake self-evaluation and the instructor and supervisors to understand the progress of learning outcomes. Each primer has three periodic tests and the completion of the terminal test of each primer (T3, T6 and T9) represents achievements at levels I, II and III.

Internal evaluation of the campaigns

3.10 The terminal tests (T3, T6 and T9) are used for the internal evaluation of the campaigns. The records of completion of T3, T6 and T9 learner- wise are supposed to be maintained village/panchayat levels.

External evaluation

3.11 In order to standardise the modalities of evaluation of learning outcomes of literacy campaigns and desirability of declaration of a district or a project area as fully literate, an Expert Group was constituted by the Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Develop-ment, Government of India under the Chairman-ship of Prof RH Dave. The Group recommended a methodology of evaluation of learning out-comes and suggested a test design, weightages to be given to reading, writing and numeracy skills, cut-off points to judge the success of the learner in achieving stipulated literacy norms and the desirable levels of achievement. The Group recommended that a learner in order to be successful in the evaluation test should score at least 50% in each of the skills of reading, writing and numeracy and should score 70% in the aggregate. According to the desirable norms set out by the Dave Group, a literacy campaign should succeed in making 80% of the identified learners literate as per the above-mentioned criterion.

3.12 External evaluations which have been got conducted into the literacy campaigns have, by and large, tended to follow the recommen-dations of the Dave Expert Group. However, some agencies have sometimes taken extremely small, unrepresentative, and unscientific samples of learners for evaluation or deviated from the Dave model in various ways. This has resulted in incomparability of results from different evaluation studies and also cast doubts about validity of some of the evaluation studies.

EXTERNAL EVALUATIONS ARE GENERALLY CONDUCTED THROUGH:

Professional agencies and institutes of social sciences

There are identified institutes of social sciences and other professional agencies which are entrusted evaluation of literacy campaigns. These agencies have not merely done evaluation of learning outcomes but have also attempted to do programme evaluation and study the short-range impact of the literacy campaigns on the community.

Evaluation by Joint Evaluation Teams

In the case of some States which are interested in getting a quick assessment of learning outcomes and achievement levels in the district, joint evaluation teams are constituted from external agencies which include statistical institutes, social science institutes, representa-tives of resource support centres (State Resource Centres), social workers, representatives of Directorate of Adult Education, Government of India, and others. A team of experts including social scientists, academicians, statisticians and others guides and supervisers conduct of the external evaluation. In such cases, the tool for evaluation is developed by the State Resource Centre and generally, specially trained teachers are engaged to evaluate the answer scripts and then the results are compiled. Such evaluations, however, by and large, are quantitative evaluat-ions and have a narrow focus of judging only the learning outcomes and levels of achievement in the district.

Impact studies

Some of the social science institutes such as Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta, have already started doing impact studies after 1-2 years of TLC completion. The objectives of these studies have been to assess the long term impact on quality of life indicators as a result of literacy campaign.

Status of Literacy and Post Literacy Campaigns-July, 1994

3.13 The National Literacy Mission has so far sanctioned 256 literacy projects covering 275 districts (247 fully and 28 partly). Out of these, 77 projects are already in the post literacy phase covering 100 districts. Thus, 175 districts are in literacy phase and 100 in the post literacy phase (alongwith mopping up for the literacy phase)

Status of Literacy Projects

3.14 As explained in the earlier section, the status of literacy projects is ascertained through both the processes of monitoring as well as evaluation, internal as well as external, of these projects. The information obtained through monitoring reports is provided by the projects themselves and is, therefore, only as accurate as the authenticity of what is being provided by the districts/projects. What follows in this section is

The Statewise position of sanctioned projects (upto August 1994) for literacy and post literacy campaigns is given below in Table-I.

Table I - State/UT-wise Picture of Literacy and Post Literacy Projects

Sl. No.	State/UT	No. of TLC Projects Sanctioned	No. of Districts Covered			No. of PL Projects Sanctioned
			Fully	Partly	Total	
	States					
1.	Andhra Pradesh	23	21	2	23	12
2.	Assam	5	4	5	9	–
3.	Bihar	16	13	3	16	2
4.	Delhi	3	–	1	1	–
5.	Gujarat	20	18	1	19	9
6.	Goa	1	2	–	2	–
7.	Jammu & Kashmir	1	1	–	1	–
8.	Haryana	10	10	–	10	1
9.	Himachal Pradesh	12	12	–	12	2
10.	Kerala	2	14	–	14	1
11.	Karnataka	19	19	–	19	10
12.	Madhya Pradesh	29	23	6	29	7
13.	Maharashtra	16	15	1	16	7
14.	Orissa	13	12	–	12	4
15.	Punjab	3	2	4	6	–
16.	Rajasthan	10	10	–	10	3
17.	Tamil Nadu	18	18	–	18	9
18.	Tripura	3	3	–	3	–
19.	Uttar Pradesh	33	29	4	33	–
20.	West Bengal	15	14	1	15	9
	UTs					
21.	Chandigarh	1	1	–	1	–
22.	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	1	1	–	1	–
23.	Daman & Diu	1	1	–	1	–
24.	Pondicherry	1	4	–	4	1
	Total	**256**	**247**	**28**	**275**	**77**

15

the position regarding the status as derived from the MIS. It is realised that an internal information system like this at an aggregated national level has to contend with a number of limitations/problems. Unless the district level Management Information System is effective and incorporates consistency checks as well as multiple channels of information, the reports received from them may not be accurate. The subsequent sections attempt to describe the position regarding the status of the projects as derived through evaluation studies. The information generated through the MIS as well as evaluation studies has to be taken together in a complementary and supportive manner to arrive at a fairly balanced picture.

3.15 Assuming that a literacy project takes about 6 months of preparatory activities and thereafter 12 months on an average for the teaching/learning phase, the literacy projects have been broadly classified into three categories :

(a) New projects which have been sanctioned recently and have not completed the first six months period.

(b) Projects which have completed the first six months i.e. the preparatory stage and are progressing.

(c) Projects which are reporting achievement for Primer-III.

3.16 Based on the achievement levels report-ed by the campaign districts, four categories of projects have been shown in the Statewise status of literacy projects (upto July 1994) in Table-II below, namely :

(i) Achievement of 50% and above of the target;

(ii) Achievement between 35% to 50% of the target;

(iii) Achievement between 20% to 35% of the target;

(iv) Achievement less than 20% of the target.

3.17 It may be seen from Table-II that 33 projects (12.89%) are new projects which are in the preparatory stage. 83 projects (32.42%) have completed the first six months period and are ready to start the teaching learning phase and 140 projects out of 256 sanctioned projects (54.68%) are already in the achievement stage i.e. they are reporting achievement for Primer III. Out of 140 projects reporting achievement for Primer III level, 68 projects (48.57%) have reported more than 50% achievement. 15 projects (10.71%) between 35 and 50% achievement, 14 projects (10%) have reported between 20 and 35% achievement and 43 projects (30.72%) have reported less than 20% achievement.

3.18 A comparison of achievement levels over the months indicates that between 45 to 50% of

Table II - Progress of Literacy Campaigns

S. No.	State/UT	TLC Projts	Achievement Status				Projs. Prog.	New Projs.
			50% & above	35% to 50%	20% to 35%	Less than 20%		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	States							
1.	Andhra Pradesh	23	6	4	5	2	5	1
2.	Assam	5	1	–	–	1	–	3
3.	Bihar	16	1	1	–	5	6	3
4.	Delhi	3	–	–	1	–	2	–
5.	Gujarat	20	7	–	3	4	6	–
6.	Goa	1	–	1	–	–	–	–

7.	Haryana	10	–	2	–	4	1	3
8.	Himachal Pradesh	12	4	–	1	7		-
9.	Jammu & Kashmir	1	–	–	–	–	–	1
10.	Karnataka	19	6	1	–	3	7	2
11.	Kerala	2	2	–	–	–	–	–
12.	Madhya Pradesh	29	7	1	–	3	16	2
13.	Maharashtra	16	9	–	–	3	3	1
14.	Orissa	13	2	1	2	1	6	1
15.	Punjab	3	–	–	–	1	–	2
16.	Rajasthan	10	3	–	–	1	2	4
17.	Tamilnadu	18	8	1	1	2	2	4
18.	Tripura	3	–	–	–	–	1	2
19.	Uttar Pradesh	33	3	1	–	4	23	2
20.	West Bengal	15	8	1	1	2	2	1
	UTs							
21.	Chandigarh	1	–	1	–	–	–	–
22.	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	1	–	–	–	–	–	1
23.	Daman & Diu	1	–	–	–	–	1	–
24.	Pondicherry	1	1	–	–	–	–	
	Total :	**256**	**68**	**15**	**14**	**43**	**83**	**33**

the projects are in the achievement bracket of 50% and above, about 20 to 25% are in the bracket of 20 to 50% achievement level and about 30% in the category of below 20% achievement level. This is not, however, a stationary position and keeps changing with time as more and more projects are sanctioned and as projects progress through different phases into higher and higher levels of achievement. However, there are some projects which lag behind, and for remedial action visits of officials/Consultants and others are organised from time to time.

3.19 By and large, the States of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Karnataka have done comparatively better in the literacy phase whereas projects in Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Orissa have tended to lag behind the others.

Status of Post Literacy Projects

3.20 A total of 77 post literacy projects has been sanctioned so far covering 100 districts (fully or partially). The reporting status of post literacy projects is far from satisfactory. Out of 77 sanctioned projects, 53 projects (including one project which is yet to be approved by NLM) are reporting progress and reports from the remaining 25 projects are not being received. Not all the reporting projects are reporting progress regularly. Table-III below shows the number of post literacy projects sanctioned, the target, the enrolment and participation levels as aggregated for different States.

3.21 The number of neo-literates in sanctioned projects now stands at 156.69 lakhs out of whom 112.09 lakh neo-literates (71.54%) have been enrolled, 57.43 lakhs (36.65%) are participating in the programme.

SOME SIGNIFICANT FEATURES OF LITERACY CAMPAIGNS

Women's Response to Literacy Campaigns

3.22 Women have invariably been the large majority of participants, often constituting 75-80% of the total learners. Since gender disparity in literacy rates was on an average between 10-20% or more, women's participation had to be nearly twice as the participation of men.

3.23 In Karnataka, women's committees have been constituted from district to village levels. Mahila mandals have been the major focal point of mobilisation of women in quite a number of campaigns in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. In Tamil Nadu, Pudukottai did outstanding work in mobilising women and training them on how to cycle as part of the literacy

Table III - Status of Post Literacy Projects State/UT-wise

S.No.	State	No of Projts Sanctioned	No. of Projts reporting.	Proposed No. of neo-litrs. (lakhs)	Enrolment (lakhs)	Participation in PL centres (lakhs)
1.	Andhra Pradesh	12	12	35.61	26.82	14.38
2.	Bihar	2	-	-	-	-
3.	Gujarat	9	4	7.75	4.07	3.56
4.	Haryana	1	1	0.60	0.24	0.23
5.	Himachal Pradesh	2	2	0.41	-	-
6.	Karnataka	10	7	17.90	13.45	7.76
7.	Kerala	1	1	12.22	11.00	-
8.	Madhya Pradesh	7	3	5.23	1.98	1.19
9.	Maharashtra	7	4	6.45	6.11	3.23
10.	Orissa	4	3	9.38	5.05	2.71
11.	Pondicherry	1	1	0.89	0.78	0.62
12.	Rajasthan	3	1	2.38	0.98	0.26
13.	Tamil Nadu	9	8	15.15	12.37	8.96
14.	West Bengal	9	6	42.72	29.24	14.53
	Total	**77**	**53**	**156.69**	**112.09 (71.54%)**	**57.43 (36.65%)**

campaign. Around 60,000 women learned cycling and this not only helped in their daily chores like fetching water, going to the ration shop, to the hospital etc., but also tremendously boosted their self-confidence and leadership qualities. In PMT Sivaganga district of Tamil Nadu, women were taught karate and competitions were also held at various levels. The training helped the women realise their own strength and overcome their fears and inhibitions.

3.24 Feedback from literacy campaigns in selected districts in Hindi-speaking States of Haryana and Madhya Pradesh indicates that whereas men seem to be more concerned with agriculture, vagaries of unreliable monsoon, power cuts etc. than literacy or education, women seem to be extraordinarily resilient, able to absorb miseries of their poverty and yet present themselves with greater hope about the literacy they acquired. They seem to attach pride and happiness about the acquisition of literacy. By and large, women see in the campaigns, a space for themselves in which to interact with each other and to gradually bring about changes in social and more particularly gender equations.

Enhancement of demand for primary education

3.25 Tremendous enhancement of demand for primary education and enrolment of children in primary schools have been noticed in many literacy campaign districts. In some districts this has been as a result of conscious efforts of TLC functionaries to arrest the swelling of ranks of illiterates by ensuring attendance of children in schools. In others, this has come about through the realisation of the need and importance of sending children to school. A spurt in demand and enhanced participation in schools have been noticed in those districts where the literacy campaigns have been implemented effectively. In such districts, the goal of universalisation of elementary or primary education became a major agenda of the campaign. Many such districts combined the survey of illiterates with a survey of unenrolled children built in and put in

sustained efforts for enrolling children in schools as part of the literacy campaign. Notable examples of such districts are Burdwan and Midnapore in West Bengal, Nizamabad in Andhra Pradesh, Pune, Wardha and Nanded in Maharashtra and several TLCs in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Involvement of primary school teachers and enrolment of children in literacy campaigns have also helped in enhancing participation in schools.

Social cohesion

3.26 The potential of literacy campaigns to ensure social cohesion is one of the impacts of literacy campaigns noticed in several States and districts. During the height of communal tensions in 1990-92, the campaign areas specially in the village areas did not witness any major communal disturbances. The same is the experience of other districts such as Burdwan in West Bengal, which had a very successful campaign experience. Communally potential incidents were nipped in the bud by the villagers and major potential disturbances averted.

3.27 In the literacy campaign districts of North Bihar such as Muzaffarpur, Madhubani, Saharsa and Madhepura, where caste considerations are very important in social equations and interactions, it has been noticed that although teaching-learning takes place in separate groups, some lower caste instructors have taken up teaching work for higher caste illiterate persons or vice-versa. It has also been noticed that caste tensions in such districts at the local level have been substantially reduced.

Involvement of the administration in literacy campaigns

3.28 Quite distinct from the enabling and facilitating role of district and government level functionaries, a large number of TLCs witnessed phenomenal participation from government servants particularly of Revenue, Development and Education Departments. In the States of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Maharasthra, Gujarat and West Bengal literacy campaigns witnessed the direct involvement of the government set-up in the implementation of the literacy campaigns. It is for this reason that the full-time structure in the literacy campaign

districts in these States had lesser number of non-officials, a feature also necessitated by the absence of strong presence of non-governmental or volun-tary agencies in the rural areas.

3.29 The Collectors or the Chief Executive Officers in selected districts in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka and some outstanding lady Collectors particularly in Tamil Nadu, were able to enthuse and motivate the entire official machinery in their districts for implementation of the campaigns.

3.30 Particularly Education Department officials including primary and secondary school teacheres worked full-time in many of these districts - they not only imparted training to the volunteer teachers but also provided sustained guidance and monitoring. One of the major spin-offs of the TLCs, where the village literacy committees functioned effectively and where the school teachers' involvement in the literacy campaigns was not under administrative pressure was the improvement in the social accountability of the education system. This was brought about by the coming together and interaction between the primary school teachers, the local community and the Village Education Committee.

Making the Administration more responsive

3.31 This is one consistently observed impact of literacy campaigns across districts and states. The involvement of the entire district machinery under the leadership of the Collectors resulted in taking the Administration to the door steps of the people and in some cases ensured accountability of government-run programmes to the community. This is especially so in those districts which concentrated on the functionality and awareness aspects of the campaigns. The 'Gaon Katcheri' in Pune, the 'adoption system' (of learners and villages by government functionaries) in other districts of Maharashtra and the practice of night halts in villages by officers (for example, in Agra in U.P.) are some of the examples and illustrations of responsive administration. Largely this stemmed from the example set by the leadership of outstanding Collectors through their commitment and involvement which were gradually emulated and followed by other district officials and workers.

3.32 This was further facilitated in those exceptional districts where some of the more enterprising and courageous Collectors, some among them women, who excelled in placing the administrative apparatus in defence of the rights of the learners. (For example Pudukottai in Tamil Nadu and Nellore and Nizamabad in Andhra Pradesh). Although the degree of such involvement and emphasis on functionality and empowerment differed depending on the leadership and environmental considerations, these efforts all served to make the Administration more responsive and ensured transparency in their functioning.

PROBLEMS AND ISSUES IN MONITORING AND EVALUATION

3.33 One key issue which concerns monitoring or evaluation is a mechanism for cross checking the authenticity of information which is collected. Although a counter check is inbuilt through a process of external evaluation upon any monitoring system, the data generated by campaigns and projects have to be authenti-cated internally by inbuilt mechanisms. Although such a decision has been arrived at, in principle, in the NLMA, its operationalisation is posing problems.

3.34 With regard to the recommendation of the Dave Group regarding a desirable level of achievement of 80% of target learners achieving 70% scores in the evaluation test, it would be of interest to understand levels of achievement which are generally considered feasible in different parts of the country.

3.35 The sampling universe and the sampling design in actually conducting the evaluation is an issue which had been left open in the Dave model. There are some evaluations being conducted in the field with very low samples and some with high samples (even upto 10%). Quite often, the sampling is not random in nature or scientific. Moreover, during the actual conduct of evaluations invariably there are cases of learners who are not available on the date of evaluation. These issues are leading to problems in interpreting even the outcomes of literacy campaigns being evaluated.

3.36 Although the importance of qualitatively reflecting on implementation of the campaigns as part of monitoring has been repeatedly emphasised even in individual correspondence with literacy campaigns the response in terms of quality of such reports has been varied and few districts are really able to provide insights on these aspects.

3.37 Since problems are being faced in reflecting quality of achievement and qualitative aspects of the campaigns during monitoring, it is desirable to lay attention on the qualitative aspect during evaluation of the campaigns. The issue of identifying qualitative indicators and converting them into quantitative indicators is still open. As part of monitoring, the compromise which is being worked out at the national level is by trying to monitor simultaneously the achieve-ments under related social sector programmes of the Departments of Rural Development, Agriculture, Women & Child Development, Health & Family Welfare and Education including enrol-ment of girls.

3.38 Comparability of information - Compilation of information generated by evaluation studies is a regular activity of the National Literacy Mission and is done by the Directorate of Adult Education, Government of India. Although one would wish that information generated could provide a basis for comparison of efforts made in implementation of different campaigns/projects, it is extremely difficult to make observations/arrive at conclusions by comparing information so generated.

3.39 Concurrent Evaluation - The NLMA had decided that concurrent evaluation of the literacy campaigns would be carried out. For this purpose, an external evaluation agency was to be decided right at the time of sanction of a project and the campaign was supposed to be monitored and evaluated concurrently along with its implementation. Because of the dearth of time with selected agencies, the number of which is not adequate, the process is not getting internalised in the campaigns.

PART-II

EXPERT GROUP'S ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT STATUS OF TLC

4.1   The National Literacy Mission (NLM) has achieved considerable success during the last four years in spreading the message 'illiteracy hatao' in all principal States of India. In the first two years, the campaign was mostly confined to southern States and West Bengal, having above average literacy rates, and it was only during the last two years that the NLM had decided to cover all States under the TLC programme. As per the latest information, the NLM has sanctioned a total of 256 literacy projects covering 275 districts (wholly or partly) almost in all States of India. Out of these projects more than one-third (88) are sanctioned in the four Hindi-speaking States.

4.2   The NLM has a system of receiving periodical progress reports on literacy campaigns from all TLC districts (MIS) which are summarised and published in the form of monthly status reports giving an overview of the literacy achievement at State and national level. The progress - **as officially reported** - has already appeared in Chapter 3 earlier. The Group is constrained to note, however, that these progress reports (from each TLC district) are normally based on the information gathered through the routine channels within the district and are not always equally dependable for all districts. Quite a few of the reports give a picture far removed from the reality, and are apparently oriented to get some funds released from the NLM. The problem is systemic, and it is not enough to merely criticise the concerned authorities; one has to consider basic systemic reform. Sometimes these evaluation reports are based on the internal evaluations which do not always depict the true state of literacy development for diverse reasons.

4.3   The status reports do, however, give an overview at State and national levels from which one can broadly identify the States performing relatively better, or relatively poorly. Based on such assessment, the central authorities can plan and make efforts to improve the performance of the below average States. For instance, about 64 projects (out of 253) have completed the TLC phase; however, in Bihar and UP only 2 projects

(out of 47) have attained the completion stage. The status report also gives the number of projects which are dragging on for a long time. At national level, 59 projects come under this category and the bulk of them (around 50%) are located in just four States (Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh). These broad conclusions about the performing and non-performing States seem to be reasonable, as the exaggeration of performance is likely to exist in varying degrees in all States.

4.4   Realising the shortcomings of the monthly status reports, the NLM recently started publishing the Evaluation Digest based on external evaluation reports. In its second volume, the NLM purports to include 41 external evaluation reports (EER) which show the aggregate number of 178 lakh illiterates, 142 lakh enrolled and 104 lakh neo-literates (as per the NLM norm). Thus, the EERs show an achievement/success rate of 58 per cent of the total target group of illiterates and 73 per cent of the enrolled learners. The Expert Group has reasons to record serious reservations about the above claim as a large number of EERs (included here) are deficient in terms of coverage, sample design, size of sample and, above all, in the estimation procedures adopted to arrive at district level estimates. These are briefly discussed in the following paragraphs.

Sample Size

4.5 It is a well recognised fact that for any representative external evaluation of literacy campaign, one has to cover various social, demographic and regional characteristics of the district. This would require a sufficiently large sample (say 5 to 10 per cent) to properly represent all segments of the target population. The Group takes serious note of the disturbing fact that more than 50 per cent of the EERs have based their evaluations on a sample size which is less than 1 per cent of the target group of learners (considered for the test). In fact, 14 evaluation reports, out of a total of 41, have taken an utterly inadequate sample of learners

not exceeding 500. These 14 EERs purport to cover more than 30 lakh learners, whereas the total sample size of the 14 surveys was only 4500 with an overall sampling fraction of 0.15 per cent making a mockery of the sampling technique.

Coverage and Sample Design

4.6 In a large number of EERs, the sample is drawn from a part of the total target population, excluding blocks and villages on some subjective grounds, whereas the conclusions have been drawn for the entire target group. Under the proper sampling procedure for drawing up a representative sample, one has to take into account all members of the target population irrespective of their geographic spread in the district. This type of extremely partial coverage of villages or blocks, included in the sampling frame, is observed in nearly 18 out of 41 evaluation reports. In most of the EERs, the sample design is claimed to be random and stratified. However, nowhere has the scheme of randomisation been explained; and in any case, quite often, selected villages and the learners are replaced for subjective reasons. In 22 evaluation reports, the response of learners is 100 per cent, which is likely to be achieved in practice only by replacing the selected sample learners (not present) by other learners, who may have been induced to turn up at the place of testing. Thus, the sample of learners tested in a village is anything but random.

Estimation Procedure

4.7 In almost all evaluation reports, the aggregate estimate of successful learners at the district level, was worked out by taking a simple average of the percentages of successful learners in different sample units (like Blocks, villages, etc.) and applying it to the entire target population of the district, without attaching proper weights to various sample units. This procedure disregards the variation in the total number of learners in various strata, blocks and panchayats, from where the sample is supposed to be selected.

NLM norm for Neo-literates

4.8 As per the NLM norm, for declaring a learner 'neo-literate', the learner has to secure at least 50 per cent marks in Reading, Writing and Numeracy separately and at least 70 per cent

marks in aggregate. However, many evaluation reports have followed considerably different norms, largely lowering the qualifying standards. The evaluation reports are thus not comparable and additive, and cannot give a realistic overview at the national level. In case of some EERs, although claiming to follow NLM norms, the results are not consistent. As per NLM procedure, if the lowest percentage of success rate in any of the three R's is, say, 60 per cent, then the overall success rate cannot be more than 60 per cent. However, in many cases this elementary principle was violated. For instance, in ten external evaluation reports, the percen-tages of successful learners were stated to be considerably higher (by 5 to 12 percentage points) than what they should have been, had the EERs followed the above-mentioned NLM norm.

4.9 Members of the Group have found, in one particular place, two disturbing features: (a) In one place, some of the 33 supposed 'learners' were either matriculates or with education upto 8th standard, which makes the TLC claim of neo-literacy a mockery; and (b) in another place, all scheduled caste non- literates were excluded from the list of illiterates and therefore from that of potential learners. These disturbing features point to the need for much greater awareness and greater focus on the 'campaign' and preparatory stage of the TLC.

4.10 In the light of the above deficiencies of the EERs, the Group feels that the external evaluation reports cannot fully substantiate the claim of considerable literacy achievement in the 41 TLC projects. In reality, the districts might have performed worse (or even better) than what is depicted by the EERs.

4.11 There is one aspect of the problem of evaluation to which the Group would like to draw attention. Most evaluation reports have focussed only on the percentage success of literacy as per the Dave Committee norms. The social (or other) impact has generally been ignored in most external evaluation reports.

4.12 For the above reasons, the Group feels that the claims of percentage success achieved in regard to literacy are not reliable. The Group, therefore, attaches special importance to its recommendations concerning the tightening up of the procedures of both external and internal evaluation.

EDUCATION, LITERACY, SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

5.1 An understanding of these three fundamental terms - education, literacy, social development- and of their inter-relationships, necessarily shape one's perspectives and therefore the policies made or recommended. This understanding in the judgment of the Group thus constitutes the basic prism through which the mass literacy campaigns/programme of the NLM will have to be assessed and evaluated.

Education

5.2 Education has doubtless an important functional or instrumental or utilitarian dimension. This much is revealed when one asks questions such as "what is the purpose of education?" The answers, too often are `to acquire qualifications for employment/upward mobility', `wider/higher (in terms of income) opportunities', `to meet the needs for trained manpower in diverse fields for national development. But in its deepest sense education is not instrumentalist. That is to say, it is not to be justified outside of itself, for example, because it leads to the acquisition of skills or of certain desired psychological- social attributes. It must be respected in itself.

5.3 Education thus is not a commodity to be acquired or possessed and then used, but a process of inestimable importance to individuals and society, although it can and does have enormous use value. Education then, is a process of expansion and conversion, not in the sense of converting or turning out students into doctors, engineers, etc. but the widening and turning out of the mind - the creation, sustenance and development of self-critical awareness and independence of thought. It is an inner process of moral-intellectual development. Education is not so much a 'preparation for life' but in the final analysis the finding of a way of life.

5.4 Education must not therefore be confused with training which is at most a junior subset of what constitutes education. It is particularly important to avoid this confusion when talking

of 'adult education' or 'adult literacy'. Adults may lack training, they do not lack education as they have learnt from life's experiences. Conversely, those who are highly trained are not necessarily highly educated or even reasonably educated. This is not to underate the importance of skill formation in a developing society, but to put it in proper perspective. The critical difference lies in the learning process - the desire, the capacity, the opportunity. Skills also have to be learnt, but they may be acquired, and practised through habit without applying any thought or excercising one's judgment. On the other hand, training in skills which stimulates observation, curiosity and assessment - of its implications, for one's self/others/the environment - is certainly an important component of education. It is in this last sense that we reiterate that adult illiteracy should not be confused with lack of education or training. Adults do not become what they are without learning many things - functional and related skills or languages to communicate values, a sense of their own identity, responsibilities, knowledge. about their own environment, traditions, culture, and specialised knowledge derived from their occupations, passed on across generations, and added to by their own observations.

5.5 The conceptual understanding of education as "the finding of a way of life" carries two important implications.

a) **It implies, that every adult, regardless of literacy levels, is already in some way educated, since merely to survive, is necessarily to find some way to live.**

b) **It implies there can always be an expansion, deepening and enriching of education, the sharpening of critical, analytical and learning capacities and the widening, changing of norms and values because ducation is a process; a finding and not a find.**

5.6 However, the progressive enrichment of education in India requires certain preconditions:

(i) a minimum decent material existence for all;

(ii) the enlargement of options i.e. the enlargement of the field in which 'the finding of a way of life' can operate. This questionof 'increased space' in the social and economic sphere is inseparable from questions of enlarging political, social and cultural freedoms, from the fear of the unknown/unfamiliar;

(iii) the enhancing of individual capacities and confidence to enrich one's education and creative energy.

Literacy and its Relationship to Education

5.7 What is literacy ? Literacy is a form of training. Its relationship to education is embodied in the third precondition (listed above) for the enrichment of education. Literacy is not the guarantee that one will become more educated. But it certainly provides the potential for such enhancement. It increases one's access and capacity to enrich one's education. It also provides access to better training, the possibility of improving one's economic condition, and enhances one's capability to function more effectively in a fast- changing world. Literacy in India also enhances self worth for two good reasons and one unfortunate reason.

5.8 The good reasons are:

– acquiring a new skill is itself a source of greater self worth.

– literacy is an empowering skill which reduces many fears, of being lost, cheated, manipulated by others. It also increases access to many types of information that one needs/wants to achieve a more satisfying life, to carry out one's responsibilities more efficiently/effectively, even to challenge/reject, if necessary what has been learnt through one's socialisation in an unequal society. It thus provides the potential (but not the guarantee) for a better lifepolitically, culturally socially and economically.

5.9 The unfortunate reason is that we live in a society where non-literate skills are so devalued that very improperly the non-literates are denied both sources and affirmations of self worth.

Social Development and its Relationship to Education

5.10 Social development should not be confused with economic development nor with socio-economic development. Socioeconomic development can be understood for our purposes here as a socially humane and equitable form of economic development. Social development is a wider concept encompassing the latter two terms. It is akin to the striving for "the good society", for which the learning process, of constant enrichment of that process, is an essential and integral element, along with effective, responsible and willing participation and the achievement of a more equitable order. A dynamic and virtuous spiral can then be established. A better society or better social development leads to better education which leads to better social development, and further improvement of educational opportunities and quality, which in turn improves the prospect of better social development, etc.

5.11 A minimum level, and equitable distribution of socio-economic development is necessary to eradicate hunger, chronic poverty, under-nourishment, malnourishment, permanent inde-btedness - which fuel exploitation, powerlessness, dependency and inequality. There must also be access to basic health care and security/shelter i.e. the minimum conditions for decent physical existence must be established for this qualitative leap in the educational-social development spiral to take off.

5.12 These, together with complete literacy, are in any case envisaged in the Directive Principles of State Policy in the Constitution of the Indian Republic. To achieve this stage, however, education itself has to play a far more active, participatory and dynamic role, to provide the motive, the rationale, the skills, the values and the vision of what is meant by a better society. At the moment, India is still very far from approaching that level of social development. The inadequacies, inequities and maladies of the educational process are both a cause and effect of this situation.

The Relationship between Literacy and Social Development

5.13   The relationship between literacy and social development is mediated by the role, spread and quality of education.

5.14   What about the relationship between literacy and socio-economic development? Does greater literacy per - se lead necessarily or easily to greater and better socio-economic development? Here, two issues must not be confused. The problem of adequate socio-economic development has both an individual and a collective/social dimension, being a problem not only for the individual but also for society as a whole. Greater literacy in some cases may mean greater/better opportunities for socio- economic improvement in individual lives/families, without much impact on other factors. Mass poverty, especially, cannot be resolved by treating it as a sum of individual problems to be resolved individually. It must be seen as a collective problem requiring collective solutions.

5.15   Mass literacy, on the other hand, because of the criticality of its size and pressure, may set off certain chain reactions, on the socio-economic, and political - administrative structures, the evidence of which we found in many areas. But it cannot by itself resolve the collective problem of mass-scale impoverishment or widening inequalities in socio-economic conditions. In the absence of collective solutions of these problems, it is extremely difficult to either .stabilise newly acquired literacy skills, or set off the spiral movement for social development discussed above.

5.16   Precisely because basic or minimal literacy is not basic or minimal education, it is not "sticky downwards". That is to say, it has no natural or intrinsic propensity to being cumulative or stable. Literacy is a training or skill whose purpose and value is contingent upon the availability of opportunities for its use, and upon benefits, economic, politico-social and cultural, to be derived from its use. The functionality dimension of literacy in India remains a problematic area. Almost as serious a problem as the lack of widespread literacy is the fragility of literacy achievements and the phenomenon of relapse of former neo-literates.

What do these Conceptual Clarifications Mean for the NLM?

5.17   The NLM has emerged not as purely a literacy mission. That has been its basic strength. The stated goals of the NLM have been literacy, skill formation, functionality, social awareness, organisation for participation in development. While this indicates a commitment to some kind of holistic approach, and some expectation of link between literacy, education and social development, it also reflects certain assumptions regarding illiteracy, lack of awareness, skills and functionality - which we have contested earlier.

5.18   The trajectory of the NLM has itself reflected to a considerable extent an unforeseen and unplanned evolution. There has probably been a certain lack of conceptual clarity at the initial stages, regarding literacy, education, social development and of the complex inter-relationships between them. To a considerable extent, this was an inherited legacy of the 'filtration theory' of education, which viewed eradication of illiteracy as a dependent function of educational development. In today's language of develop-ment studies, it was a 'top-down' approach. This has exacerbated an already existing tension which emerges from any programme with finite means and multiple objectives.

5.19   The ways in which a National Literacy Mission is, and is not, a National Education Mission must be clearly understood. Insofar as it is not, then it should be recognised that while it is legitimate to talk of the literate helping the non-literate to become literate (a more or less uni-directional process), it is not legitimate to talk of the 'educated' helping the 'uneducated' adult to become educated. To be non-literate is not the same as being 'uneducated'. In general, because of the pejorative connotations of the term illiteracy and the sense of disdain it seems to suggest for the people's rich oral traditions and its associated skills, etc., it might not be amiss - indeed it may be wiser - to use, wherever possible, the term non-literate rather than illiterate. Since convenience might demand the continued use of the terms illiterate or illiteracy, there should be, at the least, an abiding awareness of what should not be implied in the use of such terms. Certainly the pejorative sense

in which the word 'illiterate' is used in the 'campaigns' should be assiduously avoided.

5.20   This is not a mere question of semantics. There has been an assumption in various quarters associated with NLM activity that the non-literate are not merely deficient in certain skills but deficient in values and in intelligence. This has promoted two tendencies which have affected in some degree or the other, NLM functioning. Some of the messages conveyed in written materials, in the teaching-learning process, and in the environment building phase of campaigns, have been detrimental to the self-esteem of learners. It is not the 'backwardness' of learners that is responsible for the backwardness of the country's socio-economic development, but more the other way around.

5.21   Secondly, there is no simple or straight-forward relationship between learning literacy skills and developing "good" values. Literacy does not really create social awareness out of nothing or where none existed before. What literacy campaigns have done is to temporarily empower people sufficiently in some cases to do something about social ills they were already aware of but were too frightened to challenge. Or to give explanations of existing problems which are more satisfactory and which therefore, promote better understanding. Or to give more information about possible alternatives or options on how to cope with existing difficulties.

5.22   Another, perhaps unexpected, positive result of the campaigns is their transformational effect on the literates - the volunteer teachers, the organisers, the campaigners, the resource persons, who among them constitute another critical mass. The close-interaction between these two critical masses, in areas where the campaigns have been reasonably successful, has fostered new patterns of relationship, taken big strides in bridging the gap between the literates and non-literates, increasing the former's respect for the latter, and their own self-esteem for having achieved something of social value. It has also fostered a two-way learning process.

5.23   Since a large section of the volunteer - teachers are students, who displayed consider-able ingenuity and creativity in performing their roles as teachers (an indicator of learner responses), their return to their formal studies

will certainly increase pressure for changes - in the curriculum, pedagogic methods, and general teaching- learning atmosphere within the institutions.

5.24   Where the volunteers have also included a section of teachers, we have received both negative and positive accounts. Negative ones range from indifference to actual resistance, and failure to adopt the new pedagogic approach of the IPCL. Positive ones which are more significant, highlight breakdown of age barriers, and hierarchic relationships - with teachers learning the new method from their own students, generation of a sense of excitement about the new approach, and a growing conviction that this process will, and must lead to enormous changes within the formal education system - in quality and quantity.

5.25   These transformational effects, as well as the sharp increase in enrolment in primary schools, with consequent pressure for expansion of facilities make the NLM also something of an attempted National Education Mission. It is critically important to recognise and articulate this new dimension. The objective of the NLM should now include the promotion, consolidation, and development of a "learning society". Inasmuch as this involves "value learning" then, this is by its very nature a two-way process between participants, between non-literates and literates. To what extent then have channels of communication for this kind of "value learning" been institutionalised via the NLM? To what extent have non-literate skills and traditions been protected and promoted in the quest for greater spread of literacy?

5.26   The flowing stream of education represents the confluence of several processes or sources : formal education, non-formal education, and non-formal education. Formal education is further divided by levels and sectors with little or no coordination between them. The structures and controlling authorities of each are different. Strengthening / revising policy requires review of the functionality of these multiple structures. Expansion and improvement of the formal school system is critical even for the narrow objective of eradicating adult illiteracy. For it is only through the universalisation of elementary education that the "tap of adult illiteracy" can finally be closed.

5.27 The structures of non-formal education in its various forms, from literacy campaigns to centre-based or more flexible vocational training schemes provided by government sponsored institutions or voluntary organisations remain important sources for the dissemination to adults of relevant information/knowledge/skills. But the efficacy of non-formal education is decisively dependent on decentralised and locally relevant strategies for socio-economic development, planned jointly by local learners, and agencies. The latter perhaps need some exposure ti the 'transformational effect' discussed earlier - to become more 'responsive' to the learners' needs, something which many voluntary organisations have learnt over the last few years.

5.28 Finally, the structures of informal education are the structures of society itself. To demand that they be accessible and responsive to all or to most adults is to demand much greater cultural empowerment and cultural democratisation. This is inseparable from, but not congruent with, the demand for greater political empowerment and political democratisation. No policy committed to the spread and deepening of education, whether emanating from the NLM, from other government bodies, or from any other quarter, can do other than announce its commitment to the preservation and strengthening of India's democratic and secular polity, though this is not the only reason why any government programme regarding literacy or education must necessarily be part of and integrated and holistic government policy and perspective.

ADULT LITERACY AND THE NLM:
Assessment and Recommendations

Overview

6.1   The long history of adult education (or what is better termed adult literacy) in India has witnessed important changes in government and public perceptions. Though included as an ingredient of Community Development in the 50s the government's responsibility for it was soon abandoned. Instead, it became an issue of humanitarian welfare to be carried out by private welfare organisations, occasionally aided by grants from the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB). In the 60s however, functional literacy began to be emphasised by UNESCO, and some responsibility of the government had to be admitted. It was only in the late 70s, that the Government of India undertook the enunciation and implementation of an official adult education programme as essential for human and child development. The NLM was a further development of that commitment, but through a different mass- based approach. The emphasis on the importance of voluntarism, and the campaign mode on a sufficiently large scale, introduced other elements - resulting in the evolution of a dynamic process.

6.2   Another   factor   influencing   the constitution of the NLM was the shift in development paradigms in the mid-eighties abroad. This identified mass illiteracy as a crucial bottleneck to development. Since the Indian Government at the time was especially aggressive in its commitment to rapid modernisation, the influence of the new paradigm shift was significant. Embarrassment by the existence of mass illiteracy, global status considerations, as well as long standing concerns about the problem of adult illiteracy, all combined to produce a much stronger focus on the issue.

6.3   Initially the government had a strongly technocratic- managerial 'mission' approach to modernisation. The approach essentially was to identify a problem; establish targets and then throw resources for resolving the problem. The key to success would lie in good management. Hence the setting up of certain missions including the NLM between 1986 and 1989. While the urgency in this regard was welcome, it became clear in due course that education and literacy are by nature such complex issues that a narrow technocratic vision had to be replaced by a broader, more inclusive and subtle one. In 1990, the NLM, strongly influenced by the Ernakulam experiment, sought to generalise that campaign approach but still pursued centre-based and semi-volunteer approaches to tackling the problem of adult illiteracy. In a process involving active interchange with the experiences and understandings of voluntary organisations and others active in the field of adult literacy, by 1992, the campaign approach had become the dominant mode of operation in the NLM strategy.

6.4   The NLM thus attempted a holistic approach embodied in its goals regarding skill formation, functionality, awareness, and organisation for participatory development, even if it lacked complete clarity regarding the inter- relationships between education, literacy and social development. One of the peculiarities of the Indian trajectory with regard to adult illiteracy, in comparison with other third world countries, is that it falls into neither of the two contexts in which rapid eradication of adult illiteracy has taken place elsewhere. These two contexts are briefly reviewed below.

6.5   One, there is a dynamic economy showing sustained, high economic growth, which generates increasing expectations of upward social mobility through formal/non-formal education systems. Here, there is new and increasing demand for formal education; and the governments of these high growth economies are then impelled to spend a very large proportion (far higher than it has ever been in countries like India) of their annual budgets on education. This context might characterise some of the fast growing East Asian countries. Two, there are revolutionary social transfor-

28

mations which throw up a new order/new government which has deep popular support and is seen for many years at least as an authentic representative of the masses of poor, ordinary folk. Here the campaign mode for eradicating illiteracy is particularly effective. This context would seem to characterise the experiences of China, Cuba, Nicaragua, Vietnam.

6.6   India fits into neither of the above two contexts. It has had neither a dynamic economy nor a social revolution. Its attempt to eradicate illiteracy through a campaign approach has, not surprisingly, had more mixed results, in comparison with the latter group of countries indicated in the previous para. Nonetheless, for all its deficiencies, inaccuracies in evaluation, problems of sustaining enthusiasm, dangers of inadequate preparation, etc., the NLM's TLC approach has been among the best things promoted by the government since independence. The 'other' outcomes — what has been called the qualitative impact or the transformational effect - have more than justified this project, with the added bonus of better performance than the old centre-based adult literacy programme in creating neo-literates with reasonable competence in the 3Rs. There have been numerous examples of not merely the organisation for literacy' but of `literacy for organisation', finding expression through literacy efforts initiated.

6.7   It is important to understand that the TLC has been, not everywhere and not always, but still on balance more a **movement** than a 'programme' even if for the sake of convenience and partial accuracy, we will continue to refer to it as a programme. As such, it cannot be judged simply by the conventional standards appropriate to a programme. Movements have incalculable effects because they release enormous social energy which has transformative implications. Top-down government programmes, when successful, are examples of useful reform from above. Movements are often examples of attempted reform through mobilisation of people from below which, precisely because they are from below, cannot be judged in the same way as the former.

6.8   Of late, there are some signs that there is a substitution of this 'movement' - of the campaign approach, with popular, mass support

- for a wholly bureaucratic 'top down' effort to eradicate 'illiteracy'. This latter approach has considerable danger of relapsing into similar (earlier) stereotyped programmes. We would revert to this issue later.

6.9   The qualitative impact of TLCs has been in three areas — in respect of learners and the general public; in respect of teachers, volunteers, trainers; in respect of government/administrative personnel and voluntary organisations.

6.10   Where the TLC has had something of the character of a real peoples' movement, the impact on women who constitute from two-thirds to three-fourths of adult illiterates, has invariably been significant. Positive effects on the issue of gender bias through greater articulation and organisation by women to meet their various 'life problems', have been one of the more important achievements of the TLC. Intermixing of social strata has also had a positive if limited impact on caste and communal relations (certainly, this is true of the women - learners). It is this practical intermixing leading to behavioural changes rather than the 'progressive' content of primers that has been more important in altering for the better, existing caste and communal equations. Yet another important effect of the TLC on learners has been the generation of greater demand for primary school education and a new determination to enroll girls into the formal primary education system. This articulation is not confined only to education. There has also been greater and more vociferous demand for other services to meet their basic needs in regard to employment, housing, health, etc.

6.11   Regarding teachers/volunteers/trainers/organisers, the idealism inherent in a mass volunteer approach and the opportunities created for direct interaction between volunteers and the poor has helped to generate social activists with a real concern for developing a just, humane and caring society. This is an asset not just for the literacy movement but for the future in general.

6.12   With respect to the interface between government administration and the people, at least in a limited way, the TLC programme

has helped to sensitize the bureaucracy to the concerns of ordinary village folk, especially of those who are in various ways the most deprived. Among a few Collectors and other officials, the notion of government's accessibility to the poor has changed. It is not a question simply of the administrative machinery making itself available to the claims and the complaints of the poor i.e. keeping "one's doors open". There has been some evidence, in places, of bureaucrats going out and trying to gain access to the hearts and minds of common folk.

6.13 Literacy has also been placed on the national agenda as never before, and the transparency of this programme has been greater than for any other government programme. That has been a positive feature of the TLC.

6.14 These positive aspects of the NLM's campaign on Adult literacy should not be allowed to hide the real problems in its general strategy which have created serious weaknesses. These are :

(i) Owing to the preoccupation with achieving the target of "total literacy", there has been significant fudging/overestimation of achievement figures in districts where TLCs have been launched and completed or near- completed. The pressures leading to such overestimation are not just the result of bad intentions but also of good intentions related to the 'movement' character of the TLC.

(ii) There is a real fragility in literacy achievements and thus very serious problems of relapse of neo-literates even in districts where there have been successful TLCs. This problem is aggravated in cases of long time lags between TLC & PL/CE.

(iii) Now that (a) literacy has become a relatively high profile issue; (b) large (and easily accessible) funds are available for sanctioning TLC projects; (c) more district collectors and administrative officials view the TLC only as a career enhancing scheme; (d) there is considerable pressure to meet 'politically committed' targets i.e. full literacy by the year 2000 - the overall result is the emergence of a strong tendency to both press for, and to sanction, TLC projects even in areas where there is inadequate preparation, sometimes

no preparation except on paper. The consequences of such sanctions are extremely detrimental, indeed counter productive. There is grave danger that the credibility of a good programme will be fatally jeopardised if such pressures are not resisted.

(iv) There is increasing bureaucratisation of the very approach to TLCs. That is to say, the people-oriented approach is tending to be replaced by bureaucrats alone, both with respect to project formulation and with respect to implementation. The Group is constrained to say that this malaise is particularly in evidence in some of the Hindi speaking states, and even in others where people's mobilisation had been high earlier. The Group feels this is a major cause of the declining tempo of the 'movement' and for greater volunteer fatigue.

(v) Finally, the Hindi heartland states constitute the area where the problem of adult illiteracy is most acute. And here there are serious specific problems large size of illiterates; relatively small size of the pool of literates from which volunteer instructors are to be drawn, with most literates residing in urban areas; lack of recent literacy tradition/movements in these states; widening gender bias against women visible in all indicators, including literacy; low political commitment (except in two of these states) to the eradication of illiteracy; diverse socio-political, caste and communal tensions.

6.15 The Expert Group feels strongly that the NLM needs to be aware of these problems; they need to be tackled; they can be tackled; and if these issues are not seriously addressed, a promising and intrinsically good programme can get discredited.

6.16 The other problem to be addressed is illiteracy in urban areas, where the problems are infinitely more difficult for diverse reasons.

Lessons of the NLM experience

6.17 Even the positive outcomes of the NLM experience are not simply the intended result of NLM strategy. They are sometimes also the

unintended results of it, and have emerged not because of NLM strategy or functioning, but in spite of it. Unforeseen problems have forced a greater awareness of the complexity of the issues sought to be addressed by the NLM. It is now widely recognised that to eradicate illiteracy one has to do much more than eradicate illiteracy.

6.18   Moreover, the problems and difficulties that have emerged have raised fundamental questions about whether and how the 'programme' is to be extended to other districts. Are we talking today of salvaging an increasingly 'fatigued' and weakened programme, or is there life left in the TLC movement, which should be extended to other districts? While the Expert Group is prepared to answer this question in the affirmative, it also feels strongly that the TLCs should be extended carefully and selectively. The time has come for a significant reorientation or modification of the programme.

Recommendations

6.19   The Expert Group strongly recommends that the objective of fully eradicating illiteracy by the Year 2000 be forsaken, and be replaced by the more sane, feasible, and less manipulable objective of developing and deepening a "learning society" in which (a) there is acceler-ated progress in the eradication of basic illiteracy, and b) in fulfilling both the demand and supply conditions for "continuing education".

6.20   The Group would, therefore, strongly recommend a modification in the hitherto formally stated objective of the NLM. Any number of consequences follow from this. The new objective of developing and deepening a "learning society" must now inform the attitude towards, and recommendations for all aspects of the programme— the different phases in TLC; post- literacy and continuing education (PL/CE); evaluation procedures; and literacy declarations.

Assessment of TLCs and Recommendations

6.21   The fundamental rationale behind the organisation of TLCs is two-fold: (a) the organi-sation of literates to remove illiteracy; and (b) the inculcation of a spirit of voluntarism among organisers, trainers, instructors, and of mass involvement among learners and others. This does not mean that the presence of voluntary organisations (VOs) is absolutely essential in the carrying out of TLCs. But 'voluntarism' and mass involvement does require that at the lowest, i.e village or ward level there be popular participation and genuine enthusiasm, whether this is secured through VOs or through the involvement of other existing structures.

6.22   For the Expert Group, the central purpose in studying the range of TLC performances in various districts and parts of the country was to distil from these experiences what can be called the essential or minimum conditions for securing a high probability of TLC success. These would also be, in part, the pre-conditions for sanctioning new TLC projects. In good performing TLC states, patterns of mobilisation do vary. In West Bengal the relative success of TLCs has been based on the involvement of multiple party cadres and panchayats as well as the bureaucracy. In Karnataka the panchayats and VOs have been important. In Gujarat it has been the panchayats and teachers' movement. In Maharashtra, the 'campaign' evoked mass enthusiasm. In a number of southern states, the mass enthusiasm was generated by a VO, on the basis of the success of the KSSP of Kerala. One of the most important problem areas today is the Hindi belt, particularly U.P. and Bihar where progress has been at best patchy, and at worst very doubtful. Recommendations spe-cifically in this regard will be given separately.

6.23   The following would appear to be the minimum conditions for TLC success anywhere.

(i)   A strong political commitment to the concept of literacy and continuing education, for all sections of the population, and for both sexes, male and female. The education and mobilisation of women - and their empowerment - may provide the key to the basic changes in attitudes, as well as social relationships, which may usher in a transformation of Indian society to a steadily progressive one. The implementation of the 73rd and 74th Con-stitutional Amendments is likely to aid such mobilisation.

31

(ii) The existence at the state and district level of a strong core group fully committed to TLC. It is generally highly beneficial if the Collector is part of this key core team. However, transfer uncertainties imply that the continuance of any one officer cannot always be ensured. If there is a strong second line of leadership i.e. a core team which is not collector- depend-ent, then TLC can still perform well. In general, a full- time staff of 100-200 in a district depending on its size is required. But they need to have dedication to the TLC ideal.

(iii) Village level mass involvement/popular enthusiasm is a must. In most parts of India, the village is the 'natural' unit of mobilisation/organisation. Most urban areas have experienced problems in achieving a successful TLC, but the Group was informed in one district that the "ripple effect" of success in even a few rural blocks has accelerated response from the urban population. Usually, the involve-ment of the village head (sarpanch or Mukhia) and of the school head is of great importance. In certain parts e.g. Bihar, areas of U.P., the 'natural unit' of mobilisation/organisation is not the village but the tola or wadi or basti. This is a somewhat regrettable reality, arising from caste divisions; but given the reality, there is need for intensive mobilisation and popular enthusiasm for literacy and continuing education in every tola, or wadi or basti, in the rural areas.

(iv) There must be effective pre-launch preparations. The environment building phase for a TLC, which is also the phase in which a basic organisational infra-structure - reaching right down to the village or tola level - must be built up, is extremely important. There is already too much TLC related money being thrown into areas where not enough preparatory effort has been made, and often not enough money directed to areas where there has been good preparation, in order to further TLC work. Recommendations for handling this all important question of when and how to sanction funding for TLCs are given below.

(v) The atmosphere of a popular movement needs to be kept up after the environment-building phase right through the teaching-learning phase, in order to sustain the motivation of learners and for sustaining activist morale. There must, therefore, be constant monitoring and this monitoring process must itself help generate and sustain commitment and enthusiasm. In one district in West Bengal, the Group observed that following exaggerated success claimed/relapses into illiteracy, the district authorities have organised a fresh 'campaign' in order to mop up the 'dropouts'/ relapses in a programme describ-ed as PLC, but primarily a continuation of TLC with new structures for CE being evolved consciously. This calls for scrupulous avoidance of complacency on the part of the concerned authorities.

Central Recommendations

6.24 The Expert Group strongly recommends that the following procedures be adopted:

Before district level proposals for TLC are entertained or sanctioned by the NLM executive:

(i) There should be the establishment of a state level core group of 4 to 5 persons, some of whom must be outside of government, who are known for their full commitment to TLC in that state. That is, there must be an adequate framework of preparation/monitoring on a state-level basis, before further district level TLCs are launched.

(ii) In districts where TLC projects are being considered, as well as elsewhere, there must be, prior to launching TLCs, orientation courses for Collectors and senior administrators at two levels. Collectors and senior administrators should be made familiar with NLM resources, functioning and organisation at the Centre so that they know who to approach and what to do in case of subsequent problems. They should also become fully familiar with the purposes and objectives of TLC, and with relevant TLC experiences and the lessons derived from the TLCs elsewhere in the country. This could be organised by having

orientation courses for collectors and senior administrators with colleagues from other districts (including a few from other states, especially those with TLC experience) at the state level where the State core group will also be present. This will enable them to become familiar with state level resources, functioning, and organisation - coordination of TLCs, and to see themselves as part of a State- and nation wide process. As a result of such orientation courses, the transfer of Collectors would also be less of an obstacle to the introduction or continuity of TLC projects.

(iii) The present system of sanctioning TLCs at the Centre should be replaced by the following procedure which will be better able to ensure adequate preparation for the launching of the actual teacher-learning phase of the TLC.

District Collectors in coordination with the district and State level core groups will formulate draft proposals for a TLC project in their districts and submit these to the NLM. These draft proposals must spell out in greater detail (than customary so far) how the environment building phase will be carried out, and how the preliminary organisational infrastructure will be established including preliminary steps already initiated to this effect. This phase is not just concerned with motivation but also with organisation. Identification of key organisers at village/tola level will improve through the very process of organising kala jathas and other motivation programmes. Moreover, there will have to be training of the district core group and of Key Resource Persons (KRPs). Community centres should be identified in this phase at the village/tola level, if existing 'centres of activity' do not exist or are socially exclusive.

The Group recommends that some funding be allowed for such environment building. The amount is likely to be small, but very useful in getting the best value out of the funds spent. The earmarking of some funds for areas where the draft proposals have been made without environment building, may help to get over the problem of both inadequate preparation and inadequate

response. At the end of this phase (of environment building), the State level core group will assess the adequacy of preparation for launching the teaching-learning phase. Further approval at this juncture by the NLM Centre is not automatic. The State core group may decide that further preparation is required and thus advocate that certain further sums be released by the Centre, at the end of which a final decision will be taken on whether a final proposal for TLC will be sanctioned or not. Or the core group may decide that the preparations that have so far been made are so poor that nothing significant is to be gained by the release of funds for TLC. In this case, the TLC project will be discontinued, and the teaching-learning phase will not be launched. One or two such rejections may alert the organizers/ the local population to change their stance; and voluntary efforts may help to change the ground conditions for the future, when success in other areas is observed.

The purpose of the above procedure is obvious. It is to ensure that as far as possible, adequate groundwork is done to ensure the success and credibility of the programme. It is to ensure that all efforts are made to establish and consolidate the movement character of the TLC from the outset. While there can be a certain latitude in the criteria of judgment of draft proposals and therefore in the release of initial sums (for environment building), standards of judgment regarding the adequacy of preparation must be firm and fairly strict. Even if these procedures are to result in a slowing of the pace at which TLC projects are sanctioned, that is not likely to prove a handicap over a longer period. In the current context, such tightening up is most desirable.

6.25 Total literacy success defined as 80% of identified illiterates in a defined age group in a TLC achieving the Dave Committee norms on testing is a concept on which comments have already been made. The Group believes that the target of Total Literacy (at 80% achievement) is unrealistic and misleading; it encourages the fudging of figures and distracts

attention from the process of promoting a learning society. Also, progression from 10% literacy level to 50% is infinitely more difficult - and commendable - than progression from 40% to 80%. Indeed, even enrolment of non-literates is never complete; and as stated elsewhere (in the chapter on Evaluation) there is no guarantee that even the initial list of non-literates is by any means sacrosanct.

6.26   In many areas, the Group has observed a tendency to give up TLC because a sucess rate of only some 40 to 50 per cent has been achieved, and there are signs of "volunteer fatigue". The Group would recommend that in such areas, a fresh preparatory 'campaign' should be mounted, and a vigorous effort made to catch the drop-outs in the age-group below 45 years. Otherwise, the Hindi belt would get left out of the movement for increased literacy and learning.

6.27   The Group has also observed with satisfaction - that the NLM strategy is now to sanction PLC when 25% of the learners (or 50,000 learners, whichever is less) have attained the Dave Committee norms. This is a salutary procedure; it helps in promoting a learning society. In keeping with this criterion, the Group recommends that the concept of total literacy (at 80% level of success) be given up; and to this end, the Group recommends procedures as indicated in the following paragraphs.

6.27   A district is usually declared as a total literacy district for a particular age group (15-35 or 15-45 or such other age group as identified by the concerned authorities) when the aggregate of neo-literates comes to 80% or more of the identified learners in that age group. However, in practice, there has been some confusion in this regard; and there exist different procedures (e.g. 80% of the total population of the identified age-groups, or sometimes 80% of the enrolled population only). This whole business of a target approach and of achieving "total literacy" must, as indicated earlier, be brought under serious scrutiny. One cannot do without a time-bound, area-based, target approach if one is committed, as one should be, to the campaign approach for the eradication of adult illiteracy. But the 'target' to be achieved

should be shifted from seeking "total literacy" (with all the problems this brings of fudging, doctoring and politically motivated manipulation) to the idea of seeking to achieve high success rates. This notion of "success rates" must be given clearer content.

6.28   One kind of success rate is a relative measurement (related to the existing level of literacy rate in a district) which can be given appropriate statistical/numerical form i.e. a proportionate measure of the rate of change in literacy. This would be a measure of marginal rates of improvement and perfor-mance. Such indices could be used for cross-district comparisons and would give a fairer picture of performance than the use of absolute measures of literacy in districts.

6.29   There is also no point in fooling ourselves that we can or must devote equal attention/ effort to all age groups. There has to be some economy and concentration of effort with greater emphasis given to trying to make the 15-45 (and even 9-14) age groups literate, than to the 45-60 age group where physical disabilities are much greater, motivation much lower, and absorption/retention of literacy skills much weaker. In the case of 45-60 age group, their participation in TLC can be based more on learner-initiative, whereas for lower age groups there has to be instructor-volunteer initiative to mobilise learners. At the same time we are not talking of disregarding the 45-60 age group.

6.30   In some states, e.g. in West Bengal, the school drop-outs of 9-14 age are also included in the target population. This, in the Group's view is a very desirable move, as else the population of non-literates will never cease. The Group has observed that by and large, the classes for the 9-14 age group and 15 or more, are different, though the primers taught are the same. This also is a desirable development, though some experts have opined that the texts taught to the 9-14 age group of non literates should also be different so that they can later join the formal school system. This issue is discussed later.

6.31   To return to the main theme, instead of a single target of "total literacy" we can

have a graded range of outcomes — out-standing, excellent, very good, good, average, poor. These terms can be given a quantitative profile in a number of ways. In high literacy districts where further rises in literacy are more difficult, an 'excellent' achievement target will mean something else from what it would mean in a low literacy district where a significant marginal rate of improvement would better qualify as an excellent performance. Similarly, these graded outcomes will, in quantitative terms, demand higher percentage performance from the 15-45 age group than for the 45-60 age group.

6.32 Overall, if in the course of a TLC, a 55%-60% success rate among identified illiterates is achieved, this should be cause for genuine satisfaction provided there is no relapse. The broad point is that the current obsession with "total literacy" should be replaced with other measures of success, some of which also take into account the specificities of districts, and of targeted populations.

6.33 TLCs invariably generate a qualitatively higher demand for primary school education, particularly for girls. State governments must also coordinate their primary education programmes with TLCs, making sure that wherever TLCs are in their middle or later phases, a renewed effort is made to improve the availability/accessibility of lower and higher primary schools in those districts/areas where TLC success generates a higher demand for primary education. The Group would reiterate that since TLC cannot be a permanent appendage of the education system, unless there is a distinct improvement in both the quantity and quality of primary education - and its accessibility - the objectives of the TLC would not be really fulfilled. All this calls for a sea-change in the extant pattern and manner of school functioning. The problems of elementary school education lie outside the purview of the Group and have been the subject of other Committee Reports which have made their recommendations in this respect. Suffice it to stress here, that unless there is an effective universalisation of elementary education, the tap of adult illiteracy can never be closed. The last thing that anyone should want is the permanent institutionalisation of TLCs or other adult literacy programmes.

.34 As far as possible, the actual teacher learner process should coincide, in rural areas, with the beginning of the agricultural slack season. Whatever studies exist seem to suggest that the crucial point of transition is from Book 1 to Book 2. Intensiveness of the learning process i.e. lack of interruptions is very important generally, and particularly important in this period where a qualitative jump in the learning-retention process takes place. Experience suggests that for a majority of learners to actually have a net period of 6 months of instruction, the teaching-learning phase as a whole should last for at least 12 months going upto 18 months if necessary.

Other Recommendations

6.35 Primary school teachers should reside in the village in which they teach. This is not an official norm but should become an inviolable rule. This would promote greater accountability and is much more likely to ensure greater commitment and practical involvement of the primary school teacher both in the adult literacy programme in the village, as well as in the primary school education system.

6.36 Unofficially, government administration sometimes overburdens primary school teachers. This is not the case every where. In low literacy areas there are also situations where primary school teachers do not even do the work they are supposed to perform. In such cases, their contribution to TLC is understandably weak. But where this is not the case, the village school headmaster and primary school teachers are important inputs into adult literacy programmes. After normal teaching duties, the priority of primary school teachers should be adult education. Other government imposed responsibilities, where excessive, should be shifted (or shared with) other village or block level functionaries.

6.37 Great importance should be given to carrying out an accurate initial survey of illiterates. It has been observed by the Group that in some areas - especially where literacy levels are currently low - there are serious lacunae even in the official lists of non-literates. That the village sarpanch or gramsevak should

accompany those doing survey on a house to house/village level basis would seem to be a good suggestion.

6.38 The Group would not recommend any basic alteration of the Dave Committee norms on testing. However, the letter writing component which is currently given 20 marks out of the 30 for the general writing component of the evaluation test should, in the opinion of the Group, get reduced weightage. It could come down to 15 marks.

6.39 Instead of the end-of-the-TLC declaration of meeting or not meeting the "total literacy" target, there should be a more celebratory approach. The aim should be to reward efforts at various stages of the TLC, which may follow discussion/evaluation of different kinds of `success rates' achieved and not achieved. This also would be more in keeping with trying to create a continuous and ongoing learning society than with the misleading aim of seeking to achieve a "totally literate" country in some unrealistically quick time span. The morale of those involved in trying to make the TLC succeed would not then hinge so conclusively on whether the total literacy target has been achieved or not.

6.40 There should be greater flexibility in the matter of provision of erasable slates. These are not always needed, especially for adults. They are also more easily saleable. The supply of copy books to be filled in, is also more easily controlled. Generally, it is better for adults to use pencil and paper (unless they themselves have a strong demand for slates). It is what they will eventually use anyway. It is also more in keeping with their dignity. Adults having a firm hand do not need slates in the same way as children who have to develop hand control.

6.41 It is pointless to expect all non-literate adults, who may suffer from eye problems, to successfully participate in the literacy programme. Nor can villagers needing eye-care be expected to visit a fixed-site or stationary eye camp even if it is not too far from the village. What is needed are mobile eye testing/ spectacle providing vans to systematically visit every single village, and if need be, every tola in the blocks/districts undergoing TLC. This could be done just after the end of the

environment building phase in a TLC district in those cases where a decision has been taken to go beyond the draft proposal and to sanction a final proposal. Visit timings should be coordinated with the villages/tolas concerned to ensure maximum turnout for eye- testing at the time of the visit. Such a measure will build on top of the momentum already created by the environment building phase and generate an even greater sense of enthusiasm. It will also be a way of linking health benefits directly to the TLC.

6.42 Reading spectacles should be provided at low or nominal cost (cheap efficient glasses can be easily produced at current technology levels) at the time of testing itself. Obviously, all eye ailments cannot be catered for; the TLC cannot be converted into an intensive eye-care programme. It will be enough to confine oneself to providing, specifically, reading glasses for adults anxious to become literate. If necessary, such a programme should be coordinated with eye-care efforts initiated by government. or health-oriented NGOs.

6.43 Problems of inadequate lighting at learning centres have to be addressed. Where such centres have electricity, fluorescent tube lights provide considerably better illumination than incandescent bulbs. Where there is no electricity, proper and safe lanterns can be provided at the time when the teaching- learning phase is about to start. The Group has observed that in a large number of areas, a small "kuppi" lamp is all that is available for a cluster of 10 to 25 learners, which is clearly inadequate.

6.44 Systematic cross-district and even cross-state exchange visits of government officials (between say, good and bad performing areas) should be encouraged. It is important that such exchanges not be confined only to senior levels but involve those levels of the administration that work closely "on the ground" as it were.

6.45 If the district core group and the Zilla Saksharata Samiti (ZSS) is functioning properly, which is a precondition for a successful TLC, then one of its major tasks will be to supervise and monitor the proper and regular training of Key Resource Persons (KRPs), master trainers (MTs) and voluntary instructors (VTs) through periodic camps. Such camps should aim not

merely to impart the basic teaching methods but also to infuse and reinforce the sense of mission and enthusiasm that has driven trainers and instructors to volunteer their services in the first place. The organisation of such camps should reflect this intention e.g. there can be a public oath of commitment at the end of the camp training schedule. The idea should be to: a) create an emotional mood and commitment in the training process; and b) to encourage the development of greater social awareness among instructors as well, through frank interchange of views and experiences among themselves. Indeed, the excitement and the commitment have been observed to increase (among the VTs) as the learners start responding, and success of the efforts of the VTs becomes increasingly apparent.

6.46   Finally, the Group is convinced that the voluntary character of the programme is essential for its success. This, indeed, has been one of the strengths of the present programme. One of the reasons for the comparatively poorer performance of TLC in some areas is the concurrent running of the traditional Adult Education Programme in a neighbouring area. The NAEP, its past, its future, are big and problematic issues; but the Group has found that wherever the Programme has been tainted with monetary rewards to VTs, the programme has, in fact, deteriorated. A major success of the TLC is the idealism it has generated in many sections of the population.

Specific Recommendations on Primers and Written Materials

6.47   The NLM in collaboration with the State Resource Centres (SRCs) should organise reassessment of the content of primers to remove material which patronises learners, which sends messages that lower self-esteem, which are guilty of gender bias against women. Much the same stricture should apply to the messages disseminated in the environment building phase through slogans, posters, plays, etc. Here the ZSS will have to play a sensitive monitoring role.

6.48   The Group is constrained to note that it has also observed some rigidity and reluctance, in some SRCs, to allow local variations in the

learning material. The Group has noted with some admiration the efforts made by a few district authorities, to come out with their own periodicals and other literature (mostly at the PL/CE stage). In some areas, efforts have been made to bring out interesting material, partly in a tribal dialect, and in conformity with tribal traditions and aspirations, both in verse and prose form, material which (regrettably) has not found acceptability with the SRC concerned. The Group would urge that as long as the literature is consistent with the diverse provisions of the Constitution of India, there should be general willingness to encourage such local efforts. That, indeed, would reflect progression towards a learning society.

6.49   The Group would strongly recommend that all primers should, in simple language, inform learners of their basic Constitutional rights, and of the nation's goals spelt out in the preamble.

6.50   The language of learning should be the "language of environment" which is to be decided by the learners themselves. It could be the mother tongue or the market language or some other language deemed to be useful to the concerned learners.

6.51   Concerning decentralised production of primers, the Group would reiterate that one should be flexible about this. It is neither desirable nor always possible to always de-centralise this activity. Consideration can be given to farming out experts to districts if necessary. The ZSS should be the deciding body but in consultation with SRCs (subject to what is stated in para 6.48 above). All primer materials should be in accordance with certain general, centrally stipulated NLM guidelines. There is, however, some advantage in making the learning material more interesting by relating the same to certain locally relevant experiences.

6.52   The State core group along with the ZSSs need to be alerted to the need for innovatively incorporating local oral traditions of learning often specific to regions or social groups for the purpose of developing posters, written materials, even primer content. This would give an exceptionally powerful incentive to all learners to involve themselves in the

learning process, and indeed, to contribute to learning material for future learners.

6.53 The State core group, through the ZSSs, should take up the responsibility of preserving through codification, the pre-numeracy skills that non-literates have already developed and acquired in order to help themselves cope with the commercial exchanges/negotiations of everyday life. The same applies to the often rich (and little known) local oral traditions of learning and knowledge. This is also true of tribal societies of which many of us in metropolitan areas are blissfully ignorant.

Specific Recommendations Regarding Women in TLCs

6.54 Right at the heart of TLC success has been the impact of mobilised women. Both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the TLC have depended crucially on the enthusiasm and participation of women. Indeed, this aspect of the TLC has been one of the signal successes of the programme.

6.55 Despite this, and the broad mandate of the National Policy on Education (NPE) and its Programme of Action (POA), by and large, the portrayal of women in the primers and other audio- visual and written materials conforms to the traditional and stereotyped image of women of high caste-middle class background. This must be altered. The NLM should help in institutionalising a review process of the primers and should give prominent place to representatives from grass roots women's organisations. This review process should also extend to materials used in the environment building and later phases of TLCs. This, in practice, would require a network of institutions and organizations committed to this concern, with the requisite skills and understanding of the complexities of the problem. The Group recommends that the NLM extend support to the evolution of such a network.

6.56 In TLCs, it is often the case that while women form a very large proportion of learners and instructors, yet in the district and block structures of the TLC, their representation is insignificant. Every effort should be made to improve on this.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE HINDI BELT

Particularly the Key States of U.P. and Bihar

6.57 The Group is convinced that political commitment to universal primary education and to removal of the lack of literacy among adults is a must for the success of the programme. This is particularly important in U.P. and Bihar today, where the level of literacy is woefully below the national average. The nature of the bureaucracy and administration is such that it is most likely to move seriously to make a programme successful if it is convinced that top level political priority and commitment is given to that programme.

6.58 The role of the District Collectors is particularly important in these States even where much of the responsibility for TLCs has been given to VOs. Destabilising Collectors who are active and committed to TLCs through early transfers, is particularly debilitating and regrettable. The Group is conscious of the needs of administration, and the privileges of the state governments in regard to postings and transfers. And yet, the Group must record that progress - which is the objective of all state governments - at times hinges on the stability of administration.

6.59 The question of adequate preparation before launching the TLC teaching learning phase is particularly important for the Hindi belt. The Expert Group strongly recommends the following:

a) Each village should have someone identified as a key organiser who will be a full timer for the duration of the TLC. The person selected as key organiser will have already distinguished himself or herself as a dedicated activist in the early part of the environment building phase. This is an exception from general all India experience which the Group is consciously recommending for reasons stated earlier and below.

b) In States where there is today low political commitment to TLC, where the

bureaucracy frequently works at cross purposes, and where the task of eradicating illiteracy is so large that the capacities of even the best intentioned VOs is enormously stretched, there is a vital need to set up a minimal scaffolding for a functioning organisation capable of taking up the task on hand. Full time work would be limited to the duration of the TLCs, and great care should be taken to select only those with proven dedication and commitment. ZSS would be the proper organisation to decide about such selection.

6.60 Both in Bihar and U.P. there are special State-wise primary education projects based partly on external funding i.e. the Bihar Education Project and the U.P. Education Project. Problems arise in those districts where both TLCs and State level education projects are in progress, because TLCs are volunteer- based whereas the other Programmes have paid instructors. In areas not covered by the latter, TLCs have a much greater chance of success, and greater effort by the TLCs should be focussed on such areas, with extension of the official Education Programmes where they already exist. Mixing the two has been found to create problems. There should be greater co-ordination between TLCs and the State Education Projects. The latter should follow successful completion of the TLC, so that the increased demand for primary education generated by the TLC gets properly addressed.

6.61 Since problems of poverty and under-development are particularly acute in these regions and out-migration levels in many areas in the Hindi belt are well above the average, particular attention must be paid to integrate literacy and development even in the course of the TLC. At least one government development scheme (this can vary among districts or regions) should be coordinated with the introduction of a full TLC project. That is to say, for example, in a district undergoing TLC there can also be the establishment of an intensified Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS), so that out- migration is minimised. There will obviously have to be flexibility in the choice of such government schemes because needs vary across districts/regions. The Group is acutely conscious of the fact that this recommendation transcends the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Human Resource Development. And yet, since Government is one, the Group is hopeful that priority can be given to such pooling of programmes and resources (that we have recommended for PL/CE* - see Chapter VII) even at the TLC stage. At least for these two States (currently backward in terms of both economic development and education), some formula must be found for linking socio-economic development programmes with TLCs.

NOTE = * Ideally, in keeping with our understanding of the difference between education and learning, the term 'continuing education' (CE) should be replaced by the term 'continuous learning' (CL). However, too many changes in established terminology can cause their own problems. As long as the importance of the distinction is recognised, the term continuing education (CE) can be used. The Group would recommend, however, that the acronym PLC - which refers to a 'campaign' mode - be replaced by the acronym PL/CE or post- literacy/continuing education, to describe the phase after TLC.

POST-LITERACY MEASURES: CONCEPTUAL APPROACH, OPERATIONAL STRATEGIES, ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. In the earlier stages of the review of TLC, the Group expressed some concern about the absence of a clear conceptual framework for the Post-Literacy phase. As the Group began to realise the diversity of situations at the ground level, the variations in the outcome as well as in the organisational mode in different districts/States, and the transformational effect of the campaign/movement on different sections of participants, the initial vagueness of the PL/CE appeared to be less of a handicap. The conceptual approach evolving now - after discussions with diverse groups responsible for PLC, and some neo-literates as well as voluntary teachers - has a greater chance of drawing on the lessons of the TLC in selected districts (for PL/CE). The framework suggested in this chapter may provide greater opportunity to the two critical masses involved in TLC - the neo-literates and the volunteer teachers- to help give concrete shape to the PL/CE programme.

7.2 While, in respect of PL/CE, most people are, in major respects, still in the dark, yet certain broad commonalities of approach have already emerged. They point to opportunities as well as problems; the former need to be grasped and the latter addressed urgently - at the national and the State levels. They will require both investment and sustained, responsive and innovative programme support.

7.3 At present, most PLCs are engaged in "mopping up" operations of those identified non-literates who have either not passed Primer III or dropped out (or not even enrolled). This involves:

(a) **Extending the time period for the TLC phase** - to reach sections who could not be reached in the first phase, or whose learning process was interrupted because of unavoidable reasons like migration,

sickness, disasters etc. This category also includes the slow learners, who were unable to reach NLM norms at the time of evaluation. The problem of volunteer fatigue needs to be overcome by motivating others to come forward, after training, to teach.

(b) **Stabilizing command over literacy**- This has to be achieved through structured/ guided reading/ instruction/promotion of writing skills. The last has been emphasised by both committed volunteers and expert educators/linguists, and calls for production of relevant and interesting materials for general reading at the PL/CE stage. Members of the Group have come across centres where neo-literates have continued to meet their teachers long after the closure of the campaign and have indeed produced poems, songs, plays, and other compositions. Such materials reflect their own life experiences, and are in the language of their environment - not "purified" by the literate 'literati'. They are thus easily understood by other learners.

7.4 The Group would like to reiterate that PL/CE has to cater to both neo- literates and to the armies of semi-literates comprising school drop-outs and lower level pass-outs.

7.5 From the experience of districts where the PL/CE programme is in operation, it is clear that carrying out a successful PL/CE programme remains the single most difficult problem confronting the NLM, and the whole of the adult literacy programme. The Group is informed that in the old NAEP programme and its later incarnations - relapse was probably around 40% of neo-literates. Reliable estimates of relapse in the current programme are not available but few would be surprised if the current rate of relapse is not much lower where

the concerned authorities have not vigorously taken up PL/CE.

7.6   On one issue, the Group has a strong view on some part of extant thinking on PL/CE. PL/CE should not be attempted in the campaign mode. New forms of institutionalisation, new agencies of organisation; new attitudes towards this phase of the programme, fundamentally different from the TLC phase, are required. The term PLC which denotes yet another campaign is therefore a misnomer, and should be replaced by the designation PL/CE (Post Literacy/Continuing Education)

7.7   Four principles appear to be important in the effort to institutionalize a PL/CE programme.

i)   At least one PL/CE centre per village or even per tola (or for a cluster of tolas) where this is warranted, is essential. The Jan Shikshan Nilayam or JSN is not always and everywhere the appropriate form that a PL/CE center should take. At any rate, the current policy of one JSN per 5000 which tends to serve a cluster of villages is not recommended. The principle of mobilisation on the basis of the 'natural community unit' is crucial, and is the only way to invoke the necessary sense of community commitment and pride in the PL/CE programme.

ii)   The TLC and PL/CE phases must be integrated. In this respect the NLM has already taken an important step to promote this by its welcome decision to release funds for PL/CE in a TLC district where 25% of enrolled illiterates or 50.000 (whichever is less) have completed primer 2. This decision is endorsed by the Expert Group.

iii)   Organisational control of the PL/CE at the basic unit level (village or tola) must be different from that of the TLC structure of control at the equivalent level. Mahila Mandals, women members of panchayats and the staff of primary and secondary schools should play a more prominent role than the traditional village hierarchy in controlling PL/CE activity. Since the TLC and PL/CE are to be integrated, the organisational structure for running the PL/CE must emerge and operate alongside the organisational structure for running the TLC.

iv)   For the PL/CE, there should be a part which is a 'structured programme', and another part which is an unstructured programme, left to each local community to fill in. This would not only impart flexibility but also encourage local initiative, and thereby ensure continuing success of the programme. The Group, would however emphasize that in all such activities, participation and leadership role of women should be attempted from the planning stage.

7.8   In the PL/CE phase a 'sense of mission' has to be inculcated without a campaign mode. How is this to be done? There are two ways in which this can be done. First, ways must be found to encourage a real and continuing sense of collective achievement and empowerment of the people. Second, the 'sense of mission' has to take the form of a palpable 'sense of progress'. This means: (a) establishing the cultural relevance, and (b) the 'socio economic' relevance of stabilised literacy skills. Clearly, a crucially important aspect of PL/CE phase is to be able to link literacy and development in a positive and meaningful way for neo-literates and the poor in general. Literacy will have to be connected to every day existence in very concrete and sustainable ways. One way this could be attempted, without infringing the present domain of bureaucratic authority of different layers of administra-tion is explained later. (see paras 7.17 to 7.22)

7.9   There are other aspects concerning the manner in which PL/CE has to be organised. An example pertains to the TLC. Some States/districts have included many learners from the 9-14 age group in the TLC and the concerned States believe that PL/CE for this group should aim to groom them to enter the formal school system. For this category of learners, separate structured course materials are being prepared, to bring the children upto the level of class V during a period of one and half years.

While we support this objective as laudable, there are some issues that become

41

important to emphasise in this context. First, this is an area of responsibility under the TLC, wherein two different streams are being proposed. Secondly, even herein, we feel that further differentiation within this age group is necessary.

7.10 The relatively senior group would be 13-16 years old by the end of this grooming period. Admission to Class V at that age would destroy their new found confidence. In the case of girls particularly, there would be other obstacles. **It would be better to draw on the experience of the Central Social Welfare Board's programme of condensed courses (which normally take two years, but could, in the case of neo-literates, be extended somewhat), and groom them to appear for the school final (X class) examination**. Such a strategy may also attract some of the younger set from the 15-50 age group, as well as school drop-outs. But this would imply not the PL/CE as an institution or forum for wider community participation for social development, but a thrust for 'Open University' or 'Open School' type of education. This approach would meet one critical problem, that of intensive and concentrated instruction of this young and adolescent group by motivated, trained and experienced teachers. The Group feels that while this could be attempted as an offshoot of PL/CE, it may not necessarily become a universal feature. This is where the idea of an 'unstructured' programme as part of PL/CE, as indicated in para 7.7 (iv) becomes relevant. There must be room for local variations and local initiatives.

7.11 **Equally, there is a greater need for experimentation, innovation and combination of general education with vocation-oriented skill training at this level, especially for girls - to prevent child marriages**. While flexibility and responsiveness to local/group specific needs have to be pursued at all levels, we recommend local co-ordination between certain specific strategies of different departments, and the pooling of resources/experiences across various agencies/ministries of the Government of the India and States, with initiatives taken by development action groups at the local level. This is one way in which PL/CE can help in this process, without

impinging in any way on the administrative prerogatives of different departments.

7.12 **To begin with, and importantly, the PL/CE Centre could become an 'Information Window', in the village.** Information about various schemes eg. for education, for training, for services rendered by different cadres of functionaries (ANMs, CHVs, child health, nutrition and development workers, organisation and management of collective/cooperative enterprises, social educa tion oraganisers, extension workers for agriculture and allied activities, para- legal or para-medical social workers etc.) is seldom available at the district level, and never at the village level. The pooling and dissemination of such information is critically necessary for both neo-literates and the planners - to widen their own choices, vision and courage for innovation, as well as for making literacy a means of enhancing 'access' and 'capability'. The Group has received repeated suggestions/reports from committed administrators of TLCs about the felt need for a convergence of all govt. programme functionaries at the village/block level on fixed days - to listen/respond to people's felt needs, and resolve burning problems without loss of time. This is a process which must evolve with its own dynamic, and cannot, indeed should not be part of the 'structured' programme for PL/CE. But this could will be the outcome of the extension of literacy and awareness.

7.13 **One problem that will have to be overcome in the context of** access to programme information of multiple agencies - a strategy followed for several years by development oriented NGOs organising the poor in rural and urban areas - **is of the language of much of this programme literature - which sometimes confuse even highly literate BDOs and similar Panchayat leaders.** To becomes meaningful and really useful to neo literates, they would require drastic modifications. Since it would be impractical to expect such expertise from the line agencies - at the State or national level - **we recommend that NLM identifies/assists a network or grassroot development action communication to:**

(a) **undertake such exercises in different States/linguistic regions, and**

(b) **groups to - train a larger group to continue and expand such literature.** Such trainees could also be drawn from the VTs, whose recent communication experience would be of value, and neo-literates who have not only stabilisied their literacy, but have demonstrated creativity in explaining unfamiliar but useful terms/information/ideas to their colleagues.

Legal Literacy

7.14   The Group would strongly recommend that along with programme information, access to knowledge about basic laws and their required procedures should form an essential component of PL/CE. In this, again, a great deal of experience/material already exists in the country, thanks to the promotional activities supported by the Committee for Implementation of Legal Aid Schemes (CILAS) in the eighties, and continued by some voluntary organisations, law teaching institutions etc. **Since the problem of language/meaningful instruction or comm-unication is even more acute in legal literacy, the Group recommends identification/assistance for a network on lines similar to the one recommended in para 7.13.**

Other Recommendations

7.15   For this to be come possible, the PL/CE would need some support. **The Group would strongly urge that the NLM provide the resources to all PL/CEs to add a minimum of two rooms to any existing public building in every village (where PL/CE is initiated)** - be it a primary school, or ICDS Anganwadi, or a Primary Health Centre, or any other community building - one for a library and the other for continuing education (of whatever kind is attempted). Adding rooms to an existing building would minimise the cost, and at the same time provide a base which may help build a 'community centre' around the village library/continuing education centre.

7.16   The Group received some strong recommendations from teachers in schools/colleges that PL/CE centres should actively promote close interaction with the formal schools (students and teachers), for mutual benefit. The IPCL method provided a critical turning point in TLC. The method promoted learner response, which in turn encouraged higher motivation/innovation by the teachers. There is a potential for qualitative transformation of the formal educational system through increasing interaction between neo-literates, VTs (a large number of whom are students) and teachers. The Group noted instances of secondary and tertiary level teachers willingly accepting training in the new method from their students who had been trained to be Master Trainers, indicating possible need for change in curricula/teaching methods in the formal institutions. However, this is a very complex issue, and is in any case falls outside the NLM's and the Groups' terms of reference.

7.17   **There are some more general and some specific recommendations that the Group would make regarding PL/CE. One way to link literacy to economic development would be - again, without impinging on the administrative preroga-tive of any Government department - to encourage each village (though the PL/CE) to take up what may be described as 'Resource Mapping' for every village. The Group feels that this concept needs to be explained.**

7.18   Resource mapping (RM) could become potentially one of the most important links between grassroots literacy and grassroots empowerment for development. RM means basically the involvement of the village or local community in the mapping, survey and understanding of its own local village level resources and conditions of existence. In doing so, it generates not only a powerful but also a highly informed demand for development. That is to say, a demand for **specific** projects of their own choice which villagers know will be effective and relevant to their needs.

7.19   There are two aspects of RM which fit naturally into a PL/CE framework. After all, PL/CE is concerned with promoting relevant knowledge, skill upgradation and stabilisation of literacy skills all of the which are strongly promoted by Re source Mapping The first phase of RM is actual resource mapping which requires some 8 to 10 resource mappers per village. (Of course, the more the number of resource

mappers the better). These resource mappers undergo a simple training which equips them to carry out their tasks of survey (through communication with all village households) and mapping. The second phase is the generation of map literacy at a mass, all-village level. Creation of such awareness of map literacy at a village or tola level through guidance is easily done since the demand for it is invariably high and represents a form of popular empowerment that is deeply linked to the concrete reality of village lives. The process of attaining map literacy may help to stabilise newly learnt literacy skills and to generate strong enthusiasm for further PL/CE programme.

7.20 Since RM does not encroach into the terrain of rural development projects as such but remains confined to the process of information gathering and dissemination, it does not establish any additional bureaucratic structure which might encroach on government administrative prerogatives. At the same time, this could he of great assistance to panchayats in micro planning.

7.21 RM is thus ideally suited for incorporation under PL/CE, and has a number of advantages. Since it follows a TLC

(i) there is already a pool of motivated volunteers who can be trained/used for the RM process; (ii) volunteers who would be trained to carry out the first phase of resource mapping would have already established rapport between themselves and villagers; (iii) Neo-literates have an urge to do more which can now be effectively channelled. However, there is much to be said for being sufficiently flexible to allow for certain situations where RM might even accompany TLCs rather than follow it, thereby helping to generate a stronger demand even for TLCs.

7.22 The Expert Group strongly recommends the following:

(a) The NLM executive should consider sponsoring, and taking responsibility for the funding of Resource Mapping as a part of PL/CE (and on occasion, even as part of TLC where conditions so warrant). The NLM executive should, of course, be systematically apprised of the progress of RM work.

(b) This requires that the NLM executive must familiarize itself properly with RM and its organisational requirements.

(c) To this end, the NLM could seek collaboration with popular science groups which have tried Resource Mapping in some areas and have the required expertise to develop an appropriate organisational structure for the training of volunteers in RM and its application at the village level as part of PL/CE. Such an organisational structure may require a district level voluntary core team and key organiser (KO) at the block level. However, the RM work would essentially be village based. The Group feels that this type of activity which would initially have to be an unstructured part of PL/CE, to be introduced in a few areas experimentally - has great potential as a link between literacy and economic development. The Group is therefore, impressed with the concept of the organic link between literacy, RM, and continuing education/development, with RM eventually becoming a structured part of PL/CE.

7.23 The PL/CE Centres at the village or tola level could thus emerge as centres of community activity. However, PL/CE centres **must not be allowed to become the site of economic tension or rivalry. They should not, therefore become centres of economic activity - e.g. production/trade, though they certainly should be centres of economically related information and of cultural-educational activity.**

7.24 To put it more precisely, these centres should function :

(i) As a site for efforts to stabilise the 3Rs skills of neo-literates.

(ii) To serve as a community centre for the village (which could develop into a social development centre, especially for women and children). The above suggestion, if implemented, will give a real stimulus to Mahila Mandals, the

one-third women members of village panchayats, women neo-literates, and women in general to involve themselves in the functioning of such centres.

(iii) To serve, where there is specific demand, as a skill creating and training centre for activities related to economic betterment for the poor and unemployed;and

(iv) As an information window a centre for disseminating all kinds of information related to coping with the complications of daily life with its interfaces with government bureaucracy, nearby towns, banks, post-offices etc.

7.25 In order to help stabilise learning skills, expand literacy capability and enable transition from guided learning to self-reliant learning, the ready availability of PL literature (which requires improvement/multiplication) remains a bottleneck. **The Group has a specific and important recommendation in this regard. We strongly recommend publication and dissemina-tion of spontaneous output by neo-literates, as a validating strategy for their participation, and a critical measure to stabilise basic literacy. SRCs may certainly help in identifying PL literature, but should not be encouraged to adopt a censorial role.**

7.26 The Group attaches great importance to the above recommendation for a second reason. The rich oral traditions of India need recording if the process of losing cultural and local history is to be arrested. Recording of such traditions by neo-literates, from their own or others' memory, would be a critical instrument to enhance their self-esteem and to at least reduce, if not eliminate the gap between the formally educated and the rest.

7.27 Concerning skill creation and training, there could also be mobile training teams with necessary expertise to provide training at the PL/CE centres. Such mobile teams would have a greater outreach and be more cost effective than many current institutionalised (and localised) Training Schemes. The necessary link between such skill promotion and rural development schemes is obvious. But all this, like the earlier suggestion concerning concentrated higher school education, must be

a part of the 'unstructured' activities of the PL/CE, to be taken up where desired, depending on local perceptions as to need.

7.28 For cultural/recreational purposes, PL/CE centres should be provided with reading materials of an appropriate kind e.g. wall newspapers, a special broadsheet produced periodically for neo-literates perhaps funded by the ZSS on a regular basis or with the help of local voluntary organisations. Special radio programmes for the neo-literates should also be considered. The district administration could help in diverse ways in promoting such activities. Neither the SRCs, nor the district administrations should stifle local initiatives in this regard. This is a general point, and does not concern the NLM directly.

7.29 Sporting facilities are definitely not a priority. The centre must be a place where adult women feel comfortable. An excessive emphasis on sports can easily create a strong male youth ambience. The Group does not recommend providing TVs to the PL/CE Centres. Acquisition of TVs creates its own dynamics and may convert such centres into something very different from their original purposes.

7.30 **The library, on the other hand, is critical for the success/expansion of PL/CE activities. The Group recommends support in the acquisition of material and for a full time paid prerak or librarian and a caretaker for such PL/CE centres. Necessary training for PL/CE librarians, on a group basis, could be arranged at the block/district levels.**

Concluding Remarks

7.31 The Group has made a large number of important (and some highly specific) recommendations in regard to PL/CE. Even at the cost of repetition, the Group feels that it is necessary to emphasize some major elements of its recommendations. These are summarised below:

(a) PL/CE should have a 'structured' and an unstructured part. The present PLCs are mainly devoted (in most part of the country) to "mopping up" operations, in respect of TLC, with small libraries being created in a few areas, which however, are still

45

to catch on. The structured part of the PL/CE should have (i) an element of "mopping up" operation, and (ii) an element of continuing education.

(b) Additionally, the 'structured part' of PL/CE should be that the PL/CE centre becomes an 'information window' for all government/non-government programmes and legal literacy.

(c) Resource Mapping for every village could be introduced in a few areas, and extended to become a part of the 'structured' part of every PL/CE programme. This would, in a way, be an extension of 'Informa-tion System' and a motivating factor, accelerating interest in education. This activity would not impinge on the activities of any Department.

7.32 The above calls for some infrastructural support at the local level. The Group feels strongly that NLM should fund the **construction of a minimum of two additional rooms attached to any public building in every village**, for PL/CE. (Adding rooms would involve minimal cost).

7.33 The very idea of an unstructured part is to allow local initiatives to develop and to decide. Among the unstructured part, one could consider compressed school education (for school dropouts now made literate) and vocational education (of local relevance).

7.34 The concept of local initiative automatically brings up issues of the language of discourse, the simplicity of the language, the encouragement of literature produced by neoliterates, encouragement - indeed, freedom, subject to certain overall constraints - given to district and local resource centres to evolve their own literature.

7.35 Finally the Group would like to make a strong recommendation concerning PL/CE which transcends this programme but which effects it vitally. The Group has had occasion to note that easy accessibility of funds for the TLC could and indeed already has - diluted the programme. A good programme should not be discredited - nor its future put into jeopardy - because of laxity in certain parts. If and when funds for TLC cannot be used for TLC, they should be put to good use for the build up of infrastructure and activities for the PL/CE centres; and to accelerate environment building for future TLC to be effective. The TLC and PL/CE are two integral parts of the same process. We need strengthening of the former and clarity in objectives/strategies as well as innovation in methods/instruments for the latter.

EVALUATION AND MONITORING

8.1 The Expert Group has made a detailed study of the 'evaluation procedures' (in regard to success of the TLC)' in different parts of the country, and has come to the conclusion that, with some exceptions, the procedures adopted thus far leave much to be desired. This is not to belittle the achievements of the programme. Yet, there is obvious need for a relatively uniform, standardised system of external evaluation that can be adopted by external evaluation agencies throughout the country. This would ensure comparability of the results, and the possibility of assessing at a national level, the impact of the literacy campaigns, For this, it is necessary to have a minimum set of research strategies and scientific evaluation techniques. Evaluation agencies could, in addition to a minimum set of research strategies, add on other methods and objectives depending on their research capacities and interests.

The Purpose of External Evaluation

8.2 It is important to understand the broad objectives and purposes of external evaluation so that such evaluation may be conducted not only with a credible methodology but also in the right spirit. One could sum up the broad aims as follows:

(a) To provide an objective and a reliable assessment of the literacy and social impact of the campaign in the TLC district. This implies that such evaluation should be conducted by persons trained in social science research methodology, backed up by a team of experts who specialise in the conduct of random sample surveys. (This is not asking for too much because every district has a trained district statistical officer who can provide ground support to the theoretical frame provided by more expert statisticians- trained in random sampling procedures- in universities

specialised institutions/State Statistical Bureaus).

(b) To provide feedback to local organisers about the present status of the campaign, its strengths and weaknesses, so that remedial measures may be promptly taken.

(c) To provide academic inputs into the policy and planning of literacy campaigns (in other districts) at the State and Central levels.

8.3 At the same time, there should be a conscious attempt to bring the internal evaluation as close to the standards of external evaluation as possible. **The Group would strongly recom mend a system (to be outlined later) which would provide for continuing interaction** between internal and external evaluation agencies.

8.4 In coming to the above conclusions, and in setting out certain standard procedures to be followed hereafter, the Group owes a deep debt of gratitude to a number of experts from highly professional organisations. The Group has also relied on its own experiences and studies, pertaining to the extant external evaluation studies, and the discussions that the members of the Group have had with experts as well as the "evaluators" in different parts of the country.

8.5 The Group would strongly emphasise the importance of **bringing internal evaluation procedures as close to the external evaluation procedures** - in terms of reliability - as possible. This is because the sanction of PL/CE, indeed, the very location of centres for post-literacy and continuing education activities, must depend crucially on internal evaluation. The external evaluation may be treated essentially as a process of validation of the internal evaluation, the latter being made rigorous, honest and dependable.

8.6   The Expert Group would, in this context, reiterate a recommendation already made, namely, that the concept of 'Total Literacy' be **abandoned**. This is not germane to the issue under discussion. However, it is **this** which creates urges for conscious or even unconscious 'doctoring' of figures. While there is everything to be said for adopting a 'non-threatening' approach to evaluation (for adult non-literates or neo-literates), if we really want to develop a learning society, we need to be strictly fair, indeed somewhat ruthless in our tests - and our testing procedures - in regard to the proficiency of the learners, so that 'continuing education' can become a reality. Evaluation can effectively be done in a non-threatening atmosphere, if the weight of 100 per cent literacy target is taken off the minds of the local organisers.

The Approach to Evaluation

8.7   It follows that there is need for a 'participatory approach' to be adopted by external evaluation agencies. This would ensure the involvement of the participants in programme implementation, without the pressures (that exist today) from district, State and Central organisers, to reach specified 'targets' by any means. A participatory approach would also bring about better feedback into the on-going campaign.

8.8   In making its recommendations as to evaluation procedures, the Expert Group would like to reiterate its view that the literacy campaign has initiated a process of new awareness and change; its success (or failure) has to be gauged in terms of the extent to which this process has taken root (rather than in terms of mere percentages of neo-literates, who may well relapse into illiteracy unless the process is a snowballing one); and that an improvement in the percentage of literates from say, 15 to 50 percent is to be deemed quite creditworthy (and not to be belittled), as compared to progression from, say, 50 to 85 per cent. The latter is not a mean achievement but the former is immensely creditable because the large size of illiterate population also implies a very small pool of literates (from whom voluntary teachers can be drawn). The Group has chosen to comment

on this problem in the present context because it found that a voluntary group in the Kalahandi district of Orissa was 'disowned' and disqualified from continuing its work because the percentage of success that organisation could report was only 40. (The Group is unaware of the latest situation in this regard, and gives the above only as an example, in order to underscore the point reiterated in para 8.6 earlier).

8.9   It is in the above context that the Group would like to make its recommendations in regard to 'evaluation' which, while being more rigorous than in the past, needs at the same time to be as 'non-threatening' to the learners as possible. However, certain minimum care and norms have to be observed in the evaluation procedures, to make for both credibility and for bringing out the tasks ahead to the organisers of the programme. We should, in brief, not mislead ourselves.

8.10   The Group would, in the above context - and with a view to bringing internal evaluation in line with external evaluation - recommend the introduction of a system of concurrent evaluation during the process of implementation of the literacy phase of the campaign. This can be achieved through brief visits by the external evaluator/evaluating agency, for secondary data collection, observations and interactions with the organisers, say, two or three times during the literacy phase, and prior to the final external evaluation. With the present shift of focus of the NLM in regard to the sanction of PL/CEs, the Group recommends that a formal external evaluation might be initiated when about 60 per cent of the enrolled learners are reported (by the internal evaluators) to have completed the third primer. In some instances of 'credible' external evaluation, the Group gathers that it has been found useful to involve local primary school teachers as part of the larger external evaluation teams coming from outside the concerned district. The leadership, the initiative and the final say must, however, rest with the external evaluation agency. It has also been found useful to incorporate group discussions at each of the three levels of the programme 'implementation'; the sampled villages/wards; the blocks/talukas/ municipalities; and the district. This could initiate a process of self

critical construction of the campaign process by the internal organisers.

8.11   External evaluators would also need to adopt a multi-research approach, where data from testing and interviews (within the fold of the survey) are complemented by secondary data collection, observations, group discussions, and other research methods depending on the capacities of the external evaluation agencies. Some idea of the social impact of the literacy campaign can emerge even during the external evaluation.

External Evaluation of TLCs

8.12   Following from the above, the Group would strongly recommend that an external evaluation agency-preferably drawn from the Departments of Statistics and Social Sciences of some local/regional univerisity or research institution - be nominated from the outset of the TLC, so that the organisers of the TLC programme and the external evaluators can be in touch with each other, right from the beginning of the TLC. The Group finds that something of this approach has, in fact, been adopted in Maharashtra where the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) has been involved in the evaluation process in a number of TLC districts, where the TISS experts have been in touch with the programme authorities from the outset, and have interacted about the procedures to be followed during the internal evaluation; and where periodic visits by "trained" investigators from the TISS to the programme areas on a random basis, and their interaction with the local programme organisers has helped to establish rapport between the external and internal evaluators, and also a better understanding on the part of the latter, of the procedures and standards to be followed while conducting internal evaluation. In some of the larger States, it may become necessary to associate more than one agency. In this context, the Group recommends that occasional workshops (involving all external evaluators) be convened, for the exchange of experiences as well as a critical evaluation of the prcedures adopted by the external evaluators themselves. There should, however, be one nodal agency for overall guidance and monitoring of external evaluation in each state.

8.13   The Group feels that such critical self reviews and examinations are essential. This recommendation is based on the findings of chapter 4 earlier, and the Group's evaluation of the procedures adopted - and the results obtained - by some of the short listed external evaluation agencies indicated in the Introduction.

8.14   Since, in almost all States, every district has a qualified District Statistical Officer (DStO) and also several Additional District Statistical Officers (ADStO) attached to various blocks/talukas (to look after the statistical requirements for planning purposes), the Group would recommend that all such functionaries should be motivated to work for the TLC programme, particularly to provide 'consistent' literacy related data at the block and district levels. They should also collaborate and work with the external evaluation agencies to develop and conduct internal evaluation tests in their areas of jurisdiction.

The Design for External Evaluation

8.15   The basic principle of sampling is to ensure that every member of the target population gets an equal (or as equal as possible) chance of being included in the sample. In other words, the selected sample should be representative of the target population, and one should be able to draw valid conclusions (based on the sample of learners tested) about the characterstics of the entire target population. In line with the above principle, the selection of sample can be made in a number of ways by taking into account the spread of the target population under different castes, social groups etc. Basically, reliability of the data so obtained would depend on the size of the sample chosen - depending on the variations within the target population - the degree of true "randomness" achieved while drawing the sample, and the avoidance of non-sampling errors (by choosing strictly impartial evaluators).

8.16   At the outset, it may be noted herein that the details of the target population, provided by the district authorities, are taken for granted for the evaluation exercise, although the Group has reasons to believe that in some TLC districts they do not necessarily reflect the true picture. It may also be noted that the ground conditions

in different States, particularly the administrative set-up and their involvement in the literacy campaign, are very different; and this impels the Group to suggest that some degree of flexibility in designing the evaluation exercise may be not merely desirable but necessary.

8.17   For any representative (and reliable) external evaluation, it is important to cover the varying social, demographic and regional characteristics of the district and the different organisational features of the campaign. The literacy campaigns are generally organised in a manner that the micro-organisational units are villages in the rural areas and wards in the urban municipalities. Thus, before selecting a spcific sample design for say, the rural areas of a district, one has to understand the ground realities of that district, particularly the segmentation, clusters and other characteristics of the target group, and the administrative set up. The village being the smallest administrative unit for the literacy campaign (with varying number of illiterates, ranging from less than 100 to many more than 500), there is a village coordinator (normally a primary school teacher) in each village. The village co-ordinator is supposed to keep proper record of the number of illiterates, enrolled learners and the learning centres in the village. Next to villages are gram/Nyaya Panchayats which consist of a group of villages. All TLC related data at panchayat level are compiled and maintained by a coordinator (normally a high school teacher), with the help of village coordinators. Next to panchayats are blocks which are under the charge of a Block Development Officer (BDO). A district is normally divided into 10 to 20 blocks; and the TLC project is sometimes undertaken for all blocks simultaneously, and often times by taking up a few blocks at a time, and covering them in phases (with less than 10 blocks in one phase), depending on the resources (in terms of finance, manpower and managerial skill) available in the district. In the Hindi speaking States, most of the districts have taken up TLC work in phases, covering 5 to 10 blocks in one phase.

8.18   Ideally, a block is a sufficiently large geographic entity to warrant a sampling design which would cover all blocks. But, one has to consider two problems in this context: first, the resources to be spent for external evaluation

; and secondly (and importantly), the danger of stretching the external evaluating agency over too large (and dispersed) an area. Keeping the above in view, the Group would recommend the following sampling design to be followed in all districts for external evaluation :

a)   Every TLC district should be divided into strata, and their number should never exceed 10.

b)   In districts where a TLC project is undertaken in phases (covering less than 10 blocks in one phase) the block should be taken as the stratum. All blocks would thus get covered in the evaluation.

c)   Even in districts, where number of blocks is more than 10 and TLC work is undertaken simultaneously in all the blocks, the number of strata should not exceed 10. This can be achieved by combining two neighbou-ring blocks into one stratum for the purpose of sampling.

d)   Again, with a view to minimising the expenditure/stretching the external evaluation agency, one may select - through a process of random sampling with replacement - four panchayats from each block/ blocks-cluster. For this, one would require the list of all panchayats (along with the number of learners in each panchayat) in each stratum. The panchayats would have to be listed in serial order, by the number of learners, so that both the small number of learners and large number of learners get properly represented.

e)   From every panchayat selected in the sample, preferably four villages should be selected by following random sampling method. This would require the list of all villages (along with the number of learners in each village) covered under a sampled panchayat.

f)   All learners in the selected villages must be tested by the external evaluator.

8.19   In some districts, there might be a large number of learners belonging to SC/ST, other backward castes and minority communities, at block, panchayat or village level. In such situations, to give proper representation to learners belonging to these groups, all panchayats (and the villages in them) in a

stratum should further he subdivided into two sub-strata-one belonging to predominantly SC/ST, etc., panchayats (and villages) and the other consisting of other panchayats (and villages). Then, the same sampling and testing procedure as given earlier should be followed ensuring that at least one panchayat (and village) is selected in the sample from the first sub- stratum. There can be more than one panchayat or village in the sample from the first sub-stratum depending on their numbers in the stratum.

8.20 Thus, typically - and purely as an illustration - 16 villages are to be selected from each block, and all learners in those villages are to be tested. Depending on the number of villages/panchayats per block, the aim should be to cover some 5 to 10 percent of the target population. **In case the sample size of learners exceeds, say, 10 percent of the target population the number of sample villages in each of the selected panchayats may be reduced from 4 to 3, thus reducing the number of selected villages in each stratum (block/block-cluster) from 16 to 12.** Based on the performance of sample learners in the test, one can estimate the success rate at the stratum level. For the entire district, the success rate can be worked out by taking the **weighted average** of the figures of success in rates, in different strata; weights being the number of learners in each stratum.

8.21 The sample is so designed that one can have a rough idea about the sampling error in the estimate, without any additional labour on the part of the external evaluator. This can be done by extending the principle of independent 'interpenetrating sub-samples' in a random sample survey, a historic theoretical contribution to sampling theory by the late Prof. P.C. Mahalanobis. Though we do not have exactly the same situation as envisaged by Prof. Mahalanobis, nonetheless, the selected panchayatas (and the selected villages therein) can be divided into two independent sub-samples, and the absolute difference in the successs rates of the two sub-samples would provide a rough idea of the sampling error of the estimate. This is not strictly mathematically tenable, but to the extent that the sample chosen is expected to be 'representative' of the entire population (of learners), so also, the sub-samples of the sample (within a contiguous area) can be assumed to have the same rate of success. (However, under the present state of data base, and the limited statistical expertise currently available to many external evaluation teams, the computation of sampling error should, in the Group's view, be given low priority unless the external evaluation teams are confident of working out the sampling error).

Validity of Target Population and Absenteeism

8.22 Two points need to be stressed at this juncture. The first point is important : there is no way that the population of learners (listed by the organisers) can be checked by the procedure suggested ; and the Group has reason to believe that the lists available do suffer from infirmities. The only way this can be corrected is by a house-to-house survey during the campaign phase, by volunteers (assisted by village elders, head-men, etc), so that the list of non-literates is as complete as possible. Secondly, in any test, non-response or non-appearance of learners in tests is particularly noticeable where there is periodic migration from the villages in search of work. Even otherwise, there are always likely to be some absentees. The Group would recommend, following the experience of the TISS in Maharashtra, that **a minimum of 80 per cent of the 'learners' should be examined by the external evaluator; and where the percentage is lower - say, because of migration - a second visit be made to catch up on the absentees.** Also, a visit to the houses of learners who are absent would reveal the "genuineness" or otherwise of the reasons given for the absence of the 'learners'. This would require local VT's assistance. Thus, while the aim may be to catch as high a percentage of the 'learners' as possible, the external evaluator has to satisfy himself as to the reasons for the absence of a learner (from the 'tests') and to catch him (her) in his (her) house if necessary, so as to correctly evaluate the percentage of success.

8.23 Even with such efforts, some degree of absenteeism may be unavoidable. In such event, there are four choices:

(a) assume the absentees to have 'failed' the test; this may be a little harsh;

(b) assume the absentees to have 'passed', which would be wildly optimistic;

(c) assume the percentage of success to b e the same as for those tested; and

(d) assume the percentage of success (among the absentees) to be somewhere between (a) and (c) and work out the average of the success rates in terms of (a) and (c) above.

8.24 It would, of course, be desirable to clearly state the percentage of the population of learners tested by the external evaluator, and to indicate the success therein. The Group would reiterate that the percentage of learners tested should not be less than 80; and that, if necessary, a second visit should be made to reach that minimum target. But, **after 80 per cent of learners are tested, the procedure for assessing overall success may be as indicated in para 8.23 (d) above.**

8.25 The Expert Group's major objection to many currently available external evaluations is that the sample tested is not truly random and 'representative' of the target population. Sometimes the sample is drawn purely on an adhoc basis from a part of the target population, and frequently, the sample is extremely small. In any case, the sample tested is selected in a subjective manner, and the tendency observed by the Group has been that only those who have actually turned up for the test have been examined by the external evaluator, irrespective of the fact some of them do not even belong to the learners sampled for testing, and conclusions drawn therefrom as to the overall success rate. This has been observed to have been the practice in several areas. In this context, the Group recommends that all evaluation reports should contain details relating to (a) the sampling procedure adopted, and (b) the formula used for estimating the overall success rate.

Some Other Issues Related to External Evaluation

8.26 In the evaluation of TLC, the objective is to evaluate the learners who are supposed

to have completed Primer 3. (In West Bengal, Primer 2. since the three IPCL Primers have been reclassified and divided into two Primers only). However, in practice, it has been found in many places that many ' learners' who are supposed to have completed Primer 3 have, in fact, successfully completed only Primer 2, and are still studying Primer 3 (For West Bengal, Primers I and 2 respectively). The external evaluator should, while reporting on the percentage of success at Primer 3 level, also indicate the percentage of learners who have successfully completed Primer 2 (and passed the requisite test), but not completed the Primer 3. That should be helpful in estimating the extent of "mopping up" operation necessary, at the PL/CE stage. This can be verified only if a question is asked to all sampled learners (orally or in writing) - how many primers they have completed (0/1/2/3).

8.27 The sampling procedure given in para 8.8 above is based on the presumption that there are about 100 to 150 villages in a stratum. Selection of 16 villages in a block or cluster of blocks (four villages from each of the four panchayats) is suggested only as an example; the objective is to cover 5 to 10 per cent of the population of learners, selected randomly; and in a typical case, 16 villages may amount to a sample size of about 15 percent in terms of villages. Hence, there ought to be some flexibility, and depending on the density of the population, the sample can be smaller. Since some villages would be having a few learners and some others many more learners, as already stated, **they are to be randomised in terms of the number of learners in each village and panchayat, and the number of villages to be covered by the external evaluator reduced from 4 to 3 where there are a large number of villages. The sampled villages should not be known, before the external evaluation, to the internal evaluators. This would make the check truly random.**

8.28 The external evaluator has to not only test the learners but also to collect information about VTs (and learners) on

a) age, sex and occupations of learners and VTs

b) literacy standard of VTs

c) SC/ST minority/other group composition of learners and VTs. These data, if properly classified and tabulated, can provide valuable material for an Impact Study to be briefly discussed later.

8.29 The standardised model test provided by the Dave Committee Report and accepted by the NLM Executive has generally been found to be an adequate basis for testing the learning outcomes in a uniform manner. It is suggested that several standardised versions of this test of the same pattern and similar order of difficulty be utilised in order to obviate the possibility of copying from each other in a group testing situation. The criteria for literacy outcomes according to NLM prescribed levels (and also accepted Report) need to be uniformly adopted. At least 50% marks in each of the components of reading, writing and numeracy and a minimum of 70% marks is the aggregate, should be assidously followed as the norm. Only such learners who attain this minimum performance level might be considered as successful learners attaining literacy upto the NLM prescribed levels. The term neo-literates should be reserved only for such learners in order to avoid confusion. This does not imply that the other learners have not acquired some level of literacy. It only suggests that their learning has fallen short of the levels set by the NLM at a point towards the end of the literacy phase of the campaign. The campaign will have to continue (as part of the PL/CE programme where necessary), so that there is possibility of these learners attaining the NLM expected levels of literacy, thereby enabling them to enter the post literacy and continuing education phase of the programme, to be able to pursue reading/writing such as may interest them, after they have become literate.

Internal Evaluation

8.30 Finally, the Group would reiterate, and strongly urge, that the **internal evaluation of literacy attainments should be conducted for all learners (i.e. 100 p.c. basis), and should endeavour to conform as closely as possible to the standards set for external evaluation**. This calls for continuing interaction between the internal evaluators and the external evaluators. The need to improve the quality of

internal evaluation cannot be gainsaid. After all, the entire process of PL/CE (and its success) depends on the proper location of PL centres; and that would depend entirely on internal evaluation. External evaluation can at best provide a validation of the internal evaluation conducted by the concerned authorities, no more. However, the difference between the success rate given in the internal evaluation and the external evaluation, for the sample of learners tested by the external evaluator, would give an idea of the possible degree of error or over-estimation in the internal evaluation.

Impact Evaluation Studies

8.31 The Group has found- and earlier reported on - the social "impact" of the TLC/PLCE to be impressive in many areas. A natural question arises: how does one measure the impact of TLC/PLCE, and what precisely does one study to even attempt to quantify the social impact of the TLC?

8.32 Two points need to be stated at the outset. First, it is extremely difficult to totally isolate the impact of the TLC from the impact of diverse on-going social movements. This is an area where, in statistical parlance, there is strong "multi- collinearity "; there are many causal factors, and it is difficult to isolate the effect of any one of them. Secondly, perhaps a full scale impact evaluation study can only be conducted after at least a year (or more) has elapsed, and a large number of learners have successfully completed the TLC stage. Yet a third factor needs to be mentioned; for any full "impact evaluation" study one should adopt the "household survey" approach because, after all, the impact of learning should reflect not only on the learner but also on the entire family. But such a study over a longer period also raises the problem of multicollinearity - an infirmity that is not likely to affect a study conducted in the course of external evaluation.

8.33 As indicated earlier, even in the normal course of evaluation, there are ways of assessing the impact of the process initiated by the TLC. In fact, in a significant summary of the experiences of external evaluation for the Wardha, Nanded, Sindhudurg and Latur districts

of Maharashtra and of Goa, Prof. D. Saldanha of the TISS has commented that "... the transformative potential of the campaign approach has been that literate women and girls children have been enabled to break out of historically structured constraints and present socialisation, **as seen from their high proportion of participation as instructors and literacy activists**" (emphasis added).

This conclusion has been based on a cross classification of the characteristics of the population of learners/teachers. Thus, for instance, the sex-ratio of learners as well as of the voluntary teachers (VTs), as well as the age-group of both, the distribution of both by caste or social categories, can be revealing indices of the impact of the TLC. Professor Saldanha has also commented on the effect of the campaign approach "... "to `peopleising' government officials within a broader concept of shared citizenship..."; and has further stated "An important gain from the literacy campaigns has been the prominence given to education at decentralised levels and in the agenda of government development departments".

8.34   The above quotations are given in the context of 'evaluation' merely to illustrate how the social impact of TLC can be partially captured even in the process of evaluation of literacy, provided that adequate attention is given in the questionnaire - and in the tabulation programme - to the characteristics of both the learner population and the population of the instructors. In assessing the social impact of TLC, it is basically necessary to focus on:

(a)   the composition of learners;

(b)   the character and composition of the instructors/organizers;

(c)   the strengths and the nature of the various phases of the campaign process (qualitatively assessed through group discussions); and

(d)   quantitative indices of development in the area where the programme has been launched and completed successfully. It is this last problem which calls for a separate study, after one or two years of successful completion of the TLC. Group

discussions during the external evaluation can also give valuable material for an "impact study".

8.35   The Group would also give high priority to the perceptions of the learners, the VTs and others involved in TLC - regarding its personal/social values/impact and initiatives that these groups offer for this purpose, rather than pre-conceived assumptions/indices developed by the research agencies, which too often refelct urban and class biases and adopt techniques inappropriate for assesing a process at different points of time:

Storage of TLC Data

8.36   There is obvious need for the storage of basic TLC data. Such data, unless properly stored, can raise questions of credibility of internal evaluation. If properly stored, they can provide valuable material for social research in the years to come. Annex 3 gives a possible format for the storage of TLC data.

8.37   Appendix of Annex 3 gives some idea of the lines on which group discussion can be conducted by the external evaluator. This is just one example. There could be variations and other approaches. The only reason the example is given here is that in one study, such an approach has been adopted. Flexibility in regard to the questions must be ensured in order to allow for the variety of issues and experiences in different parts of the country.

8.38   For evaluation in urban areas, a similar procedure as in rural areas may be adopted, with Muncipal Corporation as the stratum, ward as first stage unit and learning centre in each ward as the second and final stage unit. Here, wards and the learning centres in each ward are to be randomised in terms of the number of learners in each ward and the learning centres. Where there are one-to-one - VTs/learners, they would also need to be (samply) covered, but such instances may not be large. The Group feels and would recommend that about a 10 percent sample of learning centres would be an appropriate size for evaluation purposes in the urban areas.

MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION)

16th April 1993.

SUBJECT

Constitution of an Expert Group for Status-cum-Impact Evaluation of TLCs:

The Department of Education has decided to constitute a 6-member Expert Group to process the proposals and guide the conducting of a Status-cum-Impact Evaluation of Total Literacy Campaigns launched in different parts of the country since 1990-91.

2. CONSTITUTION

The membership of the group will be as follows:

1. Prof. **Arun Ghosh**,
    78 SFS, Munirka, Enclave,
    New Delhi-110067.

2. Prof. **Vina Mazumdar**,
    Centre for Women's Development Studies,
    25- Bhai Veer Singh Marg, Near Gole Market, New Delhi- 110001.

3. Prof. **Andre Beteille**,
    Professor of Sociology, Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi,
    Delhi- 110007.

4. Prof. **UR Ananthamurthy**,
    President, Sahitya Akademi,
    Rabindra Bhavan, Feroz Shah Road,
    New Delhi-110001.

5. Prof. **SM Kansal**,
    Professor of Statistics,
    Indian Statistical Institute,
    J-19 Hauz Khas, New Delhi-110016.

6. Shri **Achin Vanaik**,
    Fellow, Nehru Memorial Museum & Library,
    S-314 Panchsheel Park,
    New Delhi- 110017.

3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives which have been tentatively decided for the study are as follows:

(a) (i) To measure the outcome of literacy campaigns among learners/participants with respect to prescribed levels of literacy as per NLM norms.

   (ii) To analyse the estimated number of persons made literate by gender, age groups and social groups (SC/ST and others).

(b) The processes and effectiveness of environment building/mass mobilisation through mass literacy campaigns.

(c) Involvement and partnership between government bodies and voluntary groups in literacy campaigns.

(d) Duration of implementation of the campaign with special emphasis on the duration of teaching/learning.

(e) Resources available and mobilised for mass literacy campaigns including the cost effectiveness of the campaign.

(f) To study and assess the fall out and impact of the literacy campaigns on related socio-economic development programmes such as primary education, health, nutrition, family welfare, gender sensitivity, women and child development programmes, national integration etc.

4. AGENCIES TO BE INVOLVED

On the basis of proposals received and considerations of suitability, the Department has already shortlisted the following agencies to undertake the study under the guidance of the Expert Group:

(i) Sardar Patel Institute of Economic and Social Research (SPIESR).

(ii)   Operations Research Group (ORG), Baroda.

(iii) Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Bombay.

(iv)   Madras Institute of Development Studies (MIDS), Madras.

(v)   Centre for Media Studies (CMS), Delhi.

(vi)   Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Calcutta.

(vii) AN Sinha Institute, Patna.

5. FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

The functions of the Expert Group would include the following:

(a) Sharpening of the objectives of the study.

(b) Discussion with shortlisted agencies to undertake the study, so as to finalise the metholodology, cost and the time frame for the same.

(c) Review periodically the progress of actual conducting of the study by the shortlisted agencies.

(d) Evaluating the reports of the agencies and finalisation of the combined draft report.

(e) Presentation of the final report to the Ministry.

6.   FUNCTIONING OF THE COMMITTEE

The Expert Group will meet in the National Institute of Adult Education (NIAE), 10-B Indraprastha Estate, New Delhi-110002 and will be provided secretarial assistance from the NIAE with cost being borne out of the funds for evaluation studies.

LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED
BY THE EXPERT GROUP

(By and large, serially - in terms of dates of interactions)

1. **Shri Asim Burman,**
   Collector, Burdwan
   (West Bengal)

2. **Ms. Sheela Rani Chunkath,**
   Former collector (Puddukkotai)

3. **Dr. Venkatesh Athreya,**
   BGVS, Coordinator
   (Tamilnadu)

4. **Ms. Aditi Mehta,**
   Ex-Collector, Ajmer
   (Rajasthan)

5. **Shri S.C. Bhatt,**
   Assistant District Magistrate
   (Ajmer)

6. **Shri Abdul Shakur,**
   OSD (Ajmer)

7. **Prof. Denzil Saldanha,**
   Tata Institute of Social Sciences,
   Bombay

8. **Dr. Mushtaq Ahmed,**
   Director, SRC
   Lucknow

9. **Shri Krishna Kumar,**
   BGVS, Delhi

10. **Dr. Nishat Farooq Director,**
    SRC, Jamia Millia Islamia,
    New Delhi.

11. **Shri Prem Chand,**
    NIAE

12. **Shri M.P. Parameshvaran,**
    Secretary, BGVS

13. **Dr. Gokul O.Parikh,**
    Sardar Patel Institute of Economic
    and Social Research,
    (Ahmedabad)

14. **Dr. Manohar Lal,**
    A.N. Sinha Institute of
    Social Studies,
    Patna

15. **Dr. Narsimaha Rao,**
    Centre for Media Studies (New
    Delhi)

16. **Mr. A.M. Chaturavedi,**
    Centre for Media Studies (New
    Delhi)

17. **Prof. V.N. Reddy,**
    Indian Institute of Management,
    Calcutta

18. **Prof. Raghuvendra
    Chattopadhyay,**
    Indian Institute of Management
    Calcutta.

19. **Shri Raghu Ray,**
    Organisation Research Group
    (Bombay)

20. **Dr. Ashish Panigrahi,**
    ORG (New Delhi)

21. **Dr. B.K. Joshi,**
    Giri Institute of Development
    Studies, Lucknow

22. **Prof. C.B. Padmanabhan,**
    Madras Institute of Development
    Studies, Madras

23. **Shri Anil Bordia,**
    Former Education Secretary,
    MHRD

24. **Shri Laxmidhar Mishra,**
    Former Joint Secretary (AE)/
    DG(NLM)

25. **Prof. Yashpal,**
    Chairman, UGC

26. **Sh. Avik Ghosh**
    NIAE Faculty

27. **Dr. Anita Dighe**
NIAE Faculty

28. **Sh. Sumanta Banerjee**
NIAE Faculty

29. **Dr. Kishan Kak**
NIAE Faculty

30. **Dr. Pradeep Bhargawa**
NIAE Faculty

31. **Dr. A. Mathew**
NIAE Faculty

32. **Ms Sadana Saxena**
NIAE Faculty

33. **Dr. Krishna Mohan Rao**
NIAE Faculty

34. **Shri Vinod Raina,**
Eclaviya (Bhopal)

35. **Prof. Samir Guha Roy,**
Calcutta

36. **Dr. Anjali Ghosh,**
ISI Calcutta

37. **Shri Sudeep Banerjee,**
JS(AE)/DG(NLM)

38. **Shri Satyen Maitra,**
Hon. Director, SRC (West Bengal)

39. **Shri D.D. Sharma.**
Director, SRC, (Madhya Pradesh)

40. **.Shri Ranjana Doss,**
Director, SRC, Madras

41. **Shri Avinash Dharmadhikari,**
Additional Collector, Pune

42. **Shri Vijay Prakash,**
Director, Mas Education, Bihar

43. **Smt. Q.Gandhi,**
Ex-Collector, PMT Sivagana
(Tamil Nadu)

44. **Shri S.V. Giri,**
Education Secretary, Deptt. of Edu.,
MHRD

45. **Dr. R.V. Vaidyanatha Ayyar,**
JS (EE), Deptt. of Edu., MHRD

46. **Prof. K.Krishna Kumar,**
Deptt. of Edu. University of Delhi
Delhi

47. **Prof. Aparna Basu,**
General Secretary, All India
Women's Conference,
Delhi

48. **Shri Lukose Vallatharai,**
Director, Mass Education,
Karnataka

49. **Prof. Veena Das,**
Department of Sociology, Delhi
School of Economic, University of
Delhi, Delhi

50. **Prof. Neera Chandok,**
Dept. of Pol. Science, Univ. of Delhi,
Delhi

51. **Shri Anil Sadgopal,**
Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha, New Delhi

52. **Shri Amitabh Mukherjee,**
Collector, North 24 Parganas.

53. **Ms. Ranjana Mukherjee,**
Collector, Howrah.

54. **Ms. Reena Venkataraman,**
Collector, Bankura.

55. **Sabhadhipati,**
Up-Sabhadhipati, and diverse
functionaries of TLC and PL/CE
programmes, and the Director of
District Resource Centre, Burdwan.

56. **Ms. Anita Agnihotri,**
Director, Adult Education,
Government of Orissa, and diverse
authorities at district and block
levels in Ganjam district,
Orissa.

57. **Chief Secretary,**
Orissa.

58. **Minister-in-charge of
Howrah district,**
Sabhadhipati, Up- Sabhadhipati,
and diverse functionaries of TLC and
PL/CE programmes in Howrah
district.

59. **Sabhadhipati,**
Up-Sabhadhipati, and diverse
functionaries of TLC and PL/CE
programmes in North 24
Parganas and
Chairman of the Municipal
Corporation of Barrackpore.

60. **Sabhadhipati,**
Up-Sabhadhipati, Shri Partha Dey,
other functionaries of the TLC and
PL/ CE programme in Bankura and
Secretary of the District Committee
of the CPI(M), Bankura (Shri N.
Mahato) and Shri Tarani Patra (a
Resource Person).

61. **Shri S. Shiv Kumar,**
District Magistrate, Madhubani.

62. **Shri Ram Kumar Tawar,**
TLC Convenor, Madhubani.

63. **Shri Kalyan Bharti,**
Chief District Coordinator,
Madhubani.

64 **Shri Sudhir Kumar,**
Deputy Commissioner, Dhanbad.

65. **Shri Kashi Nath Chatterjee,**
Secretary, Saksharta Vahini, South
Bihar BGVS.

66. **Shri V.N. Bagi,**
Joint Secretary Saksharta Vahini,
Dhanbad.

67. **Shri Sunil Barthwal,**
District Development Commissioner,
Dhanbad.

68. **Shri T.N. Misra,**
Deputy Director, Department of
Mines and Geology, Government of
Bihar.

69. **Shri K.P. Ramaya,**
District Magistrate,
Palamau.

70. **Shri Ajaykumar Varma,**
Ground Water Specialist, BGVS,
Palamau.

71. **Shri Vidyanath,**
Coordinator,
Internal Evaluation,
State Secretariat,
Patna.

72. **Shri R.M. Shah,**
DDO, Ahmedabad.

73. **Shri Balvinder Kumar,**
District Magistrate,
Moradabad.

74. **Shri Vinod Kumar Misra,**
Secretary, ZSS,
Moradabad.

75. **Ms. Usha Singh, Secretary,**
ZSS, Bareilly.

76. **Shri Deepak Singhal,**
District Magistrate,
Bareilly.

77. **Shri Ashok Kumar,**
District Magistrate,
Bijnor.

78. **Shri Gaya Prasad,**
Secretary, ZSS, Bijnor.

79. **Shri Bhaskar,**
District Magistrate,
Tumkur.

80. **Prof Ram Lal Parikh,**
Vice-Chancellor, Gujarat
Vidyapeeth,
Ahmedabad.

81. Vice-Chairman of the Bangiya
Saksharata Prashar Samiti (Shri
Biman Basu) and Shri Subir
Bandopadhyaya (a Resource
Person),
Calcutta.

Details of Storage of TLC Data

Data Format

For the purpose of Internal/External Evaluation and for subsequent analysis for researchers it would be essential to collect data on all learners in a specified format and to store these data on computer tapes (about five copies) to be maintained at a number of appropriate centres (like State Statistical Bureaus of Research Institutions or Departments of leading universities) which would provide access to the data to accredited researchers.

Data to be recorded for Each Learner

1. State/district/rural or urban/name and Sr. no of village (and taluka) or ward with municipal corporation/Sr.No. of Learning Centre.

2. Sr.No. and name of learner, age (completed years) sex, religion, community (SC, ST, NT, OBC, Upper Caste Hindu, others) caste, occupation if any (e.g. cultivator, agricultural labour, other self employed, housewife, permanently employed, casually employed, fishing, others)

3 No. of primers completed (None, 1,2,3)

4. No. of months of training (0,1,2,...)

5. Score in External or Internal Evaluation - (question-wise with maximum marks, sub totals for three major components (reading, writing, numeracy) and total.

Date to be recorded for each VT
(or learning centre)

1. State/district etc. as above

2. Sr. No. of learning centre

3. Sr.No. and name of trainer, age (completed years), sex, religion, community (as above), caste, occupation if any (teacher, other employed, school student, university or college student, literate seeking employment, others)

4. No. of months, giving training (gross and net, as due to unavoidable reasons there may not be any training for some period)

5. Language used for training

6. Method of learning: each one teach one, small group (2-5) larger classes (6 or more)

NOTE–
This Note has been prepared for the Group by Prof. N. Bhattacharya of the Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta.

7. Total number enrolled

8. How many sat for Internal Evaluation/ External Evaluation Test

The Internal Evaluation will cover a much larger number of learners and VT's than the External Evaluation. Serial Numbers will have to be given first to towns, villages, learning centres, VT's etc. to cover all centres, VT's, learners in the Internal Evaluation, in such a way that identification in easy. The same Sr. Nos. will be used by the EET also so that one can match scores in the two tests obtained by any candidates; however fresh Sr. NOs. may be given additionally in the EET so that there are no gaps in Serial Numbers in the EET data and tabulation of EET data is facilitated.

If data are recorded in such formats, one can easily compare scores in Internal Evaluation and External Evaluation of those learners who sat for both. More importantly, one can study the performances of different groups of learners classified by age, sex, community etc. as done in different EET studies. One can also study the characteristics of trainers and the relationship between trainer-characteristics and learner-characteristics as examined in the masterly and insightful report by Prof. D. Saldanha.

Issues for Group Discussion

1. How was the organisation for the literacy campaign in this village/ward? Discuss role of government officials, schools, gram panchayat, village community. Role of Village Literacy/Education Committee. Role of full timers and samanveyaks

2. How effective was environment building in motivating learners and instructors? What environment building activities were carried out in your area?

3. Did the people in the village/ward feel a sense of personal involvement in the success of the literacy campaign? Why?

4. Were there any problems while conducting the survey? Illustrate.

5. How adequate was the training at different levels? Any suggestions?

6. What major problems did you face as regards sustaining the teaching-learning process, i.e. problems of identifying adequate instructors, drop-outs, learning difficulties, motivation?

7. What material, apart from the kits, were used in the village?

8. After the investigator arrives at an assessment of the performance in the village on the basis of the testing, then - what is the reason for the high/low performance of the learners in this villge?

9. What was the system for monitoring the progress of the learners at the village/ district level? How effective was it?

10. What was the strongest point in the implementation of the literacy programme in the area?

11. Of what practical use will literacy be to the neo-literates in the villages? How are they using literacy?

12. Has there been any impact of the literacy campaign on the schools i.e. enrollment, drop out?

13. What should be done so that neo-literates in your area do not relapse into illiteracy?

14. Any comments on our evaluation?

15. Literacy campaigns are being planned for other districts of Maharashtra. Is there any suggestion that you would like to give them, based on your experience?

16. Is there anything else that you would like to mention about the literacy campaign?

PART-III

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The Ministry of Human Resource Development constituted a 6-member Expert Group consisting of the following persons to undertake a Status-cum-Impact Evaluation of Literacy Campaigns as a mid-term assessment of the National Literacy Mission which was launched in 1988 :

1. Prof. Arun Ghosh, Ex-Member, Planning Commission.
2. Prof. Vina Mazumdar, Centre for Women's Development Studies.
3. Prof. Andre Beteille, Professor of Sociology, Delhi School of Economics
4. Prof. U.R. Ananthamurthy, President, Sahitya Akademi.
5. Prof. S.M. Kansal, Indian Statistical Institute, New Delhi.
6. Shri Achin Vanaik, Fellow, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

The Expert Group which was set up in April, 1993 held 19 meetings, interacted with a number of social science institutions and evaluation agencies, held extensive discussions with field functionaries, programme implementors, policy makers, educationists, academicians and social activists, visited several States like Maharashtra, Goa, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, West Bengal, Orissa, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh for on- the-spot study and have submitted their findings on the evaluation of the Literacy Mission.

The report of the Expert Group is fairly exhaustive. It deals with history and evaluation of the programmes, the strategy of NLM, the status of campaigns, assessment of the current status of the literacy campaigns, conceptual clarification of the objectives of the Mission, problems, issues and recommendations of literacy and post literacy campaigns and on monitoring and evaluation.

Historical Perspective, NLM Strategy and Status of Literacy/Post Literacy Campaigns

Although a number of lacunae relating to the centre based programmes had been pointed out by evaluation studies, the Mission in the first three years of its existence continued with the same approach until a breakthrough came with the successful experiment of literacy campaign in Ernakulam district. This was not out of any wisdom internal to NLM but out of an experiment made independently in the field. Again, although the Ernakulam approach was then adopted for selected districts and expanded throughout the country, between 1990-93 the Mission concentrated only on high literacy districts and States where it was easier to show results. It is only since 1993 that the Mission has concentrated its effort and taken up the challenge in the major Hindi speaking States which contribute to about 50% of the non-literate population in the country. During 1993-94 out of 107 projects sanctioned, 53 pertained to the four Hindi speaking States of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. The other new initiatives which have been taken since 1993 are: Stress on elementary education and to improve its access and quality; Stress on post literacy and continuing education; Making efforts at strengthening and widening the institutional resource support to the programme; and Ensuring greater transparency to the programme at all levels.

(3) Recommendations on Aims and Objectives of the Mission

The report has emphasised that a proper understanding of and inter-relationship between literacy, education and social development is necessary to shape perspectives, policies and recommendations. **The fact that the Mission has emerged not purely as a literacy mission has been one of its basic strengths.** The trajectory of the NLM has itself reflected to a considerable extent an unforeseen and unplanned evolution. It points out that **there had probably been a certain lack of conceptual clarity at the initial stages** regarding literacy, education, social development and of the complex inter-relationships between them.

It has pointed out that it may be wiser to use, wherever possible, the term **'non-literate'** rather than 'illiterate' and at the very least, **the pejorative sense in which the word 'illiterate' is used in the campaigns should be avoided.**

The report points out in this connection, a number of areas where the campaigns have had

their unforeseen transformational effect on literates - the volunteer teachers, the organisers, the campaigners and the resource persons who between them constitute another critical mass. **The campaigns have fostered new patterns of relationship bridging the gap between the literates and non- literates**, increasing the former's respect for the latter and also their own self-esteem. It has also fostered a two-way learning process. A large section of the volunteer teachers being students, their return to their formal studies will certainly increase pressure for changes in the curriculum, pedagogy and the general teaching learning atmosphere within their institutions. **These transformational effects coupled with the sharp increase in enrolment in primary schools and consequent pressure for expansion of educational facilities makes the NLM an attempted National Education Mission.** The objectives of NLM should now, therefore, include the promotion, consolidation and development of a learning society.

(4) Recommendations on Literacy Campaigns

A. GENERAL

The Group has made recommendations on decentralisation of procedures for pre-appraisal and sanction of projects, constitution of state level core groups to guide, monitor and assess projects and also to recommend to the Central Government for release of grants, on the need to further improve the primers specially with regard to their content reflecting on the status/ image of women and to ensure that the content does not lower the self esteem of the learners and made some special recommendations on implementation of the campaigns in the major Hindi speaking States.

According to the Group, a strong political commitment to the cause of literacy, existence at the State and district level of a strong core group fully committed to the Literacy Campaign, village level mass involvement/popular enthusiasm, adequate pre- launch preparations and an atmosphere of a popular movement are the minimum pre-conditions of a Literacy Campaign. The Group, therefore, recommended as follows :

1. A **State level core group of 4-5 persons** including some from outside the Government known for their full commitment to literacy campaigns must be constituted. This group **should provide an adequate framework for preparation/monitoring at the State level before District level Literacy Campaigns are launched.**

2. There should be orientation **courses for Collectors and senior administrators** not only relating to the **nitty gritty of the programme** but **also on the conceptual aspects** of a literacy campaign.

3. The present system of sanctioning literacy campaigns at the Centre should be replaced by the following procedure :

On the basis of a preliminary proposal for Literacy Campaign in a district for environment building and preparatory activities some funds should be released for such activities. At the end of this phase, the State level core group should assess the adequacy of preparation for launching the teaching learning phase and they should recommend further release of grants by the Centre.

4. **The Group has welcomed the NLM strategy of sanctioning a PLC when 25% of the learners or 50,000 learners, whichever is less, have completed primer-II.** The Group has recommended that **the concept of "total literacy" at 80% level of success be given up**. The target approach of achieving "total literacy" should be given up and the objective should be to seek to achieve high success rates rather than "total literacy". **A success rate of 55-60% among identified non-literates should be considered to be a good success rate.**

5. The resources should be utilised to make the 9-45 age group literate rather than higher age groups. There should be a graded range of learning outcomes such as outstanding, excellent, very good, good, mediocre and poor.

6. There should be a second cycle of literacy campaigns in low literacy/difficult areas after another round of motivational campaigns so as to reinforce the achievement of the first cycle of the literacy campaigns and also achieve substantial results.

B. PRIMERS FOR TEACHING/LEARNING

1. The NLM in collaboration with SRCs should organise **reassessment of the content of primers to remove material** which patronise learners and send messages that lower the self-esteem and those which have a general bias against women. The ZSSs will have to play a sensitive monitoring role in this.

2. The SRCs have been seen to be somewhat rigid in allowing local variations in learning material. Some of the **efforts made by district authorities in developing materials have been specially commended by the Group.** The Group has recommended that there should be general willingness to encourage local efforts.

3. All **primers** should inform learners of their **basic constitutional rights and of the national goals.**

4. The language of learning should be the language of the environment to be decided by the learners themselves.

5. The State level core group along with the ZSSs have to be alerted to the need for innovatively incorporating local traditions in all materials for literacy.

6. The primers and other materials sometimes conform to **traditional and stereotypical images of women of high caste middle class background which should be altered.**

7. A **review process** should be initiated in which **permanent place should be given to institutions and organisations committed to such concerns** for which the NLM should extend support.

C. HINDI SPEAKING STATES

1. Regarding the Hindi belt the Group has recommended that attention should be given to **ensure political commitment** particularly to Universal Primary Education and eradication of illiteracy.

2. Stability of administration including **stability of tenure of Collectors has to be ensured in these States.**

3. Adequacy of preparation in districts in these States should include the following:

(a) **Each village should have an identified activist as a key- organiser** who would have already distinguished himself/herself in the early part of the environment building phase.

(b) In States with low political commitment, **there is need to ensure such full timers** who would be available for the duration of the Literacy Campaigns and great care should be taken to **select only those with proven dedication and commitment.**

4. It should be ensured that the **basic education projects in these States are coordinated with the Literacy Campaign projects.**

5. Particular attention should be paid to integrate literacy and development even during the course of Literacy Campaigns in these States. **At least one government development scheme should be coordinated with the introduction of a full Literacy Campaign project.**

6. Programmes and resources of the government should be pooled right from the Literacy Campaign stage. This will ensure **linking of socio-economic development programmes with the literacy campaigns.**

(5) Recommendations on Post Literacy Measures

The Group has suggested a framework for post literacy and continuing education programmes. They have specifically mentioned that carrying out successful PL/CE remains the single most difficult problem confronting the NLM and the whole of the literacy programme. Following recommendations have been made :

1. The Group holds a strong view that PL/CE **should not be attempted in the 'campaign mode'.** New forms of institutionalisation, new agencies of organisation, new attitudes towards the PL/CE phase fundamentally different from the literacy campaign phase are required.

2. At least **one PL/CE centre per village or even per Tola or for a cluster of** Tolas is essential. The current policy of one JSN per 5,000 learners which tends to serve a cluster of villages has not been recommended.

3. The literacy campaign and the PL/CE phases must be integrated and should be one continuum.

4. Organisational control of the PL/CE should be different from the structure in the literacy campaign phase. **Mahila Mandals,** women members of Panchayats and staff of primary and secondary schools should play a more prominent role than the traditional village hierarchy in controlling PL/CE activity. Since the literacy campaign and PL/CE are to be integrated, the organisational structure for running the PL/CE must emerge and operate alongside the organisational structure for running the literacy campaign.

5. For PL/CE there should be a part which is a structured programme and another part which is an unstructured programme. The Group has emphasised that in all such activities participation and leadership role of women should be attempted from the planning stage.

6. A sense of 'mission' has to be inculcated in the PL/CE phase without a campaign mode. Ways must be found to encourage real and continuing sense of qualitative achievement and empowerment of the people. Secondly, the 'sense of mission' has to take the form of 'sense of progress'. This should imply (a) establishing the cultural relevance; and (b) the socio- economic relevance of stabilised literacy skills. The PL/CE phase should be able to link literacy and development in a positive and meaningful way for neo-literates and the poor in general. Literacy will have to be connected to everyday existence in very concrete and sustainable ways.

7. Even within the 9-14 age group, there should be two streams - one which will continue with school education and the other which will be continuing with the PL/CE programmes along with the older age group persons.

8. For the age group 13-16 years, particularly for the girls, it would be better to draw on the experience of the Central Social Welfare Board's programme of condensed courses and groom them to appear for the school final (XII class examination). Such a strategy may also attract some of the younger persons from the 15-50 age group as well as school drop outs. There is a greater need for experimentation, innovation and combination of general education with vocation oriented skill training at this level especially for girls - to prevent child marriages. While flexibility and responsiveness to local/group needs have to be pursued at all levels, the Group has recommended local coordination between certain specific strategies of different departments and the pooling of resources and experiences across various agencies/Ministries of the Government of India and the States with initiatives taken by development action groups at the local level.

9. To begin with, the **PL/CE centre could become an 'information window'** in the village. Information about various schemes e.g. for education, for training, for services rendered by different cadres of functionaries is seldom available at the district level and never at the village level. Pooling and dissemination of such information is critical for both neo- literates and planners to widen their own choices, vision and courage for innovation, as well as for making literacy as a means of enhancing 'access' and 'capability'.

10. In this connection, to become really meaningful and useful to neo-literates and programme implementors existing programme literature would require drastic modifications. The Group has recommended that NLM should identify/assist a **network for grass root development action/communication** to (a) undertake such exercises in different States/ linguistic regions and (b) groups to train larger groups to continue and expand such literature. Such trainees should also be drawn from the VTs who have demonstrated creativity in course of the programme.

11. The Group has strongly recommended that access to knowledge about **basic laws and legal procedures** should be an essential component of PL/CE. A great deal of experience and material already exists as a result of the activities of the Committee for Implementation of Legal Aid Schemes (CILAS) in 80's. The Committee has recommended simplified literature to be produced as in the case of literature for development schemes.

12. The Group has strongly recommended that the NLM should provide resources to all PL/CE centres to **add a minimum of two rooms to any existing public building** in every village where PL/CE is initiated - whether it is a primary school, Anganwadi, primary health care centre or any other community building. One room has been recommended for library and the other for continuing education.

13. As a means to link literacy to economic development, the Group has recommended that each village may take up **"resource mapping"** involving the village and the local community. This will **generate a highly informed demand** for development in the shape of specific projects of their own choice which the villagers feel would be effective and relevant to their needs. Resource mapping could even accompany literacy campaigns. Some popular science groups have tried out resource mapping in selected areas and the EC of NLMA should familiarise itself with the methods and organisational requirements of resource mapping as part of PL/CE.

14. The Group has recommended that PL/CE centres should not become centres of economic rivalry e.g. production/trade but they should be centres of economically related cultural/educational activity. PL/CE centres should make efforts to stabilise literacy skills, serve as a community centre for the village, serve as a skill creating and training centre for activities related to economic betterment and as an information window for disseminating all kinds of information related to coping with the day to day life situations.

15. In order to considerably **improve availability of existing PL literature,** the Group has recommended publication and dissemination of **spontaneous output by neo-literates** as a validating strategy for their participation and a critical measure to stabilise basic literacy. SRCs may certainly help in identifying PL literature but should not be encouraged to adopt a censorial role.

16. There should be mobile training teams with necessary expertise to provide training at PL/CE centres to have a greater outreach and be more cost effective than many current institutionalised and, therefore, localised training schemes.

17. For cultural/recreational purposes PL/CE centres should be provided with reading materials such as wall newspapers, periodically produced broad sheets etc. Special radio programmes should also be considered. The SRCs and the district administration should not stifle local initiatives in this regard.

18. The **library is critical** for the success/expansion of PL/CE activities. Support in the acquisition of material and a full time paid Prerak/librarian and caretaker for such PL/CE centres has been suggested. Necessary training for PL/CE librarians on a group basis could be arranged at the block/district levels.

19. On the whole there should be a **structured and** an **unstructured part** to PL/CE. There should be both mopping up operation and an element of continuing education. The **structured part** of PL/CE **should be** the function of **information window** for all government/non-governmental programmes, legal literacy etc. The unstructured part of the programme should be left to each local community to fill in. Resource mapping may be first introduced in few areas and extended to become a part of the structured part of every PL/CE programme. This should be in the shape of "information system" and a motivating factor for education.

20. One should consider compressed school education for school drop outs and vocational education as part of the unstructured part.

21. The Group has also recommended that any savings in literacy campaign should be allowed to be used for building infrastructure and activities for the PL/CE centres. Activities of literacy campaigns should be strengthened further and clarity in objectives/strategies as well as innovations and methods are required for PL/CE.

(6) Monitoring And Evaluation of Campaigns

The Group has broadly endorsed the need for and utility of bringing out Status Reports on a regular basis at the national level as is being done now. These reports are, however, based on internal information being provided by the campaigns. Therefore, there is need to considerably tighten up the system and current

practice of external evaluations about which strong reservations have been expressed. It has been emphasised that **proper internal evaluation is a must** in every case which **should be corroborated/validated by external evaluations.**

Tke Expert Group **has suggested a framework including objectives, approach and design for external evaluation** of literacy campaigns and has also reflected on impact studies for campaign projects.

A. Objectives

The objectives of external evaluation study have been summed up as

(a) providing an objective and reliable assessment of literacy and social impact of the campaigns in the district which, in turn, implies that such evaluation should be conducted by persons trained in social science research methodology, backed up by a team of experts specialised in conduct of random sample surveys.

(b) provide feedback to local organisers about present status of the campaign, its strengths and weaknesses so that remedial measures can be taken; and

(c) to provide academic inputs into the policy and planning of literacy campaigns at district, state and central levels.

B. Approach to Evaluation

The approach to evaluation should be a participatory approach involving participants in programme implementation and should be non-threatening in nature. In this context, it has been recommended that **the concept of "total literacy" may be abandoned** so that a target centred approach does not lead to undesirable pressures leading to manipulation of figures. The Group has specifically mentioned that **increasing the literacy rate in a district from 15% to 50% would be deemed to be quite credit- worthy as compared to a progression from 50% to 85%.** This is so because the size of the literate population providing volunteers in the former case is much less than in the latter.

The Group has recommended that the objective of external evaluation should be to validate the results of internal evaluation. A process of concurrent evaluation during implementation of the literacy phase may be introduced in which the selected external evaluation agency keeps in touch with the project and visits the district for secondary data collection, observation and interaction with organisers 2 or 3 times during the literacy phase and prior to the final external evaluation. The external evaluation may be commenced when about 60% of the enrolled learners are reported by the internal evaluators to have completed the third primer.

External evaluation studies would need to adopt a multi-dimensional research approach where data from testing and interviews are complemented by secondary data collection, observations, group discussions and other research methods depending on the capacity of the external evaluation agency.

External evaluation agencies should be preferably drawn from social science institutes or departments of some local/regional universities and associating persons from Department of Statistics in the neighbourhood so that the organisers of the campaign and external evaluators can be in touch with each other right from the beginning of the literacy campaign. In almost all the States every district has a qualified District Statistical Officer and every block has an Assistant District Statistical Officer who could be associated with the evaluation study. It may be useful to involve local primary school teachers as part of the larger external evaluation teams coming from outside the concerned district. However, the leadership, the initiative and the final say should rest with the external evaluation agency.

The group has in this connection also recommended that there should be a nodal evaluating agency for each State and this nodal agency itself or in association with other agencies evaluate the different campaigns taken up in the State.

C. Design for External Evaluation

This has been suggested based on the basic principle to ensure that every member of the

target population gets an equal chance of being included in the sample and also special groups of learners belonging to SCs, STs, minority ccmmunity, other backward castes etc. get a fair representation. It is important to cover varying social demographic and regional characteristics of the district and different organisational features of the campaign.

Every district should be divided into strata and their number should not exceed 10. In districts with less than 10 blocks, each block should be covered. In districts with more than 10 blocks this can be achieved by combining two neighbouring blocks into one stratum for the purpose of sampling. In each block/block cluster four Panchayats may be selected through a process of random sampling and in each Panchayat selected in the sample four villages may be selected again by random sampling. To do the sampling, the list of Panchayats/villages along with the number of learners in each Panchayat/village would have to be drawn up in serial order and Panchayats picked up on random basis. All learners in the selected villages may be tested by the external evaluator.

In districts with large number of learners belonging to special categories, the Panchayats/ villages should be further sub-divided into two sub-strata - one with predominantly SC, ST population and the other consisting of other panchayats/villages. Then the same sampling and testing procedure as given earlier should be followed ensuring that at least one panchayat/ village is selected in the sample from the special (first) sub-stratum. There can be more than one panchayat/village in the sample from the first sub- stratum depending on their numbers in the stratum.

Thus 16 villages are to be selected from each block/block cluster and all learners in those villages are to be tested. The aim should be to cover 5 to 10% of the target population. In case

the sample size of learners exceeds 10%, the number of sample villages may be reduced from 4 to 3, thus reducing the number of selected villages in each stratum from 16 to 12. Based on performance of sample learners in the test one can estimate the success rate at the stratum level. For the entire district the success rate can be worked out by taking weighted average of the figures of success rates for different strata. The method of estimation of sampling errors has also been suggested.

There is a problem of absenteeism of learners in selected samples. All effort should be made by repeated visits by the team, if necessary, to test minimum of 80% of learners. After 80% of learners are tested, the overall success rate may be taken as the average of the success rate which is found in the available sample and the success rate assuming that the absentees have failed the test.

Workshops have been recommended to be held frequently to orient external evaluation agencies. It has also been recommended that to ensure uniformity of following the procedures and adopting a scientific evaluation procedure all evaluation reports should contain details relating to the sampling procedure adopted and the formula used for estimating the overall success rate.

Internal evaluation should be conducted for all learners on 100% basis and should conform, as closely as possible, to the standards set for external evaluation. This would also help to provide baseline information to chalk out all PL/ CE strategies and activities. The internal evaluation data should be properly stored at appropriate levels.

Impact evaluation studies should be conducted after 1-2 years of the literacy campaign adopting a 'household survey' approach by selected social science institutes/departments of universities.