

Non-Formal Adult Education for Women



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NON-FORMAL ADULT EDUCATION FOR WOMEN

(Proceedings of the 37th
All India Adult Education Conference
Varanasi, 1984)

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Introduction

THE four-day All India Adult Education Conference on 'Non-formal Adult Education for Women,' which concluded in Varanasi on October 19, 1984 urged upon the Central and State Governments, universities and voluntary organisations to launch upon a massive time bound programme for eradication of illiteracy from among the women of weaker and oppressed sections of the society.

The Conference called upon the Indian Adult Education Association to build up a cadre of women trainers and adult educators who can effectively communicate with the target groups in different programmes of development for the rural and tribal women.

The Conference declared that for successful implementation of income-generating activities linked with literacy programmes women's organisations at grass-roots level should be established with a view to helping them in decision-making and in improving their self esteem and self respect.

It was felt that in income generating activities marketing was the most difficult aspect. To overcome this, it was suggested that linkages with agencies which would help in marketing their

goods, should be established.

The Conference extended its full support to the Government and its agencies in achieving the goal of point 16 of the new 20-point programme of the Government of India.

The Conference convened by the Indian Adult Education Association in collaboration with Banaras Hindu University (BHU) was attended by 350 delegates from 19 States and Union Territories. These included representatives of Central and State Governments, Universities, Departments of Adult and Continuing Education, voluntary agencies, SRCs, Nehru Yuvak Kendras, and other organisations.

Inaugurating the Conference Smt. Mohsina Kidwai, the then Minister of State for Rural Development, Government of India, said that education is a life long process, which as Mahatma Gandhi believed, should draw out "what is best in child and man, body, mind and spirit", and for this an integrated system of education in which non-formal, informal and formal education are closely linked will have to be evolved.

Earlier, Prof. Iqbal Narain, Vice-Chancellor, Banaras Hindu University,

welcomed the chief guest and the delegates.

Barrister M.G. Mane, President, IAEA, delivering the presidential address said that educating a woman meant educating not only an individual but a family. One hundred and ninety five districts in the country, he informed, had a literacy rate below the national average of 24.88 per cent for women. For increasing this rate, he said, women organisations at the grass-roots level will have to be established.

Dr. Y.N. Mishra, Director, Centre for Adult and Continuing Education, BHU, read out the messages received from the President of India, and other VIPs and national and international organisations wishing the Conference success.

Shri J.C. Saxena, Hony. General Secretary, IAEA, proposing the vote of thanks said, "We are very grateful that a member of the illustrious Kidwai family is with us". He said that 20-point programme is the charter for the emancipation of the poor of this country and that the Association is pledged to make it a success. Programmes of rural development, he further said, can be successful only if these are linked with the adult education programme.

The working paper on the theme of the Conference was presented by Dr. K.M. Bhatnagar, Director, IAEA. It was followed by a general discussion.

The Conference then discussed the four sub-themes, namely, (a) Education of Rural Women and their Participation in Rural Development Programmes, (b) Health and Nutrition Education for women (c) Literacy and Social Awareness, and (d) Income-generating Activities for Women.

For the discussion on the sub-theme 'Education of Rural Women and their

Participation in Rural Development Programmes,' the delegates were divided into four groups. The Group Chairpersons were Smt. Shanta Krishnan, Smt. Kamala Rana, Smt. Bimla Bhatnagar and Dr. K.S. Pillai. The rapporteurs were Dr. A.K. Sen, Dr. Pritam Kaur, Dr. Asha Dixit and Dr. S.K. Nair.

The sub-theme 'Health and Nutrition Education for Women' was elucidated by Dr. (Smt.) A. Shukla, Head, Department of Home Science, BHU. She presented a study on the nutritional and health problems among housewives living in dongas in Dal lake in Srinagar (J & K) with the help of slides.

Prof. Krishna Bahadur, Dean, Law Faculty, BHU, spoke on the sub-theme 'Literacy and Social Awareness' with special reference to legal literacy. Stressing the need to make legal literacy an integral part of adult education, he said that an awareness about the legal provision with regard to matrimony, maintenance and adoption and succession practices should be generated among our rural masses.

The sub-theme 'Health and Nutrition Education for Women' was discussed in a group under the leadership of Dr. A. Shukla with Dr. (Mrs.) Nalini Swamidasan as the rapporteur. Shri B.B. Mohanty was the leader of the second group which discussed 'Literacy and Social Awareness' and Shri K.G. Balakrishnan Pillai was the rapporteur.

On the sub-theme 'Income-generating Activities for Women' Dr. (Miss) Kanchanlata Sabharwal, President, Bhartiya Grameen Mahila Sangh (U.P. Branch) narrated her experiences. Marketing, she said, is the most difficult aspect of such activities. The main reasons for this, she further said, are that goods so produced are more expensive

and inferior in quality than goods sold in the market.

Shri B.R. Vyas, former Additional Director of Adult Education, Delhi Administration said that institutional support was essential for marketing the goods produced in adult education centres.

Zakir Husain Memorial Lecture

Dr. M.L. Shahare, Chairman, Union Public Service Commission delivered the Zakir Husain Memorial Lecture, on 'Eradicating Women's Illiteracy—A Challenge'. Quoting figures to show that the Indian women are lagging behind in spite of the opportunities provided by the Constitution, Dr. Shahare said, "With the exception of education no other single programme, howsoever large in terms of investment on its own strength can enable women to become

equal partners with men *de facto* and *de jure* in running the family and society".

The valedictory address of the Conference was delivered by Dr. S.C. Dutta, Treasurer, IAEA. Dr. Dutta said that educated woman is an asset to the family and the society, and an instrument of social change. Greater efforts are thus needed for the education of women. He said that dedicated and devoted workers have to join hands to see that the benefits of the activities organised by the Government for the poor, depressed and under-privileged reach them. He said that the scheme of adopting a girl of poor family as prevalent in Maharashtra should be followed in other places also.

A visit to Sarnath was arranged for the delegates. A cultural programme in the form of a drama was also organised on the first day of the Conference by BHU students.

Declaration

THE 37th All India Adult Education Conference held at BHU, Varanasi, from Oct. 16 to 19, 1984 deliberated on 'Non-formal Adult Education for Women' as the main theme, under four sub themes :

I. Education of Rural Women and Their Participation in Development Programmes.

II. Health and Nutrition Education for Women.

III. Literacy and Social Awareness.

IV. Income-generating Programmes for Women

The three hundred and fifty delegates from 19 States and Union Territories assembled at Varanasi for the Conference declare that the rates of illiteracy among women, specially in the rural and tribal areas, and more particularly, among those belonging to families of agricultural landless labourers, traditional artisans, marginal and small cultivators, fishermen, etc., continue to be alarmingly high. The rates of illiteracy among women brought out by the census of 1981 have further highlighted the need to pay greater attention to this problem. Therefore, urgent measures have to be taken to

eradicate illiteracy among women with commitment and conviction. The formal system of education alone, cannot cope with the task of spreading universal literacy among the masses. The Conference therefore urges the Central and State Governments, Universities, and Voluntary Organisations to launch appropriate educational programmes, for illiterate women and girls.

The Conference further declares that income-generating activities should invariably be included in adult education programmes for women. For successful implementation of these activities, women's organisations at grass-roots level should be established. These organisations will also help the women to participate in decision-making and improve their self esteem and self-respect. The governmental and non-governmental agencies should cooperate in helping women to form their own organisations and co-operatives.

The Conference urges upon Indian Adult Education Association which has been playing a leadership role in the field of adult education for the last 45 years to extend its activities and devote special attention to adult and non-formal education of women.

Recommendations

I. Education of Rural Women and Their Participation in Developmental Programmes

(a) Non-formal and adult education for women should aim at enhancement of their association in the process of development. Rural women should be provided with special assistance under the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) and similar schemes to organise themselves to undertake economically viable activities linked with functional literacy.

(b) Education of rural women is of extreme importance and therefore the Conference urges upon the Government and in particular the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India to make adult education an integral part and an effective tool in all programmes of rural development.

(c) Agricultural Universities and Home Science Colleges should extend full support in developing suitable adult education programme through their extension departments and provide necessary technical assistance to implement adult and non-formal education programmes for women.

(d) Effective coordination of various

developmental agencies and officials at the field level would be necessary to link literacy among women with development. For this purpose adequate orientation should be provided to officials, workers, opinion leaders and representatives of voluntary organisations in rural areas.

II. Health and Nutrition Education for Women

(a) The Conference recognises that there are many gaps in education of women and having discussed implications of their ignorance, particularly on matters of health and nutrition, feels that the existing health and nutrition education component for women in adult education programmes needs to be further strengthened, expanded and up-dated.

(b) The Conference feels that majority of illiterate women in our country are suffering from poor health, malnutrition, infectious diseases, worm-infestations as well as psychological and emotional problems, for which they require special education. Most of them are also ignorant about correct methods of cooking, balanced diet, personal hygiene, environmental sanitation as

well as maternal health and child care. A multi-directional approach should therefore be adopted and adult education programmes for women should be co-ordinated with various schemes such as *Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)*, *Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)*, *Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM)* and *Mother and Child Health (MCH)* being implemented at the field level by the Department of Health and Family Welfare, Rural Development Department, Home Science Colleges and other departments of various universities and technical institutions.

(c) Extensive use of audio-visual aids and materials prepared by Central Health Education Bureau, Voluntary Health Association of India and other technical institutions should be made to fill the gap of knowledge and information in this area.

(d) Special training and refresher courses on Health and Nutrition Education for Women for adult education workers should be organised more frequently with the help of specialised agencies at different levels. Necessary funding support should be made available by the Central and State Governments.

III. Literacy and Social Awareness

(a) One of the major constraints in adult education programme for women is lack of motivation. There is no ready-made formula for arousing motivation but constant dialogue and discussion with the learners about their pressing problems may prove to be more effective. Functional literacy and social awareness is a pre-requisite to social development, and participation of women in developmental programmes can be ensured only by creating an awareness

about the assistance and facilities available to them.

(b) The Conference recognising the importance of legal awareness among women on matters of civic rights, such as, equality before law, special legal provisions for women, marriage acts, maintenance, adoption and succession, recommends that the content of adult education for women should include legal literacy, and suitable curriculum should be prepared accordingly.

(c) Adult education workers with the help of lawyers and jurists should try to create public opinion against social evils of dowry, neglect of women, illiteracy among women, and also try to settle and reconcile social disputes in villages outside the courts.

IV. Income Generating Programmes for Women

(a) The Conference recognises that most of the illiterate women are in the lower socio-economic group or belong to the families who are below poverty line. It is, therefore, necessary to motivate such women for literacy through income-generating activities. For successful implementation of adult education programmes among women importance of gainful employment through income generating activities should be stressed and made its integral part.

(b) Every effort should be made to involve local skilled people to provide vocational skills to women. It was felt that marketing was the most difficult aspect of organising income generating activities due to the inferior quality of the goods produced at a higher cost. To overcome this difficulty it was recommended that Government agencies should extend full support to such activities under adult education programmes and provide assistance in marketing their products as well as in

improving the quality of their products.

General

(a) A serious obstacle to the building up of cadres of women as well as of men, prepared to work in the field of women's education and development is that of hierarchy in the educational institutions and departments of education. Those engaged in adult education programmes face challenging and complex responsibilities, their status in the educational hierarchy should therefore be properly reviewed.

(b) Training programmes should be instituted for functionaries and representatives of voluntary organisations to make them conversant with developmental policies and programmes for women so that adult education programmes can be effectively implemented under voluntary sector.

(c) Mass media such as TV network is undergoing vast expansion, the Press and radio forums, etc., should be utilised in supporting adult education

programmes for women in a coordinated manner. In this task, the Universities, the State Resource Centres, UGC and the Indian Adult Education Association and other specialised technical institutions should assist AIR, TV and the Press.

(d) Rural information centres with adequate rural library facilities for neo-literates should be set up to promote non-formal continuing education programmes for women.

(e) Greater attention should be paid to the specific needs of SC and ST women as well as migrant women from rural to urban areas. Appropriate research studies and surveys should be undertaken on the needs and problems relating to such groups.

(f) Special attention should be paid to periodical evaluation of adult education programmes for women and corrective measures should be followed to remove any obstacles in its effective implementation at all levels.

Develop Unconventional Measures

Mohsina Kidwai

The then Minister of State for Rural Development, Government of India

TO inaugurate the thirty-seventh session of the All India Adult Education Conference is a privilege and also an emotional moment for me. I have known this body of the learned and devoted educationists from the very early days of my life because of the close association of my late uncle, Shafiqur-Rehman Kidwai, with it. I also learnt how different and difficult is the work of adult education in comparison to the usual branches of conventional education. Here the educator has to be a person of unique character with unusual capacity for forbearance and self-effacement.

The people whom he has to educate are no ordinary people. They are mature, experienced, intelligent and conscious people left out by sheer misfortune or as a result of the social and economic status imposed upon them by history. These are the people who lacked nothing except opportunity. It was not an accident of history but the logical consequence of our long drawn out freedom struggle

that some selfless, forward looking dedicated men and women should have come forward to take upon themselves the task of bringing the fruits of development of human civilization to the millions of the people so far deprived of it.

No democracy can sustain itself, if it is not supported by the masses who have an awareness of their environment, their needs and requirements. In countries like ours, which have undergone long spells of feudal and colonial slavery and deprivations and are now clamouring to come out of the slumber, it is essential that unconventional and informal measures of education are devised and applied fruitfully. Our conventional education, which was mainly designed on Western pattern cannot fulfil the special requirement of our society—a society ridden by caste, class and creed of which the woman has been the victim of most brutal compulsions. The educator/intellectual, born and brought up in ivory tower has no role here. It is, therefore, essential that educationists belong-

ing to the bodies like the Indian Adult Education Association so extend their activities that larger areas are covered and more and more people come forward voluntarily to take up the task.

Education is a life-long process. It aims at all round development. According to Mahatma Gandhi, it is a process of "drawing out what is best in child and man, body, mind and spirit". To realise this, we have to evolve an integrated system of education in which non-formal, informal and formal education are closely linked.

Despite the genuine efforts of our planners and political leadership for the last 37 years, the rate of literacy in our country has not gone up as expected. This is more so in the case of women. There may be various reasons for this, such as, poverty, conservatism and lack of enthusiasm on the part of the agencies involved in the work for transformation of our rural areas.

The situation of women in the world has been well brought out by statistics published by various agencies. Women constitute one-third of the employed labour force of the world and work through two-third of its working hours. Add to it the labour expended in raising families and doing household chores which finds expression in no statistics. Against this work performed, women receive barely one-tenth of the world's income and own one-hundredth of the world's property.

Mahatma Gandhi felt very deeply grieved over the discrimination against women in the society. He wanted full social justice to be extended to them. He said, "My greatest hope is in the women. They want a helping hand to lift them out of the well in which they have been kept. The slightest thing will work wonders. They made a record

contribution during the Satyagraha movement of 1931-32 and even now, they are playing their part nobly but not to utmost advantage. So little work has been done among them. They are waiting to be organised. They have the capacity for suffering evoked by non-violent effort and they will suffer silently". His fundamental faith in the equality of men and women was based on his doctrine of non-violence. He wanted that women should participate in social movements and undertake public service. He encouraged the urban women to go to the rural areas and enlighten the womenfolk there by imparting practical education and by helping them to wipe out caste system.

According to the 1981 census, more than 90 per cent of adult women remained illiterate in nine States of the country. This is a very sad picture, because it reflects the inadequacy of our efforts to emancipate our women community. It may not be possible to put a high percentage of our women in educational institutions for formal education. However, we should remember that much educational activity can be undertaken outside the established formal system. Informal education is a life-long process through which an individual acquires attitudes, values, skills, and knowledge from experience and the influences of environment. It should be seen as a part of the total pursuit for development of human personality. The participation of rural women in all activities of our society should, therefore, be encouraged and realised as part of their education.

In spite of our progress in medical sciences, infant mortality continues to be quite high. This is mainly because of rampant illiteracy among our women. Illiteracy means ignorance. Unless

literacy goes up and proper knowledge of primary health care is made available to the large population in the rural areas, mortality will remain high. Lack of adult education also leads to high birth rate. We should intensify our war on ignorance. Practical demonstrations about health, nutrition and family planning should be intensified.

The non-formal education for women should aim at enhancement of their association in the process of development. They should be given maximum opportunity to know and to participate in the on-going anti-poverty programmes. In fact, they should be given chance to voice their views in the meetings of Panchayats and other local bodies.

Women can supplement the income of their families through various income generating programmes of crafts and trades and this will ensure a reasonable standard of living and improve the quality of their life.

The Central Government, under the Minimum Needs Programme, included

Adult Education and Universalisation of Primary Education in the Sixth Five Year Plan. Also included in the Plan was the scheme for the development of women and children in rural areas. This is being taken up by the Ministry of Rural Development on a pilot basis in various States as a component of the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP.) Through this scheme, assistance is provided to women to take advantage of the facilities already available under the IRDP. They are also helped to organise themselves to take up economically viable activities on a group basis. These activities will be diversified with more intensity in the Seventh Five Year Plan.

The Government and my Department will do their outmost to help you in your work in whatever way it is possible. In fact, I would personally like to be in touch with you in greater measure.

It is my earnest appeal that action should be taken at various levels and by various bodies to develop, educate and honour the Indian womanhood enabling her to keep pace in full freedom with the womankind of the rest of the world.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Educate Women to Reduce Inequalities

M. G. Mane

President, Indian Adult Education Association

It is estimated that about 850 million people in the world are illiterate. Out of these about 50 per cent are in India alone. But if we take illiteracy rate among women the situation becomes more alarming. Three out of four women are illiterate as compared to one out of two men in this country. Greater efforts are thus needed to spread adult education among women. Realising the enormity of the problem, IAEA decided that its 37th Annual Conference should address itself to the task of identifying all the factors related to education of women.

The Education Commission (1964) recommended that education should not be equated with the formal school system and there should be organised outside the formal system educational programmes based on multiple point entry, and part-time and own-channels of study. It recommended development of non-formal education on a large scale for out-of-school children and adults so that education may be universal and illiteracy may be liquidated. The universalization of elementary education in the country by 1990 cannot be achieved with illiterate mothers. It calls for

large scale organisation of non-formal adult education programmes for women.

Education has an important contribution to make in reducing inequalities, not only in the educational status of women but also in all other aspects of development. The achievement of equality of education for women depends not only on the provision of adequate educational or physical facilities, but also on many structural, cultural and social factors.

The National Board of Adult Education at its meeting in New Delhi in November 1983 also stressed the need for stepping up programmes of women's education as educated women form the greatest instrument for national development.

Our adult education programme has three components—literacy, social awareness and functionality. Literacy education besides developing among adults the ability to read and write should also help to pursue self study and to have access to resources of knowledge. Awareness should help to liberate the minds of adults from the bondages of harmful traditions, conservatism, prejudices and superstitions. Functionality

should help adults to improve their vocational skill and the capacity to raise the quality of their life.

Educating a woman means educating not only an individual but a family, as a woman is not only an individual, but also a wife, a mother and a citizen.

It has been observed that women are more sensitive and receptive to new ideas but their main difficulty has been paucity of time for participating in non-formal education programmes as women both in rural and urban areas are involved in work for the whole day. To solve this problem, education should be taken to the places where women work.

Women find it difficult to participate in adult education centres also because there is nobody to take care of their children at home. If provision is made to take care of children, their participation will increase.

It is distressing to note that 195 districts in the country have a literacy rate which is below the national average of 24.88 per cent for women. The literacy rate among women can be increased if women organisations at the grass-roots level are established. Their own organisations will be in a better position to motivate them for adult education programme.

Some States have taken bold steps with regard to education of girls, particularly the States of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. Madhya Pradesh has made education free for girls upto M.A. The State Government of Maharashtra has made education free for girls upto secondary level irrespective of their parents' income. It has also adopted one lakh girls under Savitribai Phule Adoption Scheme. The State has also decided to provide free education for all the children whose parents' income does not exceed Rs. 10,000/-per annum. These measures, I am sure, will be helpful in increasing

the literacy percentage in the country.

Among the various problems which women learners have to face are low health status both personal and that of the family, inadequate nutrition, social and cultural oppression, and ignorance of protective legislation. The non-formal adult education programme for women should take care of all these aspects in addition to literacy education.

Teaching material for adult education for women must be based on their needs and interests. It should be attractive and relevant to their lives. Timely supply of teaching-learning material is also essential for the success of an adult education programme for women.

Traditional and mass media have a great role in promoting adult education and should be properly harnessed at local level. Traditional media like *Kathavachan*, *Bhajans*, *Kathputhli*, *Garba*, *Nautanki Jatra* should also be utilised. These will not only be helpful in motivating the adults but would also act as effective means of social change. The modern media like T. V. and films if properly utilised can go a long way in the promotion and development of adult education in the country.

The need of the hour is to provide qualitatively better programmes in adult education, rather than aiming at numbers. Adequate thought should be given to the content, keeping in mind the regional variations. The Government should also involve more and more voluntary organisations in this work. Voluntary organisations have a sense of commitment and involvement and are more suited for conducting effective adult education programmes.

The Conference, it is hoped, would make recommendations to provide strength and new direction to the movement of Adult and Non-formal Education for Women.

WORKING PAPER

Non-formal Adult Education for Women

THE history of the movement for improving women's status all over the world shows emphasis on education as the most significant instrument for changing their subjugated position in society. In India, denial of education and the practice of early marriage prevented full growth and development of women's personality and rationality. Indian social reformers time and again emphasised the crucial importance of women's education. Foremost among them was Mahatma Gandhi. His fundamental faith in the equality of men and women was based on his doctrine of non-violence. Mahatma Gandhi encouraged women to participate in social movements and undertake public service. He urged women to think independently and favoured development of mental capacities of illiterate women in rural areas. His message to urban women was to work with their rural sisters for voter registration, imparting practical education and helping them to break off the chains of caste system. Education of women in the post-independence era acquired a new dimension due to the acceptance of their equality with men and their multiple role in society.

The Constitution of India guarantees equal opportunity to all citizens irrespective of race, religion, caste and sex and directs the State to "Endeavour to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years".

Commissions have been appointed from time to time to survey the needs of Indian education, the largest being the Kothari Education Commission appointed in 1964. The Commission in its report in 1966 observed :

"In the modern world, the role of woman goes much beyond the home and the bringing up of children. She is now adopting a career of her own and sharing equally with man the responsibility for the development of society. In the struggle for freedom, Indian women fought side by side with men. This equal partnership will have to continue in the fight against hunger, poverty, ignorance and ill health."

Since then great deal of efforts have been made to achieve universal elementary education in the country. However,

literacy percentage could be raised from 16.67% in 1951 to only 36.17% in 1981. It is estimated that not more than 36% of the children who enter class I complete class V. In case of female children enrolment in class I, particularly in rural and backward areas, is not more than 40% in the age group 6-14. Even from among those who are enrolled in class I about 60% drop out by the time they reach class V. Therefore, we cannot hope to achieve the objective of universal elementary education even if all the children in the age group 6-14 are covered by the formal system of education. Consequently, in the Sixth Plan provisions were made to cover school dropouts through non-formal education programmes specially designed for them.

Illiteracy among Women

According to the 1981 census female literacy rate has not shown any significant upward trend, particularly in those States where it was reported below 20 per cent (for rural areas) in 1971. According to the literacy statistics of the Directorate of Adult Education prepared in 1979, literacy rate of below 20 per cent in respect of adult women existed in all the districts of Sikkim, 17 districts of Bihar, 26 districts of Rajasthan, 50 (out of 54) districts of UP, 39 (out of 43) districts of MP, 9 (out of 10) districts of J & K, 16 (out of 21) districts of Andhra Pradesh, 6 (out of 7) districts of Haryana, 8 (out of 10) districts of Himachal Pradesh and 11 (out of 19) districts of Karnataka. The situation is even worse in about 120 districts of U. P., M. P., Bihar, Rajasthan, J&K, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa where female literacy rate is below 10%. In other words, more than 90 per cent of adult women in the States named above cannot read or write even after 37 years of independence.

"The main concern of adult education is human resource development. All men and women in the working age group should possess the skills and knowledge essential to pursue productive activities which would ensure a reasonable standard of living for themselves and for their family members." Obviously this objective cannot be achieved as long as there is an increase in the absolute number of illiterates. Our illiterate population is trapped in the vicious circle of underemployment, low productivity and low income. We can hope to make a dent in the problem by unleashing women's creative energy, raising their awareness with regard to the potential of their collective efforts, and helping them to be organised for self-help and self-reliance.

Essential elements of this process comprise strengthening of community level organisations for the management of essential social services as well as of cooperatives and other collective production units; and development of women's capability and motivation for active participation in decisions that are expected to transform their lives.

The process of mobilizing the productive potential of all the people in a community is to a large extent an educational process creating a critical awareness of their situation and the potential for change, bringing to them new knowledge and information and reorienting and changing their attitudes towards new values in life. This is not an easy task which can be accomplished by the Ministry of Education alone but will have to be accepted as a national challenge.

Major Constraints in Women's and Girls' Access to Education

Women, especially in rural areas

constitute an under-privileged group and through tradition have come to be regarded inferior socially. They themselves have a negative attitude towards educational programmes. Consequently, though a huge sum of money is being spent in the expansion of primary and secondary education most of the girls and women derive only a token advantage from it.

In India, from a very early age, girls begin to take care of their younger brothers and sisters, and perform household work in order to relieve their parents who go out for work as labourers or to work on the farms. The timings of the formal school system do not suit such girls. Then, in many rural communities the idea of sending a girl, even at the age of eight or nine to a co-educational school does not find favour and acts as a deterrent. Cultural and traditional considerations among some other communities like Muslims and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes also hold girls and women at home. General poverty, poor health and deprivation are some other important factors which prevent girls from going to regular schools. As a result, the wastage of educational resources at the primary level in rural areas is very high.

An evaluation study conducted by the Council for Social Development of the Scheme of Functional Literacy for Adult Women in 1979 in the State of Bihar, observed. "After participating for more than two years in functional literacy programme, 55 per cent cannot read the alphabets, 68 per cent cannot write their names and 74 per cent were not familiar with numbers".

The need for educating girls and women is not always appreciated in rural areas and boys' education is given priority. Early marriage is another

obstacle in the education of girls, sometimes even at the primary level. Also, girls' schools are few in number and are located at considerable distance from their homes. In such cases provision of transportation facilities for all isolated pupils would perhaps be the best solution. But then there are a number of other difficulties like either there are no roads at all or if there are they cannot be used for a part of the year due to climatic conditions; and wherever transportation services exist, they are very expensive.

Non-formal Education

Non-formal education is closely linked with general development goals with poverty and inequality as its major concerns. Philip H. Coombs defined non-formal education as "any organised, systematic, educational activity outside the established formal system intended to serve identifiable learning clienteles and learning objectives". Informal education, on the other hand, is a life-long process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experience and the educative influences and resources in his or her environment.

Schools and universities cannot possibly meet all the educational needs of a society. Besides, one must reject the idea that schooling is "real" education while adult or non-formal education is not. Non-formal education has to be seen as part of total package for development of human personality. Both formal and non-formal education are essential components for development and life-long learning systems, and must be seen as part of a mutually reinforcing strategy for development. Formal education system must recognize the value of non-formal education.

However, at present motivation for non-formal education is lacking.

There are four different categories of illiterate adults. There are adults who have never been to school. Then there are those who did go to school in their childhood but left it before achieving functional literacy. There are others who had achieved literacy in their school but could not retain it. There are yet others who acquire literacy through adult education programme but fail to retain it as they do not find any opportunity to use it in their day-to-day life. Non-formal education programmes need to be organised for all these categories.

The quality of learning facilities and environment, especially for women, must receive our utmost attention if functional literacy is to be universalised in the country. Political will, backed by the commitment of the national leadership, and reflected in resource allocation, development priorities and inclusion of adult education in 20-point programme has already created an ideal environment for a national movement of adult education for women.

Need for a New Approach

Women have a multiple role to play in society. But the non-formal education programmes that exist today give importance only to the traditional role that women play, namely, that of wife, mother and house maker, and ignore the reality that women form a substantial and integral segment of the labour force in agriculture, industry and public services. The International Labour Office in a study on the participation of women in agricultural labour force in selected countries found that 36 per cent of women in rural areas in India are employed in agriculture. Education of women should, therefore, be accorded

high priority in any adult education programme. Along with professional education they should be educated in areas like health, nutrition, child care and family welfare so that some of their natural roles are also strengthened.

What is Needed under Non-formal Adult Education for Women

— Helping women to achieve literacy and general knowledge, and functional skills so as to achieve economic viability.

— Making them conscious of their rights and responsibilities, the implications of laws governing women's status in society and developing an understanding about the various manifest factors which cause women's oppression.

— Providing women access to knowledge in areas like health, child care, nutrition and family planning.

— Assisting women to form their own organisations for learning and productive activity, and strengthening their participation in the developmental process.

I. Education of Rural Women and Their Participation in Developmental Programmes

The literacy rate of rural women in India is only 18%. In many districts it is even below 10%. Our formal system of education covers not even 10 per cent of the female population. Considering this and the fact that the characteristics of our rural women vary across groups, non-formal education seems to be the most viable solution to the problem of educating our rural female population.

Active association of women in the task of development is necessary for their own upliftment as also for the hap-

piness of their families. The women in our country need to be made aware of their own pitiable condition, and the need to change their outlook and mode of living, thinking and behaviour. Non-formal education programmes can contribute a great deal in this regard and can help in projecting women as independent social and economic beings.

Traditionally, most rural women have been integrally involved in the production and distribution of goods and services in agriculture, live stock rearing, dairying, fishing, etc. They perform these functions in addition to serving their families by cooking, washing clothes, caring for children, nursing, etc.,

Planned development and adoption of science and technology in agriculture have given rise to the need for greater information on and knowledge about scientific skills and services. While men farmers being on the field have a greater access to such information, their female counterparts have lagged behind. Educational programmes for rural women can help in bridging such gaps.

In order to give women their rightful position in the mainstream of national development, it is essential that women's organisations at the grass-roots level are established. These organisations while taking care of women's education by offering courses in vocational skills, home improvement, child care and development, family relationship, and craft training can also help in improving their status in society. There are voluntary agencies of women in rural areas like Mahila Mandals. But their activities are confined to home and family based work. Also, these Mandals have not been able to generate enough participation of women in the task undertaken by them. They need to be

galvanised to work in close collaboration with adult education and rural development agencies.

II Health and Nutrition Education for Women

Of the 100 children born in India every 2½ minutes, 13 will not live to see their 1st birthday, & 75 will be undernourished during their pre-school years. Their chances of survival during the weaning period are fifty fifty. Seven and a half million children between 1 and 5 years of age suffer from severe protein-calorie malnutrition and 33.5 million are moderately malnourished.

In any community—rich or poor—the best food for the infant is the mother's milk. For infants who are breastfed, the first six months are often the healthiest time in their lives. If breastfeeding were to be gradually replaced by milk powders and feeding bottles among the low income families, then protecting the normal physical and mental growth of the children would be very difficult. Despite these warnings, there are alarming signs that breastfeeding is on the decline in urban, semi-urban as well as in many rural families.

"There is evidence to show that better control of infant mortality is related directly to a wider spread of literacy and primary health care. Even if there is enough food in the country, it cannot make a qualitative impact on living conditions until literacy shoots up and proper health care is available to the vast majority. Also it is known that the States with the highest infant mortality are also the States with the highest fertility. U.P., for instance, has the highest birth rate as well as the highest death rate along with lower literacy rate. There is high sex differential in mortality which means that more baby

girls die than baby boys. To fight this, a war on ignorance is crucial". (Editorial 'Save the Children', *The Times of India*, Sept. 20, 1984).

For almost all children, the most important primary health care worker is the mother. It is usually the mother's level of education and awareness which will decide whether or not she will go for immunization, whether her child will be weaned at the right time; whether the best available food will be cooked in the best possible way; whether water will be boiled and hands will be washed whether a child will be weighed and vaccinated; and whether there will be an adequate interval between births. It is, therefore, perhaps not so surprising that the children of educated mothers in general have more chance of both survival and healthy growth.

Improved child survival means that the parents can more confidently have the number of children they actually want. Lack of education of women limits their awareness of the benefits of learning for their children. Unless the women are educated, the effort to open up more schools for boys and girls in rural areas and retain them for completion of schooling is unlikely to succeed.

In those districts where female literacy rates are below the national average the mean age of marriage for girls is less than 15 years as against the national average of 18 years. Most of these districts are in the four states of U.P., Bihar, M.P. and Rajasthan. With early marriage, child birth and family responsibility, women in such areas suffer from a number of handicaps in terms of their own health and the health of their children. Due to early marriage, the reproductive span of life also increases and results in high birth rate.

There are obviously many gaps in the

education of women, however, their ignorance on matters of health and nutrition have wider implications as discussed above. It is a well known fact that lack of educated women teachers and women who are trained to provide health and nutrition education, particularly in rural areas is a major obstacle. Lack of learning materials based on women's problems and interests in health and nutrition is also an impeding factor. Literacy combined with health, and child care and nutrition requires special orientation of adult education teachers.

An experimental project on 'Non-formal Education for Women' undertaken by the Council for Social Development, in Andhra Pradesh in 1972 demonstrated that the greatest progress in the acquisition of knowledge and practices regarding mother and child care was achieved where literacy was combined with knowledge about pre-natal and post-natal medical care and daily food supplements, and practical demonstrations about health, nutrition and family planning.

III Literacy and Social Awareness

One of the biggest problems in adult education programme for women is lack of motivation among them. Even among adults who have sufficient leisure time to educate themselves, the desire for education is not easy to arouse. And it is perhaps too much to expect the poorest sections of our society, who are engaged for practically the whole day in various household chores and economic activities, to find time for learning and to gather enough will power to overcome their drudgery and accept education as an essential part of living.

Motivation is an inner force which makes an individual behave in a particular way and apply his or her will to an

action for personal or social growth. The problem of motivation needs to be solved in accordance with the nature of the groups to be involved in the adult education programme. There is no ready-made formula for arousing motivation, but constant dialogue and discussion with the learners about their specific problems may motivate them to learn. In fact, each learner should be approached separately and should be motivated by taking up her individual problems. Appointment of instructors for 12 months, instead of 10 months as it used to be earlier, is a welcome step. The additional two months can provide ample opportunity to the animators to establish a rapport with the learners and to create a proper climate for adult education work.

The literacy and social awareness programme should be such as would help women in performing their varied duties and at the same time prepare them for facing new challenges in the society. In addition to providing essential skills in reading, writing and arithmetic, it should prepare them for adjusting in the changing social system and leading a better and purposeful life. It should also develop in women an urge and desire for more knowledge.

Recreational and cultural activities have an important role in literacy and general education of adults, particularly women. These can be in the form of folk theatre, community singing and dancing games, excursions, film shows, radio and T.V. serials, etc. These should form part and parcel of the adult education programme for women.

Post Literacy, Follow-up and Continuing Education

Post-literacy and follow-up programmes for adult learners have received

scant attention so far. After the literacy programme not much is done to enable the learners to reinforce their literacy and to gain a more critical understanding of the environment. Post-literacy and follow-up programmes should be part of adult and continuing education programme leading to action, and action leading to further education.

In providing follow-up education the role of local libraries cannot be over emphasised. They provide reading materials not only for neo-literates but also for semi-educated and the educated. The goal of learning society can be achieved only if libraries are set up at different levels so that all members of society get an opportunity for self education, and for inspiring each other to intensify their learning efforts.

IV Income-generating Programmes for Women

Illiterate women are mostly in the lower income group and do not have much attraction for literacy education alone. To get them motivated for this programme, it is necessary that income generating activities are included in adult education programmes for women. Income generating activities will not only help in motivating but will also help in sustaining their interest to continue with the adult education programme. However, for organising these activities a person who can provide the necessary training for producing such things will have to be appointed. An instructor of adult education programme cannot be expected to undertake this job. The other important aspect of such an activity is marketing. Items produced in adult education centres do not compete well in the market. The learners lack managerial skills and confidence to market their own produce. Institutional support would therefore be required to

overcome the problem. Also, experience has shown that once women start earning, they are more interested in using their time for making money. It is very important that they are made to see the relationship between literacy and their work.

Earlier Attempts

IAEA has earlier made some attempts to consider various aspects of adult education for women. The first major attempt was made in 1968 when the Association organised a national seminar on 'Adult Education for Women in the Changing Pattern of Society' in New Delhi. The seminar studied the level of literacy to be achieved for women, examined the obstacles in organising literacy programme for them and the ways to overcome them. It made recommendations about the content of literacy education for women and the organisations best suited for the purpose.

Another national seminar on 'New Trends in Adult Education for Women with Special Reference to Literacy' was organised in 1980 in New Delhi to discuss the implications of these trends for women's education and motivation, the content and methodology of adult education with special reference to women's literacy, and problems faced in follow-up and continuing education and in organising adult education centres for women.

In June 1984 the Association organised a national workshop on 'Education for Adult Women'. It discussed income generating activities, literacy and cultural programmes, and health education for women.

To discuss all these issues in a broader perspective the Association

decided to have 'Non-formal Adult Education for Women' as the theme of its Annual Conference.

The Conference may discuss the subject under the following sub-themes:

- (i) Education of Rural Women and Their Participation in Developmental Programmes.
- (ii) Health and Nutrition Education for Women.
- (iii) Literacy and Social Awareness.
- (iv) Income-generating Programmes for Women.

Strategies

The strategies for providing non-formal education to women will have to be based on the needs, requirements and resources of each area and it is not possible to have strategies which would work for the whole of the country. The Conference may, however, discuss various possible strategies which could be adopted for

- mobilising and involving the community in the programme—adult and non-formal education for women;
- mobilising volunteers for undertaking short-duration literacy campaign so that the target of covering about 60 to 70 crore women in the age group 15-35 by 1990 could be achieved;
- integrating efforts of governmental and non-governmental agencies ; and
- linking adult education programme with various development schemes at local levels. Such efforts have been made in the past but they have met with only partial success. The Conference may discuss the problem of coordination and suggest how this could be effectively achieved.

Group Reports

Topic Education of Rural Women and Their Participation in Developmental Programmes

Group (i)

<i>Chairperson</i>	Mrs. S. Krishnan
<i>Rapporteur</i>	Dr. A.K. Sen

The Group felt that the poorer sections of the rural and tribal women should be the focus of discussion. Categorising the rural women into three groups, namely, landless agricultural labourers; traditional artisans; and others, such as, fisherwomen, the Group made the following observations and recommendations :

—The concept of development should include knowledge and awareness of the rights of women, various inputs of knowledge with regard to health, nutrition, child care, family life, mother craft; and knowledge of organisational skills, which would bring about a change in the total quality of their lives.

—A methodology should be evolved for conducting adult education programmes and for motivating and retaining learners in the functional literacy programmes.

—An indepth study should be taken up to identify the needs and problems of the target groups, and appropriate educational materials should be prepared.

—The agricultural universities should be involved in all the programmes of adult education for the target groups and the UGC should come forward to fully support these programmes of education and extension. The Indian agricultural research institutes should also contribute significantly in these programmes.

—Various developmental agencies working in rural and tribal areas should cooperate in the programmes of adult education and all the information relevant to the target group should be disseminated through the adult education functionaries.

—A cadre of women trainers from the development agencies should be built up who in turn would actively communicate with the target groups.

—The programmes should give special attention to the social, economic and educational problems of the women belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

Group (ii)

Chairperson Mrs Kamala Rana
Rapporteur Dr. (Mrs) Pritam Kaur

The Group felt that a plan of 'Education for Development' with each phase carefully worked out should be prepared. Taking note of the schemes and programmes already in operation, the Group observed that for the effective implementation of these there was a need to utilise mass media like radio, T.V. for disseminating correct information to the rural folk. The Group further observed that the benefits of these programmes and schemes were not reaching the people for whom they were intended and that there was a need to modify and make foolproof the procedure for selecting beneficiaries or priority groups for the programmes. For ensuring rural women's participation and cooperation in development programmes, the Group felt that it was necessary to introduce the component of education in all developmental programmes with special emphasis not only on training and skill development but also health and nutrition education, and education for family life, citizenship, etc. The Group then made the following recommendations :

—Women should become equal partners in development. They should be made aware of the existing situation, their rights and role in society and also about the various developmental programmes intended for them in their districts, blocks, villages, etc. They should

be made aware of all Government policies and the target groups relating to each so that they can play an effective role in society.

—Various groups, officials, etc., need to be oriented and educated regarding women's problems and needs. Effective coordination is needed among various officials so that adequate linkages can be established between different developmental departments and officials. The groups needing orientation are : opinion leaders in villages, educated girls and women, educated youth and men, panchayat members, especially women members, Mahila Mandals, bank officers, B.D.Os and other functionaries at the block level ; district planning cells of all departments, such as, Health, Social Welfare, Education, Agriculture, Rural Development and Information and Broadcasting.

—At all levels, specific time bound and target-oriented educational programmes (orientation and regular) emphasising greater participation of learners rather than lecture method should be adopted for making women understand their own situation ; benefits to be derived from income generating and functional literacy programmes which are correlated ; the importance of knowledge about health and nutrition and their own role in raising the status and the standard of living of the family. At the block and

district levels at least two or three orientation programmes for the functionaries should be organised not only to enlist their cooperation but also to help them integrate their efforts for more positive results. Membership of Mahila Mandals and education of women about their right to participate in decision making should be encouraged. The modus operandi suggested by them and the Mandals should become the formal strategy for implementation in these areas. The effort of different functionaries should be to plan rural women's participation with continuous guidance rather than management.

—Functional literacy should be made part and parcel of all developmental programmes for encouraging participatory approach among learners. Also, functional literacy should be planned and developed on an ongoing basis until a point is reached when women, who have been totally deprived of all opportunities, are completely on their own. Such programmes could be phased to suit the specific needs of each area. Education for responsible citizenship should form an integral part of each programme.

—With the introduction of modern and new technology, jobs which were traditionally being done by women are being taken over by men, pointing to the need for equipping rural female working force with permanent skills so that they can come above the poverty level. Income generating programmes, through which such integration is to be done, should not be fragments of ill-defined skill learning programmes, but carefully thought out and economically viable

skill and human resource development programmes.

—More and more voluntary agencies should be encouraged to go into the interiors of the country, especially tribal areas. Only voluntary agencies which are motivated themselves, can help in the effective implementation of various programmes and schemes of the Government.

—There should be sufficient post literacy and follow up material in every centre. Each Mahila Mandal should be motivated to subscribe to atleast one newspaper in local language to facilitate discussion on current issues and issues relating to their own welfare, this will help them to reach a point of take off and become self-reliant in promoting their own welfare.

—Rural libraries should be set up for neo-literate women. Women should have access to reading material so that they can cultivate and retain their interest in reading and writing, avoid relapse into illiteracy and also improve their quality of life.

—Rural radio broadcasts and telecasts should give names and addresses of officials/agencies that can be contacted for assistance relating to each development programme.

—A simple list of welfare movements organised in the country should be made available to women in every district/ State as soon as possible.

—There should be a continuous review of the implementation of the programmes through a closely knit monitoring and evaluation system.

Group (iii)

Chairperson Mrs Bimla Bhatnagar
Rapporteur Dr Asha Dixit

The Group observed that although the importance of women's education had been emphasised from time to time by various committees, a lot remained to be done quantitatively as well as qualitatively. Keeping in view the magnitude of the problem of women's education, the participants recommended that both formal and non-formal approaches should be used for tackling it. The various factors responsible for the low educational development of women, the Group further observed, could be divided into the following three categories:

Economic This was considered the most important factor for the non-participation of women in educational programmes. Girls, it was pointed out, begin to contribute to the family's income from a very early age. They look after their younger siblings and do household work to enable their parents to go out to earn a living, thus indirectly supplementing the family's income.

Social Customs and practices like *purdah* and early marriage deter women from participating in educational activities. Besides, the attitude widely prevalent towards girls' education, especially among the rural poor, is also not favourable.

The role of the girls, it is believed, is limited to the four walls of the house, and education is considered to be of no use for them.

Parental Attitude Due to cultural and social customs, parents are reluctant to send their daughters to school.

The following observations and recommendations were made with regard to the promotion of women's education:

— Motivation is the driving force which urges an individual to strive after an objective, whatever be the obstructions on the way. Hence, adult education programmes to be a success must make sense to the learners and meet their felt needs. For otherwise not only will the adult women themselves reject the programmes but will also dissuade their daughters from joining them.

— The programmes should be promoted through village meetings, panchayats and community leaders and women representatives in panchayats.

— It is also necessary to create an environment in which learners are required to use their literacy skills. Adult education must make provision for motivating learners and should try to cater to their needs and skills.

— Literacy programmes for women require careful, sensitive and sensible choice from among pedagogical approaches.

— The strategies adopted for women's education should suit their particular situation and circumstances.

— Education should be linked with different developmental programmes.

Group (iv)

Chairperson Dr K. S. Pillai
Rapporteur Dr G. S. K. Nair

The Group's discussion concluded in the following observations and recommendations:

— The Group expressed great concern and regret at the alarmingly low rate of women's literacy in India. It also noted that in as many as 100 districts the level of women's literacy is less than 10 per cent.

— The Group resolved to urge the Government of India, voluntary agencies and universities to mobilise their resources and launch massive time-bound programmes on a warfooting to combat illiteracy. The Group was of the opinion that preferential treatment should be given to rural women, especially of the S.C., S.T. and other under-privileged sections of the society.

— The Group felt that illiteracy pockets, with special reference to women should be identified and concerted efforts should be made to tackle the problem of illiteracy by linking it with income-generating and awareness creating programmes.

— The Mahila Mandals working in different parts of the country should be asked to collaborate in the programme of eradication of illiteracy at least on a one-to-one basis.

— The Group was of the opinion that developmental and welfare programmes launched by the Government during the various Five Year Plans could not deliver the goods due to the grave illiteracy problem and the consequent lack of awareness of its

importance.

— Attention should be focused on various forms of day-to-day exploitation to which our womenfolk are subjected along with an emphasis on literacy, numeracy, functionality, etc. For this an integrated programme with due emphasis on selection of personnel, course content, instructional techniques, monitoring and evaluation, follow-up, etc., has to be prepared and launched with commitment and vision.

— A detailed survey on the needs and problems of rural women should be undertaken to plan appropriate programmes with in-built flexibility. The slum areas in the urban sector as well as the mobile working class population may also be brought under the purview of such programmes.

— The Group felt that there is a gap between the actual requirements of women and the programmes implemented which has to be urgently looked into and bridged through adequate measures.

— Special attention may be given to the States and Districts which have very low literacy level and where there is lack of understanding and awareness among the public.

— The Group felt that along with the pre-primary (nursery) schools and creches adult literacy classes for women should also be launched to ensure their whole-hearted cooperation.

— The menfolk should be made aware of the need for educating their

women and should be compelled to send them to literacy centres and to extend all possible support.

—The Group was also of the opinion that the provision for free and compulsory education should be implemented properly to ensure full enrolment, arresting of dropping out phenomenon, and continued education.

— It was also noted that the rural women want to be urbanized and modern. Provision should therefore be made in the programme to cater to such requirements as well.

— It was also suggested that sensory education should be attempted for educating the adults. *Gurus* and *pandits* of the locality may be persuaded to cooperate in this task.

— The Group recommended formation of a small group to evolve a strategy for involving the entire illiterate women-folk in the integrated programme of literacy-linked development.

— Special training should be offered to enable the workers to effectively discharge their duties and attain the target.

— The consensus of the Group was that only if the content of the programme

is life-oriented and problem-oriented, can it achieve success. The pitfalls in the existing programmes have to be identified scientifically and remedial measures need to be taken up.

— It was also felt that the leaders of the country, various officials in charge of the implementation of developmental and welfare schemes should be apprised of the situation, and with their cooperation concerted efforts should be made.

— The Group also resolved to request the authorities to establish a separate channel on TV and Radio for catering to the needs of rural people, especially women.

— While giving subsidies, etc., and providing vocational opportunities preference may be given to neo-literate women. The Government authorities should consider it a part of their duty to visit the adult education centres in their respective areas and offer cooperation and necessary support.

— Some of the members of the Group suggested that the centres offering adult education for women be renamed as "Mother Welfare Centres" as in Bombay so that they would have greater appeal.

<i>Topic</i>	Health and Nutrition Education for Women
<i>Chairperson</i>	Prof. (Mrs) A. Shukla
<i>Rapporteur</i>	Prof. Nalini Swamidasan

The lively and interesting discussion of the participants concluded in the following observations and recommendations :

—It was generally felt that the existing health and nutrition education com-

ponent for women in adult education programmes needs to be strengthened, expanded and up-dated.

—It was pointed out that the women of our country are still suffering from poor health, malnutrition, infectious

diseases, particularly gastrointestinal diseases, anaemia, worm-infestations respiratory tract diseases as well as psychological and emotional problems for which they require education. They are also ignorant about correct methods of cooking, balanced diet, importance of vegetables, personal hygiene, sanitation, cleanliness of the home and environment and about maternal care and the care of the growing child. The participants felt that adolescent girls being potential mothers also need to be educated in matters of health and nutrition. Women are ignorant and illiterate and there is a lack of health consciousness, as well as health facilities and counselling specially directed towards the care of women. Women tend to spend more money on items of lower priority and thus are ignorant about household budgeting.

—The members agreed that intensive education needs to be carried out to promote breast feeding. It was felt that women need to be educated about proper feeding and weaning practices, proper health and hygiene in child care, importance of immunization, spacing of children, knowledge about common ailments in children and their prevention, promotion of use of indigenous and

Ayurvedic remedies and importance of personality development of child.

—Points regarding improvement in the methods and techniques of adult education of women were also made. The gaps and lapses in adult education programme were reviewed and it was suggested that a multi-directional approach should be taken, coordinating the adult education programmes with various programmes, such as ICDS, IRDP, TRYSEM, medical and health programmes being conducted by Departments of preventive and social medicine, paediatrics, obstetrics and gynaecology, family planning and post-partum programmes, MCH Centres, PHC centres and other university departments, such as, home science, sociology, economics and psychology. An integrated approach was considered to be important to avoid confusion and duplication among the target groups. Extensive use of audio-visual aids by securing aids from Central Health Education Bureau, transfer of aids from Central Government institutions to adult education centres and use of mass media to the maximum were recommended. It was further suggested that training and refresher courses for adult education workers should be held more frequently.

<i>Topic</i>	Social Awareness of Rural Women
<i>Chairperson</i>	Mr. B. B. Mohanty
<i>Rapporteur</i>	Mr. K. G. Balakrishna Pillai

The Group after a stimulating discussion came to the following conclusions :

—Literacy, awareness and functionality need not follow any sequential order. The order may change from situ-

ation to situation.

—Even though it is not likely that with the increase in the level of literacy, the level of superstition will decrease, awareness required for decreasing superstition has to be created in the learners.

—Awareness is a pre-requisite to development. Participation of rural women in developmental programmes can be ensured only by creating in them an awareness about the assistance provided by the developmental agencies.

—In order to enable rural women to perform their functions as mother, wife and individual they must be made aware of the components constituting their participation in social life.

—To enable the rural women to plan their family life it is essential to make them aware of the facilities and methods at their command.

—Rural women have to be trained in critical and analytical thinking so that they can develop their discretionary faculty.

—To enable the rural women to exercise their right of franchise they have to be made aware of the Indian democratic system.

—Rural women should be made aware of the legal provisions and rules enacted for their betterment. They have to be made aware of the fact that the Constitution has granted equal protection to men and women. They have to be made aware of their civic rights especially of those relating to (a) equality before law, (b) equal pay for men and women, (c) special provisions for women, (d) equality of opportunity in the matter of public appointment, (e) marriage, (f) maintenance, (g) adoption and (h) succession.

—In order that the rural women may

be able to liberate themselves from poverty and exploitation they have to be made aware of the how and why of their present economic status, viz:

(a) Why is it that we are poor?

(b) Who is responsible for our poverty?

(c) Can we get rid of the poverty?

(d) How?

—Rural women should be helped to the higher level of awareness required for bringing about a desirable change in the structure of the society.

—Reformative approach cannot help to create awareness among the rural women. Conscientisation alone can help to stimulate the learners' thinking, leading to social change.

—Creation of awareness takes time. This cannot be achieved fully within the duration fixed for the adult education programme. This has to be a continuing process.

—In order to create awareness, to impart skills and to bring about attitudinal change among the women of the rural and tribal areas, adult education functionaries from among the women of the respective areas have to be identified and trained.

—In selecting adult education functionaries for the rural/tribal women, social commitment should be preferred to educational qualifications.

—All universities of India should take up the responsibility of training the trainees in the field of adult education.

ZAKIR HUSAIN MEMORIAL LECTURE

Eradicating Women's Illiteracy : A Challenge

M. L. Shahare

Chairman, Union Public Service Commission

It is a matter of great honour for me to have been invited to deliver the Zakir Husain Memorial Lecture instituted by the Indian Adult Education Association. Dr. Zakir Husain was not only a great educationist but a great humanist also, who gave concrete shape to Gandhiji's idea of "people's education". Dr. Zakir Husain considered education as one of the most important tools for national development and social change. To quote his own words, "Education is the most powerful instrument of national development. What we need most urgently is a revolution in education which can trigger off the necessary cultural, economic and social revolution". It is this type of education which was conceived by Gandhiji and concretised by Dr. Zakir Husain. It was an education for the whole man in the true sense of the word. This is the type of education which enables people to see its relevance to their lives.

This education was intended to make the equality of all Indians irrespective of caste, creed and sex a reality. Gandhiji was a great exponent of emancipation of women of this country. Many women under his leadership

took part in the liberation struggle. The names of Sarojini Naidu and Kasturba Gandhi are two of the many such shining examples. Since he thought women as equal partners in all national activities including the national struggle, he laid great emphasis on their education. The leadership which Gandhiji created has to this date inspired and nurtured the movement of emancipation of women in this country. It is these men and women who were responsible for ensuring that our Constitution reflected fully the ideals of equality for all, irrespective of caste, creed and sex. It is they who were responsible for many progressive legislations to remove the handicaps that the women suffer from in their quest for equality and freedom from exploitation.

In spite of providing equal opportunity to them our women have not been able to secure for themselves all those rights and privileges which legitimately belong to them. They are either denied these opportunities through the biases of the society or because of their ignorance of what is their due as citizens of this free country.

For example, in spite of provision for free compulsory education for all, the gap between male and female literacy continues to widen. This gap became all the more explicit in 1981. I would like to present here some of the facts about sex ratio among illiterates which speak for themselves.

Year	No. of women illiterate per 1000 men
1951	1138
1961	1250
1971	1243
1981	1322

It means that in spite of launching a massive adult education programme in 1978 the situation in regard to women's literacy has worsened. This itself should set all of us thinking. Similarly, in various jobs the number of women in general is much lower than that of men. This difference between men and women becomes all the more marked as we move upward in the hierarchy.

It does not, however, mean that Indian women have not made any progress or taken advantage of the facilities available to them. In 1947, the enrolment of girls in schools in the 6-11 age group was less than 3 million. In 1981, it was more than 28 million. We have come to a point where we can reasonably hope to achieve our target of ensuring basic minimum education for all children upto the age of 14 years within the next one decade. There are now very few villages in India which do not have a primary school of their own. The number of women teachers in primary schools was less than 30,000 in 1950-51. It has since multiplied more than 10 times. The number of women teachers in middle classes in 1950-51 was just about

12,800. It is now more than 266,000. Literacy rate among women in 1950-51 was 7.93. In 1981, it was 24.88. I am bringing out these facts because in spite of the Constitutional and legal provisions and facilities created for women, the plight of majority of them has remained unchanged or has even worsened. There are many reasons behind this sad state of affairs. The urban middle class people by and large continue to nurture the same age-old image of women only as mothers or housewives. They think that women's primary role is to cook, clothe and feed the family and rear the children, although they see quite a few women working with them in offices, schools and colleges. They only tolerate these for economic reasons and not as a natural right of women.

When it comes to rural middle class women, the men even do not think of these economic compulsions to give them a right to work independent of men. They think all women as housewives and mothers who should confine themselves to matters related to home and the family life. The decision maker is invariably the man in all matters. It is, however, a well known fact that women in the lower economic strata are not only housewives and mothers but are also workers in fields, factories, construction of roads, building, etc. In fact, an analysis of the work force shows that a large number of women are participating in the economic activity of this country. The data show that women constitute a very big chunk of our labour force. *This contribution of theirs is in addition to the work they do at home which is not being accounted for in terms of money.*

The most important factor which can contribute towards making women realise their true position in developing

an understanding among them of the role a woman plays or contribution she makes to raise the quality of life directly and indirectly, is their education. Adult education programme is one of the most important instruments of bringing about this awareness among women. The harm we are causing to the society and the country by keeping this most important person ignorant and illiterate is incalculable. Our dream of being a great nation can never be realised unless the women, who constitute around 50 per cent of our population, are made literate and knowledgeable.

While speaking after laying the foundation stone of the new building of Zakir Husain College in New Delhi on July 19, 1983, the Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi stressed the need for giving more attention to adult literacy and women's education and warned the people that if left to Government only it would take too long to achieve universal literacy. She said that by denying our women education we were turning them into liabilities. There could not be any real progress if large sections of our population at present deprived of educational opportunities were not brought under some or other kind of educational programme, Smt. Gandhi said.

Education is, therefore, a major instrument of bringing our women back to their original glory which had been part of the tradition of this country. Our ancient literature and religious books talk of eminent educated women who could challenge men in their knowledge of scriptures and various aspects of life. We are aware of the well known story of Bharati, the wife of great learned Mandan Mishra who was made the judge of the great debate between Jagat Guru Shankaracharya and her

husband, about whom Pt. Ambike Datt Vyas has written the following :

Akhandalah Panditamandaleshu / Ya Chabhwanmandanmishranama / Arya cha Bharya cha Sati Yada/Samadhya-gachachat Sakal hi Shastram which means that among the learned the most learned one who was the master of all scriptures has been chosen to mediate.

To think of education of women is, therefore, to think of (a) raising the quality of our family life; (b) quality of our work force; (c) quality of our nation. In view of the importance of adult literacy for women, the adult education programme in India has already considered them as their first priority. It is through making women literate that we can arrest our suicidal march towards darkness of ignorance. The wishes of the designers of this programme will, however, continue to be only pious wishes like the one that have been put in our Constitution unless we take concrete steps to realise what we intend to achieve in the field of women's literacy.

India's experience with programmes designed to promote development of women, including those directly aiming at improving their fertility behaviour has been rich and varied. In some areas it has been marked by notable success; in some others results have fallen behind expectations.

The lesson we have drawn is that with the exception of education, no other single programme, however large in terms of investment, on its own strength can enable women to become equal partners with men *de facto* and *de jure* in running the family and the society. We are facing many problems on our road towards modernisation of the country and raising the

standard of living of the vast majority of our people. We have been investing very heavily for achieving these goals but the rapid growth in population has to great extent nullified our efforts to provide minimum basic needs to our people. If even this single major problem has to be resolved, the surest way is to educate our women. As in relation to fertility control, our experience is that the higher the development level of women, particularly in the area of education, the lower the level of their fertility. We are all aware of the fact that in Kerala we have been able to achieve a great measure of success in reducing the death rate as well as birth rate and it can to a great extent be attributed to the higher percentage of women's literacy there. I will, therefore, place before you a few suggestions, which to my mind will go a long way in ensuring women's participation in the adult education programme.

The management of adult education programme even when it has a special emphasis on women continues to be largely in the hands of men. Most of the senior officers at the national level, state level and even at the district level are men who will not be in a position as compared to women to ensure an effective implementation of adult education programme, meeting the special needs of women. We should, therefore, ensure that suitable women officers at all levels are appointed particularly in the adult education and non-formal education programme for girls and women. At the field level we must ensure that women teachers are available to conduct adult education centres for women and non-formal education centres for girls. I know that many villages in India do not have a single literate woman to be assigned the task of an instructor. In such cases

we may arrange special educational/training programmes of longer duration to enable the women from the community not only to acquire literacy skills but also the ability to impart literacy skills to fellow women trainees. The organisation of training programme must also cater to the special needs of women. It may not be possible for the organisers to have a residential training programme for women for reasons of security and other considerations. We, therefore, should be able to organise for them non-residential training programmes. We may also have to ensure that the training centres as far as possible are close to the villages of the trainees to enable them to travel to the training centres and to return to their homes the same day.

The training programmes for women besides giving them skills in imparting literacy must be of value to women teachers themselves. It may give them certain life skills and economic skills which they can not only share with the fellow participants in the adult education programme but which can also enable them to improve the quality of their own lives. We may, therefore, think of providing adequate funds for enrichment of the training of women grass-roots level functionaries.

The adult education instructor is the key to the success of the adult education programme. The training of instructors should, therefore, be very carefully planned. Many women who will come to receive training are likely to bring their children with them. This possibility may be taken into account while making physical arrangements for the training of women field functionaries. In fact child rearing practices and health education programmes may be made integral part of women adult education training programmes and the presence of

children may be used as an opportunity to impart skills related to the health and care of children. We may also have to think of providing toys and nutrition to the children during the period of training of their mothers. It would automatically involve separate arrangement for training of women instructors. The same way as we are recommending that women trainees be allowed to bring their children during the training programme, I also recommend that mothers be allowed to bring children when they come to attend adult education centres. I am told that it is common for mothers with their babies in their arms to come to attend adult education centres. Could we not use this opportunity of helping these women to understand more about their children as well as their own health? I have been informed that a project with the assistance of Unicef has already been undertaken by the Directorate of Adult Education, Government of India, which provides toys for women adult education centres in selected places. These toys are meant for children who accompany their mothers. May I suggest that this facility of providing toys be extended to all adult education centres for women all over the country. We may also have to arrange for medical check up of children, and provide for nutritious food at the adult education centres for the children of those mothers who attend these centres.

Most of the women and young girls are not able to avail of educational facilities created in the form of adult education centre or non-formal education programme because they are too pre-occupied with collecting fuel, preparing food and other domestic drudgeries. If need be the Government may undertake special programmes for reducing women's domestic drudgery wherever there is an adult education programme

in operation. I understand that several schemes on the use of appropriate technology are in operation and these should be fully utilized for helping women reduce their work load so that they can look forward to a better life through adult education programme. It has been stated in the various policy documents on the adult education programme that the content of the adult education programme should be related to the needs of women. However, surveys are done as a preliminary to the starting of the programme but very often there is no link between the results of the survey and the programme conducted. The State Resource Centres have an important role in making the programmes more target group/area specific. There is a need to evolve a far more dynamic curriculum catering to the needs of specific groups. In view of special problems of women one may even suggest that a special cell be created both at the national level (as a part of the National Directorate) and State level to ensure support to women's adult education programme.

It is heartening to note that there are several women organisations in the country which are trying to join the national effort to eliminate illiteracy particularly from among women. I will like to particularly mention the role played by SEWA (Self Employed Women's Association), Ahmedabad, Bharatiya Gramin Mahila Sangh, Mobile Creche of New Delhi, Centre for Women Development Studies, New Delhi and Kasturba Gandhi Trust.

I have also been informed that a National Committee on Eradication of Illiteracy among Women has been recently formed by several social workers and organisations working for the uplift of women under the leadership of

Smt. Lakshmi Menon. This Committee has also gone into the question of resource support as well as content of women adult education programme. Some of the suggestions of this committee in regard to the core content are that it should include :

—The fundamental rights guaranteed to all citizens under our Constitution—along with the rationale—why these were considered necessary by the freedom fighters;

—A special emphasis on women's and children's rights explaining the existing legal provisions and the rationale behind some of the critical social legislations like the Dowry Act, the Minimum Wages Act, the Bonded Labour Abolition Act, the Equal Remuneration Act, etc. While legal terminology is complex even for educated people, it is possible to reduce the basic meaning of these laws and their objectives to very simple language and use these concepts to develop literacy among our target groups; and

—Basic information about development programmes—the types of activities that women can develop by themselves, the sources from which they can seek assistance, the authorities to whom they need to appeal in case of unjust treatment. Incorporating these components in the literacy programmes would be of great educational value, not merely for our target group, but also for those of us who wish to instruct, assist and help them, because these are the things which many educated women are still not aware of.

The rest of the content could be based on the situational analysis of the target groups as stated above. I suggest that the Indian Adult Education Association should make special efforts in developing suitable material for women learners to operationalise this content.

It has been mentioned in our adult education policy document that at least 50 per cent of the adult education centres opened should be for women. I do not know what happens to the funds when we are not able to ensure the implementation of this part of the guidelines of the adult education programme. I will suggest that at least 50 per cent of the money on adult education programme should be spent on the education of women. This money should not be diverted to any other channel if we are not able to spend it on women's education. We should think of ways and means of ensuring greater participation of women because once we start diverting the funds then the cause of women's education would suffer.

The Government has on its part initiated a very good scheme of giving to those States prizes which have done commendable work in the field of women's education. We may think of providing incentive to women workers in the field of adult education for their outstanding work in this difficult task. We may find means of honouring such workers befitting on special occasions.

Government alone, however, cannot handle this gigantic task. Voluntary organisations must play a more dynamic role. Indian Adult Education Association, therefore, should play more vigorous role in identifying those voluntary organisations which have acquired experience of working with women particularly in the rural areas. Government of India has already made application of its rules very flexible in case of women voluntary organisations which have acquired experience of working with women particularly in the rural areas. For example, they can take up five centres, if they cannot take up a project of 30 centres. With this liberal scheme of Government of India

many voluntary organisations need to be involved in this task.

There are several developmental schemes in operation in the country. Many of these schemes have great potentiality of being linked to the Adult Education Programme. In this regard a special mention be made of Integrated Rural Development Programme, Training of Rural youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM) Integrated Child Development Services, (ICDS) National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWACRA). Of these scheme ICDS and DWACRA are of special significance for the women's adult education programme as they are specifically geared to meet the needs of poor women. Both these schemes have a strong component of education and efforts are being made to make the educational component which includes literacy as part of the package to be delivered under these schemes. There is a need to ensure that adequate attention is paid to the educational component which appears to be not so strong at present.

The adult educators have a great responsibility of studying these schemes meticulously and identifying the educational component to be built into these schemes. We all know that for the successful implementation of these schemes we need well informed and literate clientele. Adult education programme can provide both literacy and bridge the information gap for the effective utilisation of these schemes by the target groups. Thus adult education should seek to coordinate with these developmental programmes in such a manner that in each it becomes instru-

mental to their success. If this type of co-ordination can be achieved I am sure the ministries and departments responsible for these schemes will gladly provide money for women adult education centres as integral part of these schemes.

The role of organised sector is equally important in meeting the challenge of eradicating illiteracy. The benefits of well informed and literate workers to the productivity cannot be disputed. The educated worker is in a far better position to absorb training and improve his adaptability to new machines and hence it is in the interest of organised sectors, both private and public, to assume the responsibility of making the illiterate women workers literate. The Working Group on adult education has suggested that organised sector be made to provide education to the illiterate workers without loss of wages. To begin with they could certainly start with women workers who are subjected to greater exploitation for lack of access to literacy and awareness.

I have not tried to be pedantic in expressing my views as to how we can meet the challenge of the decade, that is, eradication of illiteracy from this country, however, I feel that it can never be met unless we make special efforts to eradicate illiteracy from among women. I repeat again the most often said sentence that to educate a man is to educate only one individual while educating a woman means educating the whole family. The task though very big is not a formidable one. Given the dedication and will of adult education workers the challenge can be met most effectively. We have resources, we have all the expertise, we only need determination to accept this challenge.

Legal Literacy and Social Awareness

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THE rate of literacy amongst women in India is almost negligible. Till Independence, education of women was considered an anathema by the rural society, and the rural folk could not dare send their daughters to schools. The utility and assessment of a woman's personality was in terms of heart and home. Except in metropolitan and big towns, there is no social awareness among women. The Constitution of India has granted equality and equal protection to men and women. Women now have the same rights, privileges and facilities that men have. Women in India, specially the Hindu women, suffered from several disabilities with regard to marriage, maintenance, adoption and succession. The Hindu Code drafted after Independence touched almost the entire life of a Hindu woman and paved the ground for legislation of Hindu Marriage Act, Hindu Succession Act, Hindu Maintenance and Adoption Act. The rights of the women in India may be summarised as under:

Equality before law Article 14 of the Constitution guarantees equality before law and equal protection of laws. Women therefore cannot be discriminated as against men through any Act, Statute, Ordinance, Rule, Regulation of Bye-law.

Equal pay for men and women Article 39(d) of the Constitution lays down that there shall be equal pay for equal work for both men and women, thus any law or practice under which women are paid either less pay or wages shall be unconstitutional.

Special provision for women Article 15 (3) of the Constitution of India vests power in the State and Government to make special provisions or rules and legislations for women for their social and economic upliftment. Such a law or provision or rule cannot be challenged as either illegal or unconstitutional and would not violate the equality clause between men and women.

Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment Article 16(1) & (2) of the Constitution of India lays down that there shall be equal opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State and that no citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence or any of them, be ineligible for or discriminated against in respect of any employment or office under the State. Besides being in politics, there are women today in administration, police, engineering and

even in the civil aviation and space although to be counted only on fingers.

Marriage Before the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 a Hindu marriage was considered indissoluble. Now with the passing of the above Act, both Hindu male and female have equal rights for claiming divorce or judicial separation or restitution of Conjugal Rights.

Maintenance Section 125 of Criminal Procedure Code provides that a legally wedded woman belonging to any caste, religion or faith can claim maintenance if she is neglected or is refused by her husband to be maintained. There are judicial pronouncements that a Muslim woman can claim separate maintenance under Section 125 Cr. P. C. if her husband has married a second woman irrespective of the fact that the Muslim Law permits four marriages. A Hindu woman besides having the right of claiming maintenance under Section 125 Cr. P. C., can claim maintenance under the Hindu Maintenance and Adoption Act.

Adoption A Hindu woman, whether married or unmarried can adopt a child after the passing of the Hindu Maintenance and Adoption Act, prior to which there was no such right with the Hindu women.

Succession The Hindu Succession Act gives equal right of share in the property of the parents to a daughter which means that a woman has equal share along with men in the parental property. Before the above legislation, a daughter had no right of share in the parental property.

In spite of several legislations to alleviate the miseries and hardships of the women, there is hardly any awareness among them about such laws and rights. The social structure is greatly responsible

for denying these rights to the women' as they have no social and moral courage to claim these rights. Legal literacy has to be so organised that women become aware of the socio-economic legislations made for them. For this purpose, legal literacy should be an integral part of adult education. The syllabus and the courses in adult education should be so designed and articulated that they contain the important and speaking provisions of the above mentioned laws. Very little attention has been paid by the governmental and formal agencies to legal literacy as integral part of adult education as the Guidelines do not contain any ingredients thereof. A few suggestions in this regard may be made:

—The adult education programme must consist of legal literacy as an essential cause and suitable syllabus be prepared accordingly.

—Small booklets in Hindi in its commonly spoken and easily understood form be prepared. These booklets should contain in the narrative form the provision of law.

—Popular lectures by jurists, legal aid workers and others be organised wherein knowledge and social awareness of the rights and privileges of the women be discussed.

—Adult education workers with the help of the mass media should prepare a public opinion against social evils of dowry, bride burning, neglect of women and illiteracy amongst them.

—Adult education workers with the help of jurists and lawyers should try to settle and reconcile disputes in villages outside the courts as one of the vital duties of education is stability and peace in the family and society.

Income-generating Activities and Education

Kamala Rana

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PLANNING for the socially, educationally and economically disadvantaged groups in India has been accelerated during the last three decades. The women, however, have been the focus of our planners' attention only since the last decade with the celebration of the international women's year in 1975 and the subsequent UN declaration of Women's Decade.

It is also heartening to note that of late special programmes have been planned for women particularly in rural areas, for improving their income generating skills.

Statistics today indicate some improvement in education, literacy and work outside the home. While some encouraging figures and visuals we see speak of the success and position a few women constituting a minority have achieved the story of a vast majority of women, however is, that they are participating in structured programmes designed for them without being really involved in a way in which their own personal development and leadership becomes the underlying objective. In spite of the national level planning to improve the quality of life of women,

the most stunning gaps in the knowledge about the majority of women in India are

—Not much is known statistically what are the inner feelings and designs of women deprived of education, and their ability to reach out for some participation in the process of national development. Do they count themselves among the people of India who matter?

—Do women feel responsible for changing their own destinies?

In the World Plan of Action on the programme for the 'Decade of Women' adopted by over 100 countries meeting in Mexico city at the United Nations World Conference for International Women's year 1975, the emphasis was on women's access to education as a basic human right. It is undoubtedly a key to social and economic progress. Lack of educational opportunities, functional literacy, and training in basic skills for improving family and personal life contribute to the vicious circle of under development, low productivity, poverty, and poor health and nutrition. Things have changed very marginally in the last decade considering the magnitude of the problem and the task involved.

Planning and Implementation of Income-generating Activities

Women need to learn income generating activities not only to improve their home, but also to become equal partners with men in reaching national development goals. Women do not have legal rights to land or legal right to use it. They get lower wages than men because they are unskilled. The decrease in the size of land holdings puts a strain on women to supplement family income with non-agricultural activities. Cash in the hands of women often means more nutrition and education for children. Men spend a good part of their earning outside the home.

All these factors, and the one single factor—the need to improve the status of the rural women in India—make it important to expand income-generating employment for rural women, so that they have earnings in cash or kind on which they have control.

In the current programmes in India under the Integrated Rural Development Services scheme and special schemes for women, some gaps in planning and operationalising the skill learning and income generating programmes would be worth examining if effective results are desired.

In order to plan any activity which would lead a woman to earn an independent income we need to know the existing conditions, that is:

—How do women and girls participate in agriculture, business community projects, etc.?

—Are women considered to be economically active in agricultural, handicrafts and other non-agricultural occupations?

—What attitudes about these rules

and tasks are held by women and girls themselves?

—From the information on the foregoing a list of the skills women most need should be made. Is training available in these skills?

—What training facilities are available in the District or Block?

Are these training programmes relevant and adequate to meet specific needs of women?

Skill Learning Programmes

For organising such programmes there is a need to know

—The target group for whom the programme is going to be designed.

—Skills most suitable for women in that area.

—What is the existing purchasing power in the community?

—What are the marketing opportunities for locally produced goods?

—Could these local products compete with similar products being sold in the market?

—Is there an easy flow of raw material for the income generating programme?

—What should be the duration of training in an income generating programme to acquire a high quality of efficiency?

Functional Literacy and Education for Rural Women

In the field of education, illiterate women comprise the largest number. Although more non-formal education centres have been started all over India, and some of them are operating effectively, majority of the rural women are not able to know much from these learning situations, because they are a

one time activity for an year or so.

Some of the underlying factors which weaken women's development are worth examining.

A common assumption seems to be that given women's nurturing role, they would like to learn, even in literacy programmes, about their immediate concerns, for example, learn to cook and look after children. However, experience of such projects reveals that the interest of learners soon fades away. Recent research points to the range of motivations which can be tapped if women are encouraged to think beyond their narrow daily routine. In a survey of women's interests in some Kenyan communities Halvarson found that :

"Women do not simply want to learn about home, cooking, children, nutrition and family planning. They want to know about agriculture, animal husbandry, crafts and how to earn money, about cooperatives and marketing practices. ... Says a Tanzanian woman, 'I have a small shop where I sell cigarettes, matches, salt, sugar, kerosene, bread and flour. I am old woman, but I can count. What I wanted was to learn how to keep that I count in the book, now I can write everything in the book and no one can cheat me or make me forget'."

In a study conducted in Madhya Pradesh majority of women who had participated in an integrated project on Functional Literacy and Family Life Education wanted (a) to have further learning material beyond the primer so that they can read "everything on their own and (b) wanted reading materials on knitting patterns, crafts, repair of sewing/knitting machines, embroidery designs because the craft teachers taught them the basic know-how but they wanted to learn beyond that stage".

There are several living examples of the real concerns women have been able to express for their personal growth and development. The recent trends are to develop a mix of functional literacy, increasing and widening awareness and knowledge base, and income generating skills in the new projects being developed in India and other developing countries. Experience also shows that as long as educational programmes convey information regarded by participants as relevant and functional, the attendance in programme increases. Some women's programmes have begun to combine literacy with nutrition and health activities focused on the family and the range of basic services in the 'mix' is being increasingly broadened. As a matter of fact it is because of the increasing awareness among women that they want to participate more in economic programmes rather than literacy *per se*.

In spite of the need for both functional literacy programmes and income generating activities, the reality is that programmes are being planned for functional literacy by departments of adult education in every State. It is however, necessary to see the need for integrating educational programmes, including functional literacy and income generating programme as a package design for planning implementation for effective results. Income generating activities generate the need for functional literacy. The same is true of women's Functional Literacy Programmes.

Linking functional and income generating/skill development programmes for women is not difficult in any programme. The important elements missing in such developmental programmes are

the knowledge and understanding of the needs of women at various levels. Thus a programme becomes a 'scheme' or a 'project' and not a process of self enhancement for a woman. Ways have therefore to be found to integrate skill learning with self-confidence, independent action, and channelling of this new learning into action so that women can change their situation in everyday life. Women are already aware of many new developmental activities as seen in

the rural areas. What they need is the smooth channel that will give them the learning opportunities they seek to become a part of the mainstream of India's development. Planning for such a channel is possible if all concerned devote time to developing a fool-proof method of programming activities in small groups in every village for integrating learning and earning—creating opportunities in spite of difficulties and not vice versa.

