



## ADULT EDUCATION IN INDIA

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### ABSTRACT

Education is the need of the day. Though India achieved political freedom but social and economic freedom is yet to be achieved. Without cent percent Illiteracy India could not achieve such freedom. This is so because illiteracy is the root cause for all ignorance and superstitions, and all social, cultural, political and economic backwardness. In other words it retards individual's social and national progress and development in all aspects. Moreover illiterate parents produce illiterate children. Therefore state and central Governments have taken various efforts to eradicate illiteracy. However adult education programme is the vital instrument to eradicate illiteracy in the contemporary Indian society.

**KEYWORDS:** Adult Education, Illiteracy, Neo-Literates, Development.

### INTRODUCTION

A country's national development rest on education of the neo-literates. For a long time our country suffered from a very low percentage of illiteracy because about 48% of our population was illiterate as per 1991 census. Dr. V.K.R.V. Rao says, "Without adult education and adult literacy, it is not possible to have that range and speed of economic and social development which we require. A programme of adult education and adult literacy should therefore take a front place in any programme for economic and social development".

The Education Commission 1964-66 stated on Adult Education, "No nation can leave its security only to the police and army, to a large extent national security depends upon to education of its citizens, their knowledge of affairs, their character, and sense of discipline and their ability to participate effectively in security measures". The function of adult education in a democracy is to provide every adult citizen with an opportunity for education of the type which he wishes and which he should have for his personal enrichment, professional advancement and effective participation in social and political life." In India "64% of the people are unable to read and write and naturally liquidation of illiteracy becomes a matter of immediate national concern". The scope of adult education is wide, as wide as life itself.

## **OBJECTIVES**

1. To know the objectives of adult education.
2. To know the need of adult education in India.
3. To know the problems of adult education.
4. To know the solutions of the problems of adult education.
5. To know about the policies on adult education.

**1. To know the objectives of adult education:** The goals of adult education are to increase the quality of life of an individuals and make them to realize the potential for self realization; to raise the living standard of families, communities, societies and nations; to cultivate peace and communal harmony in the multi-cultural global village; and to accelerate the pace of development and welfare of the individual nations and the international community as whole. There are three major objectives of adult education as explained below.

- **Imparting literacy of diverse types-** This includes basic literacy, scientific literacy, economic literacy, technological literacy, legal literacy, computer literacy, and so on.
- **Generating awareness on various matter/subjects-** This includes awareness about one's self, community, society and the nation. To make people conscious about social, economic, political, cultural, environmental, developmental, health, hygiene, etc. At the same time make them realize the value of peace, welfare, and harmonious growth and development of the individual, family, community, nation and the world, amongst other things.
- **Promoting functionality-** This includes application of individuals, collective, community, corporate, national and international knowledge, skills, attitudes, practices, resources, etc. for realizing the felt needs, for solving various problems, for promoting larger public participation in various activities and for bringing out social, transformation and progress for raising standard of living of the individual and community as a whole.

### **Other aims include:**

- a) Removal of illiteracy and ignorance in adults and expand literacy programmes.
- b) Improve vocational efficiency
- c) Promotion of the ideas of mutual tolerance
- d) Development of a balanced sense of rights and responsibilities
- e) Developing scientific and rational attitude in life
- f) Improving the quality of leadership in the villages
- g) Developing democratic values and secularism
- h) Acquainting the adults with the benefits of new knowledge

**2. To know the need and importance of adult education in India:** The aim of adult education is to make each person acquainted with the three R's, reading, writing and arithmetic. Such knowledge is essential for every citizen living in a democratic country.

Adult Education is needed:

- a) To remove illiteracy- Adult education brings a new hope for the illiterate masses who failed to get education during their school years. About 50% of Indian citizens still live in the darkness

of ignorance and illiteracy. In this situation adult education is essential to remove illiteracy and ignorance.

b) To save adults from exploitation- Adult education is needed to educate adults so as to make them understand the rights and responsibilities provided by the constitution of free India. It will save them from exploitation and maltreatment.

c) To make a happy and joyful life- The programmes of adult education help the Indian masses to develop the habit of a joyful life by removing dullness and uninteresting environments.

d) To make the adults politically conscious- Political freedom is meaningless without economic, social, moral and spiritual freedom. The real political awakening depends on proper education. So adult education is needed for enabling the masses to be conscious in selecting the right candidate for the right place in a right way. It is essential to strengthen a democratic country.

e) To help the adults for cooperative living- The adult education programmes tries to remove classism, groupism, casteism etc. It helps for the unity of the nation by providing training in the cooperative living.

f) To bridge the gap between educated and uneducated- Adult education is needed to remove the widening gap between educated children and uneducated adults in a democratic country like India.

g) To continue education- As education is a life-long process we need adult education for those who want to refresh their knowledge once again after completing education from the adult education centres.

h) To ensure national development and national security- A country's economic and social development depends on education of the adult learners. Thus it helps in national development. Besides, national security also depends to a large extent on education of adult citizens.

i) To make democracy successful- Education of the adults is necessary for the very existence of democracy. In the words of J.B. Harold Laski, "Without educated voters democracy becomes monarchy". Lenin has rightly remarked, "Socialism cannot be successful without illiterate masses". Adult education is needed to remove casteism, communalism, provincialism, poverty and mass illiteracy.

j) To implement government schemes- Adult education is essential to implement the goal of Universalisation of elementary education, family welfare programmes, to control environmental degradation and to awaken appreciation of five-year plans.

k) To improve vocational efficiency- It is necessary to make every adult citizen of India to make them acquainted with modern technologies. This will increase vocational productivity.

l) To modernise the society- Adult education transforms the adults from blind faith and beliefs to develop rational thinking in them. Such changes are needed for rapid modernisation in socio-economic aspects.

**3. To know the problems of adult education-** There are several problems of adult education. These are:

a) Non-cooperation of adult masses- Adults belonging to rural areas are not enthusiastic about education. They show apathy to adult education programme and do not cooperate with adult education workers. Education is secondary importance to them. Moreover blind faith, beliefs

and ignorance, lack of motivation, lack of leisure and lack of peace of mind, lack of physical comfort and family burden are the reasons for non-cooperation of the adults.

b) Defective policy of adult education- The policy of adult education adopted in this country is vague and undefined. The programmes are not successful as it is meant only for rural people.

c) Problem of adult education workers- Most of the adult education workers lack professional and vocational training skills. They are not conversant with modern technologies and other equipments.

d) Lack of equipment- Most of the adult education centres lack the proper equipment such as textbooks, audio-visual aids, charts, models, workshop, libraries and reading rooms which adversely affect the progress of adult education.

e) Problem of social backwardness:- People in the most of the rural as well as urban areas still suffer from social backwardness. The social backwardness in the name of casteism, sex and location is the stumbling block in the way of promoting adult education. For e.g. scheduled caste people are not allowed to attend the classes with others.

f) Lack of suitable Literature: - Proper Literature is not available for neo-literates who want easy and interesting books for self study. Prof. K.G. Saiyidain says, "Adult education is greatly handicapped both at its literary stages and in the wider sense by paucity of suitable reading materials. There is an urgent need for producing a large number of booklets, folders, charts, journals, newspapers, wall posters and other illustrated material which will capture adult's interests."

g) Lack of vocational training- Adult education workers are not proficient in the vocation teaching the adults. As a result an illiterate farmer knows more of agriculture than the adult education worker himself. Such workers do not promote the progress of adult education. In fact, adult education held by teenaged and inexperienced teachers was one of the reasons for its failure in Punjab.

h) Lack of finance: - The finance invested by our government for adult education is quite inadequate. As a result many schemes of adult education have failed in our country. It will not create a positive attitude to open more and more adult education centres. Priority is not given to the adult education programme.

i) Lack of proper planning:- Proper planning is essential for the success of adult education programmes. The progress of adult education is not satisfactory due to the lack of proper planning.

j) Lack of proper curriculum: - Adult education programme lack systematic curriculum. While designing it, the needs, interests and capacities of adults are not taken into consideration. Hence, it becomes impossible to meet the educational needs of the adults and it does not attract them.

k) Problem of teaching methods: - Proper methods of teaching are essential for the success of adult education. But, in the prevailing adult education programme we do not have the help of the radio, the television, stories, diagrams, charts and maps to make the teaching-learning situation interesting and lively.

l) Problem of teachers: - Nowadays trained teachers are not available for imparting education to adults. Adult learners are often taught by primary school teachers who are incompetent.

m) Lack of proper administration: - Lack of efficient and proper administration is also an important reason for the failure of adult education in India. This is so because adult education is an additional duty of the education minister. Hence, adult education programme is implemented at different places in various manners.

**4. To know the solutions of the problems of adult education:** There are some solutions to the problems of adult education. These are:

- a) National campaign should be organized to make adult education more effective.
- b) Literacy programmes should be meaningful and related to the local needs and conditions and immediate needs of adults.
- c) Every educational institution should be required to run literacy classes regularly. All students of schools, colleges and universities should be required to teach adults as a part of the compulsory national service. Social service for 10 days for school students and 20 days for colleges and university students should be compulsory.
- d) The widest use of mass media (radio, TV) should be made available for providing education to the adults. Posters, charts, films, filmstrips, lost cost publications and newspaper can also help a lot in this regard.
- e) A well-organized and effectively functioning net-work of public libraries is necessary to provide good reading and educative material to the neo-literates.
- f) More community centres and voluntary organizations should be utilized for adult education.
- g) Literacy campaign among women in rural areas and in urban slums should be organized to spread awareness among them about their education.
- i) Correspondence courses can prove a useful vehicle for continuing adult education. Along with this extension lectures, seminars, discussion and debates may be organized on adult education. Experts may be invited for delivering lectures in these fields.
- j) Literacy classes may be opened either in the morning or in the evening in educational institutions, libraries, clubs or other social service organizations.
- k) Provision should be made up for adequate finance.
- l) Open universities need to be established, at least one in each district throughout the country.

The Ministry of Education of the Government of India has given the following suggestions for the success of Adult Education Programmes in India:

- 1) Primary schools should arrange classes of two hours each at least three or four times a week for the children of 13 or 14 years. It should be done apart from the regular teaching programme of these schools.
- 2) Teachers should be trained by the following programmes for imparting education to the 14-15 age groups.
- 3) Regular classes should be arranged for men and women over a five-month period.
- 4) The teacher should educate a group of people in his neighbourhood.
- 5) A home class movement must be initiated for the education of women. It can be made an integral part of the rural education programme.
- 6) Teacher training establishments should formulate and implement programmes of adult education in their respective communities.

7) Voluntary Organization should organize adult education schemes.

**5. To know about the policies on adult education.** The policies include:

The National Policy on Education (1968) laid emphasis on Adult Education Programmes to:

- 1) Promote proper working of democratic institutions.
- 2) Accelerate economic production.
- 3) Quicken the tempo of national development in all directions.
- 4) Make functionally literate of all employees in large commercial and industrial undertakings, both private and public.
- 5) Involve all teachers and students in the literacy campaign under the N.S.S.
- 6) Educate and train young farmers for self-employment.

The 28<sup>th</sup> All- India Adult Education Conference (1975) greatly emphasised non-formal approach in adult education, improvement of skills and productivity of urban workers, continuing education at all levels and more budgetary allocation.

National Policy Statement of Adult Education (1977)

The National Policy statement on Adult Education, “While determined efforts must be made to universalize elementary education up to the age of 14 years, educational facilities must be extended to adult population to remedy their educational deprivation and to enable them to develop their potentialities. Indeed, universalization of elementary education and adult literacy are mutually interdependent”.

According to the policy statement, the adult education programmes should be:

- 1) Illiteracy is a serious impediment to an individual’s growth and the country’s socio-economic progress.
- 2) That Education is not co-terminus with schooling but takes place in most work and life situations.
- 3) That learning, working, living is inseparable and each acquires meaning only when correlated with the others.
- 4) That the means by which people are involved in the process of development are at least as important as the ends and that the illiterate and the poor can rise to their own liberation through literacy, dialogue and action.

### **National Adult Education Programmes (NAEP)**

The National Adult Education Programme was launched on October 2, 1978. It ends at eradicating illiteracy among adults of the age-group 15-35. The objectives of the programme are:

- 1) Promotion of literacy skills of persons belonging to economically and socially deprived sections of the society.
- 2) Creation of awareness in helping them overcome their helplessness and to achieve self-reliance.
- 3) Raising functional capabilities in their occupation and skills of management to their own advantage as a group.

The government of India decided to launch a well planned programme of Adult Education in order to make people literate. Proper planning is essential both at the centre and the state

levels. The National Board of Adult Education has been established under the chairmanship of the Union Education Minister to periodically appraise the progress and implementation of NAEP and advise government on various matters. NAEP should have international cooperation with UNESCO and other international institutions to formulate and implement in the right direction.

## **CONCLUSION**

In a democratic country like India adult franchise is meaningless without adult education. That is why Gladstone has raised the slogan, "Educate your Masters". A programme of adult education and adult literacy should therefore take a front place in any programme for economic and social development. An exclusive emphasis should be laid on the development of a programme of free and compulsory education for all children till they reach the age of 14 years. The Directive Principles (Art.45) in this regard should be implemented in right earnest and effectively. The programme of free and compulsory education should continue with earnest effort. All teachers and educated men and women should be mobilized to combat illiteracy. The workers and teachers participating in adult education programmes should have sufficient training in teaching methodology and knowledge of adult psychology. Besides, government and non-government agencies public involvement, support and enthusiasm are vital to the success of literacy programme.

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