

**CHAPTER I**  
**INTRODUCTION**

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

India, the greatest democracy of the world is a land of great variety in terrain, race, language, religion and culture. This diversity is fundamental to the unity of the people based on common ideals and traditions that is shared over several countries. A very large country, the seventh largest in the world, India sprawls about 3,219 Km. from the icy heights of the Himalayas in north to the tip of Kanyakumari (Cape Comorin), washed by the waves of the Indian ocean in south It spreads 2,977 Km from east to west. The country's 5,689 km. of coastline, 15,168 Km. of area encompasses geographical conditions, climate, scenery, and people as diverse as those in Europe or America. India ranks second in the world with respect to population. According to the 2001 Census, population of India is 102,70,15,247 (Female - 49,57,38,169 and Male - 53,12,77,078). The density of population is 324 per square kilometer. (Census, 2001)

India, one of the oldest civilisation renowned for its deeply rooted culture in a pluralistic ethos of an age-old history providing creative expressions of the scholars, is still a developing country and has already accepted democratic values after independence for the educational, social, economic, and scientific development of the nation. Planned efforts that are highly essential are being made as care must be taken of all its sections in the Indian Society.

Efficiency of a democratic government depends on its educated citizens as because education brings individual and social maturity. The acculturating role of education brings a change in human behaviour, and refines sensitivities and perceptions that contribute towards national cohesion, a scientific temper and independence of mind and spirit. Education has to cater to the goals of socialism, secularism and democracy that are enshrined in our Constitution.

Education serves as an instrument of social change, and is a unique investment in the present and the future as it develops man-power for different levels of economy. "Education is not a profit-making, business, but a costly one; nay, even the best attainments of it are always unprofitable, in any terms of coin. No nation ever made its manufactures by its practical knowledge, yes; but its noble scholarship, its noble philosophy and its noble art, are always to be bought as a treasure, not sold for a livelihood"(Ruskin, 1926)

Education is also the substratum on which development flourishes, and provides guarantee of the principle of national self-reliance and self-efforts that aims at elimination of poverty and creation of conditions for active and greater political, economic and social participation of the poor, the down-trodden and the under-privileged.

If India is to progress, our core task lies in developing the under-developed and the downtrodden, remote, tribal and rural areas and urban slums into effective unit of modern economy, and the integrated development of women, especially the neglected and the backward women of the society. Integrated development attempts to solve problems in a comprehensive manner covering every aspect of life, like production, health and nutrition, co-operation, communication, skilled and trained manpower, because "knowledge, information, and skills are increasingly being regarded as the major weapons in the crusade for supremacy on the Economic Front". (Rajput, 1998)

The University Education Commission (1948) has rightly remarked: "There cannot be an educated people without educated women. If general education had to be limited to men or to women, that opportunity should be given to women for then it would definitely be passed onto the next generation." Because, women education is considered to be more important than men and the key to modernisation and economic development of the society.

## 1.1 PROVISION FOR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN

Educational Development of a nation is the key to its prosperity and welfare. It has been proved in many countries that no investment is likely to yield greater returns than investment in human resources, of which the most important is education. Strictly speaking, it is the foundation on which the edifice of a nation is erected.

Realising the essence of educational development among women as one of the important indicator of national development, provisions have been made accordingly at different points of time in history throughout the globe.

### 1.1.1 PROVISION ABROAD

The role of American and British Women's Right Movement during 1820's is remarkable with regards to enhance and develop educational status of women all over the world.

Till about 1825 education of women in America as well as in England was a thing of "Shreds and Patches". The conception of the women's rights movement is often traced to the first Women's Rights Convention held in Seneca Falls, New York in 1848. However, the origin of the American Women's movement can be traced to the involvement of middle-class women in the moral reform, educational development, temperance, and abolition movements between 1820-1850.

These age-long ideas also dominated minds of the Japanese in the days of feudalism under the Tokugawa regime. Very few women in Japan were allowed to go to Terakoya to receive the elementary knowledge of reading and writing. This condition continued till the early seventies of the last century after which they abandoned the feudalistic idea of considering women as inferior by nature to men (Black and Cottrell, 1981). But during the past two decades due to many developments and efforts to involve women in Education, women's educational level has improved substantially in higher education (Hara, 1984).

In Phillipine, opportunism plays an important role in the policies of Philipino Government towards women's education and the development of their families (Beers, 1994). Bautists (1994) has mentioned the causes of non-schooling of Philipine girls in her article "Philipina Girl" that 'the interaction between political, educational, and economic policies that were not supportive of the majority of Philipino families who live in poverty combined with deeply entrenched social and cultural factors complicate the situation of Philipina girls, who already live a difficult and burdened life.' She also points to the parents and the society at large as having an ambivalent attitude towards childhood and girlhood (Beers, 1994).

Despite non-uniformity in status among the Philipino women, they have improved by having taken advantage of educational opportunities which the law and the society have made available to them. As a result they have been able to raise their literacy rate, as high as primitive and medieval Christianity enlarged 90 per cent women education after the renaissance. The objectives and method of women education were also changed. While renaissance changed the curriculum of education, the reformation changed its nature for women's development. A women's movement also developed in Britain about the same time as that of American Women's movement by the middle-class women. This movement was directed towards employment, charity, moral, educational, legal (electoral) reform between 1840 and 1870 (Everett, 1981). Prior to this women's movement Martin Luther was the first to advocate Universal Compulsory Education for both the sexes during the fifteen century, while John Khox advocated the same thing in Scotland at the end of fifteen century. Before the beginning of the Seventh Century there was not a single separate school in England for girls. A very few convents admitted girls here and there. The girls were not admitted either to the elementary school or to the grammar school. People showed much astonishment when Red Maid's school was started at Bristol in 1627. Though Luther had advocated Universal Elementary Education long back in 1500, it was only after passing of the Education Act of 1870 that universal education for both the sexes specially girls was enforced in England which is accredited to the sincere efforts of the Women's Movement in Britain.

In the continent of Europe, the stage of women education was still worse. The ideal of housewifeliness and submission to the male or the husband was very much encrusted in the minds of the Germans to make it easy for them to provide openings for education of their women. Rousseau's teaching in France retarded progress and it was only after 1848 as an impact of French Revolution that opportunities were given to women in Europe for their educational development. (Evertt, 1981)

Kenya formed no exception to this rule. Gender-role and status of the women, division of labour within the home, the home environment itself as well as the physical and psychological security of a girl child within a school environment are other factors which act as depressants to girls, education. In spite of a considerable decline in disparity and socio-cultural constraints of the women, education in Kenya has become a National Concern (Munyakho, 1994). As a result a considerable decline in the disparity in the status of boys and girls could be seen, and the country has almost achieved a 50-50 enrollment rate among girls and boys in primary education and in over all educational attainment.

The status of women in Nigeria is almost same as the women of Kenya. The literacy rate among adult women is still over 50 per cent in Nigeria. Although there are a number of constraints faced by the Women of Nigeria with regards to their educational development, their government is concerned about their development by making provisions in the educational programmes like (i) basic education programme supporting the family (ii) expansion of initial education services for the educated women, and (iii) existence of three educational models side by side traditional, formal and religious for the masses through education department. As a result, there has been a conspicuous development in women in the field of education.

In Bangladesh, although the women are eligible to vote as well as to contest and hold office in any publicly elected body, the voting rights are seldom exercised properly by the women due to their low level of literacy, deficient political awareness, and social restrictions. The social motivation for participation of girls in education is extremely poor (Rao, 2000), which has become a major constraint for the government to get success in any of the development program in Bangladesh. Despite social non-

cooperation to the government, there was an increase in the number of female teachers through out the education system and increase in the literacy rate from 17% in 1971 to 60% in 2000. This was possible because of the provisions made for the education of women like (i) Infant feeding programme, (ii) Special attention to marginalized women (iii) Mass adult literacy programme (iv) Programme of integral development for rural women (v) School attraction programme and (vi) Policy of keeping 10% of the job reserved for women (Rao, 2000).

The educational development among women in China is much better than many of the Asian and even European countries of the world. They have a high level of literacy rate i.e. more than 90% among the women. The educational attainment of Chinese women has helped them towards the rapid decline of fertility in China. The Chinese government and various organisations have made effective networking for the education of women in China viz., (i) Development of personal education networking; (ii) Special recruitment programmes for rural girls to work as teachers; (iii) Building of housing for young teachers (women) in rural areas, (iv) Providing high level of schooling to the girls in the whole country, despite a 70% approximate rural population.

### 1.1.2 PROVISION IN INDIA

#### 1.1.2.1 Before Independence

Educational development of women is not a new concept in India. India had a rich tradition of women education during Vedic Period and Buddhist epoch. The parents and well wishers of the Vedic and Buddhist women took special care to provide facilities for their spiritual progress and intellectual development in the form of moral and religious education. During Vedic period there were provisions to become two types of women students, (i) Brahmavadinis: These were life long students of theology, and (ii) Sadyodvahas: Those who studied upto the age of 16 or 18 years and learnt Vedic hymns by heart. There was provision for women even to become specialists in theological work and were considered Kasa Kritshi (Srivastava, 2000). There was provision for their higher education including Vedic studies in Gurukulas, which was regarded as a necessary accomplishment for being well placed in life.

Provisions were also made for Vedic discourses open equally to men and women and many ladies distinguished themselves not only as Vedic scholars but also as great philosopher, debaters and teachers.

It may, therefore, be stated that the overall status of women in the Vedic ages was much higher than in any other ancient society that we know today viz. those of Greece and Rome.

In the Buddhist epoch women enjoyed greater freedom to develop their intellect. In spite of caste and social status, their education was properly taken care of and they were given much scope for religious discussion before the gathering. Further, widowhood of women was not considered inauspicious, and they were allowed everywhere even in the learning centers. But in the later period (Brahmanic Period and Puranic Age) educational as well as social status of women was degraded and lots of restrictions came to be imposed on them by the Brahmins and the writers of the Puranas in the name of Pervasive Brahmanic Code and conspiracy.

Since Brahmins were regarded as Guru (teacher) and were the most powerful in those days, the common people especially from the power middle strata of the society didn't dare to go against them in taking initiation or making efforts for the education of the girls in a formal setting.

During the medieval period this trend with regard to the educational development of women continued, and no specific efforts were made by the people or even by the parents of the girls. Girls were only given the informal household training from the near and dear.

During the period of Mughal rule, the position of women deteriorated further and no identical efforts were made for the education of women.

Gradually, the rights of women (educational and social) were taken away from them. Such great women of Vedic and Buddhist periods have gone into legends, mythology and history that even today they are heard in the beautiful talk songs of the

women labourers in the village, grinding corn or working in the field at harvest time or drawing water at the common well. They are also recognised as “Shakti” in many places. These famous women would be found here and there at different points of time in history. On the contrary, for the women who have always made a very significant contribution to their societies in various ways, a particular conspiracy prevented their contribution from receiving their due recognition. The reason is that, society’s legitimating myths, creation of written historical records, and the production of authoritative self-knowledge have all been enterprised and controlled by the male.

Today in Modern India the birth of a girl is unwelcome as she is considered to be an economic burden. As a result, female infanticide, which was very common in Rajasthan and in many other parts of India, is still continuing as a practice.

In many tradition-ridden Indian Society, women is treated as Dasi (slave girl) or “Paon Ki Juti” (Shoe). Till date her position has been no better than a pair of shoes which may be laid aside, discarded or changed at the sweet will of the master. This inferior status of women is established right at the birth. From the very childhood she is taught to remain a slave to the man, - father, brother or the husband, supposedly to be her protector. The confusion created in her life brought her to the crossroads where the proverbial “Shakti” appears to be helpless and needs support of others to keep her-self going. “This help has come now through the parliamentary legislation approving the 20- point programme proposed in 1986 and finally launched on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1987” (Ashok Kumar, 1993).

Indian women in general, suffer on numerous counts due to gender bias and have to face a high degree of social insecurity. By and large, their occupational skills are low except in rare cases, where matrilineal system is prevalent. They are seldom involved in decision-making. “Strong socio-cultural taboos, practices of value systems, illiteracy and privation of poverty status of women and discrimination against girls hinder to their progress” (Vaidyanathan, 1996).

Therefore, till the beginning of the present century, women’s education in India was not countenanced with much favour. The progress of other nations, especially

western countries and the involvement of women in freedom movement of India has acted as an eye-opener in India during last part of nineteenth century. As a consequence, various provincial government and the native states have passed legislations enforcing universal elementary education both for boys and girls, and have also made provisions for higher studies of women in spite of public censure and reproach.

Although there was effect of Western Countries on educational development of Indian People during 19th Century, the progress of women education was very slow for several reasons. Indigenous schools for girls have ceased to function. The initiative taken by Christian missionaries, made intelligent later by British Government, saw a gradual growth of educational institutions promoting educational development of women. There were three agencies through which the Christian Missionaries worked for promoting women education, viz. (i) Girls Day Schools (ii) Orphanages and Boarding establishments, and (iii) Domestic teaching of women in Middle and Higher-class families popularly termed as "Zenana teaching".

During 1819-20, Devid Hare, a Christian missionary took special interest in establishing a Girls School in Calcutta. Later on people especially of missionary mind took initiative in starting girl schools. In the close of 1850's the various missionary efforts for female education in whole India embraced 354 days schools with 11,549 girls; boarding schools with 2346 girls, taught mostly in vernacular languages in Bengal ( N.W. Provinces, Madras Presidency, Bombay Presidency and Ceylon), (Srivantava, 2000).

In 1954, the Education Dispatch (Wood Dispatch approved the order of Lord Dalhousie) was given to the council for the development of female education and thus, the responsibilities of education was taken up by the Government directly. Also, there was a positive increase of government's expenditure on women's education.

In the year 1854 there were 2,875 schools for the education of men all over India, with 1,06,040 pupils, but at the same time girls' schools numbered only 65 with an enrollment of about 3,500 pupils (Srivastava, 2000) following the Wood Educational

Dispatch of 1854. Government offered in 1857, small annual rewards to those primary teachers who could form girls classes in their schools. But the progress of this scheme was slow and even in 1864-65 the government schools contained only 639 girls. In that year, the proceeds of the local funds also became available and it was possible to start more girl schools in all the presidencies. In 1870-71, there were as many as 218 girls schools (against 23 in 1865-65) with 9190 pupils and the government expenditure on the education of women which was Rs.341 in 1864-65 increased to Rs.39,337 in 1870-71.

The Indian social reformers who in their individual capacities encouraged women's education picked up the work begun and steps taken by the Christian missionaries. Reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, played important roles by lending support to the opening of girls' schools. Through the efforts and activities of the leaders of Brahma Samaj, Ved Samaj, Arya Samaj, Khalsa Diwan, Dev Samaj, Ram Krishna Mission, and other organisations a number of girl's schools were established. Iswar Chandra Vidya Sagar took up the cause of women education by establishing 36 schools for girls (Srivastave, 2000). Government in British India too gave its cordial support to the cause of women education.

The period 1857-1921 also intensified the introduction of special courses in Primary schools for girls. The prevailing opinion in the 19th century was to have an absolutely separate system of education for girls with separate schools, separate syllabus and even separate textbooks, not to speak of women teachers and women inspectors. Separate Schools for and women teachers had already become a reality by 1875. The Principle of appointing women inspecting officers was also recognised. Need for separate courses and textbook for girls was also felt during 1877-78, but they were introduced only as late as 1906.

During the period 1857-1921, some more significant efforts were made by the communities like Europeans, Anglo-Indians, Indian Christians and Parsis and even the government for establishment of girl's high schools, training colleges for women primary school teachers, and colleges for women. As a result, high school for Indian girls in Poona was established in 1884 and the expansion of the secondary education of girls was followed by their entry into colleges.

An important step was taken for the development of medical education on of women with the establishment of the Countess of Lady Dufferin Fund in 1885. The main objective of this fund was to establish hospital, maternity homes for women, to train women as nurses and midwives, to give scholarships to such women who desired professional education in medicine, and to promote child welfare and anti-natal care etc. A large amount was collected and it was utilised to give scholarship to women undergoing some type of education in medicine (Srivastava, 2000).

By the year 1901-1902 there were 76 women in medical colleges and 166 woman candidates in medical schools as students. (Nayar, 1997) The period between the appointment of University Commissions in 1902 and the transfer of education to Indian control (introduction to the System of Dyarchy) in 1921 witnessed the sincere efforts of government and other organisations for the progress of women education due to public awakening. With the encouragement and inspiration of Mrs. Annie Besant, and the members of Women's Organisations for the first time in Indian history in 1917 made a clear demand before the Secretary for state for women's struggle and asked for adequate educational facilities. Since that time there has been, practically speaking a unanimity between all sections of public opinions in Indian Political Life that women should be given their due share in all walks of life. Establishment of S.N.D.T. Indian Women's University in Bombay by D.K. Karve in 1916 is another remarkable effort for the educational development of women of this period. As a result by 1921-22 the numbers of colleges for women from only 02 in 1891-92 increased to 15 and similarly the number of women scholars increased from 45 in 1891-92 to 1263 in 1921-22 (Swrivastava, 2000). The number of high schools and primary schools for girls were also increased to 675 and 21,956 respectively (Nayar, 1997).

The efforts of Mahatma Gandhi to organise night schools and literacy classes for illiterate adults (men and women) during 1920's, the phenomenal awakening of Indian womanhood, introduction of Provincial Autonomy in 1937, and the mass mobilisation for freedom struggle not only inducted women into political process but made them came into their own as a constituency with the birth of women's Indian Association on May, 1917 and All India Women's Conference in 1924. Later on, Mass

Literacy Programmes were launched in 1937-38 in many provinces like Assam, Bengal, Bihar, Bombay and Punjab. Provisions were also made for the education of women in all the literacy programmes.

The early demand for compulsory Universal Primary Education was sort down in 1911, but re-appeared more strongly in the Nai-Talim (Basic Education). The report on post-war Educational Development (1940) was the last important educational document before the independence struck as new note by observing that it was no longer necessary to treat the education of women as a special problem requiring special measures for its advancement. It assumed that all education which was good enough for boys would be equally beneficial to girls (Report of NCWE, 1959).

With the advent of Independence of our country in 1947, a new era has begun for educational development of women. Though the efforts were rooted from pre-independence period it concretised after independence through various plans and programmes, especially the Five-Years plan. At the time of Independence there were 59 arts and science colleges for women, 2,370 Secondary Schools and 81,479 Primary Schools for girls. There were also 4,288 institutions for professional, technical and special education for women. This period shows an increase in the trend towards co-education. From this time education was no longer confined to only schooling or literacy, health, handicraft, along with reading, writing and numeracy.

### **Provision in Orissa**

The Orissian tale of women educational development of women is not much different from that of other part in the country. In ancient times, education was imparted through religious teachings by Priests and Saints and education was pursued not for its own sake, but as a part of religion; and, the priests and saints tried, mostly, to impart moral and social education to both male and female. Education was imparted orally and literacy was not considered as so much an important factor of education. In exceptional cases i.e. for the girls and women of royal families, special cares were taken to provide education in specific areas as like philosophy, religion and administration

etc. There was also impact of Vedic culture and Buddhist education on the people (both Men and Women) in Orissa.

It is evident from the history of Orissa that there was provision for pursuing religious education among the people of all sectors (including women) in an organised way on Buddhist philosophy. Lakshmikara, the sister of king Indrabhuti of Sambal State (Modern name is Sambalpur), and the daughter-in-law of Jalendra, the king of Lanka Puri (modern name Subarnapur district), was a famous luminary of Tantrik Buddhism during 8th Century A.D. She is also revealed as one of the 84 Siddhas and composer of Buddhist literature "Advaya Siddha". She was the initiator of "Sahajayan" Dharma which came out as a reaction against strict and artificial principles of sex and human desires of "Bajrayan" wing of Buddhism, and encourages to lay great emphasis on physical satisfaction (Sahu, 1958). The Principles of Sahajayan, and the activities of Lakshmikara have influenced a lot to the people of Western Orissa in changing their attitude towards life and it helps in giving impetus to the cause of women freedom and development especially in Western part of Orissa.

During the medieval period, when Maths, Ashrams, Pathshalas, Makhtabs and Madrassas came into existence, some provisions were made for the education of the people. But no specific provisions or efforts were made to educate the girls and women of the common strata.

Overall, women of Orissa were illiterate. Leaving aside the women of the Royal Zamindar class and the rich section of the society who though were given education of an extremely elementary and informal kind at home, the other remain totally illiterate. Although there were schools in the villages and towns, women were not allowed to go to schools owing to customs such as Purdah and child marriage. Women of upper strata of the society were informally taught the art of house decoration, about the observance of religious rituals, festivals and the like. A medieval outlook then prevalent in the Oriya society assigned only domestic duties to the women. In short, women all most all of them, were forced to remain illiterate and ignorant.

At the turn of the 19th century, the earlier opposition to women's education fizzled out. However, a number of obstacles remained in the way of women's education and their attaining better status. Government laws or even the personal efforts of social reformers like Fakirmohan Senapati, Madhusudan Rao, Pyari Mohan Acharya, Gourishankar Acharya, Gopalbandhu Das, Madhusudan Das, Radhanath Ray etc. are rendered ineffective by the painfully slow process of change in traditions during the first part of 19th century. The result of such social and traditional prejudices and beliefs at the turn of the century in Orissa was that only upper-middle-class women of the elitist society had some sort of schooling.

Owing to the noble deeds of these pioneers, quite a few lady social workers, writers and social reformers came out of the confines of their homes, when Purdah was prevalent, to set an example to the women folk that education was a stepping stone for their upliftment (Mohanty and Nayak, 1998). Some of the pioneers in the field were Smt. Reba Ray, Smt. Sailabala Das, Smt. Rama Devi, Smt. Malati Choudhary etc. They spearheaded the women's education movement in Orissa. This movement opened the door to educational development of women thereafter.

In 1942, the Utkal University was established. A special provision was made for women to take the matriculation final examination without appearing at the text examination at school, which was a screening test for promotion. This system encouraged a lot many women to take the matriculation examination privately. Further, after independence in 1947, the National Government as per the constitutional provisions took special measures for the education of women. As a result, several women availed the opportunity to get educated. Later on adult education and mass literacy programme were also introduced for the educational development of the illiterate adults (both male and female) in 1949 by setting up a special wing in the State Directorate of Education to organise adult literacy programme. The programme got momentum during 1950 when the social education programme was launched at the initiation of the then national government. During 1952 three urban and rural development projects were allocated to Orissa. Two voluntary organisations namely Ford Foundation and American Friends Society came forward for the educational development of people through social education. Three compact areas namely Bhadrak,

Bhanjanagar and Dharamgarh were selected by the government for the operation of the three projects, while the two voluntary organisations selected Kendrapara and Barpali respectively as field of activity. The Education Department, Government of Orissa, selected three more areas such as Baripada, Hindol, and Nayagarh to concentrate their activities to make the people literate.

The need for educated women was very much felt at the time of implementation of the First Five-Year Plan in 1951. Hence, educational development of women became an important agenda in national level through Five- Year Plans and provisions were also made accordingly.

#### **1.1.2.2 After Independence at National Level**

After Independence, the conceptual frameworks and concerns about women's education have emerged from other sources. The work of the committees and commissions headed by eminent persons have guided actions and given a thrust to education as a part of socio-economic development. Since then, educational development of women has become an area of major policy concern and is seen as an element seminal to national development. In the developmental efforts, Government of India has laid stress on rapid speed of education among women through reservation of seats for women students in different educational institutions, and opening of educational institutions mainly of residential types at different levels. The Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) in line with Sergeant Report did not include a separate chapter on women education as it felt that all the prestige of our social evolution there is no special justification for dealing with women's education separately. Every type of education, open to men should also be open to women' (Siddiqui, 1993). Provision of free tuition for girls in general education was also made. Special attentions was given to the ST, SC and socially backward centre people (both male and female) by providing stipend at Pre-secondary Stage, Post- metric scholarship etc. Different types of educational institutions like Girls' school (both residential and non-residential type), Women's college, women's poly-technic, etc., have been opened for providing professional educational facilities to girls of both general and other reserved categories. The details of provision made and steps taken in the field of

educational development of the girls during different plans, committees and commissions are presented below:

### **Indian Constitution**

Government has passed the legislatures for women's education for elevating their legal and social status. The constitution of India, in the year 1950, made provision for women with a set of fundamental rights whereby they enjoy equal opportunity relating to employment (Article-16(1)), free and compulsory education up to the age of 14 years (Article -45), equal rights for education for women (Article - 29(2)), and education and other developmental activities for weaker section of the society like ST, SC and others (including women) in (Article 46 and 275).

### **Five-Year Plans**

Successive first year Plans have consistently emphasised the acceleration of women's education, and steps were taken accordingly with a number of special programmes for the development of both girls and adult women like community development projects, Welfare Extension project, Mahila Mandals, Women's organisations and Functional Literacy for Adult Women as a part of the strategy for the educational development of women.

**The First Five-Year (1951-56)** provided due importance to women's education, and stated that the general purpose and objective of women's education cannot of course, be different from the purpose and objectives of men's education. There are, however, vital differences in the way in which this purpose has to be realised. Girls are forced to suspend their studies in the early teens due to variety of reasons. Realising the magnitude of the problems of girls, education provisions were made to facilitate resumption of studies by women at a time when they have leisure.

**The Second Five-Year Plan (1956-61)** describes the importance of girls' education under its head "Secondary Education (Girls Education)." At the secondary stage, the education of girls lags seriously behind. During this period the Central

Welfare Board was setup to supervise the developmental and welfare activities in the country. Further, the central Board of Workers Education was set up for organising Trade Union Oriental Education to both male and female workers.

The National Committee of Women's Education was set up in 1959 under the Chairmanship of Durgabhai Deshmukh during the period of Second Five-year Plan to examine the problems of women education very comprehensively. This committee took a very forward-looking stance by suggesting among others, home science as a compulsory subject both for boys and girls for class VI, VII and VIII. As a result of the recommendation of this committee, State Councils for Education of Girls have been setup in the states and the Union Territories.

**During the Third Five-Year Plan (1961-66)** efforts were made to start a mass movement for literacy in the name of Gram Shikshan Mohim in 1961. It was started by several state government, functionaries, voluntary organisations in different parts of the country. This mass movement made a deep impact on the general mass, especially on the women to eradicate illiteracy and develop education (Siddiqui, 1989).

In the same period, Smt. Hansa Mehta Committee on Differentiation of curricula for Boys and Girls (National Council for Women's Education) was set up in 1961 to examine comprehensively the problem of curricula for girls at all stages of education. The committee observes: "In the ultimate democratic and socialistic pattern of society, education will be related to individual capacities, aptitude and interests which are not related to sex. There would therefore, be no need in such a society to differentiate curricula on the basis of sex." (Biswas & Agrawal, 1971).

In 1963, the Bhaktavatsalam Committee was appointed to look into the causes of lack of public support particularly in rural areas for girls Education and to enlist public co-operation. This committee recommended that the state should create public opinion in favour of girls education, and direct co-operation of the public should be encouraged in this matter i.e. women education (Siddiqui, 1993).

The Education Commission (1964-66) headed by Dr. D.S. Kothari made valuable recommendation regarding the status of Indian Women and their education. The national Commission for women (1998) also supported for equal educational opportunities of women in all fields of education. The commission observed: "In the modern world the role of women goes much beyond the home and the bringing up of children. She is now adopting a career of her own and sharing equally with her male counterpart the responsibility for the development of society in all its aspects."

The recommendations of Kothari Commission formed the basis for the first national Policy on Education, 1968. The resolutions on the national Policy on Education also laid special emphasis on Women Education. The Policy stated: "The education of girls should receive special emphasis and funds required for its advancement particularly for the implementation of its special programmes should be provided on a priority basis. The funds of girls education and its special programmes should be earmarked so that there is no possibility of their being diverted into other uses" (NPE, 1968).

After independence, there has been a very wide gap between the avowed goal of equality to access to education and its realisation. Though education has been considered crucial for development, the empirical reality is not very encouraging (Desai, 1987), for which not only the recommendations of the National Policy on Women Education (1968), but also the other committees and commissions appointed for the purpose since independence, have remained un-implemented or not fully implemented.

**During the Fourth Five-year Plan (1969-74)** a depressing picture of women's development was found in the report of 1971 Census. In 1971 Census Report, there was observed: (i) a constant decline of sex ratio and work participation rates of women, (ii) higher mobility and mortality (iii) higher unemployment and (iv) lower literacy and educational participation among them. Based on the observation of 1971 census, a report was submitted by the Committee on Status of Women in India (CSWI) entitled "Towards Equality" in 1974, (GOI, 1974) in preparation for the International Women's Conference at Mexico, 1975. The report highlighted for the first time the

shocking state of affairs vis-a-vis the position of women at all levels and in all spheres in the country (Halder, 1997).

The report of CSWI stated that in 1971, about 68% of the total number of women in the age group of 15-25 years and nearly 87% in the age group 25 years and above were illiterate (Pandey, 1987). As a result, all national and international networks of women activists and scholars, the national government and the international organisations began viewing women's education and development as integral to human growth and development during this period (Nayar, 1997).

**During the Fifth Five-Year Plan Period (1975-80)** the central and state governments have taken a number of steps to stimulate the education of girls and women which includes separate cells in the state "Directorate of Education" to look after the programmes of girl education, establishment of Polytechnics for girls, construction of staff quarters for women teachers in rural areas, and girls hostels, introduction of condensed educational courses, assistance to voluntary educational organisations working in the field of women's education, and holding of seminars in different states to discuss problems and programmes of girls education.

Further, the National Education Policy (1979) which was set up during the plan period also emphasised that women education is of top most requirement and women instructors should be appointed for implementation of such programmes of family planning, health and nutrition, child and mother care etc.

**During the Sixth Five-Year Plan (1980-85)**, for the first time in the history of planning in India, provision was made to open a separate chapter on Women and Development. Provisions were also made on three important sectors for Indian Women viz., Education, Employment and Health. Sincere efforts were also made through special drives for higher enrollment and retention for girls under the programme of UEE. As a result, the enrollment of girls increased from 272.78 lakhs (64.9 per cent) in 1979-80 to 301.58 lakhs (72.4 per cent) in 1982-83 in class I-V. The target for 1983-84 was 319.60 lakhs (76.3 per cent). Similarly for class VI-VIII the enrollment of girls

improved from 61.53 lakhs (26.0 per cent) in 1979-80 to 73.83 lakhs (31.0 per cent) in 1982-83. The target for 1983-84 was 87.41 lakhs (35.8 per cent).

Further, financial assistance to ST, SC and OBC students (both male and female), scholarships for meritorious students and cash reward for teachers of schools showing outstanding results in the school certificate examinations were provided. Special coaching to SC and ST girls student in order to enable them to take the entrance examination for admission to medical and engineering colleges, book-bank in technical institutions for the benefit of SC/ST students (both male and female), pre-examination coaching for different competitive services including I.A.S. and other competitive examination like, Bank Services etc. were organised.

**The Seventh Five-Year Plan (1985-90)** period made serious efforts on 100 per cent coverage of girls' education up to the age of 14 years. Modifications were made of educational content of adult education programme to incorporate a new value system regarding the role of women, open learning system including correspondence course for women, Promotion of technical and vocational education. Special provision of additional facilities for women of weaker section under the "Development of Backward Caste", Provision of scholarship for female participants in games and sports, priority for women in teacher's training programme etc. were also made to increase the availability of trained women teachers.

During this period, the National Policy on Education, 1986 (NPE, 86) was made as a landmark in the mandate of bringing about women's equality and empowerment through revised curricula, re orientation of educational personnel and making women's studies the drive arm for generating, studying and supporting action. On education for women's equality the policy states: "Education for equality has been incorporated, whose preamble reads, ' new policy will lay special emphasis on the removal of disparities and to equalise educational opportunity, by attending to the specific needs of those who have been denied so far (NPE, 1986).'" POA, 1990, in the context of women's education made various recommendations with regard to the following:

The Review Committee on National Policy on Education, 1986, and its Programme of Action: (a) Access to education and quality of learning, (b) Content of Education and gender bias, (c) Vocational Education (d) Training of teachers and other educational personnel (e) Research and development of women studies (f) Representation of women in the educational hierarchy (g) Empowerment of women (h) Adult Education (I) Resources, and (j) management.

The NPE (1986) and its revised Programme of Action (POA, 1991) adopted by the Government of India gives education the mandate to become an effective tool of women's equality and empowerment. The parameters of which are:

- Enhancing the self-esteem and self-confidence of women,
- Building a positive image of women by recognising their contribution to the society, policy and the economy, and developing ability to think critically,
- Fostering decision-making and action through collective processes,
- Enabling women to make informed choices in area like education, employment and health (especially reproductive health),
- Ensuring equal participation in development process, and providing information, knowledge and skill for economic independence.
- Enhancing access to legal literacy and information relating to their right sand entitlement in society with a view to enhancing their participation on an equal footing in all areas. (Revised POA, 1991 P.2).

**During the Eighth Five-year Plan (1992-97) period,** emphasis was reiterated mainly on human development. Woman as a human being was also considered as the core of all development efforts like men (Siddiqui, 1993). A number of Literacy programmes were launched in the districts or regions which are educationally backward or have high concentration of ST and SC population or have low female literacy. Cent per cent literacy in the age group 15-35 years was envisaged as target of this plan. Based on the report and recommendations of CABE committee on NPE-1992 and with a view to bring out an improvement in the access to women education, various government and non-government organisations, departments, voluntary organisations, societies etc. were involved in those activities and educational endeavour. The

participation of the women in different educational programmes were also closely monitored, supervised and taken care off.

### **Non-Formal Education (NFE)**

Efforts were also sincerely made on provision of special NFE centres for girls who are unable to attend female schools due to socio-economic or personal problems. Although focus of the NFE scheme is for the 10 backward states it also covers urban slums, hilly, tribal, and desert areas. The NFE system is being extended to meet the needs particularly of the girls. NFE centres running exclusively for girls are getting 90% assistance from the central government (Agrawal, 1999). Mention may be made here that in the mid term appraisal of Ninth Five-Year Plan importance has been given to NFE for the educational development of dropouts, working children and girl (MHRD, GOI, 2000). Out of 3 lakhs currently running NFE Centres (Catching about 75 lakhs children) about 1.18 lakhs centres are exclusively for girls. (India,2000, GOI).

Further, under this plan highest priority was given to universalisation of Elementary Education and more importance was given to the education of girls. The suggestions were given by NPE, 1986 and its programme of Action, 1992. The National Commission on Self-employed women in informal Sector (1987-88) was to provide special facilities like provision of shifts in schools for girls at suitable times, horourarium for women helper for accompanying the children from house, free uniform, mid-day meals and free text-books, etc., and for the need based content in the primer women have to be taken care off. The suggestion for mid-day meal has been properly taken care off by the Govt. of India for record states.

It is also important to mention here that under the scheme of operation Black-Board, of the 1.47 lakhs teachers appointed, 47 per cent i.e. 69,090 were women. In future at least half of the teachers appointed are expected to be women.

**Under the Ninth Five-year Plan (1997-2002)** the thrust area of educational development is UEE and literacy programme for all. Greater importance in the plan is further given for the upliftment of the educational status of women through its various

educational endeavours like condensed courses of education and vocational training, continuing education, Non-Formal and Alternative Education, Promotion of Primary Education through 100% enrollment etc.

### **District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)**

It focuses on ~~an~~ improving girls' access to and participation in school. The programme is now operational in 52 districts spread over eleven states : Assam, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh and Orissa. It is proposed to cover another 61 districts by the end of the 8th plan. The attempt is to build in an equity focus from early formal schooling. DPEP district focus is a conscious attempt to decentralise the planning process as a strategy to universalise elementary education. Educationally backward districts that have a female literacy rate below the national average have been selected for the programme. "As DPEP has a well defined gender focus which ensures that all interventions and activities are gender aware, this effort to integrate a gender perspective begins with the planning process" (Agrawal,1999).

**Navodaya Vidyalaya:** At the end of the spectrum are the Navodaya Vidyalayas, Centres for Excellence, where at least one third of the students would be girls. In both the Kendriya Vidyalaya and Navodaya Vidyalayas education for girls is made free up to Std. XII.

**Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA):** Gaining from the experiences of the scheme of operation Black Board, non-formal Education, national Programme of nutritional support to Primary Education, and DPEP, and to looking toward to accomplish the target of UEE, the Govt. has launched Sarva-Shiksha Abhiyan - a holistic and convergent approach towards achieving UEE through a time bound-integrated approach in close collaboration with the state governments. It is a collective progress of nation, a non-violent war against inequalities based on gender, religion and ethnicity, a process of human enrichment that empower and transform people and a goal-directed intensive action as well as high level commitment for Universalisation of Elementary Education. (MHRD, 2000).

SSA was evolved as a national resolution in 1998 in the Education Minister's Conference, and a national Committee of Education Ministers' was set up under the Chairmanship of Minister of HRD to examine the modalities of adopting holistic and convergent approach to achieve UEE in mission mode.

The National Committee submitted the report in 1999 with a vision to provide a relent elementary education of satisfactory quality for all by 2010 bridging social and gender gaps. The main characteristics of SSA are: (a) All children in school, Education Guarantee centres, Alternative schools, and back to school camp by 2003 (b) All children complete Five-Years of schooling by 2007 (c) All children complete eight years of schooling by 2010 (d) Focus on Elementary Education of Satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life (e) Universal retention by 2010 and (f) Bridging social and gender gap.

#### **The National Policy for Women in India (1996)**

It seems to be the outcome of Fourth International Women's Conference at Beijing in 1995. There has been insistent and consistent pressure on the Government of India to formulate a national Policy for Women since the late 70's that went unheeded for two decades. Finally in 1996, the Government has been sufficiently motivated to take action, though it seems only under pressure from International Commission of Women and to keep its image untarnished therein, as has been its regular practice, and a final draft of the national Policy for Women has been released. The draft of national Policy for Women gives stress on gender equality and women empowerment through development of education. Because 'the Government of India has never been sensitive, sufficiently concerned, or far-sighted enough to take unproved initiatives on its own, independently, to devise its self-inspired policies and plans of action, where the women question as it came to be known in the nineteenth century in the country is concerned (Haldar, 1997).'

According to the draft report, education of the women should be given priority and different plans and programmes should be implemented so that they will achieve

equality in all the other spheres by enhancing productive capabilities in them and their knowledge about rights and responsibilities and how to fight for them.

### **Mahila Samakhya**

One of the most successful efforts for education development is Mahila Samakhya. The Programme is operational in 17 districts spread over the four states of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnatak and Uttar Pradesh. This programme begins with the understanding that the problems of women can be identified and solved by the development of women especially educational and location at their own place (Agrawal, 2001).

### **Women's Studies Centres**

The University Grants Commission has been encouraging institutions/centres to take up research projects in the area of women's studies by providing necessary funds. The researches that are emerged from the women's study centres have had a definite influence in shaping not only educational policies, plans and programmes but also in giving a direction to the national effort in the area of women's development as equal partners in a secular democracy, and in bringing home the centrality of women's education to women's empowerment as a non-negotiable area of social progress and enhancement of women's status. The initiative work of NCERT in this regard is remarkable. UGC has also assisted 22 Universities and 11 colleges to set up Women's Studies Centre. This is in addition to the 40 positions of part-time research associate ships for women.

Education of Women has assumed special significance in the context of planned development because the efforts of planned development are to bring all those in the mainstream who are left outside for some reason or the other. It is true that despite strong linkages between women's education and their equality and empowerment, educational development among women remains very low in India. This is especially the case in rural areas and urban slums, where only about 30 per cent of the adult women are literate (Mittal, 1996); and, due to their illiteracy development programmes

become handicapped for implementation because education and training are highly essential for achieving quality and replication. Philosophically, an educational training programme should necessarily address six major objective i.e. (i) behaviour, (ii) self awareness (iii) technical knowledge base, (iv) skills, (v) motivation and (vi) orientation. Illiteracy of People especially among women is handicapped in training programme due to lack of down to earth resource personnel and need based training materials. In a poor and developing country like ours, where educational programme should have a multiple effect, illiterate trainees, are unable to transfer knowledge and skill effectively (Seth, 1997).

The National Perspective Plan for Women's Education (1998-2000) formulated some important and specific objectives for women education, so that women may also participate in the area of social, cultural, economic and political activities etc. The objectives were to be obtained by 2000 AD in regard to women's education. Some of the objectives are:

- (a) Elimination of illiteracy, universalisation of elementary education and minimisation of the dropout rate in the age group 6-14 years and stagnation to negligible proportions.
- (b) Ensuring opportunities to all women for access to appropriate level, nature, quality of education and also the where withhold for success comparable with men.
- (c) Substantial vocationalisation and diversification of secondary education.
- (d) Making education an effective means for women's equality.
- (e) Providing non-formal and part time courses to women to enable them to acquire knowledge and skills for their social, cultural and economic advancement.

To achieve these objectives for women education the plan includes the following strategies:

- Involvement of local leaders, Voluntary Agencies and Women's group.
- Learning is to be made more attractive by providing adequate teaching materials in schools.

- Multi-entry system for girls who cannot attend schools continuously should be adopted.
- Wherever necessary, school meant exclusively for girls, may be setup.
- Non-formal education, correspondence course, self-study programme, open school system and condensed courses should be organised.

The International Commission on Education for the 21st Century Constituted by UNESCO to reflect on education and learning for the 21st Century in January, 1996, at New Delhi. The Commission framed a number of recommendations concerning different aspects of education. Regarding women-education, the commission strongly recommended a policy of strong encouragement for the education of girls and women following the same line of recommendations of the Beijing Conference held in September, 1995 (Yadav, 1999).

Unless women are given access to education they will not have equal access to opportunities and the benefits of development. The returns from educational development of girls and women have few parallels in any other type of social investment.

Investing in women's capabilities especially education will not only place them on an equal footing with men in decision making position but also empower them by way of giving them choices. This is valuable not only in itself but is also the surest way to participate and contribute to economic growth and over all development. Because development does not come to the people. People from every corner of the society including women move towards development through awareness, assertion and above all their level of education. As a result, socio-cultural and gender disparities among the people will diminish and a cordial relation in the society will take place and a new world order would emerge that would embrace full equality of opportunity between men and women, urban and rural, slums and sub-urban or well to do areas as basic concept. Education of women, whatsoever their social status and identity may be, will give them opportunity to contribute to national development to the best of their capability and potential. As essential agents of change in society, their contribution to

any field of work will be valued without any socio-economic or sexual discrimination affected the progress of women education and raised many controversies.

## **1.2 PROVISION OF EDUCATION FOR THE DISADVANTAGED**

Several attempts have been made by experts to understand the problems of education in the country and every time the experts in their usual hackneyed style come out with scores of policies prescription for the educational upliftment of the masses.

The educational problems of the people in the country appear to have close relationship with the ethos of the society. Most of the socially and economically disadvantaged and deprived groups of the society are found to be educationally backward. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the status of these groups, understand their socio-economic setting and resolve the problem at hand, like illiteracy and ignorance. It is reported that the 'culture of silence and the legitimation' and exploitation have been co-habiting in the Indian conditions of peculiar historical circumstances. Disadvantaged individuals and groups are there in all the countries of the world and are struggling hard for their survival and development.

### **1.2.1 PROVISION OF EDUCATION IN THE PAST**

Education that has been acclaimed as the prime mover of development opens the door to modernisation. The educational process, however, does not benefit the disadvantaged groups evenly, regulating a differential development. The educational inputs like provision of education in the form of opening of schools, providing tuition without payment of fees and of scholarships and stipends for the upkeep of scholars, supply of textbooks and other teaching materials, enrollment drives, measures of students retention, etc., are expected to facilitate the educational process and attract the disadvantaged people. It also affects the formation of personality and mould their attitudes in society. "Although education is primarily the responsibility of the state, in India a number of voluntary organisations are also contributing their mite. The foremost among them are the Christian Missionary organisations. In many parts of India, their role in educational field has been crucial as it preceded government effort in

this field. The Arya Samaj movement, Ram Krishna Mission and Theosophical Society have taken pains to establish institutions both for the general public and for the disadvantaged” (Sachchidanand, 1983).

### 1.2.2 PROVISION OF EDUCATION AT PRESENT

India started the momentum of progress after independence among scheduled caste and scheduled tribes and other disadvantaged group of the society with a constitutional agenda of securing to all its citizens justice, liberty and equality. Moreover, right to education was also envisaged. Article 41 states in this regard that ‘the state shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development make effective provision for securing the right to education’. The constitution of India states, “We the people of India solemnly resolve to secure for all our citizens, justice - social, economic equality of status and opportunity and also to promote among them all fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and unit of the nation.” In fact, provision for free and compulsory elementary education for all in the country in spite of caste, colour, sex and religion was made. Article 45 of the constitution states that, “The state shall endeavour to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of this constitution i.e. 1950, for free, and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years”.

Article 46 of the Constitution provides for the promotion of the educational and economic interest of the weaker sections of people and in particular of scheduled caste and scheduled tribes people and for their protection against social injustice and exploitation. Education provides a shield against such injustice and exploitation. Since then provisions have been pursued vigorously and steps are undertaken to speed up the educational progress of the disadvantaged and weaker sections.

In 1935, Government of India passed the Scheduled Caste Act in which certain Castes, race and tribes were put together. The Government provided some incentives for improving the conditions of scheduled castes, but desired result could not be achieved. After independence the list of the scheduled castes were revised in 1950 and

some more avenues were provided for minimising the gap between scheduled caste and general castes.

Substantial funds were also allocated in the National Five-Years plans for ameliorating the condition of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes. After that the government took various steps and made provisions to promote through various projects and welfare schemes, which were operated from central and state levels. In 1947, the congress redeemed its pledge to the Harijan's by declaring that, "untouchability in any form is abolished and imposition of any disability on that account shall be an offence". As a result, in 1955, the Untouchability Offence Act 1955 was passed. It must be noted here that, the Provision viz. Article 41,45 & 46 are placed under the Directive Principle of State policy of the Constitution. "These are not enforceable by court but regarded as fundamentals in the Governance of the country". It is made the duty of the state to apply in making laws.

A number of acts were enforced for development of the backwards from time to time, and certain territories were declared "Backward Tracts" under the Government of India Act - 1935. On the whole, the provision of such areas largely left the situation as it was in 1874, barring only certain areas on the then Frontiers. "The Constitution of India contains exhaustive provisions for protection and promotion of the interest of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes. These could be broadly classified in to three categories, namely (1) Political (reservation of seats in Legislative Assemblies and House of the People) e.g. Articles 330, 332 and 334), (2) Protective e.g. Article 15(4), 15(4), 19(5), 36,335, 5th and 6th schedules and (3) Developmental (e.g. Article 46 and 275). These provisions are not isolated directives, but part of a well- knit arrangement. The special constitutional provisions for scheduled tribes bear testimony to the statesmanship of the Indian Leadership. Commenting on the adequacy of the constitutional provisions, the Dhebar Commission (1961) has to state: 'The Constitution arranged for the provision of resources and provided the required institutional apparatus. We fee, so far as the basic frame-work is concerned, it cannot be considered inadequate'.

For the development of these disadvantaged and backward group, the constitution of India specially provides for appointment of certain commissions e.g. Finance Commission (Article 280), Commission on Administration of Scheduled Areas and Welfare of the Scheduled Tribes (Article 339), and Commission to investigate the condition of Backward classes (Article 340).

The idea of Nehru's Panchsheel for Tribes (1952), formed the basis for designing suitable programmes for tribal development in India. Keeping in view the tribal problems specially educational and economic, Ministry of Home Affairs, the Government of India invited special schemes for the development of Tribal people to supplement the benefits accruing from community development programme during 2nd Five-Year Plan. The first attempt was made in 1959 by opening Forty-three Special Multipurpose Tribal Blocks (SMPTB) in most underdeveloped tribal concentrated areas. The priority areas for development in SMPT Blocks were Education, Communication, Economy, health, Culture, Housing and Water Supply. But the efforts did not achieve the desired goal and success (Verma, 1990, Pattnaik & Bose, 1976).

The Kothari Commission of 1964 advised to the Government on the national pattern of education and on the general principles and policies for the development of education at all states and in all aspects.

It recommended that (1) one of the important social objectives of education is to equalise educational opportunities, enabling the backward or underprivileged classes and individuals to use education as a lever for the improvement of their condition. Every society that values social justice and anxious to improve the lot of the common man and cultivate all available talent, must ensure progressive equality of opportunity to all sections for an egalitarian and human society in which the exploitation of the weak will be minimised and (2) The other forms of educational inequalities which are peculiar to Indian situation need attention. The wide disparity in educational development between the advanced classes and backward ones, the scheduled caste and the scheduled tribes .On the ground of social justice as well as for the furtherance of democracy, it is essential to make special efforts to equalize educational opportunities between these groups.

The Report of Smt. Renuka Ray, M.P. on the Committee on Plan Project, Planning Commission, constituted in May, 1958, (a study team on Social Welfare on Backward Classes) recommended for the educational provision and development. (1) The general pattern of education prevalent in the country should be extended to tribal and other backward classes so as to evolve one common pattern of education in the country. (2) The accepted principles of imparting instructions at the primary level in the mother tongue of the child should be extended to tribal children as well. (3) Text books of the tribal schools specially in primary level may have to be based, based on the materials related to tribal life without substantially deviating from the general outline of the common syllabus - lessons on national heroes, common festivals, interest, and the like should also include selection from tribal life and conditions. (4) The school hours, as also holidays and vacations in the tribal areas should be so adjusted as to synchronize with their occupational seasons and social festivals.

#### **1.2.2.1 The Report of the Study team on Tribal Development Programmes, 1966**

The study team constituted by Planning Commission recommended in 1969 that, to accelerate the progress of education, primary school should be established within one or two miles of the home of every child and the problem of education of tribal girls should be given special attention. The medium of education for the first two years in the school should be tribal language (using the script of regional language). The programme of opening Balwadis or Pre-Primary Schools should be intensified. Single-teacher Schools whose performance has been unsatisfactory, should be abolished and if possible they should be replaced by Ashram Schools.

#### **1.2.2.2 Working Groups on Tribal Development during the Sixth Plan (1980-85) and the Seventh Plan (1985-90)**

This working group constituted three sub groups, such as on S.T., S.C. and on weaker sections stated that (i) while core economic sectors might hold primary in planning, education is the key to tribal development. It is an input not only for economic development, but also for inner strength of the tribal and other disadvantaged communities, so that they can meet the new challenges in terms of some degree of

equality (ii) Education has to be tackled on both the non-formal and formal levels. (iii) Low literacy pockets, backward communities and areas where intensive economic programmes have been or are being taken up should be identified and special educational efforts mounted. (iv) The state should be asked to consider and take action for instruction at the Primary State in the mother tongue of tribal children. (v) Norms establishment of educational institutions at the Primary, middle and secondary levels should be scrutinised once again with a view to ensure their relevance for tribal and under developed areas in the context of the low density of population and scattered habitations. The structural balance among the primary, middle and secondary institutions should be properly struck and maintained. (vi) Greater efforts in promoting Adult Education including Women's education in tribal areas, particularly with association of voluntary organisations and traditional tribal social institutions, should be taken up levels. Also Grant-in-aid should be given to voluntary organisations to promote education among S.T. & S.Cs. And these programmes have been launched by the state in addition to the special thrust given to the weaker sections in the general programme for educational development such as opening of schools, running of NFE and adult education centres and Scheme of operation black Board.

Challenges to Education (1985) states, "To the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other backward candidates, access has been provided through reservation of seats. This however is not enough. Arrangements have to be made to provide special coaching before and after admission to undergraduate courses" (GOI, 1985), The National Policy on Education (1986) mentioned this, as the central focus in the education development of scheduled tribes, scheduled caste and other disadvantaged group at all levels and stages of education. By 1990, 100% enrollment in 6 to 11 age group had to be achieved. To ensure timely payment of scholarship, a single nodal agency will be identified for disbursement. Rates and amount of schemes will be raised. Constant monitoring, planning and verification will be done to ensure that enrollment retention and successful completion of course by SC, ST and disadvantaged students do not fall at any stage. NPE (1986) also mentioned that crash programme for recruitment of teachers from ST and SC communities will be undertaken to remove existing gaps and to equip all single teacher schools. Adequate provision will be made for continuing education of teachers recruited and to ensure their professional up

gradation. Preparation of primers for classes having more than one lakh students would be undertaken. The Ninth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002) also commits to empower the Socially Disadvantaged Groups by making provision of Construction of Hostels for ST/SC Boys and Girls, Ashram Schools for STs, Coaching and Allied Scheme, Book-Banks; upgradation of Merit of SC/ST students, special Educational Development Programme to SC/ST Girls belonging to low Literacy areas, special assistance for the education of girls belonging Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs); national Scholarship to meritorious SC/ST students to pursue higher studies abroad etc. For the educational development amongst OBCs, schemes were introduced to provide scholarships for post matric /pre-matric courses as well as other higher education supported by hostel facilities. They are also allowed to enjoy the existing facilities meant for SC and ST boys and girls. The centre and state government would constitute committee at appropriate levels to review contents of existing curricula to ensure that caste and other prejudice do not come in the way of integration, leading to establishment of an egalitarian society constitute committees at appropriate levels to review contents of existing curricula to ensure that caste and other prejudice do not come in the way of integration, leading to establishment of an egalitarian society.

### 1.2.3 EDUCATIONAL PROVISION FOR THE SLUM DWELLERS AND DOWNTRODDEN

Education, health and social welfare assume greater importance in programmes of slum improvement than housing and other public services (Seetharamu, 1983). Education is the foremost single factor in the economic development of slum dwellers. Because it is observed and discovered that lack of education binds a slum-dweller to the horrifying conditions of slum life.(Seetharamu, 1983)

Realising the transparency of the situation, and essence of education for the upliftment of the downtrodden people like slum-dwellers and other disadvantaged group, the Indian Constitution has given the right to its citizens accordingly. The Constitution has made equality before Law (Article 14), equality of opportunity in matters of public employment (Article 16), abolition of untouchability (Article 17), Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex of place of birth (Article 15) and prohibition of traffic in human being and forced labour (Article 23) as

fundamental rights. The Directive Principle of State Policy further recognises the rights to work, to education, and to public assistance in cases of undeserved social want (Article 47); promises improvement in levels of nutrition, public health and standards of living (Article 47); directs the state to secure just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief (Article 42) to guarantee a living wage, full employment, and social and cultural opportunities to all workers (Article 43), and to promote welfare of the people. With regard to education, Article 45 of the Directive Principles of State Policy has enjoined upon the state the duty of providing Universal, Free, and Compulsory Primary Education to all. Other constitutional provisions with regard to education are: "No individual shall be denied admission to educational institution maintained by the state or receiving aid out of state funds on grounds of religion, race, caste, language or place of birth (Article 29). Article 46 has been amended to give protection from social injustice and all forms of exploitation to the weaker section of people. Lastly Article 15 and Article 16 have been amended to lay down that 'nothing in these articles shall prevent the state from making any special provisions for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens, or for the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes (Article 15-iv; Article 16-iv)'.

Various committees, commissions have been appointed and plans and policies have also been made by Government of India, after independence, for the educational development of the disadvantaged people. They are National Adult Education Programme of 1978, Kothari Commission of 1964, National Policy of Education 1986 and the Five-Year Plans.

The documents of these policies and programme show that Government has no specific policies or programmes of education targeted at the large number of adults living in the innumerable slums in the country. "Rather government has adopted policies and programmes for adults in general. Obviously, there is no realisation of the specificity of the conditions of slum-dwellers' (Choudhary, 1997). So, the general policies and programmes of adult education and literacy programmes of National Literacy Mission apply to the urban slum-dwellers as to the adult illiterates living in the rural and tribal areas.

National Adult Education Programme (1978) was launched to eradicate illiteracy in the age group 15 to 35 all over the country. This NAEP brought to the limelight the problems of illiteracy and its magnitude, and proposed for life long education as a cherished goal in the village and urban centres where learning was imparted through Adult Centres in the group of all sections of people those who are illiterate. The Sixth Five-Year Plan (1980-85) gave emphasis on education to all citizens irrespective of their age, sex, and residence. It adopted technology as the major instrument for the spread of literacy, numeracy and practical skills relevant to the economic activities of the people concerned. The plan gave priority to non-formal education for adults particularly in the age group 13-35 years due to its potential for immediate impact on raising the level of productivity in the economy. The programmes aimed at extending appropriate educational support to the concerned group of individuals through carefully designed group specific and work-based curricula which could be integrated as part of development activities. Slum-dwellers formed under the scheme a priority group besides Women, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and agricultural labourers (Choudhary, 1997).

Under the seventh Five-year Plan (1985-90), eradication of adult illiteracy and the development of a programme of continuing adult education formed a major thrust area. The task identified in this connection was to cover all the illiterates in the age group 15-35 years by 1990. The strategy envisaged to achieve the goal was 'through a mass movement involving social institution, voluntary organisation, students, teachers, employers, and the community' (Seventh Five-Year Plan ; 1985: 258). This programme was to be linked with various development programmes particularly the IRDP, 1985.

The programmes of Nehru Yuvak Kendra (NYK) and National Service Scheme (NSS) also had to give focus on eradication of illiteracy special for the disadvantaged people like slum-dwellers, Schedule Tribes and Schedule Castes, etc. Like the Sixth Plan, training on functional skills relevant to specific economic activities formed another important aspect of adult education under the Seventh Plan Programmes for this purpose had to be strengthened, and sufficient resource support provided for organising technical and vocational skill-based courses for the advantage of adult learners through Shramik Vidyapeeths and other similar institutions.

The Government of India came out with its National Policy on Education in 1986. Adult Education constitutes a part of the policy. The NPE considers the ability to read and write as the main instrument of learning. "Hence the crucial importance of adult education, including Adult Literacy (NPE, 1992:15) the documents affirm the pledge of the whole nation under the National Literacy Mission (NLM) to the eradication of illiteracy, particularly in the 15-35 age group in spite of caste, colour, creed, sex and social status through various means with special emphasis on Total Literacy Campaign (TLC). Mass Literacy Campaigns under NPE-86 include as the past programmes of literacy and functional knowledge and skills. The new and radical element however is generating awareness among learners about those socio-economic realities and the possibilities to change it (NPE, 1992).

No doubt, the disadvantaged people like Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Caste, Slum-dwellers and others have now become conscious about their own educational progress to a certain extent and also are trying to utilise the provisions offered to them. Of late they have realised the very essence of education for their development. Still the level of progress they have made is not satisfactory. In a democratic set-up, the dream of an "Egalitarian Society" would not be realized without Universalisation of Education. But if we analyse the situation minutely, it reveals that we still have a long way to go. The statistics available on enrollment and literacy rates for STs, SCs and other backward population like slum-dwellers indicates this very well. Thus, educational provision for the masses has to be a cultural action of Freedom, and what is needed is an educational programme initiating cultural action for freedom of the oppressed and disadvantaged minorities like STs, SCs and slum-dwellers. Equality of Educational Opportunity cannot be established overnight. This has to be pursued till the condition of the family, language, etc., are equated among the competing group. This requires protective discrimination.

### **1.2.3.1 The Slum Women and their Development**

Women play a very critical role in the growing industrialisation and urbanisation as pilots, doctors, engineers, lawyers, professors, journalists, judges, actresses,

architects, politicians, administrators, social workers etc. But they are very limited in numbers and they mainly belong either to the middle-class or the upper-class.

If we observe their percentage in other fields of work, definitely it will be shocking to us. It is studied that, most of the women from the lower-class work in the factories, or in the quarry sides or in the field as contract labourers. They even accept the job of iron and rag picker, maidservant, sweepers etc., especially in the city or urban areas. They also accept prostitution as a means of their livelihood in some of the slum areas of the metropolitan or cosmopolitan cities of the country.

India is predominantly a rural country. But its urban population can only be ranked among the largest countries of the world. The inadequacy of income, wretched poverty and social oppression in rural areas get transformed into slums, and the rapid growth of industrialisation has caused for rapid urbanisation with increasing slums. Urbanisation provides job opportunities thereby allowing immigration both to the male and female from the neighbouring areas. The poor immigrants gravitate towards a wretched housing and living with extreme poverty, casual employment, lowest paid jobs, illiteracy, serious deprivation, social insecurity and instability, mental and physical disease, alcoholism, higher rate of infant and general mortality, group violence, illegal activities and crime, juvenile delinquency, isolation, frustration and a perpetual struggle for sheer existence.

There is no general agreement among researchers and scholars on the definition of a slum. In general parlance, slum is defined as 'foul-back street of a city, especially one with a slovenly and often vicious population; a low squalid neighbourhood' (Webster, 1931: 19). According to Newman (1959:93), it can note the worst structural sanitary conditions and most degraded occupancy usually by the lowest income groups of any given period. In the opinion of Gist and Halbert (1950: 162), "Slum is a special type of disorganised area with dirty and crowded house". Desai & Pillai (1971) note that "Slum have become the inevitable by products of the process of urbanisation. They grow over years defying all attempts at planned urban development. They are basically the area of darkness, despair and poverty."

It may be noted that, slums are of different types and according to Charlse (1970), "Types of slums vary from place to place as does the definition". There are metropolitan and rural slums, new slums and hand-me-down, handmade and fabricated slums. Some are in shack towns, other are found in the back all eyes of mansions. Some are made of scrap; other one built with mud, adobe, thatch or wood finding. Many are one-storied, but there are also six-storied slums (Desai & Pillai, 1971).

In India, a slum denotes a conglomerate of dilapidated physical structures, built with the cheapest, readily available, and easily perishable materials, needing repair more often, but receiving rarely, if any. Observing the ecology of the Indian Slum, Bharat Sevak Samaj, (1958:9) defines, "The term 'slum' should be applied to those part of the city which may be considered unfit for human habitation either because of structure therein are old, dilapidated, grossly congested and out of repairs; or because it is impossible to preserve sanitation for want of sanitary facilities including ventilation, drainage, water supply etc. or because the sites, by themselves are unhealthy (Bharat Sevak Samaj, 1958)". The Baroda Municipal Corporation (1976) states: "Slum applies to all those dwellings, that do not provide the basic minimum facilities for human subsistence. The very lack of infrastructure facilities, high infant mortality, utter negligence of personal health and hygiene, all these together characterise what may be termed as slums. A Slum or *Basti* is defined according to Calcutta Municipal Act as "An area of land occupied by any collection of huts on a plot of land, not less than ten cottahs (1/6th acre), (Gill, 1994)". Although it is a worldwide phenomenon, the magnitude of slum population in India is very large and has emerged as an ugly but integral part of the modern industrial and urban space in our country. The urban slums are the hotbeds of social problems. Very low levels of literacy, high dropouts from schools, wretched poverty. Drunkenness, bootlegging, drug addiction, prostitution, smuggling, social tension, juvenile delinquency, high rate of criminal and violence, high growth rate of population, higher rate of general and child mortality, chronic and infectious diseases, a more than average calamity rate due to storms, rains, fires and accidents are to be found abundance in the Indian urban slums. Sex ratio here is generally in favour of males. Mostly, rural migrants come to urban areas in search of livelihood rather than improvement in job status. "All-pervasive feature of slums everywhere is the poverty of its inhabitants (Patel. 1978 & Gill, 1994)". Majumdar

(1983:6) observed, "The high proportion among them (Slum Dwellers) engaged in the 'organised sector' which hardly offers them any protection against irregularity of income and economic exploitation". As a result, they constitute the highly disadvantaged, deprived and exploited lot. They suffer from wretched poverty both economic and cultural, though studies focus mainly on the former (Desai & Pillai, 1971), rightly told in this connection that the problem of slums is linked with the types of socio-economic structure within which urbanisation and industrialisation have taken place. The problem of "slum clearance" has eluded the solution offered so far, so much so that now planners have given up the phrase in favour of 'Slum improvement' or "urban renewal" (Desai & Pillai, 1971).

Among the slum-dwellers women and girls are the worst sufferers. Commenting on the living condition of women and children in Indian Slums, Bijlani (1991) stated that 'women in the slums are the greatest sufferers. They slog and sweat for the whole day. They are ignorant of many things including how to guide their children to remain clean, keep away from diseases; their children suffer from many handicaps. The environment of the slum itself is one handicap from which the child suffers. Hence, slum is a social soil'.

The boys are encouraged to attend school, the slum girls are forced to sweep, wash clothes, clean utensils, fetch water, collect fire wood, and mind younger siblings. It is also observed that they are engaged with income generation activities from the very childhood. Department of social welfare, Government of India, adopted in 1974, a Resolution of National Policy on children in which it is clearly stated that no child under 14 years shall be permitted to be engaged in any hazardous occupation or to be made to undertake heavy work. This desire is still a distant dream because in spite of this policy implementation quite a good number of girl children in urban slums as well as rural areas are cheap source of labour in variety of jobs along with the male children. The girls are mainly employed in factories, cottage industries, middle and supper class houses as maid servants for as long as fifteen hours a day in sub-human conditions and for a pittance as wage. In match industries, fireworks. Many of them are even before attending their puberty subjected to sexual exploitation by their employers, adult co-

workers and others. Some times these illiterate, ignorant and unprotected slum girls lured on to or sold into prostitution (Devasia & Devasia, 1991).

The poor, abused and powerless slum-women cannot raise their voice against exploitation or harassment, and even for social justice and equality in an organised way due to their low level of educational achievement, wretched poverty, lack of self confidence, strong faith in superstitions and old tradition and deep ignorance towards their social and basic human rights. As a result they swallow their pain and suffering voicelessly for years together.

The weaker section of the society specially poor women, who live in a pathetic condition of life due to lack of minimum infrastructure and amenities, can never exist and develop properly without special attention and care. Any development for the women, especially urban poor therefore, must aim at transforming society's attitudes towards women and also their own attitude towards themselves. Development of the level of education among the women is the main strategy through which their exploitation can be avoided and the process of social, economic and political change in their status enhanced (Sharma, 1994).

Development which may be multifaceted in nature can be defined to mean 'Process of efforts to attain specific standard of life to have fullness in life' especially for the women of the weaker section of society (Devasia, 1995)'. It also points out individual and collective responsibility to meet the basic needs of the under privileged i.e. the weaker sections and of the slum women. Hence, it includes all types of educational, social and economic interventions that have a primary and direct concern with promoting both the progress of the individual and of the society as a whole. Human being is the central concern and human dignity is the supreme value. Without having human equality and freedom, sustainable development of women is not possible. In other words, the values of social justice and dignity must be inherent in the philosophy of development, especially in its application in relation to the underprivileged in a society, such as women of the most neglected area i.e. the slum. To humanise Indian Society, we need more meaningful expression of these values. (Devasia and Devasia, 1994).

In our country, development had its origin in efforts to deal with illiteracy, poverty and unfortunately, there are still the priority concern; although our efforts must be for freedom from exploitation, oppression, elimination of corruption and nefarious political opportunism, of promotion of self help and environmental protection. Such efforts reflect our conflict between self-help and environmental protection. Such efforts reflect our conflict between self-help and societies priorities in promoting human progress. Development of women in all areas of life is absolutely essential for sustainable development.

“The total development of women is imperative for the development of a society, such a development is inclusive of educational development, but also emphasises in terms of economic, political, social, cultural and environmental aspects”. In a society there are various hurdles in ensuring the participation of women who are highly stratified and are culturally and economically divided into small groups. “The challenge of development in the society is not only the problem of education and finance but also the problem of motivation and mobilisation of women who belong to various castes and classes is inextricably intertwined with the developmental programmes in a society (Devasia & Devasia, 1991)”.

Developmental policies and programmes for women specially the downtrodden like slum women, motivating and mobilising them for participating in such activities and helping them to enjoy the fruits of their labour, define the holistic human perspective of a community. To seek educational freedom is the most important priority for the development of self-confidence and inner potentialities of women, because educational development provides self-respect and independence to a woman.

So, there is a need for implementation of programmes based on equality and social justice and recognition of aspirations of poor women based on social security and social insurance. Poor women can develop only when they are given protection, education, and special treatment. Hence, social development of women in India must be considered as a corrective measure, because social justice is the backbone of such development perspectives.

Keeping in view the transparency of the problems of women development and recognising its urgency for the need of sustainable educational development of the poor women and the underprivileged, various developmental plans and programmes in government as well as non-government level have already been setup. Most of the plans and programmes have already been implemented from national level to grass-root level. In this background National Literacy Mission as an indispensable part of the Ministry of Human Resource Development was launched for the development and upliftment of the downtrodden people.

### **1.3 LITERACY PROGRAMME IN INDIA**

Illiteracy is a worldwide problem eating into the fabric of the society. In many of the developing countries illiteracy remains a social problem even today. "On an average fifty per cent of the world's adult population does not know how to read and write. In some areas of Africa, Asia and Latin America, the illiteracy rate is as high as almost 70 to 80 per cent" (UNESCO, E/3771-1963).

It is disturbing to learn that, India is one of the largest contributors to world illiteracy. Though India has been making progress in literacy from 16.7% in 1951 (Census Report, 1951) to 52.21% in 1991 (Census Report, 1991), 62% in 1997 (53rd round NSSO report, 1997) and at the beginning of the millennium, the literacy rate for a population of over one billion is estimated 65.38% (Census Report, 2001). According to the NLM (Report of NLM, 1988), the number of illiterates in the age group 15-35 increased from 91 million in 1951 to 110 million in 1981. On the basis of trend analysis, the number of illiterates in the age group was likely to go up to 116 millions by 1991 and decline to 110 by 2001 AD. It is estimated that, with the intervention of National Literacy Mission (NLM) in addition to the efforts of Universalisation of Elementary Education (Formal and Non-formal streams), the number of illiterates in 15-35 age group would reduce to 12 million by 2001 AD (NLM, 1988).

It is presumed that formal schooling promotes literacy. But adult literacy remains a matter at great social concern since long. Efforts have constantly been made

to fight against illiteracy among adults through social education programme, community development programme, adult education programme and similar other programmes.

During pre-independence period, adult literacy and education were taken up on voluntary efforts by some agencies, philanthropists and social workers. Their efforts were sporadic, and therefore the demonstrability of its impact was limited (Singh, 1996). In the year 1936, adult education was adopted for the first time as a definite responsibility of the Government, and adult literacy was organised as a movement. In the year 1938 Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) acted as an Adult Education Committee, which recommended that no government can make an appreciable headway with its schemes for promoting socio-economic welfare of its people unless the people are prepared to make proper use of the facilities provided to them. Subsequently, in the year 1944 a scheme for adult education identifying the target age group 10-40 years was prepared. Accordingly, within one year of time span, training to the adult education instructors, involvement of voluntary agencies, and other necessary pre-arrangements for imparting adult education among the illiterate adults were made. In the year 1948, a sub-committee was formed by the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) to report on the achievements of adult education. In their report the committee opined that, literacy and general education form a part of adult education to enable every Indian to participate effectively in the new social order. The concept of general education was further developed to Social Education in the year 1949 as the goal for the education to the adults. This concept of social education included Literacy, Extension work, General Education, and Leadership Training. After Independence, Adult Literacy became an important activity of the Community Development Programme launched in 1952. Social awareness, spirit of social solidarity and importance of planned development were inculcated in the minds of people. In the year 1963, a project was submitted on social education in which clearly mentioned that 'adult literacy is largely a matter of leadership. The function of leadership in literacy is to provide literacy movement integrating literacy ideologically and harnessing people's energy to fight out illiteracy'. The Education Commission of 1964-66 acknowledged the achievement of adult education as a voluntary activity; the basic driving force of

which was individual motivation of adults. The basic integral motivation for literacy was the result of slow growing environmental pressure and rising personal aspirations.

By early 1970's two significant events - Paulo Freire's writings on *Conscientisation Approach* and the deliberations of International Symposium on Literacy held in Persepolis in 1975 - seem to have influenced the concept of adult education. Viewing education as an element in the process of human liberation, Freire considered that the main task of adult education is to bring about a process of critical reflection that leads to action and change. According to him, dialogue and participation are key elements of liberating education and the role of adult educator is to enter into dialogue with illiterates about concrete situations and offer them the instrument with which they can teach themselves to read and write (Lind & Johnston, 1990). Freire's ideology was reaffirmed in the declaration of Persepolis, which considered literacy to be not just the process of learning the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic, but a contribution to the liberation of man and to his full development. Further, the declaration clarified that the concept of functionality must be extended to include all its dimensions political, economic, social and cultural. Just as development is not only economic growth so literacy must aim above all to arouse in the individual a critical awareness of social reality and to enable him or her to understand, master and transform his or her destiny (Bataille, 1976).

These overseas ideas had their impact on Indian Adult Education and literacy programme. The scope and significance of combining the twin components of functionality and liberation was realized then in 1978 to alleviate poverty and liquidate illiteracy. It became an historic event, when the Government of India gave top priority to adult education by issuing a policy statement on Adult Education and formulated the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 1978. The conceptual framework of NAEP laid equal emphasis on literacy, functionality and social awareness, and visualised adult education as a means to bring about a fundamental change in the process of socio-economic development. The NAEP brought to limelight the problems of illiteracy, its magnitude, and it proposed for life long education as a cherished goal. The NAEP was mainly based on the establishment of adult education centres in villages and urban slums where the learning was imparted in groups. But in

comparison with the magnitude of the problem of illiteracy, the endeavour was quite meagre. Thereby, the national adult education programme, the torch-bearer for more viable alternative for the eradication of illiteracy in the country received the boost.

The Fourth International Conference on Adult Education, held in Paris in March 1985, also took efforts at the eradication of illiteracy from among the adults of the world by declaring that 'the right to learn is now more than over a major challenge for humanity'. Elaborating its meaning the conference states, "The right to learn is the right to read and write; the right to question and analyse; the right to imagine and create; the right to read one's own world and write history; the right to have access to educational resources"; the right to develop individual and collective skills" (FICAE-Paris: 1985).

The 1980s also witnessed the expansion of University Adult Education in India when the University Grants Commission under the dynamic leadership of Dr. Madhuri Shah provided hundred per cent grants to 93 Universities to take up adult continuing education and extension activities with the active participation of Universities (UGC Report, 1987). Realising the severity of the problem of illiteracy, Government of India launched Mass Programme for Functional Literacy (MPFL) on 1<sup>st</sup> May, 1986, with a view to eradicate illiteracy from the country as early as possible. According to this programme, it is anticipated that educated persons would teach at least one illiterate adult voluntarily taking it up as his/her moral duty. As a result, participation of students both in colleges and schools increased tremendously. This programme was also termed as "Each One Teach One" (EOTO) Programme. The expansion of Nehru Yuvak Kendras provided an opportunity to non-student youth to participate in this literacy programme and other developmental activities all over the country.

Upholding literacy as an important component of human resource development, the Seventh Five-year Plan (1985-90) stated the need for strengthening the programme for training in functional skills relevant to economic activities, and adopting the strategy of mass movement to cover the huge target of illiterates (GOI, 1985-90).

The importance of eradication of illiteracy was reiterated by National Policy on Education in the year 1986, which envisaged that education ‘provides the instruments for liberation from ignorance and oppression. Since the ability to read and write is the main instrument in the modern world, it will naturally include in Education to develop the skills for further development of the individual. Hence, there is crucial importance adult education including adult literacy’. Adult education including adult literacy would be a means for reducing economic, social and gender disparities. The nation as a whole would assume the responsibility for providing resource support to the eradication of illiteracy particularly, in the 15-35 age group through campaigns of National Literacy Mission. Since the involvement of the participants of the literacy campaigns in the development programme is of crucial importance, the National Literacy Mission will be geared to the national goals such as alleviation of poverty, national integration, environmental conservation, observance of the small family norm, promotion of women’s equality, universalisation of primary education, basic healthcare, etc. It will also facilitate energisation of the cultural creativity of the people and their active participation in development process”. The National Policy on Education (NPE, 86) further states: “Comprehensive Programme of post-literacy and continuing education will be provided for neoliterates and youth who have received primary education with a view to enabling them to retain and upgrade their literacy skills, and to harness it for the improvement of their living and working condition.”

### 1.3.1 NATIONAL LITERACY MISSION (NLM)

**Its Concept & Function :** National Literacy Mission is one of the seven National Technology Missions under the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, (the other six National Missions are; Immunisation, Literacy, Drinking Water, Oil Seed Production, Tele-communication and Dairy). The National Literacy Mission (NLM) was launched on 5th May, 1988 by the then Prime Minister Late Shri Rajeev Gandhi to impart functional literacy to 100 million neo literate persons in the age group 15-35 in a time bound manner. The then Prime Minister appealed to all citizens of the country in general and educated mass in particular to extend their active co-operation for undertaking literacy work as a National Service with Missionary spirit and to make it a People’s Mission in true sense.

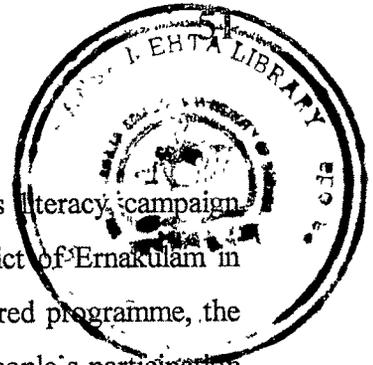
Therefore, NLM, the mission for all, is concerned and totally concerned with the issues of literacy and total literacy.

NLM embodies an urgency. The 1991 census indicated that 332.9 million citizens (of age group 7 and above) remained still illiterate as compared to 305.31 millions as per 1981 census. NLM therefore, signifies a resounding commitment to tackling this problem, which actually affects national, productivity, and social harmony. The NLM thus is an effort on a national scale. NLM is not an exclusive club for a few pedagogues and administrators. The NLM depends upon every individual citizen and organised groups of citizens to respond to the adverse situation of illiteracy, and to volunteer their co-operation to eradicate illiteracy of this dimension over an agreed deadline (Rajan, 1994).

In operational terms, the contribution expected of the citizens is just a little of their time for a limited period, whereas this little contribution would account for an enormous achievement for the national plan.

On its very inception, the NLM studied the previous programmes implemented for literacy, and also examined the models available elsewhere in the world. As for the earlier literacy programmes there was a consensus that, India needed a more comprehensive programme which would close in on the deadline much more rapidly, effectively, credibly.

As for international models, it was found that India could not readily import a model in toto. The numbers involved were much higher than elsewhere, the felt urgency to liquidate illiteracy keen and the operational modalities had to accommodate many more of diversities of geographic terrain, national subcultures and administrative mechanisms. What was therefore required was not that a few people get together, and fabricate a die-cast model of a literacy programme to be enforced all over the country. In order that the programme remained viable, it had to evolve organically through initiative at the grass-root level, enlisting the people's movement, and be cost effective and time bound and be adequately tented for its acceptability.



A happy and fortuitous discovery consisted in the mass literacy campaign initiated in 1989 and successfully completed in 1990 in the district of Ernakulam in Kerala. Instead of launching a pre-determined government sponsored programme, the district administration thought of campaigning for literacy, with people's participation in all stages of planning and implementation. Ernakulam had sparked off a truly people's movement for literacy. The campaign was eventually adopted all over the state of Kerala and many more districts in different parts of the country. Since then, such literacy campaigns have been launched with full or partial coverage in as many as 442 districts in the country located in 22 states and 4 Union Territories. The literacy campaigns of NLM are funded both by the Central and State Governments in the ratio of 2:1 ensuring a statutory Centre-State partnership.

The achievement under Total Literacy Campaign (in terms of coverage of learners and literacy competency) could vary from district to district for various causes. The TLC nevertheless represents a studied, disciplined and well-planned thrust of campaigning for literacy and achieving it by a deadline on a massive scale as "Never Before" (Rajan, 1994).

"Literacy" as the learner's achievement and Total Literacy as the intended coverage of the target group are sensitive terminology. In popular perception "Literacy" remains all things for all men. "It is important that this basic terminology be properly understood in the TLC context, not only by the public at large, but also by the TLC functionaries themselves" (NLM Report, 1994).

### **1.3.1.1 Concept of Functional Literacy in terms of NLM**

The literacy campaigns in India are being spoken and written about with some interest since the 1990s, after the successful experiment of Ernakulam Total Literacy Campaign. Once again, there was concern and renewed national interest when promotion of literacy was identified as one of the National Missions in the Seventh Five-Year Plan. As a result, NLM was launched in 1988 with the objective to impart functional literacy to 80 millions illiterate person in 15-35 age group, 30 million by

1990, and 50 million by the year 1995. Subsequently, changes were made in the target which now stands at 100 million people to be made literate in the same age group by the year 1999, and full literacy to be achieved by 2005, through a variety of means, and with the active involvement of all sections of society (NLM, 1998).

The concept of functional literacy envisaged under NLM was much broader than that envisaged earlier and included the following four aspects:

- i. Achieving self-reliance in literacy and numeracy.
- ii. Becoming aware of the causes of one's deprivation and moving towards its amelioration of one's conditions of life through organisation and participation in the process of development.
- iii. Acquiring skills to improve the economic status and general well being.
- iv. Imbibing the values of national integration, conservation of the environment, women's equality, observance of small family norms etc.

The NLM further had defined the desired level of competencies in 3 R's.

**Reading:** Reading aloud with normal accent and at a speed of 30 words-a-minute a simple passage on topic of interest to the learner.

- Silent reading, at 35 words-a-minute, a small paragraph in simple language.
- Reading with understanding the road-signs, posters, simple instructions and newspapers/broadsheets designed for neo-literates.
- Ability to follow simple written passages relating to one's working and living environment.

**Writing:** Copying with understanding at 7 words-a-minute.

- Taking dictation at 5 words-a-minute.
- Writing with proper spacing and alignment.
- Writing independently short letters and applications, and filling in forms of day-to-day use to the learner.

**Numeracy:** Reading and Writing numbers from 1 to 100.

- Doing simple calculations (without fractions), involving addition and subtraction up to 3 digits, and multiplication and division by 2 digits.
- Working knowledge of metric units of weights, measures, currency, distance, area, and units of time.
- Broad idea of proportion and interest (not involving fractions) and their use in practical situations i.e. in working and living conditions.

The campaign approach adopted as a dominant strategy of NLM proved itself to be the most appropriate strategy, because the goal goes beyond the simple achievement of self-reliance in the 3 R's. to functional literacy and other spin off. It also includes skill development, which enables people to improve their economic status.

#### **1.3.1.2 Concept of Post -Literacy and Continuing Education**

It is a well-recognised fact that neo-literates who acquire basic literacy skills through the literacy campaigns, may face a great difficulty in retaining them, and unless timely follow-up measures are taken most of them may regress to partial or total illiteracy. Thus, it is absolutely essential that those who acquire basic literacy skills make them permanent by reinforcing them through post-literacy programmes (NLM, 1991).

One of the major objectives of post-literacy campaign taken up of a Total Literacy Campaign of NLM is therefore to enable neo-literates to learn the application of literacy skills as problem solving tools, so that learning becomes relevant to living and working. Within a limited period of time available during TLC's, it is usually not possible to dwell adequately on the functionality and awareness aspects of the literacy programme. Therefore, in the post-literacy phase the objectives take centre stage. The NLM has visualised the post-literacy programme as an extension of the TLC in the continuum of life long education.

Continuing education programmes under the specific scheme of NLM are taken up only in the districts that have completed both the TLC and PLC phases, and the external evaluation of the TLC has been conducted (NLM Report, 1991).

The scheme of NLM aims at providing an institutionalised mechanism for continuing education through Continuing Education Centres (CEC's) to enable the neo-literates to retain, improve and apply their basic knowledge and skills in fulfilling their needs and aspirations (NLM Report, 1991).

The literacy campaigns taken up in most of the parts of the country today have not merely been campaigns for literacy, but also the campaigns for family welfare, immunisation, maternal and child-healthcare, conservation of environment, communal harmony, cohesion, national integration and women's development. Because, the aim of literacy mission is not just to enable people to read, write, compute in mother tongue, or in a national language, but also to acquaint them with their rights and duties, to make them realise about the causes of their poverty and deprivation, and to improve their characters, habits, scientific ideas and values etc., which are essential for development of their personalities, communities, and nation. Thus, there have been several exciting, interesting and positive spin-offs beneficial to the individual and to the community at large. (NLM Report, 98-99).

### 1.3.2 LITERACY PROGRAMME FOR WOMEN

In the modern world that is characterised by a vast array of human achievement in diverse fields of knowledge and action, the instrumentality of literacy as the prime mover of change and development has been obvious. "The most critical challenge of the new vision is to reduce gender gaps in learning, especially in countries where female illiteracy rates are higher than those of males. India is a classic example where the literacy status of a majority of women is particularly groom" (Vanka, 1995).

Though there has been a steady increase in the female literacy rate since independence, the fact that the female literacy rate stood at 39.29 per cent as compared to 64.1 per cent for males (Census of India, 1991) explained the gravity of the problem.

Of course, the report of the 53 round Survey of National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO, 1997) is definitely a hopeful one for the increase of literacy rate in general and women in particular. As per the survey report of NSSO, 1997, the literacy rate of India has increased to 62 per cent in 1997 from 52.21 in 1991 with male and female literacy rates being 73 per cent and 50 per cent respectively. (Source: Ministry of Information & Broadcasting GOI, 2000).

The NSSO figures although show an optimistic increase in female literacy of India with in a period of six years i.e. from 1991-1997, but the number of illiterate women is higher than that of men and their illiteracy needs to be arrested very soon for active participation in community development services. "While it is recognised by policy planners that the problem of illiteracy is grave amongst women, women literacy has never received the priority attention it deserves. Despite the magnitude of the problems of illiteracy among women, their educational needs are not systematically addressed in National Educational Policies and Plans" (Dighe & Patel, 1992).

The major thrust of Government of India is the educational strategy in development plans. The major thrust has been on making women literate through an expansion of formal educational system. The assumption has been that access to formal education would solve the problem of illiteracy among women. In spite of the policy initiatives to improve women's education since independence, problems of access, quality, quality and relevance have exacerbated over the years.

The significance of female literacy did not receive due priority during post-independence period. The problem of women literacy has in recent years been examined by a number of committees like National Committee on Education of Women under the chairmanship of Smt. Durgabai Deshkukh (1959), the Committee on Differentiation of Curricula under the chairmanship of Smt. Hansa Mehta (1961), and the committee of Shri M. Bhaktawatsalam (1963) which studied the problem in the six states where the education of girls is less developed or illiteracy rate among women is high. But, there was no solid groundwork for the eradication of women's illiteracy by 1950s (Dighe, 1993). It is also a point to note that adult literacy has been a national concern by fits and starts for more than 60 years. Some of the important programmes

implemented for eradication of illiteracy among adults (both for male and female) in post-independence period in India includes Social Education Programme (1951), Maharashtra Gram Shikhan Mohim (1959), Farmers functional literacy programme (1967), Non-formal Education (1974), Polyvalent Adult Education Centres (1978), and Functional Literacy for Adult Women (1977). National-wise efforts in the field of Adult Literacy were started in 1978 under National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) in terms of Rural Functional Literacy Projects (RELP), and Mass Programme of Functional Literacy (MPFL). A massive campaigning for Adult Literacy and Learning was launched by National Literacy Mission in 1988, to impart functional literacy to the mass non-literates.

The Adult Literacy Programmes mentioned above were mainly participated by the male members of the society, although one of the programme was meant for both the sexes. There was only one specific literacy programme implemented for the development of female literacy in rural areas and its development was rather very slow. It was the year 1950's with the exception of condensed courses for adult women started by central social welfare Board, where the women literacy remained as an integral part of community development programme.

During 1960s when a direct correlation emerged between education and economic growth, the emphasis of literacy programme shifted from civic to functional literacy. It was felt that literacy, if it is worth while, must be functional and the participation of people from each and every sector specially the women and the downtrodden, is essential (Shah, 1995).

Realising the essence of literacy and education of the women in the country, the Education Commission of 1964-66 recommended that 'for the full development of human resources, the improvement of homes and for molding character of children during the most impressionable years of infancy, the education of women is of greater importance than that of men. In the modern world the role of women goes much beyond the home and the bringing up of children' (Report of Kothari Commission, 1964-66).

As a result, during the 1970's Functional Literacy for Adult Women Project was implemented with a view to accelerating the participation of Adult Women in developmental efforts of local communities and bring about attitudinal changes among them. This project also proved the efficiency of functional literacy as a tool for accelerating the pace of women's development.

But this literacy programme was tentatively to be ad hoc, short term and limited in scope. The gravity of the problem of illiteracy among women received proper attention by the Government of India during the late 1970s, and early 1980s when it was noted that 'Literacy itself is not a solution to the basic problems of the poor women, and any attempt to eradicate poverty should lead the women to deal with the question of equality, social justice and development' (Shram Shakti, 1988).

It was on 2nd October, 1978, "The National Adult Education Programme" was launched by Government of India to enable men and women to play an active role in socio-cultural sphere. The programme gave a new thrust to the overall development of human resources to meet the changing demand of the country. Literacy was recognised as an integral part of the NAEP. It also aimed at upgrading functional skills and in creating social awareness among the illiterates. The problem of illiteracy among women was given special attention and a special committee was set up by Ministry of Education to study the problems of women literacy in 1977-78. The Committee identified the urgent necessity of recognising the productive and economic roles, which the large majority of adult illiterate women played in society, particularly in case of rural women. The committee opined that adult education programme should aim at (i) making women and men more conscious of their rights and responsibilities, and laws governing women's status, (ii) assisting women to improve their economic conditions through literacy and other skills, (iii) providing women access to knowledge in other areas including health, childcare, family planning etc., and (iv) assisting women to form their own groups for learning and productive activity and to strengthen their participation and voice in the development process (GOI, 1985).

Based on the literacy activities of NAEP, 1978, the Review Committee on National Adult Education programme reported in 1980 that only 35 per cent of the

population covered up to 31<sup>st</sup> January 1980 were women. The committee identified certain special problems for this slow progress in women's access to this programme. These were viz. resistance among men and the community, lack of time and energy among poor women, difficulties in finding common time for men and women to attend classes, inadequate number of women instructors and supervisors and absence of childcare facilities. The Committee recommended more meaningful efforts to relate educational content to the characteristics and need of the women's groups, provision of childcare facilities with each adult education centre for women, and organising classes during and as a part of women's working time by reorganising work schedules of Government, developmental agencies and other employers in the organised and semi-organised sectors. The committee also advised stronger effort to involve women and women's institutions (Schools, Colleges etc.) in the programme and the promotion of grass-root level women's organisations (Mahila mandals) along with education centres (GOI, 1985).

During 1984-85 (up to December, 1984) total enrollment under Adult Education was 55.34 lakhs, out of which 26.44 lakhs were men and 28.90 lakhs were women, coverage of women being 52.33 of the total. In addition, 3.52 lakhs were covered under the Functional Literacy for Adult Women (FLAW) programme. For literacy learning which was introduced in 1975-76 and covered in 23 states and Union territories by 1977. This programme was exclusively meant for the rural women (GOI, 1985).

The aims of FLAW programme was to impart non-formal education using functional literacy as the means accelerating participation of adult women in the developmental efforts in the community so as to bring about attitudinal changes among them which would enable women to play their role as citizens. The scheme was conceived as a package of services to adult women in 15-45 age group and was implemented jointly by the department of education and social welfare in the experimental ICDS project areas. The functional literacy classes were organised by the Anganwadi workers of ICDS projects, who were given an additional honorarium of Rs.50/- per month. The contents of the programme included elements of health and

hygiene, food and nutrition, home management and childcare, civic and vocational education (Shah, 1995).

To promote adult literacy among women, Government of India has made provision to liberalise grant-in-aid rules for the voluntary organisations working in the field of adult education to run adult education centres exclusively for women. Also a scheme of special award has been introduced by GOI to promote adult literacy especially among women in the 15-35 age group. There are three categories of awards for adult education centres: District, State and Union Territory level. To encourage completion among equals for the state level awards, the states have been grouped into four categories:

- (a) Those with a female literacy rate up to 16 per cent.
- (b) Those between 20 to 26 per cent.
- (c) Those between 27 to 37 per cent.
- (d) Those above 32 per cent.

In each of these categories the state, which has shown the best performance in raising female literacy has been awarded a prize of Rs.25 lakhs during the current year. In spite of these special attention and introduction of special award scheme, the participation of women in Adult Education Programme during late 1980s is far from satisfactory (Laso, 1997).

The New Education Policy on Education, 1986, emphasised elimination of disparities in educational system and provision of facilities through qualitative programme interventions for women empowerment. The NPE (1986) revised in 1992, and the Programme of Action (1992) reflect an unqualified priority to Total Literacy, Elementary Education and the ending of Gender Differentials (GOI, 1997).

With the emergence of National Literacy Mission (1988) there has been an increased emphasis on the aims, as laid down in NAEP, for women's development. NLM, setup in 1988, is one of the most concerted efforts put so far to promote functional literacy in the country. It is based on the promise that literacy is an

indispensable component of human resource development aimed to harness the advances in science and technological science for the benefit of the people specially the disadvantaged, the women, ST, SC and backward classes (Jena, 1999). The level of literacy of the women is acknowledged by NLM as one of the most significant indicators of human development, and makes this all more alarming. With one-third of the seats in Panchayats and Nagar Palikas reserved for women the need for them to become literate is visual (NLM, 1997).

NLM's approach of campaigning and environment building mechanism of Kala Jattha, in local folk form, street plays, Padayatras, Public meeting cum Interaction programmes, People's Platform on concurrent social issues, etc., in generating consciousness for National Integration, Environment Protection, Maintaining Small Family Norms, and the Women Issues and their solutions have been able to motivate the mass, mostly women, to join the campaign enthusiastically. It's clear, objective, time-bound, centre-based teaching at the interest and convenience of the learners, mainly women (both housewives and working), linkages of literacy with other developmental activities like skill development and income generation activities, child and maternity care, small savings and co-operatives, etc., and scope for grass-root leadership have generated awareness among the people to join the literacy programme actively. As a matter of fact, women's literacy for equality and development became one of the most important components within the literacy programme of ongoing Total Literacy Campaigns since 1988, and the mission has established important milestones by bringing 448 districts under the folds of literacy campaigns. By 1998, 965.76 lakhs people were enrolled in the TLC out of which 586.69 lakhs (60.75%) are women, and out of the total achievement i.e. 524.73 lakhs neo-literates 310.12 (59.10%) are of women (NLM Report, 1998).

The Literacy movement has to its credit several achievements it can be proud of. Apart from achieving the required level of literacy they experience a tremendous increase in self-worth, and go on to form groups, co-operatives and small business. Women's empowerment has resulted in their getting organised to protest against social evils such as alcoholism, abuse, etc (NLM-A People's Movement 1997).

Jena (1999) has observed and stated: "Literacy Campaigns in India have already been successful in imparting skills to the people specially to women." With the success of the campaign approach for literacy, the traditional roles are breaking down and women have started accepting non-traditional roles in some places e.g. The neo-literate women of Baroda District have learnt how to repair hand-pumps. Where as neo-literate women of Solan (Himachal Pradesh) have launched a environmental pollution drive by launching a crusade against polythene bags. And district like Dumka (Bihar) and Pudukottai (Tamil Nadu) have accelerated the process of women's empowerment by allowing women to take up non-traditional vocations. In Nallore, Andhra Pradesh, thrift groups called 'Pudupu Laxmi' were formed where each women contributed at least one rupee every day from her meagre earning and there were no defaulters and today such thrift groups generate lakhs of rupees.

The neoliterate women of Nallore District of Andhra Pradesh have formed 'thrift groups' called "Pudupu Laxmi" by contributing one rupee each every day from her meagre earnings. These habits of savings have enabled them to get away from the clutches of the traditional money lenders who charged them exorbitant rates of interest. Perhaps, it was peer pressure or perhaps it was their knowledge that such soft loans would only be possible if there was repayment, but the fact is that there were no defaulters, and today such thrift groups generate lakhs of rupees (Jena, 1999).

The anti-arrack agitation which started in Nallore District of Andhra Pradesh, and which finally resulted in total prohibition being enforced throughout the state was an outcome of the active participation of women in literacy movement of NLM (BGVS, 1997).

Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti (BGVS) is a nationwide NGO working in close association with the National Literacy Mission, Government of India since 1989 and it has been contributing its level best to achieve the goal of NLM in a successful direction. To energise the people specially the disadvantaged lot like women and downtrodden of the society and to make literacy an issue before them, BGVS has so far organised 3 Jathas in 1990, 1992 and 1993 covering 412 districts (nearly 4000 villages) in the country (excluding Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Jammu & Kashmir,

Meghalaya, Mizoram and Sikkim). The third Jattha i.e. 'SAMATA' (8th March & 19th April, 1993) was organised by the women wing of BGVS. It was exclusively addressed to the theme of education, equality and empowerment of women. The explicit aim of the Jattha was to draw women and women's organisation into the literacy campaign and to highlight the need of educating the girl child. The event was marked by nearly 130 young women and men taking out 8 women's Kala Jattas from different parts of the country and closing at Jhansi (UP) on 8th April, 1993 (Rajan, 1994).

As a result of this 'SAMATA' Jattha 1993, the literacy campaigns and their activities took a new shape in the country. Women from different sectors of social life and living came out to join the campaign spontaneously as learners and volunteers. A number of voluntary women organisation also came forward to take up the programme of NLM for the development of women literacy and equality (BGVS, 1994).

The Mahila Samakshya programme is a direct outcome of the commitment of affirmative action in support of women's education mandated in the National Policy of Education (1986). It is a Indo-Duch Project launched in April, 1989. It seeks to mobilise rural women for literacy development and empowerment through Mahila Sanghas. It is an endeavour towards creating a learning environment where women can collectively affirm their potentials, gain strength to demand information and knowledge, and move forward to change and take charge of their lives. Mahila Samakshya has been related with National Literacy Mission to link women's empowerment with literacy development and education. By 1999 this programme has been implemented in 17 districts spread over the four states of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh. The Mahila Samakshya approach begins with the understanding that women must identify their problems and evolve solution at their own pace by means of literacy and educational development (Agrawal, 1999). This programme has been able to lay the foundation for literacy development of the women and empowerment at grass-root levels and make strategic interventions to support education of girls and adult women. Also it has met with success in raising the demand for education especially among women (INDIA, 2000).

### 1.3.3 LITERACY PROGRAMME FOR THE SLUM WOMEN

Adult Literacy emerged as a distinct field of activity in India during 1937 when provincial governments organised mass literacy programmes. Since then, a variety of adult literacy programmes have been undertaken in the country and can be classified under three types of agencies viz. government, non-government and international. The adult literacy programmes in India thus have seen more changes than any other development programmes in such a span of time. Some of the important programmes implemented for eradication of illiteracy among adults in post independence period have already been mentioned earlier.

The adult learners appear to have been perceived in all those adult literacy programmes as large categories differentiated in terms of sex (Male and Female) to a large extent and place of residence (rural, urban and tribal) to a lesser extent. In fact, except the polyvalent adult education centre (Shramik Vidyapith), all major adult literacy programmes implemented so far primarily focused on eradication of illiteracy from rural areas (Ahmad, 1999).

Thus, the situation in the Slum combined with numerous complex socio-cultural and economic factors have made the slum women the most deprived group as far as education and literacy development is concerned. Despite facilities for education equally available for boys and girls, there is a significantly lower level of utilisation of facilities by the girls and women, and these facilities are almost absent in case of slum women. Women who form a pivotal point around whom family life, living and the community development resolve constitute the bulk of illiterates in general and slum setting in particular. "The problem of illiteracy among slum women is not an isolated phenomenon. It is inextricably linked to the socio-economic conditions and rapid growth of urbanisation that prevails in different parts of the country" (Dighe, 1993). While it is realised by the policy planners, administrators and implementators that the problems of illiteracy is serious among the disadvantaged women of urban slums, ST, SC and other disadvantaged backward categories, literacy development has never received serious attention it deserves.

It is true that, steps have been taken for the eradication of illiteracy among the rural people in general and women in particular since 1937, and some satisfactory results have also been achieved through these programmes. But it can be seen that almost all the programmes are implemented only for the rural people. Only programmes like functional literacy for Adult Women (FLAW, 1977) and Mahila Samakshya (1989) programme have been implemented so far for the literacy development of women in urban slums. "There is no adequate programme in our country to guide the women and youth in the slum about opportunities of literacy development, training and employment are available to them" (Bijlani, 1991).

The major education policy documents of the Government of India pertaining to the last two decades are the national Policy on Education, 1986 and the Five-Year Plans. A glance at these documents shows that, the Government has no specific policies and programmes of education targeted on the large number of adults (both male and female) living in the innumerable slum in the country. Rather, the government has adopted policies and programmes for adults in general. Obviously, there is no realisation of the specificity of the condition of slum-dwellers including the slum women. So, the general policies and programmes of adult literacy development apply to the slum dwellers as to the adult illiterates living in rural and tribal areas (Choudhary, 1997).

The Polyvalent Adult Education centre in the form of 'Shramik Vidyapith' however, provides non-formal and continuing education to the urban workers. It is meant to provide the individual (both male and female not only the skills to enhance his/her productive potential, but also the knowledge necessary to improve the quality of his/her life. This institution speaks for its concern for the economically and educationally deprived sections of the urban society. The Mass Programme for Functional literacy (MPFL) up to a certain extent has had urban coverage. It was implemented in the urban areas mainly through the Shramik Vidyapiths (Aggrawal, 1999). However, the programmes of Shramik Vidyapith and MPFL were implemented for all men and women. Some provisions were also made for the education of slum children of urban areas through NFE Centres under 8th Five-Year Plan. No specification was made for the slum women for literacy development, although some of

the activities/items of 'Shramik Vidyapeeth' were meant for the women viz mehendi application, food preservation, safe motherhood course etc. (SVP, 1998).

Further, the scheme of Shramik Vidyapeeth (SVP) is an unconventional Programme - Non-Formal, Adult and Continuing 'Education implemented Primarily in Urban and industrial areas'. The basic objective of this scheme is to improve the occupational skill and technical knowledge of workers (both men and women) for enhancing their efficiency and increasing productive ability. It is proposed to be continued with a new nomenclature, i.e. Jan Sikshan Sansthan (JSS).

The impact of policy planning of education in general and adult education programme in particular during the last two decades shows that the decadal increase in rural literacy rate is higher than that of urban literacy rate. The increase in rural literacy rate during 1971-1981 was 6.15 per cent as against the urban literacy rate of 4.63 per cent, while the decadal increase in rural literacy rate during 1981-91 was recorded as 8.69 per cent as against the urban literacy rate of 5.88 per cent (Ahmad, 1999). The literacy rate among the urban people (both male and female) was 73.08 per cent in 1991 whereas among rural people (both male and female) was 44.69 per cent, and the literacy rate of male in rural areas was 59.87 per cent and female 30.62 per cent. The male literacy rate in urban areas was 81.09 per cent whereas the female literacy was 64.05 per cent in urban set up (Census Report, 1991).

Even the programme implementation process of the campaign mode of mass literacy programmes adopted by National Literacy Mission (NLM) since 1990s also indicated the success of the programme in rural areas. This effort of NLM is however most appreciable and inevitable (Ahmad, 1999). The idea of launching a literacy campaign for the illiterate mass of the country was revived in 1985, when the Government of India initiated the process of "re-shaping the education system" and circulated the document: "Challenge for Education" (Kidd & Timus, 1992). Importance given to Literacy in National Literacy Mission in May 1988 by the Prime Minister of India had given considerable boost to literacy programme for the upliftment and development of the people. In the light of the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments, literacy has assumed even greater significance. If power for local self-

governance is to evolve, to the panchayat in rural sector and Nagar Palikas in Urban areas, literacy is an essential pre-requisite for these institutions to be effective (NLM-A people's Movement, 97).

It was for the first time in Indian history that a serious thought was given to the human resource development in a true spirit by recognising the participation of people from each and every sector of the society in spite of their sex, level of education, socio-economic background and cultural identity. The NLM had a target of making 100 million people in the 15-35 age group functionally literate by 1999. This age group was selected, because they are both in productive as well as reproductive period of life. If they missed the opportunity or were denied access to mainstream formal education, TLCs offered them a second chance. Unlike the FLAW (1977), and Mahila Samaksha (1989) programme for the rural women no such specific programme was implemented by NLM for the literacy development of slum women in urban India (Choudhary, 1997).

However, special care is being taken to bring disadvantaged group like women urban poor, scheduled caste and tribes and the backward classes into the programme. The basic objective is to create a generation, which will ensure that their children are educated to realise the dream of "Education for All" (NLM, 1997).

The first breakthrough of NLM came in Kerala in Kottayam city followed by Ernakulam District, where the campaign was initiated in 1989 and successfully completed a year later. Here for the first time, an area specific, time bound campaign was used in a totally urban setup, and the community became responsible for running its own development programme and consequently for determining its own future. The participation of women especially from the slum areas of Kottayam city as learners and volunteers in the campaign was encouraging. Active function of literacy campaign in urban area is a challenge to the Mission because the heterogeneity in the social profile of urban situations restricts the process of mass mobilisation, which is a key component of the campaign mode of adult literacy programme (Ahmad, 1999). In urban areas campaigns have by and large met with little success so far. Continuous rural migration and the large 'floating' population that it has brought in its wake, has made sustaining

any campaign extremely difficult (NLM, 1997). In spite of the urban challenge, the high literacy rate of 96.58 per cent was recorded in Kottayam Urban Agglomeration of Kerala in 1991. Since then the Nagar Palikas and District Administration of different states dare to accept the challenge of implementing literacy programme in their respective urban areas in the Districts.

Shramik Vidyapiths (Jan Sikshana Samstan) as implementing agencies of National Literacy Mission, extend their services to provide integrated education and training courses for different categories of urban workers mainly neo-literate men and women with a view to improving their professional competency and also enriching their views (Shah, 1999). In some places Shramik Vidyapiths have taken the initiatives in launching the literacy programme in the town/city. They are also giving priority to the sustainable development of the slum women basically to neo-literate women by imparting different types of training on vocational skills for increasing productivity and to make them self-sufficient in all respect for improving their quality of life (SVP, 1998).

The efforts made by Shramik Vidyapith as implementing agency of NLM is no doubt effective and appreciable, but is not sufficient enough to bring equality and raise the social standard of the slum women in urban India. It needs a specific programme based on the magnitude of the problem of slum development for implementation because the basic philosophy and objectives of literacy programme revolves around the education of the masses (especially the disadvantaged group like slum dwellers, SC, ST, Women etc.) through the propagation of scientific ideas, values and awareness among them, that they develop competence and confidence to counteract, realise the causes of their downfall, deprivation and discrimination, and even exterminate the orthodox and obscurant ideas and practices prevalent in the society.

It is clear that 'Women are the most deprived sections of society, especially among the poor and the destitute: Any development must ameliorate their misery if it is to be meaningful'. Literacy and Universal Elementary Education programmes, especially for the females, can help to modify the ante-diluvian attitudes and bias against women. Literacy as well as focused adult education, both for men and women

in the backward areas of the country, can help women face the challenges of life and to help their families. Such literacy programmes could be the least costly schemes to reach the disadvantaged women. Finally, it may be said that, what is needed in our country today is to implement specific literacy programmes for the disadvantaged group based on the magnitude of their problem of development, which is an exercise in maintaining culture of silence with the conscientisation of the slum and disadvantaged women for their liberation from oppression and exploitation, and for creation of a new egalitarian and just social order.

#### **1.4 LITERACY AND DEVELOPMENT**

Development in a country of India's size and diversity depends on the participation and is possible only in a democracy, when all the people will be literate.

##### **1.4.1 CONCEPT AND MEANING OF DEVELOPMENT**

The concept of development is not a new phenomenon, nor are the concerns of its sustainability. Development is a loaded word, which has been looked at differently by individuals based on their varying perception. To the extent, it is a changed strategy, directed towards achieving a better fit between needs, problems and community resources. The development debate of last fifty years has thrown-up several new formulations regarding alternative designs for living, and has brought into sharp focus a number of new concerns. The accent now is on human-centred development, and not on growth-rooted indication of GNP and national income. Nehru (1961) stated: "By development we mean development of consciousness; progressive change in our knowledge, understanding, attitudes, perceptions, aspirations, intentions, opinions, motives and values in the skills, technologies, systems, institutions, laws and organisational mechanisms constitute the foundation, a driving force for the process of development."

Development is nothing but a dynamic process of increasing the capacity and the potential of a human being; to identify the opportunities and skills; to tackle the problems of the humanity to increase the quality of life (Palanithurai, 1996). This

concept of development emphasises the quality of life, not the pursuit of wealth, it takes note of deeply held cultural values and seeks to promote endogenous creativity. The new concerns among others are focused on environment, energy and food security, and all three being interconnected and inter-dependent.

The meaning of the term development is so elusive that frequently varied interpretations are coming out in different human history. This is perhaps best illustrated by Dudley Sheers (1969), who conceived development as involving not only economic growth, but also conditions in which people in a country have adequate food and jobs and the income inequality among them, is greatly reduced. Furthermore, Sheers (1977) adding one more dimension of self-reliance to his earlier definition writes that the addition of this new element entails that the main emphasis on development would no longer be an overall growth rate or on patterns of distribution. The crucial targets from now onwards would be ownership as well as output in the leading economic sectors, consumption patterns that economise foreign exchange, institutional capacity for research and negotiation and cultural goals of the country.

A similar idea with different interpretation stressing more on the power structure is given by Abdul Mayeed (1982) that 'Development is no longer' considered a politically neutral process based on social science theories as applied to the autonomic integration of various socio-economic forces. It is largely the result of the political will of the power structure that the initiate a desired changes. It really means distributing the status quo, aiming at the amelioration of the conditions of the poor, but at the same time maintaining harmony and a spirit of co-operation within the community. Mayeed's statement points specifically to the fact that certain forms of development are a direct result of the wishes of the power structure. The implications of Mayeed's statement are that for social change for development depends on the will of the upper classes, and he suggests that they might undertake the altruistic exercise of ameliorating the conditions of the poor. Might not such social change be initiated by the poor themselves, provided that they are given the opportunity? If they do seek to improve their conditions, it might actually bring them into conflict with the state. Dutta (1979) suggests that the change only occurs through struggle between haves and have-

nots, and that the distribution of wealth in a society occurs through class struggle so that development might occur only as a result of class struggle.

#### 1.4.2 MODERN CONCEPT OF DEVELOPMENT

The use of the term development in its current sense began with the emergence of the nations of Third World. Though development is not infrequently identified with economic growth, and the tendency to interpret it so still persists, it is recognised as a multidimensional concept by developing nations and the developed nations. To overcome the controversies over the meaning of the term development, the U.N. General Assembly in 1971 has clearly spelt out seven principal objectives of development viz. (a) a minimum standard of living, consistent with human dignity, (b) sustained improvement in the well-being of an individual, (c) sharing of benefits by all, (d) more equitable distribution of income and wealth (e) a greater degree of income security (f) expansion and improvement of education, health, nutrition, housing and social welfare, and (g) the safe guarding of the environment (IDS, 1971).

These objectives of development embrace the whole gamut of a nation's economic, social and cultural life, and progress towards their realisation, which cannot be measured entirely by the rate of economic growth or by any other single indicator. In this connection the concept of UNDP (1981) on development is as follows: (i) Development is increasingly seen as a process that should be geared to the human factors, both as the agent and the beneficiary of development. (ii) It should be indigenous involving the autonomous definition by each society of its own values and goals. (iii) It should rely primarily on the strength and resources of each country. (iv) It should encompass the transformation of obstructive structures both national and international. (v) It should be in harmony with environment and should respect ecological constraints (UNDP 1981). The purpose of development as stated by UNDP (1993) is to enlarge human choices- not just income- so the human development concept focusses on the entire society and not just the economy. Policy makers are searching not only for development models that are people centred. They also want development to be more sustainable to project the options of future generation. This

means that the conventional definition of capital must be broadened beyond the physical capital to include human capital.

Mishra (1981) in this connection states: "Development refers to a relatively stable long range increase in real national income that is accompanied by a change in the attitudes of the people, their motivations, institutional set-up, production, technique etc. Development from another angle may refer to production and utilisation of material resources or to the enrichment of human resources. The current indicators of development include both the economic and non-economic factors."

At the entrance of 21st century, all nations of the world face the challenge of properly integrating economic growth with human development. Links between economic growth and human development need to be explored. According to the Human Development Report (1995), human development is erected on four pillars - Productivity, Equity, Sustainability and Power. It regards economic growth as essential but emphasises the need to pay attention to its quality and distribution and analyses at length its link with human lives (UNDP, 1995). Recognition of human development concerns and the global commitment to human development issues emerged prominently at the United Nations Conference on environment at Rio, (1992), the World Conference on Human Rights at Vienna, (1993), the International Conference on Population and Development at Cairo, (1994), and the World Summit for Social Development at Copenhagen, (1995).

Development is at any cost meant for man and mankind. The purpose of development is liberation of man. The same is also true of literacy and education. Education provides the instruments for human liberation from ignorance and oppression. Education as an organic entity changes and grows with the time, responds to the needs of the society and adopts to the environment. It was mostly an ornament in the agricultural civilisation, a tool for economic development in the industrial era and has become today all-pervasive resource that can find substitutes for other resources but has no substitute for itself. In the present scheme of things 'the onward march of a nation will stop if education system ceases to be dynamic and fails to respond adequately to the emerging challenges of a developing society' (Kulundiswamy, 1997).

In a developing society, literacy is virtually the precondition for an individual's evolution and national development. With little access to information, modernisation and communication and virtually no access to survival tools the non-literate remain helpless, victims of poverty, deprivation and exploitation (Jena, 1999). According to Mahatma Gandhi, "Literacy was not the end of education, nor even the beginning. It was only one of the means where by men and women can be educated and developed" (Harijan, 1937).

#### 1.4.3 ROLE OF LITERACY FOR DEVELOPMENT

Role of literacy for development has been much discussed and debated in India and abroad. Whether literacy precedes development or follows it, literacy cannot be separated from the development process. In fact 'they are intrinsically related and there is a dynamic interplay between the two at various levels of society' (Shah, 1999).

Literacy has been historically thought of as agent of individual and social development. Development is strictly human phenomenon. Development is basically about the people. There is no development without people. Development according to Nyerere (1988) is for the man, by the man, and of the man. The basic unit human factor is of utmost value. It is not agriculture or technology or industry that develops the humanity. It is humanity that develops agriculture, technology or industry - individually or collectivity, which is the centre of activity responsible for change and development. Literacy as an indispensable and indisputable component of human resource development is an essential tool for communication and learning for information and experience for national development. Literacy is not an end in itself but a means for better understanding of the surrounding world. It makes the individual largely autonomous for further learning.

Literacy, which involves more than the technical skills of reading and writing, is also about learning a language. Language, however, is not simply a tool or a medium of communication; it is packed with ideology and reproduces the oppressors world. What is needed in Adult Literacy Process is initiating cultural action for freedom

of oppressed illiterate masses. It would involve campaigns for what Freire (1975) calls conscientisation of the masses.

Over the last fifty years, numerous operational and philosophical definitions of literacy and development have emerged. The United Nations Population Commission (1948) has recommended that 'Literacy should be defined for census purposes at the ability both to read and to write a simple message in any language' (GOI, 1955).

The World Congress of Ministers on the eradication of Illiteracy, convened by UNESCO in Teheran (1965) concluded that "Literacy should be regarded as a way of preparing man for a social, civic and economic role that goes far beyond the rudiments of literacy training. The process of learning to read and write should be made an opportunity for acquiring information that can immediately be used to improve living standards. Reading and writing should lead not only to elementary general knowledge but to training for work, increased productivity, a greater participation in civic life, a better understanding of the surrounding world and should ultimately open the way to human culture"(UNESCO, 1966).

UNESCO's Revised Recommendation (1978) concerning the International Standardisation of Educational Statistics distinguishes the difference between literacy and functional literacy. A person is literate 'who can with understanding, both read and write a simple statement on his every day life', whereas an individual who is functionally literate is able to 'engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community, and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his own and the community's development'.

On the development of community and nation building perspective UNESCO observes and emphasises the following:

- Illiterates grounded deep in oral tradition and literates having acquired technologically advanced skill as literacy live in two kinds of socio-economic world.
- Illiteracy hinders the economic and social development.

- Orality is incompatible with what is required by the advances in scientific and technical evolution that mankind is witnessing.

It has also been recognised that literacy cannot alone deterministically engineer development, though it is almost possible to conceive of development without literacy, which is an “enabling or accelerating factor”.

Keeping in view the changing priorities of India’s development goals and influences of international bodies like United Nations, UNDP, World Bank, etc., the concepts of literacy and development have undergone tremendous transformation. Although, the significance of literacy as an instrument of galvanising and mobilising the masses and thus arousing community consciousness and participation for bringing about social change was highlighted by our national leaders, educationists etc., literacy did not receive due priority during the 1950’s, when it remained as an integral part of community development programme. While the concept of development revolved around building factories, industries and dams, the focus of literacy was on enabling the common man to live a better of qualitative life in all aspects and instilling civic consciousness among masses. During the 1960’s when a direct correlation emerged between education and economic growth, the emphasis of literacy programme shifted from civic to functional literacy. It was felt that literacy is worthwhile, and must be functional and should lead to development in all respect

It is universally accepted that developmental efforts like family welfare, health and sanitation, agriculture, etc., are bound to fail if the population is not literate and that literacy is, a pre-requisite for successful development. That is why India’s most literate state Kerala is also one with the lowest fertility rates and low female mortality.

A man develops himself through literacy and education, which broadens his mental horizon, widens his choices and capacity to take decisions. Since decision decides direction and direction decides destiny, ‘literacy enables the men to take control of their destiny’. When the adult acquire the ability to shape their lives, it not only enables them to bring about desired changes in their own lives but also enable them to provide proper guidance to the younger generation. It becomes a vehicle for

them through which they can fulfill their aspirations, convictions and commitments for self and social development. This 'literacy enables adults to read the world by reading the word which opens the roads to development'.

#### 1.4.4 ASPECTS OF DEVELOPMENT

The preceding discussion so far, indicates that, development always remains the constant goal for society and thus, it has to continuously renew some criteria through which the goals can be achieved in certain specific aspects of the society. Owing to heterogeneity in all spheres of life, goals differ to a large extent from one society to another. But, development remains the main goal while its connotation changes across time and across society. Having attained these periodic goals further goals are set for development, and periodic goals are sought in every aspect of human life.

While individual development and social progress become the target for development, it becomes necessary to operationalise these targets with regard to specific functional areas such as economic, social, cultural, political, environmental etc. This would mean specifying the indicators for development in each of these aspects. Since the nature of each aspect of development is different, the specific indicators sought to be achieved will also be varied.

In the field of economy which leads to productivity, development would refer to the exploitation of all productive resources by a country in order to expand real income and continuous progress of capital accumulation to increase the productive equipment available to it, possession of technical skills, opportunity for improvement in real income and purchasing power, increasing in life expectancy, a civilisation assigning high priority to its scale of values to material well-being and possession etc. Thus, all these indicators of economic development imply both qualitative and quantitative aspects. While the specific expected behavioural changes are qualitative in nature and cannot be measured in terms of quantitative indicators to increase in the national real income i.e. per capita, GNP etc. which indicate quantifiable measures. So, economic development can be best measured in terms of quantifiable things, However, qualitative

aspect also determine the tangible products. Therefore, both the aspects are closely interwoven and we cannot put them in watertight compartments.

On the contrary, the other aspects of development like social, cultural and political, determine the set of indicators would be in terms of human attributes and characteristics of both of which are entirely qualitative. It means development in these fields are not in terms of quantity, i.e. "how many" but in terms of quality i.e. "how well". Such qualitative changes will have to become perceptible with respect to some social, cultural and political characteristics. That the socio-political developmental indicators in the developing society would be with respect to the following attributes: (i) The ideology of society holds such as democratic, autocratic etc., (ii) the social structure that obtains there from reflecting the social stratification and nature and extent of social mobility, (iii) nature and direction of role specification within and across social sub-system, (iv) the system of social values evolved through time, (vii) attitude towards change, motivation for social action and social awareness and such other attributes. That's motivation for social action and social awareness and such other attributes. That's why it can be said, development is possible in an ideal limit of co-ordination in various aspects of qualitative indicators, that is, changes in anyone indicator do not necessarily and automatically bring in changes in other aspects. In India, the socio-political ideology is democracy, which implies that it accepts fraternity, etc. Making them a reality is essential for development. To be able to attend these broad based goals, such goals are stated on the tolerance for different castes and religions, high social mobility which would mean, there is scope for every person to have his own aspirations, active participation of the individuals in social and political affairs with awareness and responsibilities and so on. The democratic ideology does not seem to have brought about perceptible changes in respect of all these indicators.

The above discussion of development in terms of its indicators in the functional areas emphasises that development is concerned not only with material needs but also the social conditions of life like environmental pollution, superstition, poverty, population explosion, dowry, purdah, malnutrition, child labour, unemployment, casteism, gender discrimination and so on. Development is therefore, not only concerned with economic growth but growth and change, i.e. social, political, cultural,

environmental and institutional etc. A society like ours wherein casual interactions between and among various aspects of life are yet unclear, it becomes difficult to set some uniform development goals for all, because what may be the development for one may not be so for others. Moreover, the scientific and technological advancement and the speed of changes that are taking place in the society are greatly influencing the needs of the people in various ways. It only means that in order to realise economic development there is a need for evolving the necessary socio-cultural and political conditions. So, while planning strategy of development for the developing countries like ours, much care should be taken and equilibrium must be maintained between the demands of the people for social change and the resources available therein.

In this context it is seriously felt that, the planned goals are to be achieved for development through community support i.e. active participation of the people and provision of the government and political will. These goals can not be achieved by and large unless and until people develop social awareness to realise their individual and social responsibilities. Literacy and education as the process of social transformation is expected to develop such awareness, make individual responsible to their developmental needs, to equip them with necessary knowledge and skills.

#### 1.4.5 INTEGRATION OF LITERACY WITH DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF DEVELOPMENT

##### **Economic Aspect**

Integration of literacy with economic aspect of development of that society has been strongly argued by many. Education, the most critical development ingredient has been considered as the engine of economic growth i.e. productivity and social transformation. Rao (1966) feels that, education is a potent agent not only for the social and psychological changes, but it may influence the productivity and economic development also, and that is the reason why in the recent years, there has been much talk about the relationship between education and economic development, and about education as investment.

Literacy influences the people in their economic and social development by inducing change in technology through the systematic application of scientific and other knowledge for specialised tasks as a consequence of their division and differentiation, and in values and attitudes, to provide the necessary incentives for increasing productive efficiency.

### **Social Aspect**

Based on the celebrated human capital theory, literacy and education have been characterised as the power house of knowledge, skill, efficiency and productivity which act as catalytic agents of individual and social transformation. The integration of literacy and education with social development has been emphasised by Jones, (1992), who said, "Education is seen not only in terms of its potential to produce and distribute knowledge and skills, it is also seen as a powerful allocator of economic and social roles, not always distributed equality on the basis of merit".

### **Productive Aspect**

The World Development Report (1988) issued by World Bank makes the following observation of the economic and productive aspects of development accelerated through literacy: "Studied based on wage, employment data show that the social rate of return to education as calculated by comparing by the higher life time productivity of the literate workers with the social cost literacy generally exceeds that of most alternative investments." These findings are corroborated by evidence that literate workers with the social cost literacy generally exceed that of most alternative investments. These findings are corroborated by evidence that literate farmers are considerably more productive; the crop yields of farmers with four years of education are up to nine per cent higher than those of farmers who are non-literate (WDR, 1988). Because , literacy is integrated with the occupation of the learners and directly related to the development (GOI, 1972). The same logic also explains the fact that, literate workers in the shop floor industry perform much better than their counterparts. Industrial safety record of literate workers shows that production of literates is

invariably higher than that of the non-literates. It goes without saying that quality control industry is greatly facilitated by the level of literacy of the workers.

### **Technological Aspect**

The strong influence of literacy and development has also been noted in Japan. Japanese Development during the post Meiji restoration was speeded by aggressive accumulation of skilled and technical manpower built through commitment and consistent efforts to increase literacy and technical development (WDR, 1991).

Through its commitment to literacy and training, South Korea has emerged as a first growing, technologically developed and one of the industrialised country of the world (WRD, 1991). The Research Reports of World Bank has also indicated that there is a strong and identical relationship between literacy, growth of GNP and per capita income, and output. "A one-year-increase in schooling can augment wages by more than ten per cent after allowing for other factors." An additional year of schooling has raised output by nearly two per cent in the Republic of Korea and five per cent in Malaysia (WDR, 1991). Therefore, there is essence of integration between literacy and development process in our country; because, the net change in growth which is observed by World Bank is nothing but the result of productivity of skills and technology assisted by changes in values and attitudes of the people through functional literacy.

### **Health Aspect**

The need for integrating the components of literacy and health has been emphasised by National Health Policy, (1982), and National Policy on Education, (1986). The National Health Policy states: " 'The Public Health Education Programmes' should be supplemented by health, nutrition and population education programmes at various levels. Simultaneously efforts would require to be made to promote universal education, specially adult and female education, without which various efforts to organise preventive and promotive health activities, family planning, maternal and child healthcare, cannot be achieved."

World Bank studies in 29 Developing Countries have shown that infant and child mortality rates are in reverse proportion to the level of literacy of mothers, and that each year of schooling for girls and women's literacy means further reduction of IMP and the lower birth rate. The study conducted by ICMR in 1990-91 on immunisation programme and maternal and child health in the state Bihar, M.P., Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh has shown that the immunisation status of children of literate mothers is better than that of non-literate mothers both in urban and rural areas.

### **Primary Education**

Universal literacy i.e. development of education in all stages cannot be achieved without the integration of adult literacy and universalisation of primary education. The report of the survey of India 1990-91 indicates that, literate parents would not only enroll their children in schools but also ensure their retention. Educational statistics since 1950s show that, highly literate states and districts have a higher enrollment ratio for 6-14 age group and lower drop out rates. While highly literate states like Kerala, West Bengal, Pondicherry have had an enrollment ration of 102.45, 149.79 and 125.31 for classes I-V, in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, which had lower literacy rates the enrollment ratio was also lower i.e. 81.70 and 81.39 respectively (MHRD, 1990-91).

While literacy is a great leveler and provides opportunities even to the vulnerable in a society to improve their conditions of life in various ways i.e. economic, health, education etc., it also creates an environment of cultural progress. A nation cannot exist and develop with health and bread alone, it needs cultural support for its mobility and social development.

### **Cultural Aspect**

A well defined, socially acceptable, composite culture is needed for sustaining economic development. Socio-cultural development can play the role of supporting factor in economic and other development. Literacy increases the information level and understanding of one's own culture and induces the individual to contribute to its

enrichment. It also enables one to rise above conservatism and parochialism and to imbibe cherished human values.

While integrating literacy with development, two points are to be taken into the consideration as pre-requisites viz., the human resources and life long adaptation. While formal literacy is the main tool available in a society for developing its human resources and that through literacy the kind of human understanding and human skills that are highly essential for progress are brought into existence. The later approach refers to the provision by which institutions, programmes and activities of various types are able to, despite the rapidity of social change, maintain participation of people of all ages and for all personality types. Active participation of people from each and every sector of the society needs importance. Because peoples participation has been recognised as the process of people's empowerment (Seth, 1996) and in the view of changing scenario at global, national and regional levels, old concepts and prevalent paradigm of development must now be radically reviewed. "Development must be women around people, not people around development" (Jena, 1999). So no section of the population should be excluded by prejudice, oversight, or lack of foresight nor should they be neglected or forgotten in participating activities for development.

### **1.5 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

It has been observed that India has accorded a lot of importance to education after independence. This is because education is a means to awaken people's self-awareness and self-esteem, and hence the capacity to improve their economic condition. In a democratic set up like ours, the role of education is crucial, because democracy can work effectively only if there is an intelligent and active participation by the people. The responsibility of providing the people with necessary understanding of the problems of daily life rests with the provision of education through various educational programmes and institutions. Such education and educational programmes are specially needed for the backward and disadvantaged classes to help them become intelligent citizens to train them to be observers, thinkers, creators and critic in whatsoever humble manner it may be.

India as a democratic, socialistic republic is wedded to the principle of equality of opportunity in all field including education. Moreover, equal educational opportunity is considered to be the basic instrument to ensure opportunity of every type. Again the country is committed to providing universal primary education to all children in the age group 6 to 14 (Article, 45 of Indian Constitution) and to protect with special care the educational and other interest of the weaker section of the people (Article, 46).

Prior to the implementation of Indian Constitution (1950). Article 25 and Article 26 of the universal declaration of Human Rights adopted by General Assembly of United Nations on 10th December, 1948, has proclaimed rights to a standard of living with social protection and right to education of each and every members of our society.

In keeping with the provisions of the constitution and universal declaration of Human Rights, there has been a fantastic proliferation of educational institutions and programmes in the country at all levels. Recognising the rights of free access to education of the people, adequate provisions have also been made accordingly. The provision of ancillary services and students support in the form of mid-day meals, free supply of textbook, and reading material, school uniform, scholarship, stipends and hostel facilities etc. have also been attached with the free access to education. Special facilities have also been given in order to spread education among the socially and educationally backward and discriminated classes like ST, SC and women etc.

Despite this conscious effort at equalising educational opportunities in the country the overall picture remains unfortunately that of pervasive inequality, and till date the rights of man specially the disadvantaged and women are not yet protected and respected properly.

Active participation of women in National Development is not possible as long as majority of our women are illiterate and ignorant. Half of our population comprises of women, and the grim reality is that not joint their problems, but their very existence has been ignored, despite the fact that majority of our labour force consists of women, who produce a little less than 50% of our food. In general the position of women in our

country is not a happy one, as they are illiterate and ignorant about political, legal, social and economic issues.

Orissa, one of the economically backward state of India had a population of 36,706,920 as per the 2001 census. Out of the total population, 1,80,580 are female. The literacy rate of the state was 49.09 per cent in 1991, which was lower than the national average of 52.21 per cent. The male and female literacy rate was 63.09 and 34.68 per cent respectively. As per the census report of March, 2001, the literacy rate of Orissa has been improved to 63.61 per cent and the male and female literacy rate has been dismal with a growth of 12.86 and 14.29 per cent respectively in 2001 from 1991. Although the female literacy rate of Orissa has been improved to 50.97 per cent but it still is lower than the national literacy rate of the female i.e. 54.16 per cent. While different approaches have been attempted since independence we have been unable to significantly increase the total numbers of literate women, who evidently are the strong pillars of the society, have been neglected, discriminated and exploited a lot in all strata of Education, Employment, Empowerment and even for their sheer Existence.

The Rourkela City of Orissa is not free from the aforesaid problems related to women. Rourkela, which is famous for Steel Plant is one of the cosmopolitan cities of India. Fifty years back it was a very small place surrounded with beautiful hills, forests, mines and tribal villages. But now, due to the advancement of science and technology the steel plant and many other industries have sprung up around the city. As a result, unskilled and semiskilled, poverty-stricken villagers from different parts of the state as well as the country (neighbouring states) have flocked nearby the steel plant areas and to the other industries in order to earn their livelihood. Women who constitute about the half of the total population have also sprung up around the city in the slums with their family members to struggle for their existence.

It is seen that the educated women of Rourkela also work in different fields to improve economic condition of their families. They do work in professions like teaching, medical, engineering, law, administration, banking and management etc. Even they are found in trade, industry, journalism, architecture etc. But they are only a few in number.

In the rural settings majority of the women are generally found as housewives. Very few women normally from working class or from poverty-stricken families have to fight for their livelihood. But in urban setup especially in urban slums it is just the reverse. Women in urban slums are the worst sufferers and more disadvantaged than the men. Due to wretched poverty and social discrimination in urban slums majority of the women have to earn and struggle for their families like the male members. As a result they work as contract labourers on daily wages, maidservants, sweepers, rag-pickers, iron pickers in the dumping yards of steel plant and so on. Some of them even accept prostitution and sell rice beer as their source of income.

In spite of their day-long hard labour both in the family and work field, they have to swallow the mental and physical torture of their husbands. Also they have to tolerate the economic exploitation and social and gender discrimination by the family members and bosses. Because most of them are poor, illiterates, and their superstition is deep-rooted, and because they are not organised and are lacking in self-confidence, they do not dare to go against their family members and even to the bosses for ill treatment and exploitation.

The most neglected and discriminated section of the urban set-up i.e. slum dweller in general and women in particular can never develop properly without bridging the gulf of discrimination through proper implementation of equalisation of educational facilities, guideline, protection and serious attention. Realising the above things and keeping in view the magnitude and transparency of the problems based on the guidelines and objectives of the National Literacy Mission (NLM) the Literacy campaign of Rourkela Saksharata Samiti started functioning with the downtrodden and people residing in slums in general, and women in particular for their educational development and upliftment since 1991.

Keeping in view the above situations and the programme in operation, certain questions that come into the focus at this stage are:

1. How far the activities of the literacy programme of Rourkela Saksharata Samiti have been able to develop the skills of reading, writing and numeracy of the women in slums?
2. Whether the women in slums have become aware of family welfare and small-family norms, evils of dowry, drugs, alcoholism, castism and superstition?
3. Whether they have become conscious of their own and family health status and health issues, child and maternity care, regular immunisation to their children, need for nutrition, sanitation and cleanliness?
4. Whether they have become conscious about the schooling of their children and sending them to the formal schools regularly?
5. Whether they have become conscious to avail of their voting rights, public distribution system, urban basic services, medical facilities, different loan facilities and other basic rights?
6. Whether they have developed a positive attitude towards women life and have developed self-confidence and a self-image and are taking an active participation in various social, political and cultural activities?
7. Whether they have modified their pattern of behaviour and life style in adopting small family norms, maintaining friendly relationship with others in the basti, doing plantation for environment protection, cleaning basti with others, taking interest and initiation for basti welfare activities like motivating people to stop the practice of gambling, taking drugs and alcohol, organising basti meetings, etc.?
8. What are the problems faced by the activists and organisers in motivating and bringing the women learners to the campaigns?
9. How the material resources are mobilised tapped and utilized?
10. Whether the activities of the literacy programme executed are well planned and executed properly?
11. Whether the literacy campaign of the samiti has been able to make it a people's movement?
12. If the result of the campaign is not effective what model or strategy can be adopted to make it fruitful?

The research scenario in adult education reflects reveals that Agnihotri (1974), Bastia (1982), Mohanty (1988), Tantry (1990), Thakra (1991), Saldhana (1992 A,B), Sachidanand (1992), Rao (1992), Parikh (1994), Patel and Dighe (1993) and others have conducted some studies on impact of adult education and literacy programme in on learners in the form of evaluation study of some campaigns. Except for the studies of Rao (1992) and Patel and Dighe (1993) all the studies have been conducted on Urban people in general. They have not focused their studies on the poor urban women. Rao (1992) conducted the study on rural women of Madhya Pradesh, where as Patel and Dighe (1993) conducted a small project on the slum women of Delhi. From the review of the research literature on adult education it was found that sincere and critical research studies on impact of literacy programme on women, particularly urban slums have been neglected.

The research work conducted till now indicates that limited studies have been carried out with regard to the slum dwellers in general and there is an absence of researches on slum women and their educational development both in India and abroad. The studies carried out by Clinard (1962), Chatterjee (1962), Hams (1973), Child (1975), Shah (1973), Mohishin (1979), Saikh (1983), Aikara (1984) and others reveal the different aspects of life of the people in slums in general where as the small-scale research conducted by Shridhonkar (1993) in Indore slums and the study of Devasia & Devasia (1994) carried out in Nagpur slums focused on the participation of slum women in different developmental programme for income generation and other activities. But not even a single study has been carried out on educational development of the women in slums.

The work carried out till now as evaluation studies of the literacy programmes have not taken into consideration the educational and social parameters, the historical and contextual differences, but mainly followed a standard quantitative format. Very few researchers like Tantry (1990), Seetyharamu (1991), Saldhana (1992 A & B) and Sachidanand (1992) did present both qualitative and quantitative analysis. But except for Saldhana (1992 A & B) and Sachidanand (1992) the major thrust of these studies was of quantitative and limited in their scope and suffers methodological limitations.

So far as the methodology is concerned it is observed that great importance has been given to research of normative survey and descriptive method by the above mentioned researchers. Very few researchers like Rao (1992) and others have followed experimental methods for their studies. But methods like case study and historical research are highly neglected by the researchers.

Regarding research tools much importance is given to questionnaire, interview schedule of structure type and record study. Very few researchers like Seetharamu (1991), Saldhana (1992), Rao (1992) have adopted observation schedule, group discussion and field visit of very short duration along with other tools for their studies. Sachidananda (1992) has adopted discussion, meetings and participatory observation along with questionnaire and interview schedule for his study. Here mention may be made that none of the researchers have adopted case study and brain storming techniques for their studies to collect relevant data from the respondents. Due to this methodological short coming co-satisfactory answers to the above stated questions could not be found from the related researches.

If systematic researches on impact of different education programmes are conducted especially on disadvantaged people they would be quite useful to present a Gestalt's view. Further, it would also be useful in understanding the feelings, behaviour and experiences of the people. Their educational and social needs could be better identified, which is urgently needed.

The investigator therefore embarked upon this study where it was decided to study the impact of literacy programme on educational development of slum women. It was also decided that the activities and efforts of Rourkela Saksharata Samiti and the problems and constraints faced by the organizers and functionaries should be examined. Further, the investigator also thought of finding out causes for the under-development of those two slum women who, despite their participation in the Literacy Programme, have not achieved either the NLM expected proficiency level in literacy skills or even developed the desired level of awareness, were purposively selected from two different slum for case studies. After finding out their causes of underdevelopment suggestions were made by the investigator as remedial measures.

Since this piece of research work is taken up to study the educational development of slum women through literacy programme of Rourkela, the findings will be helpful to the organisers of the programme in understanding the changing interests, attitudes, behaviour and experiences of slum women as well as their educational and social needs which are highly essential to chalk out need-based and effective programmes and activities for their further development. As educational development of slum women is a continuous process and it cannot be the end, there cannot be prescriptive ways of achieving the targets.

#### **1.6 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

**“A STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF LITERACY PROGRAMME ON EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SLUM WOMEN, OF ROURKELA”.**

#### **1.7 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To study the activities and efforts made by Rourkela Saksharata Samiti for the development of Education in Rourkela slums with special reference to women.
2. To study the problems and constraints faced by the organisers and functionaries in organising, mobilising and monitoring the activities of the literacy programmes for slum women.
3. To study the impact of Literacy Programme on slum women in terms of (a) their level of literacy i.e. reading, writing and arithmetic, (b) level of awareness developed pertaining to family welfare, small family norms and various concerning issues related to health and sanitation, child and maternity care, environment protection, etc., (c) changing attitudes towards evils of dowry, early marriage, alcoholism, superstition, etc., raising voice against exploitation and taking interest for social welfare, and (d) enrollment of their children in formal schools and other systems of education like Anganwadi and NFE centres etc.

4. To find out the causes for the underdevelopment of the slum women who are not developed.
5. To make suggestions for the suitable modifications in the programme for its future course of action.

### **1.8 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE TERMS USED**

**Impact:** In the present study impact has been referred to the desired change resulted from the activities of literacy programme. The desired changes found in the slum women were as per the parameters laid down for their educational development.

**Slum:** Slum is basically the area of darkness, despair and poverty in an urban setup which may be considered unfit for human habitation because of its sub-standard and dilapidated houses, high density of population, lack of minimum infrastructure and amenities like electricity, drinking water, sanitation, medical services and education, poor physical and mental health condition of the people, social tension, criminal activities and wretched poverty etc.

**Slum Women:** The most neglected resident of the slum area living in a miserable condition of life due to lack of minimum infrastructure facilities and social exploitation.

**Educational Development of the Slum Women:** It refers to the level of attainment of the slum women on the basis of the following parameters.

Level of literacy (i.e. reading, writing and arithmetic), earning and saving, awareness about the environment, health, sanitation, nutrition, child and maternity care, small family norms and family welfare, knowledge about different rights and responsibilities of women and women issues, knowledge about the evils of alcoholism, dowry, superstitions etc., and educational facilities provided to their children etc.