

# Problems of illiteracy and Drop-out: A case study

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## ABSTRACT

Adult Education is taking a great role in the development of literacy and entrepreneurship among the people. Saakshar Bharat Mission is envisaged as people's programme. The present study would like to find out and analyze the problems of illiteracy and Drop-out. It also help in providing further learning opportunities for basic literacy, up gradation of literacy skills, pursuit of alternative educational programmes, vocational skills and also promote social and occupational development. The paper also highlights the factor responsible for illiteracy and drop-out. it is also suggested that the value of the adult education is achieve only when the adult learners and the whole society become enthusiastic in the literacy programme.

## Introduction

Adult education is an indispensable necessity for a developing country like India. Adult education has been visualized as functional development and social awareness along with the acquisition of literacy and numeracy with a view to cultivate the habit of self-education among the adult illiterates. It also embraces all forms of educative experiences needed by men and women according to their varying interests and requirement. Therefore, adult education is now considered a legitimate necessity in the economic, socio-political and cultural development of an individual and his nation.

In Manipur, though the significant and positive role of adult education in development has been highlighted by various educationists and social leaders, a large number of adults are still illiterate and living in sub-standard human condition mainly because they are not literate and educated. Adult Education programmes have been taken up in Manipur from 1960s. The programmes of Adult Education are taken up in different Blocks of Manipur as the social Education programme which gives stress on literacy, numeracy, agriculture, extension and animal husbandry, training in citizenship and non-student youth welfare programme. (NAEP) and other programmes were also implemented under the

National Literacy Mission (NLM) in different districts of Manipur. From a pilot survey of the existing Adult Education Centres in different districts As such, National Literacy Mission has been modified and renamed Literacy Mission as National Female Literacy Mission and Literacy programme as SAAKSHAR BHARAT MISSION (Literate India) in Manipur also, the Government of India has sanctioned for the implementation of SBM in four districts (Viz. Chandel, Senapati, Tamenglong and Thoubal) in the first phase where female literacy rate is below 50%. The Department has launched the Mission on the 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2010 at Thoubal District in the state. Thoubal District is the only valley District where the SAAKSHAR BHARAT MISSION (SBM) is implemented as number of Basic Literacy Centres and the number of learners are highest (34,299 female learners are identified in the 3426 centres @ 1:10). As to check the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of the Adult Education Programme and also to find out the factor responsible for illiteracy and drop-out implemented in Manipur especially in Thoubal District, the study of the Adult Education Programmes and the Adult Learners feel very essential.

### **Statement of the problem**

In the present study an attempt was made to know the Problems of illiteracy and Drop-out in the adult education programme so far conducted in the state, especially Thoubal District, the only valley district where the Saakshar Bharat programme was implemented.

### **Objectives of the study**

To fulfill the main objective, the study aims at identifying the following objectives.

1. To study the background characteristics of the adult learner and the volunteer teacher on the basis of sex, age, religion, caste, marital status, occupation and family income
2. To trace the factors responsible for illiteracy and dropouts.

## Hypotheses

The present study is undertaken with the object of testing the following hypotheses drawn on the basis of preliminary studies:

1. There is no significance variation of the factors responsible for illiteracy of learners due to difference in their occupation, income, type of the family.
2. There is no variation in the opinion on the factor responsible for drop-out by the type of family.

## Delimitation of the study

The study is limited to adult education programme in Thoubal district with special reference to Saakshar Bharat Mission. However, a broad survey has been carried out to ascertain about the effectiveness of adult education programme in the state. The scope of the present study is limited to the adult learners, the volunteer teachers and the adult education programme which is implemented in the Thoubal District.

## Methodology

For this present study, the normative survey method was adopted in which the relevant facts and information as it exists at present were collected through the appropriate tools developed for the purpose. Altogether, 600 learners and 200 volunteer teachers from 64 Adult Education Centres were selected through the stratified disproportionate sampling from a population of 34,299 adult learners (target group of Saakshar Bharat) and 3,426 volunteer teachers respectively. For the present study, self-developed questionnaire and interview schedule had been used to collect the required data from the volunteer teachers and adult learners. The statistical tools used for analysis and interpretation of data are descriptive statistics viz., percentage, mean, standard deviation (SD) etc.

## Analysis and interpretation of data

An attempt had been made to analyse and interpret the data collected by means of using questionnaire and interview method. The data were collected from the adult learners and Volunteer Teachers only.

According to the scope of the study, 600 female learners were interviewed. Responses of the learners were collected regarding their general background, factor responsible for the illiteracy and

dropout, problems faced by the learners at the centres and their expectation for improvement in the condition of their learning.

It is learnt that the majority of learners were in the age-group of 40-50 years with 27.5% followed by 30-40 years (24.5%), 51-60 years (22.5%), 60-70 years (12.7%), 20-30 years (10.8%), 70-80 years (1.7%) and the lowest below 20 years (0.3%). Thus the average age of learners was found to be 46.80 years with standard deviation of 11.96 years. Most of the learners were married ones (97.5%) and only 2.5% unmarried. Further, 38.3% of the learners were cultivator, while 23.8, 17.8, 16.5, 2.0, 1.3 and 0.2 percent of the learners were businessman, weaver, household chores, labourer, vendor and unemployed respectively. Thus, the average annual income of the learners was found to be Rs. 28,767 with Rs. 13,477 (SD).

It was also known from the number of male family members was less than that of the female family members. The average numbers of male and female children was 1.02 and 1.34 with standard deviation of 0.93 and 1.16 respectively. Out of 600 learners, 584 (97.3%) of them had no illiterate family members and only 16 families had illiterate family members of which one was male and 15 females.

It is observed that majority of the respondent (32.3%) stated that lack of family support was the main reason for their illiteracy. Again 13.5% of them reported that they had left the school due to their health problems, while 11.2% of them reported having no facilities of learning in their neighbourhood. Again 3.2% and 6.8% of the learners become illiterate because of the poor economic condition of the family and of the shyness of late learning respectively. Similarly, 4.0% of them stated that they had left school as they thought that learning was wasting of time.

From the above discussion it may be concluded that most of the learners became illiterates due to lack of support of the family members and poor economic condition. There were several factors responsible for illiteracy; some of the learners had more than one factor, but the main factors of illiteracy have been considered in the present analysis.

It is clear that lack of family support and poor economic condition of learners were the main factors responsible for illiteracy of learners. Further, an attempt was made to examine whether there was any variation in the factors responsible for illiteracy in accordance with the differences in their occupation, income of the family and type of family. It has been revealed from  $\chi^2$ -test that there was no

significant variation in the factors responsible for illiteracy of learners due to differences in their occupation.

Similarly, the factors responsible for illiteracy of learners were not statistically significant due to their differences in family income and type of family. Thus, occupation, income of the family and type of family were not influencing variables on illiteracy of learners.

The main factor responsible for dropout was lack of regular classes (19.33%) and it was followed by inconvenient timing of class (19.17%), expectation was not met in the centre (19.00%), poor infrastructure of the centre (15.17), lack of motivation (14.17%), location of the centre was not suitable (8.50%), defects in course materials (2.00%), poor economic condition of the family (1.50%), and lack of good work and behaviour of the volunteer teacher (1.17).

From the above discussion it may be concluded that the major factors of dropout are: expectations were not met in the centre, lack of regular classes, inconvenient timing of literacy classes.

The factors responsible for dropout were further examined on the basis of income and type of family. Altogether 256 learners were in the income group of Rs. 20,000-25,000 per annum and out of which, 61 learners (23.1%) held the opinion that inconvenient timing of class was the major factor responsible for dropout, while 55 learners (20.8%) suggested that lack of regular classes was the factor responsible for it. Some other factors were also identified, but they were not significant. Those in the income group Rs. 25,000-30,000 suggested that lack of regular class (20.2%), expectation was not met in the centre (19.0%), poor infrastructure of the centre (16.6%), inconvenient timing (15.8%) and lack of motivation (15.0%) were the main factors. In the higher income group of Rs. 30,000-35,000, the main factors responsible for dropout were: not fulfilling the expectation of the learners in the centre and other factors. There were only two learners whose annual family income was above Rs. 35,000 and one of them suggested that inconvenient timing of class was a factor responsible for dropout and the another learner suggested lack of motivation. The variation in the opinion on the factor responsible for dropping out by income was not statistically significant ( $\chi^2=28.464$  and  $p=0.241$ ), in the sense that the different income group of learners had no different views in the factors responsible for dropping out. Similarly, there was no variation in the opinion on the factor responsible for it by the type of family.

## Conclusion

The value of the programme that is basic literacy, basic education, vocational and continuing education (Lifelong Education) could only be achieved only when the adult learners and the whole society become enthusiastic in the literacy programme. The state government should earnestly manage to impart purposefully and successfully the needed education among the different section of the people and it is quite clear that “mass involvement is the key to the successful implementation of the various literacy programme”.

Again, the adult learner is being projected to learn and sustain literacy and adult education skills as a matter of right to participate actively in a literate environment and as an outcome of quality human resource. Literacy and adult education skills are not being pursued just as a matter of adding to the number of the literates, but adding to the pool of quality of the human resources that the Nation so badly needs and the spread of education among women leads to improvement in their status which in turn leads to further educational, social and economic development.

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