CHAPTER VII
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The complex and interrelated changes of unprecedented nature and magnitude facing the world of today, as a result of advancements in science, technology, communication, emphasis on development strategies and priorities leading to competition in all fields of human endeavour have exposed the people to responsibilities and tasks for which they were not prepared and for which they require continuous education and training. Need is to advance towards the learning societies having lifelong opportunities of education for all, of any type, form and level.

Education by way of growth in knowledge, proficiency, skills, and modification in terms of attitudes and values is a potent input for socio-economic advancement, modernisation and empowerment. It has been given a place of great importance and pride by all the civilised societies through centuries. The International Education Commission (1996) states that education for the 21st Century should be built on Four Pillars of learning: Learning to know, Learning to do, Learning to be, and Learning to live together: live with others.

'Education For All' implies provision of educational opportunities to every individual according to his capabilities. It is, therefore, suicidal to have 900 million illiterate adults in the world, out of which 268.42 million (1997) are in India. The adult population of a country has an immediate role to play in the national development. The literate population is able to utilise and add to the existing knowledge leading to human resource development in a better way.

Adult education is the most significant welfare idea of this generation, an emerging field of study. It is based on the concept of multi-disciplinary approach, it is a teaching and learning science with its own principles based on
its own learning. It is such a form of education which adults voluntarily undertake for their own development as individuals and as members of the society. Originally, its scope did not stretch farther than learning the three R’s i.e. acquiring the ability of Reading, Writing and Numeracy equivalent to what is usually known as census literacy.

The concept of adult education has undergone a metamorphosis during the last few decades. Shah (1981) remarked, “Adult Education is difficult to describe and almost impossible to define because it is found in so many different forms under sponsorship of a wide variety of institutions and agencies” (in Pati, 1996).

According to Ansari (1984), “Adult Education constitutes a package of educational activities and programmes for out-of school youth and adults outside the formal education system. This education aims at providing reliable and adequate information, knowledge and skills with a view to improving the style of living and also learning capacity of the clientele (as quoted by Correa, 1995).

The history of adult education in India is as old as the civilization itself. It was there in the form of mass education from the ancient days, provided through the medium of social and religious institutions. During the British Period adult education became an integral part of the state policies and programmes.

Unfortunately, due to innumerable foreign invasions in the country from time to time and British Rule for almost 200 years, a country with the oldest and richest civilization with a rich tradition of education, submerged into poverty, ignorance and mass illiteracy. At the time of Independence, the literacy rate in India was just about 16 per cent. The nation had to work towards its development and growth, hence the National Government felt the need to educate the illiterate masses to enable them to actively participate in the development process of the country.

148
The emergence of 'Social Education' was the first important landmark in the direction of removal of illiteracy in independent India which aimed at inculcation of social and civic consciousness in the masses along with the provision of basic literacy skills.

Adult education received a place of significance in all the Five Year Plans, starting from the First plan (1951-56) to the Ninth plan (1997-2002). Various programmes have been launched, e.g. F.F.L.P., N.F.E. for 15-25 age-group, R.F.L.P and many more in different plan periods. National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) was launched on 2nd October, 1978 which brought a New Era in the history of adult education in India. It aimed at eradication of illiteracy from the 15-35 age-group, estimated to be 110 million, in a period of 5 years. The programme is still continuing although the strategies for achieving the goal have been changing from time to time, but the target has still not been achieved.

Reorientation of education system so as to enable the country to meet the challenges of the next century has been the strategy of the planning process since NPE (1986). The main thrust areas have been achievement of Universal Elementary education, Eradication of illiteracy in the 15-35 age-group, and development of Continuing Education programmes.

To impart a new sense of urgency, seriousness and missionary zeal to the programme, eradication of illiteracy in the 15-35 age-group was declared a national mission namely National Literacy Mission (NLM) in 1988. For the first time an area-specific, time-bound, cost-effective, campaign approach was implemented through the Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) mode, wherein the community became responsible for running its own development programmes and consequently determining its future.

The first breakthrough came in Kerala, in Kottayam city, followed by Ernakulam district in 1989. Total Literacy Campaign in Ernakulam served as a role model for the entire country and ensured the near ascendancy of campaign mode in adult education.
7.2 NEED OF THE STUDY

As we set foot into the new millennium, it gives us the opportunity to reflect upon the efforts made and to learn from our failures. The Ninth five year plan (1997-2002) launched in the 50th year of Independence stated that this was an opportune movement to take stock of the success of our planning process as well as its failure, and to provide appropriate direction for the socio-economic development of the country. The emphasis in adult education would be on restoring the lost momentum of the programme. Literacy is essentially a powerful input in the overall development and empowerment of the of the individual, and social transformation. It is a pre-requisite for development of any nation.

The provisional population trends of the Census of India, 2001 released by the Census Commissioner recently, state that the literacy rate among the population + 7 years stands at 65.38 per cent and corresponding figures for males and females are 75.85 and 54.16 per cent (Times of India, 27th March, 2001). As the literacy experts hold that full literacy for India means the sustainable threshold level of 75 per cent, then India could be expected to touch this level by the year 2005 to 2006, thereby fulfilling the latest NLM goal of attaining full literacy i.e. threshold level of 75 per cent by the year 2005 (India, 2000). To tackle the problem of residual illiteracy, it has been decided to adopt an integrated approach i.e. T.L.C, PLP and CEP will be implemented under one literacy project to achieve continuity, efficiency and convergence. Various other strategies have also been developed to provide significance to the programme of adult education.

The creditable performance of the National Literacy Mission received International recognition when it was awarded UNESCO’s NOMA Literacy Prize for the year 1999.

The NSSO (1997) data shows appreciable raise in literacy rates, but it has also brought out regional, sex, and rural-urban variations. The country still has a huge task ahead, of educating 268.42 million illiterate adults.
needing concerted, integrated and continuous efforts, because this number is almost as large as it was about forty years ago. Another very important task is to provide Basic Education to the neo-literates through continuing education mode.

The ongoing integrated projects of T.L.C., P.L.C., C.E.C. are good but need to be implemented very vigorously. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of these projects is essential in order to assess their working and effectiveness. These projects are time-bound, the investment is high and the targets to be achieved are also high. It is logical for the planners and administrators to ensure continuously that optimum return is obtained. Therefore, it becomes necessary to conceive and workout a systematic plan of evaluation. The idea of a comprehensive evaluation gains some meaning if it is provided for at each and every stage of the programme and is intended to improve the overall efficiency for raising the outcome to an optimum level. Evaluation in adult education, therefore, has a place of great significance (Kumari, 1994).

Evaluation is a broad and many faceted concept. Literally, evaluation means ‘assessing the value of’ and it is undertaken in all spheres of life. It is a value judgement of the social utility, desirability or effectiveness of a process, product or programme. The main purpose of evaluation is to promote learning, point out the way to progress and to assess the accountability of actors.

Evaluation of the adult education programmes in India has been emphasised since beginning, more so since NAEP (1978) and NPE (1986). The literacy programme have been subjected to intensive evaluation by the approved government agencies as well as through independent research works to improve their credit worthiness. There is an increased emphasis on formative evaluation these days. Further, the results of evaluation studies need to be fed-back in the whole gamut of procedures, policies of planning and management of the programme. The researcher, therefore, thought of
undertaking an indepth evaluation study of the development, present status and functioning of adult education programme in his home state i.e. Assam.

The state of Assam spread over an area of 78,438 Sq. Kms. is a major North Eastern State, divided into two valleys by the mighty river Brahmaputra, has hilly terrains and innumerable rivers causing frequent floods. The state has 23 districts and 175 development blocks.

Assam had been identified as one of the nine educationally backward states of India. The total population of Assam as per 1991 census was 2.23 crores, 1.16 crores males, and 1.07 crores females. The literacy rate was 53.42 per cent, male 61.87 per cent and female 43.03 per cent. As per the provisional figures of Census 2001, the population of Assam has risen to 2.66 crores, 1.38 crores males and 1.28 crores females. The literacy rate has risen to 64.28 per cent, male 71.93 per cent and female 56.03 per cent. The literacy rate of 64.28 per cent is below the National Average of 65.38 per cent.

The tradition of adult education in Assam is quite old starting from the pre-independence days and continuing till date. But its progress has been very slow, sporadic and scanty. The NAEP was launched in Assam in 1980-81, through RFLP and SAEP projects. The TLC's have now covered 17 out of the 23 districts and 5 districts have started PLP also.

Out of the 23 districts in the state, 2 districts i.e. Barpeta and Dhubri were taken for evaluating the adult education programme. Barpeta district is situated on the western side and Dhubri district is situated on the extreme south-western part of the state. Barpeta and Dhubri districts stand at 4th and 5th positions in population in the state with the total population of 16.42 lakhs and 16.35 lakhs respectively as per Census, 2001. In respect of the density of population, Dhubri district stands at 2nd position and Barpeta at 6th position. Barpeta district with the literacy rate of 57.35 per cent and Dhubri with the literacy rate of 49.86 per cent stand at 21st and 23rd positions in the state. Dhubri district has the lowest literacy percentage in the state.
The researcher felt the need to evaluate the adult education programme in the state since to the best of his knowledge, only one or two such research works have been undertaken till now. It is hoped that the findings of this study and suggestions made thereof will help the programme planners and managers in adopting the right strategies for modifying the functioning of ongoing TLC/PLP/CEP, wherever necessary.

7.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

“EVALUATION OF NATIONAL ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMME (NAEP) IN THE STATE OF ASSAM IN RESPECT OF PLANNING, ORGANISATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT”.

7.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To trace the development of Adult Education Programme in the state of Assam in Post-Independence period.

2. To study the development of Adult Education in Barpeta and Dhubri districts in the state of Assam.

3. To evaluate the adult Learners opinions regarding the functioning of Adult Education Programme in Barpeta and Dhubri districts in Assam state.

4. To evaluate the achievement of adult learners in literacy skills in Barpeta and Dhubri districts.

5. To evaluate the Instructors opinions regarding the functioning of Adult Education Programme in Barpeta and Dhubri districts in Assam state.

6. To evaluate the opinions of Adult Education Officers regarding the functioning of Adult Education Programme in Assam

7. To identify the major problems obstructing the requisite implementation of Adult Education Programme in Assam.
8. To make suggestions for the modification of the Adult Education Programme in Assam.

7.5 HYPOTHESES

The present study was conducted on the basis of the objectives that have been stated in section 7.4. No hypotheses were stated explicitly but these were implied by the objectives only as was found suitable for this descriptive historical-cum-evaluation study.

7.6 CONCLUSIONS BASED ON THE STUDY OF DEVELOPMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION IN ASSAM AND THE OPINIONS OF ADULT LEARNERS, INSTRUCTORS & EDUCATION OFFICERS

The major conclusions which emerged on the basis of analysis of data in the present study have been presented in a summary fashion in this section.

7.6A DEVELOPMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION IN ASSAM

Assam a major state of North Eastern region of India, spread over 78,438 Sq. Kms., has been divided into two valleys by the mighty river Brahmaputra. The state has hilly terrains and innumerable rivers causing frequent floods. It has heterogeneous population. Assam has 23 districts and 175 development blocks.

The total population of the state as per 1991 census was 2.23 crores, 1.16 crores males and 1.07 crores females. The population as per Census, 2001 (Provisional Information) has gone upto 2.66 crores, out of which 1.38 crores are males and 1.28 crores are females.

The literacy rate of Assam in 1991 was 53.42 per cent in +7 age group, male literacy rate was 61.87 per cent and female was 43.03 per cent. The literacy rate in the state has risen to 64.28 per cent as per Census, 2001 exhibiting a leap of 10.86 per cent in ten years, but it is still lower than the national average of 65.38 per cent. The percentage of literacy in males is 71.93 and in females it is 56.03 per cent.
The total illiterate population in 1991 in +7 age-group was 84.77 lakhs, 35.92 lakhs were men, and 48.85 lakhs were women. The total number of illiterates as per census, 2001 is not yet known.

Adult education has a long tradition in the state. Some famous saints provided education to adults through informal ways in the 16th century. Jana Shiksha Abhiyan was started in 1940 by the then Prime Minister. Some night schools were also opened but the movement was restricted to a few areas and that too was shattered by World War II.

Social education wing was opened in 1950, which was later on combined with C.D.P. in 1952, but it had very little success. In 1960 sporadic literacy projects were taken up in one or two districts and tea garden estates.

Literacy movement in Assam though started in 1951 picked-up momentum after NAEP was launched in the state in the year 1980-81 during the sixth plan period, initially with 8 RFLP and 16 SAEP projects. From the year 1980 to 1997, different projects under NAEP excluding TLC, targeted to make 52.5 lakhs illiterate adults literate in the 15-35 age-group, out of which about 43 lakhs adults were enrolled in the literacy centres, and 28.5 lakhs were made literate. In the same period, about 9 lakhs SC/ST adults were also made literate.

TLC started in Assam in the year 1993. It has fully covered 17 out of the 23 districts in the state and 2 districts have been partly covered. PLP has been started in 5 districts.

The literacy percentage in Assam (64.28%) has risen no doubt but there are large male-female, rural-urban and SC/ST variations (NSSO, 1997).

Appreciable trend is that females are outnumbering males in almost all the plan periods in both literacy and post-literacy programmes. The SC/ST adults are also enrolling in the literacy programmes and completing them as well.
Barpeta District

Barpeta district has a population of 16.42 lakhs, 8.46 lakhs are males and 7.96 lakhs are females as per Census, 2001 provisional report. It has more of rural population i.e. 12.88 lakhs than the urban population which was 97,318 thousand only in 1991.

The literacy rate in Barpeta district was 43.24 per cent, 52.61 per cent male and 33.20 per cent female (1991). The literacy rate of the district has gone upto 57.35 per cent, male 65.95 per cent and female 48.16 per cent (Census, 2001). The percentage of literacy although has risen still is much lower than the state average of 64.28 per cent. The district stands at 21st position in literacy rate in the state.

From the time adult education programme started in Barpeta in 1984-85 till 1997-98 i.e. in 13 years, 1.44 lakhs adult illiterates were enrolled and 1.03 lakhs were made literate.

Survey work for TLC was started in Nov., 1997 wherein 2.48 lakhs illiterate adults were identified, 1.09 lakhs males and 1.38 lakhs females. T.L.C. has since completed two years of functioning but the number of illiterates covered was not known by the time of completion of this study. The process of starting PLP has been initiated.

Dhubri District

Dhubri district, created in 1984 is situated on the extreme south-western part of Assam. Its total population as per provisional report of Census, 2001 is 16.35 lakhs, 8.41 lakhs males and 7.94 lakhs females. Population-wise the district stands at 5th rank, and is the most thickly populated district in the state. It is a Muslim dominated area.

Dhubri is educationally a very backward state. The literacy rate of 38.36 per cent (1991) was the lowest in the state. It has gone upto 49.86 per cent as per Census, 2001, which is again the lowest and very low as against the
state average of 64.28 per cent. The male and female literacy rates are 56.61 per cent and 42.64 per cent respectively (Census, 2001).

Adult education programme started in 1984-85, had completed 15 phases by the year 1994-95. During this period 93,115 thousand adults were enrolled and 41,889 thousand successfully completed the literacy programme.

Survey work for TLC started in Dhubri district in 1996 wherein 3.06 lakhs illiterate adults were identified. The data of enrolments and achievements was not available. However, it was reported that the attendance of illiterates in the literacy centres was very less due to their disinterest.

7.6B OPINIONS OF LEARNERS

Biographic Information of the adult learners

Out of the 200 adult learners selected for the study, more than three-fourth i.e. 155 (77.5%) were from the rural areas and 45 (22.5%) respondents were from the urban areas of Barpeta and Dhubri districts. Male adult learners were 103(51.5%) and females were 97(48.5%).

Two-third respondents i.e. 129 (64.5%) belonged to the 25-35 age-group and one-third 71(35.5%) were from the 15-25 age-group.

Almost three-fourth of the learners i.e. 146 (73%) were Muslims and one-fourth 54 (27%) were Hindus. Maximum number of the adult learners i.e. 184 (92%) belonged to general category. Only 12(6%) learners were from the scheduled castes and 4(2%) were from scheduled tribes.

Two-third of the learners i.e. 135 (67.5%) belonged to the lower levels of occupation and income. They were employed in agriculture sector, labourers, rickshaw-pullers, craftsmen, herdsmen, and in small scale business. 41(20.5%) were housewives and the remaining 24(12%) learners were not working. Regarding their financial status, 128(64%) respondents belonged to the lowest two income groups i.e. between Rs. 100 to 999. 55(27.5%) out of the remaining
adults were earning between Rs. 1000 to 1499, and only 12(6%) were earning between Rs. 1500 to 2000. Five (2.5%) learners were unemployed.

Almost two-third of the respondents in the sample i.e. 139 (69.5%) were married and 61 (30.5%) were unmarried. About three-fourth of the married adults i.e. 108 (77%) had between 3 to 5 children each and 31(23%) learners had 1 to 2 children each.

There was not even one educated member in the families of 60(30%) adults, whereas in case of the remaining 140(70%) learners there were one or more educated persons in the family.

LEARNERS OPINIONS ABOUT ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMME

There was general lack of realization about the importance of education in people, as only 116 (58%) respondents said that children between 6-14 age-group in their family were attending schools. Illiterate members from only 10(5%) of the respondents' families were attending literacy classes. Very few adult learners i.e. 43(21.5%) had gone to school earlier whereas majority of them 157 (78.5%) had never been to school.

More than 90 per cent adult learners' reasons for leaving / not going to school were: lack of facilities available, no interest in studies, poor economic condition and lack of motivation. Next came (between 70 to 80%) shortage of time, inconvenient timings, poor quality of school building, unhealthy environment, distance of the school, and guardian's negligence. Non-availability of learning materials, irrelevant curriculum, unsatisfactory teaching, rude behaviour of teachers, improper equipment, discouragement from family and education not related to daily life were also cited as reasons by about 50 per cent learners. Religious beliefs was also cited by 9 per cent adults as the reason for not going to school earlier.

The main reasons given for joining literacy classes were: for acquiring literacy skills (100%), acquisition of knowledge (82.5%), and desire to learn & understand own duties & responsibilities (50%).
The instructors played an important role in motivating illiterate adults (72.5%) in joining literacy class. Twenty five per cent adults joined of their own free will, which is very encouraging.

An overwhelming majority of the respondents i.e. 93 per cent reported that they were not satisfied with the physical environment of the literacy centres. Almost half (52.5%) of the adult learners reported that they were not attending literacy classes regularly. The classes were held between 3 to 5 days per week, for 1½ to 2 hours in a day. The timings of the class was not suitable as reported by majority of the learners (81 per cent). The reasons given were: could not do their work fully (86.5%), and there was pressure of work in the afternoon (40%).

As reported by 175 (87.5%) respondents the literacy classes were not held regularly. The reasons cited were : lack of payment to instructors (81%) ; personal problems of instructors & learners (67.5%); road blocks in rainy season (32.5%); and lack of administrative control. Lack of motivation, time and interest on the part of the learners were also cited as the factors for irregular holding of literacy classes. Literacy classes were held at different places i.e. instructor’s home (53.5%), local primary school (23%), high school (15%), local clubs (8.5%) depending upon availability of place. Almost half (57.5%) learners were not satisfied with the place.

The primary emphasis in the literacy classes was on teaching of literacy skills i.e. Reading, Writing, Arithmetic as reported by cent per cent respondents. Only 20 per cent respondents said that vocational activities like preparing articles with bamboo, making handkerchiefs and table clothes were undertaken, meaning thereby that functional component was lacking.

Regarding the awareness component, it was encouraging to find that majority of the respondents (between 60-100 per cent) were told about significant social issues like: primary health care, benefits of family planning, proper weights and measures, child-care practices, important vaccinations, value of protected drinking water, and better housekeeping. Some other
important issues discussed were: dangers of drinking and smoking, cooperative societies and peoples organisations, social evils like untouchability and dowry system.

However, very few learners (about 15%) had been told about some other significant issues like value of viewing educative programme on Radio & T. V., rights of land ownership, act relating to compulsory elementary education, improved varieties of fertilizers & seeds, latest technology for agricultural development, voting rights & elections etc. Regarding other activities, important festivals were celebrated as per 65.5 per cent learners, but dramatic activities, field visit etc. were hardly undertaken.

The adult learners were making use of the knowledge gained in their daily lives in the matters of cleanliness, family planning, drinking pure water, awareness about removing the sin of illiteracy, becoming self-reliant (Between 55 to 75% positive response).

Lecture and Discussion were the most popular methods of teaching used in literacy classes (100% response). Activity method was also used by about one-third of the instructors. No other method of teaching was used. The learners in majority (87.5%) were satisfied with the teaching methods used.

The supply of learning material was quite satisfactory. However, primers were not supplied to some learners (27.5%) and paper and note-books were not given at all.

Behaviour, competency, and teaching style of the instructors was found to be quite satisfactory (above 87.5% positive response).

Evaluation of learners was found to be a weak point of the adult education programme in both Barpeta and Dhubri districts. As per 82 (41%) learners the instructors were not evaluating the learners at all. The evaluation methods used were oral only (12.5%), written only (25%), and both combined (21.5%).
Lack of equipment for entertainment; unsuitable timings; scarcity of time; lack of interest & motivation; domestic responsibilities; and inconvenience in commuting during rainy season were acting as barriers in the participation of adult learners in literacy classes, in decreasing percentage of response (between 100-50% response).

Adult learners in majority (91%) were found to be dissatisfied with the adult education programme, in general. Nevertheless, this did not dissuade them from encouraging others to join literacy class.

Regarding the attainment of literacy skills, on the basis of the test results, it can be concluded that, on the whole, the adult learners in the present study were equally placed in Reading, Writing, Comprehension, and Arithmetic skills. Their performance was very encouraging as 95 per cent learners got ‘Good’, ‘Very Good’ & ‘Excellent’ gradings and only 5 per cent were in ‘Average’ & ‘Below Average’ categories. 162 i.e. 81 per cent respondents scored between 31 to 50, which falls in ‘Good’ & ‘Very Good’ categories. There were 28 (14%) learners in the ‘Excellent’ category, scoring between 51 to 60. Only 6(3%) learners were found to be in the ‘Below Average’ group and 4(2%) in ‘Average’ group.

7.6C OPINIONS OF INSTRUCTORS

Bio-data of Instructors

Out of the total sample of 25 instructors, 23(92%) were from the rural areas and 2(8%) were from urban areas of both Barpeta and Dhubri districts.

15(60%) were males and 10(40%) were females. 15(60%) instructors were between the age-group of 18 to 25 years and 10(40%) were between the age-group of 25-35 years. A large number of instructors in the sample i.e. 16(64%) were unmarried and 9(36%) were married.

More than three-fourth of the instructors i.e. 22(88%) were Muslims and 3(12%) were Hindus. Instructors were mainly from the general categories.
of caste i.e. 20(80%). Only 5(20%) instructors belonged to S.C., S.T., & O.B.C. categories.

About two-third i.e. 16(64%) teachers were students. Out of the remaining 9 instructors, 4(16%) were employed and 5(20%) were unemployed. The respondents in majority i.e. 18 (72%) belonged to the lower income levels i.e. between Rs.1 to 2000. The remaining 7(28%) respondents, who were student did not mention their income.

More than half of the respondents i.e. 15(60%) were studying in under-graduate classes, while 10(40%) instructors were graduates. Cent per cent instructors were appointed by selection procedure.

Almost half i.e. 12(48%) instructors were teaching the adults voluntarily whereas 13(52%) were participating under pressure.

OPINIONS OF INSTRUCTORS ABOUT ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Most of the voluntary instructors were teaching by force of circumstances e.g. more than two-third i.e. 16(64%) of them were students and were teaching adults as a course requirement. Only 6(24%) volunteers were genuinely interested in this work.

Cent per cent instructors had received training of one month duration, and most of them (72%) were satisfied with it.

Only 5(20%) volunteers had three months experience of teaching adults, whereas majority i.e. 20(80%) had no experience.

All the instructors had 10 learners in their class, which is also the official requirement.

The learners had been enrolled through door to door contact by all the instructors. They had not been helped in this process by any other agency.

The attendance of learners was irregular as per all the 25 instructors.
Drop-out rate was high as reported by 9(36%) instructors. Lack of interest, personal problems, scarcity of time, lack of motivation and inadequate timing of class were mentioned as the factors responsible for irregular attendance and high drop-out rate, in the same order of priority.

The main problem faced by the instructors in holding classes was inadequacy of time-table (64%). Other difficulties were inadequate seating/lighting / fans arrangements, lack of remuneration, motivation, interest, and time on part of the instructors.

The literacy classes were held mainly at instructors' own home (44%), at local L.P. and High Schools (40%) and at local Clubs (16%). Almost half of the instructors (44%) were not satisfied with this arrangement.

The teaching / learning material provided was satisfactory and relevant as per 80 per cent instructors. But the supply of material was inadequate.

The main emphasis in the adult education programme in both Barpeta and Dhubri districts, was on literacy skills i.e. Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic. Vocational component was totally lacking except for a little bit of craft work. Awareness about some important issues relating to health, family planning, child-care practices was provided, but on the whole, this component was also not very effective.

'Lecture' followed by 'Discussion' were the two most preferred methods of teaching. However, about 50 per cent instructors were also using 'Activity' method.

Except for some cultural activities and organisation of fetes by a few respondents, no other activity was undertaken in the class by the instructors.

Learners' evaluation was done through written and oral tests. Frequency of test was between 15 to 20 days. None of the 25 instructors reported being satisfied with the performance of their wards.
Support was extended to the instructors by cent per cent supervisors, project officers, village and government level workers, and local leaders.

In running the centres the instructors faced problem of lack of facilities, irregularity of learners, inconvenient location, inadequate supply of teaching / learning materials, lack of co-operation from officials, and irrelevant curriculum, in the receding order of priority. However, when the problems were reported, the supervisors and others tried to help as much as they could.

Majority of the instructors i.e. 24(96%) reported that they got respect and recognition from the learners, community and their seniors. The respondents were not satisfied with this work and were not interested to teach the adults in subsequent years.

The instructors considered teaching the literacy classes as wastage of time since the learners had little interest in studying, the time-table was inadequate and this work had no future job prospects.

All the instructors considered literacy beneficial for adult learners in their day-to-day living.

7.6D OPINIONS OF ADULT EDUCATION OFFICERS

Bio-data of Education Officers

There were 6 adult education officers, 3 from the district level, two from the directorate level and one Journalist.

From the District level officials, one was District Adult Education Officer (DAEO) and the other two were supervisors. All three were within the age-range of 34-50 years. All of them were males, married and their educational qualification were B.A., B.A./B.T., and B.A./diploma in Management and maintenance authority respectively. Their experience as an adult education officer was 7,10 and 19 years respectively.

Regarding the Directorate level officers, one of them was Asstt. Director Adult Education (ADAE), Kamrup, Guwahati, one was Research Officer and
there was one Journalist, Editor Janasikshan. All three were within the age-range of 33 to 56 years, were males and married. One of them was B.A./B.T., the other was M.A. and the last one was a graduate with P.G. Diploma in Journalism and M.C. All three of them had teaching experience in the field of adult education for 16 years, 7 years and 15 years respectively.

**OPINIONS OF ADULT EDUCATION OFFICERS**

The opinions of the two levels of officials regarding the reasons for Assam being an educationally backward state and its high rate of illiteracy were not much different from each other. The main contributing factors according to them were: illiteracy, ignorance, and poverty of masses, frequent floods and poor transport facilities, unapproachable hilly/tribal areas, negligence of women education, rapid population growth, inadequate educational facilities and inadequate help from the central government. Lack of vocational input in education was also considered an important factor for high drop-out rates.

The development of adult education programme in Assam has been very slow, sporadic and scanty. NAEP started in 1980-81 followed by TLC’s. Overall, the programme has not been very effective due to ineffective implementation. Lack of perspective and motivation on part of the government, NGO’s, teachers, learners, and all others concerned with these programmes were the main reasons of their failure according to these officers. Lack of publicity was also a major drawback. However, the officials are hopeful of the success of the programme in removing illiteracy from the state in the near future.

The education officers at both the levels opined that the planning of various adult education programmes has been systematic and appropriate as per the norms of the existing scheme and in accordance with the finance sanctioned by the central and state government.

The officials from both the District and Directorate levels said that the organisation of the programme was very systematic. Hierarchical structure at
all the levels is very well organised. District, Block, Panchayat, Village level committees have been formed.

The implementation of the programme was systematic and suitable strategies have been developed as per the district level officials. The ADAE told that 70 per cent success rate was achieved. Programme has covered almost all districts of Assam. Concentration has been more on rural and remote areas.

The officer at both the levels reported facing certain similar problems in the implementation of the programme. Non-availability of funds was the core issue. Inadequate funds for centres, furniture, teaching/learning materials etc and procedural delays in release of funds have been perceived as the main problems encountered by them.

Lack of motivation amongst learners was standing as an obstacle in the way of proper implementation. Despite various motivation strategies, total success has still not been achieved.

Some administrative and office staff related difficulties were also perceived. Lack of guidance and support from higher authorities was reported by the district level officials.

The district adult education officers said that regarding the impact of the programme, from the initial reports it was hoped that better results would be obtained. It can be concluded that the adult education programme despite its problems has now been received well by the people of Assam state. The motivation and participation of women has been high.

The district level officers, particularly the supervisors expressed that nobody – learners, instructors, supervisors, education officers were fully satisfied with the existing position of adult education programme in the state mainly because of paucity of funds. Voluntary instructors are not paid any remuneration or given any other incentives or facilities, hence they have little
interest. Similarly nothing is done to enhance the earning capacity of learners leading to their disinterest.

The Directorate level officials said that the current campaign mode was better than the centre-based approach.

7.7 MAIN FINDINGS

The state of Assam has literacy rate of 64.28 per cent, which is still below the national average of 65.38 per cent.

There was consistency between the appraisal of the programme by the learners and instructors and to some extent of education officers.

The main factors perceived by the learners, instructors and education officers, contributing towards the overall educational backwardness in Assam are: poverty, illiteracy and ignorance of masses, lack of awareness on the part of people at large about the importance of education, inadequate educational facilities particularly in Tribal & Rural areas, negligence of women education, less emphasis on vocational education, inadequate support from Central and State governments, and frequent floods causing havoc.

In addition to the factors responsible for overall educational backwardness failure of compulsory primary education, and lack of vocational input were causing large scale drop-outs at primary and secondary education stages. Rapid population growth, particularly among the illiterate people in remote areas, and negligence of girl education were also found to be the major reasons for higher illiteracy rate in the state of Assam.

Adult education movement although started in Assam before Independence and from the year 1951 onwards, when Social Education programme was launched, but its development has been slow, sporadic and scanty. NAEP started in the state in the year 1980-81, has not been very successful due to lack of proper planning and organisation, ineffective implementation, lack of perspective and motivation on the part of the government, NGOs, teachers, learners, and community at large.

167
In the opinion of the adult education officers, while planning the adult education programmes existing norms are followed. Concentration of adult education programmes has been more on rural areas. SC/ST learners have also been attending the literacy classes.

The adult education officers state that the organisation of the programme is systematic in the sense that hierarchical structure has been established at all the levels i.e. state, district, block, panchayat & village.

However, no surveys were undertaken for identifying the needs of learners. Nothing was done for building environment for literacy. Hence, the learners and community at large were not interested in the programme.

Programme implementation was not very effective mainly due to paucity of funds, procedural delays in the release of money, loose administrative control, lack of proper supervision, and lack of motivation on the part of learners leading to their irregular attendance and high drop-out rates.

The instructors also lack motivation to teach as they are not paid remuneration, or any other incentives and proper facilities. Hence, they are teaching not by choice but by force of circumstances.

No body learners, instructors, supervisors, education officers were found to be fully satisfied with the existing adult education programme.

The programme has had some impact, as the learners reported having become aware about the importance of cleanliness, family-planning, family life, drinking pure water and becoming self-reliant. They had also known about certain social evils. The participation of women has increased.

Evaluation of learners was found to be the weakest link of the programme. About half of the learners reported not being evaluated at all.
7.8 MAJOR PROBLEM AREAS

The 7th objective was to identify the major problem areas blocking proper implementation of adult education programme in Assam. The major impediments standing in the way of proper implementation of the programme which have emerged on the basis of the appraisal of Adult Education Programme in Assam and opinions of the Learners, Instructors, and Education Officers about the functioning of the programme are:

1. Generally all ZSS are voluntary organisations, whereas in Assam the TLC run like a government programme, hence there is poor response to the programme from the community at large and illiterate adults in particular which is standing as an obstacle in the way of proper implementation of the programme.

2. Paucity of funds and procedural delays in the release of funds emerged to be the most crucial problem area contributing towards many other problems.

3. There is lack of perspective and motivation on the part of all i.e. the NGOs instructors, learners, supervisors, community, and administrators at all levels.

4. There was lack of motivation to learn in the adult learners due to the following reasons:
   - The place and timing of the centres were not according to their satisfaction.
   - Facilities like proper seating / lighting arrangements were lacking in the centres. There were no electric fans as well.
   - Supply of teaching / learning materials to the centres was inadequate. Note- books and pencils were not given at all. At some places even the primers were in short supply.
Curriculum was not related. Emphasis was mainly on the attainment of literacy skills i.e. Reading, Writing & Numeracy.

Vocational education / training was almost totally lacking except for some craftwork at a few centres. Hence, nothing is done to enhance the earning capacity of the poor learners leading to their irregular attendance or drop-out.

Awareness component although was fairly satisfactory yet they did not provide information about some very important areas like citizenship education, voting rights, people’s organisations etc.

No cultural or entertainment activities were undertaken.

5. Instructors were not teaching the illiterate adults by choice but by force of circumstances. They lack motivation due to:

- Poor attendance and lack of interest on the part of learners.
- They are not paid any remuneration, or any other incentives like some benefits, future job opportunities etc.
- Lack of adequate support and guidance from learners, supervisors, community at large and other functionaries.

6. Evaluation of learners was the weakest link of the programme. Almost half of the learners reported that no evaluation was done at all. The instructors were not satisfied with the performance of learners.

7. Due to frequent floods in the state, the learners could not come to attend literacy classes as there were no means of transportation.

8. There was lack of proper publicity of the adult education programme, leading to poor response from the community.

9. The training component was found to be weak.

10. The supervision of the programme was reported to be poor.
11. The education officers reported facing some administrative and office staff related difficulties.

7.9 SUGGESTIONS FOR MODIFICATION OF ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMME

1. Multidimensional efforts and measures have to be adopted for removing illiteracy from the state of Assam.

2. There should be a strong and workable planning unit in the Directorate of Adult Education for preparation of need based plans of adult education for different areas.

3. The Central Government should help the State Government with sufficient money so that it can continue the programme effectively.

4. The adult education officers at all levels should have proper coordination with each other, with the office staff and field workers. They should understand each other’s problems and try to provide solutions or give suggestions for handling the problems.

5. Need is to inculcate in everybody concerned with the adult education programme a feeling of sincerity, commitment and service to humanity.

6. There should be proper supervision and administrative control over the literacy centres to improve their functioning.

7. Participation of all the people irrespective of caste, race and community is imperative for making the adult education programme more effective.

8. For the motivation of learners it is important that:

- The place and timing of the class should be according to the convenience of the learners.

- If possible night classes should be started for those learners who can not come at any other time.
It is very important to make proper seating and lighting arrangements in the centres. Electric fans should also be provided.

For enabling the adults to become self-reliant, vocational education & training is a must and needs utmost emphasis.

Some financial help in the form of cash or kind can also be given to the learners for motivating them particularly women and those belonging to S.C. / S.T. classes.

Use of audio-visual aids, organisation of cultural activities, entertainment programmes, field visits, with active involvement of the local community would go a long way in motivating the adult learners and the community at large.

The programme will be more effective if some scientific & technological inputs according to the learners respective activities and interests are provided in the centres.

Learners' and instructors' demand for provision of tea at the cost of the government in the class should be fulfilled.

9. For the motivation of voluntary instructors:

They need to be given some incentives like money, job opportunities, or some other facilities.

Support and guidance from learners, community, supervisors and other adult education officers.

10. The functional literacy programme must include knowledge and information about some significant areas like population awareness, conservation of environment, citizenship education, family life, health and nutrition.
11. The SRC should ensure supply of adequate quality and quantity of teaching / learning materials i.e. primers, note-books, pencils etc. to the centres.

12. The areas entering the PLP stage need to be provided supplementary reading material in local language, suitable to the needs and interests of the neo-literates.

13. More of objective type of questions should be put. Instructors should, if possible, follow some uniform norms for evaluating literacy, functionality and awareness components of the programme. Learners progress must be evaluated continuously.

All the suggestions given above are worth consideration and if these are incorporated in the programme, hopefully the participation would increase.

7.10 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1. Evaluation study can be taken up in other districts of the state.

2. Evaluation of integrated projects of TLC/PLP/CEP can be undertaken in different districts.

3. Expectancies of neo-literates from continuing education can be assessed in order to incorporate them in the CEPs.

4. Comparative study of TLC/PLP/CEP projects in different districts of the state can be undertaken.

5. Indepth study of problems of participation of adult learners and neo-literates can be undertaken and viable solutions in consultation with the beneficiaries can be worked out.