CHAPTER – I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 LIFELONG EDUCATION

The world of today is going through rapid social, political, economic and cultural transformation due to scientific and technological advancements, information technology and explosion of knowledge. The impact of rapid advancements in science, technology and communication, the emphasis on development strategies and priorities leading to competition in all fields have raised the expectations and aspirations of people. In the face of these complex and interrelated changes of unprecedented magnitude, the citizens are called to tasks and responsibilities they can undertake only if they have suitable training for desired competence (Lengrand, 1980).

The International Education Commission (1996) states that the phenomenon of globalization particularly in the past 25 years, has brought about worldwide economic, scientific, technological, cultural, environmental, political and human interdependence. We are moving now from the local community to a world society, which needs a global approach to problems and their solutions.

For confronting the many challenges that the future holds in store, humankind sees in education an indispensable asset in its attempt to attain the ideals of peace, freedom and social justice. Education by way of growth in knowledge, proficiency, skills, creative potential and modification in terms of attitudes and values is a potent input for socio-economic advancement and modernisation. It is now increasingly being realised that education instead of being a closed circuit must reach the whole of the society, and cover the entire lifespan of an individual. ‘Learning: The Treasure Within’, a report of the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century (1996) set up by UNESCO reiterated the concept of Lifelong education emphasised by ‘Learning to be’ (1972). The commission believes that lifelong education would help in meeting the challenges posed by a rapidly changing world.
Education is a significant instrument of empowerment, individual, social and national. Hence, it has been given a place of great importance and pride by all the civilised societies through centuries. Indian scriptures regard education as a means of 'Liberation from all kinds of bondages' and for improving efficiency in all activities.

According to Gandhiji, "By education I mean all round drawing out of the best in child and man-body, mind and spirit". In the history of mankind, education has formed a continuum and a basis for the development of human society (Coombs, 1985). "Education" according to Plato "is the capacity to feel pleasure and pain at the right moment. It develops in the body and soul of man, all the beauty and perfection of which he is capable of". The foundation of such education 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 as is emphasized by the International Education Commission (1996).

Such learning has to be a continuous process accessible to all, at all stages of life, a dimension of life distinguished by continual acquisition of knowledge and ceaseless re-examination of ideas. This concept of learning signifies a transition from the idea of initial training to that of lifelong education.

Delors (1996) observes that there is a need to rethink and broaden the notion of lifelong education. Not only must it adopt to changes in the nature of work, but it must also constitute a continuous process of forming the whole human beings, making them aware of themselves, their environment, and above all education must prepare them to play all their social roles in a most effective manner. In this context the International Commission (1996) stressed the need to advance towards a learning society, where everybody is provided opportunities for learning throughout life. Lifelong education is a concept which includes every form and type of education, starting from basic education to the highest form of education. It means 'Education for All' as per their capabilities and talents at all stages of life starting from childhood to old age.
1.2 EDUCATION FOR ALL

There was time when development was measured in purely economic terms. Gradually, it has been recognised that there could be growth without development in the sense of improved conditions of living for majority of the people. Elaborate man-power surveys, statistical projections and cost-benefit analysis have their undoubted value, but they are not the whole picture. Development obviously has its economic side, which is important too, but people are people, if the human resources of the country are viewed in the same manner as the mineral and animal resources, a grossly distorted image will inevitably emerge. Real development must depend on the balanced growth of persons, both as economic and social beings.

Harbinson (1965) has rightly argued that the wealth of a country is dependent upon its natural resources and material capital but more than that on the knowledge, skills, and motivation of its people. The realization of the country’s aspirations involves changes in knowledge, skills, interests, and values of the people. An essential condition for the success of the people is the change on the ground scale. This change can be achieved only through one instrument and that is ‘education’. Education is the most effective instrument in producing complete men and women having the right attitudes and capabilities to cause and contribute to the upliftment of the society.

‘Education For All’ implies provision of educational opportunities to every individual from children to adults. Under the circumstances it is suicidal to have 900 million illiterate adults worldover. Providing literacy training and thereafter basic education to these illiterates is very important for enabling them to lead meaningful lives.

The adult population of a country has an immediate role to play in National Development. According to Jayagopal (1990) “adults are the sources of ideas, innovations, decisions and actions which influence the pattern of society, history, nation and civilization as well.”
Literacy has been acknowledged as an essential component of learning. The literate population is able to utilise and add to the existing knowledge leading to human resource development in a better way. Sadly, illiteracy has plagued the progress of most developing countries. The new international order that is being sought by the world community today, cannot be built upon divided humanity into two species, one literate and the other illiterate (Dutta, 1987).

As per World Conference on Education For All (1990), basic learning needs comprise both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy, and problem-solving) and basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning.

Education, therefore, has to be organised both from a qualitative and quantitative point of view. In this context, the present system of education which has been designed to meet the needs of an imperial administration, a few decades back, needs radical changes in various aspects to suit the present scenario. One of the major weaknesses of the existing education system is that it lays heavy responsibility on full-time instruction, ignoring the adequate development of the other two alternative channels namely part-time education and private study or informal education.

Development planners all over the world, particularly in the developing countries are concerned about the existence of 884.7 million illiterate adults in the +15 age-group, out of which 320 million are males and 564.7 million are females. Most of these illiterates are in the developing countries with India having the highest illiterate population of 290.70 million. China stood at the second position with 166.17 million illiterates although its population is more than India.
1.3 ADULT EDUCATION: CONCEPT

Adult Education is the most significant welfare idea of this generation. It's possibilities are great. It is a very broad term based on the concept of education as a continuous life-long process.

Adult Education is an emerging field of study. Even though, it was well recognised in many societies of the world for centuries, the seriousness with which it is being studied now was never done earlier. It occupies a rather special place among academic pursuits. It is based on the concept of a multi-disciplinary approach. Adult Education is a teaching and learning science with its own principles based on its own learning. Adult Education is principally a group activity directed at community improvement. Even when the fact remains that individual needs must be met, the main emphasis is on the total community.

Adult Education is any form of education which adults voluntarily undertake for their own development as individuals and as members of the society. The concept is much older than its name. The ancient practice of imparting knowledge through village-theatres, fairs, folk-singers, daily reading of religious books goes to reveal its existence in the most common and universally used form of expression. By implication it means imparting education to those who at their educable age could not or did not go in for formal schooling. It carries a sense of compensation for the denial of opportunity in childhood. Originally, its scope did not stretch farther than learning the three R's—that is acquiring the ability of reading, writing and numeracy, equivalent to what is usually known as census literacy. In India census literacy was formally equated with the ability to read and write a simple post-card letter.

The concept of adult education has undergone a metamorphosis during the last few decades. There have been lot of controversies in defining its concept. 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". According to UNESCO (1976) the term adult education denotes the entire body of organised educational process, whatever content, level and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether it prolongs or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications and bring about changes in their attitude or behaviour in two-fold prospective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development (as quoted by Correa, 1995).

According to Ansari (1984), "Adult education constitutes a package of educational activities and programmes for out-of school youth and adults outside the formal educational system. This education aims at providing reliable and adequate information, knowledge and skills with a view to improving the style and also earning capacity of the clientele. The main objective of adult education, therefore, is to enable people to become confident and self-reliant by understanding the situation in which they live and solving the problems faced by them". (as quoted by Correa, 1995)

In the words of Knowles (1980) it is a process that is used by adults for their self development both alone and with others and it is used by institutions of all kinds for the growth and development of their employees, members, clients. It is an educational process that is often used in combination with production processes, political processes or service process. It includes all the organised classes, study groups, lecture series, planned reading programmes, guided discussions, conferences, institutes, workshops and correspondence courses in which adults engage themselves (Sharma, 1990).

It can, therefore, be concluded that adult education is not merely confined to literacy training although it is one of its major components particularly in countries having mass illiteracy. It lays emphasis on the need
for creating an awareness among the illiterate masses about the conditions in which they live, so that they can change their environment. It also seeks to provide them opportunities for developing their functional competence and the quality of their lives (Tapader, 1991). In broad connotation adult education extends to all people, in all walks of life from non-literate to semi-literate men and women at one end of the scale to people who have highly specialised and sophisticated education at the other end.

1.4 ADULT EDUCATION IN INDIA

The tradition 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 and centred mainly around the social, moral and philosophical issues. A variety of methods mostly oral, were used for the purpose by the saints and sages, story-tellers and folk artists. The primary objective of this old system of mass education was to educate the people in the real sense by making them conscious of their moral and social obligations. In this way the traditional values and knowledge were transmitted from generation to generation. However, this system had some limitations as it was not at all related to the economic strivings of the community and did not flourish under the State patronage. It was only during the British period that adult education became an integral part of the State policies and programmes to some extent. The movement received great impetus after the first World War (1914-1919) and from the constitutional changes which followed in its wake. The Indians suddenly started understanding their ignorance, poverty and backwardness. They were infused with great enthusiasm to alter the whole set-up that was governing them. (Kumari, 1994)

The credit for the formal type of adult education goes mainly to Sri. M. Visvasvaraya, a former Dewan of Mysore and to Shri Robinder Nath Tagore. The literacy percentage in India in 1911 was just 5.92. In 1912, Shri. M. Vasvasvarya started night schools and circulating libraries. By 1917 mass
literacy was imparted mainly through police education schools, night schools and jail schools.

Many important organisations such as the Indian Adult Education Association (IAEA, 1939) were established. The period between 1927 and 1942 witnessed a steep rise in the adult education programmes and adult literacy rose to 16.10 per cent in 1941. But in the period following it i.e. from 1942 to 1947, there was a set-back in all the branches of adult education.

After Independence (1947) the National Government realised the need to educate the masses so as to enable them to meaningfully participate in development process of the country. Indian Constitution envisages a just, equitable and fraternal society which ensures dignity of the individual and the nation. Indian democracy is characterised by a concern for the individual not as an instrument of development, but as an individual identity. This emphasis enhances the importance of education for creating self-confident individuals with commitment to democratic values and national unity. Under this broad framework, Indian Government committed to provide equality in all spheres to all its people, could not afford to have an overwhelming majority (about 84%) of its population as illiterate, hence an increased emphasis on the eradication of illiteracy. As a result thereof, various programmes of adult education particularly for the illiterate adults have since been launched and it has also found a place of importance in all the Five-Year-Plans.

The emergence of 'Social Education' was the first important development in independent India. It represented an approach to impart education through an organised community of learners and teachers. It offered a wide range of activities through a variety of agencies. An important aspect of Social Education programme was inculcation of social and civic consciousness.

In the first two Five Year Plans (1951 to 1961) Rs. 20 crores were earmarked for social education and other adult education programmes. The important developments during the period were opening Social Education
Centres, Community Centres, Rural libraries, Janata Colleges, National Fundamental Education Centre (1956), Workers education institutions etc. The most significant programme was the Gram Shikshan Mohim in Maharashtra State which acted as a trendsetter for the current Total Literacy Campaign. It is estimated that about 75 lakhs adults were made literate during these 10 years.

During the third Five Year Plan (1961-66) some of the major developments were: establishment of correspondence courses by Delhi University (1962), National Demonstration Programme for Agriculture (1965), and establishment of University Adult Education Association (1966). The Education Commission (1964-66) recommended to raise the literacy rate to 60 per cent by 1971, 80 per cent by 1976 and 100 per cent by 1986 (Education and National Development, Report of Education commission 1964-66). The Commission made some very important recommendations for improving the adult education programme which were considered by the Government of India and resolutions related to it were incorporated in the National Policy on Education (1968).

The Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-74) emphasised that adult education should be functional, need-based and life oriented so that it serves as a tool for rural development. The important schemes of this plan were the establishment of Shramik Vidyapeeths in 1967, Farmers Functional Literacy Programme (FFLP), setting-up of the workers Social Education institutes, National Board of Adult Education (NBAE) in 1970, production of literature for Neo-literates, assistance to voluntary organisations and setting-up of Workers Social Education Institutions.

The educational strategy in the Fifth Plan (1974-79) was built on the assumption that formal and non-formal education should be correlated and integrated (Rahi, 1996). The launching of Non-Formal Education Programme (1975) to look after the education of the educationally deprived children and adults between 15-35 years of age, Functional Literacy Programme for adult
women (1975), the Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP, 1978) were the main milestones of this plan.

The national government saw that inspite of serious efforts made so far to improve adult literacy percentage, it had not risen to the level of satisfaction and needed improved and fresh efforts. After thorough thinking, planning and national level discussions the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) was launched on 2nd October, 1978 which brought a New Era in the history of adult education in India. This programme aimed at extending education to nearly 110 million unlettered in the 15-35 age-group, in a period of five years. The key element of this programme was to open adult education centres run by an honorarium paid animator, provisions were also made for training of the animators and for administrating the programme in a coordinated manner throughout the country.

The Sixth Plan (1980 –85) gave highest priority to the education of illiterate adults, and laid emphasis on providing minimum essential education to all citizens, irrespective of their age, sex and residence. The plan sought to achieve the target of 100 per cent literacy in the 15-35 age-group by 1990, through the literacy drives which were to be characterised by flexibility, inter-sectoral co-operation and inter-agency co-ordination (Pati, 1989). Technocracy was to be used as a major instrument for spreading literacy, numeracy and practical skills. Work based programmes were also given priority. Special attention was given to weaker sections like women, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, agricultural labourers, and slum dwellers.

1.5 NATIONAL LITERACY MISSION (N.L.M) & TOTAL LITERACY CAMPAIGN (T.L.C.)

Reorientation of education system so as to prepare the country to meet the challenges of the next century has been the strategy of the subsequent plans. The main thrust areas have been achievement of universal elementary education, eradication of illiteracy in the age-group 15-35 years and development of continuing education programmes. The eradication of
illiteracy from a nation that has become the second most populated country in the world is by no means easy. Realising this the National Literacy Mission came into being on 5th May, 1988 to impart a new sense of urgency, seriousness and missionary zeal to the programme. For the first time an area-specific, time-bound, cost-effective, campaign approach was implemented through the Total Literacy Campaign (T.L.C.) 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 where the T.L.C, was initiated in 1989 and completed within a year. Total Literacy Campaign in Eranakulam served as a role model for the entire country and ensured the near ascendancy of the campaign mode in adult education.

The Approach paper to 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 its failures, and to provide appropriate direction for the socio-economic development of the country. The principal task would be to usher in a new era of people-oriented planning wherein not only the Government at the Centre and the States, but the people at large, particularly the poor, can fully participate. It was stated that apart from carrying out the directions given by NPE (1986,1992), keeping in view the Declaration of Education as an aspect of Fundamental Human Rights, making the nation fully literate by the year 2005 would be a committed goal. Around 6 per cent of the GDP would be earmarked for the education sector by the year 2000 and 50 per cent of that would be spent on primary education. The emphasis in adult education would be on restoring the lost momentum of the programme and to make it more effective by clarifying the administrative and financing roles of the centre, the states, Zilla Saksharata Samities, local bodies and NGOs.

Literacy is essentially a powerful input in the overall development of the individual, and social transformation. It is a pre-requisite for development
of any nation. Although the country has not, so far, achieved the goals of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) and eradication of adult illiteracy, yet the efforts of NLM and campaign mode have been quite appreciable. During the last ten years (1988-1998), 556 districts out of 588 in the country have already been covered under TLC, of which 259 districts have entered the post literacy phase (PLP) and 85 have entered the continuing education phase.

1.6 N.L.M. ACHIEVEMENTS : NSSO (1997)

As per the National Sample Survey Organisation (1997), the literacy rate of India in +7 age-group has increased to 62 per cent in 1997 from 52.21 per cent in 1991. The male and female literacy rates being 73 per cent and 50 per cent respectively. The literacy rate in the 15-35 age group is 66 per cent with male and female literacy rates at 77 per cent and 54 per cent respectively. The rise in female literacy rate between 1991 and 1997 has been 11 per cent whereas the male literacy rate for the same period has gone up by 9 per cent. In the decade between 1981-1991 too, the female literacy rate had risen faster than the male literacy rate (9.6 per cent as against 7.8 per cent). Thus, the faster rate of growth of literacy among females has not only been maintained but slightly enhanced (India, 2000).

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 and above stood at 65.38 per cent and corresponding figures for males and females were 75.85 and 54.16 per cent. (Time of India, 27th March, 2001)

The number of non-literates in 1997 has decreased to 294.66 million from 328.88 million in 1991. This is despite the fact that annual rate of population growth of India is little over 1.8 per cent. The NSSO figures show a jump of 10 percentage points between 1991 to 1997, i.e. just within six years. It shows that in a matter of just six years the decadal average of all earlier years has been surpassed (India, 2000). At present an annual literacy growth
of approximately 2 per cent is being maintained. If this rate is maintained, India would reach a level of between 66 to 68 per cent literacy by 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 between 2005 to 2006, thereby fulfilling the latest NLM goal of attaining full literacy i.e. threshold level of 75 per cent by 2005. (India, 2000).

The creditable performance of the National Literacy Mission received international recognition when it was awarded the UNESCO's Noma Literacy Prize for the year 1999.

1.7 CURRENT STRATEGIES

The National Literacy Mission in the meantime has been revitalised with the approval of the Union cabinet on 30th September, 1999. The Mission's goal is to attain full literacy i.e. a sustainable threshold literacy rate of 75 per cent functional literacy to non-literates in the 15-35 age-group. To tackle the problem of residual illiteracy, it has been decided to adopt an integrated approach to total literacy campaigns and post literacy program. This means the TLCs and PLCs will be implemented under one literacy project to achieve continuity, efficiency and convergence and to minimise unnecessary time lag between the two. Post literacy programmes will be treated only as a preparatory phase for launching continuing education with the ultimate aim of creating a learning society.

To promote decentralization, the State Literacy Mission Authority have been given the authority to sanction continuing education projects to districts and literacy related projects to voluntary agencies in their states.

The scheme of Jana Sikshan Sansthan, previously known as the Scheme of Shramik Vidyapeeth was initially evolved to respond to the educational and vocational training needs of adults and young people living in urban and industrial areas and for persons who have migrated from rural to urban settings. Now their activities have been enlarged and infrastructure
strengthened to enable them to function as district repository of vocational and technical skills in both urban and rural areas.

Ever since its inception the National Literacy Mission has taken measures to strengthen its partnership with NGOs and to evolve both institutional and informal mechanisms to give voluntary organisations active promotional role in the literacy movement. Now under the scheme of support to NGOs they will be encouraged and provided with financial assistance to run post literacy and continuing education programmes in well defined areas.

In order to revitalise, reenergise and expand the role of State Resource Centres, not only their number is being increased but also their infrastructure and resource facilities are being strengthened to enable them to play the role of catalytic agents. (http://www.education.nic.in).

1.8 DISPARITIES IN LITERACY

The NSSO (1997) data shows appreciable rise in literacy rates, but it has also brought out regional, sex, and rural-urban variations.

There are regional variations in literacy rates i.e. Mizoram holds the top spot in the country with 95 per cent literacy rate. Some states have shown dramatic improvement i.e. Andaman and Nicobar Island, Lakshadweep, Pondicherry, Himachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Nagaland, Manipur, Assam, Sikkim, Meghalaya, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Delhi all have literacy percentage between 70 to 90. As compared to these states Bihar, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orrissa and Dadra and Nagar Haveli have not even crossed the National literacy rate of 62 per cent. So, it is a matter of regret that after about 53 years of Independence these states have not been able to show significant progress (India, 2000). As per the Provisional figures of census 2001, appearing in Newspapers on 27th March 2001, Kerala leads in the literacy race with 90.92 per cent followed by Mizoram 88.49 per cent and Lakshadweep 87.52 per cent. Bihar is at the bottom in the country having literacy rate of 47.53 per cent.
Although rural-urban differential has decreased in the last six years (1991-1997) by 4 per cent still there is overall difference of 24 per cent between the literacy rate of urban and rural areas (urban 80%, rural 56%). Similarly the female literacy rate is still lower than male literacy (Male 77% & Female 56%), but vitally important thing is that the rise in female literacy during the six years has been 11 per cent whereas the male literacy rate for the same period has risen by 9 per cent. The trend was the same in the last decade also, although the increase has slightly enhanced (female 9.6% as against 7.8% male). In this perspective it can safely be said that there has been an appreciable rise in the literacy rates although regional, sex, rural-urban variations are also there. However, these differences have also narrowed down from the earlier years, but still a lot has to be done in this direction.

Another disheartening aspect of the NSSO analysis is that the total number of 268.42 million illiterates in the +7 age-group in the year 1997 are more than they were in 1961 i.e. 249.4 million. This has happened because of the tremendous population growth. The Provisional Population Trends of Census 2001, state that at 0000 hours of March one, 2001, the country's population stood at 1.02 billion, comprising 531.3 million men and 495.7 million women. India has added 181 million persons between 1991-2001 and has become the second country in the world after China to have crossed one billion population mark. (Times of India, 27th March 2001). However, as against the total population of 838.82 million (+7 age-group) in 1997 and 356.85 million in 1961, the number of illiterates in proportion to the total population has decreased manifold. Nevertheless 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 important task is to provide Basic education to the neo-literates through continuing education mode.

The strategies mentioned earlier are good but need to be implemented very vigorously. There can not be any laxity in our efforts. The new integrated ongoing projects of T.L.Cs, P.L.Cs, CECs need to be continuously monitored...
and evaluated 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 traditional model of evaluation has been found inadequate as it suffers from numerous weaknesses, chief amongst which is that it serves primarily as a measurement and rarely as an improvement tool. If evaluation has to be forward-looking, development-oriented, it is necessary to have inbuilt mechanism of appraisal, feedback diagnosis and remedial action at all the stages of a programme including pre-planning, planning, implementation and assimilation. 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)

1.9 EVALUATION

Evaluation is a broad and manyfaceted concept. Literally, evaluation means ‘assessing the value of’. Evaluations are undertaken in all spheres of life, in informal or formal ways, whenever one wishes to know and understand the consequences of some action or event. The acquired knowledge and understanding are commonly used by the evaluator to perform some activity in a better manner in the future that is, one tries to learn from one’s experiences in order to improve one’s performance (Dale, 1998). It is a value judgement of the social utility, desirability or effectiveness of a process, product or programme. It sometimes includes a recommendation for some course of action.

UNESCO (1981), in its general conference, laid down that evaluation is a study which permits a rigorous scientific measurement of the effect of a project or an activity, taking into account its objectives as established before
its inception. The purpose is not only to determine the nature of this activity in its social, economic or cultural context, but also to derive guidelines for its future planning as well as of new projects of similar nature.

‘Evaluation’ according to Rogers (1986), is an essential tool of learning, especially in the area of practice. It helps in planning new strategies, making choices, establishing priorities to determine where we are at present and what to do next. In summing up, evaluation helps in improving our performance as planners, organisers, managers, teachers, evaluators and participants as well.

The main purpose of evaluation is to promote learning, point out the way to progress and to assess the accountability of actors. It enables the programme planners to make a programme more effective. The use of any evaluation report will, of course, largely depend on its purpose or the relative importance of purposes. It forces us to test our goal, our methods and procedures against needs and accomplishments, and to modify them in the light of our findings and provides sound basis for future planning (Dale, 1998).

Evaluation in development programmes and projects has been promoted and formalised from 1960s onwards by donor agencies, which wanted a ‘true’ account of how well things had been done and what had been achieved. The idea was to have ‘objective’ analysis, which was considered possible through the engagement of ‘independent’ persons to conduct them, through standardised procedures of data collection, and by using quantitative measures (Mikkelsen 1995, Rubin 1995).

Evaluation, therefore, must be an integral part of the adult education programme in India. It must be a continuous process starting from the planning stage and ending with the assessment and follow-up stage. Data must be collected about the adult educands - their age, interest, background knowledge and experience, language, occupations, attitude and aspirations, analysis of the programme content, methodology, materials, media and other inputs (both human and materials) and feedback must continue to provide
necessary correctives for making the programme progressively effective and useful. This is the aim of concurrent and inbuilt evaluation (Mohanty, 1993).

1.10 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, so that the threshold level of 75 per cent literacy can be achieved within the target period. It is, therefore, necessary to assess the ongoing programmes and seek new horizons.

Since the beginning of the adult education movement, monitoring and evaluation have been greatly emphasised, more so since the NPE(1986) and NLM (1988). Presently the Directorate of Adult Education, a sub-ordinate office of the department of Elementary Education and literacy has been entrusted with the task of monitoring and evaluating the various literacy programmes being launched under its aegis in the country.

The literacy programmes in India have been subjected to intensive evaluation by the approved government agencies as well as through independent research works to prove their credit worthiness but most of it has been the product-cum-summative evaluations, whereas it should be process-cum-formative if we want to use it for quality improvement purpose.

There is an increased emphasis on formative evaluations these days as alternatives or supplements to summative evaluations as it facilitates adjustment of action and even the innovations during the programme or project period. Formative evaluation is considered more important particularly in relatively complex developmental schemes which tend to be riddled with uncertainties of many sorts. Further, the results of evaluation studies need to be fed-back in the whole gamet of procedures, policies of planning and management of the programme.
In view of the above, the researcher thought of undertaking an in-depth evaluation study of the development, present status and functioning of adult education programme in the state of 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 was 2.23 crores, 1.16 crores males, and 1.07 crores females (1991). 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 is 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.

The researcher, who belongs to Assam, 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. For the present study two districts i.e. Barpeta and Dhubri were taken. Barpeta district is situated on the western side and Dhubri district is on the extreme south-western side of Assam state. The literacy rate of Barpeta and Dhubri as per Census, 2001 are 57.35 per cent and Dhubri 49.86 per cent respectively. The two districts stand at 21st and 29th positions, in literacy percentage, in the state.
It is hoped that the findings of this study and suggestions made thereof will help the programme planners and managers in adopting right strategies for modifying the functioning of ongoing TLC/PLP/CEP wherever necessary.

1.11 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

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

1.12 OBJECTIVES

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 Programme 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 Education Officers regarding the functioning of Adult Education Programme in Assam state.

7. To identify the major problems obstructing the requisite implementation of Adult Education Programme in Assam state.

8. To make suggestions for the modification of the Adult Education Programme in Assam.
1.13 HYPOTHESIS

The present study was conducted on the basis of the objectives that have been stated in section 1.12. No hypotheses were stated explicitly but these were implied by the objectives only as was found suitable for this descriptive historical-cum-evaluation study.

1.14 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

1. The study was delimited to the evaluation of Adult Education programme running in two districts i.e. Barpeta district and Dhubri district in the state of Assam.

2. The learners' sample was restricted to 200 learners only due to constraints of availability, time and distance.

3. The sample of instructors was limited to 25 only. Effort was made to make it representative by using random sampling technique.

4. Data could be obtained from only those education officers who agreed to fill the questionnaire.