

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 248 388

CE 039 720

TITLE Asian-South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education Special Issue in Preparation for the Fourth International Conference on Adult Education Convened by Unesco, Paris, 1985. Courier No. 31.

INSTITUTION Asian - South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education.

PUB DATE Jul 84

NOTE 125p.

PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Collected Works - Serials (022)

JOURNAL CIT ASPBAE Courier; n31 Jul 1984

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS *Adult Basic Education; *Adult Education; Adult Literacy; Agency Role; Community Development; Conferences; Economic Development; Educational Benefits; Educational Cooperation; *Educational Needs; Educational Objectives; *Educational Practices; Educational Strategies; Educational Trends; *Literacy Education; Nonformal Education; Postsecondary Education; Private Agencies; School Role; Womens Education

IDENTIFIERS *Asia; *South Pacific; UNESCO

ABSTRACT

This special issue was developed by the Asian-South Pacific Bureau for Adult Education (ASPBAE) in preparation for Unesco's fourth international conference on adult education. A section on "Literacy--A Great Challenge and Important Debate" includes "Why Literacy? (Paul Fordham); "Cooperating or Campaigning for Literacy" (Heribert Hinzen, Jakob Horn, Wolfgang Leumer, Rolf Niemann); comments from Sri Lanka (W. M. K. Wijetunga), Bangladesh (Rezaul Haque), Indonesia (Pepep Sudradjat), Australia (Arch Nelson), and India (K. M. S. Benjamin); "Literacy: The Moving Target" (Carmen Hunter); "Thai National Literacy Campaign"; and "Experience from the Field: Literacy--What and How?" (Om Shrivastava). The next section contains observations on the conference by W. M. K. Wijetunga; "Summary of ASPBAE Consultation on Desirable Conference Themes" (Chris Duke); a brief summary of an ASPBAE-Unesco consultation; Unesco Asian Regional Consultation; "Adult Education in Asia Today" (A. Chiba); and 1983 ASPBAE executive meeting minutes. Next, "Prespectives from the Asian Region" contains a report on the 1964 establishment of ASPBAE; "South Asian Examples of Adult/Nonformal Education" (Hwang Jong-Gon); "Village Level Action in India" (Om and Ginny Shrivastava); "Women's Development in Chhan Village" (Rajkumari); "Literacy to Development: The Growth of a Tribal Village" (Manohar Singh); and "Strategies for Development and Peasant Education" (Chanida Chanyapate). The section entitled "What Can the Non-Governmental Organizations Achieve in Adult Education?" includes commentary from Kerala, India (K. S. Pillai); the Indian Adult Education Association (J. C. Saxena); Bangladesh (Osman Ghani); Nepal (Sri Ram Lamichhane); and Sri Lanka (W. A. Jayawardana). (MN)

ED 0248388

Asian-South Pacific Bureau
of Adult Education

**SPECIAL ISSUE IN
PREPARATION FOR THE
FOURTH INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON ADULT
EDUCATION CONVENED BY
UNESCO, PARIS, 1985**

COURIER NO. 31

JULY 1984

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ISSN No. 0 814-3811

ASPBAE is associated with the International
Council for Adult Education (ICAE)



Produced at the Centre for Continuing Education,
Australian National University, Canberra

ASPBAE COURIER SERVICE is produced three times a year in April, July and December.

Opinions expressed in the Courier are not necessarily those of the Editorial Board or Members of the Asian-South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education.

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Association of Adult Education Journal Vol.24 No.2

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the kind permission of "Asiaweek", December 16, 1983

This special issue of the ASPBAE *Jourier* opens by collecting together various suggestions which have come from this Region in relation to the Fourth International Conference on Adult Education, to be convened by Unesco in 1985. The Asian and Pacific regions have tended to play a very modest role in such international debates, despite the large proportion of the world's population that is found in Asia. It is hoped that the voice - the experience, the wisdom, the understanding derived from long and rich cultural conditions as well as modern dynamism and innovation - of the countries of the Region will be heard more clearly than in the past. There is an 'Asian way' and also perhaps a 'Pacific way' (though Asian cultures and languages vary greatly, and the Melanesian, Polynesian and Micronesian parts of the Pacific also differ one from another). Because that way often means speaking more quietly, more reflectively, than do some other regions and traditions, it may pass unheard. If so, as with the drowning of women's voices by men's, the world remains the poorer for it.

Supplementing section 1 of this issue, the following 'issues for consideration' were put by ASPBAE to the Unesco Regional Adult Education Conference in 1980. They are reproduced here, as they are still important to consider in 1985.

The scope of 'adult education': including literacy work; including also, but wider than, work-oriented education

The distinction between non-formal education as an administrative term and as a description of ways of teaching and learning

The limitations and failings of purely economic development and of the 'trickle down' theory

Unintended consequences of development and adult education programmes, e.g. raised expectations and migration to urban areas

Problems of social change and redistribution; the predicament of adult educators confronting inequality and injustice

Limitations on participation if local needs and national policies are in conflict

Role and limitations of the mass media for participative adult education

How to inform national planners of the role and contribution of adult education

Middle class subversion of programmes intended for those in greatest need

Implications of technological change and specialisation for resource allocation and democratisation

Forms of and checks upon decentralisation of policy-making and programming

Developing new-style flexible adult education resource centres

Community organisation and the development of recipient systems

Balancing endogenous materials and modes with materials and resources from outside

The relation between non-formal adult education and the formal education system within a 'total education system' concept and strategy

The accessibility of educational opportunities 'from the learners' perspective

Staff training and development, and the dangers of professionalisation

Role of and support for non-governmental organisations and activities

Section 2 is on the crucially important matter of literacy. There is a new urgency about the literacy debate in recent months, within a context of universally shared commitment to the reduction and so far as possible eradication of illiteracy. The debate concerns means rather than ends, also the accidental and unintended consequences of some of the assaults on illiteracy which may overlook other equally important objectives and at the same time be ineffectual because of their timing and lack of relation to other efforts and objectives. To this extent scepticism about some approaches, and about the international league table or 'pecking order' which seems to suggest that literacy can be achieved once for all (it is in fact a 'moving target'), is healthy.

This section is offered as a contribution to what will surely be an important review of progress and approaches to literacy at the International Conference next year.

Following a section offering Asian perspectives on adult education, this issue concludes with a discussion of the role of nongovernmental organisations in adult education. A passage from the Bureau's position paper to the regional Unesco conference in 1980 had this to say about the place of the voluntary or nongovernmental effort:

At the Asian-Pacific regional level it seems clear that a body like the bureau can play a useful complementary role to that of the inter-governmental and large aid agencies; providing the role is clearly understood on all sides as a complementary one, a partnership and not competitive. Within a number of member countries, and depending on history, tradition, and present socio-political system, voluntary agencies and the volunteer efforts of mobilised communities of ordinary people play an important role in adult education for development. It is impossible to conceive of the Burmese literacy campaigns having the success they have had without massive mobilisation of voluntary effort. In India and Bangladesh, countries with large populations and pressing adult education and development needs, non-governmental organisations play a significant part and are acknowledged and supported by the respective Governments as

partners in education and development. ASPBAE is doing what it can to foster national associations in all member countries where there appears to be a need. Such associations make it easier for adult educators in government, in universities, and in NGOs, to meet together and benefit, in their work, from exchange of experience both locally, nationally and regionally.

Since this was written several other countries in the region have established national associations: Malaysia, Macau, Pakistan, China in 1980. Others close to creating such associations are Fiji, Nepal and Thailand.

A series of case studies on adult education and the reduction of poverty (coordinated by the ASPBAE Secretary-General on behalf of the International Council for Adult Education and including good representation of Asian examples) indicates different roles for national governmental programmes and the various nongovernmental agencies. The former can usually achieve much wider impact and achieve more, in one sense, with their bigger programmes. On the other hand (except in places where there has been popular revolution and a commitment to major change in society by a new government) nongovernmental organisations tend to be better at devising and carrying through innovative and radical programmes which address the exploitation, inequalities and corruption that often underlie and cause poverty and illiteracy.

Items and comments in this issue on the role of nongovernmental organisations should be squarely addressed by national commissions and government departments. Each government should consider what part the voluntary sector can and might play in using adult education to promote social and human, as well as strictly economic, development. This consideration should extend, also, to the preparation of delegations and country position papers for the International Conference, and to the choice and briefing of delegates, to including non-governmental participants and non-governmental perspectives.

The International Conference will take stock of progress made in adult education since 1972, just as the Tokyo conference that year looked back over the previous twelve years to Montreal, and back from there to Elsinore in 1949. There are many grounds for satisfaction, but none for complacency. Adult education has gained much in different countries of the Asian region, in respectability and credibility - as the strengthening of ASPBAE in that time well reflects. But at what price? Does recognition by government, and some measure of professionalisation, also mean bureaucratisation, becoming the unquestioning servant of economic growth and the priorities of the powerful? Will there be still more ministers, permanent heads of ministries of education, and pinstripe suits, at Paris in 1985 than Tokyo in 1972? How many field workers will be seen at the Paris Conference? How much knowledge of, and commitment to improving the lot of, the poorest of the poor, may be expected? No doubt the Conference will be largely governmental in orientation, as, of necessity, is Unesco itself.

Unesco is also facing a crisis of identity and survival. Although this is brought on by the attitudes and action of the world's most wealthy nation, it would be an error to dismiss the crisis as just a product of U.S. hostility. Large bureaucracies, like large governments, tend to get out of touch with the needs of the people. The ICAE in 1982 opened an exciting adult education assembly in Unesco Headquarters which addressed the need for and means to 'authentic development'. Can the Conference there in 1985 also address the real and important questions facing adult education, and threats to humankind? Such is the call of this issue of ASPBAE Courier. If issues of peace, human rights, poverty and inequality, are left aside as too difficult or too political, and the Conference addresses only matters of a professional and technical kind, the Fourth International Conference will have failed to meet the challenge before it. There is no doubt that adult education has a major part to play in improving the lot of humankind, if only adult educators have the support, the courage and the clarity to attempt it.

(Chris Duke)



LITERACY - A GREAT CHALLENGE AND AN IMPORTANT DEBATE

Illiteracy remains one of the greatest challenges confronting adult education, nowhere more so than in parts of Asia. China's magnificent literacy campaign at and following the time of Liberation remains a lesson from which the world still seeks to learn. The National Adult Education Programme in India in recent years has attracted wide interest. Other countries in the region have tackled illiteracy, both through national campaigns mobilising the citizenry generally (as in Bangladesh), regionally and by towns or districts (as in Burma) or through a variety of governmental and non-governmental, national and local, efforts. The most recent large-scale national effort is that of Thailand, to which the last part of this literacy section is devoted.

The International Council for Adult Education, of which ASPBAE constitutes an active regional organisation, has sponsored a number of major conferences and seminars designed to promote literacy efforts and to enable countries tackling illiteracy to share their experience and learn from one another. This section opens with a brief first chapter from Paul Fordham's summary report of the most recent of these major seminars, held in Berlin in October 1984. Fordham's brief introduction is headed simply 'Why Literacy?'.¹

WHY LITERACY?

Investment in education is everywhere under scrutiny. The days are long past, when a simple and direct connection was assumed between investment in education and national development.

Global recession, the accompanying need to reconsider development priorities and the absence of any clear balance between the availability of education and the availability of paid jobs: all these have combined to question the importance of literacy as a priority development goal. When thousands of school leavers are unemployed, why should even more scarce resources be devoted to literacy, either for school-age children or for illiterate adults? Would it not be better to sacrifice early universal literacy - and other basic services - for the sake of boosting employment in directly productive sectors?

Now these are the kind of questions more frequently asked by development planners and by politicians than by educators. But if educators are to re-affirm their commitment to universal literacy by the year 2000 - as we did in Berlin - then educators themselves must also take a hand in answering the hard questions about development priorities as well as those about educational priori-

ties. We must be able to justify our belief that literacy is today not only a basic human right, but also an essential tool for national development.

Of course, development may sometimes happen without recourse to literacy. For example, the farmer may be enabled to increase his production, perhaps with the help of extension service using oral communication, in person or on the radio. But sooner or later, if the development process continues, if the economy becomes more complex and if basic services improve: in other words, if 'rural development' really begins to happen, then there will come a need for literacy. While it is useless to offer literacy instead of good, housing, water supplies or electricity, it may become uneconomic to offer them without it. Literacy may be only a part - but it is still an essential part - of the range of basic services which bring direct economic returns as well as direct social benefits.

Lack of pure water and/or miles of walking to fetch it leaves less time for production and increases the likelihood of illness. Lack of vaccination, health education and basic curative services leaves workers and peasants too weak to be fully productive... Illiteracy reduces workers' flexibility and productivity even in simple occupations such as peasant farming, construction or handicraft...²

In determining the place of literacy as a development priority the question of timing is all important. For the individual, unless he is motivated to learn, it is futile to offer a literacy programme. It is the same with nations. For them, the skill will be to seize the 'magic moment' to determine when now is the time to embark on an effective national programme. If political will is the essential starting point for literacy - as our Seminar certainly believed - good judgment about timing may be the essential ingredient for success.

Given that for many countries the time is clearly now, what emphasis should be placed on different aspects of work towards literacy? There has been much debate in recent years about the relative importance of Universal Primary Education (UPE) on the one hand and of mass adult education on the other; but this seems to us a false antithesis. We therefore welcome the dual strategy recently (1982) adopted by UNESCO: the extension and improvement of primary education and renewed literacy efforts for out of school youth and adults. Without mass adult education, UPE alone would take 30 or more years to achieve universal literacy even if instantly established: without UPE, the effect of an adult literacy programme could only be temporary.

However, important though this dual strategy may be, it is not by itself enough. For we see literacy as far more than the acquisition of simple reading, writing and numeracy skills. Young people and newly literate adults must be able to use these basic skills for

purposes which have clear meanings both for them and for the wider society. Access to newspapers, text books, stories and other reading matter is one necessary aspect of a literate environment. But so, too, is a broad range of non-formal adult education programmes both general and vocational. And it is here, of course, that literacy ceases to be the exclusive preserve of the educator. Personnel in health, agriculture and other sectors must all be brought in if literacy is to make its maximum impact. Co-operating for literacy makes as much sense within countries as it does at the international level. We return to adult continuing education in the section on 'Beyond Literacy' below. (Not included in this extract.Ed.)

Our definition of 'literacy' is therefore a wide one. We see it as having three inter-related components: (I) literacy for adults and out of school youth, (II) UPE and (III) adult continuing education. And all three must be seen and planned as part of the overall process of national development. To answer the question, why literacy? is as we see it intimately bound up with the question, what for?

All this is not to lose sight of the broadly humanistic, idealistic reasons for literacy. If there are close on one billion* adult illiterates in the world - as there are - then there are also one billion living reasons for literacy. Or, as an Indian participant put it: 'I don't want to live in a society where literacy is the culture of only one part.' And again, for the individual, literacy 'gives a kind of faith, an ability to ask questions.' We are therefore thinking of the role of literacy in a development which is not simply a notion in the mind of an economist, but a means by which millions of individuals can transform both themselves and their societies.

It is sometimes asserted that enthusiasts for literacy ignore or under-value the importance of oral cultures. Oral cultures have their own validity and they must not be devalued. It would be an unforgivable arrogance which equated illiteracy with ignorance or literacy with wisdom. What we do assert is that the ability to read and write is increasingly indispensable for living in all societies. Even where illiteracy rates are still high, there is plenty of evidence to show that illiterates do feel marginalised whenever they come close to the literate world. And in countries with a long tradition of literacy on the one hand combined with high rates of illiteracy on the other, there is a clear connection between mass illiteracy and mass poverty.

The illiterates are at a clear disadvantage when they try to participate in either the world of work or the world where decisions are made. They are increasingly dependent on others and denied access to written cultures or to further education: above all, they are not able to make a full contribution to the life and work of any nation.

There is a dynamic interplay between literacy and development at all levels of society. Literacy cannot be separated from the development process. If all the countries of the world are to move forward from

* Defined as one thousand million.

stagnation, recession and despair they will need to generate a new 'climate of urgency' for literacy.

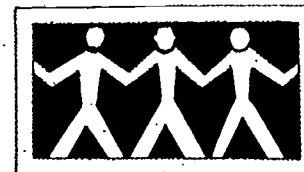
Notes

1. Fordham, Paul, Co-operating for Literacy, Report of an International Seminar held in Berlin, October, 1983, International Council for Adult Education and German Foundation for International Development, 1983. Available free to Third World countries from: German Foundation for International Development, Hans Boeckler Strasse 5, D-5300, Bonn 3, F.R. Germany. Please quote DOC 1122 A/a. ICAE as co-publisher authorised use of this chapter in the Courier.

The full set of papers from the earlier Udaipur seminar are also available see below:

Bhola, H.S. in collaboration in Josef Müller and Piet Dijkstra, The Promise of Literacy, Campaigns, Programs and Projects, Report of the International Seminar on Campaigning for Literacy, Udaipur, India, January 4-11 1982, ICAE Seva Mandir (India) 1982, German Foundation for International Development (DSE). Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, Baden-Baden 1983; Germany (ISBN 3-7890-0882-6).

2. Green, R.H., Paper on 'Literacy, Depression and the Poor'.
3. See: e.g. Yusuf Kassam, Illiterate No More, Tanzania Publishing House, 1979.



Although the importance of promoting literacy and helping those who cannot read and write to find a way out of illiteracy is agreed almost universally (the only exception may be some in power who prefer to keep their subjects uninformed and without access to knowledge which might encourage them to protest their circumstances) it is by no means so widely agreed what are the best means of combatting illiteracy, and whether this should necessarily be given absolute priority ahead of other adult education, or for that matter relief and development, programmes. Sometimes the best of intentions and efforts can have unintended and undesirable consequences.

Members of the Department of International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (DVA), which has supported many of the programmes and activities of ASPBAE since 1971, recently published and circulated a short paper reflecting concerns about some of these unintended consequences of the drive to abolish illiteracy. The Editor of the *Courier* sent copies of this paper to a number of Asian adult educators for comment. We reproduce here the German position paper, and comments from those of our colleagues in the field who have so far been able to provide comments.

COOPERATING OR CAMPAIGNING FOR LITERACY: LET'S REMOVE DOUBTFUL PROMISES AND COPE WITH THE PRACTICABLE

In the past few years a new dimension seems to have been given to the discussion about literacy and the 'eradication of illiteracy'.

ILLITERACY = IGNORANCE = INDIGNITY: A WRONG EQUATION

Active as we are in the field of adult education and development, we deplore the fact that many of our colleagues are increasingly referring to illiterates as ignorant, to illiteracy as an indignity to mankind, and at the same time assuming that illiteracy is the cause of oppression, exploitation and further impoverishment. It is even more deplorable to find this attitude in official declarations, reports and so-called research pamphlets that pretend to offer insights and guidance, but which, in fact, are misleading in many respects.

The kind of despair felt by many of us in the face of the ever-increasing misery in the world and ever-widening gaps between the haves and have-nots should not become an excuse for a wrong analysis, and can never become a justification for the mere repetition of slogans that will not hold water when confronted with a thorough examination of our insights and day-to-day experiences.

CAUSALITY: APPEARANCES ARE DECEPTIVE

As far as the presumption of causality is concerned - correlation and interdependence are not equal to causality - there is no general proved evidence that literacy

- in historical terms was a prerequisite of economic and social development. In fact historically in Europe and other industrialized countries widespread literacy followed the industrial revolution, and they then reinforced each other.
- Nor is there any general evidence that literacy efforts by themselves have diminished exploitation and poverty in so-called literate societies.

The fact that the frequently cited maps of poverty and illiteracy coincide is no proof that literacy is the determining factor for the distribution of wealth within a given society or between nations.

- Many examples have shown that ever-increasing efforts for and large expenditure on literacy did not necessarily lead to a reduction of poverty.
- Literacy and intelligence are both context bound, literacy is not a prerequisite for intelligent understanding and handling of life. Literacy becomes a necessary, or at least an enabling skill, for the individual in a literate environment.
- There is also no direct relationship between literacy and the attainment of participative structures and general human values; literacy is not the exclusive or even self-sufficient skill for liberation and self-realization, or for the abolishment of oppression.

LITERACY: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

Those who still propound the argument that literacy finally leads to the enlightenment of individuals and/or mankind should keep in mind, that the terrifying arms race and destruction of unrenewable natural resources, which endanger the existence of our world, are not perpetrated by illiterates, but are only possible through literacy and highly literate specialists - although, again, this should not be mistaken as a causal relationship.

We should also bear in mind - without taking a romantic view of illiterate communities - that non-literate societies have produced and still produce positive, indigenous values and techniques for the satisfaction of basic needs and human enrichment, which are important and appropriate now and may become even more decisive in the future. Are we fully aware and concerned about the harmful and often destructive potential of our literacy endeavours and the indirect, negative influences and repercussions on developmental processes

which are apparent in phenomena like rural exodus, negligence of traditional skills and cultural heritages bound to non-written transfer from generation to generation?

We do see a perspective for integrated literacy work as part of a more comprehensive concept of adult education and development which takes adults - literates and illiterates alike - seriously in their realization of their lives, and which remains open to the question of whether literacy can be meaningful or even a tool for change. Whether literacy is a necessary or helpful tool for the improvement of living conditions can only be assessed according to the specific prevailing situation. Assessment and decision have to be based on the experience and knowledge of those who are concerned and directly involved.

Our experience clearly shows that adult education and local development can often be effected without literacy skills and that the need for literacy may only arise during or even after the performance of activities by a given community or the society at large. In imposing literacy above all as a precondition we could be opposing our own objectives by demotivating the learners and leading to failure; the demotivation effect may be permanent and irreversible.

Literacy, like any other means in the development of the individual, the community and the society has to be a socially appropriate 'technology'. A largely literate environment produces the necessity for additional literacy efforts. Adult education must make provision for motivated learners and try to satisfy their demands.

REALITY VERSUS WISHFUL THINKING

Let us be honest and realistic: no matter what efforts are made unless the world, North and South, West and East, and the rich, elite and powerful within countries are prepared for an alternative orientation and a total shift of financial resources from arms' budgets to basic services - illiteracy will be a fact of life even after the year 2000. Therefore the call for 'eradication of illiteracy by the year 2000' is misleading and an unrealistic objective. It is an illusion and not a meaningful utopia. Moreover, it is a discrimination and an insult for those who will continue to master their lives as illiterates or non-literates.

Illiteracy is not a fatal disease which requires a 'vaccination programme' for its eradication. On the contrary, literacy work needs a careful, sensitive and sensible choice of pedagogical approaches, neither hand-outs nor injections will help.

CAMPAIGNS: YES AND/OR NO?

Taking these insights and experiences seriously we must confess that we do not see the possibility nor necessity for either an immediate confrontative approach or for literacy campaigns as a strategy for everyone and everywhere at present.

Will not the characteristics of centralization, which are part and parcel of campaigns, jeopardize very important essentials of adult education, namely, participation and self-determination?

Above all have not most of all past campaigns shown that the larger the campaign the more insurmountable the difficulties grew in respect to functionality, training of literacy personnel, production of materials in meaningful quantities and qualities, transport, etc. etc.

Nevertheless, we do see two other aspects and uses of campaigns:

- Campaigns for information, creation of public awareness and motivation for literacy.

- Literacy campaigns in the context of far reaching changes or revolutions in society - a context which adult education cannot presuppose, nor create, by itself, nor await.

CONTINUITY IN COOPERATION

We are conscious of the interrelation between adult education and development. Therefore we shall continue to support adult education and literacy in our own country and in the framework of international cooperation. In our international work our prime concern will continue to be the improvement of the living conditions of the poor who form the majority in Africa, Asia and Latin America through adult education, while recognizing the limitations of education for the development process. At the same time we realize our quantitative limitations faced by this huge task, although the last decade has shown a favourable increase of resources for our work in cooperation with our adult education partners.

We are of the opinion that it is better to continue with the present diversity of modest approaches in literacy work, embedded in many other activities of non-formal education and development.

INVITATION TO DIALOGUE

We would appreciate an open dialogue on the issue of 'literacy for development' which would stimulate the theory and practice of adult education alike for the benefit of the learners.

Heribert Hinzen, Jakob Horn, Wolfgang Leumer, Rolf Niemann
German Adult Education Association (DVV)
Department for International Cooperation

Among the first comments came these from Dr Wijetunga, Sri Lanka:

LITERACY

It is a thought provoking presentation of some critical issues re literacy, and would appear as a continuation of a dialogue initiated by Nyerere with his opening address at Dar-es-Salaam in 1976. There is certainly much futility in pursuing literacy for its own sake, without due consideration to and understanding of life and social situations, cultural values, life-skills or even survival skills.

However some apprehension can be caused in the way this dialogue is conducted, if the hand of the developed countries is made to look as if pulling the reins and turning off the taps, or even laying the guide-lines. Even Sri Lanka, with its acclaimed high literacy rates, is often left out in most activities connected with literacy. Many people can read many things into any assumption or conclusions. Still for all, as you rightly suggest, there should be a useful dialogue, and a closer look at some of the perceived assumptions.

Illiteracy = Ignorance: This certainly is a hangover from our colonial experience, where traditional knowledge and skills had scant respect or understanding of the colonial masters. Such things were considered superstitions. On the other hand despite lack of reading ability, both men and women had acquired a deep knowledge and understanding of religion and culture and a wide variety of skills. A person's conduct was more important than book knowledge. Conduct (*seela*) was the way to introspection (*samadhi*) and to knowledge (*pragna*). ~~Today knowledge is synonymous with book learning and certificates.~~ Where as it should also include development of character.

However there should not be a total abandoning of literacy efforts. Literacy should rather be a tool/process in the total development of humankind. Here one is reminded of the proverbial Brahmin who knew all the texts, but was totally lacking in life skills which would enable him to face the perils of a capsizing boat, in which he was being ferried.

Causality: This assumption is buttressed by the Srilankan experience in family planning work, where contrary to normally held assumptions, best reported results have been recorded among the least literate of the population, being the Tamil population in tea estates. But this does not necessarily mean that literates are not equally motivated towards the same. Is there, on the other hand, a correlation between poverty and religion, and poverty and culture? What, on the same count, is the correlation between literacy and rationality?

Literacy and Total Mobilisation: Mass literacy campaigns have relevance and meaning in certain circumstances, such as in the socialist countries, where it is a form of mass mobilisation for the attainment of certain goals. It is not for its own sake, but only as a means to an end.

Dr Renaul (Dulal) Haque of Bangladesh responded as follows:

COOPERATE OR CAMPAIGN: LITERACY A MUST

A recent writing by Heribert Hinzen and others entitled, 'Cooperating or Campaigning for Literacy: Let's Remove Doubtful Promises and Cope with the Practicable', is a thought-provoking and interesting reading. The arguments put forward elaborate some of the deepseated concerns, which, however, usually are either ignored or overlooked by the traditional adult educators and planners. Nevertheless, from a Third World point of view, some of the issues raised in the article may be worth re-examining.

It has been rather confirmed that illiterates are referred to as ignorant by many of the adult educators. Besides illiterates are assumed also to be stupid and indifferent about their problems and prospects. This is a deplorable attitude but this can only be rectified through improved awareness and appreciation of the situation by the practitioners and not by denying access of the illiterates to educational/literacy programs.

The authors have referred to industrial revolution period in Europe and discussed its effects on the spread of literacy. But the current situation in the Third World countries are far more different and complex. Although relatively primitive and not very widespread, with the advent of modern communication system and other amenities for modern living in these countries, people are exposed to a variety of experiences. The gradual fall and withdrawal of British Empire from most of its Third World colonies and the newly earned independence has produced long term impact on the people's psychosocial constitution. Thus, the development versus literacy inter-relationship, as explained, may no longer stand valid.

Unfortunately the authors have isolated literacy and failed to put it in the total context of development. Although there is no proof that literacy alone has diminished exploitation and poverty, there is no evidence that illiteracy has alleviated the situation either. There is statistical evidence that the literate nations enjoy higher per capita income than their less literate counterparts. Faulty planning, which is a product of political developments, and weak implementation and follow-up of literacy or a development program for that matter, does not justify the statement that expenditure for literacy programs are ill-conceived. Since literate people and literate environment will continue to influence human life for years to come, striving for an illiterate primitive society, will only help increase the gap between the haves and have nots and strengthen the hands of corrupt literates. Participation is a social process and is influenced by several variables, and under the current environment, is neither attainable in a literate nor also in an illiterate society, to its truest sense.

It is understandable that illiterates are not responsible for arms race, destruction of unrenovable natural resources and other related genocidal phenomenon. But historically the illiterates are the

victims of poverty, ill-health, and to a greater extent, population boom, liberation from which is virtually impossible. This vicious cycle itself is self-destructive and a threat to the future human existence. Virtually serene and heavenly rural society is now a reminiscence of the past, and can only survive if they are reinforced with aggressive literacy and simultaneous socio-economic development efforts. The onus to make provision for motivated learners should not be only on the adult education programs, but other component activities conducive to this situation are to be orchestrated.

The authors have taken resort to some health terms; eg, 'eradication of illiteracy by the year 2000' (reminds, health for all by the year 2000), 'vaccination program for eradication of the illiteracy', and the like. But similarities end here. Let us see what happens, if the relevant examples, are stretched further. The objective of health for all is an estimated target. It may not be (presumably) achievable, but this is a lighthouse, guiding star to usher planner and implementers to a definite goal. Nevertheless, this does not mean that 'Health for all' is an unrealistic objective, on the contrary, understandably at least something will be achieved, which would have been impossible without this pre-set objective. Is this an illusion and not a meaningful utopia? Is this a discrimination and an insult for those who will be compelled to maintain their lives as sick or unwell?

Illiteracy may not be fatal for human body, but far more damaging to the ever burgeoning section of mankind. Vaccination programs, to the author's surprise do not have to reach 100% population, but the idea is to cover maximum percentage of population so that an environment is created which is not conducive for the growth of particular disease. I think this concept of creating and maintenance of a favourable environment is key to the success of a vaccination program and by the same token, of an adult education program.

I agree, adult education is not toothpaste or any consumable commodity that can be sold through campaign approach. But even the campaign of a consumer item is also synchronized and integrated with effective marketing and distribution system. Besides, the emphasis is again on maintenance. A good mix and timing of campaign approach or any other method with proper integration with various development approaches may seem appropriate. A system that works in one place, may not be suitable for another social structure. But it is the practitioner's responsibility to identify and try the method. However, even if one is to say that the methods so far employed may be wrong, that does not mean that literacy is detrimental to any modern day human society. Till to date writing is the most scientific, effective and efficient tool for communication, if used properly with other societal variables.

An Indonesian response was provided by Peper Sudrajat:

MASS LITERACY: YES OR NO?

Perhaps now comes the time for us to put the issue of literacy in its proper perspective. A perspective of what it means for people individually like you and me to have it and what the consequences are for not having it. To argue that since in historical terms literacy has never been proven to be a prerequisite of economic and social development, hence no justification for wide-spread or universal literacy can only mean one thing; a privilege to some and denial to the rest (majority). Because certainly industrialization and the resultant social economic development could not have been generated and sustained by illiterates? Who was to decide what members of the community were to be made literate with which to have easier access to the sources of knowledge and information to develop themselves and be prime actors of change and progress.

Let's face the fact. Literacy is imperative in a literate society. It is imperative not because it is the cause of oppression, exploitation and impoverishment (although as we shall see later it has an indirect bearing on these deplorable consequences), but for its value even as an enabling skill to deal with the requirement of a literate community.

It can be said that nowadays, no society, even the so-called traditional, is exempt from a penetrating and sometimes harmful surge of modernization. Any reference to a purely traditional and non-literate society in which people are supposed to be contentedly satisfying their basic needs and human enrichment, overlooks the undercurrent dynamic changes occurring in those communities.

It is exactly these societies that were vulnerable to a barrage of literacy requisites which they were ill-equipped to cope with, resulted in human misery, even death. In dealing with products of agrochemical industry, for instance, which are proliferating even in the remotest and non-literate village communities, the simple skill of reading the label can spell the difference between safe use and fatal poisoning or intoxication. At least, illiteracy does lead to deprivation and waste and curtailment of human potentials to reach optimum self growth and self actualization.

Let me illustrate the point with what literacy means for a person in a village life in Indonesia at present. Village government used to be the most indigenous and democratic political institution. It was made up of people (villagers) nominated and elected direct by and from among themselves and ran its own affairs on its own resources. The leaders who were elected were usually characterised as honest, intelligent, inspiring, a natural leader and very often illiterate. Now it has changed, one requirement for their election has been added ie, literacy skill. No matter how intelligent one can be, how qualified a villager be for a position of a village chief, if he/she is illiterate, he/she cannot be made chief.

In most societies, illiterates have no access to certain occupations no matter how adept or skilful he/she is in the relevant field.

In some others, illiterates are not given the opportunity to even exercise their fundamental right to vote, to elect and be elected as a representative. If literacy has nothing to do with intelligence, with wisdom, etc., why can't we have an illiterate as village chief, policeman, teacher, judge or for that matter, president of the country? Who knows that among illiterates, there are those with high potentials to become what he/she is capable of becoming? If he/she remains illiterate, can these potentials be realised?

So, if literacy is not the cause of oppression, exploitation or further impoverishment, are there not indications enough that illiteracy leads to deprivation, to curtailment of opportunity for optimum self growth, to become foreman instead of labourer, to become leaders who lead others instead of followers being led by others, etc. to find the most productive and useful place in one's community? Is it not justified enough to demand literacy for all simply because of what one can possibly become with it in terms of self growth and self-development or because of enabling skill to cope with the requisites of a literate society in which one has to live nowadays? Another perspective of literacy may also be viewed from another angle. If we consider literacy as one of the fruits of civilization or one of the products of culture to be enjoyed by all because of its intrinsic value, why should there be a discrimination of those who may and may not share the enjoyment?

The advocacy for universal literacy or literacy for all within the shortest possible time should not be delimited simply because of mere technical considerations, such as insurmountable difficulties with respect to functionality, training of literacy personnel, production of materials for illiterates as well as neo-literates and transportation; or difficulty in maintaining or sustaining motivation and interest for literacy for the majority, etc., etc. to the effect that literacy campaigns are rejected out of hand. Because if we learn from a few countries that have tried before, literacy teaching on a massive scale is feasible. Take Cuba and Indonesia for example. Cuba has provided us with a unique experience in how a mass literacy campaign could be generated to bring about social change through mobilizing own resources for other than purely economic considerations.

One major weakness in these two campaigns had been attributed to the failure to sustain the momentum for after care activities up to a level of functional literacy.

The argument for integrating literacy into broader educational or developmental schemes should not obscure the assumption that literacy is very important in its own right as indicated earlier.

If we should proceed with modest approaches in literacy work, it must only be considered as a strategy which is subject to resources at hand, a tacit admission that we fail to generate indigenous and local potentials for active participation in this noble effort.

The Chairman of the Australian Council for Adult Literacy, Arch Nelson, has this to say:

LITERACY AND DEVELOPMENT

There may be a variety of reactions to the interesting statement, Cooperating or Campaigning for Literacy, from our German colleagues. Some of us may be inclined, given the size of the task ahead, to take issue with them on their statement that 'it is better to continue with the present diversity of modest approaches in literacy work' than presumably, to launch a thorough going campaign for the development of adult literacy. Does not thinking of this kind, one may ask, smack of defeatism?

I shall return to this question later. Meantime let us say that I find much wisdom in the German statement: much that endorses what thoughtful practitioners in the adult literacy field in Australia have written and said when reflecting on their own work: much that should be beyond dispute among the experienced and enlightened. This is evident from many of the arguments in the statement.

First it is contended that we should not write down the world's illiterates as ignorant and presumably unintelligent. Nor should we assume that illiteracy is the cause of oppression, exploitation and further impoverishment. This is surely the beginning of wisdom. We need an end to the thinking which in our day to day life as well as in the Third World, identifies the educated and literate as first rate and as intelligent and the inadequately literate as third rate and unintelligent. Unless we are able to make an end to this kind of thinking there can be little real cooperation between the literate and those who feel themselves to be outside the literate culture, and, in consequence, drives for the development of adult literacy must fail. But to agree that illiteracy is not the 'cause of oppression, exploitation and impoverishment' is not to suggest that the confidence which comes from the ability to express their thoughts in words is unlikely to be a powerful and essential factor in helping the disadvantaged to resist oppression, overcome poverty and feel that they matter in this confusing and rapidly changing world.

The essence of the arguments put forward in the statement may well be found in the following sentence: 'Nor is there any general evidence to suggest that literacy efforts by themselves have diminished exploitation and poverty in so-called literate countries'. Since very little 'general evidence' has been produced in 'literacy efforts' this is not surprising. But experience and commonsense do suggest that to tackle any social problem - be it illiteracy, poverty, child delinquency, drug addiction or adult crime - by treating it alone and without regard for the total community situation from which it has arisen would be foolish in the extreme. I would, therefore, agree not only that 'literacy efforts by themselves' would be unlikely to do much to diminish the general despair of the disadvantaged, but also that, if undertaken in splendid isolation, such efforts would be unlikely to do much to raise the general level of literacy. But where leadership is sensitive and imaginative 'literacy efforts' are not likely to be 'by themselves'.

The paragraph headed 'Campaigns: Yes and No' is, as the heading suggests, inconclusive. These writers warn against the dangers of centralized campaigns and the problems involved in coping with size and conclude that literacy campaigns are not 'a strategy for everyone and everywhere at present'. But they do concede the appropriateness of (1) 'campaigns for information, creation of public awareness and motivation for literacy', and (2) 'campaigns in the context of far reaching changes or revolutions in society'. Perhaps this amounts to little more than counselling caution and suggesting that each case should be examined on its merits. The dangers of centralization are real but to be forewarned surely makes it possible to be fore-armed. Nor do existing adult literacy authorities, ill equipped to cope with a heavy potential demand, and therefore very fearful of it, need to be reminded of the problems of size. But here again decentralization could help and planning is consistent with decentralization. Campaigns for public awareness and motivation are, it seems to me, not merely appropriate or useful, but essential to any serious movement to develop the level of adult literacy. And I should think that all the really significant movements for adult literacy in our immediate future will be if not 'in the context of revolutions', at least a function of a radical and compassionate re-thinking of the responsibilities that we adults have for each other: a re-thinking which must be given practical expression if communities are to remain or become democratic.

Of course, the suggestion that 'literacy campaigns' are not for everyone does imply that they are for some. Before it came to power the present Australian Federal Labor Government promised to initiate and fund, in cooperation with the States, a nationwide campaign for adult literacy. It now has before it a precise recommendation. This provides for funding to enable the responsible authorities, over a three year period, to meet existing but unsatisfied demand and to prepare and plan for much more comprehensive provision later. If adopted this recommendation would allow for the kind of experimentation, participatory research and community consultation which is the antithesis of the 'immediate confrontative approach' reflected by our German colleagues. But this does not mean that the approach should be other than thorough and determined. Any campaign for adult literacy must obviously be sincere and purposeful. But as in all adult education it is of supreme importance that relationships should be genuinely and sensitively egalitarian. To imagine that we are entitled to prescribe for the lives of others would be a cardinal and catastrophic mistake. Our task is surely to help the disadvantaged to create for themselves an environment in which they will be able to grow.

I have appreciated this invitation to an open dialogue on the issue of literacy and development. It is, indeed, timely.

*An Indian comment comes from (Dr) K.M.S. Benjamin,
Director of the Centre for Human Development and Social
Change in Madras:*

ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY

People had been living in the world a long time before systematically-developed script became a basis for communication. Unfortunately, indications over a period of centuries suggest that an individual's level of literacy does not necessarily guarantee the expected result: full human development. In our immediate experience we have found that those who have a quite strong ability to read and write are sometimes unable to meet even their basic needs; i.e. three meals a day, decent and simple housing, basic clothes to cover one's body against the vagaries of nature.

In this context, over emphasising the importance of literacy becomes stupid. In reality, literacy has not yielded the desired results with the mass of people. In fact in several societies, written language is used as the basic tool of oppression. One has to distinguish very clearly between literacy and education. Often literacy is equated with education. This is a sad situation which trivialises the broad concept of education as the process whereby human beings constantly learn how to ensure their basic needs and how to cope positively with life's problems.

On the other hand, the teaching of writing, reading and 'rithmetic - the three Rs of basic literacy - has not changed the face of human society, particularly in the Third World. In industrialised societies, the highly literate are unable to recognise that the 'progress' taking place is a lop-sided development producing fewer solutions than problems, such as pollution, imbalanced use of resources, nuclear war, militarisation, psycho-emotional depression, loneliness, etc. Even so, the challenges facing the Third World are much sharper as they highlight more fundamental problems which are impossible to disguise.

Those who argue for the importance of literacy alone are certainly living in a fool's paradise. Such arguments are delusions. They could be presented only by those who are seeking to maintain the status quo of the existing socio-economic and political (dis)order, a system which, incidentally, ensures the perpetuation of the misery, squalor and exploitation of the masses, the non literate.

Certain conclusions emerge from current experiments and experiences in adult education: ultimately, the crucial educational need of today is the politicisation of the poor and the marginalised. Such politicisation should be carried out in the context of a sharp ideological base and a clear vision for the future. Otherwise it becomes very difficult for people to work jointly or to carry on the task in a sustained manner.

There are interesting experiments in the systematic building up of people's movements currently taking place along non-party political lines. It is good to see that such visions are emerging in different

pockets. One can only hope that these individual visions will join together to give a much stronger and broader understanding of the ailments of society. When this happens, we should be able to get a much clearer concept of the role and the nature of adult education.

The Editor of *ASPBAE Courier* makes no apology for airing these important questions, even though they may cause some unease and even conflict among adult educators. It is very important that we be as clear as we can what we are trying to do, how best to go about it, and how far it achieves its objectives - and perhaps has some consequences as well, that were not planned for or intended.

ICAE has recently launched a Newsletter which enables adult educators to follow and contribute to this discussion, and generally to exchange views and experience about literacy. *Literacy Network* is edited by Anil Bordia, 72 Devi Path, Kanota Bagh, Jaipur, India. Readers are invited to correspond with Anil Bordia and to send him materials for use in the Newsletter.

One of the most stimulating sessions at the recent Adult Education Symposium in Shanghai, China (May 1984) addressed the question of literacy. Dr Carman St John Hunter's brief paper, 'Literacy: the Moving Target', is closely reasoned and full of significant points.

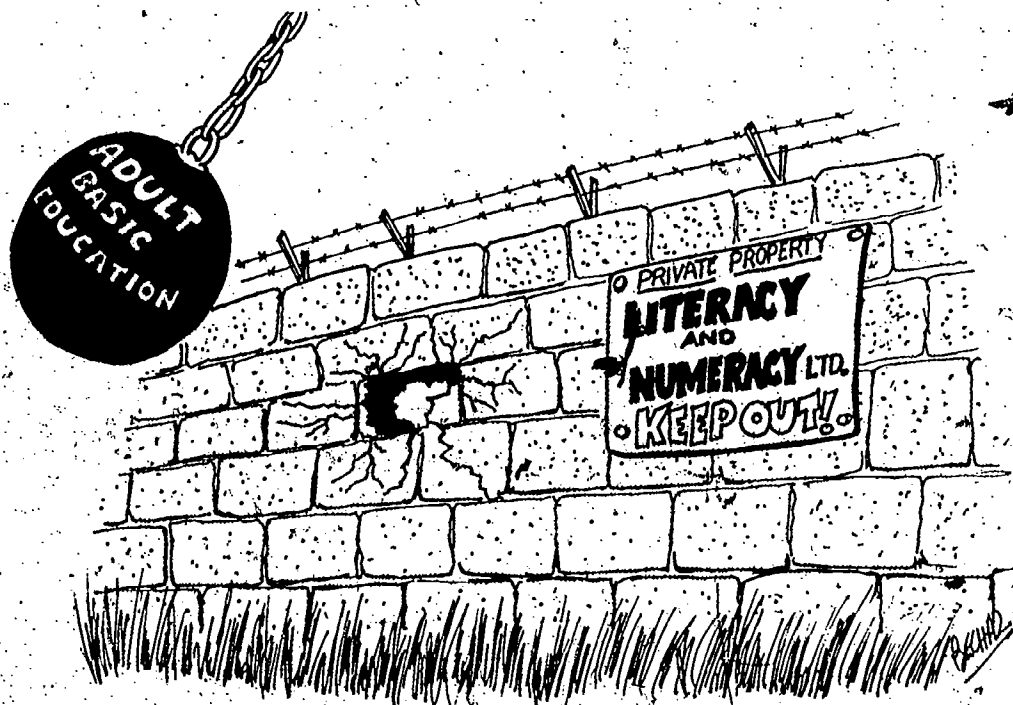
LITERACY: THE MOVING TARGET

Carman St J. Hunter
CHINA SYMPOSIUM, May 1984

The major purpose of this brief paper is to provoke discussion around some of the issues that underlie the 'literacy debate'. Perhaps no other apparently simple concept has created so much difference of opinion as the questions surrounding literacy. Everyone agrees that literacy is important, but beyond that affirmation, there are seemingly endless questions. And there are a series of myths which, though generally discredited by those most knowledgeable in the field, persist in different forms to cloud the discussion.

THE LITERACY MYTHS

It is commonly believed that it is possible to compare levels of literacy among nations on an international scale. Various world bodies publish statistics purporting to show the literacy levels in every nation of the world. The figures are quoted to prove a wide range of points by persons who ought to know better. Comparative statistics have no meaning unless they are based on comparable data. In the case of literacy, such comparable data does not exist. There is no set inventory of skills that is measured in every country of the world.



The second myth is that there should be such a set of absolute measures that would allow us to compare one nation with another. But literacy is a set of skills related to the coding and decoding of written language. The ability to code and decide is not an end in itself. It is used by people to accomplish purposes important to themselves within certain cultural and personal parameters. Depending on the level of social, economic and cultural development, nations require larger or smaller numbers of citizens at different levels of proficiency to fulfil the current needs of the society. Therefore, the question of who needs what level of literacy skills to do what, is a key question. This varies from one culture to another and, even, within cultures. An Indonesian villager and an urban Canadian will obviously require different levels of literacy skills. Therefore, even if there were a way to use the same inventory of skills to measure the literacy level of two persons so distant from each other geographically and culturally, the result would tell us very little. The reality is that desirable levels of literacy not only vary within and among nations, but, also, over time. A person living in Paris in 1984 will require considerably greater literacy skills to carry on his/her daily work compared to the skills a Parisian needed in 1924, for example.

This latter point leads us immediately to another myth. It is quite common to hear about the need to eradicate illiteracy. While it is quite possible that a nation could achieve universal basic literacy, that is, reach the goal of having every citizen able to write her name and read a simple passage or write a paragraph that would be intelligible, few, if any, nations have accomplished this task. However, as modernization takes place, the person with those minimal skills would probably encounter great difficulty functioning in the society. Since literacy competence is not some absolute minimal level of achievement but, rather, a competence that is related to a set of demands that the society lays on those who wish to participate in it, then literacy is, indeed, a moving target. Once a minimal goal has been achieved, another will be required.

THE PERSONAL DIMENSION

In 1962 UNESCO stated that:

A person is literate when he has acquired the essential knowledge and skills which enable him to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning in his group and community and whose attainments in reading, writing and arithmetic make it possible for him to continue to use these skills toward his own and the community's development.

Once literacy has been described in functional terms, as in this definition, it becomes almost impossible to think only about external measurement. A nation can set desirable literacy levels and measure them. China has, at different periods defined literacy as the ability to read 1000, 1500 or 2000 characters. In the same way, the United States has set 4th or 6th or 8th grade reading levels as minimum standards. Employers also screen prospective employees according to levels required for specific jobs. However, these are external stand-

ards and apply to specific points in time. The UNESCO definition, and others that are similarly broad, are more developmental. As conditions and ambitions change, individuals can only apply internal standards to judge their own levels of achievement. Who, other than the person concerned, can truly say whether he can 'engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning'? Who, other than the person concerned, knows whether he can 'use his skills in his own and the community's development'?

Of course, literacy means reading and writing, but at what level? There is a sense in which the level can only be determined by what a person needs/wants/hopes to be able to do. A nation can set minimal levels that define literacy but these have little to do, in reality, with the objectives individuals set for themselves. Whenever participants in a literacy group are asked why they are seeking literacy skills at whatever level, the responses are very different. One wants to help her children with their studies; another hopes to write letters to a relative living far away. Some have ambitions involving further study and far-reaching vocational goals. Whether or not the minimal standard set externally will be sufficient to enable the individual to reach his personal goals, is another sign of how the target changes, in this instance, within individual lives. Minimum standards can be set, but are there any maximum standards? These are very personal.

But there is always a limit set, sometimes by the persons themselves and sometimes by conditions that they cannot control. Think for a moment about who the 'illiterates' are in any society. Are people poor because they are illiterate or illiterate because they are poor? This is one of the questions that has caused a great deal of controversy in literacy discussions. Generally it is easiest to avoid further discussion by saying that this is like the question of which comes first, the chicken or the egg? This is a complex matter about which there can be no absolute position. The evidence requires serious consideration.

THE ECONOMICS OF LITERACY

Why is it true that the highest rates of absolute illiteracy are in the poorest nations? In China, prior to 1949, large landowners, government employees and the small affluent class in general were not illiterate. Internal and external oppressions had kept the masses poor. Once the barriers to economic development were removed, a message of hope for the future was delivered together with the great literacy campaigns. Within industrialized nations, the poor (minorities, women, immigrants, older people) have the lowest literacy levels. Their options for development are few, therefore there are less demands for literacy in their daily lives, and, therefore, they have the lowest literacy levels. Economic development and the hope of participating in its benefits cause literacy skills to be more highly prized. Sometimes only the hope is necessary. Change begins to take place before the hope is fully realized. Where dramatic social and political change has occurred, literacy campaigns have had far greater success than in nations where there has been no such change. There is, of course, the possibility of serious problems for individuals and for the masses if hopes are raised and not realized.

All of this is to say that raising the literacy level of marginal people, those left behind in any society, requires more than the provision of an increased number of literacy programs. Individual or group motivation is in direct relation to the degree of anticipation that the effort to achieve literacy skills will pay off in some tangible way. When economic and social barriers to full participation in society are removed, the motivation for and pursuit of literacy skills follow. When the desire to acquire literacy is present, how can programs best be structured to meet the needs of adults long excluded from learning opportunities?

CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

Just as existing barriers to participation in the full life of the society must be removed before there is a notable change in the desire for literacy, there is, built into the goals and methodology of successful programs, the assumption that the learners will actually be full participants in the future. The following criteria have been developed by a group of literacy specialists:

- Learning programs must emerge from the needs and problems of the learners themselves. Active, conscious, organized participation of the population in all levels and stages of the program is fundamental.
- Programs must have credibility with, and inspire trust in, the illiterate population in order to motivate and mobilize them for the learning process.
- Programs must include both the study of theory and opportunity for practice.
- Programs should make use of amateurs who are integrated in the life of the local communities where the programs are to take place.
- Learners must have opportunity to participate in the construction of materials to be used in the program.

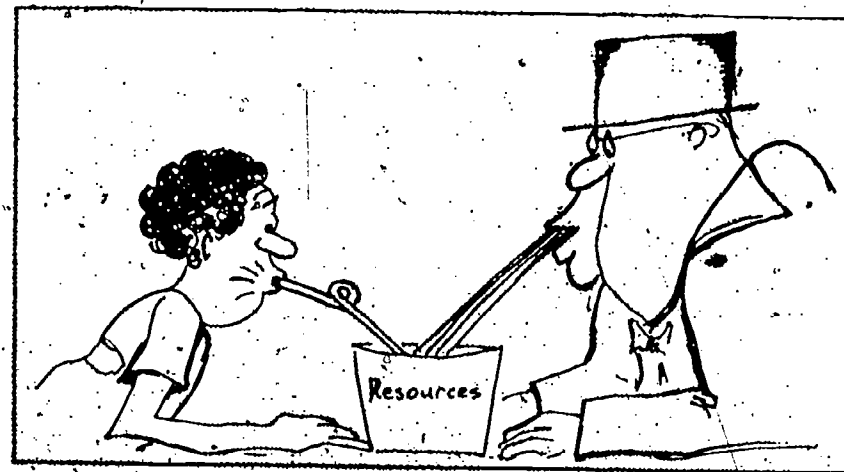
At the level of literacy instruction, also, we can see that the target is a moving one. Good instruction does not see illiterate or semi-literate persons as a homogeneous mass to receive identical treatment. Methodology and materials must be shaped, as closely as possible to the particular conditions, desires, hopes and abilities of each group of learners. It is the unlocking of individual creativity and imagination that is at stake. Otherwise, to what end the cultivation of literacy skills? The ultimate target among all the moving targets is the literate individual freely contributing to the building of a better society.

SUMMARY

Literacy does not represent a standard to be reached once and for all. Rather, literacy requirements change according to the opportunities for their use. They differ from one society to another and within any particular society. They also change over time. Motivation to

acquire literacy increases as social impediments are removed and economic options increased. Popular literacy campaigns and literacy teaching have greater success when they are accompanied by policy changes in the larger society that move toward greater inclusiveness of all levels of the population in all aspects of national life. They are also more effective when methods and materials are grounded in the daily life of the people served.

- 1 The Commission on Literacy, International Council for Adult Education, Meeting in Paris, October 1982.



This section on literacy continues with an official report on the current Thai literacy campaign from the Department of Nonformal Education which is responsible for its administration, and extracts from an illuminating, descriptive and more subjective, account of the Campaign as it appears 'from the field'. The report was prepared by Dr Kasama Varavarn, Director of the Campaign.

THE THAI NATIONAL LITERACY CAMPAIGN

THE NEED FOR A NATIONAL LITERACY CAMPAIGN

The year 1983 marked the 700th anniversary of the invention of the Thai alphabet under the command of King Ramkhamhang the Great. Today, literacy is no longer a privilege granted to a few but it is considered to be a basic right of every Thai. Literacy is identified as a decisive factor in the liberation of individuals from ignorance, as a precondition for broad-based democratic participation and as an indispensable vehicle for the development of the society.

Yet, while the nation celebrates the 700th anniversary of the Thai alphabet, approximately 3.5 million Thais are left at a disadvantage because they are illiterate. These people are found among the poorest of the poor in every province of the nation. Sixty per cent are within the working age groups and approximately 60 per cent are women. Any struggle for a developed and a just society cannot be achieved if it fails to reach 10.5 per cent of our population found in the national census to be illiterate.

As an indication of its firm commitment to the eradication of illiteracy, the Thai government sets a target in the Fifth Social and Economic Development Plan to reduce the country's illiteracy rate among the working age population. Accordingly, a plan has been formulated to reach 1.5 million illiterates within five years, with emphasis on those within the age groups of 14-15.

While there are several on-going efforts to cope with the illiteracy problem, the universalization of primary education will ensure that every child will have access to schooling and that there will be fewer and fewer new illiterates. For the out-of-school population, the Department of Nonformal Education has been organizing functional literacy teaching. It aims to promote rational thinking, to provide basic and fundamental education as well as to certify graduates for primary education. To attain these objectives, the program requires specialized training for teachers, up-to-date learning materials, regular follow-up and supervision. Consequently, in spite of intensive investment in the program, it can only serve 50,000 illiterate adults each year.

While existing efforts can help to contribute towards the total eradication of illiteracy, with limited resources, it is not feasible to expand them to serve the target population of 1.5 million. Any struggle to overcome illiteracy among such a vast and diverse population cannot be handled by any one agency or even by the government alone. It must be based on a national sense of commitment and receive popular support from all levels.

To alleviate the illiteracy problem towards the goal promulgated in the Fifth National Social and Development Plan, the Ministry of Education was directed by the National Rural Development Committee to launch a nationwide literacy campaign, with the aim to reach 1.5 million illiterates within the ages of 14-15 during the years of 1984-1986.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND PREPARATION FOR THE NATIONAL LITERACY CAMPAIGN

The campaign, the second in the nation's history, was based on several guiding principles.

Unlike the first campaign of 1940 which was supported by a law making literacy skills mandatory to all Thais, the present National Campaign is based on the principle of non-coercion. Intensive popularization efforts through local leaders, field-workers and mass media, creation of conducive literate environment and a systematic follow-up and reporting system are designed to motivate the target group to participate in the campaign.

In recognition of the nation's relatively high literacy rate of over 86 per cent, the campaign aims to mobilize literate persons within the family and within the community to serve as volunteer instructors. Such approach will enable the illiterate to receive individual instruction which can be arranged according to his own learning pace and convenience. It also greatly lowers the operating cost of the campaign and enables the campaign to reach the target group within the available budget. If paid professional teachers are used, approximately 360 million baht will have to be spent to reach the target group of 1.5 million people. Most importantly, such approach provides the opportunity for people from all walks of life to participate and develop a sense of shared commitment with the campaign.

While the impetus for the campaign originates from the Ministry of Education, its role in the campaign is confined to coordinating the implementation and providing technical supports. Responsibilities in planning, mobilizing, operating and follow-up rest within the community and different layers of provincial administrators. Through these administrative structures, various government and private agencies are mobilized to take part in the campaign in different capacities.

Lastly, the campaign is not conducted in isolation but is supported and supplemented with other development efforts. Along with the attempts to eradicate illiteracy among adults, efforts are being made to achieve universalization of primary education by the same period, in order to reduce the number of new illiterates being added. With the decision to launch the National Literacy Campaign, the government has given assurances to establish information resource centers where the learners can continuously acquire reading materials in all target villages of the campaign.

Preparation of the campaign started well over two years prior to official proclamation in September 1983.

A three-year survey of 3,500,000 fully illiterates began in 1981 to develop a computerized name list to be distributed to campaign organizers in every community to be used in the planning, operation and follow-up of the campaign.

While village volunteers are encouraged to use any teaching methods and learning materials most convenient to them, two choices of literacy primers were developed and mass-produced to assist them in the teaching and learning processes. Both literacy primers are based on the basic words used in everyday life. The contents of the primers are based on problems, stories and information which are of relevance and interest to the learners. Funds are allocated from the government to provide one primer for each of the learners.

Training models for provincial and sub-district coordinators and manuals for coordinators and volunteers are developed and mass-produced with government funds.

While maximal flexibility in teaching approaches is encouraged, the program controls the standard of literacy skills achieved through very carefully developed testing systems. Ten sets of standardized reading and writing tests are developed and tested. To enable the learners to assess their literacy skills at their own convenience, primary schools which are accessible to most villages are requested to serve as testing centers.

Popularization campaigns also started well ahead of the literacy campaign. Newspapers, radio programs, posters, pamphlets, folk media, as well as formal delegation of responsibilities, are media used to develop commitment and enlist the support of policy-makers, administrators, the general public and potential coordinators and volunteers. The village coordinators and volunteers, in turn, are expected to persuade the target groups to join the campaign.

In 1983, a pilot project was conducted in nine provinces of the country involving 1,832 illiterates to determine the feasibility of the principles of the campaign and to develop campaign organizational and coordinating mechanism at different levels.

The most crucial step in the campaign strategy is the development of commitment and a sense of shared responsibilities among government and private agencies and provincial authority. To achieve this goal, the campaign proposal based on the principle of shared responsibility was first submitted to the inter-agency National Commission of Non-Formal Education. Once approved in principle, representatives from various agencies concerned were invited to draft guidelines on the roles and responsibilities of each agency. In August, a seminar was organized for the provincial governors, and key officials from 18 target provinces of 1983 to plan for the campaign strategy.

On September 8, 1983, the International Literacy Day, the Thai National Literacy Campaign was promulgated with national addresses by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Education calling for unified efforts in the eradication of illiteracy.

PROGRESS OF THE NATIONAL LITERACY CAMPAIGN UP TO APRIL 1984

The campaign is now under way. Even though there have been delays in release of budget, most provinces have used their own funds to conduct training of campaign coordinators and to implement the campaign. Monthly reports from the provinces show gradual increase in program participation. By April 1984, 196,569 learners are reported to have participated in the campaign with 149,696 volunteer teachers. In several provinces, over 80 per cent participation rates have been attained.

From provincial reports and follow-ups, the following conclusions can be made about the campaign's progress and problems.

Recruitment of Volunteers

Experiences from the implementation confirmed the possibility of recruiting local volunteers to serve as literacy teachers. It was found that most villagers are willing to serve for a social cause, especially if they are requested by those who command their respect, and if they are convinced that they can be of assistance and that the teaching schedule does not conflict with their working patterns. Many view teaching as a form of making merit and pride themselves in being selected to be 'teachers'. In general, in communities where the village headmen, the monks and the teachers are committed to the campaign, volunteers for all learners can be recruited within one or two weeks.

The large majority of volunteers are members of the families or neighbours teaching on a one-to-one basis or in small groups. In several communities, members of organized groups and outside volunteers such as the village scouts, the monks, primary and secondary students and the border police have also offered their services.

Motivation of Learners

Most campaign coordinators admit that it is easier to recruit volunteer teachers than to motivate illiterates to participate in the campaign. All illiterates have led their lives without literacy skills, they are pressed with hosts of problems and some may even have unhappy memories of early schooling experiences. Therefore, in most communities, while there are many who readily participate in the campaign, there remain others who have no interest, lack the confidence that they can learn or simply have no spare time.

A variety of approaches have been adopted to deal with this problem. Among the successful ones are sermons by monks on the value of education, persuasions by village headmen and local leaders, use of folk media and assignments given to school children to assist their parents in acquiring literacy skills. In one of the districts of

Chaiyaphum Province where all target learners have participated in the campaign, the district officer personally visited every village to persuade the illiterates to join. He has also prepared a manual to be used by campaign coordinators when questioned by villagers. Among the most frequently asked questions is 'Why do we have to be literate when we are not government officials, soldiers or monks?' The guidelines in the manual give the following suggestion: 'Explain to villagers that to learn to read is a means to learn about life. Point out contents within the primer which deal with village problems. As for the concern found among most illiterates that they would not be able to learn, the manual advised that the coordinators should try to convince the villagers that if they can learn to weave, a skill which is more complex than literacy and has yet to be acquired by the literate government officials, there is no reason why they will not be able to acquire literacy skills. In several communities where the learners simply have no free time for literacy education, other strategies have been devised. For example, in Samut Sakhon Province, where a large number of illiterates spend over ten hours in the day-time in factories and the early hours of morning from 1-3 o'clock picking flowers, appeals were made to factories to allot time within their work schedule for literacy teaching.

Through the dedication of campaign coordinators at the field level and the ingenious ways they have developed campaign strategies to correspond to the specific conditions of the learners in their communities, the campaign has been able to reach approximately 52 per cent of the target population within eight months of the start of the campaign.

Sustaining the Interests of Teachers and Learners

Up to the present time, the most difficult problem of the campaign has been how to maintain the commitment of both the volunteer teachers and the learners until the literacy skills have been successfully acquired.

The campaign has indeed demonstrated, much to the surprise of many educators, that the volunteer teachers with no training and regardless of their sex, age and educational background, can impart literacy skills effectively, using a variety of conventional and unconventional teaching techniques. In most cases, however, the partners will face certain problems resulting from loss of interest, conflicting time schedule or inability to overcome some learning difficulties. Unless they are assisted to deal with such problems, learning will be most likely discontinued. A system of follow-up is, therefore, equally critical to the campaign as recruitment of volunteers and motivation of learners.

Again, a diversity of approaches has been developed to deal with this issue. Monks, primary school teachers, health reporters, members of farmers' groups or even patrolling policemen have been requested to serve as coordinators to learning/teaching partners, to assist them to overcome difficulties and to give encouragement until the learning process is successfully completed.

Preventing Reversion to Illiteracy

As more and more learners become literate, the need to provide a continuous flow of relevant reading materials to the target areas becomes increasingly evident. Having completed the primer, neo-literates continually request the campaign coordinators for more reading materials. Unfortunately, while a large number of development agencies do distribute printed materials in rural areas, they are often limited in number or are not suitable for new readers.

Several measures have been undertaken to create a more literate environment. Requests have been made to major development agencies to be aware of the needs and the reading level of neo-literates and to modify their materials accordingly. All provinces have been supported to produce simple wall-newspapers focussing on local news and information and using village writers. A series of easy pictorial readers is also published with cooperation from professional writers and artists. These readers have been successful with neo-literates. But due to budgetary constraints, only one copy of each reader produced can be provided to the entire village. The campaign, therefore, is seeking contributions from the public in supporting the production of reading materials in larger quantity and in creating a more effective production and distribution system for reading materials to rural areas.

The National Literacy Campaign is now only in its eighth month of implementation. While it is too early to draw conclusions about the outcomes and the impact, the campaign has already demonstrated the feasibility of certain principles which have been considered as unattainable. It has shown that it is still possible to mobilize the spirit of voluntarism in rural Thai communities, to motivate illiterates to learn without legal coercion, to use untrained volunteers as literacy teachers, to unite various agencies in reaching a common goal and above all, to launch a mass literacy campaign in a non-revolutionary society.



IMPRESSIONS FROM THE FIELD

I have had a hard time dealing with this National Literacy Campaign from its early planning days, even though my role has only been that of an observer. The history of these things elsewhere has not been too good. Big goals, big claims and then, several governments or an ideological shift later, reality. I remember a fellow with whom I once worked in another Asian country. Ten years earlier he had provided his nation's charismatic leader with the statistics that enabled him to claim - at some UNESCO meeting, I think - that illiteracy had been wiped out in that country. I believe the current illiteracy rate for that country is something like 40 per cent.

There is literacy and there is literacy. A few years back a University of Texas study in the USA revealed 19 per cent of the sample studied couldn't understand things like bus schedules and could not fill out those myriad of simple forms that are part of everyday living for most people in that country.

And the people who have to plan and carry out the campaign here. They are my friends. They have done a lot of real good things in education here. They have more to do, can do. Their eyes have fire in them.

And their eyes had fire in them when they talked to me about their early ideas for the Literacy Campaign... whether it was about strategies or the reactions they had gathered from illiterates in the villages. It was not difficult to raise thoughtful concerns in the face of those eyes, but, for me, it was very difficult to be cynical. That was about a year ago.

As planning went on and the hype needed for any national campaign began to develop, things became even more difficult to deal with. Things had to be done big, national scale... the voice from Bangkok, pumping things up. Meetings in Pattaya, the Prime Minister's office... pulling in the Khunying and the governors' wives. A strategy of volunteerism and noncoercion, in sharp contrast to most if not all similar campaigns being conducted elsewhere today. A strategy admirably consistent in both its assumptions and processes with the strategy guiding national political, social and economic development efforts.

But in the end, the chance this thing had rests in the hands of lots of little people. People who will teach. People who will coordinate, encourage, support. People out there somewhere.

To get an idea of what's going on out there and in between, I visited two pilot sites of the project, in the South and in the North East.

SOUTH - AUGUST, 1983

'In the fields there is rice. In the fields there is water. In the fields there are fish.' The woman read on slowly despite the periodic loud grunts of her drunken husband and the playful pokes and muffled giggles of three of her daughters who had crouched down around her. 'In the water there are fish. In the fields there is rice.'

Finished, she looked up, her eyes dancing confidently over our faces. Her smile was so enthusiastic that, for a few moments, she forgot to cover it with her hand.

A withered old man sitting on the floor off to her right smiled too. His daughter, aged 27, was learning to read and write as a participant in one of the pilot activities which preceded the recently initiated National Literacy Campaign. A younger cousin who lives several houses away was teaching her.

The young nonformal education official who led our unexpected visit continued this impromptu testing. He asked the woman to sign her name, which she did without much difficulty. Then he wrote words and short phrases on slips of paper and handed them to her one at a time.

'Muban', she read, then smiled.

'Sweep the house.' Smile.

'Ehh...' she thought for a moment. 'Make a garden... ueee... make a kitchen garden. Big smile... and smiles too on the faces of her father and daughters.

Her husband finally managed more than a grunt.

'Ai nu...' he said loudly, pointing abruptly at one of his daughters. 'Get me my pen and some paper.'

'Father, naa...' another daughter started to protest only to be quickly quieted by a firm, but understanding stare from her mother.

The woman glanced at us, smiled nervously, and looked down at the text on the floor in front of her. She began fingering its already frayed edges. It took some time before we could find a way to leave.

Once outside the Kamnan who was accompanying us explained that, though the husband caused no real trouble, he was constantly drunk and rarely worked. The young official who had stayed behind to talk a bit more with the woman caught up with us.

'She has learned quite well, huh? In only three weeks, too. I don't think she'll have any trouble passing the test at the end of the month.'

The village homes were bunched tightly together, forming a rough circle. Most were dark except for an occasional flickering light from a single light bulb. Walking between the houses on the outer rim, we came to the home of another woman participating in the pilot program. Unlike those we had passed it was built on the ground, primarily with cement block, and lit brightly with the pale white of neon. The doors were wide open. Inside, twenty maybe thirty children and a smattering of adults had their eyes glued firmly on a large, old black and white TV.

The Kamnan spoke softly to a young girl who disappeared into the darkness around the side of the house.

The room with the TV was also a shop of sorts. Its shelves were few and, except for a couple of bottles of fish sauce and some cheap plastic goods, largely bare.

Eventually, a dishevelled woman appeared hesitantly in the doorway of an adjoining back room. Spotting the Kamnan, she quickly made her way through the packed room and came outside. She gently brushed several young children off a low make-shift wooden table and motioned to us to sit down. Then suddenly she rushed off and returned quickly with a straw mat which she set on top of the table. The young official sat down and invited the woman and us to join him. The Kamnan pulled me and the other NFE official with us out into the darkness.

'She has a lot of burdens,' he said. 'Six... no five kids, one just died. No land to plant rice. Sells a few things here. Makes kanom jean to sell in the market...' he paused. 'Works hard, real hard.'

'I don't think we should spend much time here,' said the NFE official. 'Let's go now, huh?'

'Yes.'

'No, it's okay... we can talk to her.' As he spoke, the Kamnan led us back to the table.

The woman was retying her pha thung. Everyone else remained totally absorbed by the TV.

'How's the studying going?' the young official asked. 'Your daughter is teaching you, right? Where is she?'

The woman called her daughter and, still standing, began straightening her badly soiled grey blouse. Her daughter, a lower secondary school student, appeared carrying the text. The official held his hand out for it and asked the woman to sit down.

'So, how's it going?' he asked again.

The woman brushed her hair off her forehead revealing large, deep eyes. Her look was distant... hard, but neither apologetic or defiant. It was a look of long tiredness.

'I have a lot of burdens.' She moved her arm in the direction of the shop. 'There's little time... opportunity to study. My daughter has homework to do at night. Sometime she tries to teach me on Saturday or Sunday. Look, I work hard. I send all my kids to school... make sure they do their homework. That's what is important...'

She was calm, her speech even and clear. 'Isn't that important...? That they have an opportunity? Aren't I doing enough?'

By now a number of children had left the room and were crowding around the table. The education official took the text and skimmed through the first few pages. It was clear that the woman had done some studying as there were the hesitant letters of a new learner written in some of the blank exercise spaces.

'Can you read this?' the official asked.

The woman looked down, her hair falling back over her forehead. She mumbled the beginnings of a word and the children around the table began to laugh.

The official pushed a bit more and the woman endured his efforts and the laughter. Her daughter standing off to one side, was having a more difficult time.

'Your mother is doing more than enough' the other nonformal education official who had moved to her side said quietly. 'Too much, maybe. Anyone who is not a total dullard can learn to read and write if they have an opportunity. But not too many people around here who have TVs open their doors wide and let the neighbours come in to watch. Help your mother. She is a special person.'

He went over to his junior colleague. 'Let's move.' He then turned to the woman. 'Thank you for talking with us.'

We spent several hours at the Kamnan's house discussing the pilot effort. The talk kept coming back to the woman who we had just visited.

NORTHEAST - SEPTEMBER, 1983

We received a briefing from the provincial education officer. He explained that the district we would be visiting was a 'red' area until only several years ago.

'It's quite safe now. We chose it as a site for our pilot activity,' he continued, 'because we considered it the most difficult area in the province. It's far away... hard to get to. The people are poor. Illiteracy is high. We want to develop strategies there that will be most useful when the National Literacy Campaign is extended throughout the province this coming October.'

The 130 km trip took almost two hours. Most of the roads were paved, but we encountered few other vehicles. Clouds covered whatever moon there was and we could not see the sugar cane fields we were told dominated the area.

It was nearly 10 pm when we reached the subdistrict with ten villages participating in the program.

'Isn't it kind of late to visit?' someone offered.

'No, not at all. The villagers here don't return from their fields until about eight. By the time they've cooked their rice, eaten, and cleared up it is usually around this time.' responded the education officer.

The vehicles came to a halt and we stumbled stiffly out. The Campaign director suggested we break up into small groups and visit different homes. She then walked off in the direction of a one room, thatched roof house on stilts about a meter and a half off the ground.

A young man and his wife in their early twenties seated on mats greeted her. Their broad, round faces beamed in unison in the wavering light of the small lamp on the floor. The young woman softly stroked a small baby, their first child, which was sleeping peacefully beside her. On the floor next to the lamp was the Campaign's official text. From our discussion, we learned that the couple had migrated five months ago. When they heard about the literacy campaign, the husband who never had a chance to go to school because there was no school in his mountainous village was very interested. However, due to their recent migration, his name was not on the target group list so he had to wait about a month before receiving the text. Every night after dinner and after putting the baby to sleep, he will learn to read and write with the assistance of his wife, a graduate of prathom 4. After two months he can read up to chapter 20 of the text fluently, he can write his name, address, and can even read newspaper. Sommai recounted his experience with pride. The first few lessons were difficult. But now I am having a lot of fun reading about farming, medicine, history and other interesting stories in the text. Yesterday I even read about the Prime Minister in the newspaper.

We said goodbye and walked on in the dark along the earthen road.

We reached the second house and looked up onto the partially enclosed porch. A small boy, his hair neatly cropped in the style of a student, half stood when he saw us.

'Can we come up?' the director asked lightly. The boy waved, nodded, mumbled something in Isan, and looked down at the floor. Slipping off our shoes, we climbed up the ladder onto the straw mats that covered the sturdy wooden planks.

'Well, who is the teacher here?' the Director asked.

'Me, ma'm,' he responded with the smile of a shy imp.

'Well, isn't that something... good,' she rubbed his head, rolling it around in a tender, rough and tumble way. 'That's very good. Hey... show me how you do it. Try teaching him. He's not too smart, though. Might be hard.' She laughed picking up the text on the floor and pointing to me.

The boy turned his head toward me, but kept his large eyes on her.

'Well, who do you teach anyway?' There was respect in her playful tone and it gave him the courage to turn his head back to her.

'My mother, ma'm.'

'Your mother, eh, that's really good. Does she learn well?'

'Yes'm,' he laughed. 'She learns well.'

'Where is she?'

The boy half turned his head to one side. A woman's voice came out of a partially visible mosquito net in a room several feet behind him.

There was some soft rustling and a woman in a phasin and simple blouse appeared in the doorway and moved gracefully down on to the floor beside her son. The smile creased her whole face as she waived each of us in turn.

'Excuse me, I was putting my baby to sleep.' Her words were an easy mixture of Isan and central Thai.

'Please elder sister... if you are not finished, we can wait... or come back.' offered the director.

'Oh no, no... everything is done.'

'How is the studying going? You have quite a teacher here, a real fine boy.'

The boy and his mother exchanged knowing looks. He turned and looked at the director. We chatted easily for some time. Then the director turned to Chaleo.

'Well, do you think your mother would like to read something for us? I tell you what, you find the last lesson she studied and have her read that. Come on, be like the teacher in your third grade class.'

Chaleo smiled and moved on his knees closer to his mother and the text. He opened it and began turning the pages.

'Just a minute... stop there.' The director was leaning forward close to the boy. 'Who wrote those words? There... those, in the exercise.'

'My mother, ma'm.'

'Pretty good, huh?'

'I don't write very well,' the woman said, extending her smile wider than it had been.

'She hurries too much.' Chaleo added. He continued to turn the pages.

'That exercise there... there, there.' The director interrupted.

'Who drew those lines?'

'I did,' answered Chaleo quickly.

'You did?' said the director with a playfully exaggerated look of reproach.

'Yes'm,' Chaleo replied sheepishly, 'but my mother told me what words to match. Then I drew the lines.'

Chaleo's mother helped him turn the pages as they moved through the text looking for the last lesson they had done. More than three-quarters away through the 125-page text they stopped. The woman

broadened her ever-present smile, pulled the book closer to her, bent forward in order to see better in the dim light, and began to read. She read smoothly, with the index finger of her large strong right hand moving steadily across the page under the words she read. Her smile seemed to grow even wider as she read.

When she finished, she looked up and still smiling... I don't remember her not smiling... asked, 'When I have finished this studying, what can I study next?'

'Well...' The director paused and looked at us. 'Maybe we can arrange to have a functional literacy class conducted here so you can earn a grade 4 equivalency certificate. Or... we will get some books for you to read. What kind of books would you like?'

'Reading is fun. I enjoy it. The text here is interesting. But, I'd like to learn to use numbers, too. You know, add and subtract.' Her smile was still broad. 'You know, I go to the market sometime and buy things. Well, I can figure things out, but the traders do it so quickly... and, if I don't think their figuring is right, sometime they write it down and I get all confused. Sometimes they tell me I don't know how to use numbers.'

'Would it be good, elder sister, if we put out a book like this text, but about numbers?' the director asked intently.

'Yes'm.' The woman's smile again widened.

'Could you teach your mother to calculate, Chaleo?'

'Big person, little knowledge.' The director whacked him lightly on the shoulder. Ducking, he added, 'Yes, I could help her.'

We talked about leaving, but didn't. We played around a bit and soft laughter and broad smiles came easily. After some time the baby started to cry, so we said our goodbyes and left.

We walked back to the paved road and turned in the direction from which we had come. 'We've got to do something to follow this program up... and on a similar scale.'

'Once they learn to read and write... what do we do so that all these efforts, the new confidences developed... the new skills, I mean, you saw how confident that woman was... she was enjoying it. The joy of reading, not cooking. What do we do so it isn't all wasted?'

We walked past the turnoff where the vehicles were parked. Several hundred meters beyond we came to a large house set off the road a short distance. The official called in and a voice answered from the back. As we walked in the official explained that the old man who was learning and his wife, the teacher, were both over 60. Though the man was well beyond the 50 year old upper-range of the Campaign's target population, he had asked to be included in the program.

We took off our shoes, climbed the stairs, and walked along a narrow porch around to the back of the house. The old couple greeted us and invited us to sit. The room was spacious and open on three sides. The wide, hardwood floor boards were smooth and cool.

Light was provided by the flame of a traditional lamp. It consisted of dry leaves rolled tightly together forming a slightly tapered cylinder about a foot long and two inches in diameter. At the middle it was fastened almost perpendicular to a wooden stake which rose about five inches off the floor out of a solid wooden base. The base under the lighted end had been hollowed out to catch the ashes and sparks that fell as the lamp burned.

Noticing my interest in the lamp, the old man pointed to it. 'Cheaper than kerosene. Light's not so good. Hard to read by. Attracts bugs, too. Get in my eyes as I read.' He laughed.

He was naked to the waist, with a pakoma tied neatly there and extending to just above his knees. Another pakoma was draped easily over his right shoulder. He had muscle tone and bulk on his upper torso and a straight thick crew cut of grey hair that would make many men 20 years younger envious. Only his shallow cheeks and the condition of his teeth gave any real clue to his age.

With hardly a suggestion from the Campaign director, the man quickly found the last lesson he had studied and began to read. He read everything on the page, even the headings and instructions. Finished, he turned the page ahead and read some more as we all listened intently. His pace was rapid. Occasionally, he stumbled, went back over the word reading each syllable slowly, and then raced on. He turned back a few lessons and read some more, ignoring, except for a quick look, the director's efforts to ask him some questions. Another lesson. He read on as his wife, who had had only two years of formal schooling, looked at him with patience and pride. He read on even as his wife and the director got involved in a lengthy discussion. On each page to which he turned, the exercises had been completed with words that were written in large, but fairly fluid letters.

He read through the main passage of the 39th of 50 lessons, then stopped. He showed us the exercise he had completed with that lesson. His address, the date, about two weeks before our visit. Then he started reading aloud from the exercise in which he had filled in the blanks.

'Honorable Minister of Education, to whom I give highest respect. I whose name is Perm, family name Saengsom, am learning to read and write the Thai language. I am close to finishing this text.' He stopped and smiled with much satisfaction. 'Had a little trouble there writing the last letter of my family name. Couldn't get that last stroke to go straight up... kinda went off to the side.'

He turned the page and continued reading. 'I think being able to read is useful. And, I think if we villagers had some simple books to read, it would be very good. With highest respect, Mr. Perm Saengsom... aah.' He smiled.

Finally, an example of the approach which is possible to a small non-governmental agency with a clear commitment to social change in an integrated adult education programme including literacy. The agency is Seva Mandir, in Udaipur, Rajasthan, India, the author its General Secretary.

EXAMPLES FROM THE FIELD: LITERACY WHAT AND HOW?

Om. Shrivastava

'You know I was able to speak clearly and firmly to the SDO* yesterday about our land records - he looked at my face and said "haven't I seen you before?" Said I, "Yes, sir. You have, last year, when our* Patwarisab pushed me in front of you and I was only begging for justice, you only looked at me and kept signing your papers. Now you have to look to our records, we all are together." You know, where this strength came in me - through going to that literacy centre and not only learning alphabets but discussing our problems too. It brought us together, made us think, I have developed a self-confidence, I feel a different man.'

I had this dialogue two months ago with a tribal man in a small village. And there are several such stories which outline the purposes and process of an adult education centre. To quote a few would provide a broader canvass for reference.

A few years ago in an adult education centre, the members were working in a stone quarry. When the learners learnt about numeracy, they were curious to know about the income and expenditure to the owner in the quarry and how they are doing in comparison to his income. The literacy teacher went through the mathematics of operation and the learners of the centre realised that they contributed much higher percentage in the income than the wage they get. With the help of the teacher they were able to organise themselves and found out how lease can be taken for the mine and took a mine on lease. This process not only helped them in their economic development but increased the daily wage in the area because other mine workers demanded the wage too. This shows how a centre, if it considers the problems of the learners, as part of the curriculum can guide them in understanding the economic system as it operates on their level.

Another example of an agricultural-oriented adult education centre in South Rajasthan was an eye-opener. This was a tribal area and people were introduced to the new ideas in agriculture and animal husbandry through literacy and functional knowledge. One young man took a lot of interest in understanding the concepts and tried them on his farm.

* SDO - Sub-Divisional Officer looks after revenue affairs.

* Patwari - Revenue Clerk at village level.

but when his crops were almost ready some thieves came and stole the crop. He was very angry and sad. He thought if he would not have done such a good work he would not have such a crop and he would not have lost so much. But he continued his effort. Next crop time he was ready for the thieves. Sure enough, they came and he caught them. He said, 'You are as poor as I am, why do you steal my crop? You have land too. I will teach you how to get good crop, then we both will be benefited by the knowledge I have gained.' The same young man became a real change agent in his village. In a caste Panchayat (a body of caste members of 12 villages) meeting he raised many social issues and was thrown out of the caste group. Later when some other caste members also experienced similar social exploitation by the caste joined with him. Now he is part of the group. Though this activity is outside an adult education centre but the beginnings of these were discussed initially at the centre informally by the project supervisor.

Can a literacy centre become a place to initiate women's issues? Can it help women to think about their own status and begin some action in that area? Here I will quote another example from an area where we were operating an adult education project. In a village where women used to come for an adult education class in the evening. They used to work as labourers in constructing a boundary wall in a jungle. This was the second year for these women to meet six nights a week. One day one woman did not come for the work as well as in the centre. The teacher sent for her. She came very hesitatingly. The group asked her what is the reason for her not coming for work as well as for the centre. After a lot of coaxing she said that the day before yesterday the *mate tried to assault her sexually (after she refused to compromise). He told her that he would strike her name out of the job; she ran home. She does not know what to do. If she loses this job it will be a real hardship. The women were very angry. They discussed the whole issue at the centre. It was decided to make an application jointly to the engineer about the behaviour of the mate. They also planned a strategy to involve all men who were working on the site. The engineer tried to persuade them to excuse the mate. But the women were determined to throw him out, and this was done. The women realised that they as a group can assert themselves and can take up leadership on these issues. There are some more issues in which women after attending adult education centre, are becoming part of a self-help society (a credit union of women) as a follow-up programme. They have taken up issues which have provided them with skills in leadership, organisation and problem solving.

It may seem rather too much to think about an adult education centre to become a forum for initiating social movement but if the adult education teacher, the supervisor and the total project team understand this broader objective and start a thought process among poor people who come to the centre then something can be started. I will like to quote another example here to make a point regarding a politico-economic process in a group in a village. One time, after a successful meeting of 5-6 adult education centres in an area, the teachers and the learners expressed their interest to know about

* labour contractor

election in the cooperatives. A small teach-in was arranged. Before this the teachers had talked about functions of cooperatives and people through discussions had realised that their cooperatives are not working. This teach-in was quite timely because the elections were going to be held soon. The education process was able to provide good knowledge to the people. Later people were able to hold different meetings to plan actions. In two places they were able to get their men in the election, but in one place they lost. The place where they lost was due to the political manoeuvrings of the vested interests. But it provided them with good lesson in their learnings about cooperatives and its functioning.

In each of these stories an adult education centre has become a point of reference which indicates that the adult education centre is not only used as a centre to learn skills in reading and writing but a place which provides a forum for people to come together and understand their social/economic and political situations. Why would one organise an adult education class with these objectives? The answer is very clear; if adult education is education for life then problems of life are to be understood through this process. Hence, what and how are two big questions to be considered: if one has to be considered, one has to see what eradication of illiteracy will mean to people.

As to the debate about whether 'Literacy by year 2000' is a legitimate goal or not, these stories do point out that if the vicious circle of poverty needs to be broken, it is an important essential tool in the hands of the poor, not only because it may save them from exploitation but because it starts a process of thinking, analysing the situations and at a later stage acting upon their situations.

After working for a decade in the field it does appear that adult education centre is a very good entry point for community organisations. Also we have come to know that the causes of poverty are not only economic. In most cases the poor are exploited because they do not understand the social, economic and political forces. This can be easily understood by two examples in which the people from two groups were trained in weaving and leather work as a follow-up programme to an adult education programme. In one case most of the people got the skill in weaving process, but it was not enough. The selection of raw material, negotiation with the bank for loans, marketing the products, made us realise how these forces keep exploiting people when they do not know about these processes. Particularly, market forces were so strong that no individual from a poor community could handle them. It became quite clear in our mind that one of the most important skills through adult education is not only providing them with functional skills, but also giving them understanding about the market forces. Also we realised that organising of a group of such people is important, so that they can negotiate with more confidence in themselves.

Similarly there was a programme which was a follow-up to a literacy programme, in the field of agriculture. The programme is known as 'Laboratory to Land'. It was meant for small and marginal farmers. The objective of the programme was transfer of technology to the people. In this case, also, though we were able to train the people

in new technologies in agriculture, we found that people have to learn about purchase of seeds and fertilizers. They had to obtain the loans to get some money for these inputs and learn about how banks and cooperatives are important to them. So knowledge and skill in agriculture alone cannot help the poor.

From these examples one can understand that it is important to learn the technical skills, but it is much more important to understand the system. Adult Education has to play a role in making people understand the system.

In a way then, what we are proposing is that the adult education programme cannot be a simple programme of literacy. It has to be much more comprehensive. Literacy has to become an instrument which will provide people some of the important skills to understand the society because most of the things which happen around the poor are in the written form and can easily be used to exploit them. Hence they have to get hold of these skills.

Sometimes a question is raised as to whether we should start a literacy programme or whether we should straight away go to the people and through dialogue and discussion encourage them to understand the social, economic and political forces. But we have to understand that these groups of poor people have existed for many centuries and have reached such a dependent state that to come out of such situation they will need a step by step process which will make them realise who they are and what they can do. We believe that the literacy centre can begin such a process in which without threatening the established vested interest the people can start this process of learning in which they would gain a different self-concept of themselves. In a different paper I have indicated some of the reasons for adult education to become an entry point for community organisation. These are as follows:

The learner group that comes together to work together on one or two problems of poverty (illiteracy, lack of agriculture knowledge) and experiences the value of working at things in groups, gains confidence and desire in continuing to work together. In itself, the first year of the adult education centre will not make a significant change in the poor and exploitative conditions in the area, but we have found it to be a good beginning. People gain confidence, get into the habit of meeting together, come in contact with a voluntary organization prepared to help them, and in this way lay the foundation for future action.

Through leadership training and group training programmes people come in contact with government officers in charge of programmes that are supposed to be for the poor. They get some glimpse of schemes and resources that could be brought to their area. This exposure through the adult education centre, in itself starts people thinking about further action. Not only do the people see resources in government departments outside the village, they begin to see resources in their own midst. Adult education centre groups have gone on, together, to build community centres, to start small credit unions, to clean up their villages and homes - without any intervention from any government department.

Leadership for future work in the area can also be identified and developed through the medium of adult education. In implementing an adult education programme; young people are identified, trained and supported in leadership roles in running a programme in which literacy, functional knowledge and awareness-building are the content. Many of these young people become involved with the problems of the poor of their area, and if even some of them show interest and aptitude in providing continuing leadership among the poor of their area, then there is a network of contact people and leaders for further action on issues affecting the poor. There is a kind of self-selection process in which those who are interested become visible by their own interest and ability, and it is not difficult to identify them.

Leadership skills can be developed during the course of the adult education programme. For one thing, the task of being an adult education centre instructor is specific enough, structured enough, that it provides a framework for the local person to work within a programme which gives him/her enough guidance about what to do while he/she gains confidence in leadership, as well as giving enough freedom to build on local issues if and when the people and the instructor are ready to do so. The in-service training programmes, and the monthly meetings help the instructor to grow in understanding of problem-solving, and to increase knowledge about issues that affect the area.

The monthly meetings and the continuing supervision of the centres in the area allow the implementing organization or organizers to keep in touch with the current conditions and problems of the area. The close contact with the area over most of one year allows the organizers to get a feel for the social, political, economic life of the people. This preparation of the organizers is important if they are to help to guide future organizing work in the area.

Adult Education is a good medium for organizing the community because it gives a lot of scope for involving the community in committees and meetings in the course of the running of the centre. The idea of forming an adult education committee to support the centre is a useful one. This committee would share the responsibility of solving small problems that come up in the course of running the centre. These will include negotiations about space for the centre, encouraging regular attendance, and helping the total community to make the centre their own. If the adult education centre attracts younger adults, the adult education committee, being a group of adults, will give the nucleus and the base for a group of older adults to begin to meet regularly to talk about learning and organizing needs of their community. But the committee is only one point of contact with the community as a whole. The 'chetna yatras' or 'awareness building motivational walks', the community functions that can be organized by the centres on national festivals and holidays, and the opening and closing functions of the centre itself allow the community to come together to think about society, education, organization and action.

And finally, as a medium to begin work with the poor, the adult education centre is a good entry point. Illiteracy, and lack of numeracy skills, are characteristics of the poor. The rich classes

and upper castes have usually acquired some numeracy and literacy skills. So, as a basis for building a group and community effort amongst the poor, the adult education centre is a good beginning. The activity, almost by definition, will exclude the richer groups.

Now we come to a point for the content of a literacy programme. How to conduct a literacy programme becomes very important. This has been proved in many countries. In those countries the content and the process has made a difference in changing the social, political and economic conditions of those countries. These countries are Tanzania, Cuba, Nicaragua and several others. In each of these countries there was a political will to use the literacy programme for a socio-economic change by involving the masses. This involvement helped the whole development of the country. One may draw the conclusion through the experiences of these countries that literacy programme with a definite objective of social change can be planned and organized for a new social order. We have to build in the programme a clear objective for the poor to understand the system and provide them the skill so that they can remove ignorance and lack of literacy and they could initiate a process which can help them to break the status quo in the system. In such programmes, process is very important and also the teacher of the adult education programme has to act as an activist and not just a simple teacher of three Rs.

It is high time for adult educators to take up this challenge and plan programmes of this nature. Then and then, only adult education programmes become a relevant programme for the poor of the Third World. A continuous hammering is needed of the political leaders as well as of the administrators in building up a political will which could initiate a movement for such an adult education programme. It is also important for all adult educators to accept the challenge of process in which they have to practise a concept of participation, equality, freedom and social justice. The time has come and we should begin now.

There is no chance that this brief ASPBAE symposium will conclude the debate about the best way of promoting literacy in Asia, but it may help to present some of the range of relevant, and well-informed, views that need to be taken into account. There can be no doubt that literacy, its means of promotion and its standing relative to other adult education purposes and priorities, will be prominent among subjects to be discussed at the International Conference in Paris. It is important that all possible strategies be considered, and that those who deliberate recognise that what may work best for one society at one time may not be most effective for another country where political, economic and cultural circumstances are different. Such, surely, is one lesson of the Asian experience of combatting illiteracy.

THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE - SOME OBSERVATIONS ON PRIORITIES FROM ASIA

There have been several formal discussions in the Asian region about what Unesco's Fourth International Conference should concentrate on during the preliminary consultation and preparation period, late 1982 to late 1983. Dr W.M.K. Wijetunga of Sri Lanka, Secretary of ASPBAE Region 1 and also an Executive Member of the International Council for Adult Education, made a presentation reviewing these consultations and recommendations at the International Conference on Adult Education in Hong Kong, October 1983.

Part of his address is presented here, together with a summary of the main points of discussion and the recommendations at the three meetings to which Dr Wijetunga refers: in Japan the previous year; at the Unesco Regional Office in Bangkok in May 1983; and in Colombo in July that year. The section concludes with an extract from the ASPBAE Executive minutes at the meeting which followed this Conference in Hong Kong. This was the last opportunity ASPBAE had to make an input into the planning of the Unesco Secretariat on the matter of theme and priorities. The pressing needs of humankind generally, and of the poor of Asia in particular, are clearly conveyed in these passages. It is to be hoped that the location of the Conference in the affluent industrialised North will not encourage any tendency to overlook these pressing and compelling concerns.

(a) Unesco Fourth International Conference on Adult Education 1985

W.M.K. Wijetunga

After reviewing reports about the planning of the Fourth International Conference emanating from Unesco, Dr Wijetunga referred to what were understood to be the likely subjects of the Conference. Noting that the Conference would take stock of developments since the 1972 Unesco Conference in Tokyo, he suggested that "the more successful programmes, evidence of better resource distribution in respect of adult and continuing education, helpful legal provisions and perhaps innovative new developments, both in theory and practice of adult education, would be highlighted."

The paper continued as follows.

At the same time, problems and bottlenecks that were encountered, significant failures and the reasons thereof, should receive as much attention. Out of these retrospective exercises should emerge the future prospects and the perspectives, taking also into account the emerging significant trends, and the most vital areas of neglect over the years.

The world is continuing to be plagued by perplexing problems. Various strategies undertaken by individual nations and international agencies such as the UN, have failed to make even a serious dent

in these problems, causing much concern among all people. In such a situation, it is quite understandable that the pertinent question is being asked as to what type of contribution could adult education make in solving major problems of the world today, and making the world more peaceful, contented and a happier place for all.

In spite of all the development, expansion of educational opportunities, and the explosion of knowledge, there is an increasing alienation of peoples from all these processes, and it is in this regard that attention is being focussed on suitable educational activities and structures that could motivate and generate greater people's participation in political, economic, social and cultural life of the nations. Finally, there will be a critical evaluation of the nature and effectiveness of regional and international cooperation, of the past and of the present, and with the knowledge gained thereby, to examine the futuristic needs and select more appropriate forms to meet those needs, and by which adult education, all over the world could also be promoted.

The Fourth International Conference follows the three previous international conferences, held between 1949 and 1972. The first conference was held in 1949 in Elsinore, Denmark. The time was significant being hot long after the end of the Second World War, and the world in acute need of urgent reconstruction, both materially and morally, and of enduring peace between nations and more confidence and trust in humanity. This was predominantly a West European Conference, and reflected little or nothing of the rest of the post-war world. The second conference took place eleven years later in 1960, in Montreal, Canada. The non-European representation as well as that of the socialist countries at this meeting had improved considerably, and the conference was inclined to explore the theme "Adult Education in a Changing World". Adult Education was seen as a dynamic concept capable of helping adults to cope with the changing situations and to prepare them for life. In retrospect, this assumption seems to be more naive than otherwise.

The third conference, held in Tokyo in 1972, is considered more universal in its representation, both in terms of individual member states and also in terms of regional groupings. There was a preponderance of policy-makers and senior administrators at this meeting, and naturally they were more concerned with policy, planning, management and financial issues than with theoretical or conceptual aspects of adult education. However, the concept of life-long education was rigorously promoted, and pursued at the Conference, and thereafter.

The Fourth Conference, is expected to address itself to problems and issues which are likely to be faced in the 80s, and even the 90s, both by government and non-government agencies, and also by the adult educators themselves. Since the conference needs direction in its deliberations, and owing to the fact that, like in Tokyo, once again there will be a preponderance of policy-

makers at ministerial level, very senior administrators and some professional adult educators, the ground-rules and the ground-work have to be laid beforehand. It is as a realization of this need that Unesco has been engaging itself in a series of consultations, with member countries, with national commissions and with regional and international organizations, during the last couple of years.

My remarks here as to what has been going on will be confined to this region.

With regard to regional consultations, the initiative has been taken mostly by ROEAP - the Unesco Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific - in Bangkok. The rationale for such regional consultations is that the forthcoming conference should reflect and be concerned with not only the global picture, but also the regional issues, priorities and the perspectives. To enable this, there is the need to prepare regional inputs, and to register them at the preparatory stage of the Conference.

The first regional consultation took place in 1982, with the ASPBAE Region 3 Conference in Japan, on the theme "Nonformal Education for Women". One full session of this meeting was devoted to the Unesco Conference, with the focus on the following three questions:

- what major themes would most appropriately reflect the needs and priorities of the 80s and 90s?
- what would be the specific issues and problems Asia and the Pacific region would like to see in the agenda of the 4th International Conference?
- what contribution can this region offer for the preparation of the 4th International Conference?

These three questions were posed in turn, either in the same manner, or suitably modified, to the next formal consultation - The Planning Meeting - held at ROEAP, Bangkok in May 1983. Most countries in the region were officially represented at this meeting, with resource persons drawn from ASPBAE and India. The most recent formal consultation was the ASPBAE Region 1 Seminar in Sri Lanka (July 1983), which presented its submissions to Unesco-Paris and ROEAP - Bangkok.

Through the consultations with ASPBAE Region 3, the following themes were identified:

- Equality, democracy, quality of life - role of adult education;
- Adult education and technological changes, urbanization and employment;
- Cultural identity and international understanding;
- Innovations in adult education.

The planning meeting in Bangkok (May 1983), by taking into consideration the results of the previous consultations, concentrated its attention on the following themes:

- Education for all;
- Adult education for the year 2000;
- Adult education for self-reliance;
- Adult Education for effective living.

The consensus of the meeting was then to combine all the elements into one theme: "Adult Education for self-reliance and for effective living for all".

The Region 1 meeting in Sri Lanka was unanimous that the Conference theme should be "Education for All". The issues identified were the following:

- The need for adult education to be a liberating force for all, and to be a force which generates self-reliance;
- The need for sharing and better distribution of resources in the provision and promotion of adult education;
- The need to mobilise the NGOs in the provision and promotion of adult education;
- The need to consider adult education as an effective instrument for environmentally oriented development.

Lastly, attention may be drawn to the informal consultations conducted by ROEAP at some regional seminars and workshops such as the Field Operational Seminar in China, Regional Literacy Workshop, Chiangmai, etc. Some important issues raised at these Consultations include:

- Improvement of quality of life, especially for the deprived sections;
- Readjustment to a rapid technological change and urbanization;
- Unemployment and vocational training;
- Preserving and advancing cultural values and identities;
- Importance of international understanding and cooperation.

(b) Summary of ASPBAE Consultation on desirable Conference themes, Japan, 1982

Chris Duke*

Mr A. Chiba, UNESCO ROEAP, welcomed ASPBAE's imminent Category B status with UNESCO and recalled past cooperation, including the 1980 Regional Seminar on Adult Education and Development. He reviewed the three previous UNESCO International Adult Education Conferences and explained the Consultative processes of UNESCO, emphasizing the close and cordial relationship between the UNESCO Regional Office and ASPBAE.

East and South-East Asia were perhaps too little heard in UN international deliberations. It was important to have an influence on the next Conference at the formative stage. What was needed was a vision of Asia in the year 2000, and of the place of adult education in this.

In addition to the present meeting, it was agreed that the ASPBAE might suggest helping preparation for the 4th International Conference by means of a further joint regional consultative meeting with UNESCO. Such a meeting might enable professional adult educators to brief top policy-makers on adult education issues prior to the main conference.

ASPBAE might also assist in each country to strengthen channels and enhance the flow of information from the grass-roots, also from non-governmental sources into central governments. It similarly might enhance regional communication and information-sharing.

ASPBAE should also do what it could to encourage suitable delegation membership including professional adult educators; this related to choice of theme and emphasis; e.g. methodological and action aspects required professional participation. Non-governmental observers would also be invited. Different ASPBAE members should more immediately encourage their National Commissions to complete and return the questionnaires reviewing the status and development of adult education since 1972. It is important to provide the Conference with basic facts and figures.

The following framework of issues emerged from the consultation.

1. The 4th International Conference should take stock of achievements so far. Such a review is timely.

* From: ASPBAE, Nonformal Education for Women Proceedings of ASPBAE Region 3 Conference, 10-18 October 1982, Ed. K. Moro'oka, National Federation of Social Education, Japan, 1982: 211-214

Key principles have been espoused and their practical realisation should be examined:

- core principles in adult education practice
- linkages with the formal school system and the complementary role of NGOs
- participation as a value and a method, and as a means of mobilising disadvantaged groups.

Persisting conceptual confusion about adult, non-formal, continuing, further, etc., education requires review and clarification.

In relation specifically to women it is timely to review

- separate provision, and provision together with men
- the limits on practical results from the various measures taken for women (e.g. more integration into the existing male-ordered systems - cooperation)
- real access to power as distinct from merely formal, legal, equality
- the effective exploitation of women in the course of 'development'

2. Equality, Quality of Life, Democracy, Reduction of Disadvantage

Disappointment with the results of the Development Decades should not be allowed to cause loss of commitment to these central issues and purposes. Illiteracy and poverty remain vital challenges to adult educators, as does inequality within and between countries. How may access to adult education by various disadvantaged groups be increased? What is the possible role of the mass media, especially in low-cost widely available radio?

Adult education is still consumed mainly by the relatively privileged. What forms can reach down, and be drawn up, to and from local levels and serve the remote rural and other disadvantaged groups? Those requiring special provision include youth and women, the elderly and the handicapped?

3. Consequences of Rapid Change

Dramatic social, demographic, cultural and economic change dictate new adult education needs. Adult education should assist people to influence and direct change as well as to cope with its consequences.

Major changes in Asia include

- the increasing proportion of the elderly in society, with their need for positive identity and status, social contact and positive social purpose
- rapid population increase and urbanisation, with unsettling and destructive effects on some of those drawn into urban living (e.g. mass hysteria of groups of women in Malaysia)

- increasingly rapid obsolescence of skills and knowledge requiring massive national retraining programmes in some countries (e.g. Singapore), and producing new problems for adult education e.g. deskilling, and lack of motivation for learning in 'black box' situation
- reduced opportunities for work, and the spread of labour-saving devices, requiring a new approach to education for leisure
- changing roles of women and men, and greater participation of women in income-generating activities.

Life in modern urban society generates many new practical learning needs to enable people to cope, bearing in mind e.g. special safety needs of the very young and the elderly. The rapid changes experienced imply a need for new attitudes to learning and continuing to learn, as does increased longevity.

4. Human and Cultural Values, and Identity

Modernisation and economic development frequently lack a human face. Traditional human and spiritual values are threatened or destroyed. There is need to preserve and develop moral values especially in the transition from rural to urban society, and to find ways to assimilate new technology without loss of identity and self-confidence. The stress in government programmes on economic development has led as a by-product to erosion of traditional moral standards and sense of identity.

5. Survival through International Understanding

Meeting in the context of remembering the experience of nearby Nagasaki, the consultation lays greatest emphasis upon the absolute importance of the peace for human survival, as a prerequisite not just for development but even for the continuation of life itself. Adult education could play a vital role in this.

The sensitivity over taking peace as the explicit central conference theme is recognised. It is conceded that some other form of words, which stresses international understanding, human rights, understanding other cultures, etc. might be expedient and necessary if the Conference is to adopt this theme. None the less the consultation holds firmly to the view that threat of human destruction is an over-riding consideration and its prevention in part through adult education, should by whatever means be a central theme of the Conference.

6. Interagency Cooperation and Coordination

Links between learning (adult education) and working (application of newly acquired vocational skills and understanding) is a subject for both review and development (e.g. Indonesian Learning Fund), if learning is to result in greater productivity. This implies coordination with Ministries of Labour etc., banks and other lending

agencies.

More generally adult education needs to link and coordinate more closely with the work of other government agencies. So do non-government and government agencies contributing through adult education to development; both government and non-government agencies including Adult Education Associations should cooperate to enhance access of disadvantaged groups to adult education.

There is a need for enhanced communication, access to and dissemination of research findings, teaching materials etc., among professional training and development to understand and meet the new needs for new circumstances identified in the consultation as important themes for the 4th International Conference.

(c) Brief summary of ASPBAE-UNESCO Consultation in Colombo, Sri Lanka, 18 - 20 July 1983

Mr A. [redacted] of the Unesco Regional Office for Asia participated in the Asia Region 1 Conference held in Sri Lanka from 18 - 20 July, and gave participants information about the previous consultations that had been held in other parts of the Region.

Participants from India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Maldives, Korea and Sri Lanka took part in the discussions. Some of the issues which confronted adult educators in Region 1 were; illiteracy which needed constant commitment from governments; post-literacy, a phase into which many countries were now moving; lifelong education, education has to be a lifelong process, not limited to a short period of time. The average government expenditure on adult education is 1% of provision to formal education - we need to develop approaches between formal and non-formal education to get more of the resources shared with nonformal education. Another issue was life in the cities such as Dhaka, Colombo, Calcutta, Delhi - in some cities life is becoming intolerable and the organization of society to deal with this problem is becoming urgent; development of technology, media and interpersonal communication for development is also a vital issue.

The coincidence between the International Year of Youth and the 4th International Conference was noted and it was considered that recognition should be made of this fact and the important link between adult education and youth, particularly out-of-school youth and the unemployed.

Investigation of ways and means of getting scarce resources down to the grass roots was considered to be important. Of the many nonformal education programs which are being undertaken, not only in Asia, but also in Africa and Latin America, very little was getting down to the poorest people and urgent attention was required to see how this could be overcome. Unesco as a world body could guide world knowledge in this and other ways.

The importance of worker education was recognised - this could cover such areas as trade unions, organizing the unorganized, social education and basic literacy could be learned in the work situation.

For the purposes of the 4th International Conference it was recognised that fundamental issues should be the focus as these would provide guidelines for adult educators throughout the whole world.

From a large number of suggestions the four themes included in Dr Wijetunga's paper were identified as reflecting the discussions and were passed on to Unesco for inclusion in their considerations;

Adult education as a liberating force for all and a force for self-reliance

Need for sharing and better distribution of resources in the provision and promotion of adult education

Mobilisation of NGOs in the provision and promotion of adult education

Need to consider adult education as an effective instrument for environmentally oriented development

(d) Unesco Asian Regional Consultation

The main Unesco Asian regional consultation on the Fourth International Conference took place in the Regional Office in Bangkok in May 1983. The group of experts, which included a strong ASPBAE contingent, came up with the following Recommendations:

1. Theme

It is proposed that the theme for the Fourth International Conference on Adult Education be: Education for Effective Living and Self Reliance for All.

Within this theme is the implication that all people of all ages should have opportunity to meet their learning needs, and to seek self-reliance, equality and effective living through education. It implies that lifelong education should be available not only to those who have already a reasonable quality of life but also for the poorest of the poor. It insists that women have equality of educational opportunity along with men. It includes the objective that there should be literacy for all by the year 2000 AD.

The rationale for this theme is that education enables people to transcend the limitations of their environment and is, therefore, an important key to development. Education provides opportunity for: personal development; community development; national development;

and international cooperation.

The most important aspect of development is economic development. However, development should not be seen only in economic terms, but also in terms of quality of life and in providing satisfaction and 'harmony' within the individual, the community, the nation and the world. Education can lead to self reliant, healthy people empowered to achieve worthwhile personal and societal goals. It can lead to equality and better international understanding.

2. Priority Programmes

An expected outcome should be to establish a set of priority programmes in adult education. An important aspect of adult education vis-a-vis formal education is that people only participate in programmes which appear relevant to them. However, incentive may be given to provide particular programmes and for participation in them.

2.1 Literacy and Communication - Improvement in communication skills is a priority for all people to achieve understanding of events around them and to obtain the information they need for life and development. They need to be able to express their ideas. To a large proportion of the world's population this will mean achieving basic skills in reading and writing. Literacy may be seen as the major single learning need of adults and there is a need to ensure literacy for all by the year 2000. The increased use of the electronic media for mass and individual communication requires other skills. These include the use of equipment from a simple telephone to computer based communication. It involves the ability to evaluate or interpret messages received from radio and television.

2.2 Vocational Education - learning skills required for employment should be seen as a high priority for the individual and community. Increasingly vocational education will need to be of a scientific and technical nature as technology makes demands for intellectual rather than physical effort. Women should have vocational training for wider career opportunities.

2.3 Population) should be an integral part of the

2.4 Environmental Education) adult education programmes.

2.5 Peace) is necessary for the dignity of the

2.6 Cultural Education) individual, the stability of the community and for international understanding.

3. Priority Actions

A further outcome of the conference should be to identify priority actions. Some of the priorities would be:

3.1 Providing for participation in the planning and management of the learning process by participants and communities and mobilizing local resources for learning.

- 3.2 Providing adequate development opportunities for adult education personnel
- 3.3 Encouragement of the use of low cost methods for adult learners but ensuring that appropriate methods, media and material are available. Pilot groups may be a valuable technique
- 3.4 Developing of inter-agency coordination and cooperation. This should include official coordinating committees and the valuable role of voluntary adult education associations. should be seen as complementary
- 3.5 Recognising the important role of a wide variety of agencies in providing adult education including associations of university students, women's organisations and trade unions
- 3.6 Providing adequate legislation to implement adult education for all and making available adequate funds for government and NGO programmes

4. Documentation

The documentation for the conference should include the following:

- 4.1 A survey of literacy programmes including case studies of effective programmes and special target groups. Statistical notes should be provided where possible
- 4.2 Regional Perspective plans prepared by Regional offices
- 4.3 A study of coordination in adult education including case studies of official coordinating committees and voluntary adult education associations
- 4.4 Directories of coordinating bodies
- 4.5 A paper on the role of NGOs in adult education
- 4.6 A paper on the training and development of adult education personnel
- 4.7 In addition to documentation, consideration should be given to documentary films and displays of adult education

5. Participation

National governments should be reminded of the need to include in the delegations to the conference those representing the following:

- Adult Education specialists
- Women
- Those with a knowledge of the learning needs of disadvantaged groups

6. Regional and International Cooperation in Adult Education

The meeting stressed the need for further strengthening of regional and international cooperation for the development of adult education.

In the context of growing importance of adult education for improving the quality of life, every nation, rich or poor, should share the burden of developing adult education for the service of mankind, peace and international understanding.

The areas and methods of regional and international cooperation which the Meeting recommends for the consideration of the Fourth International Conference are as follows:

- * Although some attempts have been made to develop adult education methods, media, materials, training, research, etc., in all the countries, there is a general feeling that there must be a Central Resource Centre/Institute at national level to promote and strengthen various technical and substantive tasks of adult education on a continuing and systematic basis.

It was also observed that there already exist very strong institute-like Curriculum Development Centres and Educational Development Centres in different countries in the field of formal education.

It is recommended that those Member States which do not have such a Central Resource Centre for Adult Education should set up one and those Member States which already have them should strengthen them.

Unesco should help Member States to set up and strengthen such Central Resource Centres.

- * A regional programme of technical co-operation in literacy and adult education be established by linking and setting up the network of such Central Resource Centres of Member States to facilitate exchange of information, experiences and expertise. Regional Perspective Plan for the eradication of illiteracy by 2000 in Asia and the Pacific is a good example of providing clear policy guidelines and directives to the work of this network.

- * At the regional level a Regional Resource and Documentation Centre should be set up to provide effective support to the functioning of the network and to the strengthening of the Central Resource Centres. This regional centre should be set up either at the Unesco Regional Office for Education or at the existing Regional Literacy or Adult Education Centre. This will further strengthen the mission and task of Unesco to provide effective advisory and information support to the Member States.

- * There is a growing realization of the importance of mass media and appropriate technology for the development of adult education in the Member States. Unesco should help the

* Member States to develop appropriate technology and media materials for adult education. Such materials should be of low cost and as much as possible folk media should be utilized. The prototype or exemplary materials should be pooled at the Regional Resource and Documentation Centre and should be made available to all Member States, institutions and agencies upon request.

* Training of personnel of various types continues to be a priority area for the regional and international co-operation. Key personnel in various fields like planning, administration, monitoring, evaluation, curriculum and material development should continue to receive training through regional training programmes, inter-country study visits and attachments. The regional training programmes should be effectively followed up by national training to ensure multiplying effect. Some training manuals should be developed at national and regional levels.

* Studies and research on basic issues and problems of adult education, as well as on some practical problems, should be undertaken at national level and regional level. Unesco should encourage and promote more studies and exchange such studies.

* There must be greater co-operation and involvement of Nongovernmental Organizations at national, regional and international levels for the development of adult education and there should also be a more effective co-operation and co-ordination between government and non-government sectors.

* Inter-regional co-operation should be promoted and strengthened to exchange information, experiences and expertise.

* Efforts must be made to mobilize more resources at national, regional and international levels for adult education, and the possibility of setting up a special fund for literacy, and adult education be reconsidered.

* National Commissions should be encouraged to take more interest in adult education and a more active role in its development.

(e) Adult Education in Asia Today: Diversities and Common Trends

A. Chiba*

Adult education is normally developed to meet some socio-economic and educational needs of societies and countries, and it is quite natural for such vast regions as Asia and the Pacific that adult education programmes are marked with diversity rather than uniformity. This diversity is even apparent in the terminology and definition of adult education. Such terms as adult education, non-formal education, continuing education, social education, mass education, workers/peasants education, or complementary education are used in various countries with different definitions and connotations.

While acknowledging the vast range of diversities in the scope and nature of adult education programmes in the region, the Regional Seminar on Adult Education and Development in Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok, 1980) attempted to classify them into the following four broad categories:

- (a) Programmes addressed to survival needs
- (b) Programmes addressed to growth needs
- (c) Programmes addressed to remedial needs
- (d) Programmes addressed to anticipatory needs

The overriding problem of the region is the existence of over 60 percent of the world's illiterate population in 16 developing countries. At present 50 per cent of the total population in the region are illiterates and the literacy rate is estimated to increase only to 57 per cent in 1990. Furthermore, the literacy rate among the female population in the predominantly illiterate countries is less than half of the male literacy rate, reflecting a low social status of women in these countries. It is evident from this striking fact that major national policies and programmes in the region are concerned with literacy campaigns and mass education programmes - namely the programmes to meet survival needs.

The scope and nature of literacy programmes differ from one country to another, but one can observe a common trend toward functional literacy approaches combining the teaching of literacy and numeracy with skill training in farming, health and child care, cooperatives organization, and vocational training. In certain countries, it goes beyond vocational oriented functional literacy to include the creation of civic awareness and creative thinking.

*Presented to the ASPBAE Region 1 Conference, Sri Lanka, 18-20 July 1983.

Another common trend is found in the strategy of mass programmes or campaigns emphasizing mobilization, participation and decentralization.

Those countries with high illiteracy rates suffer from the slow development of primary education and also from high rates of drop-outs and have the arduous task of doubling their effort for literacy while they also face the serious needs of developing other types of adult education and post-literacy programmes to meet the needs of those already literate adult populations including the new literates and unemployed youth.

Those countries which are reaching the threshold of universal literacy are more concerned with the provision of continuing and life-long education to meet the growth needs for enhancement of production capacity, for improvement of home and family life, for greater civic participation and ultimately for the overall development of the individual, the family, the community and the nation. The programmes include training for improved farming, vocational training or retraining of unemployed and under-employed youth, skill and management training for factory and workshop workers and self-employed workers.

A major problem confronting adult educators in many developing countries is how to overcome the latent inertia that hinders the acquisition of new knowledge, skills and attitudes. In several countries strategies to motivate adults by relating adult education to felt needs has become an area of considerable interest. Since needs and problems are closely tied up with social, economic and environmental factors, efforts are being made to conscientize them to become critically aware of their situation and thereby set in motion a process by which the adult learners become self-reliant and acquire mastery over their own lives.

Major Issues for Advancement

Through various consultation meetings, have emerged a number of important conclusions which are essential for the satisfactory development of adult education.

1. Political Commitment

Adult education programmes are increasingly addressing themselves to the education of the traditionally deprived sections of society and the "political will" or "sustained political commitment" is prerequisite to resolve major constraints and bottlenecks. The main questions regarding political commitment are:

- (a) Creation and articulation of such political and policy commitment;
- (b) its permeation to the field levels and mass organizations of workers and peasants, of women and youth;

- (c) sustaining of the political commitment, particularly in countries where changes in national political leadership are not infrequent; and
- (d) mobilization of financial, material and human resources to back up the political commitment.

2. Literacy

The most critical problem of the region is the existence and even more alarming increases of the vast number of adult illiterates and this should be the prime target group of adult education in the region. In the predominant illiterate milieu co-exist poverty, malnutrition, disease, hunger, supersatiation, rigid mores and traditions inhibiting social change. It is an appalling fact that more than half of these illiterates are women. In fact literacy programmes cover vast numbers of rural poor, slum dwellers, minorities and others.

In order to reach these deprived sectors of society, the planning and implementation of literacy programmes are required:

- (a) to create circumstances for motivation and active participation of workers and learners;
- (b) to involve all agencies, groups and individuals - governmental and non-governmental - in the planning and implementation of the literacy programmes and to establish arrangements of coordination among them;
- (c) to ensure that priority is given to the coverage of women and other sections of society which have suffered in the past from educational deprivation, and
- (d) to establish necessary administrative and organizational arrangements with necessary decentralization and expertise.

3. Post-Literacy Programmes

Post-literacy programmes for new literates should receive equal priority to enable them not only to retain literacy skills but also to continue to improve their life skills. For this purpose, the following considerations are necessary:

- (a) Literacy and post-literacy programmes to be concerned as a continuum and the inclusion of elements of continuation and diversification of learning, and application of learning to the world of work.
- (b) Creation of a learning environment in which facilities are available for continuing education programmes and for self-learning.

- (c) Provision of diversified facilities for functional education, leisure-time activities, re-entry into the formal stream and family-life education.
- (d) Provision and adequate funds and creation of necessary administrative, supervisory and field machinery.

4. Continuing and Life-Long Education for All

It must remain the goal of all societies.

In this context some of the issues which need attention are:

- (a) Recognition of the limitless opportunities for well-being and personal advancement placed at the disposal of mankind by science and technology.
- (b) Whatever the socio-economic system, there is need and scope for greater understanding of the challenges of environment and improvement in relationships between groups, regions and people.
- (c) Recognition of the fact that in all societies there are groups, which are not given opportunities - a particular mention in this connection should be made about the status of women. The problems of the disabled, the aged and the unemployed or underemployed need special attention.

5. Articulation between Formal and Non-Formal/Adult Education

This needs emphasis because of the artificial dichotomy often created between the two. In this context it should be recognised:

- (a) That there is close inter-dependence between primary education and adult literacy;
- (b) that the school is an important resource in organization of all educational programmes;
- (c) that inter-change between full-time 'schooling' and short-duration and/or part-time non-formal education programmes are implicit in the vision of life-long education; and
- (d) that education is for an individual's totality and its breaking down into artificial compartments would deter rather than promote learning.

6. Problems of Adult Education in Urban Areas

These have several important characteristics which deserve to be recognized and catered for. These include the following:

- (a) Most of the cities of this region have a regular inflow of the rural poor who need education and training for adjustment in the new situation and for employment.
- (b) In the large and industrial cities there is a sizeable section of organised labour who need training in responsible trade union organization.
- (c) Urban areas generally have a wide variety of media which affects the learning of the city-dwellers.
- (d) The urban population, due to the comparative stress of living in cities, and the competitive spirit which pervades these areas have to be provided special courses in skill development and relaxation.

7. Resource Development

Resource development, i.e. technical and pedagogic support services are deficient in practically all developing countries in the region and should receive much greater attention. The areas to which special attention should be called are the following:

- (a) Curriculum development - in accordance with the objectives of the programmes, but keeping in view the learning needs and interests of the clientele.
- (b) Methods and Materials - while considerable research has been done in these spheres in recent years, there is still a vast gap between what is feasible in learning through improved methods and materials and what actually exists. The vast scope of technological media is yet to be explored.
- (c) Training - particularly at the level of local administrative and supervisory personnel and of persons responsible for organization of adult education activity the training is far from adequate. New methods and arrangements for training have to be worked out.
- (d) Evaluation and Research - Seen as an essential input for maintenance of the quality of programme and as an aid for decision-makers, the importance of evaluation can hardly be over-emphasized. That can also be said of research aimed at solving of implementation problems. A much greater effort needs to go into these areas.

8. Media and Communication

These are basic to all programmes of adult education. Some of the significant issues in this regard are:

- (a) One of the traditional forms of learning and value

inculcation has been the folk and informal media. It is essential to ensure that this media continues to enrich the learning process.

- (b) All societies have their technological capabilities and the media for mass education should be built around that technological inheritance, rather than being a foreign transplant.
- (c) From the point of view of its acceptance, simplicity, ease in dissemination and correlation with the basic education programmes, it is advisable that maximum use should be made of the print media.
- (d) It is also important to emphasize that the modern sophisticated media should effectively supplement the learning environment and instructional process. Arrangements of training in the use of such equipment and the maintenance should form an essential part of adult education organization.

The Challenge of the 80s and 90s

The Fourth International Conference follows the previous three international conferences - Elsinore (1949), Montreal (1960) and Tokyo (1972). The previous three conferences reflected the distinctly different features of the world situation in the decades in which they took place and each conference contributed to the development of adult education in the subsequent decades.

What are the features of the decade in which the Fourth International Conference will take place and what contribution is expected of adult education to the challenge of the 80s and 90s?

There are certainly clear and undeniable trends in the decade, i.e. the Third UN Development Decade, New International Economic Order, Second Medium Term Plan of Unesco, etc. In this connection, adult education needs to be viewed in terms of equity, equality, democracy and development.

Despite the earnest hope for reconstruction and peace at the Elsinore Conference, the world at present is far from what was aspired for in 1949. Is the Fourth International Conference an appropriate occasion to take stock of what has happened since 1949 and to reconsider the role of adult education for peace and international understanding?

The world today has entered into a new phase with the widespread application of computers and other engineering and technological devices. Isn't it worthwhile to have a reflection once again on the human value and quality of life? These are some of the questions raised in the consultation meetings in Asia and the Pacific.

(f) Finally, from the 1983 ASPBAE Executive minutes:

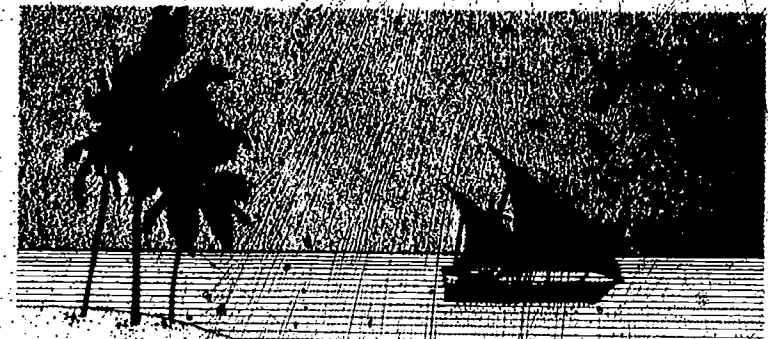
...Concern was expressed that possible themes might not adequately reflect the needs of the Third World. The theme 'education for all' should be included, at least as a background theme. This theme was supported at the Region 1 Conference recently. Other themes should also be included: none need be cut out.

It was resolved unanimously that the central theme should be 'adult education for total human development' (that is to say not just for material and economic development). Seeking the means for social development and enhanced national productivity was also important, and could be treated within the total development theme. Women's adult education also needed to be continuously emphasised. Progress was still slow. The needs of youth including young women also needed special attention.

It should be stressed that Asia has a high proportion of the world's very poor and illiterate people, and their needs should not be lost from sight in the Conference.

There was consideration of the discussion in Japan, 1982, concerning adult education for world peace, and concerning human rights, which was recognised to be a politically sensitive topic.

It was agreed that these were both none-the-less themes of great importance, and resolved that they should be major themes for consideration, finding an approach or form of words which would not make them embarrassing and politically divisive.



PERSPECTIVES FROM THE ASIAN REGION

ASPBAE 'comes of age' at the beginning of 1985. It was created on the occasion of a Unesco regional seminar in January-February 1964, so is now in its 21st year. The founding Chairman, Dr S.C. Dutta, has provided us with the text of a report on the meeting and the founding of the Bureau which shows how its origins were connected with the work of Unesco for adult education, at a time when regional adult education associations were rare indeed. ASPBAE, it seems, is younger only among such bodies than the European Bureau of Adult Education, and the first of its kind in the Third World. We reproduce for historical interest the brief report from the July 1964 issue of the Indian Journal of Adult Education asking at the same time how far the Bureau has met the aspirations of its founders, and where we should be going from here.

From: Indian Journal of Adult Education, July 1964

ASIAN SOUTH PACIFIC BUREAU OF ADULT EDUCATION

Adult Education has become a matter of increasing national and international concern over recent years. This is true anywhere, but particularly true of countries facing major social and economic change under the impact of organized national efforts to raise economic production, and the general standard of living. After some years of development efforts it is increasingly recognised that low educational levels among the adult section of the population represents one of the most serious obstacles to the success of national development programmes. Much attention is being paid to the improvement and extension of educational services provided for children and adolescents but the people who will provide leadership and shoulder responsibility at village, regional and national levels in these countries for the next thirty years are already adults. These countries cannot wait for the schools to turn out the next generation of better educated children, the needs are too urgent. The need for educational services for adults are recognised and adult education is seen as an integral part of the overall educational system - one of the most important sections in the light of today's problems and educational needs.

Montreal Conference

The increase in interest in adult education throughout the world is reflected at the international level in the significance of the report which emerged from the Unesco World Conference on Adult Education held in Montreal in 1960, in the establishment of the Unesco International Committee for the Advancement of Adult Education and the Unesco International Committee on Adult Literacy, and in the series of specialised regional and international conferences on adult education which have also seen the emergence of important non-government organisations concerned with adult education such as

the International Congress of University Adult Education (ICUAE) and the Adult Education Committee of the World Confederation of Organisations of the Teaching Profession (W.C.O.T.P.) while interests of residential adult education are catered for by more informed international consultation.

Regional Meetings

Asia and South Pacific countries have not lagged in the work. In almost all countries of the regional area there are, by now, well organised educational programmes for adults, and governments have recognised the importance of adult education through reasonably generous support, both financial and material. The work of the Unesco World Conference on Adult Education was followed up in this regional area by a regional Asian-South Pacific Seminar on Adult Education sponsored by the government of South Vietnam in 1962. In 1964, plans and discussions were taken a step further when a second Asian-South Pacific regional seminar on adult education was held at the University of Sydney, Australia, in January 1964 - this seminar giving specific attention to the role of "Universities and Schools in Adult Education". A third regional seminar is being planned for 1966 to deal with Literacy and Post-Literacy Work in Adult Education and which, it is expected, will be held in India.

Regional Bureau

As has been pointed out, adult education on the whole is by now reasonably well organised on the national and international level. But there has been a weakness. There has been up to the present, little indication of reasonable regional organisation to bridge the gap between organisation of adult education at the national level and organization at the world level. The one obvious exception is the successful European Bureau of Adult Education which is playing a significant co-ordinating role in the regional area of Europe.

One of the pleasing results of the recent successful Unesco Asian South Pacific regional seminar on adult education was the determination of the delegates attending that some machinery should be created which permitted continuing consultation and cooperation within the regional area in between regional conferences such as Saigon and Sydney seminars. The result was the formation of the Asian-South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education.

Plan for the Future

It was agreed that the new Bureau should establish a clearinghouse for adult education in the general area; should publish a quarterly newsletter on adult education and, if possible a regional journal on adult education (twice a year at first); should maintain liaison with Unesco and International Non-Governmental Organizations such as W.C.O.T.P. and I.C.U.A.E. and should cooperate in regional plans for conferences and seminars and programmes of adult education.

embracing two or more countries in the region, and in general, should act as a link between adult educators and adult education institutions in the region. The executive committee has also undertaken the first step towards the compilation and publication of a roster of people concerned professionally and full-time in adult education work in Asia and the South Pacific.

Officers elected were:

Chairman - S.C. Dutta, Hon. Gen. Secretary,
Indian Adult Education Association.

Hon. Secretary - A.S.M. Hely, Director of Adult Education
The University of Adelaide,
S.A. Australia

Executive Members -

Ang Gee Bah, Director, Adult Education Board,
Singapore

R. Gibson, Director Department of Extramural
Studies, University of Hong Kong

U Kyaw Khin, Assistant Registrar, Rangoon
University, Burma

Seiichi Okamura, Professor, Tokyo Agricultural
and Technological University, Japan

A. Vizconde, Assistant Chief, Division of Adult
and Community Education, Department
of Education, Philippines

The Asian-South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education has been born. It makes no pretentious or grandiose claims. But if its present resources are modest, it has within itself the potentialities for growth and development. It could well play, in the future, a significant and fruitful role as a co-ordinating and consultative institution within the framework of adult education in Asia and the South Pacific.

Professor Jong-Gon Hwang, former President of ASPBAE, Chairman of Region 3, and founder of the Korean Association of Adult and Youth Education, recently visited several countries of South Asia as an ASPBAE Travelling Fellow. His reflective report on differences between the countries of South Asia and those of other regions, such as his own Republic of Korea in East Asia, concludes with four important questions.

SOUTH ASIAN EXAMPLES OF ADULT/NONFORMAL EDUCATION

Jong-Gon Hwang
Professor, Keimyung University

As the Region 3 delegate, I was invited to participate in the ASPBAE Region 1 Conference which took place in Colombo, Sri Lanka from the 18th through the 20th of July, 1983. Taking advantage of this opportunity, I proceeded to make further trips to Trivandrum and Udaipur, India and Dhaka, Bangladesh.

The purpose of my trips to this region was to visit distinguished adult education organizations and agencies to meet with ASPBAE contact people and to observe their programs and projects in actual operation.

Background

Sri Lanka, India and Bangladesh located in the South Asian region, have common historical backgrounds of British rule and similar cultural patterns such as food, clothes and housing, though each nation has its own different religion, language and customs.

Buddhism in Sri Lanka (69% of the population), Hinduism in India (84%), and Moslem in Bangladesh (85%) dominates the lives of the people in each country and provides a deep-rooted influence which is readily observable in all aspects of their daily lives, such as in the schools, temples and mosques, and market places.

Compared to the eastern part of Asia, the dominant feature of these countries is the spread of rural settlements and their simple agrarian life. The population distribution of rural areas is 77.6% in Sri Lanka, 89% in India and 92% in Bangladesh. According to the western standards, the economic conditions are far behind. For example, in 1979 the per capita income of Bangladesh was only \$109 (US), India \$190 and Sri Lanka \$284.

However, except for the recent racial incidents, Sri Lanka and India have undoubtedly been the objects of envy and admiration for their democratic institutions, especially their parliamentary systems, to most Asian and African nations whose governments have been frequently overthrown since their liberation from western occupation.

While it is somewhat dangerous with my limited observation of less than twenty days to attempt a conclusion on such a broad, varied area as culture and adult education in Sri Lanka and India, I nonetheless, have made an effort to summarize my observation and relate some of my impressions concerning development and adult education in these countries.

Sarvodaya Movement in Sri Lanka

Except for the recent incident of racial conflicts, Sri Lanka has established a democratic institution, having elected eight governments peacefully and orderly. They have developed agricultural plantations and industry for exports, marking per capita income of \$284 in 1979, which is almost double that of India and triple that of Bangladesh.

However, the considerably higher per capita income among the other South Asian countries and the stable parliamentary system seem to have a close link with the educational system, especially the adult education tradition of this country.

Adult education in Sri Lanka has been represented by the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement which is a nation wide movement of community education for integrated rural development. Sarvodaya Shramadana literally means a process of bringing about an awakening of all by means of sharing labour and resources.

The Sarvodaya Movement, inspired by the teaching of Buddha, is characterized as grass-rooted and non-partisan in nature, and devotes itself towards the development of man and society through cooperation and compassionate action.

At the village level, various programmes are carried out pertaining to pre-school children, school going children, out of school youth, mothers, farmers, craftsmen, Buddhist monks, government officials and foreign participants. All these programmes are integrated with spiritual, moral, educational, social and economic elements approaching to the development of individual life and its social conditions. Since development itself is a very complex organic process, it is, nonetheless, approached by many elements of human life, as mentioned above.

During the last 25 years, the movement has spread throughout the nation with a mysterious and energetic force. Today, the activities of the movement are found in over 5,000 villages and 350 plantations. The Sarvodaya movement, undoubtedly has contributed to the country's high literacy rate of 86% through their untiring "Campaign for Total Awakening" for almost a quarter century.

The Sarvodaya Movement was started in 1958 by a group of student volunteers who moved into a remote village and initiated a labour service activity under the leadership of Mr A.T. Ariyaratne, who then was a science teacher of Nalanda College in Colombo. Ariyaratne, a man of inspiration and devotion, has gained admiration and respect from within and without the country for his miraculous achievements in rural developments throughout the country, he

received the Ramon Magsaysay award for community leadership in 1969. The organization and the infrastructure of Sarvodaya now have grown enormous and huge and become an international movement.

KANFED and CAEE in Kerala

Though it is a small state located in the South-West corner of India, Kerala is known as one of the most advanced states in regard to education. Kerala stands first with 70.42% of literacy as against the national average of 36.17% in 1981. Among many institutions and agencies engaged in non-formal education in Kerala, the Kerala Association for Non-Formal Education and Development (KANFED) and the University of Kerala Centre for Adult Education and Extension (CAEE) are the most representative ones.

Stemming from the reading and literacy projects of the Library Association which functioned since 1945 and as a successor organization of the Kerala State Adult Literacy Council, the KANFED was founded in 1977 and has launched a literacy campaign linked with development activities. Within 6 years since its inauguration in 1977, KANFED has successfully completed the following projects:

- * Creating an awareness among concerned people of the need for eradicating illiteracy and ensuring a learning society
- * Making 50,000 illiterates literate
- * Training more than 10,000 adult education workers for organizing adult education centres
- * Publishing KANFED newsletters, 200 books for post-literates, 15 primers, 30 technical books
- * Organizing street jathas, exhibitions, corner meetings, and seminars
- * Running model continuing education centres with libraries and guidance facilities

The government of India recognized KANFED and entrusted the State Resource Centre for non-formal education to it. It is imperative to mention that the enormous achievements of KANFED could not be realized without the humble and untiring dedication of Sri P.N. Panikar, Organizing Secretary of KANFED. The organization and activities of KANFED have by and large close linkage with the University of Kerala Centre for Adult Education and Extension (CAEE) headed by Dr Sivadasan Pillai, who is also a member of the executive committee of KANFED. There is complete understanding and cooperation between KANFED and CAEE, which, in turn, unites almost all the adult education agencies and leaders in the state.

The CAEE at the University of Kerala was started in 1980 to collaborate in the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) launched by the Government of India in 1978. NAEP set a target of 100,000

illiterates to be made literates within a span of five years for which the University of Kerala decided to set up CAEE to participate in the fight against illiteracy. For 3 years since its inauguration, the CAEE has trained 100 college teachers as Project Officers, 100 graduates as Supervisors, and more than 100 students as instructors, and nearly 9,000 illiterates have been literated and 3,000 more are studying during the academic year of 1983-84.

Through a series of workshops and field testing, the CAEE has produced a primer for use in the adult education centres and a book for the instructors on how to use the primer as well as a workbook for learners. A number of researches including the identification of motivational and facilitating factors as well as barriers in adult education has been successfully carried out in the CAEE.

It was my impression that, though the history of this institution is quite short, CAEE has established its firm stand and successfully carries out its coordinating role among adult education agencies as well as its personnel. This feat has been realized because of Sivadasan Pillai's professional and personal leadership.

Organization and Leadership of the Bangladesh Literacy Society

Compared to Sri Lanka and India, Bangladesh has suffered a heavier burden of cyclonic natural disasters, a high population density, frequent political disorder, and, consequentially, poverty. The first concern of the Bangladesh people, therefore, is to find ways of 'being survived' rather than 'being educated'. However, to help people to survive, it is necessary to organize the appropriate programme for their dominant needs in collaboration with literacy and adult education.

There are many voluntary organizations in Bangladesh enlisted in the field of non-formal education such as the Bangladesh Community Education Association, the Family Planning Association, the Rural Advancement Committee and the Bangladesh Literacy Society, etc.... Among these organizations, the Bangladesh Literacy Society is very active in non-formal education and is a member of ASPBAE and the International Council for Adult Education, which the writer is representing.

The Bangladesh Literacy Society (BLS) has been operating since 1975. It is registered with the Directorate of Social Welfare and affiliated with the Population Control and the Family Planning Division of the Government of Bangladesh. The BLS approach to the literacy campaign has multiple approaches for imparting functional literacy, health and population education to the disadvantaged illiterate adults, youths, drop-outs and out of school working children, providing them with necessary education and services.

Up to December, 1982, the Society has imparted literacy to more than 25,000 adults, youths, and children and has motivated 46,000 couples for accepting family planning with necessary services. Of the 1,800 literacy teachers engaged in 323 literacy centres 780 have been trained at the Society.

At the guidance of the Central Executive Council of the BLS, the villagers formed village executive committees which select at least 5 volunteers for literacy teaching and every teacher is supposed to recruit 10 learners from 10 families for their service every year.

However, the learners who are mostly of the poor and disadvantaged classes, tend easily to lose their interest and motivations in receiving simple literacy, which does not bring about any immediate economic or material gain. On the other hand, the literacy teachers or organizers, many of whom are unemployed or underemployed, also lack motivation without any incentives for their services.

A new innovative project of the BLS in collaboration and under joint management with the Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh is the Local Initiative Support Programme which is operating in 200 local villages. This project is not solely a literacy programme. It is designed to engender initiatives where these are most lacking. It combines economic development with the literacy drive. From the experiences of the BLS literacy work, they learned that a literacy movement without any economic advances is likely to fail where people desperately feel the need for economic development. Therefore, any programme built around the dominant needs such as ponds and fishery, liberation from money-lenders, or skill developments of any sort, should be incorporated with literacy and nonformal components.

One of the excellent achievements of the BLS is editing and publications of literacy books, syllabus, and magazines. The Society has published one primer for functional literacy and one preparatory book for children. It has also published one motivational book on literacy and family planning include Newsletters and souvenirs. At present, a quarterly magazine is being published by the Society which would work as a medium of nonformal and post-literacy material for the literates and the neo-literates.

In mentioning the achievements of the BLS it is inevitable to pay our tribute to Professor Osman Ghani, Secretary-General of the Society for his untiring dedication in organizing national literacy programmes and in coordinating among voluntary organizations and government agencies concerned with nonformal education in this country. He is also Chairman of the Task Force on Mass Education, newly commissioned in 1982 by the Government of Bangladesh. The Task force has formally submitted the Report which recommends the Government's support for the NGO's programmes for mass education and for the birth of the Federal Council of Mass Education to introduce integrated Mass Education Programmes of the NGO's.

Some Considerations

After travelling through the South Asian countries observing conditions concerning the lives of the people and the nonformal education efforts to cope with their problems, several questions remain in my mind for which I have no conclusion or solutions.

Do traditional culture and religion contribute to modernization?

As mentioned earlier, religion dominates the lives of the people in the South Asian countries. Religious practices, somewhat combined with superstitions, are readily observable in all aspects of their lives in the family, the market and their work places.

Unsuitable women's clothes at work places, discriminatory practices against particular groups like women or other castes, millions of cows idle in the fields or in the streets, and the custom of drinking water from the sacred river - all these phenomena are strange or shocking to the foreign eyes of the Far Eastern and Western countries. Some ambivalent reactions are also experienced from the obviously conflicting phenomenon of those simple and honest people who have inherited such a rich culture and tradition, but who continue to live in the poverty present before modern civilization.

Traditional culture and religious factors can frequently be seen to play a potentially hindering role in the modernization of developing countries. This is a difficulty which must be overcome in a respectful and non-threatening manner if adult education projects are to experience full success. In this regard, however, the Sarvodaya movement in Sri Lanka has been successful in bringing religious principles to teaching people and in developing rural economic programmes. It is the primary task of adult education to harmonize religion and traditional culture with modernization without unduly disturbing the religious and cultural roots of the society.

Should democratic institutions allow such gaps among groups?

Since their independence from British rule, India and Sri Lanka have been faced with critical contrasts. In both societies, there are enormous gaps and differences between rich and poor, intellectuals and illiterates, urban and rural, men and women and other differences visible among groups of people. These two nations have developed democratic institutions which have been the object of envy and admiration from other countries in Asia and Africa. In order to meet the basic survival needs of the people, more is required than simply preserving local elections and parliamentary procedures. We must be honest in saying that adult education can not do all alone. To achieve fundamental goals of adult education which ensure individual freedom, opportunities of individual self-realization and social well-being in a democratic society, we must utilize or capitalize the full range of political, economic and social forces operating within each community to change even the existing structure of the society towards modernization and democracy. The primary task of adult education, therefore, is to help the people to be aware of their status and problems and to urge them to participate in social action to solve their problems.

Is the purpose of literacy education for letters and numbers alone?

How should we define the role of adult education when dealing with those who are living at the most basic survival level? Can literacy programmes alone solve these problems?

Since World War II, many newly emerging countries have so emphasised

national campaigns for 'total literacy' that other aspects of adult education are seemingly left behind. It is clear that literacy education by itself cannot meet the basic survival needs of the people, nor can adult education programmes wait until all the people are completely literate. Literacy education, even for the illiterates, then, must be integrated with programmes of health and sanitation, nutrition, vocational, and citizenship training to comprise a relevant and integrated programme of adult education. Literacy training therefore, should be cultural, as well as a social and economic action. This approach, which represents a relatively new philosophy, is found in the Sarvodaya Movement in Sri Lanka and the Seva Mandir project in India, the results of which have been remarkable.

How much dependence on foreign funds?

For almost 40 years since 1945, foreign funds have flown into the Asian and African regions to help the newly emerged countries to become really independent. Many of the national and local initiatives of fundamental and adult education have been supported by the foreign aid programmes such as Unesco, UNDP, ICA, DVV etc. Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka, KANFED in Kerala, Seva Mandir, in Udaipur, and Bangladesh Literacy Society in Dhaka, by and large, have been assisted by foreign funds and the results have been remarkable as mentioned earlier.

Although foreign aid to less-developed countries has great values in the spirit of international cooperation, it also conceives some negative elements on the part of the recipients. One criticism is that foreign aid tends to make the recipients too dependent on the aid and sometimes spoils local people. Another point of criticism is that too much aid is flowing too long into only a few agencies, while there is so much need for new projects in other poorer areas. We must keep in mind the principle of self help project, i.e. "help the people help themselves".

Finally, the writer wishes to emphasize our fundamental goals of adult education which we all must strive to achieve. Although the standards by which cultural values and a happy life can be measured may vary from time to time, and from society to society, the common human goals of quality of life and realization of democracy remain constant. In other words, the God-given gifts of individual freedom, the inherent dignity of man, and the potential for self-realization must be equally guaranteed to all people. It is the promotion of a society where these conditions are uniformly available to each member which is the ultimate goal of all education programmes. We realize that the accomplishment of this goal requires the mutual solidarity and united cooperation of all leaders in the fields of adult education.

Among a number of case studies on the relationship between adult education and the reduction of poverty commissioned by the International Council for Adult Education was one prepared by Drs Om and Ginny Shrivastava of the very active and well-known Indian non-governmental agency, Seva Mandir, in Udaipur, Rajasthan, India.

Seven of these studies, featuring national, mainly governmental and mostly top-down, approaches appear in *Combatting Poverty through Adult Education: National Development Strategies, to be published by Croom Helm (see separate notice in this issue)*. The Seva Mandir case study included two examples of the nature and effects of village level action, which are presented here.

VILLAGE LEVEL ACTION IN INDIA

Om and Ginny Shrivastava
Seva Mandir, Udaipur

Women's Development in Chhani Village, by Rajkumari

The following remarks were recorded by the supervisor of the women's adult education centre in village Chhani, Kerwara Block. The young woman interviewed has made remarkable progress in many aspects, but she is not atypical of changes that take place in women who were never touched by development efforts earlier.

The English translation of Rajkumari's own report of her growth and development is refreshing, and is presented here as an example of what can happen, and what we are trying to facilitate through adult education and women's development efforts.

The name of my village is Chhani. It is 10km west of Kherwara. The population of this village is approximately 2,500 which includes different castes of people. Only a few in my village are rich people and all the rest earn their livelihood through farming or manual labour. I too belong to a poor farming Rajput family and my father owns only one Bigha (half of an acre) of land. My father works as messenger (Chaprasi) in the village panchayat. My younger brother works as a domestic help in Ahmedabad in a rich businessman's house. During most of the year, my mother and myself work as labourers. Looking at our situation, we can say that without labour it would be difficult for us to make both ends meet:

It has been a tradition in our area of not sending girls to school and also not allowing women to talk and mix with people. In the old days, the women had to remain veiled, and any kind of outside influence on them was unthinkable. Gradually, with passage of time, the traditions are slowly changing. Because of the traditions, even I was deprived of studies. Seeing my other friends going to school I often wondered at my fate that I was letting such a beautiful opportunity go past. I used to blame my parents for this but after all they were helpless in front of social circumstances.

In this moment of regret, Seva Mandir opened an adult education centre in my village. I still feared an opposition from my parents and they did object. A teacher of the centre, Chandrkanta Devi, would everyday come to my house to persuade my father to let me study, telling him that there was no harm in doing so, but he would always say - "what will my community think that I was sending a girl to study". In the meanwhile without the knowledge of my parents, I would go to the centre along with my friends. Whenever my father would come to know of my going to the centre he would scold me; despite this, my interest in studies kept growing. Slowly and slowly my parents understood the importance of literacy. I learnt not only to write my name but other things too. I would meet the teacher of the centre in the afternoon at her shop and gradually learnt to sew there. My friends also faced the same problem as mine in the beginning, but being together we gained a degree of confidence and courage in ourselves, and slowly even the parents agreed to send them to the literacy centre. At the centre we got the opportunity of meeting and talking to other people and gained some knowledge of the outside world. Whenever an outsider came to the centre and asked us questions, we were very scared and apprehensive about answering. Even some people of the village did not stop at making fun of us and would say - "So you are this" - and I would answer back. Whoever got an answer from me would not have the courage to tease me the next time.

Seva Mandir often organised cultural programmes and with my colleagues I would enthusiastically participate in them. Whenever I got the time, I told my neighbourhood women to study too. But they being older than me would not give serious thought to it; still I was not discouraged. With the close cooperation of my friends I continued to study, sew and embroider. With the help of Seva Mandir I went to Udaipur for training and learnt about the nutritional value of food. Going outside the village also gave me a chance to see the city, meet people and learn new things, and I reached a conclusion that without studies everything is meaningless. One advantage of being literate was that I gained a lot of confidence. Before this, I was scared and answered only questions I was asked, but now I could answer my parents on something that I thought to be right.

There was a tradition in our society of all the family members sitting together and consuming liquor. I raised my voice against the custom and told my father that by his consuming liquor he was ruining our lives. Gradually my father understood my point of view and stopped consuming in front of us; and even if he did consume some, it was less, and he would go to sleep.

There were about 15 other girls from my village who came to study at the centre with me. Being with them and talking to them every day, we exchanged our ideas, we listened to each other and respected each one's ideas and points of view. The village people did not like the formation of our group and often criticised us. We would sometimes give reply but often we had to tolerate their criticism. I had full faith that we would have to be ready with an answer for the right cause.

Last year, in the neighbourhood village of Chitter, the work of road construction started, in which about 100 workers from Chhani also worked. Nowadays, in every department and place corruption is growing. While listing the wages of the labourers, the supervisor and the foreman would keep an amount of Rs. 2-4 from each labourer's salary in their own pockets. I felt like fighting against this corruption but I did not receive the cooperation of my co-workers and neither did I have adequate knowledge of the law etc. I kept quiet and remained a silent spectator to all this. God knows how much money these corrupt people stole from the illiterate poor labourers, and how they indulged themselves in luxuries. Although this work was a government department project, their workers also had a hand in this malpractice and they too enjoyed themselves at the cost of the labourers. When the due money had to be paid to the labourers the foreman forged their thumb-print, and exploited them once again; and with that money, they indulged themselves in the 'luxury' of wine and chicken. During the discussions at the literacy centre in my village, we had learnt not to put our thumb print on false papers and to maintain a private copy of our attendance. So, when the turn came for me to put my thumb print on the false papers I refused to do so and told my colleagues to abstain from doing so, but they were scared that the foreman would strike out their names off the muster roll, therefore, they continued to put their thumb print wherever the foreman wanted them to do.

A similar kind of roll call was made on 12.10.80 at 10 p.m. because the department people knew that at night whatever wages would be given to the labourers they will accept without any protest. This is what really happened.

That night the 500 labourers accepted whatever was given to them as wages during the roll call. We discovered 1 or 2 days salary less after reaching home and looking at our personal attendance register. We wondered - is this what we get after carrying 20 Kgs of stones throughout every day? At the Adult Education Centre I told this incident to all my friends and the teacher in charge of the Centre. When I discussed this with the in charge and the workers of Seva Mandir, they wrote a request letter. When we were busy signing this request letter, the foreman came to know about it and Shri Ram Singh came to threaten me and said that it was not the right thing that I was doing. He also said that he would not take me for work next time. To that I replied back that we are the people who work, while you are busy exploiting us. At this moment my parents were very angry and asked whether I went to the centre to study or fight with other people. The teacher in charge and myself tried to explain that this was reality. All my other friends got scared after listening to these things. But I was adamant that when we work, then why should anyone else receive the money! The request letter reached the department. However, because the departmental people were also responsible for all these things, the request letter had virtually no effect on them, and when the work of threatening started all over again, we 12 people who had put forth the request letter were not taken on the job. We all decided that if they would not keep us on the job for a year, and would not give us the money that they owed us, we would still continue to keep contact with the department and press them. We saw the muster roll 3 - 4 times in connection with the proceedings, and also met the Sessions Judge thrice, and

sent back the request letter to Kherwara. Seeing that we were adamant about this and would not leave them, they gave back our money which they owed us, and took us back on the muster roll. When these foremen were working in the forest department they refused to take us labourers. This was a needed drought relief project in our area. We continued our efforts and gheraoed (surrounded) the sarpanch (the elected village leader), and the forest official. Due to these incidents, the villagers grew quite angry, but I feel that we took the right step, which is why they had to bow down. I believe in continued joint effort, hence I am forever working for it, and keep explaining these courageous ideas to them. Gradually these ideas are having an influence on the rest of the women force of the village. While before only girls of the age group 15-20 came to study at the centre, now this year women of an approximate age group of 30 years, who have children, are also coming to the centre.

Besides, this year they have opened a sewing centre in our village, where I am working as an assistant sewing teacher.

In all this work I have got continued co-operation and advice from the Seva Mandir workers, because of which my ideas and arguing power have been on the increase. I am sure, in the future, I will work for these developmental works and help in the uplift of my village people.

From the above said incidents I have learnt the following:

1. to read and write
2. realise the real position of women in the society
3. continued effort can undo the impossible
4. indulging in developmental programmes, assures continued increase in courage

* * * * *

Literacy to Development: The Growth of a Tribal Village, by Manohar Singh

In this case study, Manohar Singh describes how an adult education centre can become an instrument in initiating a development process in a tribal village, Umara, and outlines the role of Seva Mandir and its workers.

There are many examples in rural development where programmes have moved from one objective to another as a result of the push provided by the beneficiaries. While development projects invariably start with some external agency or group wanting to do something, very few move beyond the initial programmes developed by the sponsors. This, of course, can be due to various factors. In this case study, I have presented the shift in emphasis of the programme as a result of the evaluations conducted by the participants whom the sponsors usually consider only beneficiaries.

Background

Seva Mandir has been engaged in Adult Literacy Programmes in the district of Udaipur since the early 1970s. Kherwada block has been the major focus of their attention in this respect. Starting with farmers' functional literacy programmes in the early 70s, it grew into the adult education programme under the auspices of the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) in 1978.

Umara is a remote tribal village 50 kms south-west of the Kherwada Block headquarters. Situated on the border of Gujarat, the village is in a hilly forest area. It is inhabited by about 30 tribal families with a total population of 250. While agriculture is the main occupation of the people in Umara, they also engage in wage labour for three to six months in a year. During these months, they migrate to Gujarat in search of daily wage labour. This is mainly due to their small landholdings, hilly terrain and lack of irrigation facilities. In fact, the shortage of water including drinking water is so acute that when there is no rain, they have to take their cattle to neighbouring Gujarat to get them drinking water.

In other words, lack of irrigation and drinking water facilities conditions their whole life. As in most other parts of the country, also in Southern Rajasthan, the tribals are among the most exploited sections and get the worst land. Because of the quality of their land, they can at best hope for one crop which does not take them beyond a few months. During the remaining months they are unemployed and undernourished. Lack of water is a major obstacle to their owning good quality cattle. Besides, hygienic conditions are bad and their health is poor. The family life is disrupted by their need to migrate in search of subsistence wage daily employment elsewhere.

Despite claims about major tribal development programmes Umara, like the remaining tribal areas, has felt very little impact of government-sponsored programmes. Unlike many other areas where a basic infrastructure has been built, though it is accessible only to the rich, the tribal lands have been totally neglected since they have got very little political strength. The village is inaccessible because of lack of a link road. Agriculture and animal husbandry cannot be improved and made economically viable. The health situation continues to be miserable and the migrant tribal labour is underpaid and undernourished.

Adult Education

It is in this unjust situation that Seva Mandir opened an adult education centre at Umara in 1978, under the NAEP. 33 adults were registered. From the beginning the local instructors as well as the field project staff felt that they should not turn it into an adult or functional literacy class. It had to be non-formal education in the proper sense of the word. The teacher-taught difference had to disappear and the classes had to become a forum for open discussion on the socio-economic situation of the village and a place for beginning action to change it.

However, the project staff was aware of the backwardness of the village and therefore, apprehensive about the success of the adult education programme. One aspect of what is called backwardness is the fear the villagers have to open discussion. They belong to the culture of silence. Centuries of oppression have reduced them to a state of fatalism and helplessness and because of the internalisation of the image imposed on them by the exploiters, they consider themselves only receivers of orders, of benefits, and of knowledge.

Consequently, the field project officers decided upon a step by step approach. Initially, they would have only literacy classes. They had misapprehensions even about the success of this step but they began slowly. They got a few persons together with a view to encouraging them to take responsibility for the development of their own village. The beginnings were difficult. The villagers had their whole history of passivity and fatalism behind them. Efforts had to be made and they had to be helped to acquire self-confidence. Slowly, a few began to see its usefulness and these discussions led to the evaluation of the existing situation in the village. Various aspects of social, economic and political dynamics in the village were analysed in detail. The history of the village and reasons for its continued under-development were enumerated. The roles of various development schemes of the government were examined and the desired future of the village was hypothesised.

These discussions, extending over a considerable period of time, began to generate villagers' interest in the development of their own village. They began to understand the problems in the village and possible solutions to those problems. They realised that they are poor not because of God's will for their fate but because the decisions taken for national development ignore their needs. They understood that funds allotted for their welfare do not reach them.

Their understanding did not stop at theoretical analysis. In fact, theory alone does not take the villagers very far. They have to act and reflect together. As they discussed their problems they slowly began to see not merely the injustice of the system but also their own potential for change. They realised that they had to act together and that they could make a beginning towards changing their society by themselves working in cooperation with one another, by giving a bit of themselves to improve the village.

As the discussion continued they began to realise their resources in implementing those solutions. One of the first concrete outcomes of the discussions was a decision to build a link road in the village. The villagers agreed to volunteer their labour as well as use food-for-work programmes for this road construction. Only Umara villagers contributed towards building the road and one could see that they were interested in the road more than their wage. Though many other villages got its benefits they had not passed through an awareness process. As a result, they did not take part in its construction.

After the road was constructed, a series of discussions took place to evaluate the manner in which it was constructed and its outcome.

Several important findings were shared by the villagers:

- * The total output was about three times the wage given. In other words, they had not depended on anyone else to do the work for them. They had given all that they had and had requested wages in the form of food-for-work only as an additional support. This wage could not be considered relief in any form; it was but a small share of the nation's riches that are their right and they have been deprived of. This enabled them to tide over the lean season by getting sustenance wages for improving the assets in their village instead of being exploited by some outsider.
- * Though they might not have been aware of all the above theoretical implications, they knew that they were doing something constructive for their village community. As a result, all those who worked on the road agreed that they did not feel any pressure to contribute their work. In fact, they said that they enjoyed working together on a constructive programme.
- * Unlike in the past when they used to begin some work without proper motivation and leave it half done, in this case the road was completed and nothing was left undone.
- * Though the fact of working together on something constructive was their main motivation, they realised that they had gained also materially. Since the foodgrains obtained under the food-for-work programme were shared equally by all the villagers, they got higher daily wages (4 Kg each) than what they would have got otherwise. Moreover, this equal sharing had become one more factor in cementing the unity of the tribal community.

Going Beyond the Village

Our main motive in getting involved in the village was not merely constructing a road or solving a few problems but building the people. We knew that people cannot grow only through theory or only through action but that the two have to go together. In the above case the villagers had started with discussion on their situation, had acted on their findings and had, as a community, evaluated their action. The self-confidence they had gained as a result of this process would lead to further action. However, it would be against the philosophy of human development to restrict the process to one village. What began in a small community has to spread to the rest of the area. Otherwise it can become only an island of prosperity or awareness in a sea of poverty and exploitation. Moreover, for any long-term effect it is not enough for the oppressed to become aware of their unjust situation or potential for change. They have to build up sufficient pressure in order to change the policies of the decision-makers.

With this in view, the villagers decided to share the evaluation of their action with the panchayat leaders who in their turn conducted similar evaluations in other villages. They also gave feedback on these reflections to the government officer and other

decision-makers. Apart from initiating a process in the neighbouring villages, this led to a change of attitude among the Government functionaries.

- * Up to now the officials had functioned on the age-old stereotype that the tribals are lazy and do not want to work. This action and its feedback made them realize that the backwardness of the area was not the result of laziness but had other factors, lethargy of the bureaucrats being one of them. Given proper motivation they are capable of working for a change in their situation.
- * The functionaries had so far taken for granted that the tribals were ignorant and were incapable of taking any decision. This group action showed if proof was required, that the tribals are not ignorant and are capable of taking responsibility provided they pass through a process and receive initial encouragement.
- * It was also realised that for the above changes to take place, the procedure adopted during the work was useful. The villagers had, as a group, decided that they needed this road. In other words, their personal motivation was tapped, which is not the case with most Block or panchayat-sponsored projects where the villagers become only wage earners.

Total Development

Apart from contributing to the beginning of a process in the neighbouring villages and change in the attitude of government functionaries, the process of participation led to increased self-confidence in the villagers. This, in its turn, enhanced their interest in the Centre, which led to the beginning of greater development in the village.

This concept of total development itself emanated from the experiences and evaluation of the Umara villagers during the previous year. As a result, Seva Mandir, which had originally thought of various target-oriented projects, slowly changed its approach. Now it had to play its role primarily in a supportive capacity. When in June 1979 Seva Mandir launched a scheme of Community Education for Rural Development, it could easily choose Umara as one of the villages since its inhabitants had felt the need of such a programme. Though they did not express it in such terms, we viewed it as total development of the community.

The emphasis in this effort was to build on people's desire to take responsibility and get themselves organised for common objectives. After a series of discussions with the villagers, a hamlet-based organisation was created. In this organisation groups of five households each were formed with one representative selected by them. Decentralisation and direct participation by every household were the main motives behind this organisational structure.

In the early phase the villagers asked the field-worker to conduct

a survey of the potentialities of the village for development. This request would have been counter-productive since it would have led to an outside expert conducting a survey and making the people dependent on him. On the other hand, the field-worker could not disassociate himself completely from the process. Hence discussion was started again and it was decided that the field-worker and the tribals would work together and pool their knowledge. Thus this survey was conducted with the help of the villagers and the information so obtained was fed back to them in the meeting of the representatives.

As a result of this, the villagers decided to launch several community schemes. The first one was to build a community centre for their common activities. They identified a place, contributed their labour and constructed it in record time. Both the decision-making process and the construction of the centre brought the community together and strengthened their bonds.

This action led to further reflection in the community and more action. Seen from a purely material point of view, their action led to what can be called development projects. But these had emerged out of common thinking by the whole village; initially we had thought of literacy as a priority but the tribals did not see much meaning in it. After this evaluation they saw the need of a school for their children and they built it themselves not because we told them to do so but because they wanted it. Irrigation facilities were poor. However, now they realised that they could build upon what they had. So, they decided to clean and renovate the village pond. It would obviously not provide them with a long-term solution of water shortage. It will dry up in a year of drought. But it was a slow beginning from which they gained more confidence in their ability to change their society.

After the renovation of the pond, their common reflection showed them the possibilities of improving their agricultural practices. Thus they were able to go beyond a sustenance economy. Their working together gave them confidence in their ability to manage their own affairs. So they decided to run the school on their own. Twenty-five children attended it. All these actions have led to better organisation among the villagers and more action-reflection-action. The Block and the remaining State facilities that were so far monopolised by the powerful are today more accessible to them. The neighbouring villages have learnt from Umara and are beginning a process of their own.

Some Observations

A study of the change that has taken place at Umara over the past three years brings out among others the following points:

1. The most important change noticeable in Umara is a feeling of inter-dependent, collective, purpose. Earlier, the villagers lived in their own households fairly isolated from one another. Having worked on some of the above-mentioned projects together, they developed a sense of common purpose.

2. There is a perceptible change in their attitude toward mutual labour. Earlier, work was only a tool to earn wages and the gains went to someone else. Even when it was for the Block-sponsored project such as road building, the people viewed themselves only as wage-earners and the government as the employer. Now they are the producers and their manual labour can be used for their own development, not someone else's profit.
3. It is clear that a series of discussions before the construction of the road and the intensive evaluation following it were important turning points in the shift from literacy to development. They were also important from the point of view of enhancing their self-confidence, which led to further action-reflection-action. They began to view themselves as decision-makers and actors, not merely as beneficiaries. Participatory evaluation played a major role in this change of attitudes.
4. Finally, it became clear to many of the field-workers that development is people's own business. We cannot develop them. We can only assist. Hence, participation is not a matter of mere strategy but is a philosophy of life which begins with trust in the people.

Conclusion

There is an age-old Confucian saying which goes more or less as follows:

When I was still a man of the world, I used to see trees and streams and forests and hills. But they were nothing more than ordinary material things whose benefits I enjoyed. Then I passed through the second stage of searching for a meaning. Then all was darkness. I saw neither the world nor its trees, and streams and forests and hills. Finally, I reached the third stage of contemplation and enlightenment. I saw the same trees and streams and forests and hills. But now they were not the same old things I saw then I was a man of the world. Now I saw them through totally different eyes. They signified to me the power of nature, the creativity of man, and new life.

With proper modifications, this saying can be applied to the process the Bhil tribals of Umara have passed through. In the past there have been some government or privately sponsored projects in that area. But in all of them, the people were viewed only as beneficiaries who received something from others. While improving the economic situation of a few, they did not lead to the changing of their state of dependence since it confirmed them in their self-image as persons only fit to receive orders from their masters or favours from their benefactors.

If allowed to take a purely project approach, also the above programme would have followed the same path and confirmed them in their state of dependence. But the process they passed through changed

all the development programmes into a new life-giving source of community building and their growth as human beings like Confucians; also the tribals of Umara had to pass through an age of darkness. They expected the field-workers to do everything for them and could not understand why they refused to do what they thought was their duty. It was also an age of darkness for the field workers because initially the response to a human development process was poor.

Looking back at the last three years, we realise today that this is an essential step in the growth of the people. They can grow neither at a pace nor in the direction set by the voluntary organisation. The community has to set its own pace and decide its own direction. It may not be as fast as the impatient field-worker would like it to be. It may not be target-oriented like the material-based development projects. It is a slow process.

Through this process, the villagers have come to what looks externally like the classical development projects. But, like Confucian trees and streams and forests and hills, also these roads and centres and schools and ponds do not have the same meaning any more. They have become tools, not of making the people dependent on the external agency, but of helping them to acquire their society. They have started going beyond their individualism to become conscious of their tribal solidarity. Manual work has taken a new meaning no more as a tool of exploitation but of creativity and growth.

It has been a process also for the field workers of Seva Mandir. From the initial project workers, who, if not properly guided, could have become 'doers' of everything, they have learnt to become catalytic agents. They realise that the people have to grow and that any outsider can only be a supportive element.

However, the process is not complete. There is always the danger of the people thinking primarily or exclusively in terms of material gains. A balance has to be kept between the benefits received and the socio-political process of the people. The momentum of consciousness-building should not be lost. These gains should not lull them into a sense of security. We have taken many big steps, but we still have a long way to go. The people will take the direction they want. We shall have to watch and see in what way we can be of help or when we should withdraw. This is the new relationship between the external agency and the people that we have to grow into.



While local level approaches can engage very accurately with the particular needs of different groups and communities, especially where there are ethnic and other regional differences, as in India, large-scale, nationally conceived and government-supported programmes for rural development might be expected to have much wider and more rapid impact, given the larger resources that can be mobilized.

The following paper was prepared by a leading adult educator working in the Thai Department of Nonformal Education for the International Symposium on Adult Education held in Shanghai in May 1984. It explores some possibilities for education in the direction of self-sufficiency as one approach to a human form of development in the circumstances of Thai society and government. It should be remembered that the forms of adult education which may be acceptable and effective vary greatly from country to country, as a function of the different political, cultural and economic circumstances from time to time and from place to place.

STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPMENT AND PEASANT EDUCATION

Chanida Chanyapate

The Present Scene

All who have any experience of rural development quickly discover that the various components of rural misery - poverty, ill-health, poor education - are interconnected. A nutritionist, for example, cannot get very far persuading villagers to eat a healthy balanced diet if those same villagers simply do not have enough to eat. The literacy teacher finds that the constant nagging need to seize every chance of making a bit of money renders attendance at classes rather sporadic. School teachers might observe the effects of protein-deficiency in early life on school achievement (one reason perhaps why the 80% rural population of Thailand provides only 7% of university students).

A common response to this situation by development organisations is to focus on income-generating projects. So educational efforts are directed towards the teaching of marketable skills, or skills that may lead to self-employment. Or agricultural extension officers will concentrate on propagandizing methods of raising agricultural production. With the extra income that, one hopes, will result from this, peasants might start building latrines or indulging in other 'improving activities' that require an initial bit of cash.

So far, so good. The only problem being that it doesn't seem to be working very well. Otherwise we would not be sitting here today talking about it as a problem. There is little evidence for example, that the lot of the poorest peasants in Thailand has substantially improved over the past two decades, whereas economic indicators on a national scale indicate a steady, even impressive improvement over the same period.

Actors in the Scene - The Peasant

In looking around for somebody to blame for this quite remarkable non-improvement, I personally would wish to disassociate myself from the chorus that commonly accuses the farmer. Blaming the victim rarely helps anybody. While it may be true that certain peasants are stubborn, or (from the eager development worker's point of view) lazy, and that communities may shy away from new technology in superstitious ignorance, you begin to think that the peasant can't win.

What if the peasant does increase production, as has happened periodically in Thailand in the sugar cane and pineapple industries? By the invisible hand of the capitalist market, prices slump, the peasant is virtually no better off for all his hard work and pineapples get thrown into the Gulf of Thailand. The newspapers talk of 'overproduction' and guess who gets the blame for that.

Actors (2) - The Official

Let's now look at other participants in the rural landscape who might also share the blame.

First of all, the 'official' development agents. (In many countries, including Thailand, these are synonymous with government officials.) The most important thing to realise is that the primary objective of such rural development workers does not directly concern the village where they may be working. Their viewpoint as government officials is, almost by definition, more directed towards their city-bound superiors. They may be sincerely striving for some kind of improvement in the lives of the local peasants, but the plans by which they work are drawn up and directed by their superiors, the budget that they dispense has been approved by some more central agency, even their very existence as salary-earners demanding the respect of the 'ordinary' peasants represents an intrusion of alien, urban ways.

Two important features of this situation must be stressed. First, the role of the development worker as 'helper', or 'facilitator' or 'advisor' becomes inextricably bound up with the function of 'controlling' or 'supervising'. One of the functions of local government officers in Thailand is to arrange for local elections for positions such as village headman. This seems to be a clear case of 'facilitating'. And after the election, the same officer must give his official approval to the community's choice for the results to be valid. A similar system of 'controlled democracy' (where the control is effective and the democracy largely illusory) governs agricultural co-operatives, a fact which some observers use to explain their widespread failure.

The second feature is that the policies that inform the actions of the local development worker are largely decided by a centralized (and, in Thailand, westernized) group of planners whose vision has national scope and who simply cannot afford to inquire after the details of the situation in each village. To these planners

rural areas in the mass are a source of 'rural manpower' in the mass, which must somehow be put to work increasing agricultural production. This will both increase the export of raw materials on which the country's balance of trade depends, and will allow peasants themselves to become consumers, thus fuelling an acceleration of economic growth.

So the problems of rural areas are viewed as national problems: More rice must be grown so that Thailand can increase export revenues so that Thailand can pay for the importation of 'necessary' commodities, the most important of which is energy. The fact that these energy imports are used in the generation of electricity that doesn't get to the village or in the gas tanks of cars that the average peasant will never own, is not a significant problem for the central planner - he has the national accounts to balance. But it is a problem for the individual peasant, waiting patiently for something, anything, to trickle down through the system.

To give one example of the 'national' view of rural problems, I would like to explain a little about a yearly 3,000 million baht (\$130 Million) project called the Rural Job Creation Scheme. Under the guise of participatory community development, the government hands out sums of money to specially-formed local organizations called sub-district councils. These councils then decide how, in their locality, the money is to be spent. Commonly the money is spent on dry-season activities such as building roads, digging irrigation canals, sinking wells, etc.

The two obvious purposes behind this scheme - to inject some cash into the local economy and to improve the local infrastructure - are in fact subordinate to a hidden third objective - to discourage the annual migration into the towns, in the dry season. One by-product of this scheme has been accusations of misuse of funds and corruption at the local level. When critics point out that in many places peasants were being paid to build roads that were washed away in the rainy season, only to be rebuilt with next year's government handout, one Minister said that this was not entirely unsatisfactory, since at least the local population would be kept down on the farm, even if they were rebuilding the same road year after year. So this 'rural' scheme was quite clearly intended by the government to benefit the situation in the cities.

Among the various officials involved in development work, agricultural extension officers seem to me a breed apart. (For one thing, I am intrigued by the use of the word 'extension' - what exactly is being extended?) The Department of Agricultural Extension in the Thai Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives has a specific mandate to increase agricultural production, on the assumption that increased production must ipso facto be beneficial to the peasant concerned. As we shall later see, this is not necessarily the case, and so a tension arises between the agricultural extension officer, who has virtually no experience growing things himself, and for whom success is defined by the adoption of new crops or cultivation methods, and the peasant, who may not always agree,

but who is often in a poor position to resist the influence of the government agent.

Actors (3) - The Volunteer

The shortcomings of the official development worker are of course quite visible, even to townspeople. And this has spawned a number of small voluntary groups of concerned citizens. Private, non-profit development organizations are established, which set out to work with rural communities on a limited scale. Most workers are well-intentioned middle-class young people who soon discover that they possess no skills or real understanding of the peasant mind and economy. Their plan of action is sometimes little more than an eager and vague desire to help. Many learn that village life is not for them and become frustrated when things do not change as quickly as they would like. Those who stay involved in rural development sometimes resign themselves to cultivating their own gardens more for the sake of self-fulfilment.

Actors (4) - The Businessman

Another agent that has recently entered the rural scene and one that is of growing importance in Thailand, is represented by agribusinesses. And of course, such companies are primarily concerned with monetary income. Their influence is towards greater mechanization and market-oriented agrarian reform. Such efforts could be beneficial to the peasant, but the profit motive does not always coincide with greatest social benefit. Increased mechanization may increase yields, but perhaps at the expense of rural workers who are left landless. Market-oriented production often impells the peasant into producing cash crops, which first of all will not keep him alive and which offer only an unstable monetary return.

Agribusinesses also have an unpleasant side-effect in siphoning off some of the governmental development effort. Highly trained but poorly paid university experts on poultry are commonly under retainers to a major chicken- and egg-producing company in Thailand. Similarly plant specialists are being lured away by cigarette manufacturers and breweries to work on their tobacco and barley crops. Individual peasants directly employed by, or under contract to these agribusinesses often enjoy a better than average standard of living. But the effect of commercialized agriculture is to concentrate scarce resources of knowledge and expertise into exploiting areas that are already favoured in terms of soil conditions, communications and ancillary services.

The Effects

Past development efforts seem to have been largely predicated on an assumption of national or even global interdependency, and the effect has been to neglect subsistence culture in favour of producing a marketable surplus of agricultural goods to be exchanged (generally at an unfair rate) for consumer goods from the city factories.

A colleague who has recently completed a research study paints this picture of life in the poorest area of Thailand, the north-east -

Rice yields have started to decrease. The soil has always been poor and the application of chemical fertilizer, which has consistently been encouraged by agricultural extension officials, is no longer effecting any increase. In fact, a ceiling has been reached with the soil being left in a depleted state, so that increasing use of fertilizer is needed just to maintain present yields.

The large-scale use of chemical fertilizers has overshot the absorption capacity of the environment. The ecological balance is shifting, producing a marked change in water quality. Fertilizer-related pollution of water has resulted in widespread destruction of aquatic life, which traditionally served as a major protein source for the local population.

Since the expenses of farmers have risen, the debt burden has also steadily increased, so that land is being confiscated or sold off cheaply. Thus there is a rise in tenant-farming and share-cropping, to match the situation in more fertile areas.

The incentive for quick profits in cash crops, such as cassava, has led to massive deforestation by capitalist enterprises. Effective official reaction has been negligible, with local officers either turning a blind eye to, or even conniving at the practice. The loss of forests, apart from any ecological disadvantage, also removes a source of additional non-cultivated produce for the peasants' own consumption.

The effect of current development efforts in such cases has been to make the poor peasant worse off than he used to be. Half the population of the north-east of Thailand has sunk below the poverty line. Increasing numbers of rural people are forced to migrate to the cities, to live in slum and squatter areas, to undertake skilled casual labour or factory work at extremely low wages, and in the case of young rural women, to go or be forced into prostitution.

Similar situations are repeated throughout the third world as international agencies consistently report a growing gulf between the largely urban haves and the normally rural have-nots in many countries.

The Old and the New

A number of concerned individuals have become so disillusioned with the effects of development efforts that they advocate that we should all leave the peasant alone. The peasant community survived for centuries before the advent of development workers, and in certain cases it is very tempting to think that the peasants would be better off if left to themselves.

But before we countenance any radical suggestions for some strategy of benign neglect, it will be helpful if we look at the agricultural and community practices that allowed peasants to survive in self-sufficiency in the past and at the factors that have intervened to upset the even tenor of their lives.

In many developing countries, the rural population still heavily outnumbered the urban, except in terms of power. Living in small communities spread over the arable land in relative isolation, these peasants represent to cultural tradition and identity of the land, in contrast to their westernised, consumer-oriented city cousins. This traditional culture has been one of subsistence. Activities are geared towards providing life sustenance in terms of food, clothing and shelter for the family and to maintaining a spiritual identity. The source of all wealth in this system is land. Families produce for their own consumption and also gather from surrounding non-cultivated land. Skills are passed on from parents to children. The existence of communities allows specialized functions to certain members, such as spiritual leaders, midwives, etc. So a certain amount of interdependency is evident, but this is largely limited to within the community, with relatively few needs being met from outside the immediate village.

The main force of such communities, given the Buddhist ethos prevalent in Thai society, is towards harmony, harmony both within the community, where individuals would seek to provide for themselves and each other all their material, social and spiritual needs, and harmony between the community and its natural surroundings, such that dependence on outside organizations was at a minimum and each community was virtually self-sustaining.

Such a situation of harmony or balance, can be upset by disruptive forces from both within and outside the community.

Forces of Disruption

Within the community, the pressures of increasing population have strained the ability of the land to provide sufficient wealth. A change of this sort, however, takes place relatively slowly, allowing peasants time to make adjustments. In rural Thailand, the most common adjustment has been to send the surplus manpower of sons and daughters into the cities for seasonal work.

Outside the community there are other forces which are largely beyond the control of the peasant and which directly and dramatically affect his ability to subsist.

Mass destruction of forests, for example, is making rain-fed rice farming an even more precarious business in a cycle of drought and flood. It also removes a source of fuel and a supplementary supply of food that was traditionally gathered by the peasant.

Commercial goods, produced by a growing industrial sector supported by government policy, are invading rural communities and changing peasants' consumptive patterns. Modern education in schools

alienates the successful schoolchild from his agricultural background and contains a powerful hidden curriculum which teaches that jobs in the service sector, with their relatively easier way of life, should be the goal of an academic career. The aspirations of peasants have been raised without any corresponding increase in the likelihood of their success, thereby causing frustration.

Changes in agriculture are generally in the direction of capital-intensive methods. However, the average peasant has no capital. He would therefore have to risk substantial debt in return for what must be an unpredictable return, given the artificially depressed price of rice, the high cost of fertilizer and pesticide normally needed in new methods, and the producers' vulnerable position in the market. On the other hand, those few farmers who already enjoy a financially more secure position may well be able to benefit from such a situation, thereby widening the gap between themselves and the poorer peasants, and further destroying the harmony of the community.

The one modern service from outside that can directly and immediately improve the quality of life for peasants - curative medicine - has been applied in a haphazard and disappointingly inadequate way, so that today Thailand can boast of more Thai doctors working in the United States than in rural Thailand.

The forces that disrupt the peasant's traditional self-sufficiency in a subsistent system of agriculture are mainly from without. And many peasants have tried to resist them. They have (often wisely) shown great reluctance to invest in new technology, to move from staple to cash crops, to increase production substantially when there is no realistic guarantee of return, or to exacerbate their dependence on the market. This conservatism is fortified by an attachment to the land that will, for example, see farmers accept 2 or 3 years of non-productive drought and the resultant crippling debt, before they would think of relinquishing their land to become tenant farmers or hired labour elsewhere.

It seems safe to predict, however, that unless conditions change markedly, the forces of disruption are slowly going to succeed in demolishing the self-sufficient harmony of the community, forcing peasants off their land and thereby allowing agricultural production to be taken over by larger economic units.

While such a shift in the socioeconomic structure might be beneficial to national prosperity in gross terms (though there are reasons for doubting this), it is difficult to see how this would improve the lot of the poor peasant of today.

It therefore seems that if we are interested in helping the poorest of the poor, then we should be helping the peasant to resist a changing situation that can only lead to his demise. We can best do that by helping people do what they do best, i.e. working on the land, meeting their own minimum needs, storing by the occasional surplus to meet emergency cash needs, and thereby maintaining the ecological balance and living in harmony with each other and their surroundings.

Meeting Minimum Needs for Self-Sufficiency

Any attempt to help peasants to meet their minimum needs must begin with the belief that the peasants themselves know where their problems lie. This translates into a situation where the development worker must go directly to the individual peasant, his family and his community, and try to gain a real picture of the situation. Before any decisions are made as to what advice or assistance to give, a thorough survey must be carried out of factors causing problems and the availability of resources for solving these problems.

The preceding paragraph resembles something from the first chapter of dozens of development manuals and the ideas in it are widely endorsed by experienced development workers. And yet it seems to be a truism that is regularly ignored. Many agencies go into the field with ready made decisions that often incorporate assumptions that may not be shared, or at least should be questioned, by the prospective 'developee'. Perhaps this is a necessary consequence of centralized standardized bureaucracies. The Thai government, for example, invariably sets objectives and activities for officials to implement in any development programme, and programmes themselves must often be carried out on a nationwide scale, irrespective of local differences.

There seem to be numerous areas in which assistance could be given to the peasant to help maintain or reinstate self-sufficiency.

For example, it is interesting to look at what has happened to the wing bean, whose varieties constitute one of the most important high-protein 'fruits of the forest' in many areas of Thailand. In the wake of deforestation, this significant supplementary food source is fast disappearing. And yet there has been virtually no official interest or research on wing beans in Thailand, either from the agricultural or nutritional aspects, since these plants have never seriously been cultivated.

A local breed of chicken, naturally adapted to the existing environment and serving basically as a device for turning household and farm refuse into a source of eggs and meat for the peasant, has been wiped out in certain areas of Thailand by diseases introduced by commercial poultry breeds that require, and get, close veterinary care.

Primary medical care can have a substantial influence on reducing the level of human misery in rural areas. Preventive health measures themselves constitute a form of self-sufficiency by reducing the likelihood of the peasant's need for outside medical assistance. Further research into the efficacy and proper use of herbal medicines would also reduce the peasant's reliance on outside sources of medication.

Education for Self-Sufficiency

The peasant needs no direct educational input to enable him to achieve self-sufficiency. He has been doing this for generations.

However, he does need new skills to be able to manage the outside influences that threaten his subsistent culture. In other words the peasant must learn to protect himself and his community from advice, information, material goods and commercial propaganda that may disturb the balance of self-sufficiency by creating dependence on goods and services delivered from outside and hence beyond the control of the community or the individual. Skill in evaluating the likely implications of communications from outside the community is clearly needed.

Such an educational philosophy might be termed 'preventive' education, education that aims to enable the peasant to avoid the unpleasant consequences of unthinking acceptance of new ideas. The parallelism with preventive medicine should be obvious. Preventive medicine would presumably include attempts, either by legal force or persuasion, to protect peasant communities from the candy bars, cheap cosmetics and addictive proprietary drugs that are touted from the cities where they already cause unnecessary illness and disease. Similarly, preventive education would seek to establish a protective barrier of healthy scepticism against the worst excesses of ill-informed advice from 'experts' with only a superficial understanding of actual conditions and with a mandate to apply the same panacea in every locality. From behind his barricade of critical questioning, the peasant would view such experts, be they government agricultural extension workers, private community development workers, commercial travellers, and even the purveyor of preventive education himself, with a respectful and reasoned distrust.

A raising of peasant suspicions seems to me to be closely related to the 'khit-pen' concept that forms the philosophical basis for current literacy programmes in Thailand. 'Khit-pen' means, literally, the ability to think. In brief, the process involves taking learners through the steps of problem-solving, from identifying problems and their causes and effects, to formulating alternative solutions and finally to decisions made by the peasants in the best interests of the harmony within their society and with their environment, as they see it. At each step, the teacher may inject new information, perhaps in the form of 'what the book says', followed by an invitation to the learners to react in the light of their experience and to explore other factors in their social, economic and cultural environment. Often the chosen solution will go against what the book says, but this has no importance compared with the fact that the peasants themselves understand the reasons for their decision.

'Khit-pen' has been criticized as being counter-productive to development and non-progressive. This is because it legitimizes fatalism and allows reasons for maintaining the 'status quo'. Such criticisms are of course only valid when it can be proved that change is necessarily beneficial.

Much the same criticisms have been made of Buddhism. This is no coincidence since 'khit-pen' has been developed in a Thai Buddhist context. Buddhism emphasizes inner peace and harmony and considers that happiness is achieved not through the satisfaction of every

desire, but from the limitation of desire to the basic needs of food, clothing, shelter and medicine - which constitutes almost a definition of self-sufficiency. Strong emotions, such as greed, anger and obsession, are to be eliminated by choosing a middle path between extremes and thereby maintaining equanimity and harmony.

Well-meaning workers in agriculture, health and community development may be able to create an environment conducive to the preservation of re-establishment of self-sufficiency by practising 'khit-pen dialogues' with the peasant communities where they work. There must be mutual respect for each party's opinions and each dialogue should be a learning situation for both sides. No outside proposal should be accepted without thorough discussion and evaluation of its implications by the community.

In creating a discriminating barrier to outside ideas, preventive education is not entirely negative in its approach. One of the reasons why outside influences on subsistent culture have been so strongly subversive is because the flow of information has been controlled and imposed from above. New ideas generally arrive in a village reinforced by the authority of the central power who delivers them.

A more reliable and trustworthy flow of information might be horizontal interaction between communities rather than the current vertical direction. Information passing by this route will increase peasants' confidence in their own judgment in dealing with problems and in making conscious and informed decisions.

A second side to the concept of preventive education might be directed to those involved in intruding into peasant communities. Many of those now responsible for destroying the ability of the peasant to subsist are acting more out of ignorance or indifference than malice. The formal education curricula have so neglected the issues of development that it is quite normal for even the educated Thai city-dweller to be unaware of the mechanisms by which the government artificially depresses prices at the farm gate for the benefit of urban consumers and to the disadvantage of the farmer.

Development workers themselves appear occasionally to suffer from a woeful ignorance of the effect of their own activities. It has been reported that agricultural officials who were urging the adoption of high-yielding varieties of crops were blissfully unaware of the implications such adoption would have for the farmer in the way of necessary dependence on fertilizer and pesticide, for example.

Implications:

An emphasis on subsistent agriculture and away from marketable surpluses will have a direct impact on the unproductive urban minority. An easing of hardship in rural areas may imply imposed restraints on urban consumption, especially in the form of realistic food prices and a more conservative use of imported energy.

Government policy toward rural development must undergo a shift

of strategy. Instead of directing all efforts at stimulating economic activity by the poorest farmer while allowing the freedom of the market-place to large and economically powerful units such as agribusinesses, it would be wiser to allow the peasant to work towards his own salvation behind the protection of strict government imposed limits on the use of corporate force.

Every step along the road towards localised self-sufficiency entails a loosening of central authority's control over social, economic and political matters. While some may fear that this represents a move towards anarchy, it should rather be interpreted as a strengthening of a democratic way of life and an orientation towards a more equitable economic system.

EDUCATION

Get the Girls into School

Survival of a Third World child depends almost exclusively on its mother. If she is illiterate, superstitious and ignorant, the baby's chances are that much slimmer. If she can't read, she can't mix medicines, follow cooking instructions or benefit from printed guides to infant health care. Village hearsay is not good enough when it comes to hygiene, nutrition, treating diarrhoea, knowing how to weigh, when to wean and whether to breastfeed.

There are solid statistics to back the claim that a higher rate of female education is imperative if babies are to live. Many studies show that children of literate mothers have considerably better survival rates. This tends to be true even of well-to-do mothers who cannot read. One such study in Indonesia showed that infants born to women who had had four years or more of basic education had a 50% better chance than children of illiterate mothers.



Baby-care class: Illiteracy means more dead infants

Getting girls into school has therefore taken on the character of a crusade among those whose prime intention is to reduce infant mortality. They often have to overcome strong resistance. In many cultures, the educated wife is not wanted. Emancipation from traditional male-dominated mores is feared. Such sentiments are especially strong in Africa, South Asia and in Muslim countries. Religion is a deciding factor.

In East and Southeast Asia there is an established tradition of education for boys at the expense of girls, but little entrenched opposition to sending girls to school. Mainly Buddhist Thailand has a 83% adult literacy rate

for females compared with 93% for males, while in largely Muslim Indonesia, the ratio is only 58%:77%. Mainly Christian Philippines is the leader among the agriculture-based nations of the region (females: 88%, males: 90%). Urban Hongkong and Singapore boast a virtually 100% rate for female children in school. Everywhere, the proportion of girls with education is climbing dramatically. It means many yet-unborn children have a better chance of surviving.

WHAT CAN THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS ACHIEVE IN ADULT EDUCATION?

We have noted that the Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education itself is 20 years old this year. Another section of this Courier recalls its origins and some idea of its purposes. Its purposes are currently described (in a general purpose publicity booklet) as follows:

Principles, Purposes and Values

Behind the formal Constitution with its statement of objectives there is an ethos, a set of ideals, values and purposes, which give the Bureau its life and character. It is not always easy to spell these out but they are revealed by the work the Bureau supports, and the people who are active in this work:

Some guiding principles may however be mentioned:

- * The T.C.D.C. principle - (Technical) cooperation between developing countries
- * Working to reduce social and economic inequality and injustice, which means seeing adult education as a means to social development rather than an end in itself, and keeping in sight the needs of the poorest of the poor
- * Cooperation and complementarity, rather than competition, with other agencies having similar objectives
- * Keeping the infrastructure and secretariat to a minimum and avoiding building a bureaucracy in which people develop career interests
- * Being as flexible, adaptive and responsive as possible to members' needs

The following extracts from *Adult Education and Development*, No. 17, September, 1981. (D.V.V., Bonn), "DVV-ASPBAE partnership - evaluative review" give some further insights into the approach and values of the Bureau.

A key characteristic of ASPBAE is its non-governmental character which No Limits to Learning, a report to The Club of Rome, identifies as having essential qualities lacked by governments and inter-governmental agencies: 'it is the NGOs which appear to have the longer term, flexible, interdisciplinary perspectives and where anticipation and participation are emerging'. That report uses the term network, noting that some new NGOs and networks 'make a point of calling themselves non-organizations'. ASPBAE prefers the term network to organisation, and has employed the term 'non-organisation' also to refer to its distinctive characteristic.

Costs are low in terms of the number of activities, and the proportion of infrastructure compared with direct provision each year. The mode of participative planning means that the program belongs very much to the partner countries and local people. In a number of cases there is direct government participation through its own machinery, such that the activity is continued and partly absorbed by the on-going work of that government....

ASPBAE is distinctive in having almost no infrastructure and assets, and no salaried staff. It is heavily dependent, or 'parasitic' upon the existing infrastructure, resources and voluntarily given unpaid time of adult educators in different places.

There has grown up (partly through the travelling fellow mechanism) a 'member at large' concept whereby highly competent senior practitioners... serve as resource persons in situations of special or potential need....

An important principle of the Bureau, is its TCDC emphasis: This does not exclude western experts and experience being drawn upon, but it does put the main emphasis on sharing and mutual help between Asian and Pacific countries. To this kind of interpersonal and inter-country teamwork may be added other key characteristics and values: the stress upon small scale programs rather than massive approaches; the stress upon adult education in the context of development rather than as its own end; the broad and humane sense in which 'development' is used to embrace social and cultural matters rather than merely economic progress; the valuing of the purposes and approaches now commonly referred to as 'conscientisation'.

In July 1983 a Region I ASPBAE conference reviewed the Role and Performance of NGOs in Adult Education in the South Asian countries. What follows are extracts from various papers presented at that Conference, which together give some idea of the range of practices and possibilities.

First, from India, two examples from Kerala State:

Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad

This is another voluntary agency of Scientists and people interested in the spread of science among the masses. For its very useful work this agency bagged the 1982 ICSSR (Indian Council for Social Science Research) Award. Besides organising science fairs, science exhibitions, science corners, corner meetings, jathas etc., recently they launched cultural programmes of the folk type which proved a great success. They publish 4 science magazines meant for primary school children, high school pupils, college students and the public respectively. Their wall chart has acquired the appreciation of many. A scientific culture has been developed even among the masses through the activities of the Parishad. The science quiz programmes launched among pupils, have resulted in developing Scientific interest and fostering scientific aptitude. Most of the volunteer workers are science teachers and college lecturers/Professors dealing with science. A series of books under the common title "Science Cream" have been published by this agency.

Though with major emphasis on science and technology, the Parishad has been doing efficient work in popularising Science among the people. Scientific literacy is their secondary objective. Programmes for the 80s have been worked out at its annual conferences and are being implemented.

Kerala Association for Nonformal Education and Development (KANFED)

This agency was set up for the sole purpose of propagating nonformal education linked with developmental activities. It is the successor organisation of the Kerala State Adult Literacy Council formed as part of the Kerala Grandhasala Sangham by a few leading social workers and educationists. Registered under the Travancore-Cochin charitable societies Act 12 of 1955, on June 30, 1977, KANFED has its headquarters at Trivandrum though it has statewide jurisdiction.

The objectives of KANFED are

- 1) to promote the educational, cultural and economic development of all sections of the people
- 2) to help universalisations of education by propaganda for it and by the institution of nonformal education activities as supplementary to the formal education systems
- 3) to establish institutions for research and training in all aspects of nonformal education, publishing houses for the production of literacy materials, and centres for the eradication of illiteracy
- 4) to plan and carry out projects in continuing education, correspondence courses and research.

On June 30, 1983 KANFED completed 6 years of fruitful work. In the anniversary celebrations the State Governor, Ministers, Vice-Chancellors, Pro-Vice Chancellors, Ex-Ministers, M.L.A.s and leaders from various walks of life praised the activities of KANFED which included the following:

- 1) training more than 10,000 workers for organising and running adult education centres on a long term basis
- 2) creating awareness among all concerned on the need for concerted efforts for eradicating illiteracy and ensuring a learning society
- 3) preparing and publishing 15 primers, 30 technical books and more than 200 books useful for neoliterates
- 4) publishing 'KANFED News', a weekly for neoliterates, Anapacharika Vidyabhyasam fortnightly for functionaries and Nattuvelicham, a monthly wall paper for conscientizing people
- 5) running two correspondence cum contact courses for workers entitled 'Janavidya Pracharak' and 'Janavidya pravesh' for graduates and undergraduates respectively
- 6) taking a short film on nonformal education narrating KANFED's programmes for liberating people from illiteracy
- 7) organising street Jathas, exhibitions, corner meetings,

seminars etc. for equipping people to cope with the modern trends in science and technology.

- 8) running model centres and continuing education centres on its own.

The Government of India reorganised KANFED and entrusted the State Resource Centre for nonformal education with it. The SRC is functioning since July 1978. The German Adult Education Association has selected KANFED as one of its 18 projects all over the world with financial support for specific items such as training, publication and publicity. Awards for social workers were first instituted by KANFED to honour dedicated volunteers behind the agency.

A scheme was discussed at the Sixth anniversary meeting to eradicate illiteracy completely from the age group 15-35 in Kerala before 1990, through cooperative and concerted efforts.

KANFED had been instrumental in making at least 50,000 illiterates literate during the last years with the reasonable estimate of 50% success in its centres. The KANFED centres contain libraries, guidance facilities and provide assistance to all needy people. It is hoped to start at least 10,000 such centres in Kerala within five years, under the banner of KANFED. Though started as late as 1977, KANFED has won great reputation not only in Kerala but all over India and even outside.

The Indian Adult Education Association is the oldest national adult education association in the Asian and Pacific Regions. The paper from which these extracts were taken by J.C. Saxena, Hon. General Secretary, also set out some of the work and achievements of that Association.²

India has long traditions of adult/nonformal education through non-governmental organisations. The Ashrams and Gurukuls and Vidyapeeths, were the centres of education in ancient India where the rich and the poor, the king and the common man used to flock round a Guru (teacher) to get the kind of education they needed. They used to get guidance and advice which would enable them to perform their functions effectively in the community.

Non-governmental organisations in this country have played a very significant role in promoting various ideas and implementing programmes in adult education which ordinarily would not have been undertaken by state departments. Adult Education is essentially a peoples programme in which the community has to play an active part. Voluntary organisations as the peoples organisations have given comparatively better and more useful results with comparatively less investments.

Voluntary organisations have great potentialities for securing public cooperation in the implementation of non-formal education programmes. They have greater freedom than the governmental agencies to adapt themselves to changing needs, requirements and

aspirations of the people. They are in a better position to experiment and undertake innovative programmes. Equally they are in a position to discard programmes which are not acceptable to the people or beneficial to them.

With the greater human touch and closer personal contact that normally characterise them, voluntary organisations are in a better position to mobilise community efforts for education and welfare programmes. Having living contact with people in the area of their operation, voluntary organisations have the advantage of elasticity in their methods of working and can experiment with new methods, techniques and innovative ideas.

The Association has a number of voluntary agencies as its members, notable among them are:

Karnataka State Adult Education Council (Mysore), Bengal Social Service League (Calcutta), Andhra Mahila Sabha (Hyderabad), Tamil Nadu Board of Continuing Education (Madras), Bombay City Social Education Committee (Bombay), Literacy House (Lucknow), Saroj Nalini Dutt Memorial Association (Calcutta), Seva Mandir (Udaipur), Rajasthan Vidyapeeth (Udaipur), Kerala Association for Nonformal Education and Development (Trivandrum).

These organisations are headed by committed and devoted adult educators....

An attempt has been made to give an idea of work done by some non-governmental organisations in the country. How new experiments have been planned and tried, how attempts have been made to organise adult education programmes according to the needs and requirements of the people for whom they were meant.

The Ministry of Education provides financial assistance to voluntary organisations (VAs) working in the field of adult education under its scheme of assistance to voluntary agencies. The Central Social Welfare Board set up by the Government in 1953 gives grants to voluntary agencies for condensed courses, vocational courses and socio-economic projects for women belonging to rural areas and slums. The Central Board of Workers Education gives grants to trade unions and voluntary agencies to run one-day, three-day and seven-day courses for industrial workers and unorganised rural workers.

After the launching of the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) in 1978 the number of voluntary institutions receiving grants increased since the Policy Statement on Adult Education said that voluntary agencies have a special role to play and necessary steps will have to be taken for their involvement.

Over 650 institutions received financial assistance from the Ministry of Education during the period 1978-80. Before the NAEP the size of the adult education programme had an enrolment of 675,000. In 1979-80 it had risen to 3.6 million and the share of voluntary agencies (VAs) was one-fourth. A significant aspect was

that many VAs, not directly engaged in programmes of adult education, earlier were involved in this programme. Besides some VAs were entrusted the responsibility for implementation of all India programmes such as Farmers Functional Literacy Project and Nonformal Education for the age-group 15-25.

Another significant factor under NAEP was that a number of voluntary agencies working in different parts of the country were entrusted with the responsibility of starting State Resource Centres (SRCs) to provide support to the adult education movement. The unsatisfactory teaching/learning material and poor quality of training led the Government to establish SRCs in different parts of the country. The non-governmental agencies which have been given SRCs are:

Rajasthan Adult Education Association (Jaipur)
Literacy House (Lucknow)
Utkal Navjeevan Mandal (Angul) Orissa
Bengal Social Service League (Calcutta)
Karnataka State Adult Education Council (Mysore)
Indian Institute of Education, Puna (Maharashtra)
Tamil Nadu Board of Continuing Education (Madras)
Kerala Association for Non-Formal Education and Development (Trivandrum)

Giving the responsibility of running State Resource Centres to voluntary agencies indicates the confidence the Government have shown in the work of voluntary agencies. These agencies which have living contact with the masses are doing good work in their respective areas.

These Resource Centres have provided training to key personnel and have rendered assistance in training programmes organised for field functionaries. They have produced teaching and learning materials, have provided support for organisation of post-literacy and follow-up programmes. Some Resource Centres have undertaken innovative programmes and are using traditional and modern media of mass communication for community education, community mobilisation and community participation.

Nonformal education in order to be successful is to be based on innovations, experimentation, collaboration and team work. New methods of work and new techniques need to be discovered. These can be done only by voluntary agencies because they have a great desire and appropriate perspective to experiment. Sufficient funds should be placed at the disposal of SRC and VAs to undertake these experiments.

The need of the hour is that adult education should enable the community as a whole through a process of social change and increased self confidence to participate in national development.

Adult Education should be an instrument of social change. Through adult education the poor and the deprived sections of the society should be made conscious of their needs and requirements and the

programme should help them assert and fight for their rights, solve their problems and to share in the fruits of development.

Issues

Voluntary organisations have to be implementors of educational and social programmes at the local level. The recent trend to take up too many activities under the magic words "comprehensive and integrated" is open to question. Each section of disadvantaged in society needs specialised services to make progress. It is simply not possible for one unit to make available all specialised services so required at one place. Attempts in this direction lead to dilution of services and ultimately to ineffective services. Voluntary organisations which become large, develop the same problems and drawbacks as the Government. They tend to become removed from the people, be set with bureaucracy and personnel conflicts, pressure of politics and perpetuations.

The paper from Pakistan did not specifically consider the role of NGO's. However, since that Conference, a National Association, the Pakistan Association for Adult Education, has been formed. The founding President of the Association is Mr Inayatullah and its headquarters will be at 56, F-7/2 Margalla Road, Islamabad. Among its aims and objectives are:

Establishing literacy and adult education centres in cities and villages for both men and women

Establishing research cells to determine specific requirements of various regions, cultural groups, age groups etc.

Organising writers' groups and establishing publishing centres for preparing literacy and adult education materials, flash cards, books and other visual aids

Establishing contact with organizations, associations and non-governmental groups so as to benefit by their experience in the field of literacy and adult education

Organizing conferences and Seminars

Publishing a journal on Adult Education

From Bangladesh the following passages are taken:-³

After independence of Bangladesh (during 70s) quite a number of voluntary and non-government organizations engaged themselves in the field. Of these, Bangladesh Literacy Society (BLS), Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), Jatio Tarun Sangha and Bangladesh Association for Community Education (BACE) deserve special mention.

In the recent years (during 1980s) there have been some other NGOs like Bangladesh Gramin Juba Samity, Bangladesh Family Planning Association, Bangladesh Surja Sena and Bangladesh Sabuj Sena engaging themselves in mass education and playing an important role in the field.

Non-Government and Voluntary Organisations

The non-government and voluntary organisations have been continuing their adult mass education programme in which they have been found to be very much committed and enthusiastic. But they have been disheartened with the changed situation in mass education programme. The target population and workers of those organisations including the people in general mostly lost their interest in mass education programme with the sudden break in the ongoing Government sponsored mass education programme. Nevertheless, the NGOs in the field have always been with the Government. And they have formed a Federal Council for Mass Education to work jointly with the Government.

Success, Failure and Problems in Adult Mass Education Programme in Bangladesh

The Mass Education Programme launched by the last Government continued for two years up to March, 1983. The evaluation report on Mass Education Programme revealed the success, failure and problems in the programme. The success was less spectacular at least in consideration of the resource availability and the cost involved. There has been an organisational structure with a loose type of central administration in respect of planning, programming and management strategies isolated from inter-agency and inter-sectoral collaboration and co-ordination. It has been observed that the results of the programme requiring school students and teachers to teach the adults were not satisfactory. There were lack of proper supervision, administration and management at the local levels. The squads formed for mass education did not function properly. The non-government sector has not been involved as complementary to the Government programme which has been a universal practice in the free society. Primers and books produced by the Government did not match with the community needs in most areas and time and contents of programme were not suited to socio-economic life of the target people. The primers produced and used successfully by NGOs did not receive any importance in the national sphere. But the programme could, by and large, create a large amount of awareness among the masses as it was a political commitment. The massiveness of the programme reflected the revolutionary spirit of the Government to discard the usual and prolonged practice of so-called experimentation in the field. The Directorate of Mass Education did not have the required time to have a breakthrough. It was still passing through the preparatory stage putting the programme into action abruptly at the instance of revolutionary spirit of the Government. After the end of crash programme and first phase of the regular programme the programme has undergone evaluation for assessing the drawbacks and problems of the programme. But the sudden break and discontinuation of the programme did no more harm than any good in the mass education envisaged. Only through trial and error, perfectness in the programme to solve such a prolonged corrosive problem could be attained.

The study of mass education programmes during the last 30 years in the soil of Bangladesh also showed that the Government and semi-government programmes for mass education were, by and large, successful. But some programmes were wound up before they could create appreciable impact and some were not expanded due to lack

of adequate Government support.

Non-Government and Voluntary Organisations

The non-government and voluntary organisations, as revealed in the write-ups and reports on field visits, have been carrying out their respective programmes with 50-70% success on average. They have also been doing well in the motivation of adult learning groups for schooling of their school age unschooled children in the formal primary schools in the areas under their programmes. They have also been working for strengthening primary education with intensive adult literacy programme. The sample organisations have been carrying out their own programmes suited to local and community needs and developed, in most cases, their programmes. The programmes are integrated having socio-economic value. Some have community development programmes integrating functional literacy, some have health and family planning programmes integrating functional literacy while some have functional literacy and nonformal education programmes for the 'out-of-school' youth and drop-outs and adults integrating development programmes. Some have children and youth education and welfare programmes integrating literacy for the adults also. However, the problems encountered by the organisations are as follows:

Lack of Government support for effectively carrying out mass education programmes successfully

Lack of social and administrative support originating from the absence of national commitment for mass education

Lack of publicity and motivation through Government mass media

Inadequate availability of literacy materials including suitable primers and logistics

Lack of inter-agency and inter-sectoral collaboration and co-ordination of activities at national and local levels

Lack of incentive from the Government for the organisations, their worker-educators and the disadvantaged learning groups

Lack of financial resources to carry out and develop projects of socio-economic value

Lack of trained and dedicated workers on a voluntary basis

Lack of reading centres and follow-up reading materials

The reports on the field visits and experiences and formal discussion meetings with the national level NGOs reveal that most of them have been carrying out their programmes with the manpower and local resources available to them. Among their problems, they have mentioned the resource constraints very prominently that still hinder in achieving their set targets and expansion of the programmes. They have also to shoulder social and administrative

constraints in terms of very poor and weak morale and active supports for mass education. They also have to meet the socio-economic constraints in terms of participation of the education and learning groups. The absence of clear cut Government policy and commitment for adult mass education are the main constraints for the NGOs in the field.

Summary

A Federal Council of Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) for mass education should be formed which will be responsible for coordination of the activities of its member organisations for carrying out a properly managed uniform mass education programme and the council should be recognised by the Government as the national policy executive body for mass education in the private sector

The non-government sector should be entrusted with the responsibility to carry out mass education programmes where the Government will play the role of a facilitator providing resources and other logistic support by mobilising funds from national and international sources.

The government should have some model collaborative projects with NGOs for strengthening universal primary education with intensified adult literacy programme and expand the scope of the same on the basis of constant review and evaluation

The Government should help the NGOs introduce complementary education programmes like vocational training, apprenticeship courses, trade courses, etc. for the neo-literates for retention of their continued interest in further education and creation of interest for the existing illiterate youth, adults and 'out of school' working children. The NGOs should also be encouraged and helped for establishing Community Reading Centres along with their ongoing literacy centres

For the Integrated Mass Education Programme of NGOs under the Federal Council for Mass Education of NGOs there should be an introduction of easy credit system by the Government for service and development support to the educators and learning groups respectively linking mass education programme with the existing opportunity structure for economic and overall development activities of the Government at the Grass-root level (village).

The Paper from Nepal included the following comments: 4.

Status of Voluntary Organisations and Their Involvement in Adult/Nonformal Education

The importance of voluntary organisations has been increasingly realized by the youths of Nepal mainly in view of carrying out social welfare activities. Such organizations are found in different geographic regions of the country. With a view to consolidating and coordinating the activities of the voluntary

organisations, a national level body known as 'Social Service National Coordination Council' has been constituted with Her Majesty the Queen as Chairperson. Under this Council are set up several committees such as 'Youth Activities Coordination Committee', 'Women Services Coordination Committee' 'Disabled People's Services Coordination Committee' etc. Any group of people willing to establish a voluntary organization should apply to the respective committee for approval to do so. Voluntary organizations established so far in Nepal have embraced the objectives of social-welfare activities. Adult/nonformal education has been considered as one of the programme components. But the noticeable thing is that these organisations do not have their own roles in the design, development and implementation of adult/nonformal education. They are virtually dependent on the programme of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

The functional literacy programme of the Ministry of Education and Culture is also provided to the voluntary organisations on a quota basis. In other words, these organisations acquire the functional literacy programme packages and other logistic support from the Ministry of Education and Culture and conduct the programme in their respective communities. As voluntary organisations their roles in strengthening and expanding the adult/nonformal education should have been more meaningful. But in the absence of which we find a situation where a growing need lies for the increased involvement of voluntary organisations in undertaking the task of designing and operating adult/nonformal education activities on their own planning and initiative. For this it has been envisaged that a voluntary organisation solely concerned with the adult/nonformal education aspect has to be established. Such an organisation can be expected to play a leading role in preparing other voluntary organisations to make their own efforts in the formulation and operation of the adult/nonformal education programme.

We understand that Nepal is in the process of establishing a National Association of Adult Education. It has applied to the Nepalese Government for registration and in the interim has established an ad hoc committee to develop plans for its future operations.

A substantial study by W.A. Jayawardena surveys the range of NGOs and their respective capacities and contributions for the decade 1972-82 and through the remaining years of the Eighties. Some details and examples are excluded, but the bulk of the paper is presented here, since it offers an unusually comprehensive and insightful picture of the place of NGOs can and do play in a number of societies.⁵

It is not practicable, nor is it considered necessary, to deal individually with the role and performance of each of the NGOs and much less with each of the programmes conducted by each one of them in adult education/nonformal education in a paper of this nature. They are far too numerous in number and varied in their activities. What is attempted here is only a brief overview of the national level NGOs and their involvement in adult education

during the decade 1972-82 and opportunities open for them in the rest of the 80s. For this purpose I have broadly categorised the NGOs, organisationally to seven groups, given below, each group consisting of a kindred set of organisations. These groupings, I presume, are equally applicable to any of the other countries of the Region, except the last grouping which is a local phenomenon unique in many respects, which may profitably be tried by the other countries which do not have similar organisations.

1. Educational Organisations
2. Labour Organisations
3. Religious Organisations
4. Social (Welfare) Organisations and Service Clubs
5. Professional Organisations
6. Women's Organisations
7. Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement

I must confess, however, at the outset itself, that this is not an indepth study of all types of NGOs listed above or their varied activities in adult education in the decade under review. It is, at best, a rather superficial account, may even be called a perfunctory one, of some, in my opinion, of the more important organisations and their more relevant activities in adult education.

These organisations conduct a vast range of programmes, diverse in their nature and scope, falling into all or several of the four (4) categories into which the Regional Seminar on Adult Education and Development held in Bangkok in 1980 attempted to classify the Adult Education programmes of the NGOs. Namely:

1. Programmes addressed to Survival Needs
2. Programmes addressed to Growth Needs
3. Programmes addressed to Remedial Needs
4. Programmes addressed to Anticipatory Needs

Educational organisations

Nongovernmental educational institutions engaged in adult education programmes in Sri Lanka may be discussed under three groups:

1. Universities
2. Other Institutes conducting extension programmes
3. Technical and Craft level institutions

Practically all these institutions are government aided in some form or other and are not entirely government-independent voluntary organisations. Nevertheless, they conduct their own educational programmes much the same way as any voluntary organisation....

Other Institutions

Among other institutions which conduct courses and other activities of an academic nature, for the benefit of adults, may be mentioned

the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute (SLFI) and the Marga Institute.

Technical and Craft Institutions

There are a large number of institutions many of them run by religious or social organisations, which conduct middle range vocational courses of different types and levels, in addition to government technical and other institutions which run similar courses. They cater mainly to school leavers, school drop-outs and others in low and middle grade employment to equip themselves for employment by the acquisition of various types of skills and/or to upgrade their knowledge and skills in order to make them more suitable in their present employment or to better their prospects of promotion and self-advancement. More popular of these courses are the basic technology courses, language courses and trade craft courses. The sizes, organisational structures, contents and standards of the courses and other details of these institutions differ but they serve the common objective of providing opportunities for adults, particularly the youths to gain employable skills.

Labour Organisations

The trade unions are the principal labour organisations in Sri Lanka responsible for the educational activities of the workers. There are around 1,300 unions, more than 100 of them having a membership of over 1,000 each. Unionised membership exceeds 1.5 millions, comprising nearly one third of the total workforce of 4.5 million.

The main preoccupation of the trade unions continues to be their agitational work in the struggle for workers' rights, and their interest in educational activities remains marginal. The multiplicity of trade unions and political rivalry among them have further hampered the systematic and continuous growth of educational programmes. The little that is being done by the respective unions has a large political content and is concerned mainly with subjects relating to trade union matters.

However, in recent years the unions have begun to show a greater awareness of the importance of general education among the workers in strengthening the organisations themselves, building up leadership within the movement and the role of the workers in the larger community.....

Among the nongovernmental International Workers Education Organisations working in Sri Lanka are the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and the Asian American Free Labour Institute. It is owing to the support extended by the former that trade union education took an institutionalised form in Sri Lanka with the establishment of the SLFI which conducts residential programmes for the workers. The latter, among its other activities, supports the community development programmes of the CWC in the plantation area.

Religious Organisations

Buddhism, the religion of the vast majority of the population, occupies the pre-eminent place among all the major religions of the world that are represented in Sri Lanka. This multi-religious composition of the Sri Lankan society naturally has given place to a multitude of organisations representing each one of them. (A population of 14,850,000 in 1981 was composed of 60.3% Buddhist, 15.5% Hindus, 7.6% Muslims, 7.5% Christians and 0.1% others.) The most popular among them are the Young Men's and Women's Associations of the adherents of these religions. All Ceylon Buddhist Congress, the Buddhist Theosophical Society, other Buddhist Societies together with Hindu, Christian and Muslim associations constitute the very large number of other religious organisations active in the field of adult education. These have their headquarters in Colombo with affiliated and/or branch organisations in the provinces and engage in a similar set of activities emphasising the way of life and philosophy particular to the respective religions. Their programmes cater to the promotion of the moral, cultural, social and physical well being of the community and consist of running of pre-schools, Sunday schools, religious examinations, libraries, seminars, camps and a host of other educational activities. Vocational training, rehabilitation of the physically and socially handicapped through provision of institutional services, rural and slum community projects, are among the other services undertaken by these organisations.

Particular mention should be made here of the role that continues to be played by the village (Buddhist) temple which was the centre of learning in the ancient days. Despite the various vicissitudes it had to face over several centuries of foreign domination and influence, it has managed to retain its traditional character as a service organisation. Encouragement of practical observance of "Dhamma" through organised campaigns such as the observance of "Sil", conducting of religious discourses, meditation classes are aimed at spiritual awakening of the community. These observances have gained equal or even greater significance among the urban community where the struggle for life is more competitive and keener.

These programmes acquire added relevance and greater acceptance among Buddhists due to their basic conviction that education is not confined to what is acquired within the present span of life but transcends to lives hereafter in their long and arduous journey in "Samsara" (cycle of births and deaths).

The other religious organisations also undertake similar programmes in keeping with their religious tenets.

Social (Welfare) Organisations and Service Clubs

I have grouped in this category a host of organisations dedicated to the promotion of health, social services, and community development primarily among the disadvantaged and Service Clubs with exclusive membership, most of them having international affiliations. Like the previous group, these organisations are also based in Colombo having their affiliated or branch organisations

in the provinces. They work in close collaboration and liaison with government departments, national and international organisations having similar interests and objectives, functioning often as auxiliary to these services. The activities of the welfare organisations centre round the rehabilitation and well being of the special groups whose interest is their concern.

The Family Planning Association is one of the better known of these organisations. It concentrates in disseminating information and education on family welfare and primary health care not only through discussions but also through practical programmes such as maintaining of clinics and conducting of projects with specific groups...

Service Clubs

The more popular of the Service Clubs functioning in Sri Lanka are the Rotary Clubs, Lion's Clubs, Jaycees and Apex Clubs, all of which are affiliated to the respective parent bodies. Their common objective is community development and leadership training. The selective membership of these clubs consists of representatives of professions, mercantile executives and others drawn from the elite of the society. The Jaycees and Apex Clubs have a younger membership of not more than 40 years of age while the Rotary and Lion's Clubs cater to a more mature membership of men of standing and ability in their respective spheres of life. Their programmes of work aim at developing individual abilities, good fellowship, mutual understanding and good citizenship among their members and through them in raising civic consciousness in the society at large. These clubs also undertake projects designed to meet the felt needs of various specified groups of the community.

The Sri Lanka Scout Association and the Girl Guide Association may also be classified as service organisations as their activities are service oriented. Their objectives are the development of civic responsibility among members and community service and community development...

Professional Organisations

The professions constitute an important segment of any community. In a country like Sri Lanka engaged in a massive development programme requiring specialised knowledge and skills in practically all spheres of activity their importance cannot be underrated. Thanks to the educational facilities available to Sri Lankans, both at home and abroad, Sri Lanka has been able to build over the years a rich reservoir of professional talent covering a wide range of disciplines. She has also been a supplier of specialised services to several countries in the developing as well as the developed world. Sri Lanka is also the heir to a rich heritage of traditional skills and knowledge particularly in areas like medicine and agriculture...

The tendency of most of these associations at the beginning has been to confine their activities to safeguard and promote their professional interests and keep aloof from the community at large. However, in recent times, there has been a growing realization on the part of many of these associations of the need on the one hand to bring the professionals together and on the other to identify themselves more meaningfully with the rest of the community.

This broadening outlook has led to the inauguration and implementation of several programmes aimed at realization and promotion of these objectives, particularly during the latter half of the decade. They have taken the form of lectures, symposia, seminars, workshops, discussion groups, specific projects and other similar activities which benefit the professions themselves, promote inter-professional understanding and co-operation and bring the professionals in closer contact with the community which they serve. Reason for the inclusion of these professional bodies among the NGOs involved in adult education is this emerging new tendency on the part of these organisations which till recent times were self-centred in their interests...

Sri Lankan women have shown as much interest and in certain areas a greater interest than men, in community development activities. They are in most cultural, religious and social organisations where membership is open to both men and women, in addition to having their own exclusive organisations. This is so in regard to several professional organisations as well. Also women only organisations outnumber the men only ones and may even exceed those open to both sexes, and are too numerous to be discussed individually here. The vast majority of them engage in welfare activities. A noteworthy feature is that a large number of them operate in rural areas at grass-roots level.

The Mahila Samithis, Kantha Samithis and the Kulangana Samitis (women's groups) are the more popular of the village based organisations. The Mahila Samithis have a national level apex organisation in the Lanka Mahila Samithi (Women's Association of Sri Lanka) and it is the premiere women's organisation.

Kantha Samithis are sponsored by the Rural Development Department and the Kulangana Samithis operate in association with the village (Buddhist) temples, the traditional centres of social and cultural activities of the village. The primary objective of all these associations is the upliftment of the rural community. I have selected below, at random, a few of these associations for brief discussion....

Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka

Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka, popularly known as Sarvodaya, is undisputably the largest national level non-governmental voluntary organisation having its base firmly rooted at grass roots level. The Movement works in nearly 1,500 villages to promote people's self-help. Its manifold activities aimed at the total development of the individual and through the individual the society at large, include programmes encompassing all the four

broad categories referred to at the beginning. Development Education, however, is its main forte. The Development Education Institute at the Sarvodaya Headquarters has planned for the next 3 years (1984/86) some 25 training programmes involving around 40,000 participants. I do not however propose to discuss the Movement in this paper as one full session of the proceedings has, very thoughtfully, been devoted for this purpose.

Sarvodaya means "awakening of all" and Shramadana is "sharing of labour" and these two words explain the strategy and philosophy behind the Movement.

Constraints

The foregoing account of the NGOs, I presume, throws some light on their role and performance in adult education in the current decade. However, before I proceed to discuss their future trends, some passing reference, at least, would be expected on the constraints which affect their work. In order not to lengthen an already long report I would, at this instance, mention only some of the constraints that readily come into my mind, and that too in point form.

1. One of the major constraints is the absence of a declared national policy towards the NGOs. Although the principle collaborator of the government in its adult education activities is the NGO the participation has been more on a piece-meal, ad-hoc basis rather than as an integrated planned exercise.
2. Financial constraints have the most crippling effect on the activities of the NGOs. Although almost all the NGOs are supported by the government in some form or other and a good number of them are assisted by National and or International organisations, the flow of funds has generally been inadequate and irregular to sustain continuity of programmes in most instances.
3. Lack of suitable infrastructure by way of buildings, furniture, equipment and other facilities and qualified and trained personnel restrict the activities of practically all the NGOs.
4. The NGOs themselves are not sufficiently aware or been made aware of their contributory capacities and participatory capabilities in promoting adult education programmes, while the recipient rural communities are equally unaware of the potentialities of the NGOs to make full use of them.
5. The tendency of many organisations to concentrate in and direct their activities from urban centres has deprived the rural community of the maximum benefits from the adult education programmes. This has been aggravated by the inaccessibility to adult education centres due to distance and lack of adequate transport facilities in certain remote areas.
6. Needless to say that local rivalries of various types and parochial considerations hinder the progress of the NGOs.

Changing Role of the NGOs in Adult Education and the Future Trends

The growing involvement of governments in social welfare activities which were once the exclusive preserve of the voluntary organisations, has changed the role that these organisations play in the developmental activities in their countries. From their position of indispensable instruments of implementation and promotion they have come to play roles complementary and supplementary to the mainstream of government activities. Acceptance by the governments that the provision of primary education and eradication of illiteracy and the provision of primary health care are basic responsibilities, and the recognition that these are fundamental to development and an integral part of it, have necessitated the governments to direct action in areas where their previous role was only a supportive one. The government organisations thus become the main instruments of a total development process of the people. This position I believe is true of all the countries in the region.

In so far as Sri Lanka is concerned, the last decade witnessed far reaching changes in its socio-economic set-up. These changes coincided with the political changes that took place in 1970 and 1977. It is against this background that the activities of the NGOs in non-formal education referred to above, and their perspectives for the future, have to be viewed.

It is the changes that took place in the economic sphere that had the greatest impact on the educational activities of the NGOs during the latter half of the decade and will continue to have in the rest of the 80s. Policy changes introduced in 1977 and pursued thereafter transformed a near stagnant economy to a dynamic one. This resuscitation of the economy brought in employment opportunities for a large number of unemployed youths.....

In order to meet these demands particularly for technically qualified personnel in the middle range, a large number of full-time part-time technical courses were provided in state institutions and state aided ones. By 1982 some 300 courses were being conducted at 97 full-time technical units for nearly 6000 students with around 14,000 students following courses at 300 part-time technical units.

The programmes conducted by the NGOs in these and other areas, some of which were referred to earlier were mainly to supplement the efforts of the government sector. The creation of these opportunities through the combined efforts of the GOs and NGOs to provide the necessary occupational skills helped in meeting the pressing demand appreciably. The result is that unemployment figures that stood in the range of 1.3 million in 1977 came down to around 0.8 million by the end of 1982. This supportive role of the NGOs in the provision of skills for employment purposes and improvement of career opportunities, will continue.

However, the main thrust of the NGO programmes in the rest of the 80s and thereafter, to my mind, should embrace the following if they are to remain meaningful and productive. It is indeed in these

areas that the government will look up to the organisational resources and the participatory capacities and capabilities of the NGOs.

1. The NGOs will be required to equip themselves to meet the demand of the radical restructuring of the economy that is taking place through an expansion of agriculture and export oriented industries which need higher and varied technical skills that were not hitherto required.
2. The multi purpose development projects like the Mahaveli diversion scheme are expected to change the entire socio-economic complexion of the country. They will assuredly need the participation of the NGOs in the solution of problems of readjustment in the new environments by the families settling down in the recently colonised areas and of the villagers who are uprooted from their ancestral homes and located elsewhere to make room for the reservoirs that replaced their villages.
3. The Gramodaya (village awakening) Movement on which the government relies heavily in its efforts to uplift the economic and social conditions of the villagers and to arrest their migration into the urban areas will depend for its success on the voluntary organisations from whom it drew inspiration for the Movement itself.
4. The promotion of communal understanding and racial harmony in a multiracial community such as ours (Sinhala 74%, Sri Lanka Tamils 12.6%, Indian Tamils 5.5%, Moor 7.1%, Burgher 0.3%, Malay 0.3%, others 0.2%) which have been deteriorating in recent times, is a major area of useful and urgent co-operation where the NGOs can play a decisive role. Initiative already taken by the Sarvodaya in this direction is commendable and deserves emulation.

Notes

1. Pillai, Dr K.S., "Role and Performance of Non Governmental Organisations in adult/non-formal education during the decade 1972-82, and the perspectives for the 80's, with special reference to Kerala", paper presented by Dr Pillai, Head, Centre for Adult Education and Extension, University of Kerala, Trivandrum, India, to the ASPBAE Region I Seminar Sri Lanka, 18-20 July 1983.
2. Saxena, J.C. "The Role and Performance of NGOs in Adult Education in India". J.C. Saxena is Honorary Secretary-General of the Indian Adult Education Association, 17-B Indraprastha Marg, New Delhi, India, presented to Region I conference, as above.
3. Ghani, Osman., "The Role and Performance of Government and Non-Government Organisations in Adult Education in Bangladesh". Osman Ghani is Secretary-General of the Bangladesh Literacy Society, 59, Rajabazar, Tejgaon, Dhaka 15, Bangladesh. Presented to Sri Lanka Conference, as above.

4. Lamichhane, Sri Ram, "The Role and Performance of NGOs in Adult/ Nonformal Education in Nepal". Sri Ram Lamichhane is a staff member of the Centre for Educational Research, Innovation and Development (CERID) of Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu Nepal. Paper was presented to Region I Conference, Sri Lanka, as above.
5. Jayawardana, W.A., "Role and Performance of Non-Governmental Organizations in Adult/Nonformal Education in Sri Lanka during the Decade 1972-82, and the Perspectives for the 80s". Dr Jayawardana is President of the Sri Lanka Association for Total Education, Sarvodaya, 98 Rawatawatte Road, Moratuwa, Sri Lanka. Paper was presented to Region I Conference, Sri Lanka, as above.

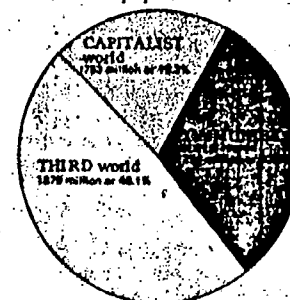
The above papers have now been published in a Proceedings of the Region I Seminar and a limited number of copies are available for anyone with a particular interest in the topic.

Region I, ASPBAE (W.M.K. Wijetunga Ed.), The Role and Performance of Non-Government Organizations in Adult Education in South Asia, A Report of a Regional Seminar July, 1983, Sri Lanka. Published by Asian-South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education: Region I, 1984, C/- Sarvodaya, 98 Rawatawatte Road, Moratuwa, Sri Lanka. 126p.

How many people live where?

[Comparative populations]

Total world population in 1975-3906 million people.

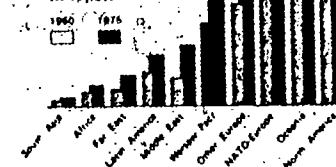


Latin America has 319 million people (8% of world's population) Africa has 400 million people (10% of the world's population) Asia - excluding Japan - has 1,957 million people (49.4% of the world's population)

What is the wealth for the different regions?

[Comparative wealth]

GNP per person in dollars - after allowing for inflation



The Gross National Product (GNP) is the total amount of goods and services produced by a country. In 1975 the average GNP per person in the Third World was \$ 441 per person, compared with \$ 4,831 for the developed countries. The poorest 60% of the world's population had 9% of the world's GNP.