

LIFELONG LEARNING FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

G. Amaresan¹ & G. Sundharavadivel²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Adult & Continuing Education, School of Social Sciences,
University of Madras, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

²Associate Professor, Department of Adult & Continuing Education, School of Social Sciences,
University of Madras, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

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ABSTRACT

India has made great strides educationally. In 1951 the literacy rate was 16.6 per cent, while in 1971 it had increased to 29.45 per cent. The percentage of literacy among men was 39.5 per cent while among women it was only 18.5 per cent. However, facilities for education do not keep pace with the rise in population. Hence within this twenty year period, the illiterates have increased by eighty-eight million (Manorama Year Book, 1978).

In many states education is free, but a majority of poor children have to choose between basic needs and education. In addition school attendance means clean clothes, books, and other expenses. Sickness or death of father or mother means an end to schooling for many children at a tender age.

Children in such areas do not get any education at all. Unfortunately, many children from the villages and slum areas find that they do not fit into the culture of the school. In certain areas, teachers coming from middle-class backgrounds look down upon poor children, particularly from the low castes. Sometimes children are beaten for bad behavior. This frightens them away from school forever. Thus the social distance between the educated and the uneducated grows.

In many rural and jungle areas, schools are far away from home, hence parents are reluctant to send girls to school without someone to protect them. The purdah system also keeps Muslim and Hindu girls from receiving an education, particularly in northern India. Often schools are co-educational; therefore many girls are pulled out of school after the fourth or fifth standard.

In education institutions the proportion of girls to boys at the primary level is 2:5, at the secondary level it is 1:3 and at the university level it is 1:4. Unless this changes rapidly the social distance between girls and boys will only widen the cultural gap between them.

In some areas in India illiteracy among adults is almost one hundred per cent. In most areas, women are worse off than men. Many girls drop out of school for domestic reasons. Among many communities, girls are not sent out of the house after attaining puberty. A marriage of teenage girls means an end to their education. Hence the great need for non-formal education.

- *The Network Approach used in the districts of Raigarh and Surguja of Madhya Pradesh and in the Ranchi, Palamau and Hazaribagh districts of Bihar.*
- *The Centre Approach used at the Adult Education Centre in Venoor, South Kanara district of Karnataka, and at Trumarikop in the same state. At Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu and Lilipur in Andhra Pradesh too the same approach is used.*
- *The Mini Mobile Team Approach used by the Sarvajani Seva Samaj (SSS) in Chattisgarh district of Madhya Pradesh.*
- *The Live-in Village Approach used by the Sarvangin Gram Vikas (SGV) in Palamau district, Bihar and in Haryana. Several others use it in other states.*

KEYWORDS: *Children, Educationally, Clean Clothes, Books and Other Expenses. Sickness or Death*