

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

India, in terms of her population, is the seventh largest country in the world. The 1981 census shows that the population of India was 685 million including the projected population of Assam - where the 1981 census could not be conducted (Rajan, 1988, p.10). The Indian society is diversified in many ways. It is constituted by people belonging to various religions, castes, ethnic and cultural groups. The people have different socio-economic status, family backgrounds and educational standards. They have multiple characteristics. The stability of a democratic country depends upon the quality of the people who live in the country. Education is very essential to be a man of good quality. Education develops the personality of a man and moulds the behaviour to build the character as per social norms. Sarwal (1987, p.32) says that 'Education is the systematic development and cultivation of the mind and other natural powers. Literacy is only the barest foundation for education - not education itself'. An individual cannot be said to be fully educated if he is illiterate. Literacy may be considered as a categorical and demonstrable skill. Illiteracy among people is the serious ailment for a country.

1.1 Illiteracy in India

Illiteracy in India is the most crucial problem of the country. It blocks country's economic, social, political and cultural development. Literacy is like the back-bone of a country. India has become hunched-back for the mass illiteracy among her people. She has faced various developmental problems such as, over population, poverty and ignorance. All these problems can be sorted out if the illiterate people of the country can turn into the term of literate. Mahatma Gandhi - the father of the nation has said :

"Mass illiteracy is India's sin and shame and must be liquidated."
(Ministry of Education and Culture, 1979,p.39)

India is predominantly rural. The majority of Indians live in villages. Hulbe et al.(1978, p.1) has quoted that, the majority of the country's population resides in 5,58,000 villages. The main occupation of the villagers is cultivation. The majority of them have no formal education or have a few years of schooling. India has the largest number of illiterates in the world. Sharma (1984, p.1) has quoted that in 1947 at the time of independence, 86 per cent of the people were illiterate. Eighty per cent of children of the age group of 6 to 11 years were just idle at home without entering schools or had 2 or 3 years of schooling. The worst was the condition of the people who were above 15 years of age, as only 12 per cent of them could just write their names.

Keeping this alarming problem in view, primary education was made free to all by the government of India in 1960. Education has been allotted more funds in the Five Year Plans. Burman (1986, p.33) has quoted from the Constitution of India, "Every man has the right to education. Education shall be free at least in the elementary and functional stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory". As a result, the numbers of schools and colleges have increased, but the number of illiterates has also increased instead of decreasing because of increase in the population of the country. Jan Mohammad (1984, p.3) stated that although the percentage of illiterates has come down after independence as is evident from the census data (Table 1.1), the number of illiterates has increased with an increase in the population. Literacy has been growing at less than one per cent a year while the population has been increasing at over two per cent each year.

Table 1.1 Literacy Position from 1951 - 1981

| | 1951 | 1961 | 1971 | 1981 |
|------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| Percentage of illiteracy | 81.7 | 71.7 | 65.5 | 58.3 |
| Number of illiterates (in million) | 246.63 | 267.22 | 307.19 | 343.3 |

Source: Jan Mohammad, 'Removal of Adult Illiteracy',
University News, Vol. XXII, No. 16, 1984, p.3.

Sharma (1984, p.2) stated that in 1971, the number of illiterates in the country was 30.7 crores, 27 crores being adults out of whom 10 crores were of the age group of 15 to 35 years. Directorate of Adult Education (1984, a p.29) provided the fact that the total population of India was more than 66.5 crores in 1981, out of which 80 per cent lived in rural areas where most of the people were illiterate. Table 1.2 shows statewise and sexwise literacy rates of India.

Table 1.2 Literacy Rate of India - 1981
(including population of age group 0-4 years)

| India/States/Union Territories | Total Population | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|-------|--------|
| | Total | Male | Female |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| INDIA * + | 36.23 | 46.89 | 24.82 |
| STATES | | | |
| 1. Andhra Pradesh | 29.94 | 39.26 | 20.39 |
| 2. Bihar | 26.20 | 38.11 | 13.62 |
| 3. Gujarat | 43.70 | 54.44 | 32.30 |
| 4. Haryana | 36.14 | 48.20 | 22.27 |
| 5. Himachal Pradesh | 42.48 | 53.19 | 31.46 |
| 6. Jammu & Kashmir | 26.67 | 36.29 | 15.88 |
| 7. Karnataka | 38.46 | 48.81 | 27.71 |
| 8. Kerala | 70.42 | 75.26 | 65.73 |
| 9. Madhya Pradesh | 27.87 | 39.49 | 15.53 |
| 10. Maharashtra | 47.18 | 58.79 | 34.79 |
| 11. Manipur | 41.35 | 53.29 | 29.06 |
| 12. Meghalaya | 34.08 | 37.89 | 30.08 |

Table 1.2 (continued)

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|-------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| 13. Nagaland | 42.57 | 50.06 | 33.89 |
| 14. Orissa | 34.23 | 47.10 | 21.12 |
| 15. Punjab | 40.86 | 47.16 | 33.69 |
| 16. Rajasthan | 24.38 | 36.30 | 11.42 |
| 17. Sikkim | 34.05 | 43.95 | 22.20 |
| 18. Tamil Nadu | 46.76 | 58.26 | 34.99 |
| 19. Tripura | 42.12 | 51.70 | 32.00 |
| 20. Uttar Pradesh | 27.16 | 38.76 | 14.04 |
| 21. West Bengal | 40.94 | 50.67 | 30.25 |
| UNION TERRITORIES | | | |
| 1. A. & N. Islands | 51.56 | 58.72 | 42.14 |
| 2. Arunachal Pradesh | 20.79 | 28.94 | 11.32 |
| 3. Chandigarh | 64.79 | 69.00 | 59.31 |
| 4. Dadra & Nagar Haveli | 26.67 | 36.32 | 16.78 |
| 5. Delhi | 61.54 | 68.40 | 53.07 |
| 6. Goa, Daman & Diu | 56.66 | 65.59 | 47.56 |
| 7. Lakshadweep | 55.07 | 65.24 | 44.65 |
| 8. Mizoram | 59.88 | 64.46 | 54.91 |
| 9. Pondicherry | 55.85 | 65.84 | 45.71 |

* Excludes Assam where census could not be held.

+ Excludes the population of area under unlawful occupation of Pakistan and China where census could not be taken.

Source: Directorate of Adult Education, 1984, 'Literacy Statistics of India- 1981, pp 1-2.

In Assam, census was not held in 1981. According to 1971 census, the literacy rate of Assam was as shown below:

Table 1.3 Literacy Rate of Assam - 1971

| Total | Male | Female |
|-------|-------|--------|
| 28.15 | 36.68 | 18.63 |

Source: Ministry of Education, Government of India, 1985, p. 6.

Prem Chand (1982) stated that if the growth rate of literacy of India during 1971-81 are applied to Assam, the estimated number of literates for Assam comes to 6.27 millions. Thus, the total number of literates in India during the year 1981 comes to 245.82 millions.

The 1981 census revealed that out of 402 districts, 244 were below the National Literacy Rate. Out of the total population, only 29.65 per cent of the rural people were literate. More people in urban areas were literate than in the rural ones. Table 1.4 shows the rural and urban sexwise population, number of literates and percentage of literacy in India (DAE, 1984).

Tilak (1985), while discussing the growth of literacy in India, stated that the growth rate of literacy in India is not a promising one. At the beginning of the 20th century the overall literacy rate of India was 5.35, which increased to 36.23 per cent in 1981. In 1981, the number of illiterates became the double the number in 1901.

Table 1.4 Rural/Urban Sexwise Population, Number of Literates and Percentage of Literacy of 1981 census of India

| | Total population | | |
|-------|------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | Persons | Male | Female |
| Total | 665,287,849 | 343,930,423 | 321,357,426 |
| Rural | 507,607,678 | 260,054,020 | 247,553,658 |
| Urban | 157,680,171 | 83,876,403 | 73,803,768 |
| | Number of Literates | | |
| | Persons | Male | Female |
| Total | 241,032,849 | 161,285,568 | 79,746,281 |
| Rural | 150,516,864 | 106,066,214 | 44,450,650 |
| Urban | 90,514,985 | 55,219,354 | 35,295,631 |
| | Percentage of Literacy | | |
| | Persons | Male | Female |
| Total | 36.23 | 46.89 | 24.82 |
| Rural | 29.65 | 40.79 | 17.96 |
| Urban | 57.40 | 65.83 | 47.82 |

Source: Directorate of Adult Education, New Delhi, (1984), Literacy Statistics of India 1981, p. 29.

N.B. Excluding Assam where census could not be held.

The annual growth rate of population from 1921 to 1951 was 1.22 per cent, which increased to 2.16 per cent during 1951 to 1981 (Table 1.5 and 1.6).

The literacy rate of the adults of age group 15-35 was

32.4 per cent in 1961, 42.0 per cent in 1971 and 50.6 per cent in 1981. During the decade 1971-81 the growth rate of literates in this age group was 5.39 per cent which was 4.44 per cent during 1961-71. The rate of growth of illiterates during 1971-81 was 1.79 per cent, but in the preceding decade it was only 0.22 per cent (Table 1.7 and 1.8).

Table 1.5 Growth of Literacy of Total Population in India

| Year | Population | Literates | Rate of Literacy (%) |
|------|---------------|-----------|----------------------|
| | (in millions) | | |
| 1901 | 238.4 | 12.8 | 5.35 |
| 1911 | 252.1 | 14.9 | 5.92 |
| 1921 | 251.3 | 18.0 | 7.16 |
| 1931 | 279.0 | 26.5 | 9.50 |
| 1941 | 318.7 | 51.3 | 16.10 |
| 1951 | 361.1 | 60.2 | 16.67 |
| 1961 | 439.2 | 105.5 | 24.02 |
| 1971 | 548.2 | 161.5 | 29.46 |
| 1981 | 685.2 | 248.2 | 36.23 |

Source: An Analysis of the Situation of Children in India, UNICEF, New Delhi, 1984, pp 15 and 63. (quoted Tilak, (1985), p. 22).

Table 1.6 Annual Compound Rates of Growth (%) of Literate and Illiterate population in India

| Decade | Population | Literates | Illiterates |
|---------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| 1901-11 | 0.58 | 1.53 | 0.50 |
| 1911-21 | -ve | 1.91 | -ve |
| 1921-31 | 1.05 | 3.94 | 0.79 |
| 1931-41 | 1.34 | 6.83 | 0.58 |
| 1941-51 | 1.25 | 1.61 | 1.19 |
| 1951-61 | 1.98 | 5.77 | 1.04 |
| 1961-71 | 2.24 | 4.35 | 1.49 |
| 1971-81 | 2.26 | 4.39 | 1.23 |
| 1901-51 | 0.83 | 3.14 | 0.58 |
| 1921-51 | 1.22 | 4.11 | 0.85 |
| 1951-81 | 2.16 | 4.33 | 1.25 |

Table 1.7 Literacy in India 15-35 Age group

| Years | Population (in millions) | Literates | Rate of Literacy (%) |
|-------|-----------------------------|-----------|----------------------------|
| 1961 | 140.7 | 45.6 | 32.4 |
| 1971 | 167.6 | 70.4 | 42.0 |
| 1981 | 235.0 | 119.0 | 50.6 |

Source: Ministry of Education, Government of India, New Delhi, quoted by Tilak (1985), pp 22-23.

Table 1.8 Annual Compound Rates of Growth (%) of Literate and Illiterate population of India 15-35 Age group

| Decades | Population | Literates | Illiterates |
|---------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| 1961-71 | 1.77 | 4.44 | 0.22 |
| 1971-81 | 3.44 | 5.39 | 1.79 |
| 1961-81 | 2.60 | 4.91 | 1.00 |

1.2 Need of Literacy

Illiteracy, ignorance and poverty are great obstacles in the way of progress of a democratic country like India, Rabindranath Tagore said:

"The welfare of the people could be safeguarded only if they are made literate."
(Sircar, 1982, p. 11)

In India illiteracy is one of the major problems which obstructs the development of the country. India has a high percentage of illiteracy which goes on increasing day by day at a terrifying rate. As a result, the country has to suffer socially, economically, culturally and politically. Giani Zail Singh - the then President of India, said:

"Literacy is indispensable for enabling the masses to appreciate a true significance of social change from a traditional to a modern society. Adult literacy is an essential condition for the smooth working of parliamentary democracy and for achieving social progress." (IAEA, 1987, pp 87-88)

Education is the foundation of a nation. Literacy is a weapon to educate a person fully. A developing country like India can never make progress unless her mass illiteracy

is eradicated. Literacy is needed to acquire more knowledge which can help in all-round development of an individual. A literate man is likely to adjust with his family, society, job or business better than an illiterate one and may avail better status in the society. Literate persons may have tolerance to face difficult situations with courage and to solve problems in a wise manner. Literacy adds more and more to the education of an individual. Education is like a tree and literacy is the manure which helps it to grow. Without manure a tree cannot grow properly. Similarly without literacy, education cannot develop properly. Literacy education is a must for all human beings. In the opinion of Dutta S. C., President of Indian Adult Education Association, (1987, p. 49):

"Literacy work is never lost since literacy provides people with new ways of looking at things, if it does not give them new identities completely. Literacy releases the individual from a sense of personal inferiority from the relationship of dependency and subservience and allocates to the new literate, new status and potential."

Literacy opens the door for education and learning. Literacy opens the vistas to more and more knowledge. Literacy helps an individual to distinguish the right from the wrong. Literates can read, write and count; so none can exploit them easily. Literacy helps them to know more through reading, to express their own feelings and thoughts by writing and none can cheat them as they know counting. Therefore, literacy education is a must for every individual.

Professor E. Ahmad - Vice Chancellor, Magadh University,
in a message has said :

"Education has been enjoined as the bounden duty on all human from cradle to grave. Literacy is a first step in this direction. Without literacy a person, however wise and experienced, is greatly handicapped. Literacy, therefore, is a passage from the darkness of ignorance to the illumination of knowledge. Literacy opens a vista of education and learning. It saves men from wrongs and limitations. It is one of the greatest wealths of human society and the difference will be apparent in their culture, civilization and economic levels." (IAEA, 1987, p. 94)

The University Grants Commission (UGC) working group 1983 has observed the facts for need of literacy and stated:

"Education is human right. Literacy provides access to knowledge and understanding of skills. It is a life-long process for the development of harmonious personality to comprehend the ever widening and deepening spheres of human endeavours. The removal of illiteracy is regarded in effect as a sine qua non for the struggle against exploitation and removal of impediments to the growth of the individual and the socio-economic progress of the country. In a democratic society literacy is a means of enlisting people's participation in the functioning of the democratic system. It constitutes the first step towards acquisition of knowledge and development of productive skills. It also fosters awareness of the rights and responsibilities of the individual and the community at large." (Dutta, 1986, p. 135)

1.2.1 Literacy and Personal Development

Literacy is a systematic education which makes a man able to read, write and count. An illiterate person is just like a man without vision. A literate can read and write what he says and thinks and also what others say and think through reading and writing. A literate can solve and face problems alone; but an illiterate cannot. In certain cases

where literacy is needed, the illiterate has to depend upon literates. He may be exploited as he is compelled to believe whatever the literate reads or writes for him. An illiterate person may be a burden to himself, his family, the society and thus to the country. An illiterate does not know the value of literacy, hence he may not allow his children to be literate. His offsprings, the future citizens of the country, may remain illiterate and this leads to great loss for the country.

Illiterates are deprived of many human necessities and so are deprived of enjoying life as complete human beings. These people become suspicious about others and lose confidence and faith in others and in themselves. They lose courage to face reality due to their ignorance. Illiteracy leads them to backwardness. They are afraid of expressing desires. They, as illiterate, are afraid to talk with big personalities. In our country, illiterate masses, mainly the people of rural areas are lagging behind others, even their own countrymen. On the other hand, a literate person can keep abreast of the developing world and has no need to be contented with his limited knowledge bound within the four walls of his house. A literate increases his level of understanding about himself and others around him. A literate can easily be in touch with the outside world and is able to acquire up-to-date knowledge through reading. He can see the world and hear the voice of others in a more meaningful way.

An illiterate with his outdated knowledge and ideas cannot cope with the changing society. Literacy develops the potential and intellectual abilities of an individual. Illiteracy makes the knowledge static and hinders the progress and development of a person.

1.2.2 Literacy and Home and Family Life

A house becomes home when the members living in it are bound by love and affection, have a common religion and discharge duties in a cooperative manner. Many problems may arise from time to time in a home and family. A literate has the advantage of gathering more knowledge and ideas and may apply them in solving the family problems. He may satisfy his family members by proper behaviour suitable in certain situations. A literate person may be able to play his role in the family in such a way that all the family members are satisfied, live peacefully and happily. His understanding enables him to face a critical situation and to tackle it. A literate can adjust with the family and society better than an illiterate. A literate person may create a peaceful atmosphere in the home and family life by helping out in domestic matters and playing his roles in a satisfactory way.

1.2.3 Literacy and Status

An individual may have acquired status or/and attained status in a society. In ancient times an individual from a higher caste acquired higher status in a society by birth. Acquired status was thus more valuable than attained one.

Now-a-days, status which is attained is of more value than an acquired one. In this scientific and technological era, people compete for better status with their own abilities. A low caste literate person gets better status than a high caste illiterate. In the past, high caste people had higher status and low caste ones had lower one. That system is gradually disappearing from the Indian society. People have started attaching more value to education than to caste or religion. Casteism of Indian society is gradually disappearing and literacy is occupying its place. If one achieves a better status it may continue to his future generations. A better status may give chances to get priority and advantages in many cases as he achieves prestigious position in the society. A literate person is respected by his family members as well as by the society.

1.2.4 Literacy and Job

Scientific and technological development have brought many changes in our country. The number of industries has been increasing and many jobs have been coming up day by day. These jobs need various types of experienced personnel. Sometimes old jobs require persons with new knowledge, experience and ideas. In the past the job for which no literacy education was needed now requires literate persons.

Moreover, as the standard of living rises and the prices of essential commodities rise, people are compelled to come out from the four walls of their houses in search of

livelihood to fight the hardships of economic conditions. The competition for better job and promotion requires better knowledge. The illiterates have to remain as before without any progress and development. They are unable to cope with the new advanced and developed society. They become out-dated because of their illiteracy and ignorance. These people due to their ignorance and lack of up-to-date knowledge, are unable to avail the facilities offered by the government, private agencies and organisations for their upliftment. Since independence, the government has offered to the people numerous facilities for self-development in the fields of education, occupation, economy, agriculture, veterinary, medicine, housing, self-employment and so on. The government tries to help those who are economically backward, but they cannot avail of the benefits of these advantages. They are afraid to meet officers for financial and other help and thus they suffer throughout their lives due to illiteracy.

1.2.5 Literacy and Society

Today's society is changing at a rapid rate. In the earlier days, people liked to live together and they preferred joint family system. After independence, transport and communication facilities have developed alongwith the development in other areas. As a result, mobility has become easier than before. A person who never moved out of his place, started visiting other places in search of livelihood, job or source of income. Thus, the joint families of old days got fragmented and nuclear families gradually took their place.

Indian people have many customs, superstitions and prejudices. With the changing time, the attitudes of the people towards superstitions, customs, beliefs and prejudices have gradually changed. As people move from one place to another, work and mix with others, the barriers of caste and religion are also slowly disappearing from the Indian society. Inter-caste and even inter-religious marriages are being accepted to some extent. So, cosmopolitanism has taken roots in the reserved societies. Along with these changes the style of living is also changing. Everybody tries to have a better standard of living. To cope with all the changes, literacy is needed which may add more knowledge to the existing knowledge of the people. To adjust with others one has to be literate. A literate person adapts himself better to every situation than an illiterate one. A literate person is respected by the society and is offered a prestigious position. He may get a better job and more advantages in the society.

1.2.6 Literacy and Citizenship

In a democratic country every citizen has some rights and duties. A citizen should play his role in the right way, so that he can contribute to the development of the country. An illiterate is not able to know what rights and duties are conferred on him by the constitution of the country. He is not aware of his rights and duties as a literate is. So, an illiterate cannot discharge his duties satisfactorily and enjoy his rights as a citizen. He plays his role as directed

by the literates. The illiterate masses are deprived of their rights and privileges. They are not aware that the constitution has given equal rights to all citizens of the country irrespective of caste, creed and religion. The constitution of India promises to all the people justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. The illiterate masses may not be aware of this. They cannot take part in the social, political and economic affairs of the country in an effective way as the literates can.

1.2.7 Literacy and Science and Technology

The present age is the age of science and technology. Science and technology have been leading the world towards rapid development. The inventions like radio, transistor, record player, tape-recorder are becoming outdated. Television, video cassette recorder, and video cassette player have taken their place. Now-a-days, man does not fly only by aeroplane but he can now go into space with the help of jet, rocket, space-shuttle, satellite and other inventions of science and technology. News and information from far distant corners of the world spread all around the world in minutes. Information can be sent not only through telephone or cable but also by satellite. Man has no need to waste time in mathematical and statistical calculation as calculators and computers have come to solve the problem within a few minutes. The electronic power and even solar power have taken the place of electricity and battery cell. The present era is the era of computer, rockets, jets and

robots. The development of science and technology is utilized efficiently by the literates only. The illiterates lag behind in the use of these modern facilities. They are not aware of many modern inventions. Many simple household appliances and equipments are invented to do work within a very short span of time. These advantages are availed of by the literates only as they come to know about these through reading of news-papers and other media. The illiterate masses are unable to utilise these advantages though they have money and means to have them. They do not know how to utilise their money in a profitable way. Literacy helps an individual to live a comfortable life.

1.3 Need of Literacy for Women

Society is built up of men and women. They both are integral parts of society. Therefore, they both are equally important for the development of the society.

It is true that every country depends upon its own people for its progress and development. The progress can be expected if the people of the country are educated. Education is most necessary for them. They should be educated if they want their country to advance alongwith other developed countries of the world. The National Committee on the Status of Women of 1971-74 has commented,

"Education has been regarded both as an end in itself and as a means of realizing other desirable ends. It develops the personality and rationality of individuals, qualifies them to fulfil certain

economic, political, and cultural functions and thereby improves their socio-economic status." (ICSSR, 1975, p. 88)

To become fully educated, a person should be literate. Literacy adds more knowledge to a person and enables him to shoulder the duties and responsibilities as a citizen of the country.

In India, women constitute half of the population of the country. Unfortunately, their percentage of literacy is very low. According to 1981 census report, women constitute 331 million in absolute numbers and represent 48 per cent of the total population of the country. There were 933 females per one thousand males (Sarojini, 1989, p. 28). The literacy rate of females in comparison with males was very low. The rate of male literacy was 46.89 per cent of the total male population and the rate of female literacy was 24.82 per cent of the total female population in 1981, (Sarkar, 1988, p. 15). This section of population plays the most important role in the society. Unfortunately, most of the women in India, cannot play their roles in an effective way due to illiteracy and ignorance. Three out of four women are illiterate as compared to one out of two men in India, (Mane, 1985, p. 17).

The women do household work at home, help husbands in fields in rural areas, and take care of their children. Besides, these women are supposed to be the teachers of the future citizens of the nation. They pass on information and convey ideas, knowledge and education to their children. Thus,

women preserve the social heritage, religious customs and traditions through children for future generations. They are the most responsible part of the population of the country. They look after every sphere of life.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru - the first Prime Minister of independent India in a message has said :

"In order to awaken the people, it is the woman who has to be awakened. Once she is on the move, the household moves, the village moves and the country moves; and through the women, its children are brought into the picture and given the opportunity of a healthier life and better training. Thus through the children of today, we build the India of tomorrow."
(Ansari, 1984 b, p. 21)

Unfortunately, a majority of them still has remained illiterate. If they can be literally educated they would be able to handle many more responsibilities equally with men for the development of home, society and country in a more effective way. Indira Gandhi - the late Prime Minister of India, said in a speech delivered in the International Women's Year Conference at New Delhi held in April, 1976 :

"The women should help to develop new attitude in homes and families, and fight all obstacles in the path of progress." (NE States Women's Conference, 1976)

In the past, most of the middle and upper class women were contented to stay at home. They felt it was inferior and degrading to serve out side the home. Even today, for many women, marriage is the career and after that their duty is to look after their husbands, in-laws and children. So,

they themselves and their parents do not consider their education as important as that of males.

These factors stand as obstacles against women getting formal education. As a result, majority of the women in India have remained illiterate. Women who live in rural areas are more backward in literacy than the ones in urban areas. The disparity in literacy between rural and urban women has been quite a great. The rates of literacy, in 1981, among rural and urban women were 17.96 and 47.82 per cent, respectively (DAE, 1984).

Rapid changes occur in the society with the change of time, such as breaking down of the joint families and formation of nuclear ones. Higher marriage age and the use of family planning methods have led to smaller families with less children. Now, a woman has more time to spare in other activities and is willing to do something gainful. Many of them serve in offices, schools, hospitals, factories and so on. The literate women folk gain much more than those who are illiterate. The literates enjoy the advantages of modern science and technology more than the illiterates. The illiterate ones lag far behind the literates. For the advancement of this section of women they should be given education through literacy.

Muthu (1980, p. 52) stated the fact that the women who are in need of a literacy programme like adult education and who have to be covered in such a programme are mostly working

in factories, mines, plantations, construction work, beedi and match-making and household industries and as agricultural workers. Hence, special efforts need to be made to remove illiteracy among those women particularly among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Because of this, National Adult Education Programme aims to cover all the adults between the age 15 to 35 years and to extend educational facilities to them.

Moreover, with the modern trend of life, cost of living also goes up day by day and with it, wants and necessities become numerous. This makes women search jobs outside the home. The multiple role of women has affected the art of home-making. The new scientific and technological inventions have come to every corner of the home. To adapt to the rapid changes in the society, literacy education is very necessary for women.

Education is necessary at every stage in life - for marriage, child bearing, child rearing, care of the home and family, to run a house more satisfactorily and to cope with the job and society. The women of our country must be given help to shoulder the multiple responsibilities. This can be done by making them literate. They must be given education so that they can take active part in the developmental activities of the country. The significance of education of women was realised by the government and the leaders of the country. In India, women have been given equal status legally

and constitutionally with men and necessary legislatures have been enacted for raising the legal and social status of women. Article 29 (2) of Indian Constitution provides equal rights for education to women as that of men. (Sharma, 1988, p. 6).

1.4 Government efforts for Eradication of Illiteracy in India

Taking into consideration the magnitude of the problem of illiteracy in India, government has made various literacy programmes and schemes. The government is aware of the fact that due to illiteracy, majority of the people are unable to take the advantage of the massive investment of the government for their own development. A fairly large part of our population is below the poverty line. It is also realised by the government that unless the mass illiteracy of the country is eradicated, the people would not be able to develop or to take part in the national development. So, the government has emphasized the eradication of illiteracy from India. Government has laid stress on educating the adults, as at the time of independence of the country, 86 per cent of India's population was illiterate. Twelve per cent of the population of the age group above 15 years could write their names only (Sharma, 1984, p.1). The people of this age group are most important for a developing country like India. This group of people can render their services for economic, social, political and agricultural development of the country. If this large group of people remains illiterate, India cannot look forward

to her progress. No developmental programme would be successful unless this particular young group of people took part in the developmental activities of the country, and for their participation in national development their being literate is very essential.

In the early stage of independence, our leaders realised this burning problem and tried to tackle it by expanding primary education and organising a number of literacy drives and programmes to remove adult illiteracy from the country.

1.4.1 Pre-independence Period

Adult education is not a new concept in our country. India had a tradition of adult education. In ancient times, adult education was imparted through religious teachings by priests, saints and sages. At that time learning was persuaded not for its own sake, but as a part of religion, and the priests, saints and sages tried to impart mostly moral and social education. Education was imparted orally and literacy was not considered so much as an important factor of education.

In medieval India, maths, ashrams, pathsalas, maktabas and madrassas - schools based on religion, came into existence not only to give education to the children and youth but also to adults irrespective of their age or standard; yet the rate of literacy was very low at that time (Dutta, 1986).

During the period 1836 to 1839, the percentage of literacy in India was only 6 per cent. Even that time, a few

night schools were run to teach the adults, (Ansari, 1984 a, p.3). During the years 1882-1886, the Indian Education Commission named as Hunter Commission, recommended extension of existing night schools of Madras, Bombay and Bengal to all other provinces of India. In this period jail schools were also started in Sultanpur and Lucknow jails in Uttar Pradesh, (Mohsini, 1978).

In the field of adult education many new institutions began to emerge. Night schools were working in Bombay, Bengal and Madras. In Baroda, public libraries were established as far back as 1910 and a few years later mobile libraries also came into existence.

Gandhiji organised night schools and literacy classes for adult illiterates since 1920 along with his other constructive activities, (Mohsini, 1982, p. 5).

From 1926 to 1947, rural and urban libraries for adults were started. Jamia Millia, a well-known national institution, has played a pioneering role in adult education. The first night school was started in this institution in 1926 which ultimately led to the establishment of the Institute of Adult Education with the efforts of Dr. Zakir Hussain - the late President of India. Mahatma Gandhi initiated his constructive programme during this period and it was harmonised with his work, (Mohsini, 1978).

To attract adults to adult education classes, in many

places medicines were distributed and exhibitions of news bulletine were arranged from time to time. Film shows and educational meetings were also arranged to teach adults. Mass literacy campaigns were launched in 1937 in many provinces, like, Assam, Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Bombay and punjab. Adult literacy, from this time, became a responsibility of the whole country and so the entire country was involved in adult education, (Dutta, 1986, p. 35).

Assam Pradeshik Mahila Sammelan, Uzanbazar (district Guwahati), was established in 1926 in Assam to work for the welfare of women and children. It runs adult education classes and condensed courses. It provides library service, weaving, mat-making and other income generating activities.

Thakur (1988,p. 31) mentioned that the all-round social and economic development in rural areas in a planned way was first discussed at the governmental level in 1938. The National Planning Committee was appointed by the Indian National Congress under the chairmanship of Jawaharlal Nehru with an aim to make plans which could ensure an adequate standard of living for the masses.

After independence, the launching of the Community Development Project was the first step of the government for all-round rural development which included education and social education as an important subject along with many other items.

Dayal (1965) stated that Community Development has grown

out of the earlier concept of "Mass Education", a term used by the Advisory Committee on "Education in African Society" published in 1944. Mass education meant not only the formal teaching in a classroom but the teaching with the use of modern techniques and equipment to the people out of school.

In 1939, Indian Adult Education Association was established. It is a national voluntary organisation. Since its inception, the Association has concerned itself with promotion of adult education movement in the country through various activities. The Association has a comprehensive programme of publications related to adult education. It has instituted the Nehru Literacy Award to be awarded every year to a person or an institution for outstanding work for promotion of literacy in the country. (DAE, 1979)

1.4.2 Post-independence Period

A new era has started for adult education with the advent of independence of our country in 1947. Though the adult education was rooted from pre-independence period it took a definite shape after independence through planned efforts of the government. From this time education was no longer confined only to literacy. It included education in citizenship, health, agriculture and handicrafts alongwith reading, writing and numeracy.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the education minister of that time, termed the adult education as Social Education as he thought social education meant education for one to become a

complete man (Dutta, 1986, pp 56-57).

1.4.3 First Five Year Plan Period

Community Development Programme was launched in 1952 and Social Education was made a part of it. During 1951-52, Social Education Organisers' Training Centres and Janata Colleges were established. In 1956, National Fundamental Education Centres were organised for training and orientation of key personnel and preparation of materials for adult classes. Moreover, researches in adult education were also started (Dutta, 1986).

1.4.4 Second Five Year Plan Period

During the second Five Year Plan, Cooperative Education and Development Centres were opened in New Delhi for undertaking intensive educational programmes for members and officers of cooperative societies. Central Social Welfare Board was set up during this period to supervise the development and social welfare activities in the country.

Within the second Five Year Plan period, the Central Board of Workers' Education was set up for organising trade union oriented education. The Ministry of Labour established the Board and set up Regional Workers' Education Centres in different regions of the country.

1.4.5 Third Five Year Plan Period

In 1961, mass movement for literacy in the name of Gram Shikshan Mohim was started by several state government

functionaries and voluntary agencies in different parts of the country. Each one of these programmes contributed to the development of the adult education movement in the country. This programme was the mass approach to the eradication of illiteracy. This made a deep impact on the movement.

It was decided, in the period 1961-66, by the Kothari Education Commission and the University Grants Commission (UGC) to involve students of universities in adult education programmes. It was one of the most significant event and an event of far reaching importance to adult education. During this period, correspondence courses were started and evening colleges were set up. Literacy education for industrial workers was also felt necessary by the government (Dutta, 1986, p. 83).

1.4.6 Fourth Five Year Plan Period

Farmers' Training and Functional Literacy Programme was launched in 1968 to link literacy with economy and social development. This programme was like a milestone in the field of adult education in India. It was a part of the experimental World Literacy Programme and was confined to the districts, selected for the programme (Mohsini, 1982, p. 8). The Farmers' Training and Education Programme was basically a programme of non-formal education in its objectives, content and organisational strategies.

The scheme of Farmers' Training and Education was sponsored in 1966-67 by the central government in the states and union

territories. The Farmers' Functional Literacy Programme (FFLP) was linked with this programme. Afterwards the Farmers' Functional Literacy Programme was converted into Adult Education Programme (AEP) and from that time this programme was meant not only for farmers but for all the illiterate adults of the country (DAE, 1984).

1.4.7 Fifth Five Year Plan Period

During the Fifth Five Year Plan period, high priority was given to non-formal education for non-school going children, out of school youths and adults. Non-formal Education for Women was also started in 1975-76. Satellite Instructional Television Programme (SITE) was started for adults along with those for children. Krishi Vigyan Kendras were established in rural areas to impart necessary knowledge to the farmers through learning by doing. Shramik Vidyapeeths were also started in this period to provide integrated education and training to the urban workers (Dutta, 1986).

The state governments were given the primary responsibility for the implementation of the Adult Education Programme within the respective state. A scheme of establishing State Resource Centres (SRCs) at the state level was formulated and implemented by the Ministry of Education, government of India, in July 1976 with the objective of providing technical services to conduct the AEP. The areas of resource support in Adult Education include curriculum formulation, preparation of teaching and learning materials, training and promotional

materials, development of methods, use of mass media, training of functionaries, evaluation of AEPs, research and innovation in the field of adult education. The Directorate of Adult Education (DAE), Government of India functions as the National Resource Centre and the SRCs function at the state level, (DAE, 1984, p. 77).

In the beginning, the government gave importance to mere literacy. Later, the government tried to link literacy with development. It was to be done through social education which was a part of Community Development Programme of India. Afterwards, adult education and literacy education were made a part of the education system under the Ministry of Education, Government of India. The central government also sponsored various schemes for adult literacy and adult education. One such programme is National Adult Education Programme (NAEP). It was launched on 2nd October, 1978, which coincided with the birthday anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation, as he had stressed the eradication of illiteracy from the country. Gandhiji taught people, 'For education to be meaningful, it must be correlated with the living, and working condition of the people'.

In 1978, Farmers' Functional Literacy Programme and Non-formal Education Programme (NFEP) for the age group 15-25 were merged together and renamed as Rural Functional Literacy Project (RFLP) for the age group 15-35 years, (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 1988, p. 1).

In 1978, the scheme of Adult Education and Extension was initiated and was implemented in 68 universities, 705 colleges by sanctioning 8,790 centres, as per the guidelines drawn in this regard. It was merged in the scheme of removal of adult illiteracy from the country as per point number 16 of the new 20 Point Programme of the government of India (DAE, 1984).

1.4.8 Sixth Five Year Plan Period

The University Grants Commission (UGC) had appointed a working group in 1983 to review the on-going schemes for Adult Education and Extension and made recommendations for a dynamic programme for removal of adult illiteracy through the involvement of students of the universities and colleges. The working group had recommended that the adult literacy programme through universities may be implemented in two phases. In the first phase it envisaged to covering the period ending 31st March 1985 and in the second phase to cover the period ending 31st March 1990. The UGC has agreed to provide assistance to the universities and colleges on 100 per cent basis upto 31st March 1990.

To promote the participation of the universities in organising programmes of continuing education for the students and the community in general, and also to link post-literacy and follow-up with continuing education to ensure that neo-literates do not relapse into illiteracy, the UGC provides financial help to the Continuing Education Programme. The

following schemes are sanctioned by the commission (UGC):

- a) Scheme of Continuing Education.
- b) Scheme of Adult and Continuing Education and Extension.

The ~~Sixth~~ Five Year Plan stated that the entire illiterate population in the age group 15-35 would be covered under the literacy programmes by 1990. The new 20 Point Programme also lays emphasis on the implementation of the Adult Education Programme through voluntary efforts and involvement of students and youth of the country, (DAE, 1984).

1.4.9 Seventh Five Year Plan Period

Mass Programme of Functional Literacy (MPFL) was launched on 1st May 1986. The students of National Service Scheme (NSS) and the other students of universities and colleges were involved in this programme to impart functional literacy to adult illiterates of 15-35 years of age. In 1987, National Cadet Core (NCC) cadets were also involved in this task. In this programme, youths, students, teachers, workers, universities, colleges, schools, trade unions, panchayati raj agencies, voluntary agencies, other organisations and individuals were engaged and took active part in the eradication of illiteracy among adults (UGC, 1988).

The new National Education Policy (NEP) was introduced in 1986 by the Government of India. It emphasised and gave importance to adult education. The aim of the new National Education Policy was to produce manpower resources of the quality and number required by the society. The new NEP required

systematic programmes of adult education to fulfil the national goals, that is, removal of poverty, national integration, conservation of environment, acceptance of small family norms and promotion of equality of women. It is expected that the whole nation would pledge to eradicate illiteracy from the nation, particularly from the adults of 15-35 years of age. The policy stressed integrated efforts of universities and colleges to improve the teaching quality of adult literacy and to establish linkage between the on-going programmes for eradication of illiteracy, continuing education and other community and developmental programmes of the country (UGC, 1983, p. 4).

The new National Education Policy (NEP) - 1986 envisaged that adult education would be a means of reducing the inequalities caused by economic and social status and sex among people. The past experience has brought out that literacy programmes could be worthwhile if they were imparted along with practical information related to day-to-day needs of the learners.

The new National Education Policy has changed the programme of adult education by changing its existing intensively selective activities to a mass programme with the definite objective of removal of illiteracy from the country by 1995.

The new National Programme of Adult Education (NPAE), formulated under the new National Education Policy, aimed mainly at providing education, including literacy . . .

to the population of 15-35 years of age, which is about 100 millions in number. National Programme of Adult Education (NPAE) would be a time-bound programme in 2 phases to cover all the estimated 100 million illiterate adults by 1995. The NPAE had four components, namely, (i) literacy, (ii) general education, (iii) functionality, and (iv) awareness (IAEA, 1986 and Mohsini, 1987).

National Literacy Mission (NLM) was introduced on 5th May, 1988 for intensive application of science and technology to the areas considered most important for the nations' development. The National Literacy Mission is one of the 5 National Technology Missions identified by the Prime Minister of India. The Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi has said while launching a mass campaign for National Literacy Mission at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi, 'The National Literacy Mission would try to reach eight crore people by 1995 and make them self-reliant in literacy and numeracy so that they could acquire skills to improve their economic status, the status of women, adopt the small family norm and be motivated to protect the environment. To relate itself to the lives of the people, the Mission would teach them in their own local languages and dialects.' (IAEA, 1988).

The main objective of the NLM is to impart functional literacy to 80 million adult illiterates of the age group 15-35 by 1995 in two phases - 30 millions by 1990 and 50 millions by 1995. Priority would be given to the rural areas,

specially for women and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Jana Shiksha Nilayams (JSNs) were established for the implementation of post-literacy and continuing education programmes. Each JSN would cover 4-5 villages, a population of about 5000 neo-literates would be covered. The JSN helps in improving learners' skills in literacy and numeracy. Besides these activities, it gives information about various developmental programmes (DAE, 1988).

The National Literacy Mission is visualised as a mission of society for mobilising active participation of the people. It is expected that with the implementation of NLM and of universal elementary education, the number of illiterates of the age group 15-35 would be progressively reduced. The NLM also prepared attractive literacy kits for the mass programme of functional literacy. It planned to use television, video cassette recorder, audio cassette player and other teaching-aids, wherever possible for the teaching of adult learners (UGC, 1988).

1.5 Government Efforts for Eradication of Illiteracy among Women

Successive Five Year Plans have consistently emphasised the acceleration of women's education. Special programmes for the education of adult women such as Community Development Projects, Welfare Extension Projects, Mahila Mandals - women's organisations, and Functional Literacy for Adult Women have been organised from time to time as a part of the strategy for

the educational development of women. Thus, since independence of the country, the government of India has made various efforts for liquidation of illiteracy among them.

Government has passed legislatures for women's education and for raising their legal and social status. The Constitution of India provides women with a set of fundamental rights where they enjoy the following :

Article 16 (1) of the Constitution says "there shall be equal opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office in the state." Article 45 says "the state shall endeavour to provide within a period of 10 years from the commencement of this constitution for free and compulsory education for all citizens until they complete the age of 14 years" (Rajan, 1988, pp. 10-11). Article 29 (2) of the Indian Constitution provides equal rights to women for education (Sharma, 1988, p. 6).

Accordingly, the government has introduced a number of programmes for removal of illiteracy among women. At the beginning, a National Plan of Action for women's development was prepared to identify the areas of education for women - health, family planning and nutrition, employment, legislative measures and social welfare - for initiation of the action programme.

A massive programme of adult education for women has been launched by central and state governments. The main objective of adult education was human resource development.

All men and women in the working age group should possess the skills and knowledge essential to pursue productive activities which would ensure a reasonable standard of living for themselves and for the members of their family (IAEA, 1985, p. 20). Every state was directed by the centre to organise at least 50 per cent of its adult education centres for women. The voluntary agencies were given grants for running centres for women and existing rules had been eased so as to acquire greater participation on the part of voluntary organisations. A project of Adult Education of 5 centres could be organised by an agency exclusively for women. Priority was given to opening of 'Adult Education Centres' (AECs) in the rural areas and for weaker sections of the society (DAE, 1985, p. 3).

The Directorate of Adult Education (DAE) and the Department of Social and Women's Welfare implemented various schemes for the improvement of literacy among women. Non-formal Education for Women and Girls was implemented by the Directorate of Adult Education in collaboration with UNICEF as a part of on-going programme from 1982. The main objective of this project was to strengthen the component of family life education in general and mother and child care in particular. This project was meant for advancement of women's and girls' education (Sarkar, 1988, p. 15).

In 1975, the International Women's Year, the scheme of Functional Literacy for Adult Women (FLAW) was sanctioned as a

central scheme. It was taken up in the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS). The scheme was to impart knowledge to the adult women through non-formal system of education. It used functional literacy as means of imparting knowledge on (i) health and hygiene, (ii) food and nutrition, (iii) home management, (iv) child care and civic education, and (v) vocational and occupational skills. The scheme was implemented in 766 Integrated Child Development areas upto June 1984, (DAE, 1985, p. 4).

1.5.1 Linking Literacy of Women with Development Programme

The Government of India considered necessary to link literacy with development programmes to gain maximum benefit out of the scheme. While organising Adult Education Programme for women, a link was established with the other developmental activities for achieving maximum participation and benefits in the scheme, like Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas and Integrated Rural Development Programme (DAE, 1985, p. 5).

Incentive Award Scheme for female adult literacy has been designed to promote adult literacy among women in 15-35 age group. In this scheme, awards are given to the Adult Education Centres doing outstanding work in a year for women's education. There are three categories of awards, that is, centre level, district level and state level. One district in each state/union territory which has performed outstanding work for women's literacy is selected for the award. There are

four awards for states and one for union territories, for the best work for female literacy. The awards are given for establishing training institutes for women, functioning of adult education, providing continuing education to women, craft education, or any other programme for women's development (DAE, 1985).

Since, the investigator is originally from Assam, a state of India, and has wide experience of the rural areas, she planned to conduct the present study on literacy programme for rural women in the state. A description of Assam, Assamese people and literacy position, is presented here.

1.6 Assam and Literacy

Assam, one of the Indian states, is situated in the eastern corner of the country. According to 1971 census, the population of Assam was 146.25 lakhs. Seventy-five lakhs of them were of indigenous origin. The remaining 71 lakhs were immigrants. These immigrants were, 24 lakhs Muslims, 12 lakhs tea-garden labourers, 13 lakhs Hindu refugees from East Bengal, 2 lakhs Nepalese and the rest 13 lakhs were Indian citizens from other states. So, in Assam there are people of different religious, caste, ethnic and linguistic groups. According to 1961 census report, 61 per cent people spoke Assamese language, 20 per cent Bengali, 6 per cent Hindi, 3.5 per cent Bodo dialects, 2 per cent Karbi, 1 per cent Mishing and the rest spoke various dialects and languages other than these (Taher, 1980, pp. 52-53).

Doley (1980, p. 37) has described that the population of Assam could be classified into three broad categories, namely, tribals, non-tribal caste Hindus and the scheduled castes. These categories consist of different ethno-cultural communities. The tribals are known as Miris, Kacharies, Bodos, Deoris, Rabhas etc. The non-tribal Hindus consist of Ahom, Brahmins, Kayasthas, Kalitas, Koches, Morans, Muttaks, Chutias etc. The Basfors, Baniyas, Dhobis, Dholis, Hiras, Kaibatras and the Namsudras are included in Scheduled Castes. During the British period many immigrants entered Assam and have become residents of the land. They were mostly from Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and other parts of India. The tea-garden labourers have formed a major group who are collectively known as 'Baganiyas'. These groups of people were brought to Assam from Bihar, Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa by the British tea planters to work on their tea estates. These people, 'gradually have become an integral part of the society of Assam. They belong to the communities of Bhumij, Karmakar, Orang, Tanti etc.

The main religions followed by the people of Assam are Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Vaishnavite and various tribal religions which include traditional beliefs and rites.

Regarding caste, Assamese people do not show any dogmatism. People from lower castes can move up to higher castes through matrimony, education and occupation. There is

no caste rigidity in Assam. The studies conducted by the Dibrugarh University on rural communities of Assam revealed that education, occupation and wealth are considered to be more important than caste or creed in determining one's social status and prestige in the society of Assam.

The information received from the Government of Assam, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Guwahati, regarding population, religion, caste/tribes belonging to different ethnic groups of Assam are presented in Appendices I and II.

1.6.1 Illiteracy in Assam

The state of Assam is full of villages. The people of Assam are mostly cultivators. Saikia (1985, p. 3) stated that 91 per cent of the total population of the state lives in her 22,000 villages scattered all over the state. The people in these villages are mostly illiterate and so the literacy rate of the state is very low. Sharma (1984, p.3) mentioned that the total illiterates in Assam were 44.22 lakhs. The Ministry of Education, Government of India (1985, p. 6) revealed from the 1971 census data (1981 census could not be held in Assam due to disturbances.) that the literacy rate of the state was 28.15 per cent, 36.68 per cent male literacy and 18.63 per cent female literacy. Percentage of the total population of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes was 6.24 and 10.98 and literacy rate was 10.66 and 5.34 per cent respectively. The number of illiterates of the age group 15-35 years was 32.45 lakhs in 1981.

1.6:2 Illiteracy among Women in Assam

The percentages of rural and urban female population in Assam, according to 1971 census, were 43.50 and 3.80 per cent, respectively. The literacy rate of women in Assam was 18.63 per cent in 1971, out of which the literacy rate of rural women was 16.28 and that of urban women was 50.54 per cent. The literacy rate of rural women in Sibsagar district (at that time Jorhat district was a sub-division of Sibsagar district), was the highest among all the districts of Assam. It was 25.80 per cent and the lowest literacy rate was in Karbi Anglong district, that is, 9.46 per cent only (Saikia, 1986, pp. 14-15).

As per 1971 census, more than 90 per cent of the total women population of Assam comprised of rural women. Among rural women 83.49 per cent were illiterate and 5.73 per cent were literate without educational standard, while in urban areas 49.11 per cent were illiterate and 11.69 per cent were literate women without educational standard (Saikia, 1987, p. 4).

The literacy rate of rural and urban women in different districts of Assam in 1971 is presented in Table 1.9.

1.7 Government Efforts for Eradication of Illiteracy in Assam

Adult literacy programme was started in Assam sometime in 1939. Late Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi, the then Chief Minister of Assam started the Jana Shiksha Abhijan (Mass Literacy Campaign) in 1940. Night schools were started

Table 1.9 Districtwise Literacy Rate of Rural and Urban Women of Assam in 1971

| Name of the district | Percentage of literacy | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|-------|
| | Rural | Urban |
| 1. Goalpara | 10.78 | 42.25 |
| 2. Kamrup | 18.57 | 49.06 |
| 3. Darrang | 12.38 | 48.70 |
| 4. Nowgong | 17.79 | 51.33 |
| 5. Sibsagar including Jorhat district | 25.80 | 53.87 |
| 6. Lakhimpur including Dibrugarh | 16.39 | 52.87 |
| 7. Karbi Anglong | 9.46 | 49.70 |
| 8. North Cachar | 14.75 | 59.98 |
| 9. Cachar | 16.89 | 56.06 |

Source: Saikia, P.D., 1986, "Rural Women in India", p. 16.

in several villages to teach literacy to the adult illiterates. The Education Department was given the responsibility of this Mass Literacy Campaign.

The Mass Literacy Movement was first launched in Assam in 1940. Literacy and post literacy classes were started in every sub-division of the state. Within a year it had run 1840 classes including 47 classes for women. Over 21 lakhs persons were given literacy test between September 1940 to August 1942. Till April 1943, libraries, reading rooms, clubs and 220 circulating libraries were established by 407 villages. Teaching materials like charts, posters, pictures, primers and post-literacy readers and the journal Jan Shiksha were distributed

among the learners. The government spent nearly Rs. 2 lakhs from September 1940 to March 1942 for this mass literacy scheme (Dutta, 1986, p.38). The outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 disturbed the normal life of the country. Assam was not free from the effect of it. The literacy programme received a set back and was stopped till 1950.

After achieving independence, the government of India initiated a number of programmes for adult literacy. In 1952, on 2nd October, the Community Development Programme was inaugurated through out the country. Under this programme the Adult Education Programme was a component in the name of Social Education Programme. The aims and objectives of the Social Education Programme were 5 fold - (i) literacy; (ii) health education; (iii) citizenship education; (iv) education for socio-economic development; and (v) teaching of proper utilization of leisure or recreational activities. In rural areas of Assam night schools and literacy centres were organised for adults. Social Education had many programmes within its fold for which the literacy programme was neglected to some extent in Assam.

However, in different periods different programmes were implemented for adult literacy. In 1964, an intensive mass education programme was conducted in 13 community development blocks in Nowgong (now Na-gaon) district of Assam for illiterate adults. The success of this programme encouraged the government of Assam to take up such programmes in other parts

of the state. The tea-garden literacy programme was launched in 7 tea-gardens of the Lakhimpur district of Assam. This programme was also successful.

The Farmers' Functional Literacy Programme (FFLP) was started in Assam in 1972 along with the other states of India. This programme was implemented in certain selected areas of the state. The FFLP has since been conducted as Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP) in Assam.

In 1978, National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) was launched in Assam. This programme has since been expanded to cover all the blocks in Assam. The NAEP has embraced everything in its 3 main objectives - namely, (i) literacy; (ii) awareness; and (iii) functional development for all-round development of the adult illiterates.

State Resource Centre (SRC) for adult education was set up in 1976 in different states of India. In Assam, SRC was set up in May 1984, and it has since been functioning for the promotion of adult literacy. It has since been involved in the preparation and development of reading materials like basic literacy, post-literacy, follow-up, training materials, posters, charts and other teaching-aids. The SRC of Assam has also prepared Literacy Kits for Mass Programme of Functional Literacy since 1986. Besides, seminars, exhibitions, meetings, and training centres are organised by the State Resource Centre of Assam to attract people and to involve them in the programme and to make them aware of the need of adult education (Saikia, 1987).

In 1986, the Mass Programme of Functional Literacy (MPFL) was launched in India. In Assam this programme was implemented in July 1986. It was proposed to cover 10,400 adult illiterates through this programme. The National Cadet Corps (NCC) cadets and National Service Scheme (NSS) students were involved in this programme besides the other voluntary educational and non-educational organisations and agencies.

It was feared that due to population explosion every year, the number of illiterates might have increased, though various literacy programmes had been conducted. So, the Mass Programme of Functional Literacy (MPFL) aimed to cover the increased number of adult illiterates during the coming years. Moreover, the National Education Policy - 1986 and National Literacy Mission (NLM) also planned to cover the increasing illiterate adults. The NLM was introduced in Assam in 1988. The NLM and the new National Education Policy - 1986 (NEP) would do a lot to cover the increased number of illiterates of the state on the same pattern as at the national level. The MPFL would also help to cover the increased number of adult illiterates of the state in the coming years (Saikia, 1985).

The government of Assam has planned to cover 32.45 lakhs of adult illiterates of the age group of 15-35 by 1990 in two phases, as the government of India aims to cover more than 100 million illiterate adults of the age group 15-35 by 1995 in two phases - 40 millions by 1990 and 60 millions by 1995 under the

National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) (Saikia, 1987).

1.7.1 Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP) in Assam

Initially, the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) was started in Assam with 16 projects of State Adult Education Programme (SAEP) and 8 of Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP). These projects expand each year and at the end of Sixth Five Year Plan, total number of SAEP and RFLP were 51 and 20, respectively. The universities, colleges, voluntary agencies and other organisations also participate in this programme under the State Resource Centre (SRC) in collaboration with the Directorate of Adult Education of Assam. Exhibitions have been organised in different parts of the state from time to time for highlighting the programme to the people of the state. Tables 1.10, 1.11, 1.12 and 1.13 show the district-wise allotment of SAEP and RFLP of Adult Education Programme in 1979-80, achievement of RFLP in Assam from 1980-87, coverage of target and achievement of illiterates through RFLP from 1979-87 in Assam and proposed target of projects and adults to be covered through RFLP from 1985-86 to 1989-90, respectively (Saikia, 1987).

In Assam, the scheme of Farmers Functional Literacy Programme (FFLP) was implemented from 1972. This programme has been conducted as Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP) instead of FFLP. The government of India spent lots of funds to run the programme. The utilization of fund for RFLP in

Assam during the Sixth Five Year Plan period is shown in Table 1.14.

Table 1.10 Allotment of Adult Education Projects in Assam from 1979-80

| Name of districts | RFLP [*] | SAEP ^{**} | Total |
|------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------|
| 1. Dibrugarh | 1 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Sibsagar | 1 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Jorhat | 1 | 5 | 6 |
| 4. Na-gaon | 2 | 5 | 7 |
| 5. Kamrup | 1 | 5 | 6 |
| 6. Goalpara | 1 | 5 | 6 |
| 7. Dhubri | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. Kokrajhar | 2 | 5 | 7 |
| 9. Barpeta | 1 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Nalbari | - | 4 | 4 |
| 11. Darrang | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| 12. Sonitpur | 1 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. Lakhimpur | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| 14. Cachar | 1 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. Karimganj | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| 16. Karbi Anglong | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| 17. North Cachar Hills | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Total | 20 | 63 | 83 |

* Each RFLP was having 300 Adult Education Centres except North Cachar Hills where there were 100 centres only.

** Each SAEP was having 100 Adult Education Centres.

Table 1.11 Achievement of RFLP centres in Assam
from 1980-81 to 1986-87

| Year | Number of RFLP centres |
|---------|------------------------|
| 1980-81 | 2340 |
| 1981-82 | 2400 |
| 1982-83 | 2399 |
| 1983-84 | 2386 |
| 1984-85 | 4200 |
| 1985-86 | 4243 |
| 1986-87 | 5790 |

Table 1.12 Coverage of Illiterates by RFLP in Assam
(Target and Achievement) from 1979-80 to
1986-87

| (in lakhs) | | |
|------------|--------|-------------|
| Year | Target | Achievement |
| 1979-80 | --- | 0.62 |
| 1980-81 | 0.72 | 0.68 |
| 1981-82 | 0.72 | 0.69 |
| 1982-83 | 0.72 | 0.73 |
| 1983-84 | 0.72 | 0.73 |
| 1984-85 | 1.26 | 1.16 |
| 1985-86 | 1.53 | 1.27 |
| 1986-87 | 1.74 | 1.74 |

Table 1.13 Proposed Target of Projects and Adults to be Covered in Assam through RFLP from 1985-86 to 1989-90

| Year | Number of RFLP projects | Adults to be covered (in lakhs) |
|---------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1985-86 | 20 | 1.74 |
| 1986-87 | 20 | 1.74 |
| 1987-88 | 20 | 1.74 |
| 1988-89 | 20 | 1.74 |
| 1989-90 | 20 | 1.74 |
| Total | 100 | 8.70 |

Till 1985, Assam has covered 9.33 lakhs illiterates of 15-35 years age group through RFLP, SAEP, voluntary agencies, organisations, universities and colleges. The remaining 23.12 lakhs out of the total target of 32.45 lakhs illiterates are expected to be covered by 1990. From the years 1985-86 to 1989-90, 8.70 lakhs illiterate adults have to be covered through RFLP. The remaining part of the proposed target of illiterate adults would be covered through SAEP, voluntary agencies, organisations, universities and colleges. (Saikia, 1987).

Table 1.14 Utilization of Funds during the 6th Plan in Assam
Rs. in lakhs

| Scheme | Years | | | | | Total |
|--------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| | 1980-81 | 1981-82 | 1982-83 | 1983-84 | 1984-85 | |
| RFLP (Central scheme) | 15.35 | 41.60 | 41.60 | 74.95 | 137.90 | 311.40 |

Source: Ministry of Education, Government of India, 1985, p.7.

Besides providing funds for smooth running of RFLP programme, the government gave physical facilities like, textbooks, slates, pencils and so on free of cost to the learners. The government appointed numerous personnels all over the state to make the programme a success and to achieve the desired goal.

The total number of centres and enrolment in RFLP during the Sixth Five Year Plan period in Assam is shown in Table 1.15.

Table 1.15 Total Number of Centres of RFLP and Enrolment of learners during the 6th Plan in Assam

| Programme | (Enrolment in lakhs) | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|----------------------|-----|---------|-----|---------|-----|---------|-----|---------|---------------|
| | Years | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1980-81 | | 1981-82 | | 1982-83 | | 1983-84 | | 1984-85 | |
| | C | E | C | E | C | E | C | E | C | E |
| | | | | | | | | | | (Provisional) |
| RFLP | 2134 | .68 | 2295 | .74 | 1213 | .40 | 1429 | .45 | 2815 | .82 |

Source: Ministry of Education, Government of India, 1985, p. 8.

C = Centres

E = Enrolment

The rural Functional Literacy Programme has been conducted from 1979-80 in 16 districts of Assam out of 17. In the Jorhat district of Assam, one project of RFLP was sanctioned which is still working in 4 community development blocks of the district (SFC, Assam, p. 6).

Yearwise enrolment of male and female learners of RFLP

in Jorhat district of Assam during the years of 1980-81 to 1985-86 is shown in Table 1.16.

Table 1.16 Year and Sexwise Enrolment in RFLP in Jorhat District of Assam from 1980-81 to 1985-86

| Learners' sex | Years | | | | | | Total |
|---------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| | 1980-81 | 1981-82 | 1982-83 | 1983-84 | 1984-85 | 1985-86 | |
| Male | 5777 | 2770 | 2651 | 4376 | 2144 | 2357 | 20075 |
| Female | 2974 | 3726 | 3822 | 4325 | 3599 | 4066 | 22512 |
| Total | 8751 | 6496 | 6473 | 8701 | 5743 | 6423 | 42587 |

Source: District Adult Education Office, Jorhat, Assam.

The total coverage of learners of RFLP in Jorhat district of Assam in the year 1986-87 is shown in Table 1.17.

Table 1.17 Caste and Sexwise Distribution of Learners covered through RFLP in the year 1986-87 in Jorhat District of Assam

| Caste | 1986-87 | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------|--------|-------|
| | Male | Female | Total |
| General | 404 | 1328 | 1732 |
| Scheduled Caste/ Scheduled Tribe | 577 | 1152 | 1729 |
| Others | 1476 | 1475 | 2951 |
| Total | 2457 | 3955 | 6412 |

Source: District Adult Education Office, Jorhat Assam.

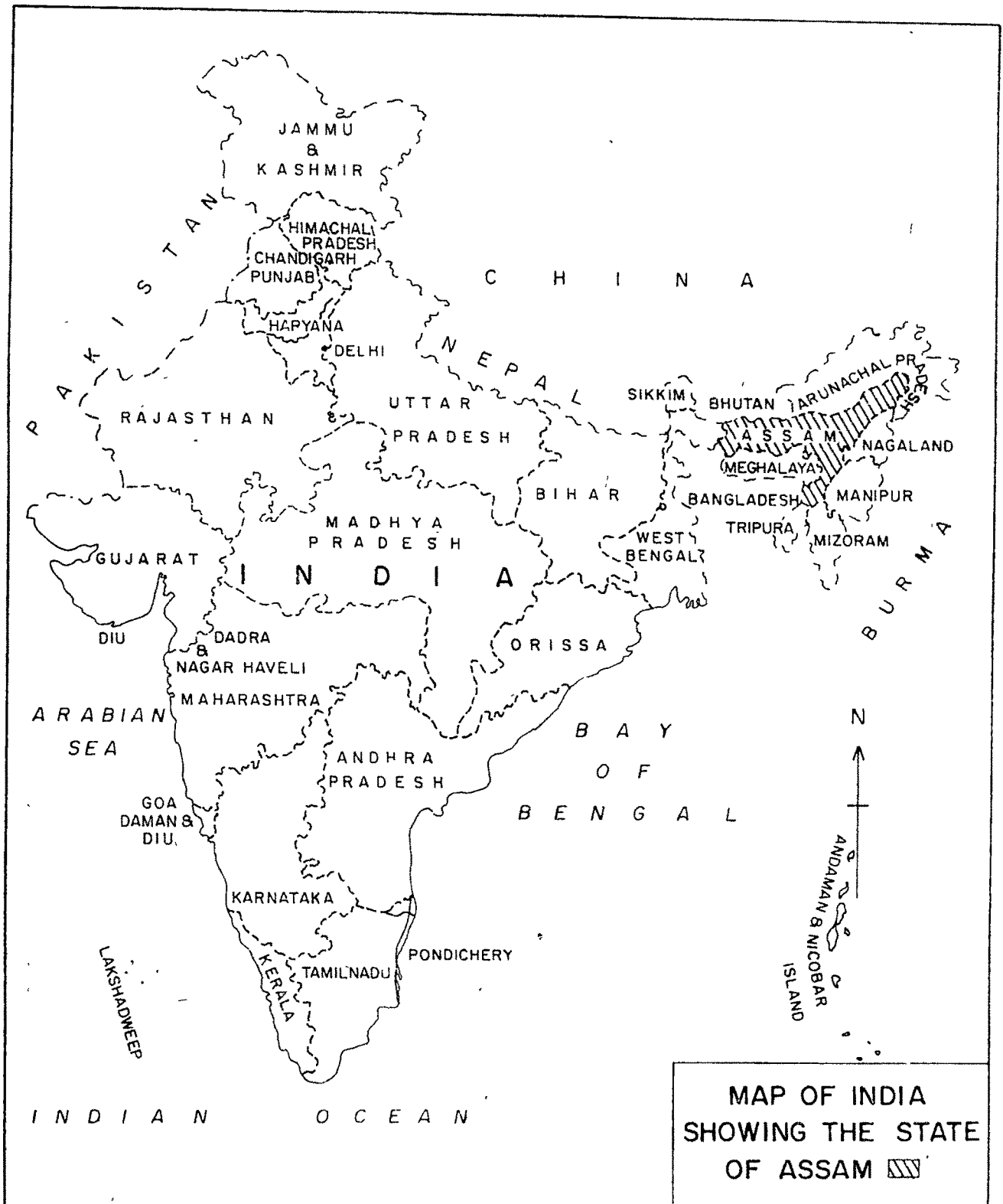
The massive literacy programme as envisaged in the new National Education Policy - 1986 and National Literacy Mission (NLM) would cover a big group of illiterate and also the increasing illiterate adults in Assam. In Jorhat district the National Literacy Mission is implemented from 1988. During the Seventh Five Year Plan period, it is proposed to cover 8.70 lakhs adult illiterates through RFLP (SRC, Assam, p. 13).

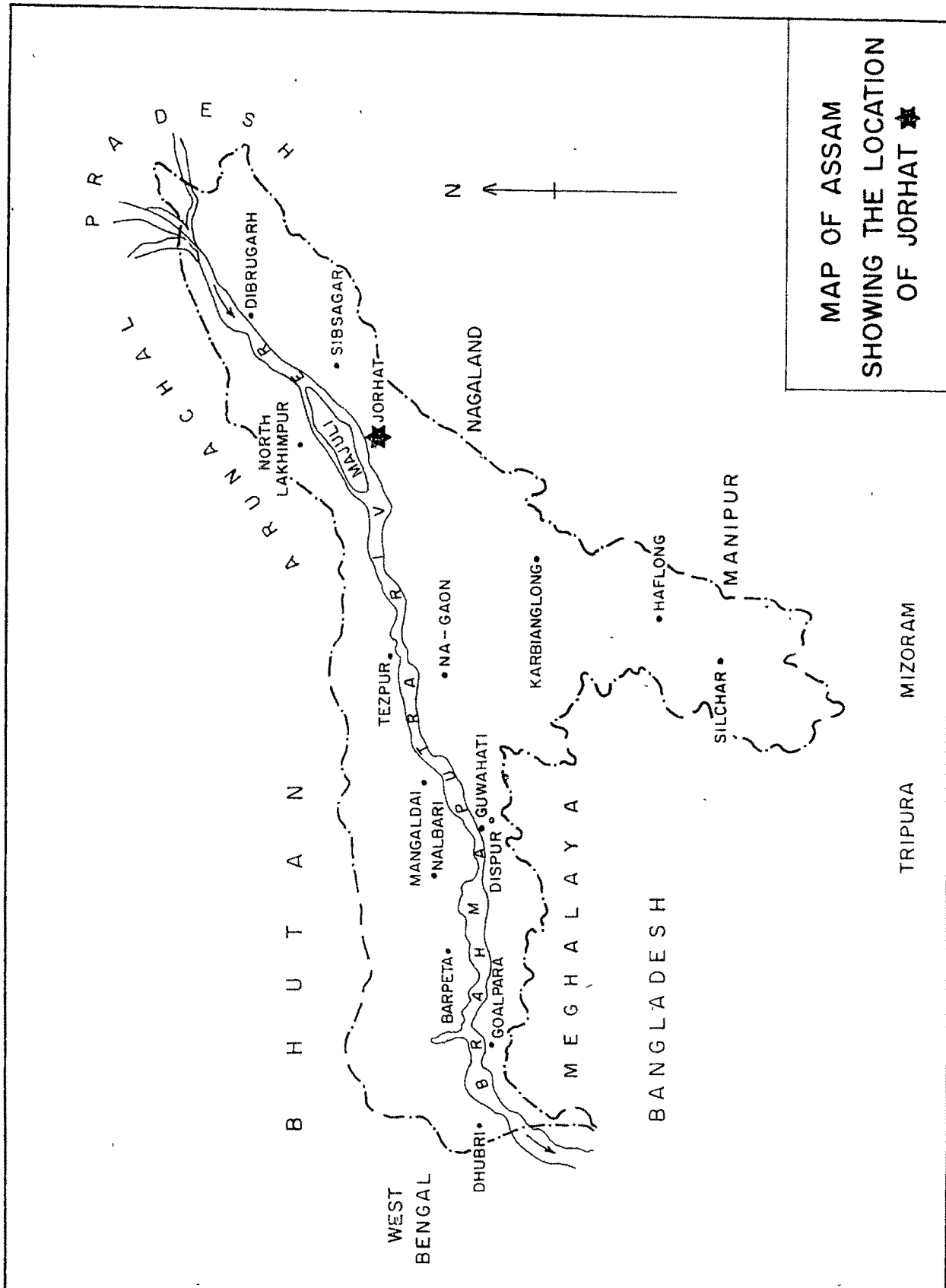
Table 1.18 would give an idea about area, population, rate of literacy, sex ratio, and Adult Education Projects of Assam.

Table 1.18 Assam at a Glance

| Particulars | Description |
|--|--|
| 1. Area | 78,523 sq.km. |
| 2. Districts | 18 |
| 3. Development Blocks | 130 |
| 4. Total population | 1,46,25,152 (1971 census) |
| 5. Projected population | 199 lakhs (1981) |
| 6. Density of population | 254 per sq. km. |
| 7. Literacy rate | 28.14 per cent (1971 census) Male = 37 per cent, Female = 19 per cent |
| 8. Sex ratio | 896 female per 1000 male |
| 9. Number of Adult Education districts | = 17 |
| 10. Number of Adult Education Projects | = SAEF = 63, RFLP = 20 |

Source: State Resource Centre for Adult Education, Assam, 1987.





1.8 Description of Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP)

Farmers' Training and Functional Literacy Programme was implemented by the government for the benefit of the rural illiterates. The programme was launched with an aim to link literacy with economy and social development. Later in 1978, the functional literacy component of Farmers' Training and Functional Literacy Programme and the on-going scheme of Non-formal Education Programme (NFEP) for 15-25 years were merged together and a new programme was formed, namely, Rural Functional Literacy Project (RFLP). Initially there were 205 projects (144 FFLPs and 61 NFEPs). New projects were added every year and by the end of the Sixth Five Year Plan as many as 513 RFLPs were sanctioned to different states and union territories providing at least one project to each revenue district. One RFLP consists of 100 to 300 Adult Education Centres (AECs). Each AEC is required to register 30 adult learners in the age group 15-35 years. Normally, the functional area of a project (RFLP) comprises of one or two community development blocks.

Right from the inception of the programme, RFLP is primarily meant for rural areas and the priority groups under the project are the illiterate population of the specified age group who reside in the rural areas. The objectives of RFLP can be defined as :

- To develop in the learners abilities to read, write and compute (Literacy);

- To raise the functional capability of the learners with regard to their personal, economic and social life (Functionality), and
- To create awareness among learners regarding their personal and social predicament (Awareness).
(Mathur, 1988; p. 5)

The duration of the programme is 10 months. The medium of instruction is the local language. The classes of Rural Functional Literacy Programme have to be conducted for two to two and a half hours per day. A programme of about 300 hours has to be spread over a year of which 150 hours have to be devoted to teaching literacy, 100 hours to awareness and 50 hours to functionality. The 150 hours of teaching should enable the learners to acquire basic skills in reading, writing and numeracy. Through 100 hours teaching for awareness, knowledge has to be imparted to the adult learners about the matters related to day-to-day life of the learners and also related to their field of work or occupation. For the functionality aspect, 50 hours have to be spent in making the learners practice applying the knowledge gained through the classes of RFLP to practical fields.

Teachers (instructresses/instructors) are generally matriculate and are selected from the locality. They have to take training twice a year for effective teaching of adult learners.

- a) Training I : The teachers are required to undergo a pre-service training of 8 days before joining the service.

- b) Training II : After conducting the classes for 4-5 months, the teachers have to undertake an inservice training for 6 days only.

There is one supervisor to help the teachers who gives necessary suggestions. Teachers act as a liaison between the learners and the supervisors. There are prescribed textbooks in the regional language which include whole courses of RFLP on literacy, awareness and functionality (Sharma, 1984).

The University Grants Commission Working Group report (1983) has stated:

"Although literacy begins by acquiring of the three R's - reading, writing and arithmetic, it is not all. It has to be supported by functional development and awareness. It is inseparable from the total development process of a nation particularly its socio-economic aspects. The commonality of both literacy and development is man. Adult literacy should not be considered as a separate programme or external input. It is a part and parcel of development process and should therefore be built in as integral component of the various development programmes." (Dutta, 1986, pp. 135-136)

There are 3 components of the Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP), namely, literacy, awareness, and functionality. Literacy means to make an illiterate person able to read, write and compute, and also develop his/her ability to make use of this knowledge in day-to-day life.

To cultivate awareness means to make an illiterate person conscious of his or her rights and duties as a citizen of the country and to acquaint him/her with daily life

problems, and also the ways to solve them. It also means to enable the person to act on the issues related to every day life of the person, family, community and the society.

Functionality aspect of Rural Functional Literacy Programme deals with the job of the adult illiterate. Through it the individual is helped to improve the skills of his/her present job, and remove the drudgery in the job. This may be the most effective aspect of the RFLP to motivate the illiterate adult learners to become literate. Functionality should teach an adult learner the skills of productive use of his time for economic benefits.

Kiwia (1989, p. 24) has quoted that Titmus has defined functional literacy as the ability to read and write and calculate so that a person may engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also to enable him to continue to use reading, writing and calculations for his own and the community's development. He further quoted that, according to Gray, a person is functionally literate when he has acquired the knowledge and skills of reading, writing and notation which allows him to engage effectively in all those activities which are normally considered as literacy.

Kiwia also mentioned the description of functional literacy given by Viscus as the programme should have the following features - First, it is selective and is offered to adults who can draw the most personal benefits and make the

greatest contribution to national, economic and social progress as a result of becoming literate. Secondly, functional literacy programmes are aimed at those groups of people to whom illiteracy presents the most immediate block to progress but who stand the best chance of using it and thus retaining literacy skills once they are acquired. Thirdly, functional literacy programmes are intensive, so that the learner makes rapid progress by using his newly acquired knowledge and is thus motivated to continue learning. Finally, functional literacy is work-oriented and usually integrated into economic activities thus changing the learner's whole approach to the world of work.

1.8.1 Monitoring and Evaluation of RFLP

There is procedure of monitoring and evaluation of the Rural Functional Literacy Programme for effective implementation of the programme. At the outset, the volunteers of the programme are oriented for two to three days on specific aspects relating to monitoring and evaluation. Evaluation has to be made according to the instruction of the Directorate of Adult Education, Government of India. There are 3 levels for monitoring of the programme. They are, (i) national level, (ii) state level, and (iii) district level.

Monitoring specifically needs to be done twice for a programme, initially and terminally. Initial monitoring report has to be given immediately after the commencement of the programme. Terminal monitoring report has to be given

soon after completion of the programme with the information of achievement of the programme (SRC, Assam).

There are four major aspects of learner evaluation. They are - (a) initial evaluation; (b) periodic progress evaluation; (c) summative evaluation; and (d) evaluation of retention of learning.

a) Initial evaluation is to see the level of the learner at the entrance to compare with the gain at the end of the programme.

b) Periodic progress evaluation is to get an idea of ongoing progress of the learner.

c) Summative evaluation is to see at the termination of the programme to find out how much learning has taken place.

d) Evaluation of retention of learning is to find out how much learning the learner has retained and applied in his everyday life.

After completion of the prescribed course of RFLP, final evaluation has to be done. The progress of the learner is evaluated in 3 phases. First evaluation is done at the end of 4 months of teaching. Second evaluation is done at the end of 6th month and the final evaluation is done at the end of 8th month of the programme (Mathur, 1985).

The learner is considered to be literate if he or she has achieved at least the level of 'average' in reading, writing and numeracy (SRC, Assam, p. 11).

Taking into consideration all the above matter, the investigator planned to conduct a study on the impact of Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP) on rural women of Jorhat district of Assam. The investigator is originally from the state of Assam and by serving in the field of extension education, has gained wide experience and knowledge of rural areas of Assam. She has collected information from various sources and found that, so far, no such study on the impact of RFLP has been done in Assam.

The routine evaluation and monitoring of the programme of adult education is made from time to time by the related government departments and agencies. This evaluation and monitoring is generally time-bound and restricted. It is to be conducted as per laid down directions of the authority. The factors associated with learning of the adult learners may not be considered in these evaluation and monitoring systems. As such, they may not present a complete picture of the programme. Realizing the lacuna in this evaluation, the investigator wants to investigate into the programme of adult education independantly to find out which factors are associated with the impact of the programme. Moreover, she wants to know to what extent the neo-literates learned, retained and applied the knowledge gained through the classes

of Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP).

1.9 Statement of the Problem

"Impact of Rural Functional Literacy Programme on rural women of Jorhat district of Assam", who have attended the classes of Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP) during the year 1986-87 with respect to some selected variables. The study is an attempt to measure the level of changes that may have taken place among the rural women of Jorhat district of Assam after implementation of the programme.

The government has been trying to eradicate the illiteracy from the country and run various literacy projects and programmes. Projects or programmes which are implemented need to be evaluated from time to time to find out their effectiveness. So, it is of consequence to find out the impact of the programme of Rural Functional Literacy Programme on rural people of the country. This impact may be influenced by some factors which are associated with it. These factors may be personal, family or institutional. Personal factors may be the learners' age, religion, caste/sect, marital status, education, occupation, type of work, number of hours of work, ethnic group and value for literacy education put by the learners. Family factors may be type and size of the learner's family and number of children in the family and also the encouragement for literacy education received from the family members. The institutional factors may be like teachers' effectiveness in teaching and the facilities available in the

classroom of the learner. These factors may be described as follows :

I Personal Factors

Age: Age of the adult learners may play an important role in the process of learning of the adults. The learners in an adult education centre are of different age groups ranging from 15 to 35 years. Older learners may learn at a slower speed than the young learners. Older learners may have less memory power, less interest in learning, but more health problems like poor eye-sight, difficulty in hearing and other problems regarding family than the young group of learners. On the other hand, young women may have other problems like child bearing and child rearing activities besides other household responsibilities which may hinder their learning and create difficulties in attending the classes of RFLP.

Religion, Caste/Sect and Ethnic Group: These factors may also have effect on the impact of RFLP on women. Superstitions and religious customs and traditions may disturb the women and obstruct their mixing with learners of different religions, caste or sects and ethnic groups which may, in turn, affect the learning. Some learners may not like to come out of their homes to learn in the RFLP classes due to religious or social barriers. So, religion, caste/sect and ethnic group may hinder the women's learning.

Marital Status: Marital status is also an another important factor which may influence learning of the adult learners. The married women may have some more household responsibilities than unmarried ones. They may not get time to study or revise lessons at home. Unmarried learners may have less household burden, less obstacles to come out for the classes and may have more time to study at home and as such this later group may increase more interest and ability to learn.

Value for Literacy Education: Those learners who place more value on literacy education may learn in the class more attentively and try to retain the learning. These learners may have more interest and willingness to learn than the learners who place less value on literacy education.

Education: Educational level of the learners may have some effect on the impact of the programme. In the Rural Functional Literacy Programme along with the illiterates sometimes those learners are included who have read upto a few classes in their childhood and have forgotten what they have learnt or who can only read or write or count. The learners who have previous schooling experience and knowledge may not find it strange to attend the classes and may recall the past learning experience and so learning may take place quicker than in the case of the other women who have never availed of any school experience.

Occupation, Type of Work and Number of Hours of Work :

Occupation, type of work and number of hours of work influence the learning of the adult learners. Those who work and those who work for more hours a day may get less time to attend the classes of RFLP or to study at home than those learners who do not work or work for less hours a day. The former group may get tired after the day's labour so may not learn properly like the latter group.

Type of work also influences the learning of the adults. Farm labourers or tea-garden labourers may have to work harder than the other labourers such as office attenders, ayas or maid servants. Naturally, heavy workers may become more tired due to their work than other workers. The learners of the heavy working group may not be able to concentrate their minds in the classes as the learners of other working group.

II Family Factors

Type and Size of the Family and Number of Children in the Family : Family factors like type of the family, size of the family and also number of children in the family may have some influence on learning of the women learners. Women are more tied-up with the home affairs than men - their counterparts. According to the type and the size of the family the learners get time and inspiration to study. The type and the size of the family and number of children in the family create favourable or reverse atmosphere for study at home or even outside the home. The women belonging to small family with very few

members and children may get more time to spare for study or to attend the classes regularly than the women from big family and those who have more children in their family.

Family Encouragement: Encouragement given by the family members may have great effect on the adult learners. The encouragement received from the family members may not motivate the adult learners to join the literacy classes and continue to attend the classes and also to revise their lessons at home. So, family encouragement is one of the factors which may influence the learning of the adult women.

III Institutional Factors

Teacher Effectiveness and Classroom Facilities: Teacher effectiveness and classroom facilities may have great influence on the learning of the adult learners. A teacher may play her role as change agent to the highest extent which can help the adult learners to learn in the class more effectively. An efficient teacher is likely to make learning effective and permanent. On the other hand, classroom facilities are not less important than any other factor which influence the learning of the adult learners. The classroom facilities may have relationship with the impact of RFLP. The atmosphere around the learners, if pleasant and attractive, may give more encouragement to learn attentively. Seating arrangement, light and ventilation and facility of drinking water are most necessary to attract the learners and create a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom. Adequate facilities add satisfaction to the mind of

the learners. Mental satisfaction and physical comfort lead the adult learners to learn more satisfactorily. Physical comfort and easy process of teaching combined with teaching aids satisfy the learners and help them to learn properly.

1.10 Justification

The success of any developmental programme is in bringing about the desired changes on the part of the target group. Achievement of desired changes depends largely upon the implementation of the programme. Sometimes, expected results are not achieved and programmes fail. This may be because of inefficient implementation of the programme. It is, therefore, necessary to measure the success of the programme - whether it has achieved the set objectives or has failed to achieve them.

The government of India has implemented various programmes and schemes for the eradication of illiteracy among the people of the country. Projects or programmes implemented by any organisation must have some impact on the beneficiaries for whom the programme is made. Impact may be positive or negative, more or less, and stable or unstable. However, it is necessary in each case, to examine the impact after implementation of the programme. It may help the persons involved in planning and implementing of the programme, for future improvement, by adding or omitting some points which become visible after examining its impact. So, it becomes important to measure the extent to which the objectives are fulfilled and its impact on the target group.

The impact study would be valuable theoretically for the government as well as the country as the government has invested a large amount of the national budget for eradication of illiteracy among the people. The development of the country depends upon the people of the country. If the people cannot take part in the developmental activities of the country due to lack of knowledge and education, all efforts of the government to develop the country will go in vain. The impact studies may reveal the weaknesses of the areas of adult education such as - management, planning, policy making, training of functionaries, construction and development of curriculum, consistency of the courses, methods and media of teaching, evaluation, physical and psychological environment of the classroom, psychology of the illiterate adults, physical abilities of the learners, motivational aspects on the part of the learners and teachers, facilities for the neo-literates for retention of learning and so on. The study may provide not only guidelines or directions for execution of policies and programmes of adult literacy but also may suggest different corrective actions wherever and whenever necessary. It may also find out whether the adult literacy education is integrated with the developmental work or not. Studies of this type may bring out pictures of not only skin-deep knowledge about adult education, but may squeeze out detailed information. The findings of the study may become an indicator for determining the effectiveness of the programme concerning literacy skills - reading, writing and numeracy - areas of functional knowledge and extent of

participation in economic, social and political fields.

Raghavan (1987, p. 7) has explained the literacy as , 'Literacy is most valuable and necessary as it changes the very ways of thinking and the basic attitude of mind which mere training or provision of information cannot'. He also stated that to know how much the literacy programmes were successful and how much the goals were achieved, one had to evaluate the programme. He further said that, evaluation had become sophisticated and mathematical. In fact, the essence of all evaluation was to find out whether the work was done in a right way or not and whether the goal was achieved or not. All evaluation results should feed back the plans, policies and programmes and in return must result in better implementation, otherwise, the evaluation had no value.

The Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP) is one such programme, the government has implemented since long for the eradication of illiteracy among rural adults of the country. This programme could not be exempted from the above facts. It also must have some impact on the adult learners.

The main objective of RFLP is to bring about overall development of the illiterate sections of the society by imparting literacy, functionality and awareness. The RFLP aims at providing the rural illiterate learners, skills for self-development and also enables them to take active part in national development. It tries to eradicate illiteracy

and ignorance which are the main obstacles in development of a nation and the cause of backwardness. The RFLP is a learner based programme which is flexible and need-based, made for upliftment of the unprivileged illiterate masses of the country who have been deprived of education at the right time which leads to the deprivation of many other things of human life. The government has run this programme with great hope and spent lots of funds, given facilities, engaged personnel and setup departments for adult literacy. It is most necessary to find out the effectiveness of the programme and benefits gained by the participants of the programme. Periodic evaluation, research and short research studies on the impact of the programme will help to make the programme more effective. Such studies will help the government as well as the administrators, planners, policy makers and teachers to identify the strong and weak points of the programme by finding out the level of impact. There may be some factors which affect the impact of the programme. These factors may be personal, family and institutional factors. Personal factors may be age, religion, caste/sect, marital status, education, occupation, value for literacy education and ethnic group. Family factors may be type and size of the family, number of children in the family and family encouragement for literacy education. Institutional factors may be teacher and classroom facilities. All these factors may have more or less influence on the learning of the adult learners who attend the classes of Rural Functional Literacy Programme.

The present study is likely to find out the factors which are related to the impact of RFLP on rural women. It may help in future to take care of the factors for achieving better success of the programme. Neo-literates may relapse into illiteracy if they are not contacted after completion of the programme. The study will help in pointing out the extent of retention of the learners. It will help the planners of the programme to develop future post-literacy and follow-up programmes in a more effective way. If the desired impact is not found, the pains taken by the government, university and college students, voluntary agencies, organisations and the people who were engaged in this task, will be futile. The study may be able to provide scientifically obtained information and help in formulation and revision of the policies and to make modifications for actual operation of the project.

Keeping in view all the above facts, the investigator has realized that it is important to examine the fruitfulness of the Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP). So, she has planned to find out the impact of the RFLP in relation to some selected factors.

1.11 Objectives of the Study

- 1.11.1 To find out the level of impact of Rural Functional Literacy Programme on rural women of Jorhat district of Assam in terms of the following :
- a. Level of literacy achievement
 - b. Level of awareness

- c. Level of functionality
- d. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding usefulness of RFLP
- e. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding women development through education.

1.11.2 To find out the level of impact of Rural Functional Literacy Programme on rural women of Jorhat district of Assam with respect to their age in terms of the following :

- a. Level of literacy achievement
- b. Level of awareness
- c. Level of functionality
- d. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding usefulness of RFLP
- e. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding women development through education.

1.11.3 To find out the level of impact of Rural Functional Literacy Programme on rural women of Jorhat district of Assam with respect to their religion in terms of the following :

- a. Level of literacy achievement
- b. Level of awareness
- c. Level of functionality
- d. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding usefulness of RFLP

- e. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding women development through education.

1.11.4 To find out the level of impact of Rural Functional Literacy Programme on rural women of Jorhat district of Assam with respect to their caste/sect in terms of the following :

- a. Level of literacy achievement
- b. Level of awareness
- c. Level of functionality
- d. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding usefulness of RFLP
- e. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding women development through education.

1.11.5 To find out the level of impact of Rural Functional Literacy Programme on rural women of Jorhat district of Assam with respect to their marital status in terms of the following :

- a. Level of literacy achievement
- b. Level of awareness
- c. Level of functionality
- d. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding usefulness of RFLP
- e. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding women development through education.

1.11.6 To find out the level of impact of Rural Functional Literacy Programme on rural women of Jorhat district

of Assam with respect to their level of education in terms of the following :

- a. Level of literacy achievement
- b. Level of awareness
- c. Level of functionality
- d. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding usefulness of RFLP
- e. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding women development through education.

1.11.7 To find out the level of impact of Rural Functional Literacy Programme on rural women of Jorhat district of Assam with respect to their involvement in occupation in terms of the following:

- a. Level of literacy achievement
- b. Level of awareness
- c. Level of functionality
- d. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding usefulness of RFLP
- e. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding women development through education.

1.11.8 To find out the level of impact of Rural Functional Literacy Programme on rural women of Jorhat district of Assam with respect to their type of work in terms of the following :

- a. Level of literacy achievement
- b. Level of awareness

- c. Level of functionality
- d. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding usefulness of RFLP
- e. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding women development through education.

1.11.9 To find out the level of impact of Rural Functional Literacy Programme on rural women of Jorhat district of Assam with respect to their number of hours of work in terms of the following :

- a. Level of literacy achievement
- b. Level of awareness
- c. Level of functionality
- d. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding usefulness of RFLP
- e. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding women development through education.

1.11.10 To find out the level of impact of Rural Functional Literacy Programme on rural women of Jorhat district of Assam with respect to their ethnic group in terms of the following :

- a. Level of literacy achievement
- b. Level of awareness
- c. Level of functionality
- d. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding usefulness of RFLP
- e. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding women development through education.

- 1.11.11 To find out the level of impact of Rural Functional Literacy Programme on rural women of Jorhat district of Assam with respect to their value for literacy education in terms of the following :
- a. Level of literacy achievement
 - b. Level of awareness
 - c. Level of functionality
 - d. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding usefulness of RFLP
 - e. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding women development through education.
- 1.11.12 To find out the level of impact of Rural Functional Literacy Programme on rural women of Jorhat district of Assam with respect to their type of the family in terms of the following :
- a. Level of literacy achievement
 - b. Level of awareness
 - c. Level of functionality
 - d. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding usefulness of RFLP
 - e. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding women development through education.
- 1.11.13 To find out the level of impact of Rural Functional Literacy Programme on rural women of Jorhat district of Assam with respect to their size of the family

in terms of the following :

- a. Level of literacy achievement
- b. Level of awareness
- c. Level of functionality
- d. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding usefulness of RFLP
- e. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding women development through education.

1.11.14 To find out the level of impact of Rural Functional Literacy Programme on rural women of Jorhat district of Assam with respect to the number of children in the family in terms of the following :

- a. Level of literacy achievement
- b. Level of awareness
- c. Level of functionality
- d. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding usefulness of RFLP
- e. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding women development through education.

1.11.15 To find out the level of impact of Rural Functional Literacy Programme on rural women of Jorhat district of Assam with respect to their family encouragement in terms of the following :

- a. Level of literacy achievement
- b. Level of awareness
- c. Level of functionality

- d. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding usefulness of RFLP
- e. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding women development through education.

1.11.16 To find out the level of impact of Rural Functional Literacy Programme on rural women of Jorhat district of Assam with respect to their concept of teacher effectiveness in term of the following :

- a. Level of literacy achievement
- b. Level of awareness
- c. Level of functionality
- d. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding usefulness of RFLP
- e. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding women development through education.

1.11.17 To find out the level of impact of Rural Functional Literacy Programme on rural women of Jorhat district of Assam with respect to their classroom facilities in terms of the following :

- a. Level of literacy achievement
- b. Level of awareness
- c. Level of functionality
- d. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding usefulness of RFLP
- e. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding women development through education.

1.12 Assumptions of the Study

The study is based on the following assumptions :

- 1.12.1 The Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP) has some impact on the rural women of Jorhat district of Assam.
- 1.12.2 There will be rural women of different age groups in Jorhat district of Assam who have attended the classes of RFLP in the year 1986-87.
- 1.12.3 There will be rural women of different religions in Jorhat district of Assam who have attended the classes of RFLP in the year 1986-87.
- 1.12.4 There will be rural women of different castes/sects in Jorhat district of Assam who have attended the classes of RFLP during the year 1986-87.
- 1.12.5 The rural women of Jorhat district of Assam who have attended the classes of RFLP in the year 1986-87 will have different marital status.
- 1.12.6 There will be rural women of different levels of education in Jorhat district of Assam who have attended the classes of RFLP during the year 1986-87.
- 1.12.7 The rural women of Jorhat district of Assam who have attended the classes of RFLP in the year 1986-87 will be having different occupations.

- 1.12.8 The rural women of Jorhat district of Assam who have attended the RFLP classes during the year 1986-87 will be engaged in their work for different hours.
- 1.12.9 The rural women of Jorhat district of Assam who have attended the classes of RFLP during the year 1986-87 will belong to different ethnic groups.
- 1.12.10 The rural women of Jorhat district of Assam who have attended the classes of RFLP during the year 1986-87 will have different values for literacy education.
- 1.12.11 The rural women of Jorhat district of Assam who have attended the classes of RFLP during the year 1986-87 will have different types of family, sizes of family and the numbers of children in the family.
- 1.12.12 The rural women of Jorhat district of Assam who have attended the classes of RFLP in the year 1986-87 will have different levels of family encouragement for literacy education.
- 1.12.13 Teachers of different centres of RFLP who conducted the classes in 1986-87 in Jorhat district of Assam will differ regarding their characteristics.
- 1.12.14 Classroom facilities will differ from centre to centre where the classes of RFLP were conducted for rural women in the year 1986-87 in Jorhat district of Assam.

1.12.15 The women of Jorhat district of Assam who have attended the classes of RFLP during the year 1986-87 will be able to express their opinions regarding usefulness of RFLP and women development through education.

1.13 Null Hypotheses

1.13.1 According to age, there will be no significant differences among the rural women of Jorhat district of Assam who have attended the classes of Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP) during the year 1986-87 regarding :

- a. Level of literacy achievement
- b. Level of awareness
- c. Level of functionality
- d. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding usefulness of RFLP
- e. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding women development through education.

1.13.2 According to religion, there will be no significant differences among the rural women of Jorhat district of Assam who have attended the classes of Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP) during the year 1986-87 regarding :

- a. Level of literacy achievement
- b. Level of awareness
- c. Level of functionality
- d. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding usefulness of RFLP

- e. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding women development through education.

1.13.3 According to caste/sect, there will be no significant differences among the rural women of Jorhat district of Assam who have attended the classes of Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP) during the year 1986-87 regarding :

- a. Level of literacy achievement
- b. Level of awareness
- c. Level of functionality
- d. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding usefulness of RFLP
- e. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding women development through education.

1.13.4 According to marital status, there will be no significant differences among the rural women of Jorhat district of Assam who have attended the classes of Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP) during the year 1986-87 regarding :

- a. Level of literacy achievement
- b. Level of awareness
- c. Level of functionality
- d. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding usefulness of RFLP
- e. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding women development through education.

1.13.5 According to level of education, there will be no significant differences among the rural women of Jorhat district of Assam who have attended the classes of Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP) during the year 1986-87 regarding :

- a. Level of literacy achievement
- b. Level of awareness
- c. Level of Functionality
- d. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding usefulness of RFLP
- e. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding women development through education.

1.13.6 According to involvement in occupation, there will be no significant differences among the rural women of Jorhat district of Assam, who have attended the classes of Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP) during the year 1986-87 regarding :

- a. Level of literacy achievement
- b. Level of awareness
- c. Level of functionality
- d. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding usefulness of RFLP
- e. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding women development through education.

1.13.7 According to type of work, there will be no significant differences among the rural women of Jorhat district of

year 1986-87 regarding :

- a. Level of literacy achievement
- b. Level of awareness
- c. Level of functionality
- d. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding usefulness of RFLP
- e. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding women development through education.

1.13.10 According to the value for literacy education, there will be no significant differences among the rural women of Jorhat district of Assam who have attended the classes of Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP) during the year 1986-87 regarding :

- a. Level of literacy achievement
- b. Level of awareness
- c. Level of functionality
- d. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding usefulness of RFLP
- e. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding women development through education.

1.13.11 According to the type of family, there will be no significant differences among the rural women of Jorhat district of Assam who have attended the classes of Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP) during the year 1986-87 regarding :

- a. Level of literacy achievement

- b. Level of awareness
- c. Level of functionality
- d. Development of opinion of the respondents
regarding usefulness of RFLP
- e. Development of opinion of the respondents
regarding women development through education.

1.13.12 According to the size of family, there will be no significant differences among the rural women of Jorhat district of Assam who have attended the classes of Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP) during the year 1986-87 regarding :

- a. Level of literacy achievement
- b. Level of awareness
- c. Level of functionality
- d. Development of opinion of the respondents
regarding usefulness of RFLP
- e. Development of opinion of the respondents
regarding women development through education.

1.13.13 According to the number of the children in the family, there will be no significant differences among the rural women of Jorhat district of Assam who have attended the classes of Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP) during the year 1986-87 regarding :

- a. Level of literacy achievement
- b. Level of awareness
- c. Level of functionality

- d. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding usefulness of RFLP
- e. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding women development through education.

1.13.14 According to the family encouragement, there will be no significant differences among the rural women of Jorhat district of Assam who have attended the classes of Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP) during the year 1986-87 regarding :

- a. Level of literacy achievement
- b. Level of awareness
- c. Level of functionality
- d. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding usefulness of RFLP
- e. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding women development through education.

1.13.15 According to the concept of teacher effectiveness, there will be no significant differences among the rural women of Jorhat district of Assam who have attended the classes of Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP) during the year 1986-87 regarding :

- a. Level of literacy achievement
- b. Level of awareness
- c. Level of functionality
- d. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding usefulness of RFLP

- e. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding women development through education.

1.13.16 According to the classroom facilities, there will be no significant differences among the rural women of Jorhat district of Assam who have attended the classes of Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP) during the year 1986-87 regarding :

- a. Level of literacy achievement
- b. Level of awareness
- c. Level of functionality
- d. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding usefulness of RFLP
- e. Development of opinion of the respondents regarding women development through education.

1.14 Delimitations of the Study

1.14.1 The study will be limited to the rural women of Assam who have attended the classes of RFLP during the year 1986-87.

1.14.2 The study will be limited to the rural women of Jorhat district of Assam who have attended the classes of RFLP during the year 1986-87.

1.14.3 The study will be limited to the centres where classes of Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP) for women were conducted during the year 1986-87 under the Jorhat North-west Community Development Block, Titabar Community Development Block, and Jorhat Community Development Block of Jorhat district of Assam.