

I SUMMARY : The present investigation "A Study of Rural Functional Literacy Program in the North Arcot District of Tamilnadu" was made with reference to the following objectives:

- A. To briefly survey the historical aspects of adult education in Tamilnadu.
- B. To construct the relevant tools - 1. literacy tests, 2. interview schedules to assess awareness and functionality levels, and 3. problems checklist.
- C. To assess the learning outcomes of the RFLP in terms of performance of the learners in 1. reading, 2. writing, and 3. arithmetic.
- D. To compare literacy levels of the RFLP participants with that of children of 3rd standard of the primary school in the formal educational system.
- E. To assess awareness and functionality learning outcomes of the participants of RFLP.
- F. To find out the association between the literacy, awareness, functionality levels of the participants and their 1. age, 2. caste, 3. marital status, 4. income, and 5. occupations.
- G. To identify the main problems of RFLP as checked by the animators, supervisors, and village leaders.

To assess the accomplishments as stated in the objectives (C - G), the following tools were developed in Tamil for the purpose of this study as no such tools were in existence:

1. A reading test
2. A writing test
3. An arithmetic test
4. An awareness and functionality schedule, and
5. A problems checklist.

These tools were constructed on a random sample of 100 adult participants of the RFLP.

The literacy tests and, awareness and functionality schedule were administered on the sample of 270 adult participants drawn from Cheyyar, Vembakkam, and Timiri blocks of North Arcot district of Tamilnadu. The literacy tests were also administered on an equal number of primary school children randomly drawn from the same blocks. The problem checklist was administered on 50 animators, 50 village leaders, and 10 supervisors.

Five variables, namely 1. age, 2. caste, 3. marital status, 4. family income, and 5. occupation were selected as important aspects to investigate if they have any association with the achievement levels of the adult participants in the RFLP.

The data were analyzed by employing the appropriate statistical techniques, such as, chi-square, t-test, and Kendall's coefficient of concordance.

II FINDINGS : The major findings emerged as follows:

- A.** The reading and writing achievement of the 3rd standard school children was higher than the participants of RFLP; but in arithmetic achievement, there was no significant difference between the 3rd standard school children and the RFLP participants.
- B.** Age and literacy skills were significantly related to each other. With the advance of age, the achievement level tended to decrease.

- C. The caste groups of the participants and their literacy achievements were positively associated. The literacy achievement was found to be low in the scheduled castes.
- D. Family income and literacy achievement of the participants were significantly related with each other. The mean achievement score values increased with the increase in the family income.
- E. The marital status and the literacy achievement of the participants was positively associated. The achievement level tended to decrease if the women were married.
- F. The occupation and the literacy achievement of participants were positively associated.
- G. The age and the awareness level of participants were not associated with each other.
- H. The caste and the awareness levels were related with each other. The higher caste groups had more awareness than the lower caste groups.
- I. The marital status and awareness level of participants were significantly related.
- J. The family income and the awareness level of participants were significantly related. The higher the family income, the higher was the awareness level.
- K. The occupation and the awareness level of participants were unrelated.

- L. The age and the functionality level of participants were not associated.
- M. The castes and the functionality levels were related with each other. The trend indicated that the forward castes had a higher functionality level and the scheduled castes had lower level, the functionality level of backward castes remained between the two.
- N. The marital status and the functionality level of the participants were significantly related. The married group obtained a lower mean functionality score.
- O. The family income and the functionality level of participants were significantly related.
- P. The occupation and the functionality level were unrelated.
- Q. Regarding the problems in RFLP centers, there was a significant agreement between the animators, supervisors, and village leaders.

III RECOMMENDATIONS : From the findings in the study and observations made during the study, some recommendations are offered to help in ~~excelling~~ the achievement of the RFLP.

- A. Roy and Kapoor (1975) in their study 'Retention of Literacy' recommended the need for four years of the primary education or the adult literacy of the third grade level (Literacy House, Lucknow) as absolutely a minimum requirement for an individual to be continuously in command of literacy skills. In the present study, the participants of RFLP in general did not

achieve this standard. The RFLP participants seem to relapse into illiteracy again. Most likely, this is because of the rudimentary level of literacy being imparted at present. In its stead, the level of literacy should be of sufficiently high level to alleviate such relapse conditions. Therefore, it is advisable that a four years of primary school level be provided to the RFLP participants which will lead them to sufficient proficiency to prevent their relapsing into illiteracy and for them to be able to retain their skills for the rest of their lives and use them functionally.

- B. As this study reveals that the young adults' performance was better than the older ones, the young adult illiterates should preferably be enrolled in the centers as they would benefit more than will the older ones.
- C. The achievement of literacy skills will have no real significance for the participants if the program is not followed up by some systematic and orderly method for the neo-literates. Therefore, there should be follow-up steps after their completing the course as follows:
 - 1. Since many neo-literates are unable to purchase books, an effective circulation of books should be established through mobile libraries, village libraries, and reading rooms. Bell bicycle library is a modest approach in this direction. A provision should be made for such bell bicycle libraries in all the villages.

2. A greater range and volume of rural needs-based follow-up literature for neo-literates should be produced through writers' workshops. Constant flow of brochures, booklets, hand-outs, circulars, leaflets, posters should be printed which is appropriate for the neo-literates.
- D. Literacy, awareness, and functionality components should be given equal importance in the RFLP centers. So far, they seem to have been stressing importance to the literacy component than to awareness and functionality. Instead, the animators should impart knowledge on awareness and functionality to the participants. More literature on awareness and functionality should be provided to the animators.
- E. Some crucial problems which the RFLP centers face are - 1. the improper classroom, 2. the cramped seating space in the classroom, 3. inadequate ventilation, 4. inadequate lighting in the classroom, 5. inadequate seating arrangements in the classroom, 6. lack of drinking water facilities, 7. lack of sanitational surroundings in and around the centers, 8. lack of calm atmosphere for concentration by the learners, 9. lack of desks and benches for the learners, 10. lack of globe, 11. lack of wall maps, 12. lack of good blackboards.

For proper learning, the pre-requisite is the proper classroom environments. The animators with the help of villagers should attempt to provide good environments.

To raise the quality of animators, who play a pivotal role for the success of the program, instead of providing a brief training of 10 days, the government should plan for one year training course in adult teaching much alike the primary school teacher's training.

IV SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH: The present study is an evaluation of the RFLP in terms of the attainment of literacy skills, awareness, and functionality of the adult learners. Further studies may be conducted on different aspects of RFLP as given below:

- A. The same study with a large sample and more number of variables can be conducted at the state level.
- B. The impact of RFLP on the social participations of the adult participants.
- C. The impact of the RFLP on the adult participants through the use of mass media.
- D. The impact of RFLP on the change of attitude of participants toward their children's education.
- E. The ways and means by which the illiterate women of the different socio-economic groups can be motivated to participate successfully in RFLP.
- F. Effective planning and organization of RFLP.
- G. Cost effectiveness studies about the design, implementation, and target population.
- H. Attitudes of administrators, animators, and participants towards RFLP.
- I. A comparative study of the effectiveness of RFLP and SARP (State Adult Education Program) in Tamilnadu.
