

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

In this chapter a discussion on the outstanding findings of the study is presented.

5.1 Impact of Rural Functional Literacy Programme

The impact of Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP) regarding various aspects and sub-aspects on the rural women of Jorhat district of Assam was studied.

5.1.1 Literacy Achievement

On the whole, the impact of the classes of RFLP on the rural women of Jorhat district of Assam was reported to be poor in all the 3 sub-aspects namely, reading, writing and numeracy under the aspect of literacy achievement.

This is supported by the findings of the Literacy House, Lucknow (1969), Directorate of Adult Education (1973), Agnihotri (1974), Shah (1978), Council for Development of the Scheme of Functional Literacy (1984), Xavier Labour Relations Institute (1981), and (1982), Aikara and Henriques (1983, Aikara (1984) and (1985), and Chakravorty (1988) as they found very low impact regarding literacy skills of the respondents who attended the classes of adult literacy.

However, there were some contradictory findings of the present study as Gandhian Institute of Studies (1969), Bikaner

Adult Education Association (1973), Venkataiah (1977), Lakshmi Narayana (1982) and Ganguli et al. (1985) found that the participants of adult education showed good impact regarding literacy skills.

Poor achievement in literacy skills of the learners might be due to the lack of proper attention to some areas of the RFLP programme to upgrade the literacy skills of the learners.

Literacy is not a simple thing to teach to the adult learners and complete the course within a few months and to make the learners retain whatever they have learned in the classes. Shah (1978) stated that 'literacy is not a short circuit topic which can be completed in a few classes'. The low impact of RFLP might be due to the short duration of only ten months of the programme. Shankar (1972) found that the participants of 9 months literacy project did better in average writing than the participants of 6 months projects. Roy and Kapoor (1975) stated that for retention of literacy skills, minimum 4 years of schooling or grade III literacy training is essential. Council for Social Development (1982) pointed out that the participants of FLIT under ICDS achieved better literacy skills in second phase of study than in the first phase.

Achievement of literacy may be affected by the regularity of the attendance of the learners. In the present study the women who attended the classes of RFLP for minimum 65 per cent of the total classes conducted, were taken. This might be the

reason behind low achievement in literacy of the learners. The learners with cent per cent attendance might achieve better level in literacy skills. Natarajan (1982), Seth et al. (1983), Seth (1984) and Vasudeva Rao (1984) found relationship between learners' participation in the programme and their achievement in literacy skills.

Adult women might face the problem of lack of time due to various household responsibilities. So, they might not have regular attendance in the classes. To tackle this problem, the duration of the classes of RFLP can be made longer instead of 2 hours or so per day. The time can be divided into two or three shifts. The learners can be allowed to choose their own time, convenient to them to attend the classes during the period of shifts. Then they may be able to attend the classes when they are free. Moreover, before the end of the ten months programme, some periods can be kept for the defaulters who lost some classes, to make up the lessons, they missed. The teacher can try to impress them by her effective teaching so that they would not degrade the value for literacy classes. This would help them in learning with due respect for literacy education.

Moreover, adult neo-literates easily relapse into illiteracy afterwards, because of non-practice of the literacy skills. To retain the literacy skills the adult education programmes should be continuous and the learners should be contacted even after the programme is over. Roy and Kapoor (1975) mentioned that ex-literacy-class adults were more susceptible to relapse into illiteracy

than the school leavers. Rural ex-literacy-class adults relapsed more into illiteracy than their urban counterparts. A child of very young age completes the primers resembling the textbooks of adult education course in 2 to 3 years, though that is the proper period for learning and retaining of an individual, but older person cannot learn so fast as that of young people. So, the duration of the adult education programme can be increased for higher achievement in literacy skills among adult learners.

Besides increase in the duration of the programme, continuity of the programme should be given due importance. Practical assignments on the use of literacy skills are more useful for permanent learning of an adult. Post-literacy facilities can help the adult neo-literates to retain the learnings of the adult education classes and not to relapse into illiteracy. Moreover, the teacher of the adult classes can try to motivate and attract the learners to make them regular in attending the classes. The teacher may keep in mind the physical and psychological factors of the learners and can treat them accordingly. Rogers(1986) mentioned in his book 'Teaching Adults' that the teacher of the adult education class should help the learners to feel themselves as human beings. The teacher should not only remain as expert in the subject, but he/she should have some imagination and passion and should be able to communicate his/her knowledge to the adult learners. He should know how to take advantage of students' willingness to learn as an instrument to make the students motivate and learn. A teacher in an adult education class should act as a catalyst and form good relationship with the learners.

Teacher's involvement with the students is very important for teaching adults. Vasudeva Rao (1983) reported that the learners' performance depended upon the teachers' background.

Classroom facilities also play an important part in the learning of the adults. Goyal and Kakar (1987) stated that the size of the writing on the black-board, the colour of the chalk used, the size of the articles the teacher holds for the adult learners to see and the volume and distinctness of his/her speech, and the size, type and quality of handout materials also are important in teaching adults.

Among the 3 sub-aspects namely, reading, writing, and numeracy, lowest impact was found regarding numeracy.

The Directorate of Adult Education (1973), Xavier Labour Relations Institute (1981), Council for Social Development (1982), and (1984), Aikara (1984) and (1985), and Aikara and Henriques (1985) ascertained that the respondents of adult education classes were poor in numeracy.

The rural women might not be using numeracy in their daily life and might not be keeping account of daily expenditure or might not be having the habit of budgetting. Further, they might not have that much money to form a habit to keep accounts. They might have to read or write sometimes for some occasions which make them retain reading and writing but not numeracy. So, they might have forgotten whatever they learned in the classes of RFLP.

Necessary efforts in imparting numeracy may lead to some improvement in the adult learners. The importance of numeracy in daily life has to be shown to the learners. The necessity of keeping daily accounts, how it helps in discarding the unnecessary expenses can be taught with due stress. In teaching numeracy, practical work can be assigned to the learners and the work can be checked and special attention can be paid to the weak learners. In numeracy, practical assignment may improve the ability of the learners. Seth et al. (1983) found that the adult learners whom the teacher gave practical work showed improvement and they were more motivated in counting than reading and writing.

5.1.2 Awareness

The overall impact of Rural Functional Literacy Programme regarding the aspect of awareness was reported to be medium as nearly half of the learners reached this level in all the 3 sub-aspects, namely, agriculture and veterinary, family planning and health and hygiene, and general knowledge.

It is supported by the findings of Agnihotri (1974), Xavier Labour Relations Institute (1981), Vasudeva Rao (1983) and (1986) as they ascertained medium awareness among the respondents who attended the adult literacy classes. While, Natarajan (1982), Council for Social Development (1982), Aikara (1984), Ganguli et al. (1985) and Chakravorty (1988) found low awareness among the learners of adult literacy classes. The Planning Commission, Government of India (1969) found gradual awareness among the women who attended the classes.

There were other findings which were contradictory to the present study. Lakshmi Narayana (1982) pointed out that a big majority of the respondents attained good awareness through adult education.

The lowest impact among the 3 sub-aspects of medium level of awareness was found regarding family planning and health and hygiene. Agnihotri (1974), Xavier Labour Relation Institute (1981), and Vasudeva Rao (1983) and (1986) revealed medium awareness about health, family planning and hygiene among the adult learners. Council for Social Development (1982) found that there was awareness among the learners only about permanent methods of birth control.

Singh (1979) studied 'The status of women and population growth in India' and pointed out that a very high level of awareness was found among the women regarding the movement of family planning. Women had different levels of awareness regarding family planning methods as some women just know that one could control the number of children as desired; others, though they never used the methods to restrict the number of children, had the knowledge about it, whereas there was another group of women who had the knowledge of using the methods of birth control. More women were theoretically aware of birth control methods than the women who had practical knowledge about actual methods of control of conception.

Family planning is closely related to the economy of a family

as well as to the country. The population of India is increasing at a rapid speed which in turn badly affects the country's development. It is the most burning problem of the country. Population explosion has become one of the India's greatest problems. Singh (1979) stated that a study conducted by Coale and Hoover (1958) focussed on many important points about relation of India's population growth with the economic development. According to them, if India's birth rate would not come down by 50 per cent within the next thirty-five to forty years, she would never be able to achieve a successful industrial economy. A rapid decline in birth rate is necessary for economic development and improvement in the standard of living of the masses. Decrease in birth rate seems to be an easy solution of the problem, but in practice it is not an easy task to achieve its goal, if besides family planning programme, widespread education programmes among women are not conducted.

The government of India tried to control the population of the country by adopting family planning programme as an official policy from 1952. A better and life-long education, facilities for women employment and willingness to have better standard of living may result by adopting small family norms. Further, Singh (1979) has quoted Chandrashekhar (1972), 'Emancipation of women in legal, social and particularly economic sense can basically alter the magnitude of the population problem'.

The government of India has emphasised the importance of the family planning programme since independence and accordingly implemented the programme throughout the country as a national

movement. It is included in the course of adult education and functional literacy programmes also. Small family norms through the use of contraceptives are stressed by the government. Hence, the knowledge about the needs of family planning should be given to the women in adult education classes with due stress. Willingness to accept the small family norms has to be planted in the minds of the learners by imparting knowledge about the advantages of having few children and disadvantages of having more children so that they accept and adopt the small family norms. This can be achieved by using audio-visual aids on the topic of family planning and health and hygiene.

A number of reasons may be responsible for low impact of awareness about family planning and health and hygiene. One of the reasons might be that the adult women did not give due importance to the subject. They might not have thought of the need and advantage of small families. The knowledge about family planning and health and hygiene might have been given through the classes of RFLP regularly, but the women remained unaware about it. There might have been some other strong drives or factors due to which they neglected to acquire the knowledge about it and did not believe in its fruitfulness. Even if they believed and wanted to know, their husbands or other family members, like mothers-in-law or the society might not have believed in the usefulness of family planning. All these might have influenced the learners. Besides these, there might have been some religious thoughts against family planning. Further, they might have preferred more children in helping them

in cultivation, or there were women whose offsprings were only girls and were in want of a boy. Such women did not care to learn and retain the learning of family planning. Moreover, as they did not feel the need of family planning they did not apply the knowledge gained through the classes of RFLP. Hence, they forgot whatever they learned in the classes of RFLP. Furthermore, the teachers might not have taught them with due stress on account of the lack of their own interest or knowledge about the subject as most of the teachers were teenager, unmarried, and from the same locality of the learners. They might have felt shy to teach the subject of family planning to the older and married women. This might have been responsible for low impact of family planning and health and hygiene.

The problem of family planning might have been overcome if the teacher of another locality could be arranged by the authority, even if more remuneration had to be paid. Audio-visual aids on the topic could have been used in the classes by the teacher regularly to lay more stress on the subject. It also have helped the adult women to learn with more interest and they could have retained the learning permanently.

The Rural Functional Literacy Programme can prepare such curriculum for imparting practical knowledge of family planning and health and hygiene by making learners visit family planning centres and making provision for them to discuss with the experts, at least twice a week within the period of the programme. Sometimes the experts may be invited to deliver talks on the topic to

put more stress on the matter. Such steps may help the learners understand the importance and necessity of family planning.

5.1.3 Functionality

The impact of RFLP regarding functionality was found to be low as more than half of the respondents achieved low level in 3 out of 4 sub-aspects of functionality namely, economics, agriculture, and education.

Prasad (1971), Vasudeva Rao (1983), Aikara (1984) and (1985) and Ganguli et al. (1985) found that application of knowledge among the learners of adult education was poor. Vasudeva Rao (1986) stated that though the female learners were best in functionality in banking they were poor in occupational skills. Braham Prakash (1978) found no association of knowledge about package of practice of HYV programme with adoption behaviour of the learners.

There were research findings contradictory to the findings of the present study. Planning Commission, Government of India (1969), Singh (1970), Directorate of Adult Education (1973), Shah (1978), Xavier Labour Relations Institute (1981) and (1982), Natarajan (1982), Chaturvedi and Braham Prakash (1983), Aikara and Henriques (1983) and (1985), Chouhan and Rai (1984) and Mohanty (1987) ascertained that the learners of adult literacy classes applied functional knowledge in their every day life in different fields.

A number of factors may be responsible for the low impact

of functionality of the respondents of RFLP. It might be for the lack of knowledge regarding the particular matter or inaccessibility or non-availability of the source or material like, post offices, banks, family planning centres, primary health units, schools and so on. These facilities might not be within the reach of the learners of the classes of RFLP. Less impact of literacy leads to less impact in functionality. The learners with less achievement in literacy skills might not apply the learning efficiently in practical fields.

Lowest impact was evident regarding economics. It might be due to lack of knowledge of the proper use of banks and post offices for saving and utilising facilities of borrowing loans in different schemes. The women might not be habituated to saving and keeping daily account of expenditure or they might not be having sufficient money to function as they were from low economic families. Besides, the learners might not have been taught household crafts like, weaving, stitching, embroidering, knitting and so on in the classes of RFLP or the advantages of kitchen gardening, poultry farming, piggery, duckery and bee-keeping through which the women might earn some income, might not have been emphasized. It is easy to learn and improve literacy and awareness but not easy to apply these in a country like India where people are poverty stricken. The women might know about the subjects taught in the classes, but, application of knowledge in practical fields needs many other inputs like, money, material, time and involvement of other people. The rural women might not have these resources and hence, cannot apply the

knowledge practically.

Moreover, programmers and implementors of the programme might not have paid due attention to functionality aspect of the RFLP. Aikara (1985) also mentioned that as functionality and social awareness have not been given due attention, the programme had made little contribution in increasing the adults' functionality and social awareness.

The rural women can be encouraged to apply acquired knowledge, by showing some examples of persons in those villages who have availed the post office and banking services or availed of and have utilised loan borrowing facilities and thereby improved their condition, like, constructing their own houses, buying a van, an autorickshaw or improved agricultural equipments and so on. The teacher might not have paid due attention in this regard while teaching, or the learners had no interest due to lack of inputs like, money, materials, time and so on. Information regarding loan services may help in encouraging them to take up these subsidiary works.

Audio-visual aids can be used for more effective teaching and learning on the topics related to subsidiary occupation like, bee-keeping, kitchen gardening, poultry farming, duckery, piggery, household crafts, sources of loans, how to avail loans and other facilities offered by the government. It may increase the interest of the adult learners and learning may become permanent.

5.1.4 Opinion Regarding Usefulness of RFLP

In case of the development of opinion of the respondents regarding usefulness of RFLP, the impact of the programme was not so discouraging, as little more than half of the respondents developed favourable opinions.

Directorate of Adult Education (1973), Xavier Labour Relations Institute (1981) and Singh (1988) found favourable attitude of the learners of adult literacy classes towards adult education programmes. Chouhan and Rai (1984) pointed out that farmers participating in adult education programme developed favourable attitude towards adult literacy. The attitude was found more favourable among the non-tribals, adopters and small farmers than the tribals, non-adopters and marginal farmers, respectively. Sharma and Patel (1986) have revealed favourable attitude among both the sexes but more favourable among female learners towards adult literacy programmes.

Some findings contradictory to the present study were found. The Planning Commission, Government of India (1969) pointed out that the learners of adult literacy education did not feel that literacy is needed for their improvement. The learners gave more importance to their pre-occupied activities. Bhandari (1970) found that the learners felt that literacy had no use for them. Bikaner Adult Education Association (1975) pointed out that the adult learners were indifferent towards learning and showed doubt about the utility of literacy education.

The learners who attended the classes of Rural Functional

literacy Programme might have realised the importance of education after attending the classes of RFLP and might have felt the necessity of literacy education in the life of an adult. The education imparted to the adult learners based on the basic principles and practices and improved knowledge of modern science and technological methods, might have been suited to and liked by half of the learners. So, they might have developed a favourable opinion regarding usefulness of RFLP.

Usually women are traditional and fatalistic. The rural women are more traditional and fatalistic than urban women. It is not easy to make them accept or reject any thing easily. They like to act in their own way and to depend upon fate. So, it might not have been possible to change cent per cent of the rural women, through the classes of RFLP. Some of them might have changed and developed favourable opinion regarding usefulness of RFLP. Some might not have changed. Those who developed favourable opinion might be having the qualities of the persons who achieved high impact in the present study. Those who were OBC/MOBC, unmarried, semi-literate, who highly valued literacy education, having few children, and were more encouraged by their family members for literacy education developed unfavourable opinion regarding usefulness of RFLP. They were from the minority group of respondents and hence there would be no problem to change them in future as the respondents from the majority groups developed favourable opinion. To change the women who were in minority, conscious efforts have to be made in future so that, they also develop favourable opinion regarding usefulness of RFLP.

Practice of income generating activities, namely, handicrafts like knitting, hand/machine embroidery, basket making and toy making can be encouraged in the class period. Topics related to income generating activities can be shown by audio-visual aids so that the learners would be able to increase family income. This may help to develop more favourable opinion regarding usefulness of RFLP among the other group of women who had unfavourable opinion.

5.1.5 Opinion Regarding Women Development Through Education

On the whole, the impact of RFLP regarding development of opinion of the respondents regarding women development through education was found average as about half of the respondents developed favourable opinion.

The women who attended the classes of RFLP might have learned something in the classes which helped at least half of the respondents to realize the value of education and hence, these women developed favourable opinion regarding women development through education.

Literacy education is the major instrument for the upliftment of the status of women. If this feeling can be rooted in the hearts of the adult women through the classes of RFLP, the remaining women who could not develop favourable opinion regarding education also might develop positive opinion.

Pillai (1984) stated that literacy is directly related with developmental and productive activities. So, giving literacy

education to all must be a pre-condition for all programmes of socio-economic and cultural development. It is necessary to make the learners know that the learning of the classes of adult education will lead them to a better life.

Women, whether illiterate, semi-literate or neo-literate have no strong feeling about their own development. Most of them are generally fatalist and hence remain contented with their existing status or condition. They themselves might have negative self-perception about them. They might like to spend their time as usual, without any change in their life style. Many of them might not know the value of education. Deep feeling or love for literacy education cannot be expected of them. Hence, these women cannot think that education may bring development in their lives. Children change their behaviour or opinion easily and also accept or reject anything within a short period of time. But, it is not easy to change the affective behaviour or opinion of an adult woman. Women are more traditional compared to men. They like to behave and act in their traditional way. It is difficult to make the women accept or reject something which differs from their views. Unless Rural Functional Literacy Programme help them by taking proper steps drastically, there is no hope of rural women to change their feelings or opinions towards women's development through education. The rural women, in general, were more traditional and more fatalistic than the urban women.

Teaching can be focussed along with audio-visual aids on the topics like, 'education helps the women in improving their condition and status in the home and society!', 'how the educated women earn and improve their home and family life!'; 'how much the educated women are independent' and so on. It may help in changing the opinion of the rural women and in making them less traditional and less fatalistic.

In a poor country like India, with empty stomach and full of anxiety one cannot concentrate his/her mind on learning new things and retaining them. Literacy education does not mean any difference to the poverty stricken illiterate mass. If 3 R's can be taught adequately keeping relation with their daily life activities, it would be enough for them. If adult learners would be able to read, write and count alone, they would be aware themselves through reading newspapers, books or megazines and according to their needs and interests they would be able to apply the acquired knowledge. Thereby they may be benefitted. Universalization of elementary education may help to reduce illiteracy in the country in future. The young generation may be made literate by universalization of elementary education. In future there would be very few illiterate adults. Then, it would be easier to cover remaining illiterates in the programme of adult education and to make them literate.

5.2 Impact of Rural Functional Literacy Programme in Relation to the Different Factors

The present study found some factors associated with the impact of RFLP on rural women of Jorhat district of Assam.

5.2.1 Personal Factors

Among the 10 personal factors caste/sect and type of work of the respondents were found to be the factors associated with many aspects/sub-aspects of the study.

Significant differences were found in the impact regarding 9 aspects/sub-aspects of RFLP out of 12 in relation to the caste/sect of the respondents.

The respondents belonging to SC/ST have achieved higher level of impact than the other two caste/sect groups of the respondents regarding numeracy; agriculture and veterinary; economics; agriculture; and developed more favourable opinion regarding usefulness of RFLP.

The respondents of OBC/MOBC achieved higher level of impact regarding family planning and health and hygiene; general knowledge; family planning; and education than the other caste/sect groups of the respondents.

Prasad (1967), Bhandari (1970), Singh (1970), National Committee on Status of Women (1975), Sarkar (1981), Srivastava and Rawat (1982) and Chouhan and Rai (1984) found relationship between learners' caste/sect and their performance in adult literacy programmes. There were some findings which were found

contradictory to the present study. Panwar (1978) and Khajapeer (1978) found that there was no relationship among the learners' academic performance and the caste of the learners of literacy programme.

Mohan (1984) was of the opinion that the personal factors affect adult learning. He stated 'sometimes learners have a desire to learn but refrain from learning because they have to toil hard even to survive at subsistence level. After the day's hard work, they are not left with any energy either to think, act or even react to their deplorable conditions. Lack of self-confidence, docility, submissiveness and vulnerability to exploitation are other factors, which hamper their learning.'

The respondents belonging to Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes received help and active encouragement from the government for their upliftment. The government has given lots of facilities and chances to them in different fields like education, job, loan and so on. National leaders like, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, B. Ambedkar, Rajendra Prasad, Indira Gandhi and others tried to uplift these people from a pitiable condition so that they may become conscious about their condition and compete to get higher status in the society. Moreover, the higher caste people suppressed them for a long time so they might have taken more interest in learning than the higher caste and must not have been willing to miss the opportunities.

While, the respondents belonging to the groups of general

and OBC/MOBC might not have tried as those of SC/ST. These people might have been less interested in learning as their condition was a little better than others. They might have over estimated themselves. They might have felt that whatever they know was sufficient for them to live a good life. They might have been born in higher caste families and might not have wanted to learn and mix with the castes they feel inferior to them. So, they could not achieve better level than other caste/sect groups.

The families of OBC/MOBC were in a better condition than the families of SC/ST. Their family members might have had a little education and may be helping them in learning. These families might be having family influence and hence know what is happening around them. They might be gaining some knowledge about family planning and health and hygiene, general knowledge and education from their family members and friends. These might be helping them in recalling the learning of the classes of RFLP and thereby retaining them. They might be making use of the knowledge of literacy. So, they achieved higher level of impact regarding family planning and health and hygiene, general knowledge and education, than their counterparts, general and SC/ST. They might have gained some benefits from the learning of RFLP and also seen some changes among the SC/ST group who attended the classes of RFLP. All this might have helped them to develop more favourable opinion regarding usefulness of RFLP.

The respondents belonging to the caste/sect group of SC/ST might want more children to work for the family or in the field. The older children look after the younger children of the family at home while the parents go out for day's work. To make them accept small family norms, creche type establishments may be helpful. Moreover, if the influential families of the villages, belonging to the same caste/sect can be convinced to accept family planning methods then the other people may accept and like to learn about the subject.

The general and OBC/MOBC groups of women need to be encouraged as those of SC/ST. These women might be made aware of the people who are in a better condition than them. If they try a little then they would also be able to reach the same status. These women have to be informed that their present condition is not satisfactory. To cope with the present times they have to learn many things.

The respondents who belonged to the caste/sect group of general and OBC/MOBC could not achieve better impact than their counterpart SC/ST respondents. Since, general and OBC/MOBC respondents were less in number it may not create a big problem. It will be easier for the organiser to take proper care of them in teaching as they are less in number.

Significant differences were found in the impact regarding 7 aspects/sub-aspects of RFLP out of 12 in relation to the type of work of the respondents of the study.

The women belonging to the group of workers other than farm and tea-garden labourers achieved higher level of impact in numeracy; agriculture and veterinary; agriculture; and developed more favourable opinion regarding women development through education. The farm labourer group of the respondents achieved higher level of awareness regarding family planning and health and hygiene and higher functionality regarding family planning and economics.

The respondents who were from the group of workers other than farm and tea-garden labourers achieved better level of impact among the 3 groups of workers. As they were working as ayas, attendants, maid-servants, cooks and so on, they might be meeting different people in their work place from whom they had the advantage of learning and gaining knowledge. Such advantages were not possible for the women of the group of farm labourer or tea-garden labourer. They had the same type of work and in the same field where they met the people who were of the same category. So, these people did not have the advantage of learning from others. Moreover, the 'other workers' might be getting advice and encouragement for adopting new methods of agriculture and other new ideas from the people they met outside. These women could know about the importance of literacy and benefit of education, hence they may have developed more favourable opinion regarding women development through education than the other groups of labourers.

In case of the respondents of farm labourer group, they mostly stayed within the village, so, the Village Level Workers (VLWs) might be easily meeting them and talking about various matters related to family life. Thus, they might be adding to their knowledge about family planning and economics. Through the encouragement of the VLWs these women might be motivated to have less children and save their money in banks or post offices. So, they might have acquired the higher level of awareness and functionality about family planning and health and hygiene, family planning and economics respectively, than the tea-garden labourer and other worker groups of the respondents.

The husbands and other family members of the women who are tea garden labourers and other workers or the society in which they live might not accept family planning. These women might have been adversely influenced by the strong views of their family members and society and hence, they might not have accepted family planning in spite of their learning in the classes of RFLP. For this, they might not put any value for the family planning and health and hygiene. It is very difficult to make the village women form the habit of account keeping, saving or depositing their savings in banks or post offices. To make the women accept a new idea, the influential persons or families of the locality have to be motivated to accept it first. Once they accept the idea then the other women of tea garden labourer and other workers group would follow them without hesitation.

The changes among the other workers could be pointed out

to the farm and tea-garden labourers to realize the need of education for their self development. When the farm and tea-garden labourers see the benefits gained by the other workers through literacy education, they might also develop favourable opinion regarding women development through education.

The respondents of the group of workers other than farm and tea-garden labourers had achieved better level of impact of RFLP. It may create a big problem as the groups of farm and tea-garden labourers which had more respondents in number could not achieve higher level of impact. The group of other workers which had less number of respondents achieved better impact. The organiser may face problem in teaching the groups having more women in number. Hence, more care has to be taken in teaching them in future.

Among all the 10 personal factors, religion, occupation, number of hours of work, and ethnic group of the respondents were found to be the factors associated with some aspects/sub-aspects of the study.

Significant differences were found in the impact regarding 5 aspects/sub-aspects of RFLP out of 12, in relation to religion of the respondents.

The respondents belonging to Hindu religion achieved higher level of impact in numeracy and family planning and developed more favourable opinion regarding women development through education than the respondents belonging to other religious groups.

The Hindu and Christian respondents achieved higher level regarding agriculture and veterinary while Muslim and Christian learners developed more favourable opinion regarding usefulness of RFLP than the other group of religion.

Sarkar (1981) while studying the female learners' development in family life, pointed out that the growth rate of education was highest among the Hindu women and least among the Muslim women. National Committee on the Status of Women (1975) stated that cities and regions with a high proportion of Muslim or Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes were marked by low literacy rate.

The Hindus were generally engaged in business and possessed the skill of numeracy from their early age; so the women might have some previous knowledge about numeracy, hence, they achieved higher level in numeracy. Moreover, being little more well to do compared to the respondents of other religions, Hindu women might have more interest in learning and they might have been helped by their family members and friends. They could easily move about and mix with others as there are few social restrictions on them. In case of Muslim women there are more restrictions than the women of Hindu religion. Hence, the Hindu women got more chances to learn and acquire knowledge from others which the Muslim women did not. They might not hesitate to consult doctors of family planning for advice. So, they adopt family planning methods and also realised the urgency of education and developed more favourable opinion regarding women development through education.

On the other hand, Muslim women had more constraints, though they have attended the classes, none might have encouraged or helped them in learning. In case of reading and writing, if alphabets and vowels could be learned the learners could read or write simple language by themselves. But for numeracy, methods of computing different sums, they had to be helped by some experts if they could not do that by themselves. So, they could not do well in numeracy. In case of family planning, also they could not do well. Though, in Assam, there is no 'purdah' system among Muslim women, they cannot move freely as they like and though, there is no restriction from religious side, the priest or head of the family, in the name of religion, might oppose and restrict them from adopting the family planning methods. In such atmosphere, they cannot form healthy opinion also towards women development through education.

Women learners from Christian religion, might not realise the importance of learning numeracy as they might think that oral counting was sufficient for them. They were not from the background of farm labourer and got meagre amount of money as daily wage. They spent that money mostly on liquor and did not save. Hence, they might not care to learn numeracy. Moreover, they are used to staying and mixing with their own caste and class and do not get chance to mix with others and acquire knowledge from other people who have more knowledge than them. So, they might not have formed positive attitude towards women development through education. Further, in tea-gardens, child labour system is prevailing. The family with more children can

have more earning. So, the Christian women who belonged to tea garden labourers group might not have adopted family planning methods. Moreover, they belonged to the Roman Catholic section of Christian religion, who strongly oppose it. Socio-culturally also, Muslim and Christian women have less privileges than the Hindus.

Majority of the Hindu respondents were cultivators and majority of Christian respondents were from the background of tea-garden labourers. The respondents of both the religions must have acquired knowledge about agriculture and veterinary from their families. In Assam, generally almost all the cultivators tame domestic animals at home and, hence, these women had some knowledge of agriculture and veterinary. In case of most of the Muslim women, they do not work in agriculture fields due to many restrictions from family and society. Hence, they may not be able to achieve high level of impact regarding agriculture and veterinary.

On the other hand, as the Muslim women are suppressed by the family and society, when they got the chance to attend the classes of RFLP their eyes must have opened and they must have woke up to some extent and felt the necessity of learning something useful for them. The Christian when they attended the classes got a new experience which may have made them realize the importance of Rural Functional Literacy Programme. So, the women from both the religions had developed more favourable opinion regarding usefulness of RFLP than the Hindu respondents. The Hindu women might feel or see that the learning

of RFLP classes was not so much helpful to improve their present condition as they were from the families a little better off than their counterparts belonging to other religions.

To make the Muslim and Christian women accept family planning, influential people of that locality may be encouraged to adopt it. Once they adopt it, then the other may follow them. Persons of these religions with religious knowledge can be invited in the class to deliver talks in favour of family planning. Moreover, side-by-side audio-visual aids can be utilized for better results.

The women who belonged to the Hindu religion were majority in number. They achieved the highest impact among the 3 religious groups of the respondents namely, Hindu, Muslim, and Christian. As majority of the respondents achieved the highest impact there may not be a big problem to teach the other groups of women as they were less in number.

Significant differences were found in the impact regarding 4 aspects/sub-aspects of RFLP out of 12, in relation to the occupation of the respondents.

The respondents belonging to non-working group achieved higher level of impact in reading, .. numeracy and agriculture.

The respondents of working group developed more favourable opinion regarding women development through education than the non-working group of the respondents.

Vasudeva Rao (1983) pointed out that occupation of the learners was a positive factor in their performance in adult literacy. Contrary to the present study, Mali (1974) found that there was no relationship between the occupation of the learners and their achievement in learning.

The non-working group of women might have more time to spare for learning and revising the lessons at home as they had no need to go outside home for work for a fixed period of time. They also might have some household work like other women, but as they have no time-bound work outside home they could manage their household activities to find out some time for study. As such, these women of non-working group could learn and retain better than the working group of women. Though, these women did not work, they might be using the functional knowledge about agriculture gained through the classes of RFLP in their fields of cultivation. So, they have achieved the better level of functionality regarding agriculture.

The learners of the working group, however, developed more favourable opinion towards women development through education than the non-working group. Since, these women were working, the learnings of the classes might have helped them to some extent, which enabled them to improve their attitude in a positive way. Most of the working women worked in paddy fields or tea-gardens. These women might not want to leave their traditional methods of cultivation, and hence, they might not have accepted the new methods of agriculture and did

not cultivate improved High Yielding Varieties (HYV) crops in their fields of cultivation.

The respondents of non-working group can be encouraged to develop favourable opinion towards women development through education by showing the benefits and development of the women who had developed their condition through education and had achieved high status in the society. This may make the women realize the differences between having and not having education. It may help them to change their opinion regarding women development through education.

The women of working group might get tired after the day's work, hence, they might not concentrate and learn with interest in the classes when they attended the classes of RFLP. After leaving the centre they might not apply the knowledge due to lack of awareness as they could not learn well previously. Moreover, result demonstrations on the topics may be conducted which may give the learners practical knowledge regarding utility of improved methods, techniques and practices of agriculture.

The non-working group of respondents which was small in number achieved better impact than the working group having majority of the respondents. It may create a big problem in future. It would be easier to handle a small group of learners than a big one. Proper care has to be taken in future in teaching the women of majority group.

Significant differences were found in the impact regarding 5 aspects/sub-aspects of RFLP out of 12, in relation to the number of hours of work of the respondents.

Those women who worked for less number of hours a day during the time when they attended the classes of RFLP achieved higher level of impact in terms of awareness regarding agriculture and veterinary and family planning and health and hygiene, higher functionality regarding economics, agriculture and developed more favourable opinion regarding women development through education than the women who worked for more number of hours a day.

This might be due to the reason that the women who worked for less number of hours had more time for study and also they might get less tired than the other group. So, these women can concentrate their minds in the class and retain whatever they learned. While working they might have applied the knowledge to their work in agricultural fields. They might save some money from their income or they might apply their knowledge of income generating activities and earn some money through them. So, they reached the higher level of impact regarding awareness and functionality. Moreover, as they saw that the literacy classes brought some benefits to them or their families they might have developed more favourable opinion towards women development through education than others.

The respondents who worked for more hours a day might become tired after the day's work. The tiredness might make

them less interested to learn and lead them to learn slowly. These slow learners can be helped by giving more time to learn. It can be done by increasing the total duration of the programme. On the other hand, the length of the daily class period may be decreased as these women may not be able to concentrate their minds for longer period of time for tiredness of day's work.

The respondents of the group, worked for less hours a day had achieved better level of impact than the group of women who worked for more hours a day. The former group consisted of less number of respondents. It may make problems in future as the group of majority of the women could not achieve better impact. The organisers of the classes of RFLP may have to face big problem in teaching the majority groups. Conscious efforts have to be made to overcome the problem.

Significant differences were found in the impact regarding 4 aspects/sub-aspects of RFLP out of 12, in relation to the ethnic group of the respondents.

The respondents belonging to the Assamese ethnic group, achieved higher level of impact than the non-Assamese group regarding writing and family planning. The respondents of non-Assamese ethnic group of the study, achieved higher level of impact regarding family planning and health and hygiene and education than the Assamese ethnic group.

Assamese women, as they are familiar with their own language might practice in writing with the help of the other

family members who know it. Their children generally go to the village schools, they might be helping the adult women of their own families, due to which these women might have reached the higher level of achievement in writing. Besides, the majority of the doctors and Village Level Workers (VLWs) are Assamese. These people might have influenced the rural women and motivated them to have less children and to undergo operation and to use other family planning methods. So, they achieved better level of impact in functionality than non-Assamese group of learners.

On the other hand, the women who were non-Assamese might be realizing the need of literacy education. Their relatives might be living outside Assam, so, they might need to correspond with them. Hence, they might try their best to learn to read and to write and might practice regularly. They might read magazines, books or newspapers and so became aware about family planning and health and hygiene.

The women who were Assamese might have undergone family planning operation due to incentive without the knowledge of even the names of different family planning devices. They might not care to know about them as they had already been operated. Detailed knowledge regarding family planning and health and hygiene can be given to these women in the RFLP classes by using audio-visual aids. As these women stayed in the villages they might not get books to read or write anything for any occasion. Moreover, as they are self-sufficient they need not spend that much money to keep accounts. Post-literacy facilities

for neo-literates may help them to keep themselves linked with literacy skills.

Non-Assamese group of respondents could not write so efficiently like Assamese women as the Assamese language is not so familiar to them. These women might not apply the knowledge of family planning. They might like to have more children to help them. In tea-gardens children can also earn by doing different works. Hence, they might like to have more children for their interest.

Unless, this group of non-Assamese women is made aware about the advantages of small family with less children and disadvantages of having more children they may not change. Teaching along with audio-visual aids may help in this regard.

There were equal number of respondents in both the ethnic groups namely, Assamese and non-Assamese. They also achieved equal level of impact. Hence, there may be some problems in teaching them. Conscious efforts have to be made to make both the groups learn better and to achieve better level of impact in future.

Among all the 10 personal factors, age, marital status, education and value for literacy education of the respondents were found to be the factors associated with very few aspects/sub-aspects of the study. These factors were associated with 3 aspects/sub-aspects out of the total 12 aspects/sub-aspects of RFLP. Even very clear trend was not found about the asso-

ciation of these factors. Association of these factors with very few sub-aspects might have occurred by chance or some other hidden or overlapping factors might be responsible for this association. So, further investigation is necessary for these factors.

5.2.2 Family Factors

Among all the 4 family factors, number of children in the family of the respondents was found to be the factor associated with many aspects/sub-aspects of the study.

Significant differences were found in the impact regarding 10 aspects/sub-aspects of RFLP out of the total 12 aspects/sub-aspects, in relation to the number of children in the family of the respondents.

The women belonging to the families having few children have achieved higher impact regarding reading, family planning and health and hygiene, agriculture and veterinary, general knowledge, family planning, economics, education, and developed more favourable opinion regarding women development through education.

The women who had more children in their families achieved higher impact regarding agriculture and developed more favourable opinion regarding usefulness of RFLP.

Those women who came from the families with less number of children might be enjoying better atmosphere at home to study. They might have less household work and less burden and

responsibilities. Hence, they might get time to study, revise and recall the learnings of the classes of RFLP. These women might get enough time to decide and so could apply the knowledge. Seeing the profit from the learning through the classes of RFLP they might have developed favourable opinion regarding women development through education.

On the other hand, besides they have less children, they might not have other helper to help them in household work or in the cultivation fields. So, they could not have applied the knowledge in agriculture. They might not have had time to experiment, before cultivating any HYV crops in their fields.

The respondents who had more children in the family may be taught with due stress about advantages of having less children and disadvantages of having more children. Example may be shown from among them.

The respondents who had few children in their families achieved higher impact than their counterparts who had more children in their families. The respondents of the former group were majority in number, so, there may not be major problem in future to teach this latter group of respondents who were minority in number.

Among all the 4 family factors, size of the family and family encouragement of the respondents were found to be the factors associated with some aspects/sub-aspects of the study.

Significant differences were found in the impact regarding 5 aspects/sub-aspects of RFLP out of 12 in relation to the size of the family of the respondents.

The women belonging to the small families achieved higher level of impact regarding agriculture and veterinary; family planning; economics; education; and developed more favourable opinion regarding women development through education than the women coming from large or medium sized families. The women from small families with less family members might have enough time to spare in learning. These women might have less burden of household work and responsibilities than the women from other two groups.

Women from medium and large sized families might not get time to prepare or recall what they learned in the classes. So, they could not retain what they learnt in the classes. These women cannot learn at home due to lack of time. Post-literacy classes can be run for longer time after completion of the course of RFLP. Reading and writing materials can be provided to them to practice regularly. Moreover, they can be taught the process of distribution of labour and time saving methods of household activities. Besides, need of small family norms and advantages of having few children can be taught with due stress to these women. They can be encouraged to adopt family planning devices for the young women of their families.

The women belonging to the small families were minority

in number in comparison with the women from medium sized families. Problem may arise in future in teaching majority of the women who belonged to the medium sized families and achieved low impact in the present study. The organisers of the programme may have to face difficulties in teaching them. proper care has to be taken in teaching this majority group of women in future. There may not be problem in teaching the women belonging to large sized families as there were very few women in this group.

Significant differences were found in the impact regarding 4 aspects/sub-aspects of RFLP out of 12 in relation to the family encouragement received by the respondents for literacy education.

The respondents belonging to the group of women who were less encouraged by their family members to join or attend the literacy classes of RFLP had achieved higher level of impact than their counterparts who were more encouraged by their family members, regarding all the 4 aspects/sub-aspects, namely, reading and numeracy under literacy, agriculture and veterinary under awareness and development of opinion regarding usefulness of RFLP.

The investigator tried to find out other characteristics of the group of women who were less encouraged by their family members. These qualities were like non-working, having few children in the family, Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes, working for less hours a day and coming from small families. The investigator has found out in the present study that the

persons with these qualities achieved better impact than their counterparts. So, these women even though less encouraged by their family members might have showed better impact. These qualities might have helped them in achieving better impact. It might have been a co-incidence which led the women to learn better than their counterparts.

The respondents who were less encouraged for literacy education by their family members had achieved better impact than their counterparts who were highly encouraged by their family members. Since, respondents belonging to latter group were less in number the organisers may not have to face big problem in teaching them in future. Hence, it may not create a major problem.

Among all the 4 family factors, type of family of the respondents was found to be the factor associated with only one aspect/sub-aspect of the study out of 12 aspects/sub-aspects. No clear cut trend was found about the association of this factor. It might have occurred by chance or some other hidden or overlapping factors might be responsible for this association. So, further investigation is necessary for this factor.

5.2.3 Institutional Factors

Among the 2 institutional factors, classroom facilities was found to be the factor associated with some aspects/sub-aspects of the study.

Significant differences were found in the impact of RFLP

regarding 4 aspects/sub-aspects out of 12, in relation to classroom facilities of the respondents.

The respondents who considered their classroom facilities as adequate, achieved high level of impact in terms of awareness regarding general knowledge and functionality regarding agriculture and education.

Classroom facilities have some relationship with learners' achievement. The women who availed most of the classroom facilities had more advantage to learn. In proper classroom situation teaching and learning process become more effective. Hence, these women achieved high level of awareness in general knowledge and applied it more in the field of agriculture and education. As these women got chances to learn in a comfortable atmosphere whatever they learned might have been retained and applied even after completion of the classes of RFLP.

Mali (1979), Council for Social Development (1982), and Reddy (1986) found relationship between classroom facilities and the performance of the learners. Dissatisfaction of the learners, disturbed the learning process in adults. Xavier Labour Relations Institute (1981) stated that a big majority of the respondents did not find difficulty in following their teachers in classes and they were satisfied with most of the facilities except the seating arrangements in the classes. Panwar (1978) and Xavier Labour Relations Institute (1979) found that most of the learners of adult education classes were satisfied with the available facilities of the classroom.

Talukdar (1975), Shah (1978), Lakshmi Narayana (1982) and Council for Social Development (1982) found inadequate classroom facilities in adult education centres which affected the learning of adult learners.

Adequate facilities as far as possible should be provided to the centres of RFLP. Seating arrangement must be proper, teaching aids must be suitable for the age groups. Provisions of drinking water, electric light and ventilation, and lavatories are essential for the learners if better results are to be expected from them. Uncomfortable situation of the classroom leads to disinterest and dissatisfaction among learners. This has some influence on their learning.

The respondents who considered their classroom facilities adequate were majority in number. They achieved higher level of impact than the other group. Hence, there may be no such problem in future to teach the other group of respondents who were minority in number.

Among the 2 institutional factors, the concept of learners about their teacher effectiveness was found to be the factor associated with very few aspects/sub-aspects of the study. It was associated with 3 aspects/sub-aspects out of the total 12 aspects/sub-aspects of RFLP. The association of the factor did not show any clear cut trend. Association of this factor with very few aspects/sub-aspects might have occurred by chance or some other hidden or overlapping factors might be responsible for this. Further investigation is necessary for this factor.

5.3 Conclusion

Based upon the discussion it can be concluded that the following implications may help the adult learners to achieve better level of impact of Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP) :

- Increase in the duration of the programme to give more time to the adult rural women to learn well.
- Flexibility in timing of the classes. Keeping more than one shift a day with the same teacher or by appointing more number of teachers and allowing the learners to attend the classes according to their convenience and thus increase attendance.
- Maintenance of continuity of the programme so that there would be no break in learning of the learners which may cause adult women to relapse into illiteracy.
- Stress on teaching income generating activities and keeping provision for varieties of supplementary income activities to make the adult learners realize that RFLP is really useful for their improvement. It may attract the learners to the classes and may make them regular.
- Use of varieties of audio-visual aids in teaching to increase interest of the learners and to clarify the topics which cannot be made clear by oral explanations.
- Relating of literacy skills with daily life activities to help the learners to learn with keen interest.
- Assigning more practical work in the classes or by way of home-work and correcting them regularly to make

learners aware of their mistakes.

- Provision of post-literacy facilities and observation of proper utilization of the facilities by the neo-literates.
- Care to be taken regarding personal and family factors which were associated with more aspects/sub-aspects of the RFLP than with the institutional factors.
- Importance of teaching literacy skills, as literacy alone would lead the learners to be more aware and functional in their field of work.
- More care to be taken in teaching the aspect of family planning as it was associated with most of the factors of the study.
- More attention to be paid to the family factor - number of children in the family - as it was the factor associated with most of the aspects/sub-aspects of the study.
- Appointing teachers not from the same locality of the learners, so that even young teachers may not hesitate to teach a subject like family planning to the adult learners.
- Providing proper classrooms, and adequate and suitable classroom facilities for the adult women like, proper seating arrangement, lighting, ventilation, drinking water, lavatory, urinal and so on.
- Universalization of elementary education to minimize the number of illiterate adults in future from the country. If there are few adult illiterates in future, it may become easy to teach and change the adult learners.

5.4 Recommendations

The present study pertains to the impact of Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP) on rural women of Jorhat district of Assam. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made.

5.4.1 Recommendations Directly related to RFLP

It is recommended -

1. to increase the duration of the programme and to decrease daily teaching time.
2. to maintain continuity in the programme.
3. to keep more number of shifts of daily class periods and allow the learners to attend the class in any shift according to their convenience. More number of teachers may be appointed to run different shifts of the classes.
4. to appoint teachers not from the same locality of the learners, but from the nearby areas even if more remuneration has to be paid.
5. to relate skills of literacy with daily life activities.
6. to assign more practical work to the learners and to encourage them to be regular in attendance.
7. to make use of more audio-visual aids in teaching.
8. to have functional programmes directly related to the needs of the learners.
9. to give priority to income based teaching learning programmes.

10. to keep better provision for post-literacy facilities in the Adult Education Centres.
11. to keep provision for varieties of supplementary income activities.
12. to put more stress on teaching literacy skills which have relation with necessary matters of day-to-day life like, family planning, health and hygiene, foods and nutrition, agriculture, veterinary and so on. If the rural women become erudite they will be aware about many things and apply the knowledge according to their needs.

5.4.2 Recommendations indirectly related to RFLP

It is recommended -

1. to provide proper classroom and adequate and suitable classroom facilities for the adult rural women.
2. to keep meetings of neo-literates time to time in the centres to discuss their progress.
3. to make provision of creche-type facilities in rural areas to help the working learners.
4. to take care of the personal and family factors as these are the factors associated with more aspects of RFLP than institutional factors of the present study.
5. to put more stress on family planning to encourage women to adopt small family norms.
6. to universalize the elementary education for minimizing number of illiterate adults in future.

5.4.3 Recommendations for Further Study

1. Similar study can be carried out in the same or different centres or groups of neo-literates.
2. Similar study can be conducted with respect to other variables.
3. Study may be made to find out the association of the personal factors namely, age, marital status, education and value for literacy education; family factor namely, type of family and the institutional factor namely, teacher effectiveness, as no clear cut trend was found in the present study for these factors.
4. Study may be carried out on provisions for income generating activities and post-literacy facilities for the adult learners.