

# Role of Sakshar Bharath Programme in promoting Life Skill Education

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India is most populous country in the world having second largest population with low / no education. Education is considered as one of the powerful instruments in socio-economic upliftment of the country as a whole and an individual in particular. Keeping this in view, the Government of India has launched several programmes for the promotion of functional literacy among its population such as Farmers Functional Literacy Programme, Gram Shikshan Mohim, National Adult Education Programme, Mass Programme for Functional Literacy etc., and it has established the National Literacy Mission under whose aegis, the success of Ernakulam Experiment, the Total Literacy Campaign was taken up in a mass campaign mode. Further, to avoid the problem of relapsing of literates made through the Total Literacy Campaign into illiterates, it has launched Post Literacy and Continuing Education Programme. Now it has launched Sakshar Bharath Programme.

Sakshar bharath is one such programmes implemented and initiated by the Government for uplifting the illiterates / semi-literates, school dropouts, pass outs etc., particularly the women. Saksharbharath programme is the programme that intended not only to promote traditional education, but also the vocational training along with the life skills that will promote their occupational skills and life skills which will help them to gain the potentialities for national building and productivity.

**Sakshar Bharath Programme**

Sakshar Bharat is in operation from 1-10-2009. Though duration of the scheme, National Literacy Mission, was valid only till the end of the Tenth Five Year Plan, residual activities under the Mission were allowed to continue till 30-09-2009, as a special dispensation, so that the ongoing activities could be

completed during the extended period with the following objectives.

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## I. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME

The Mission has four broad objectives, namely:

- Impart functional literacy and numeracy to non-literate and non-numerate adults
- Enable the neo-literate adults to continue their learning beyond basic literacy and acquire equivalency to formal educational system
- Impart non- and neo-literates' relevant skill development programmes to improve their earning and living conditions
- Promote a learning society by providing opportunities to neo literate adults for continuing education

**Targets**

The principal target of the mission is to impart functional literacy to 70 million adults in the age group of 15 years and beyond. Auxiliary target of the mission is to cover 1.5 million adults under basic education programme and equal number under vocational (skill development) programme. Within these targets, the Mission will primarily focus on, but not limited to, women. Schedules Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) Minorities, other disadvantaged groups and adolescents in rural areas in low literacy States will be other focused groups. For each focused group and area, there will be a specific target and for each target, an explicit approach and strategy.

**Target Specific Approach**

**Women**

Women being the prime focus and predominant participants, the entire programme was given gender

treatment. The gender, social and cultural barriers that women face were taken into consideration while designing teaching learning programmes. Gender should not be seen in isolation but in conjunction with other social categories like caste, ethnicity, religion, disability, etc. Gender perspective will permeate all components of the programme, including the approach, strategies, planning, management structures, teaching-learning materials and monitoring and evaluation. Special priority was given to women belonging to SC, ST, Minority and other disadvantaged groups in rural areas.

This approach was built on women's existing knowledge and levels of their literacy and numeracy in order to ensure that in the long run the existing levels are substantially upgraded and they are able to use the skills acquired in their own contexts. Innovative, tried and tested programmes related to women's literacy, including interventions related to thematic or issue-based literacy was up scaled. Women were engaged in large numbers as volunteers and instructors to encourage women learners to participate in the programme. Further, they will be trained in skill promotion programmes so as to equip them with the necessary vocational training programmes and to promote employability among them for furtherance of their living standards.

#### Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Minorities

The SCs (15%), STs (8%) and Minorities (20%) together constitute more than 40% of India's population. In terms of illiterate population, SCs constitute 20.5% and STs 12%. Minorities, especially Muslims, constitute another large block of illiterate population. Targets have been fixed taking into account not only the share of their total population, but also their share of the non-literate population and commensurate resources should be invested for raising their literacy level. SLMAs and other sub-State level implementing agencies must draw special strategies taking into account their socio-cultural background and sensitivities and share these strategies with NLMA. Larger roles for their respective communities need to be conceived in planning and implementation structures and processes. Monitoring mechanism will have an inbuilt feature to maintain a constant watch and highlight the progress made by the learners belonging

to these groups while simultaneously taking timely corrective measures to prevent relapse to illiteracy.

#### Adolescents

The dominant aspect of the design interventions of the prevalent educational programmes for non/semi-literate adolescents is fertility, sexual behaviour, planned parenthood, etc. To address the real life needs of these adolescents, innovative design interventions will be conceived that would lead to acquisition of marketable qualifications, supported by certification. These programmes will be a combination of basic education and practical training in a skill or vocation. Camp based instruction has been found more suitable for the needs of the adolescents. The Mission will have a flexi approach to provide room for such innovations.

#### Geographical Area Coverage

Another goal of the Mission is to minimize inter and intra regional/state disparities. Inter state disparities range between 33% and 88%. Intra state disparities are equally stunning. To minimize regional disparities, the programme, in its first phase, that is during the 11th Plan period (31-03-2012) will remain confined to districts with adult female literacy rate of 50% or less as per 2001 Census. Nearly 18 crore non-literate adults live in these districts. Besides, 33 districts affected with left wing extremism will also be covered under the Mission irrespective of the existing literacy rate.

#### Rural and other Special Areas

According to 2001 Census, 84% of India's non-literates live in rural India. Since illiteracy is far more widespread in rural areas as compared to urban India, and for the reason that urban areas are better endowed with educational infrastructure leading to better access to opportunities, the Mission would concentrate on and deploy public resources in rural areas. An all out effort may be made to saturate rural areas first before expanding to non-rural areas. In these areas, the focus will be on women and adolescents belonging to SC, ST, Minorities and other disadvantaged groups.

#### . Strategy for Urban Areas

In the urban areas, Mission objectives may be achieved innovatively, using new actors. The

programme may be handled through Jan Shikshan Sansthan, State Resource Centres, NGOs, social groups and any other institution identified by NLMA through Public Private Partnership (PPP) or any other mode. Linkages with Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation under Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) could also be developed for synergy and augmentation of resources.

#### Basic Education Programme

This programme is designed to achieve the second objective of the scheme, namely, 'Enable the neo-literates to continue their learning beyond basic literacy and acquire equivalency to formal educational system'. Arrangements will be made to enable young adults to continue their learning till they are able to achieve equivalence levels with Grade III, IV, V, VI, VII and VIII and beyond in the formal school system or through the Open Learning System. The Open Basic Education (OBE) programme initiated by the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and other Open Schools will be taken as the starting point. While formulating equivalency programmes, the life experience and local knowledge systems of the adult learners will be taken into consideration.

#### Vocational Education (Skill Development) Programme

For furtherance of the third objective of the scheme, that is, 'Equip non- and neo-literates with vocational skills to improve their living and earning conditions', suitable skill development training will be imparted to those having rudimentary levels of education or no education. Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS), set up under the Scheme for Assistance to Voluntary Agencies for Adult Education and Skill Development of DSEL, will be institutionally networked with the Adult Education Centres so that they could impart skill development training, as well as literacy linked vocational training. JSS, in coordination with the District Implementing Agency, will enlist neo-literates for appropriate skill development training. Besides specific activities for which a specific budgetary provision is available under the Mission, JSSs will utilise their programme budget to impart vocational skill training. Parallel efforts will be made by the SLMA and District Implementation Agencies

for developing synergies with other agencies in the public as well as private sector for enhanced opportunities of skill development training at the gram panchayat level.

#### Continuing Education Programme

Continuing Education Programme (CEP) is aimed at achieving the fourth objective of the Scheme that is, 'Establishing a learning society by providing opportunities to neo literates and other targeted beneficiaries for lifelong learning'. The programme recognizes increased demand for learning generated by Basic and Post Literacy Programmes and the potential need of adult learners to further enhance their skills on their own terms and at their convenience. CEP, as the very name suggests, will not have a fixed time frame as in the case of the other three programmes, but will be organized on a continuous basis. The approach is to create a sustainable learning environment so that learners are encouraged to continue with their literary aspirations and take advantage of the programme facilities to satiate their learning appetite.

The Programme will provide facility of a library and reading room, which would be gradually provided with other contemporary ICT devices. Short-term thematic courses like Health awareness / care, Food and nutrition, Water conservation / drinking water / sanitation, Population development education issues – AIDS/STD, Sex education, Consumer awareness / Consumer rights, Legal literacy, RTI or any other topic of interest and relevance to the lives of the learners will also be offered under this programme.

#### Implementation of the programme

To implement the programme, 1.70 lakh Lok Shiksha Kendras (Adult Education Centers) were established in Panchayat grams of the districts covered under the programme. It will subsume the already sanctioned Continuing Education Centers (CECs) in a particular district. Existing CECs and the nodal CECs in the districts not covered under the programme will have to be closed down, unless the Government of States wish to run them at their own cost through Public Private Partnership or otherwise. Gram Panchyats may as well be given this offer. Specific approval of NLMA will be required to continue an existing CEC under this programme.

A Lok Shiksha Kendra will act as a centre for registration of learners for all teaching learning activities in their jurisdiction; Nerve center for literacy campaign including identification of the learners and volunteers, batching and matching of the learners with suitable Volunteers as well as their training, providing literacy kits to learners and volunteers, keeping track of the progress made by each learner-volunteer group; Nodal centre for mass mobilization activities; Technology center; Center for thematic courses on behalf of other departments such as Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary, Fisheries, Horticulture, Sericulture, Handloom, Handicrafts, Health, Education, Rural Development, Urban Development, Women and Child Development, SCs, STs, OBC welfare, Panchayatiraj, Science & Technology etc. or based on local demand; Library and reading room; Venue for group discussion; Vocational and skill development and extension facility for other departments; Center for promoting sports and adventure and recreational and cultural activities; A composite information window and Data center for Adult education besides any other activity related to the mission.

## II. RESOURCE SUPPORT

In order to provide academic resource support to literacy and adult education programmes, State Resource Centres (SRCs) have been established throughout the country. Not only their number will be increased but also their capacities enhanced so that they could extend adequate academic and technical resource support to adult and continuing education programme specially in the realm of development of teaching learning material and training of literacy practitioners and managers. Besides SRCs, Resource Support Groups with due representation of educationists, social activists, experienced and committed volunteers/functionaries, representative of local training institutions etc., will be constituted at national, state, district, block and Gram Panchayat level.

The programme is being implemented in all the districts of the country where, there is low female literacy rate. In Andhra Pradesh, the programme is in implementation in 18 districts and Anantapur is one of the districts among them which has low female literacy rate less than 50 percent. In the light of the

above, an attempt was made in this paper to find out the impact of the Sakshar Bharath Programme in enhancing the life skills and potential human capital for the nation building and to create a learning environment in the society in the district of Anantapur with the following objectives.

## III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out the socio-economic profile of the participants and volunteers / village co-ordinators
2. To find out the impact of Sakshar Bharath Programme in promoting life skills such as Self-awareness, Empathy, Critical thinking, Creative thinking, Decision making, Problem Solving, Effective communication, Interpersonal relationship, coping with stress, Coping with emotions etc., among the participants
3. To identify the impact of the programme in promoting living standards among its clientele.

Rayalaseema is a region in Andhra Pradesh, India, consisting of the districts of Annamayya, Anantapur, Chittoor, Kadapa (also known as YSR district), Kurnool, Nandyal, and Sri Sathya Sai

## IV. METHODOLOGY

Andhra Pradesh is divided into three geographical regions viz., Rayalaseema and Coastal Andhra and North Andhra. The Rayalaseema is the region with most backwardness in all spheres such as socio-economic and cultural aspects including education. The region consists of 7 districts viz., Anantapur, Chittoor, Kurnool, YSR Kadapa, Annamayya, Nandyal and Tirupati. Among all the districts, Anantapur is most backward due to drought prone and low literacy levels. For the purpose of the present study, the Anantapur district has been selected as the locale of study.

The district comprised with 63 mandals and the Sakshar Bharath programme is being implemented in almost all the mandals. The Lok Shikshan Kendras are being organized by the volunteer / VCO. For the purpose of the study, from among these Lok Shikshan Kendras, 25 kendras were selected randomly from the district. Further, for the purpose of the present study, 100 participants/ learners and 50

volunteers / Village co-ordinators were chosen as sample of the study to find out their views and opinions regarding the programme and its impact in promoting human capital and life skills among its clientele.

## V. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

### Volunteers / Village Co-ordinators

1. Majority of the VCOs (78%) has revealed that the Sakshar Bharath Programme is a good programme and through the programme they are able to promote learning skills among the learners.
2. The programme was succeeded in fulfilling the objectives for which it is being implementing (55%). Further, the programme is succeeded in learning the discipline and good habits among the learners (62%).
3. Further, 68 percent of the VCOs are of the opinion that the Programme succeeded in promoting life skills among the learners.
4. The learners are able to send their children to the school by recognizing the importance of education through which the school enrollments were enhanced.
5. Further, 52 percent of the VCOs informed that self discipline has been adopted by the learners.
6. 57 percent of VCOs are in the opinion that the learners are able to understand their problems and rectifying them and about 60 percent of them opined that the learners are practicing the learnt skills in their day-to-day life.
7. The change in the roles performed at their families were also been observed by the VCOs (63%) and they informed that their learners are involving in the decision-making process both at families and also regarding their vocations.
8. Further, more than half of the VCOs informed that their learners are able to talk with the higher officials regarding their problems and implementation of the developmental programmes at their vicinity etc.,
9. Further, 45 percent of the VCOs felt that their learners are mingling with their peer groups and sharing their feelings, problems and discussing about the remedies to solve their problems both personal and vocational.
10. 89 percent of the VCOs felt that their learners were able to become empower only in some aspects but could not achieve the total empowerment.

### Learners

1. With regard to the changes occurred among them due to the Sakshar Bharath programme majority of the learners (82%) revealed that they learnt the basic literacy skills through which they are able to understand the latest know-how which is helpful to them in their day-to-day life
2. 60 percent of the learners informed that the general knowledge and rationale thinking among them was enhanced
3. Further, 55 percent of the learners revealed that they are able to know about the development programmes and could utilize them for their betterment.
4. Further, 46 percent of the learners opined that they could learn about the good habits and importance of self-discipline and are practicing them in their life.
5. 52 percent of the learners disclosed that they are able to understand the social changes which are being occurred due to the globalization (the exact term was not coined by them) and urbanization and are trying to enhance their vocational and life skills so as to cope up with them.
6. Further, the learners (55%)also informed that the rationality in their views and thinking was enhanced after attending the classes at centres.
7. 62 percent of the learners informed that they are able to identify the problems of their vicinity and are able to discuss with the concerned officials regarding their problems and solutions.
8. The learners also informed that their involvement in decision at their families was also enhanced (56%). Further, 45 percent of them revealed that they could take decisions regarding their children's education also.
9. About 67 percent of the learners have informed that they are discussing about the implementation of the developmental programmes and could be able to utilize them for their betterment. Further, about 95 percent of them are informed that they are availing the developmental programmes such as abhayahatam (42%), Indiramma (Housing

scheme) (58%), Pavala vaddi (49%), MGNREGS (39%) etc.,

10. Only 35 percent of them felt that they become empowered in taking decisions both at their homes and also at occupations. Further, they also informed that they could discuss with the higher officials as and when required and also could lead their peer groups.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

The Ten core Life Skills as laid down by WHO are Self-awareness, Empathy, Critical thinking, Creative thinking, Decision making, Problem Solving, Effective communication, Interpersonal relationship, coping with stress and coping with emotion. Keeping this in view, the present study was undertaken and found that still majority of them are lagged behind in some of the aspects of life skills. Hence, it is suggested that the programme should implement more emphasis in promoting these skills among its clientele which are most essential for their upliftment in all spheres of life. Further, the programme should laid emphasis on the vocational component (as no centre is organizing the vocational training programmes though this is one of the components mentioned in its objectives) which is essential for enhancing their income and productivity.