

**Regional Conference on Community Learning Centres (CLCs): Lifelong Learning for
All through CLCs from 26-28 September, 2012, Bangkok, Thailand.**

COUNTRY REPORT

INDIA

1. Introduction

1.1 Eradication of illiteracy from a vast country like India with 1.2 billion population beset by several social and economic hurdles is not an easy task. It has been one of the major national concerns of the Govt. of India since independence. The efforts in this direction stated from First Five Year Plan in 1951. A programme of social education, inclusive of literacy was introduced as part of Community Development Programme in 1952. Since then Literacy in India has made remarkable strides. The literacy rate has increased from 18.33% in 1951 to 74.04% in 2011. This is despite the fact that during the major part of the last six decades there has been exponential growth of population.

1.2 Yet, there are some challenges to achieve equity like: gender gap, intra and inter regional disparities, low literacy among socially deprived sections and minority groups etc. There is a wide gender disparity in the literacy rate: effective literacy rates (age 7 and above) in 2011 were 82.14% for men and 65.46% for women. The census however, provided a positive indication that the growth in female literacy rate (11.8%) was substantially faster than in male literacy rate (6.9%) in the 2001-2011 decadal period, which means the gender gap appears to be narrowing.

2. National Literacy Mission:

2.1 The National Literacy Mission (NLM) set up on 5th May, 1998 to impart functional literacy to non-literates in the age group of 15-35 years was a societal Mission whose success rests on mobilization of social forces on the one hand and harnessing of technology and findings of scientific research for the benefit of the deprived sections of the society on the other. After experimenting with alternative models of adult education, NLM finally settled down to a model which is known as Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) or Campaign mode that became the dominant strategy for eradication of adult illiteracy. The district level literacy programmes under TLC were area specific, time bound, cost effective, and volunteer based. The Campaign which started in the beginning of 1989 rapidly gathered momentum and created desired impact. NLM played a catalytic role by promoting context specific programmes for improving the literacy levels. The thrust was on attainment of functional literacy and numeracy.

2.2 By the end of 2007 NLM had covered 597 districts (out of 600) under Total Literacy Campaign (TLC), 485 districts under Post Literacy Programme (PLP) and 328 districts under Continuing Education Programme (CEP). The concrete achievement of NLM is reflected by the number of persons made literate. As a cumulative outcome of these efforts, 127.45 million persons became literate with the help of more than 10 million volunteer teachers.

About 60% of the learners made literate were females. It is undeniable that this phenomenal achievement has been made possible by a combination of factors. A strong political will, total and spontaneous participation of the administrative machinery, the keen concern of the State Governments for the spread of mass education and above all, the wholehearted participation of people from different walks of life have achieved so much in the sphere of literacy.

3. Saakshar Bharat Programme:

3.1 Despite significant accomplishments of NLM there were 259 million non-literate adults in 15 + age group in the country as per 2001 census. Wide gender, social and regional disparities in literacy also existed. Adult Education therefore was indispensable as it supplements the efforts to enhance and sustain literacy levels through formal education. In the context of Governments overall policy aimed at empowerment of women and in recognition of the fact that literacy, especially female literacy, is a prerequisite to socio-economic development, it was considered imperative to recast the National Literacy Mission with enhanced focus on female literacy.

3.2 “Saakshar Bharat” a flagship programme of Govt. of India was launched by the Hon’ble Prime Minister of India on 8th September, 2009. It is a new variant of National Literacy Mission. The mission’s primary focus is on women, socially deprived sections like Scheduled Cast, Scheduled Tribes, Minorities, other disadvantaged groups and adolescents in rural areas.

3.3 Vision of the Mission: “To establish a Fully Literate Society through improved quality and standard of Adult Education and Literacy”.

3.4 Components

- Functional literacy
- Basic education through equivalency to formal education system
- Vocational skill development
- Lifelong education

3.5 Goals:

- (i) Achieve 80% literacy rate
- (ii) Reduce gender gap in literacy to 10%
- (iii) Imparting literacy to 70 million (60 million to be women) non-literates-special focus on adolescents by imparting basic education with practical training, aimed at marketable skills
- (iv) Reduce regional, social and gender disparities.
- (v) Extend coverage from 15-35 year age group to 15+ age group

3.6 Objectives of the Mission:

1. Impart **functional literacy** and numeracy to non-literate and non-numerate adults.

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

4 Adult Education Centres (Community Learning Centres): The Adult Education Centres are set up at the Gram Panchayat level to provide institutional, managerial and resource support to literacy and lifelong education at the grass root level. All AECs are manned by two Preraks (paid coordinators) and they are provided financial resources for conducting survey, training, community mobilisation, library, sports and cultural activities. It is responsible for delivering the entire range of activities under the Mission including, Functional Literacy, Basic Education, Vocational Education and Continuing Education.

4.1 Functional Literacy programme:

The Basic Literacy Programme aims to impart Functional Literacy to non-literate adults. Functional Literacy implies: Self reliance in 3 R's, Participation in the development process, Skill improvement to improve economic status and general well being and imbibing values of national integration, Conservation of Environment, Women's Equality and Observance of small family norms etc. Literacy centres are set up at different places in each of the covered Gram Panchayats. Mass campaign approach is the main strategy. Under this, a volunteer teacher is responsible for imparting literacy on an average to 8-10 learners.

4.2 Basic Education Programme:

The programme is designed to enable the neo-literates to continue their learning beyond basic literacy and acquire equivalency to formal educational system. National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and State Open Schools are associated in this programme.

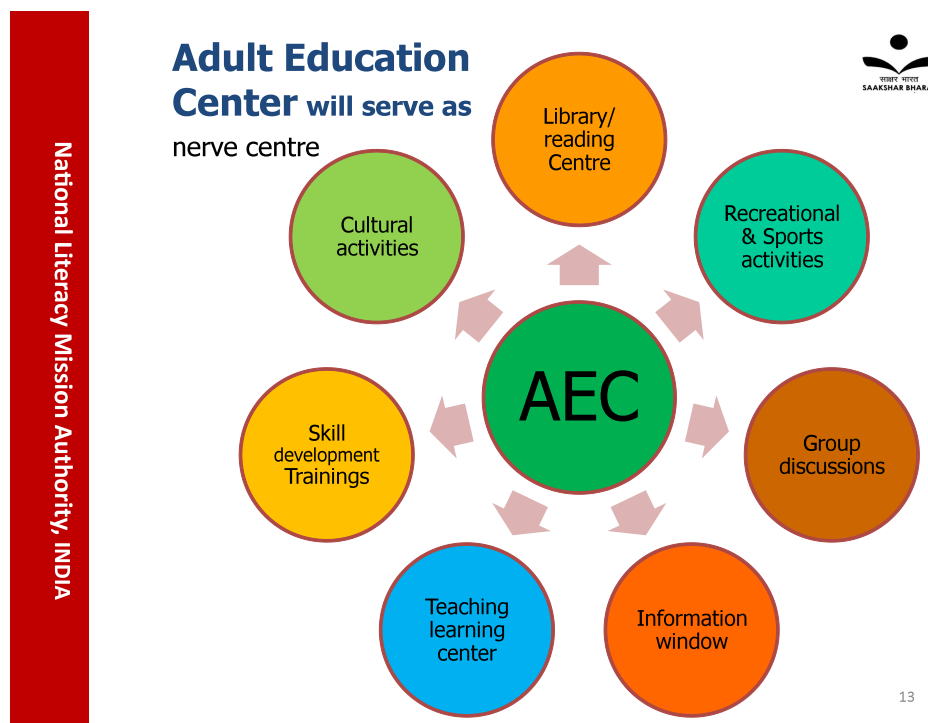
4.3 Vocational Education/Skill Development Programme:

The programme is aimed to equip non-literates and neo-literates with vocational skills to improve their living and earning conditions. Suitable skill development training is imparted to those having rudimentary level of education or no education. Jan Sikshan Sansthans (JSS) set up, under the Scheme of Assistance to Voluntary Agencies for Adult Education and Skill Development are organizing these training programmes. The total annual coverage under this programme is around 5 lakh learners.

4.4. Continuing Education Programme:

Continuing Education Programme (CEP) is aimed at establishing a learning society by providing opportunities to neo-literates and other targeted beneficiaries for lifelong learning. Saakshar Bharat programme provides funds for setting up of at least one Adult Education Centre (Community Learning Centres) in each Gram Panchayat of the areas covered under the programme. In 372 districts covered so far, 91,029 Adult

Education Centres have been set up in as many Gram Panchayats to provide continuing education facilities like library, reading room, providing awareness and short duration programmes for improvement of the living and working conditions of the adults of the rural areas in these Gram Panchayats.



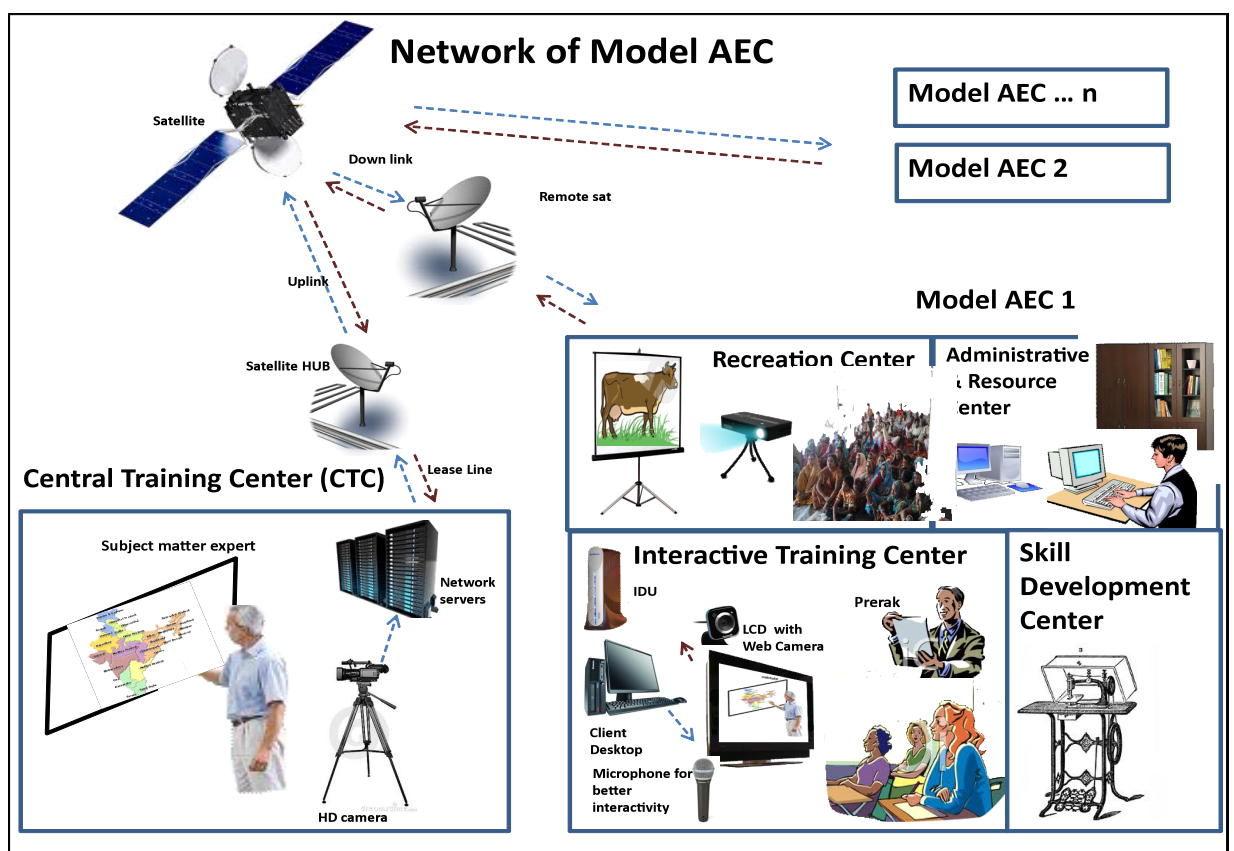
5. New Trends and Innovations:

5.1 **Concept of Model AECs:** A model AEC is envisaged as a well-equipped multi-functional and multi discipline training centre which is enabled with Satellite connectivity which in turn ensures effective and speedy delivery of quality services to large number of beneficiaries on a regular basis at a fraction of the cost of manual delivery. The Model AEC will encompass besides a cultural & recreational an interactive training centre staffed with properly trained manpower and equipped with necessary resources. Each AEC will be of approx. 2500 sq. ft. and will have a standardized structure which will be easily identifiable. It will function as multi-faceted resource and facilitation centre to cater to the varied nature of occupational, social and cultural needs of society at the Gram Panchayat level. A model AEC cuts across time and space boundaries and renders a learning experience that can be highly enriching and engaging.

5.2 As the budgetary resources of the Government are limited, it therefore becomes imperative to involve CPSE (centre public enterprise) as partners in the spread of literacy by converting AEC into model AEC so that the donor CPSEs could finance them both in cash, kind and services on fixed or recurring basis under the obligation of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) so that AEC becomes a hub of activities in the field of literacy, knowledge, sports information, national integration, environment management etc.

5.3 The Model AECs across the country will be connected via satellite to ‘**Central Training Centres (CTCs)**’ where experts will interact simultaneously and in real time with the Model AECs in a unique interactive environment. The centrally conducted sessions will be viewed by all model AECs simultaneously and will facilitate interactions through chat and audio with the experts in the CTCs. It will seamlessly integrate knowledge with modern technology for the convenience of the local population. The components of Model AEC would include:

1. Interactive Training Centre (ITC)
2. Recreation and Audio Visual (AV) Centre (RAVC)
3. Administrative and Resource Centre (ARC)
4. Skills Development Centre (SDC)



5.4 Advantages of Satellite Based Ecosystem

1. Satellite technology can reach anywhere, anytime in a cost effective manner.
2. Secured dedicated network which eliminates time & distance constraints.
3. Better use of scarce expert resources enabling them to reach out to a larger population in real time.

4. Facilitating interactivity between expert faculty in CTC & learners in model AEC, this is viewed by all other model AECs simultaneously.
5. Bypass infrastructural challenges - without compromising on the quality of training and practical demonstrations.
6. Same infrastructure can be leveraged for vocational training, healthcare, information dissemination, awareness programs and other training purposes.
7. Learning can be interactive, highly explanative with advanced graphics, and eventually very immersive with 3D.
8. Interactions can be stored and can be played locally whenever required. A digital database can be created for future exploitation.
9. Different Government departments can address and conference with local representatives and general public
10. Intriguing Educational Content - reduce drop out, enhance retention and increase productivity.
11. Cost effective way in which simultaneous training / interaction can be done over a large number of AECs from a CTC.
12. Highly scalable model where a large number of AECs can become operational within a short span of time.

5.4 Public-Public and Public-Private Partnership:

NLMA approached several Corporate Sector Undertakings with a view to promote Public-Public and Public-Private Partnership for Saakshar Bharat Programme and its activities under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). A couple of major PSUs have joined with the programme as partners with financial support. Some major companies include: The Container Corporation of India Ltd. (CONCOR) provided Rs.3.00 crore (\$ 0.6 Million) in 2011-12 for up-gradation Adult Education Centres into Model AECs. The Power Finance Corporation Ltd. provided assistance of Rs. 6.70 crore (\$ 1.3 Million). The Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) has provided 10.5 crore (\$ 2.1Million). State Bank of India a Nationalised Bank has also joined with the programme recently. Many more companies are showing keen interest to join as new partners for this mission.