

## EDUCATION OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN

### INTRODUCTION

Aruna Roy

The Commonwealth Conference on Non-Formal Education and Development took place in New Delhi in January 1979. The Conference expressed concern that a number of Commonwealth countries were still unable to universalise primary education, and it recommended the adoption of a variety of non-formal education programmes to supplement the ongoing efforts at extension and improvement of schooling for children in the primary age group.

Non-formal education was also considered by the Commonwealth Education Conference held in Colombo in 1980. The Ministers of Education of Commonwealth countries who participated in that conference noted that while non-formal education had been on the agenda of educational planners for over 10 years, there was little resource support and documentation on this subject. The Commonwealth Secretariat was therefore asked to examine the possibilities of supporting research in non-formal education. In this context they further recommended that the Commonwealth Secretariat take steps to compile and to publish case studies of non-formal education projects from Commonwealth countries to understand the various aspects of this subject, and to facilitate planning of such programmes in countries of the Commonwealth. Among these they gave particular priority to learning opportunities for out-of-school children.

The Commonwealth Secretariat proposed this study with the intention of identifying non-formal education projects for children in the age group 5-14 on which case studies could be prepared. The assignment was accepted with some hesitation, because of the limited number of non-formal education projects which cater to children in the specified age group. An acquaintance with some projects however reinforced the immense promise they hold for the poor. The task has therefore been one of enquiry and hope.

Before the selection of the projects for case studies it was necessary to be clear about the type of programmes that could be useful. All the case studies in this volume are on projects run by non-governmental organisations. This was not accidental. Frankly, despite the search, we could not locate successful governmental programmes for this age group in the rural areas. Innovative programmes require freedom of operation, so that they can identify alternatives. It is perhaps that non-formal education lends itself to experimentation and is best done

outside the education system as it is now understood. Nevertheless, sufficient ideas have emerged and methods detailed which governments may take up for consideration and incorporation in their programmes.

To begin with, the concept of non-formal education needed to be clarified. The term 'non-formal' continues to be used and understood in many different ways, in spite of the attempt of Philip Coombs to define it in New Paths to Learning<sup>1</sup> as:

"... any organised educational activity outside the established formal systems - whether operating separately or as an important feature of some broader activity - that is intended to serve identifiable clienteles and learning activities."

The Michigan State University which has also popularised the study of non-formal education defines the concept with reference to a range of educational situations. According to them non-formal education is: <sup>2</sup>

"... any non-school learning where both the source and the learner have conscious intent to promote learning."

Projects which are involved with educational activity outside the establishment define themselves as formal or non-formal depending upon the degree of deviation from the formal system that they accept as the norm. The range of the projects vary from a complete questioning of the educational system to supportive attempts to remove identified constraints within it. Governments, on the other hand, see non-formal education as low cost programmes which can be entrusted to non-governmental agencies, where the norms of formal education are not necessarily applicable, and are to an extent, irrelevant.

Non-formal has also become 'jargon', a word which is used without clarity. The variations in interpretation of the concept could be as diverse as it is baffling. This is no doubt made much worse by those who tend to see a particular interpretation as the correct one. In practice, however, such watertight distinctions do not exist. Most of the non-formal education programmes at present use the school buildings for instruction, employ teachers on an honorarium basis and may not make any variation in curriculum or in methods of pupil evaluation. They try to condense primary education curriculum and organise educational activity in the evenings to enable the learners to continue their work on the farm or at home.

A flexible approach was adopted in identifying the case studies. As a result, some of them may seem almost indistinguishable from formal primary education. This only goes to show the range of educational experiments that fall within non-formal education. The considerations were: (a) that the age group covered should correspond to pre-primary or primary education levels; (b) that the programme should have characteristics which clearly distinguish it from the traditionally understood pre-primary or primary schools; (c) that the intent and structure of the programme should be defined by a desire to extend

basic education to the poor who, ordinarily, may not be able to benefit from formal primary schools, and (d) that the projects should have been in existence long enough to draw valid conclusions.

Having set up this frame of reference, suitable projects were sought in the various countries of the Commonwealth. Available literature was examined and consultations with the officials and scholars of the various regions held. It was found that in most parts of the world non-formal education was almost indistinguishable from training of out-of-school youth or adult education. The emphasis and preference among practically all Commonwealth countries seems to be for full-time formal schooling for the children in the appropriate age group.

In the Caribbean, every country gives high priority to primary education and many of them are fairly close to achieving universal primary education. Although the African-American Institute has compiled a number of interesting programmes in their publication 'Non-formal Education in African Development' (1972), we found very little material, even of an experimental nature, about non-formal programmes for children aged 5-14 in the Commonwealth African region. There are a number of African Commonwealth countries which have very interesting non-formal education programmes for youth and adults. Programmes such as the Botswana Brigades and the Kenya Village Polytechnics, designed for integrating young people who have completed primary education into the process of rural development, do merit careful study and analysis. But they are outside the scope of this study.

In Asia there is a large variety of non-formal education programmes for children. For example, Indonesia and Thailand have been active in the spheres of community development and population education. The programmes prepared by SEAMEO, as far as they concern the Commonwealth countries of South-East Asia are restricted to post-primary education. It is due to these reasons that the study had to be confined to the sub-continent, many of the countries of which have been striving to universalise primary education, with varying degrees of success. In this region too, some interesting experiments of non-formal education can be identified. Of necessity therefore, the study had to confine itself to the three Commonwealth countries of the sub-continent.

### Analysis of the Milieu

India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka share a common heritage and have had continuous historical and cultural exchange through the centuries and share, broadly speaking, common socio-economic problems. Even three decades after independence, India and Bangladesh face a common predicament in not being able to universalise elementary education within the formal system of education.

Education policies have made sporadic efforts to accommodate the demands of a rapidly growing population. In spite of the phenomenal increase in the number of children admitted to elementary schools, a staggering number still do not go to school. Facilities in the form of school

buildings have increasingly been located in villages. A review of education when preparing India's Sixth Five Year Plan shows that formal primary education facilities have substantially increased and primary schools are available to 95 per cent of the population within walking distance among children in the 6-11 age group. Actually, almost 75 per cent of children of school-going age, mostly from the poor and disadvantaged class, particularly girls, do not complete their schooling.

"The modern educational system in India is now a vast undertaking with over 700,000 institutions, 100 million students, 3.5 million teachers and a cost of Rs.26,000 million (next only to that on defence); and yet its chief beneficiaries are the upper and middle classes who form about 50 per cent of those who complete elementary school, and occupy about 70 per cent of the places in secondary education and 80 per cent of those in higher education. The vast bulk of the poor are still outside the system: 60 per cent of the adult population is still illiterate, and as many as 75 per cent of the children in the 6-14 age group do not complete elementary school. The masses therefore still continue to be educated almost exclusively through the traditional incidental and non-formal sub-systems, which, by mere passage of time, have become even more obsolete today. The gap between them and the upper and middle class educated in the modern formal school has therefore become even wider than it was 60 years ago."

The reasons for drop-out are poverty, social customs and unattractive and irrelevant instruction. From age five onwards, poor children are busy the whole day long in assisting their parents in agriculture and other tasks, or are required to earn a living for themselves.

#### Poverty and the School

An analysis of those who reach the school system in the project areas pertaining to the case studies shows that those children who attend formal schools come from families which can afford to relieve them from the burden of generating income. In spite of differences which relate to the socio-economic levels of various groups in the different countries, non-formal education is preoccupied with the under-privileged and the poor. Poverty and an understanding of its relationship with non-schooling is therefore relevant.

"The educational scene has also been dismal according to expert opinion. The so-called development policies and action followed for more than two decades until recently on the iniquitous base of the social structure in effect contributed to polarising disparities of income and education." (Rowshan Qadir; see pp. 79-80).\*

There is little doubt that elementary education has failed to reach the under-privileged. The major reason for this lack of access is poverty.

\* i.e., in this volume

"At the same time the main reason for non-enrolment has been identified as the poverty of families who are forced to treat the child as an economic asset rather than send her or him to school. From such reasoning it becomes apparent that:  
 (a) where educational facilities have expanded they have catered to those who can afford to send their children to school; and  
 (b) even if much greater expansion were undertaken, education would still not reach the poor unless the conditions of their poverty are changed. Most of the government schemes have, however, tried to solve the problem by administrative and curricular reforms with increased allocation of funds. Few have attempted to tackle the inter-relationship with poverty, far less to understand it." (A.K. Roy; see p.94).

Poverty of the parents compels them to involve the child in earning a living. This is, by and large, a universal phenomenon which keeps the majority of the children out of schools. The relation between poverty and the lack of access to schools is perhaps too obvious to need emphasis. But it is necessary to re-state the linkages between the two. The low income levels of the parents and the socio-economic development of the community therefore become relevant issues for consideration. Socio-economic development of an area has not necessarily meant a fairer distribution of income. Lack of access to formal school for the poor is evident even in areas where there has been a fairly rapid growth in economic terms. The glaring example of the formal school being located in the richer part of the village, thereby denying access to children belonging to the poorer areas, is not rare.

"The Panchayat Union and Government schools are all located in the upper caste sections of the village..."  
 (T.K. Sundari; see p. 63).

It is a common complaint that the poor are apathetic and indifferent to their own development. Reaction to schooling is cited as an example of their apathy. It is obvious that the poor do not express a need for schooling. The schools therefore pass them over. The formal school exists as a facility outside the community. It does not involve itself in motivational or even educational work with those in the community who do not avail themselves of its services. To make demands on the educational system, the poor need an information base and confidence to express themselves. While adult education programmes have attempted to educate the parents on the need for schooling for their children a working elementary school has to demonstrate that useful learning can be provided within the constraints of the locale, that in fact the school can recognise the constraints and modify its functioning to suit the children. Parents have to see that the school is not a threat to the economic role of the child as a contributor to the family income; but despite its many limitations the school has to be seen, as one of the major alternatives that the under-privileged have, to adapt, modify or change their role in society.

Perhaps we need to ask ourselves why formal schools are looked upon as useful only by the privileged within a community. This questioning has to become a genuine exercise in which the community, the teacher and the child participate. Only then can the resultant planning be meaningful. What these case studies illustrate are the reasons for the rejection of schooling that derive from poverty, and what may be done to accommodate the community's needs within a framework of learning for children. The analysis for non-attendance in formal schools and its relationship to poverty bears a family resemblance, whether it is in Gonopathsala or Sarvodaya Shramadana. (See R.S. Qadir, pp 79-92; A.T. Ariyaratne, pp 125-30).\*

Given the common agreement that non-schooling is related to poverty, the case studies offer a range of possible approaches, all of which differ from one another in specifics and even in method, but are comparable in effectiveness. It seems reasonable to suppose, therefore, that such and many more efforts are possible given the fact that (if) educational plans arise from the participation of the community in defining its problems and alternatives. The case studies have amply demonstrated the need for an alternative to school.

#### Participation

It is clear that there are links between poverty and education, and schooling. Almost all efforts to understand the reasons for drop-outs from school accept this reason as pre-eminent. But, when plans are made, educational policy does not give sufficient thought to the links that need to be established at the levels of planning and implementation. Most well-meant schemes do not produce results at field level as the community does not 'participate'.

Participation is an important and well-recognised input in planning and implementation. At the same time it is the least definable of processes. However, some broad categories have been listed by Philip Coombs:

"Standing alone, 'community participation' is just as ambiguous a term as 'integration'. It acquires concrete meaning only when viewed in a specific context. There are numerous types and degrees of community participation, ranging across a wide spectrum. At the one extreme, villagers may participate negatively ... at the other extreme is the village that has organised itself democratically to examine its needs and options, to make decisions and plans to mobilize its own resources, and to seek specific kinds of help from outside sources to fill gaps and break bottlenecks beyond its own capacity. Most villages seem to fall between these extremes."<sup>4</sup>

Participation is understood to be relevant and the process of participation makes inevitable the recognition of subsequent and dependent actions. In other words:

\* i.e., in this volume

"If participation is to be effective, it will be essential that those who hold power do not block innovative learning. Participation is more than the formal sharing of decisions; it is an attitude characterised by cooperation, dialogue, and empathy. It means not only keeping communications open but also constantly testing one's operating rules and values, retaining those that are relevant and rejecting those that have become obsolescent."<sup>5</sup>

If the poor are to accept schooling, they have to be involved in the process that looks at the issues critically. The concept of schooling, if not education, has to become more apparent both in a literal as well as a metaphorical sense.

"The right to participate is integrally linked with a right to learn."<sup>6</sup>

While there is recognition of the notion of participation, very few planners and administrators follow it up. This is partly because the process of genuine participation involves dialogue and other exchanges of an intimate nature which governments cannot bring about. There are besides, difficulties arising out of identifying a community of people who may respond to initiatives from outside. There is also an unexpressed apprehension that it may not be worth the effort of government to try out any project that does not allow for replication.

The success of the projects discussed in the case studies lies mainly in the ability of the organisers of the programmes to initiate, involve and sustain the interest of the community in appreciating their own situation.

"The communities which have now participated in planning and conducting the part-time classes in the action research project have become aware of their capability to think about their education problems. Some villages have suggested short follow-up courses in health, child-care and nutrition, occupational skills and so on. They are ready to find part of the resources and help plan and organise the courses." (Chitra Naik; see p.47).

"When the Oraons first came to the Shahdol area, they were regarded as expert earth-movers. They could literally move mountains of earth to develop agricultural land or to reshape territory for mining and industrial operations. They settled near Naura's village and the first batch came to clear Naura's land of vegetation and to make it arable. They stayed on to learn about vegetable cultivation, to decipher the alphabet in the evenings, to read the clock for work timings, to add and subtract their wages and bonuses ... Through their self activity, they helped Naura to develop the course content, the games, and the pedagogy." (A.K. Roy; see p.102).

Participation involves sharing a common concern; identifying the causal patterns for the existence of problems together and seeking solutions that are sometimes mutually acceptable to the two involved in a dialogue; reciprocating and sustaining the common concern; continued communication; and empathy. Participation is therefore crucial to the development of programmes which are effective and relevant.

The alternative offered by the case studies is a schooling system emerging from the environment after having identified the areas of learning which are relevant and creative. Under these circumstances, non-formal education is primarily concerned with equipping the child to deal with problems arising from the environment. If that is so, in a majority of cases, the objective of the non-formal education programme is primarily to allow children and the community to shape its programmes in a manner in which it becomes a tool not only of schooling but of learning, to focus on demands that help decide, in a manner that is relevant to them.

The process of non-formal education is such that it precludes even an attempt at prescribing a uniform model for decentralisation. The approach of non-formal education is area specific and clients specific. In determining who is going to benefit from the programme, the approaches have to look at not only where the activity is to be located, but who in that area is to share the benefits of that activity. The location of the school in a village is in itself not sufficient to draw the children to school - as evident in the analysis of the reasons for non-attendance in schools. The school has often to be located in the poorer part of the village for the more under-privileged group to attend, or in a special local area to draw a particular group into school. Apart from the geographical location of the school, it has to identify clearly the group within the community it has to reach and involve them in the activities of planning for the school. The basic question that arises is whether anything but a decentralised programme of activity can ever actually reach the poor, in a sense that is both meaningful and useful. For participation to be effective, there has to be decentralisation and planning at the grass roots level.

#### The Child: An Analysis of his Role in Society

The child has little choice in deciding which school he will attend. In the case of a poor child, school is either impossible or terrifying. Legislation notwithstanding, children in many regions in the sub-continent are part of the work force. Though this is mainly related to poverty, it is also related to the irrelevance of the formal educational system itself. The parent decides that the child is better off with informal learning which will ensure social adjustment. A child who grows up as a shepherd is more likely to settle down at home than one who goes to school and comes home discontented and maladjusted. From one child's point of view:

"I was very keen on going to school, but my parents made me stay back at home after I finished class one. They

wanted me to take care of the goats. Now when I take books home from this evening school and read and write, they say, 'If this child had gone to school, imagine how well he would have done!' Only now they realise this. Earlier they used to say, 'what is the use of going to school, you won't learn a paisa's worth ...' Now they say, 'Poor child, he should have been allowed to study further ...'" (T.K. Sundari; see p.69).

The child in this milieu is a responsible wage-earner. The process of learning becomes meaningful to the parents only if it is useful. Even though alternative methods of learning bring games and story-telling lessons to the school child, the involvement with what may seem to be adult preoccupations demands attention to problems in his daily life. In a story-telling session, T.K. Sundari recalls that the children made even the prince and princess work as bonded labourers. If the child is bonded, it becomes his norm and the only way he knows how to live. School does not change his bondage.

In such a situation, the child is to be treated as part adult and part child. The understanding of his role demands that the education that is planned for him takes both roles into consideration. The part-time non-formal school understands the child's predicament, and plans for it. The curriculum includes the child's environment and his situational demands. The school has to become an organic part of the child's life. Only then can it get the right to question the role of the child in his society and explore other alternatives, and stimulate enquiry and criticism.

From the child's own point of view, school can be stimulating if it adjusts itself marginally to his needs. The school that relates to him and wins his confidence brings him in. The case studies demonstrate the willingness of children to attend school and their creativity when they are participants in the learning process. Those who were the drop-outs and the push-outs are regulars at school.

It is essential to understand the predicament of the child out-of-school and make him the focus of planning. If the child is in focus, learning has of necessity to be relevant and meaningful. The approach and method can vary from one project to another, as indeed they do. But there is common agreement that to counter the monolith that formal education is today, non-formal schools have to start reinforcing the fundamental commitment of learning, to place the learner in a position of pre-eminence, to make adjustments whenever necessary, but not sacrifice learning needs for the expediency of standardisation and evaluation.

To sum up, the under-privileged child's predicament is that the child is (i) an inherent part of the work force of the family - employed either in working with the parents or as a wage labourer in the village. The child from the age of five or six has to participate actively in

an adult occupation. With the exception of the BACE project,\* all the other studies recognise that alternative employment has either to be provided in the school to the child or that timing has to be changed. (ii) The child's inability to attend school relates also to the fact that what he learns in school alienates him from life around him. Since learning is not related to the environment, to many of them it is irrelevant. (iii) Struggle for sheer physical survival governs the lives of poor families. The mid-day meal becomes an important part of full-time non-formal programmes and this aspect of nutrition is brought to light both by the Sri Lanka and Bangladesh projects.

#### The Community's Point of View

The community is not homogenous. The poor within a community or in a village are often distanced not only metaphorically but also in a literal sense. Facilities have traditionally been enjoyed by the privileged. The school is one such facility which to the poor parent represents certain values and culture - a culture that may be viewed with sympathy or suspicion. The school is on the periphery of village life and while it may succeed with the student who rises in life and comes back a success, it has failed generally as a means to employment. The number of hangers-on and dissatisfied youth has increased. The school is useful for some, of course. But for the poor it is a gamble, that may not pay off. The odds are too high.

"In reply to a question, 'why she did not send her children to school', in a survey, an earning mother replied 'the school does not provide him or her food, but working somewhere else he or she can procure food.'  
(Rowshan Qadir; see p.79).

The under-privileged and the poor have often to forego their daily income to invest in the education of their children. It would not be possible for the poor to divert children from gainful occupations to involvement with the formal school, only to find that the children have developed permanent handicaps. Aspirations for jobs created are often not satisfied. The risk is too high.

"For a poor parent, the primary need for children is to provide food first, not education. They think that education does not provide any solution to children's practical life. (Rowshan Qadir; see p.79).

The rigidity of the formal system prevents adjustment to local demands, which may have made the school more acceptable.

The community has a variety of needs. The kind of education offered has, however, been uniform, standardised and unimaginative. Even technical education has been linked not to traditional occupational

\* see pp. 50-60

skills in village communities but to school leaving certificates. The picture of education leading to self-employment remains sketchy to say the least. The school remains a vaguely edifying experience, which in many cases leads to alienation. In the Shram Niketan experiment in India therefore, agricultural production which has and continues to absorb the major part of the work force has been made the basis of educational activity. The school runs along with it.

To enliven the present schooling system new ideas have to be drawn from activities outside the school.

"... we have to develop alternative structures and strategies involving the entire community and the resources available within it. What children learn in school should bring about behavioural changes applied to real life situations..."  
(A.T. Ariyaratne; see p.125).

The parents of children out of school view formal education as unsuitable. The timing of the school is inconvenient to the child and it does not instruct him in skills needed to obtain meaningful employment.

Formal education is not tailored to either help the child to learn about his environment or to prepare him to cope with the outside world. The community, in many cases, has not considered an alternative to the formal school because it has known no other.

The gap between the expectation from the educational system and the reality of unsatisfied demands has motivated a number of organisations to try to identify approaches to education which may be more useful from the community's point of view and which may even fall outside the formal system. Once an alternative model has been identified the community's response has been positive.

#### Assumptions regarding Formal Education

Formal education has been found purposeless and unsatisfying from the point of view of many under-privileged communities. An analysis of the reasons why the school has been rejected brings into relief a number of inherent limitations in the system.

"The shortcomings in the formal system consist not only of failures in strategy, scarcity of resources or certain characteristics of its bureaucratisation or institutionalisation, but also in the values and ideas perpetuated through its techniques of communication and by the interpersonal relationship within the system." (T.K. Sundari; see p. 65).

In the critique offered by the Indian and Sri Lankan projects and Gonopathsala in Bangladesh, the system is found to reach only a few and is unable to adapt to a variety of demands. It works on the basis of imported models and does not utilise resources available locally.

"Some societies, notably those with a recent history of colonialism, are burdened with irrelevance of a double dimension, not only are their educational systems obsolete, but they are fundamentally inappropriate to the cultures into which they have been transplanted. The wholesale, carbon copy transfer of foreign learning models and the subsequent indiscriminate devaluation of traditional learning has left many developing countries with the ultimate in non-anticipatory and non-participatory learning."

In importing many of the ideas of education, the formal system depends heavily on resources which are expensive. The investment in terms of textbooks and teachers make it impossible for the formal system to cover all areas that need to be covered. The formal school plans on the basis of general predetermined standards and fails to take into consideration the environmental differences and the varying needs of the clientele.

"However, they [children] should not be mere consumers of social product but be conscious participants and accelerators of the process of change. To ensure this we have to develop alternative structures and strategies involving the entire community and the resources available within it. What children learn in school should bring about behavioural changes applied to real life situations." (A.T. Ariyaratne; see p.125).

Formal education has ceased to satisfy one of its own admitted major objectives of training children to earn. Universal schooling was evolved as a strategy by governments for satisfying manpower needs. The links between schooling and employment is all pervasive. But this is a function that formal education no longer performs well.

"... communities have come to recognise that education does not mean employment and that the present system of education alienates children from work." (Rowshan Qadir; see p.79).

It is in fact felt that the child who goes through formal education is often alienated from the environment and that an educational system which alienates the child from one environment while not adequately preparing him for absorption into another, has in-built deficiencies.

"Even the learning gained by being in school does not seem to throw much light on the future. So much so that even a successful learner often isolates himself from real life situations and the longer he stays in the system, the less able he is to relate to his environment." (A.T. Ariyaratne; see p.126).

"In a recent learned paper, Chowdhury calls education in Bangladesh 'dysfunctional'. Primary education does not help the child to affirm his relations with

nature and other ecological forces and as such does not impart receptiveness to change." (Rowshan Qadir; see p.80).

The reasons for this lie to a large extent in the nature of the education system. The analysis of the reasons for its failure points to a system which is a legacy from the British and which has long outlived its value, but is still persisted in. Lord Macaulay stated that:

"... a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia ... It is, I believe, no exaggeration to say, that all the historical information which has been collected from all the books written in the Sanskrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgements used at preparatory schools in England ..."

The education system proposed by Lord Macaulay and implemented during colonial days therefore does not relate to, or satisfy current demands. Almost all the case studies analyse the shortfalls of the system that was introduced to train the maintenance staff of an empire, while the demands today are for development oriented education.

By implication, the content and method of education in the formal system are also criticised in the case studies in this volume. Unless the content of education is made meaningful to the learner and till such time as scientific methods are evolved and introduced to communicate with the learner, the defects in the formal system will continue to alienate the child from the school.

The formal system of education has become examination oriented. There is rejection of the examination system by children from under-privileged homes. Examinations demand free time for concentrated study. The BACE project in Bangladesh argues against repetition. To prevent the evils of competition and comparison the RDS schools do not have a formal evaluation system. Primarily, however, the examination system, viewed from the eyes of the learner himself, is terrifying. Children who are handicapped by having to work for their living have found it difficult to cope with the kind of examinations that they have to pass even at the primary level.

There is also the financial handicap in putting up the physical infrastructure required to make elementary schooling possible for all children in the age group 6-14. It is surprising that there has been no widespread attempt at establishing non-formal education programmes for elementary schooling with Government support until quite recently.

"As primary education cannot physically cope with the children presently enrolling, about 7-8 million, and as little physical renovation has been carried out, it is hardly possible that 12 million children (the present primary school age group) can be accommodated in the

schools by 1985 even under a double-shift system. There simply are not enough schools, classrooms, benches, or teachers let alone other educational facilities such as simple equipment or books to enable Bangladesh to provide universal primary education. At present the enrolment of 12 million children is not a practical possibility, not to speak of their retention in the school for five years." (Ellen Sattar; see p.50).

One of the major shortcomings of the system as it is today has been its inability to draw girls to school. The girls school, especially if the school is part-time and in the evenings, has faced a number of problems. In a majority of them, girls continue to keep out of school.

#### The Teacher

In all the case studies there is implicit comment on the formal school teacher who does not belong to the community, cannot relate to it and is therefore only partially successful in drawing children to school. The community however has been conditioned to think of the school teacher as somebody who had a certificate to teach. As Lakshminarayan, a village teacher says:

"I am a village teacher. I have only a Higher Secondary certificate and no formal training. When I first became involved with the primary education programme, I had to face gossip and mistrust from those of my villagers who had a higher degree of formal education and training than I. They thought it would not be possible for me to 'compete' with the urban trained school teacher. Even I did not think that I could do so. After all, my knowledge was so limited. In the first six months of my training as a teacher, I learnt that I could be a competent teacher. At the end of the experimental phase, three years after the school had begun, I was willing to face evaluation by an impartial committee from any school in my region." (Aruna Roy; see p.141).

In most of the case studies under review, the teacher is not trained formally. His educational level is also not prescribed. It is left very much to the community and the project organisers to decide the level of formal education of the teacher that is considered adequate. In areas where there is greater literacy and consequent unemployment, non-formal teachers are found to have better formal qualifications, whereas in regions where literacy levels are low the projects have settled for much less. In fact there is agreement that trained teachers are not necessarily better than untrained teachers.

The other issue is the selection of the teacher. A teacher who is selected by the community has been found to satisfy the requirements of learning objectives as understood by non-formal education. Non-formal schools are concerned with organisation of learning in a manner that the child is not alienated from the environment. For the process to be

effective, it is very important that the teacher be from the same environment as the learner so that they share the values and culture.

It is also important that the teacher be acceptable to the community from the moral and social points of view. There is an increasing emphasis in non-formal education programmes on the de-professionalisation of the role of the teacher. Professional teachers see this move as a threat to their jobs. The opening up of the profession to those without certificates not only questions the competence but the necessity of formal training, and devalues the professional teacher. To those who are familiar with development concerns, this argument is not unrelated to issues of the bare-foot doctor of the village level health worker. The planners and the administrators will have to recognise the importance of a teacher who is not formally trained, since non-formally trained teachers have a major role to play in universalising elementary education.

#### Learner Equivalence and Evaluation

Learner equivalence can be seen in many ways: (i) as provision of similar opportunities to the learners in non-formal education as in formal education to enable them to continue their education in formal and professional courses; (ii) as reviewing the connections between formal education and employment and evolving a realistic correlation; and (iii) as comparable certification upon the completion of schooling through either formal or non-formal systems. The projects can do no more than pose the dilemma that confronts a genuine effort to tackle the problems of schooling at the grass roots level. Equivalence between formal and non-formal schooling is an issue that has to be seen in the context of a national or at best a regional level, and is outside the area of decision-making on projects.

The approaches in non-formal education are based on different assumptions but all arising from an identification of problems existing in formal education. One of the areas which comes in for severe criticism is the examination system, which by its lack of imagination and rigidity defeats its own purpose of evaluating learners. The case studies demonstrate that learner evaluation has to be area specific and even pupil specific to make it a creative and positive process. In arguing for recognition of certification by non-formal schools, non-formal projects implicitly express the need for having multiple approaches and an approximation in standards, or imply that only those pupils who want to go into middle level need conform to uniform prescribed standards. Non-formal education programmes have difficulty in trying to evolve methods by which non-formal learning can be evaluated. For, there must be some criterion of measuring progress. The more effective the method, the more specific it is. Methods of non-formal education evaluation can at best outline a process. This process will have to be evolved with variations depending upon each participant group.

### Raison d'Etire of the Projects

Elementary education of the children in the age group 6-14 cannot be the sole responsibility of formal education in most Third World countries. Formal education has not been able to cope with the diversification and decentralisation necessary to involve the community and look at education seriously. There are other very severe limitations as well. Some of them are: (i) The lack of resources. Even if the governments should decide to universalise elementary education, there would not be enough resources in terms of school buildings, textbooks and other infrastructural requirements. (ii) A shortage of trained teachers. There would not be enough trained teachers to carry on the programme of teaching. (iii) Lack of funds. There would not be sufficient budget allocations for paying salaries of teachers.

Considering all these shortcomings, non-formal education for elementary schooling fulfils either or both of the following functions.

- (i) It fills in the gaps in the formal system by supplementing it and by preparing the drop-outs and push-outs to enter the mainstream at a later stage; or
- (ii) it provides for an alternative where the learners are kept outside the formal school system and the pattern of schooling relates to the environment and the immediate concerns of the participant group and implicitly questions the reasons why formal education has become dysfunctional.

Non-formal education does not raise 'original' issues. There has been continual concern over the major issues for many years. Alternatives have been designed by many, including Mahatma Gandhi, to introduce changes in the formal system to suit the needs and culture of the people.

"It seems to me that in our country in which 85 per cent of the population is agricultural and perhaps 10 per cent occupied in supplying the wants of the peasantry, it must be part of the training of every youth that he has a fair practical knowledge of agriculture and hand-weaving. He will lose nothing if he knows a proper use of tools, can saw a piece of board straight and build a wall that will not come down through a faulty handling of the plumber's line. A boy who is thus equipped, will never feel helpless in battling with the world and never be in want of employment."<sup>9</sup>

These issues have been muted by the partial acceptance of concepts, without a major change in approach. The object of any innovative programme in non-formal education today has to question implicitly or explicitly the values that underlie and perpetuate the formal system. Any constructive non-formal programme should, therefore, provoke the planners to look critically at the process once again.

### Concerns of the Projects

The projects under review see the non-formal system either as an alternative education system that exists outside the formal system, implying a considerable modification or change in the pattern of education, the curriculum and the method; or supplementing formal education, without questioning fundamental assumptions but filling in the gaps, using imaginative methods which are participatory and relevant.

It is difficult to place the approach of any one project in either of the above mentioned categories without some overlapping of intent. The division of intent only emphasises the broad thrust of the approach. In any case, supplementing formal education becomes a short-term goal, even if the intention is to change the nature and content of formal education.

"It is also generally conceded that while developing a non-formal channel of primary education, the formal primary school would have to be helped to function better. The two should be mutually supportive devices in the interests of universalisation of primary education... Developing non-formal education rather than intervening directly in the formal system is... the... policy. Yet, improving the performance of the formal system at all levels, so as to render it more responsive to the needs of the disadvantaged sections of society, is also within the scope of its concerns."  
(Chitra Naik; see p.31).

Broadly, again, formal education is seen as leading to certification and employment, and non-formal as being involved with environment and development concerns.

### Schooling and Development

The preoccupation of non-formal education with the poor and under-privileged raises issues which are directly related to development. To quote J. P. Naik:

"We have now become more keenly aware of the need to relate all education to development. In particular, we have realised that the education of the poor, whether elementary or adult, cannot be divorced from direct efforts to improve their standards of living in which they themselves will have to be intimately involved. A trend has thus begun to combine education and development, especially where the poor are concerned. This is a very significant change which goes far beyond the earlier attempts to merely 'educate' the poor, or to give them an education combined with some welfare services, as a form of charity. It is obvious that this new trend can only be strengthened in the days ahead."<sup>10</sup>

However, for many of those involved at the grass roots, the outlines are blurred. Education and development seem so integrated that it seems unlikely that intervention in one area can leave the other untouched. It is interesting to note that the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement began with a concern for the improvement of the quality and life of the individual. This led to the organisation of the pre-schools and the Shanthi Sena. The SWRC,\* Tilonia's interest, is in rural development and in questioning the reasons for poverty. Primary education was identified as one of the important areas for attention. The Savar Gonopathsala is involved in a successful health project with community participation. In BACE, the feeder schools grow out of a co-operative movement. The IIE,<sup>†</sup> Poona, links itself to the Zilla Parishad which is the primary development agency at the district level. In the RDS,<sup>‡</sup> issues relating to poverty and women are concerns of the school. Development and education, in fact, are facets of the same problem.

To make learning relevant, schooling has to relate it to the environment, and to identify issues which bring about change. Thus begins an association with development. On the other hand, the non-formal approach to education of children and adults determines the approach of development programmes. Wherever there is a conscious expressed objective of working with the under-privileged, these two areas integrate and thereby support and clarify mutual problems.

"The Shanthi Sena (Peace Army) Programme of Sarvodaya is an attempt to give form and direction to the development oriented system of education, embracing all young people of school age who are currently in school or out of school. They act as catalysts directing their services and activities to all other age groups within the community."  
(A. T. Ariyaratne; see p.126).

In Sri Lanka, the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement has established a whole network of alternative strategies covering a range of activities to satisfy the needs of the community. The non-formal approach of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement is a broadening of all concerns, moving out of school and entering areas, which in the eyes of the orthodox, are not educational at all. The non-formal alternatives also explore the possibility of establishing and linking education with areas of children's activities in the environment. Education, by linking itself to the environment, has shifted its focus from employment to learning. The Indian experience as well as those of Sri Lanka and Bangladesh have made it explicit that education and learning should equip the child to face day to day problems in the environment.

It may be true that development education is crucial not only for those involved in non-formal schooling and outside the pale of education provided by the structure, but also for those who go through formal education, if it is to be a concerted method to hasten the pace of change.

\* Social Work and Research Centre - see pp. 131-52

+ Indian Institute of Education - see pp. 30-48

‡ Rural Development Society - see pp. 62-78

"A major component of assistance is generally in the form of non-formal education programmes to create awareness and to inculcate correct and relevant attitudes in the minds of State extension workers and the members of the community." (A. T. Ariyaratne; see p.130).

If schooling has to make the child and community the focus, their concerns become the school's concerns. Involvement with development is inevitable.

### Linkages

Non-formal education has been viewed as an activity or a series of educational activities that functionally exists outside the formal system. Nevertheless, none of these functions of non-formal education can be viewed in isolation from the formal structure. This is specially so, as non-formal education relates to the environment and the formal system is very much part of it. Relationship between formal and non-formal education therefore has to be viewed seriously and linkages between the two systems explored. The case studies review this problem. An approach of "bridging techniques" has been evolved. The BACE feeder schools literally feed children into the formal school; the IIE, Poona has planned for bridge courses to enable children to appear for formal tests and join regular schools. The RDS mentions the opportunities provided by the open university as a means of providing higher education to the children. But the problem still persists. A number of governments do not recognise non-formal schools and do not have facilities of open testing for children with access to learning through systems other than the formal school.

Projects represented in the case studies remain connected with the formal system either through the teacher, the curriculum or certification. However, programmes have not been designed to fit into schemes that can be 'replicated'. Non-formal education programmes run by non-governmental organisations have been successful but do not lend themselves well to replication, partly because the primary concern of such programmes is innovation and not replication. Replication is an unhappy word to use in connection with non-formal education. The concept of replication or duplication is alien to the designing of non-formal education. Almost all successful projects on non-formal education would not lend themselves to duplication. If they should, the quality of the programme would perhaps deteriorate. Innovative aspects of programmes presented at formal and informal forums have generated interest and experimentation. The usefulness of an experiment in non-formal education is its ability to stimulate thinking on alternatives.

Participation is the determinant of success, in the sense of the community identifying and evolving a strategy for action. Ideally and wherever possible, "the people themselves must have control over the planning and carrying out of education. In the exercise of this control lies education too."<sup>11</sup> There cannot be centralised blueprints for participatory action. Though programmes continue to multiply, yet they are not enough in the context of national or

even regional primary educational needs. This dilemma continues to feature in any major debate on the relationship between formal and non-formal education. The concept of dissemination therefore has to be viewed as distinct from replication.

While considering linkages, the comparative costs of education in formal and non-formal systems also need to be looked at. Whereas formal Government schools give free education, non-formal schools are expected to motivate the community to contribute. The nature of expenditure on non-formal schools need perhaps to be looked at afresh from a different perspective.

"In the part-time classes, the enrolment consists of those children who have to work during the day. A survey of their occupations has shown (in the project area) that a child of 9-14 may often earn Rs. 4 per day, on an average, for 200 days in the year or may engage in household tasks or assistance to parents, of which the value would amount to similar wages, though this income is not visible. About 1000 pupils earn wages of Rs. 4 per day on an average. Their cumulative daily earnings thus amount to Rs. 4000 per day. Assuming that they work for about 200 days in the year, the total annual earnings would amount to Rs. 800,000 - Rs. 1,600,000 in two years ... As against this income which accrues to the pupils, the expenditure on their part-time education would amount to Rs. 138,000 or, to put it in round figures, about Rs. 140,000. These are points which education planners may find worth examining." (Chitra Naik; see p.46).

### Flexibility and Decentralisation

One of the reasons for the success of the non-formal education programmes has been its ability to change and adapt to the needs of the community. This flexibility is possible only if the project's approach and methods are sufficiently decentralised so as to enable those involved to make changes without having to refer issues 'up'. Decentralisation is possible only when the controlling authority plans for delegation of authority to units that are considered appropriate in size and competence. Most projects under review have implicitly stated that the problem of having to report or refer matters to anyone other than a small group or the community would, in the final analysis, defeat the very purpose of non-formal education.

Governments have repeatedly said that community participation has to be an essential part of non-formal education programmes. However:

"To many observers the characteristics of non-formal education which explain its success are precisely those which are felt to be incompatible with large bureaucracies. The most effective non-formal education programmes exist and survive because of their flexibility ... These kinds of characteristics are very difficult to build into larger-scale government planning bodies. Of necessity, governments require long-term horizons for planning, seeking authorization, obtaining funds, selecting

staff and implementing programmes. Decisions must be reviewed at many levels, with corresponding delays and compromises." 12

If that is so, the question that arises for consideration is whether governments can, in fact, plan for non-formal education while retaining the flexibility of approach necessary. This poses a set of conflicting demands on planning by Government.

#### Critical Areas for Structural Change

This leads us to critical areas in which changes have to be made in the formal educational system to give a rightful place to non-formal education. The existing system of primary education is characterised by single point entry, sequential progression and institutional instruction by full-time professional teachers. These are the critical areas which distinguish a formal programme from a non-formal one.

i) Single point entry : Ordinarily a child is expected to enter Class 1 in the school system at the age of 5-6. Although it is true that slightly underage or overage children are also admitted in Class 1, the educational administrators while emphasising enrolment of children refer to a particular age group. It is argued that if older children are admitted, they soon find themselves out of place and drop out. This system has the advantage of creating a homogenous age group in Class 1, and makes class room instruction comparatively easier. On the other hand, if a child, for whatever reason, does not enter or stay in Class 1 (as happens with nearly half of the children who enrol themselves) he loses the only chance he has to receive instruction.

Since large numbers of children have not been able to receive education and are not yet adults, it is obvious that any insistence on single point entry has to be abandoned. Children, say between the age of 8-14, have also got to be absorbed into the system. This would perhaps bring a very large number of children to school.

ii) Sequential Progression : The existing school system is rigidly sequential in that it expects a child to spend a year in one class and to move on to the higher class after passing an examination. There are no doubt exceptions. Many children fail and have to repeat a whole year. In several countries an ungraded system has been introduced, which enables the child to move from one class to another without being formally examined and without a fear of failure. The basic characteristic of the system, one year for one class, has, however, remained undisturbed.

The arrangement which envisages annual progression is also designed to facilitate classroom instruction to groups of children of the same age and attainment. In a number of case studies in this volume, it is demonstrated that comparatively grown up children complete the course of Class 1 to 5 in 2-3

years. Scope for rapid progression, as well as special arrangements for irregular and slow learners is no doubt necessary for the entire educational system, but for the children who would begin learning at a later stage (8-14 age) it is imperative that the annual sequential character is replaced by opportunities provided for condensed learning.

iii) Whole time instruction : This is another characteristic of the formal system of education which works against the interests of the poor. In India and Bangladesh children are expected to work even before they complete five years of age - they work on the farm, tend cattle, or go out to earn small wages in whatever way possible. Girls are generally expected to look after younger children. It is impossible for these children to attend a school run on a whole-time basis. This is a principal reason for the large drop-out rate in primary education.

Since the economic condition of the poor cannot be improved immediately, the only alternative is a system of part-time education. It may enable children to work as well as to learn. This system, as pointed out by J.P. Naik, "should be replaced by another in which every child is required to attend school on a full-time basis, if possible, and on a part-time basis, if necessary." 13

iv) Insistence on professional teachers : The full-time professional teacher is another typical characteristic of formal schooling. There is a long tradition behind professionalisation of teaching. It is believed that competence and professional training are sufficient for the dissemination of knowledge that is esoteric and specialised. The professional teacher has an urban background and has little empathy with the children he teaches. The system is expensive and economic cuts directly hit the number of children per teacher, increasing the ratio of children. Alternatives have to be identified and soon, if all children should get to school and learn.

There are a number of alternatives to the professional teacher. The local person is one. Another is the village youth who even as he studies can supplement the work of the teacher. It is unfortunate that whenever proposals for using part-time teachers are made, the bogey of educational standards is raised by teachers' associations and even planners and politicians seem to support this stand.

It is apparent that these modifications in the formal system are fundamental and necessary. They could include part-time and short duration courses for children out-of-school and make education the concern and responsibility of a larger number of persons, and involve the community. It is also important to

mention that the reduction in hours of instruction and duration of courses, and the involvement of part-time teachers from the community would make the new system economical for the governments and within the reach of even the poorest.

v) Standardised curriculum : The curriculum in formal schools has failed to relate teaching to the environment. Though much can be done even within the formal system to make curriculum relevant, efforts have been made only in the past decade or so. The non-formal programmes for elementary schools evolve the curriculum from environmental needs, and which may not necessarily remain within the bounds of formal educational concerns. To make non-formal education meaningful, educational planners will have to extend the horizons of non-formal education to include aspects that are part of community life, and involve concerned departments and ministries in the formulation of curriculum and programme planning.

### Planning Pre-requisites

Structural changes in the educational system in the five critical areas discussed cannot be made operational without careful planning and proper administrative arrangements. There is a well known poster in which a bird is flying high. The caption says: "I can, because I think I can." A deep urge and strong resolve are undoubtedly important but that is not enough. In the planning of radical reform in education, it is essential to know what is necessary and to adjust strategies accordingly. It is also important to identify prerequisites for successful implementation. The case studies are conscious of the fact that much of the responsibility for large-scale involvement would fall on the Government. Before introducing non-formal education programmes on a wide scale, it may be essential for national governments (or provincial governments) to follow the steps indicated below either sequentially or simultaneously :

i) Restate educational objectives : It needs to be acknowledged that so far educational opportunity, even at the primary level, remains confined to the privileged. The decision to extend that opportunity to the under-privileged and the poor would call for a clear government commitment. The introduction of non-formal education programmes on a wide scale is a political act inasmuch as it would undermine the existing monopoly on education. It will also not be possible to implement large-scale non-formal education programmes without support from government.

ii) Ensure participation : In societies which do not have a literate milieu, it is necessary to disseminate information. All sections of the community will need to be convinced about the need for non-formal education: the press, universities, and teachers' organisations. Even the parents of the children who would benefit from non-formal education may be influenced to think that non-formal education is inferior and offered to them, because they are poor. It would, therefore, be necessary to

create an environment in which the parents can assess the alternative and benefit from it. Dissemination of information is necessary to involve village youth so that they participate in the programme as instructors and motivators to mobilise the village community into participating actively in the programme.

iii) Realistically phased implementation : It would be rash to implement the non-formal education programme in a country or province without careful preparation. It is generally advisable to start on a small scale, learn from the experience in the first couple of years and then to rapidly expand the programme. It is also ordinarily advisable to begin where the chances of success are brightest and then, gradually, extend the programme to difficult areas.

iv) Focus on the most deprived : Even non-formal education programmes may leave out the most under-privileged. In the sub-continent girls are decidedly under-privileged, even amongst the privileged groups. Communities which live in hilly and tribal areas, and especially identified groups such as persons belonging to the scheduled castes in India, and the minorities, deserve special attention. The real test of the success of non-formal education is whether it reaches those who have so far been left out.

v) Review administrative structures : It would be impossible to implement non-formal education programmes unless the administrative system can be decentralised and made flexible. All successful programmes of non-formal education in countries other than those which are in the midst of socio-economic revolutionary change, are organised by voluntary organizations. People in government can seldom guarantee the decentralisation and flexibility needed for implementation of innovative programmes. When non-formal education programmes are taken up by government, it shall require decision-making at the lowest level, departure from established procedures, and the inculcation of a new creative spirit among the functionaries. A review of administrative structures and procedures should, therefore, be treated as a prerequisite for the successful implementation of non-formal education programmes.

vi) Emphasise complementarity with formal system : There are several points of contact between activities of formal and non-formal education. Emphasis should be on their mutuality rather than on exclusiveness. Many of the children who go through non-formal elementary education may want to continue to study in the formal system. Such a move should be encouraged by granting scholarships and introducing the necessary flexibility in the formal system. It is also possible that the formal system may acquire the characteristics of non-formal education and the latter the objective of good formal education.

### Making Non-formal Education Operational

Several aspects of how this could be done have already been detailed. However, for the sake of clarity and to emphasise the insights that have emerged from an analysis of the case studies, some important administrative aspects of implementation of non-formal education programmes on a large scale are given below :

i) Implementing agencies : There is a strong tradition of voluntary work in the sub-continent - of a religious as well as a secular nature. Generally, such organisations operate on a modest scale and in a limited geographical area. But they are strongly motivated groups. As Philip H. Coombs has noted :

"... in recent years a growing number of voluntary organisations have begun to shift their emphasis from religion and limited social service to more fundamental developmental efforts." 14

The main role of voluntary organisations is innovation, experimentation and resource development. In a few cases they also effectively implement programmes in well defined geographic areas.

Viewed from the national perspective, however, most of the responsibility has to be that of the government. Education is already a concern of several ministries and departments (such as Agriculture, Labour and Community Development) and as many as possible should be encouraged to participate in the implementation of non-formal education programmes. Similarly, municipalities and local bodies operating in rural areas can take responsibility for non-formal education. It would be important to reorient the personnel concerned with implementation of non-formal education programmes in government and semi-government organisations.

ii) Community and parent participation : The most important variable in children's education is, perhaps, the interest, or the lack of it, of parents. Non-formal educational programmes which do not fully recognise this have little chance of success. In this connection, one may recall the important part-time education experiment launched by C. Rajagopalachari in 1938 in the state of Madras, India. His programme of part-time education failed because parents viewed it as an inferior programme which would keep their children at a disadvantage in comparison to urban children. On the other hand, we have the experience of cases included in this volume, where parents participate in decision-making and actually contribute to non-formal programmes. The Tanzanian and Indian experiences show that programmes of education of children of poor parents have the best chances of success if they are accompanied, or preceded by, effective programmes of parents' education.

Apart from parents, there should be participation of local youth, village leaders and other people in the community. The teacher in non-formal education will have to move the spirit of the school out of the confines of the classroom and involve the community in the running of the school, sometimes through local committees.

iii) Resource development : The development of curricula, preparation of instructional materials, training, and research have a most important place in all educational programmes. They do, however, depend on the nature of programme intended to be run. In many cases, the Government programmes may simply be part-time education programmes as in Madhya Pradesh, India. The programme completes the five-year primary education course in two to three years. In such cases it may be best to use curricula and instructional material used in formal schools. Even here the curriculum should include areas of special interest to the pupils. In innovative programmes, the agencies concerned would design suitable curriculum and instructional materials, often with the participation of the teachers and sometimes with the learners themselves.

Training is critical for the teachers in non-formal education programmes. Those with experience of such programmes have recommended short duration pre-service training, followed by counselling by supervisors, and frequent meetings among the instructors and between instructors and supervisors for continuing education. Intensive training programmes have to be organised for supervisors and administrative personnel. The training programmes themselves should ideally be non-formal, to help the teachers and other participants acquaint themselves with methods they have to follow with their pupils.

Suitable agencies will also have to be identified for resource development. BEERI of the Government of Bangladesh is an organisation specifically set up for this purpose. There may be a need to decentralise the activities of BEERI to different regions of that country. India's National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) may have to serve the needs of non-formal education as well. Each country must decide whether it would prefer to create a wing for non-formal education within the institution created to provide resource support to formal education programmes, or whether there should be separate organisations for non-formal education programmes. It is strongly felt that the objectives of non-formal education would be served only by creating flexible and small resource development organisations which would co-ordinate the vast resources available in the community rather than having huge unmanageable institutions. Voluntary agencies which have credibility among other implementing agencies should be encouraged to organise resource support at the local level.

iv) Supervision : The type of supervision that exists in primary schools will not do for non-formal education programmes (they have not been effective for the formal system either). In the selection of field level supervisory personnel too, academic qualifications are not so important, although a minimum level (say matriculation) should be insisted upon. The supervisors in non-formal education programmes should be able to move from village to village and work with the village community, the instructors and the learners. Therefore, selection, training and motivation of these field workers is crucial. The competence, credibility and effectiveness of instructors depends to a great degree on the kind of support the supervisors are able to give them.

The design of the supervisory system in non-formal education should give numerical adequacy some special attention. In India and Bangladesh, the supervisors of primary schools seldom do what is expected of them because the task assigned to them is unmanageable. They are given a number of additional administrative chores. Non-formal education programmes could be in clusters of not more than 20 centres under the charge of a supervisor who lives in the area, and can visit each centre at least once a month. The supervisor should not be expected to write long inspection notes. He should work with the instructor and, where necessary, co-ordinate the work in the area.

v) Financing of non-formal programmes and cost-effectiveness :

The basic economic rationale for non-formal education is that, in comparison to formal education, the investment in it is likely to have a much better return. Without going into the technicalities of economics of non-formal education, it would be necessary to refer to a few major issues. Studies made in this area by Manzoor Ahmed,<sup>15</sup> and T. Majumdar and M S Adishesiah<sup>16</sup> have shown the validity of investment in non-formal education, not only in comparison to school education, but indeed in comparison to other investment choices available to economic planners.

The desirable elements of cost-effectiveness in non-formal education is optimum retention of learners and a stress on the quality of the programme. The principal indicators of internal inefficiency of primary education are : (i) the big drop-out rate, and (ii) insufficient achievement for self-reliant learning upon completion of the primary stage. Non-formal education is designed to effectively counter the main reason for drop-out. We have, however, to persist with emphasis on the quality of the programme, including achievement of literacy and numeracy skills, also to generate capability amongst the learners to deal more effectively with their environment and to bring about an overall improvement in their socio-economic condition. It is this that would determine the cost-effectiveness of the programmes of non-formal education and justify the investment in them.

vi) Monitoring of non-formal programmes : The traditional model of evaluation and monitoring, which views evaluation as the last activity in a cycle which begins with planning and then has implementation and evaluation, is not suitable for non-formal education. It suffers from numerous weaknesses, chief amongst which is that it permanently serves as a tool of measurement, and only rarely of improvement. In such a system, the barriers and shortcomings which are observed at the time of evaluation are used mostly to apportion blame, rather than for correcting the way the programme is run. On the other hand, if evaluation is to be a tool of self-evaluation and learning, it has to build into itself a mechanism for appraisal, feedback, diagnosis and remedial action at all stages of a project or programme including planning, implementation and assimilation. In specific terms, this changed perspective in monitoring non-formal education programmes implies that those responsible for planning and implementation of such programmes provide for : (a) appraisal at the stage of the existing situation, i.e. when the programmes of non-formal education are being planned; (b) evaluation of material inputs as well as non-material inputs at the

commencement of the programme; (c) careful checking of the management as well as the pedagogical processes; and (d) paying enough attention to the evaluation results, the immediate learning outcomes as well as the long range impact on the learners and the community.

As far as the flow of information for monitoring is concerned (i) essential information should be collected; (ii) channels through which information pass should be kept to the minimum; and (iii) stress should be laid on feedback so that a two way channel of communication is established.

### Summing Up

In this introduction an attempt has been made to draw some broad conclusions from an analysis of the case studies included in this volume. Details of the process of effective planning at the project level have been highlighted. The methods used have subsequently been synthesised and conclusions have been drawn on the pre-requisites for planning of such programmes by Government. The issues that have been focused upon for the attention of administrators and educational planners derive essentially from the case studies, but also take note of other important contemporary happenings in the field of non-formal education in the sub-continent.

It is hoped that the case studies have succeeded in presenting the stages in the process of planning, drawing general lessons from successful experiences in non-formal elementary education and raising major issues for debate; and that the conceptual clarity necessary for planning and implementation has been set out.

These case studies have all been undertaken by private agencies. They represent an interesting cross-section of communities in the sub-continent and describe what actually happens when a motivated individual or group takes serious cognizance of a problem. The success of these projects lies in their closeness to the community they serve. The case studies should not be looked on necessarily as models for replication. The usefulness of an innovation in non-formal education lies in provoking and stimulating thought and action. The multiplication of such projects and the growth of a movement in non-formal education, therefore, depends upon the ability of Governments to facilitate more of such activities and even more importantly, to sustain them.

Aruna Roy

References

1. Philip H. Coombs with Roy C. Prosser and Manzoor Ahmed, New Paths to Learning for Rural Children and Youth (Prepared for UNICEF by the International Council for Educational Development, 1973), p.11.
2. Marion Grandstaff, in Non-Formal Education and an Expanded Conception of Development, Michigan State University, Program of Studies in Non-Formal Education, 1974. (Discussion Paper number 1.)
3. J.P. Naik, 'Non-Formal Education in India: A Retrospect and a Prospect' in Non-Formal Education and the NAEP (Oxford University Press, 1980), edited by A.B. Shah and Susheela Bhan, p.227.
4. Philip H. Coombs, ed., in Meeting the Basic Needs of the Rural Poor (Pergamon, 1980), p.25.
5. James W. Botkin, Mahdi Elmandjra and Mircea Malitza in No Limits to Learning: Bridging the Human Gap, A report to the Club of Rome (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1979), p.13.
7. Ibid., p.71.
8. Thomas B. Macaulay, 'Minute on Indian Education', reprinted in Prose and Poetry (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952).
9. M.K. Gandhi, 'Speeches and Writings', in Towards New Education, p.43.
10. J.P. Naik, 'Non-Formal Education in India: A Retrospect and a Prospect' in Non-Formal Education and the NAEP, edited by A.B. Shah and Susheela Bhan, p.231.
11. M.K. Gandhi in True Education, p.44.
12. David R. Evans, The Planning of Nonformal Education (Paris, UNESCO: International Institute for Educational Planning, 1981), p.60.
13. J.P. Naik, 'Non-Formal Education in India: A Retrospect and a Prospect' in Non-Formal Education and the NAEP, edited by A.B. Shah and Susheela Bhan, p.231.
14. Philip H. Coombs, ed., Meeting the Basic Needs of the Rural Poor, p.32.
15. Manzoor Ahmed in Economics of Non-Formal Education Resources, Costs and Benefits (London: Praeger, 1975).
16. Tapas Majumdar, 'Non-Formal Education and Economic Theory' and M.S. Adiseshiah, 'Economic and Financial Aspects of Formal and Non-Formal Education' in Non-Formal Education and the NAEP, (Oxford University Press, 1980), edited by A.B. Shah and Susheela Bhan.