





**INDIA**  
**IGP Country Report**



## Introduction

### Context

There is no doubt that one of the important aims of development in the developing countries of Asia and the Pacific has been the removal of poverty amongst the masses. It is now accepted that in poor countries production and planning need to be specifically geared to the satisfaction of basic human needs. In fact, the United Nations Development Programme in its Human Development Report (1997) provided HPI (Human Poverty Index) values for several countries in the Asia-Pacific region which clearly indicate the existence of large numbers of people below the poverty line. Income-generating programmes (IGPs) have a major role to play in alleviating poverty in these countries.

In India, the need for poverty alleviation has been recognized almost since the nation's independence 50 years ago. While initially it was expected that the overall economic development strategies incorporated in the Government's five-year development plans would also reduce poverty among the masses, later on (perhaps in the 1960s) programmes specifically designed and addressed to the cause of poverty alleviation among the rural poor became indispensable. In the last four decades a number of such programmes have been and still are being implemented in this country. Simultaneously, the control of population growth through family welfare programmes and the eradication of illiteracy through special literacy drives were conceived and implemented as important planks of human development. Thus Family Welfare Programmes (FWP) and Universalisation of Primary Education (UPE) have been important aspects of development planning in India.

However, for a multiplicity of reasons, not the least important of which has been inefficient implementation, the expected results from family welfare and universal primary education programmes have not come about. To be sure, there have been marked increases in literacy levels, and also, at least in some selected areas of the country, an appreciable reduction in TFR (Total Fertility Rate) in the last two decades. Along with the extension of formal schooling facilities to the far corners of the country, non-formal education (NFE) programmes have been vigorously implemented over the last two decades as part of India's commitment to the Education for All (EFA) initiative sponsored by UNESCO.

While it may be difficult to link NFE directly with poverty alleviation programmes, basic education does form the basis for skill development and the empowerment of the deprived which in turn enables the poor to participate in IGPs for poverty alleviation. In India, both governmental as well as non-governmental/voluntary organizations are implementing NFE programmes. Not all of these organizations are directly involved in IGPs as well, but many of them have also taken up such programmes along with their other activities directed towards EFA.

### *NFE and IGPs*

The NFE programmes are being implemented by the Central and State Governments as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to fulfil the national commitment to Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Education For All (EFA), as set out in the National Education Policy of 1986. NFE is commonly defined as any organized education activity outside the established formal system – whether operating separately or as an important feature of

some broader activity – that is intended to serve identifiable learning clientele and learning objectives.

Shri. J. P. Naik, the doyen of the Indian education system, has discussed in great detail the three channels of learning, viz., incidental, non-formal and formal. According to Naik, the non-formal education channels cover both liberal arts and vocational education; they are traditional as well as modern; they have continued to play an important role in the education and socialization of individuals, both before and after the birth of formal education. NFE addresses all three educational objectives of imparting knowledge, teaching skills and promoting values, although in the traditional forms it was most commonly used for teaching skills (J. P. Naik: *Some Perspectives on Non-formal Education*, 1977).

APPEAL uses the term “non-formal” for courses and programmes offered outside the formal system. The formal system covers programmes offered by established education institutions such as schools, technical colleges and universities. Thus the term “non-formal education” is expected to cover all organized courses of studies outside the formal system, irrespective of whether these are for general, liberal arts, vocational or technical education, and also regardless of the level of education (APPEAL, UNESCO, PROAP, ATLP – CE, vol. I, 1999).

In recent years, however, non-formal education has come to be identified in India with the primary level education provided outside the formal system. It is also sometimes referred to as the “equivalency programme” because students (children ages 9-14) are provided a condensed course and prepared for

Standards IV or V of the formal school in a shortened period of two or three years. The children who missed the bus in the first instance for one reason or the other are thus able to join the formal mainstream later on.

For the purposes of this research study, we endorse the concept of NFE as elaborated by Naik and endorsed by UNESCO. To reiterate, NFE is the channel which covers both liberal arts and vocational education outside the formal mode. Moreover, vocational training programmes (or IGPs) may be independent of liberal arts education at the elementary level.

We must emphasize that the eradication of illiteracy from a nation that is set to become the most populated in the world within only a few decades has had to be necessarily accorded the top billing in national priorities. However, this does not mean that the skills development and empowerment of the rural poor have been neglected. With the emergence of millions of neo-literates due to successful total literacy campaigns, the need to train these individuals in the skills needed for raising their incomes has become all the more pressing. Several governmental, non-governmental and voluntary organizations have taken upon themselves the task of training neo-literate as well as illiterate adults in income generating skills and activities. There is no central or even state-level direction in regard to the type and content of these training programmes aimed at promoting income generation in the rural areas. These organizations are locally based, and build up their programmes and activities around local needs. Many of them are devoted to the empowerment of rural women so as to make them active partners, along with men, in earning for their families. They develop the course curricula, and decide the admission criteria, duration of courses and schedules to meet local requirements and suit the local populace. We mention examples of these organizations in Section 2 of this study.

### *Objectives of the study*

The broad objective of this study is to examine and present a typology of NFE demonstrating the potential for poverty alleviation through income-generating activities.

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Identify the scope and the role of NFE contributing to IGPs.
2. Identify innovative approaches of NFE linked to income generation.
3. Assess the impact of pilot/experimental IGPs as a useful input for human resource development.
4. Assess the impact of IGPs for increasing participation in NFE.
5. Make recommendations for policy formulation to build up essential links between NFE and IGPs for poverty alleviation.
6. Suggest measures for replicating effective NFE programmes with particular focus on income generation.

### *Scope and coverage of the study*

In addition to the specific objectives of the study outlined above, the study also proposed to examine in detail various macro-level programmes undertaken in the country over the past three or four decades. The Government of India's National Policy of Education (NPE) (1986) and the Programme of Action (POA) (1992) have emphasized constitutional commitments to ensure free and compulsory education for children up to the age of 14. A number of schemes and programmes have been launched in the past fifteen years in

pursuance of these commitments. One notable example is the “Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan” (SSA) initiated by the Government in the year 2000. This initiative aims to provide useful and good quality elementary education to all children ages 6-14 by the year 2010.

We assumed that in this vast country there would be a number of NGOs involved in this type of NFE and poverty alleviation programmes. However, keeping in mind financial and time constraints, it was not possible to undertake case studies of more than five such organizations. Such in-depth case studies shed light on the efficacy of vocational training programmes and IGPs in contributing to poverty alleviation in India. This is particularly relevant for rural women, who are healthy and hard-working human beings but, because of illiteracy and other socio-economic constraints, are not able to contribute substantially to development. In the final analysis, this study attempts to bring out the interrelationship or interdependence between basic education on the one hand and IGPs and poverty alleviation on the other.

### *Study design*

The macro-analysis presented in this report is based on an in-depth study of publications, research papers, government reports and other documents related to NFE, vocational training and IGPs. For the purposes of fieldwork, research managers selected five organizations (one governmental and four NGOs) with a reputation for excellence in their programmes. A team of six researchers under the supervision of the Director-General, Indian Institute of Education, collected detailed information on these organizations and their activities with the help of a structured schedule-cum-questionnaire. From each of these

organizations, ten beneficiaries were randomly selected and interviewed by means of a previously designed questionnaire.

The study was completed within a period of 6 months, from December 2001 to May 2002.



## Poverty Alleviation Programmes in India

### The Poverty Line

The concept of basic human needs has recently gained favour in the thinking of experts concerned with new strategies of development for poor countries. These thinkers are unanimous in their agreement that production and planning must be specifically geared to the satisfaction of these needs. Poverty is the condition where human beings are not able to meet the basic needs of life. One way to determine the number of people in this condition is to use the concept of the “poverty line.” There are several indicators we can use to determine where to draw this line:

- per capita income
- household consumption
- per capita consumption of specific items such as cereals
- proportion of expenditure on food items
- calorie intake
- basic metabolic rate and other medical indicators

There is no single method combining all these indicators to obtain figures on the number of people living below the poverty line. Thus there are wide variations in estimates of the percentage of people living in poverty. In India, for example, these estimates range from about 25 per cent to a little more than 50 per cent of the population. Further attempts to define poverty in relation to area or region, caste and community, education and occupation, or the rural-urban divide have only added to the confusion.

The United Nations Development Programme (Human Development Report, 1997), using a few important variables (people expected to die before age

40, illiterate adults, people without access to health services, unsafe drinking water, underweight children, etc.), has calculated a human poverty index (HPI) for developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region. The HPI for India is 36.7 per cent, compared to Singapore (6.6), Thailand (11.7), China (17.5), Pakistan (46.8) and Cambodia (52.5). Using this index and other poverty indices, we can assume that almost 40 per cent of India's population live below the poverty line. In other words, these people are unable to satisfy basic human needs.

### *Characteristics of the poor*

According to the UNDP report a little more than a quarter of the total population of the Asia-Pacific region are poor. They are mostly illiterate, with low incomes. There is an uneven distribution of poor people within a country, with a high concentration in rural areas. The poor are exposed to many risks and hazards due to their living conditions and means of livelihood. The appalling living conditions of the poor, especially in regard to inadequate ventilation, unsafe drinking water and poor sanitation, expose them to constant disease. The poor are generally without land and capital, and have no way to acquire the skills needed for remunerative labour. Because of social and legal discrimination, women and girls are more commonly the victims of poverty. They have to accept without question their subordinate status in the home and in society. Children from poor families suffer both physically and psychologically. Malnutrition forces them to start life with poor health, impaired development and reduced resistance to disease.

The poor are also found in urban areas also, although in relatively fewer numbers in some countries. The urban poor are mostly squatters residing in slums or destitute families and individuals living in the open air. They lack access to

basic services and are exposed to health hazards and crime. They are compelled to earn a living as casual wage workers, street-side vendors, rickshaw pullers, beggars or prostitutes.

The hallmarks of the poor, especially the rural poor, are illiteracy, malnutrition, poor health, and economic, social and cultural exploitation by the more powerful groups in society.

*Poverty alleviation: the need for a direct attack*

There is now enough empirical evidence (if any was really needed) to indicate that a large proportion of the Indian population is not in a position to meet basic needs as defined in terms of employment, consumption, health, nutrition, life expectancy, child mortality, literacy, opportunities for schooling, and access to public goods or property. As a long-term measure for the eradication of poverty and improving the quality of life, broad-based literacy and basic education for all is the main foundation and an essential precondition. Thus, in the developing countries, raising literacy and education levels should be viewed as the principal instrument of poverty eradication. Although mainstream economists may insist that poverty will be addressed by the regular growth processes of the economy, many of them also agree that economic growth alone cannot alleviate poverty without structural changes in favour of the poor. There is also a growing realization that market mechanisms are neither efficient nor reliable instruments for allocating resources when the income distribution is highly distorted as is the case in India (and other densely populated countries of South Asia, like Pakistan and Bangladesh). The need for a direct attack on poverty in these countries cannot be over-emphasized.

In India poverty eradication is one of the major objectives of planned development. The magnitude of the problem is still quite staggering. Thirty-six per cent of the Indian population were below the poverty line in 1993-94, the latest year for which data are available, and the absolute number of poor was 320 million, of which 244 million (37 per cent of the rural population) lived in rural areas. The main determinants of poverty are 1) a lack of income and purchasing power due to lack of productive employment and considerable underemployment (not to lack of employment per se); 2) a continuous increase in the price of food, especially food grains which account for 70-80 per cent of consumption; and 3) inadequate social infrastructure, which affects the quality of life of the people and their employability.

It is recognized that a dramatic increase in incomes is by itself not enough to improve the quality of life of the poor. Unless all citizens, especially the poor, have certain basic minimum services, their living conditions cannot improve. These minimum services include, among other things, literacy, education, primary health care, safe drinking water and nutritional security.

The Government of India has identified seven basic minimum services: safe drinking water, primary health care facilities, universal primary education, nutrition for school and preschool children, shelter for the poor, accessible roads for all communities, and a public distribution system with a focus on the poor. The Ninth Plan (1997-2002) places special emphasis on these seven basic minimum services and their provision in partnership with State Governments and local government institutions.

Direct poverty alleviation programmes on an expanded scale are also an important feature of the Ninth Plan. These programmes are oriented towards strengthening the productive potential of the economy and providing more opportunities for involving the poor in the economic process. Broadly, there are schemes for generating incomes through supplementary employment, for improving the welfare of the poor in rural and urban areas and for a targeted public distribution system to ensure that the poor have access to food grains at prices they can afford. These programmes are based on approaches and methods that involve the poor themselves in the process of poverty eradication and economic growth. Local government institutions, voluntary organizations and community based self-help groups are closely involved in these programmes.

### *Poverty alleviation programmes*

The poverty alleviation programmes serve as the basis for a direct attack on poverty. These programmes essentially aim at generating incremental incomes for the poor. This means a direct transfer of additional purchasing power into the hands of people living below the poverty line. It is also an attempt to alleviate the problem of almost negligible “trickle down” from economic growth to the bottom rungs of society because of structural constraints. India has implemented a number of income and employment generating programmes for poverty alleviation in the last three decades.

#### A. Self-Employment Programmes

- 1 Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)
2. Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM)
3. Supply of Improved Toolkits to Rural Artisans (SITRA)

## B. Rural Wage Employment Programmes

1. Rural Manpower Programme (RMP)
2. Crash Scheme for Rural Employment (CSRE)
3. National Rural Employment Programme (NREP)
4. Rural Labourers Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP)
5. Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) (a rural works programme introduced in 1989-1990, which later incorporated the NREP and RLEGP)

## C. Special Area Development Programmes

1. Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPEP)
2. Desert Development Programme (DDP)
3. Hill Area Development Programme (HADP)

## D. Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA)

In addition to these national-level programmes (past and present) undertaken by the federal Government, several NGOs and voluntary associations have initiated micro-level training with or without outside assistance. These programmes, using the methods of non-formal education, have proved to be very popular, especially amongst women and children who either dropped out of school or never attended in the first place. The programmes have emphasized the development of income-earning capacities and self-sufficiency on the part of their beneficiaries. We look at some examples of these programmes in the next section of this report.

There is no doubt that these income and employment generation programmes implemented by both the Government and NGOs during the last three decades have had some impact on the level of poverty in the country. The Government claims that the proportion of the population below the poverty line has gone down by more than 20 percentage points, in other words, from a little more than 50 per cent in the 1960s to a little less than 30 per cent in the 1990s.



## Micro-level Programmes

### Introduction

In our survey of government NFE programmes, we have seen that in its broader sense NFE is not restricted to literacy and numeracy alone but refers to any organized effort to inculcate knowledge and skill development outside the formal system. The fact nevertheless remains that in India, NFE under governmental initiatives is largely if not wholly addressed to the problem of eliminating illiteracy. This emphasis was perhaps inevitable because this country is home to almost 40 per cent of the world's illiterate population.

But it would be incorrect to conclude that NFE is not being used in India for training men and women to undertake income-generating activities. On the contrary, there are several hundreds of small institutions that are providing training to enable illiterate, neo-literate or semi-educated young men and women to become small-scale entrepreneurs. The institutions offering these training courses may or may not get outside assistance from the Government or other organizations, but they are backed by a band of social workers devoted to the poor and deprived.

For the purposes of this study and taking into account the constraints of time and funding, researchers selected five such institutions in the state of Maharashtra as the subjects for detailed case studies. Four of these institutions are run by NGOs, while the fifth is a registered society deriving a substantial part of its income from government grants.

Because of space considerations, in this report we will describe in detail only one of these institutions, namely a programme for tribal people, “Adivasi Sahaj Shikshan Pariwar.” First, however, we will provide summaries of the other four projects. (Readers wishing complete details on all of these, including the results of interviews with beneficiaries, are referred to the original report submitted to APPEAL by the Indian Institute of Education.)

### **Four Examples of Non-governmental IGPs in India**

1. The Vigyan Ashram (Science Hermitage), located in the village of Pabal in the state of Maharashtra, aims to spread science and technology in rural areas in tandem with a philosophy of simple living and high thinking. It concentrates on teaching people how to learn and practices the pedagogy of “learning while doing.” Its education activities focus on helping school dropouts to apply science and technology in their day-to-day occupations. Specifically, the ashram offers courses in basic rural technology, sewing and knitting, animal husbandry (poultry and goats), metalworking (welding, soldering, fabrication), electrical repair and assembly (including computers), and rural lab technology (testing for blood type, blood sugar, pregnancy, simple soil analysis, etc.). Trainees also learn how to set up and manage small businesses of their own. The graduates of these courses have become remarkably self-reliant in many ways. Women have gained confidence and can attend to household tasks such as electrical wiring and repair, carpentry, masonry and machinery repair.

2. The Centre for Education and Development of Rural Women (CEDRW), located in the village of Shivapur southeast of Pune in Maharashtra state, is

involved in a number of activities aimed at the empowerment of women. In addition to operating a recreational centre and preschool for children, CEDRW offers agricultural courses, health education camps and vocational training courses that include tailoring, knitting, embroidery and bag making. The beneficiaries, all of them girls and young women, are able to contribute to family incomes and thus are a valuable support to poor rural families.

3. The Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS, or Institute of People's Education), located in the city of Pune, was initially a government project but two years ago became an autonomous, independent, registered society dependent on government grants. The JSS, among other activities, offers non-formal training courses for urban youth (both women and men) who have dropped out of school. Trainees can select from about 70 different courses, ranging from a one-day course in candle making to a six-month course in tailoring. Learner demand governs the selection and provision of courses. Many housewives and unemployed youth, after receiving training, have set up their own small enterprises. Originally restricted to Pune city, JSS has extended its services to smaller towns in Pune district.

4. World Vision India operates a tribal area development programme in Pune district. Multifarious activities are conducted in the areas of health care, education, leadership development, agricultural development, environmental awareness and income generation. During the past two years, training programmes in three areas have been available: tailoring, computer literacy and driving motor vehicles. Graduates from computer literacy and driving courses already have secure employment, while tailoring graduates state that they use their skills for meeting domestic needs, thus saving on household expenses.

<sup>38</sup>Liu Huihan, Pei Shuben, *The Exploration and Practice of Education Reform Improves Rural Development*, The People's Education Press, (1997: 7)

## Case Study: Empowering Tribal People

### *Introduction*

The “Adivasi Sahaj Shikshan Pariwar” is located in the village of Maswan, a tribal community in the Thane district of Maharashtra state. The majority of the population are Malhar Koli, a prominent ethnic minority in the district. Kunabi and Agari are other ethnic groups found in this area.

Twenty-five years ago, most of the tribal area of Thane district was unknown to the rest of the world. Not only government agencies but also social services organizations failed to take any notice of this area. The people here were deprived of all civic amenities, affected by ignorance, poverty, malnutrition, disease and unemployment. Starvation and the untimely death of family members had become routine occurrences in their day-to-day lives.

Only a few primary schools existed there. Even those people who lived nearby were unwilling to send their children to school. One of the most important reasons was poverty. Although education was free, parents could not afford to send their children to school because they would lose the earnings of these children, who collected firewood or edible items from the forest for sale in the village markets. Another compelling reason was the need for older children, especially girls, to look after the younger siblings and do the household chores like fetching water, cooking and tending cattle.

A social worker and ardent follower of Jayaprakash Narayan, the doyen of Indian socialists, made up her mind to work for the uplift of these tribal people. In 1978, which was declared the International Year of the Child, the Samajawadi Mahila Sabha decided to undertake a project on tribal children's education. The Sabha initially surveyed 320 families in and around Maswan to find out the reasons for people's indifference to education. The results indicated that these children were not attending school because 1) they did not have sufficient clothes to wear due to poverty; 2) they were receiving one meal a day by working as caregivers to younger children; 3) they were forced to stay at home to look after their younger siblings because both parents were absent; and 4) they could not understand the language of the textbooks due to the differences between this language and the tribal dialect. As a result, they had difficulties in comprehension and could not generate any interest in studying.

On 1 April 1978, the first tribal welfare centre was established at Maswan. As the life style of the tribal people differed from that of urbanites, formal methods of teaching could scarcely be successful. On the advice of Shri J. P. Naik, the leading Indian educator, centre staff decided to adopt non-formal methods of teaching.

Staff members visited almost every hut in the village and were thus able to recruit some 70 to 80 children to attend classes. People from surrounding villages developed an interest in this experiment and requested such centres in their *padas* or hamlets. Within a year, eleven such centres had started. Each centre is a small institution carrying out

multifarious activities related to education, health and nutrition, skill development for income generation, and social welfare. In May 1980, an independent trust was established, which was registered under the Societies Registration Act with the name “Adivasi Sahaj Shikshan Pariwar” (ASSP).

### *Support*

The ASSP’s main objective is tribal welfare. This means involvement in activities that lead to empowerment and improvement in the living standards of the ethnic minorities living in this area.

A Board of Trustees and an Executive Committee supervise the activities of the ASSP. It gets its funding and donations from the following institutes and organizations:

- Central Social Welfare Board, New Delhi
- Department of Human Resources, New Delhi
- State Children’s Welfare Society, Mumbai
- Khadi Gramodyog Mandal, Mumbai
- German Agro Action, Germany
- Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, New Delhi
- Samajawadi Mahila Sabha
- Rashtra Seva Dal
- Bhoomi Sena
- National Institute of Rural Development
- Yusuf Meharally Center

- Palghar Taluka Panchayat Samiti
- Indian Institute of Education
- Lesley Swahey Center

### *Infrastructure facilities*

The ASSP owns approximately four acres of land at Maswan. Facilities at present consist of a bakery, hostel, dispensary and accommodations for staff.

The ASSP provides a hostel for 25 to 30 girls attending secondary school, although the Social Welfare Department gives grants only for 24. The ASSP also has a small library with a good collection of books. Teachers as well as children use this resource to good advantage.

At Dhuktan, a neighbouring village, the ASSP has bought 1.5 acres of land for paddy cultivation. The institute also owns five acres of land at Koknare, another village close by. Of the eleven centres, five of them are established on the institute's own land. For transport, the ASSP has two jeeps, one of which is used as a mobile dispensary.

### *Programmes and activities*

This project, which initially focused on the education of tribal children, has over the last twenty years gradually diversified and expanded its activities into various areas of human welfare. The ASSP now aims at the overall development of ethnic minority communities in the vicinity of Maswan, with the main emphasis on education and health and targeting children and tribal women in particular.

**Non-formal education programmes.** At present, the ASSP operates eleven centres, with Maswan as the central office. Initially each centre served three groups separately. There was a *sahaj shikshan* or non-formal education class (6 to 14 years), a nursery (3 to 5 years) and a creche for children under 3. But at present only two activities, nurseries and crèches, are continuing at most of the centres. Gradually the number of children in the first group kept on decreasing. In fact, the decline of the non-formal education classes is one of the significant achievements of the ASSP, because as parents became more aware of the importance of education, they started enrolling their children in formal schools. At present, most children above 6 years of age are enrolled in the regular primary school. At each centre, a trained teacher, an assistant teacher and two “ayahs” (nannies) are appointed. These teachers and ayahs participate in a number of workshops, short-term courses and camps.

**Health and nutrition programmes.** Another important activity is promoting an awareness of the importance of health care and nutrition. There were not many medical facilities in these remote places. Tribal people were under the unholy influence of local *bhagats* (quack doctors). So the ASSP started providing medical assistance with the help of a trained doctor. There are two dispensaries at Maswan and Vandivli. Its mobile dispensary visits remote *padas* (hamlets) and provides free regular medical checkups for children and any required medical help. Nursery teachers pay special attention to children’s cleanliness and hygiene. They are provided with tooth powder, wash cloths and bath soap. All children also receive nutritious food three times a day. Seasonal fruits and vegetables are occasionally available.

**Other activities.** A social forestry project involves local people who plant hundreds of acacia, teak, subabul, mango and other trees. The project provides wood for the bakery and fruit for the children. The ASSP purchased 1.5 acres of land for paddy cultivation in 1983. The Inner Wheel Club of the Bombay Airport provided assistance for a bore-well. Rice and seasonal vegetables are grown and the produce consumed at the various ASSP centres. In addition, several camps are organized for teachers, ayahs, mothers and others. These camps introduce participants to various subjects such as legal literacy, education and family welfare. Picnics, sports and drawing competitions are also organized for the children.

### *Income-generating programmes*

One of the main objectives of the ASSP is to promote and implement employment generating schemes to provide supplementary work, especially for women. As almost all of the tribal people live below the poverty line, providing education was not sufficient. It was necessary to start some income-generating training for them. The ASSP started four such programmes. Two of them (a six-month tailoring course and a course in Warli [tribal] painting) are almost formal in nature, while the other two (for bakery workers and ayahs) make use of on-the-job training methods.

**Tailoring.** The ASSP offered its first tailoring course in 1990, training thirty candidates. Jawaharlal Nehru Entrepreneurs sponsored this course. After this batch, the ASSP had to discontinue the course, as they were unable to find sponsors. In October 1999 the tailoring course was revived. This course is six months in duration. Ten to fifteen women are enrolled in each batch. Although

there are no specific criteria or conditions of eligibility for enrolment, the ASSP generally prefers women who are literate. Initially trainees were charged Rs. 10 per month. Due to inflation, the ASSP has now increased the fees to Rs. 30 per month. The trainers hold master's degrees in tailoring given by private tailoring institutes. A trainer is paid Rs. 1,000 salary per month. As this salary is meager, the ASSP is unable to retain the same trainers for successive batches and has to appoint new ones.

Most of the trainees are either unmarried girls or newly married women. The majority are from 18 to 20 years of age. There are ten sewing machines, and the programme also provides cloth, scissors, thread and other raw materials. Instruction and practice take place three hours per day except on Sundays. After completing the course, the trainees receive assistance from the ASSP and from sponsors in purchasing sewing machines and setting up independent businesses. Even if the trained girls do not start tailoring shops, they use their skills at home and do stitching for neighbours.

**Warli painting.** Warli painting is a unique style of painting practiced by the Warli people (a local tribe) and other ethnic groups in the region. It has flourished over many generations. Tribal people draw pictures to decorate their thatched huts. For example, at the time of a wedding, a special picture, called a "*chowk*," is drawn on the wall. In the past, people created these pictures with the help of rice paste and a bamboo brush. This folk art is on the verge of extinction, and needs to be revived.

The workers at the ASSP realized that a commercial touch to this folk art could result in an unlimited market for these tribal paintings. Fortunately,

the Maharashtra Foundation of New York agreed to sponsor a course, which started in 1993. The duration of this course was six months. Twenty young men and women enrolled. No fees were charged. Instead, each trainee received Rs. 10 per day as a stipend. There were no requirements for admission. Two trainers were appointed, both traditional artists who were illiterate but considered to be experts in their field. They were assisted by a social worker who was neither a traditional artist nor a commercial artist by profession, but had a good judgement of market demand. He helped the trainees to give a professional touch to their art. The ASSP set up a separate “Warli painting” unit where the trained artists are engaged at Rs. 100 per day. The institute provides the necessary raw materials like cloth and paper.

This experiment has not met with the expected degree of success. Even though the ASSP has started their own Warli painting unit and employed three of the trainees, none of the other trainees has been able to earn enough from this skill for their livelihood. The main problem is the lack of a market. As the Maswan area is far away from the main market, namely the city of Mumbai, they do not get sufficient orders. As a result, no one is attracted enough to this art to accept it as a full-time profession, in spite of free training. The lack of a sufficient market has also led to the cancellation of this course after one batch. Another reason for discontinuing the course was the lack of sufficient funds.

At present, the institute still employs the three tribal graduates in its Warli painting unit. They produce paintings according to orders placed by customers from within the country as well as from abroad. They paint their images on earthen pots, handkerchiefs and cloth bags. They also prepare greeting

cards and panels. They send their magnificent pieces of art to be represented at various exhibitions all over India.

**The bakery project.** A bakery unit was established in 1982 with the intention of providing employment to local youths. The ASSP decided to introduce bread to these people because wheat was not a part of their diet. The Khadi and Gramodyog Mandal helped the institute to establish the bakery unit. The first individuals who worked in the bakery did not receive any formal course of training in bakery and confectionery. Instead, all of them learned while on the job. A skilled person was brought in from Thane to train other local tribal people.

At present, five tribal men work in the bakery. They prepare bread, biscuits, *nankatai* and other products. Raw materials are provided by the ASSP. Bread is supplied to all of the ASSP centres for midday meals. Most customers are local villagers. Some bakery products are also sent to a school run in Mumbai by a noted social welfare organization.

**Other training courses.** Courses in wiring and carpentry were also started in 1990 at the same time as the tailoring course. For all these courses, Jawaharlal Nehru Entrepreneurs provided sponsorship. Later on, the institute could not continue these courses due to lack of funding. Similarly, it failed to keep track of the trainees who had completed the wiring and carpentry courses. Therefore, no information is available at present regarding whether these graduates are earning their livelihood using the skills acquired during these courses.

**Training of ayahs (nannies).** Two ayahs are appointed at each centre. One of them looks after the crèche and the other prepares food for the children. These ayahs are local tribal women. None of them has received any formal training in running a crèche. Very few of them have ever attended school but many of them have attended either adult education or NFE classes run by the institute and have become literate. They have received some on-the-job training. At first, they were paid Rs. 300 per month. Later their salaries were increased according to their experience. They also look after the health and hygiene of the children. Now they have become so confident in their work that they can entertain the children even in the absence of teachers. All of them are given the opportunity to participate in workshops and camps organized by the ASSP or other institutes for their further development.

#### *Identification of beneficiaries*

From the list of beneficiaries given by the ASSP staff, the researchers selected ten for interviews. Seven were women and three were men. These ten beneficiaries represent all four income-generating programmes conducted by the ASSP. The beneficiaries were interviewed individually at their homes or at the centre.

#### *Socioeconomic conditions*

Most of the beneficiaries selected for the sample live below the poverty line. Their family members are either labourers with no land or marginal farmers who cultivate paddy. Their farming depends upon the vagaries of rainfall. The paddy is so meager that it is hardly sufficient for home consumption.

Husbands of women beneficiaries work in nearby factories or on farms for a daily wage.

Some of the beneficiaries still live in thatched huts. With one exception, they have their own houses, either thatched huts or concrete houses with Mangalore tiles. Most of the beneficiaries who have completed the tailoring course have their own sewing machines, either purchased themselves or received from donors. The ASSP had helped them to find these donors. Most of the beneficiaries were unable to give information about the monthly income of the family, as this income varied from month to month. Due to the seasonal nature of their employment and breaks given to factory workers, their income is not stable. All of them are the members of self-help groups. Their monthly savings ranges from Rs. 10 to Rs. 100 per month.

**Table 2: Profile of beneficiaries**

|                   |   |    |           |          |                |         |
|-------------------|---|----|-----------|----------|----------------|---------|
| Kunda Harwate     | F | 30 | Married   | 4th std  | Ayah           | Rs.675  |
| Suma Mankar       | F | 24 | Married   | NFE      | Ayah           | Rs.450  |
| Vasanti Jadhav    | F | 38 | Married   | AE       | Ayah           | Rs.850  |
| Anita Pawar       | F | 24 | Married   | 10th F   | Warli Painting | Rs.1750 |
| Sumitra More      | F | 24 | Married   | 10th std | Warli Painting | Rs.1750 |
| Girish Dhanwa     | M | 27 | Married   | 11th std | Warli Painting | Rs.1000 |
| Kishor Pawar      | M | 33 | Married   | 4th std  | Bakery         | Rs.875  |
| Chandrakant Bhoir | M | 19 | Unmarried | 10th F   | Bakery         | Rs.625  |
| Tara Bombade      | F | 17 | Unmarried | 10th F   | Tailoring      | Rs.550  |
| Darshana Bhoir    | F | 20 | Married   | 6th std  | Tailoring      | Rs.250  |

### *Education*

Among the ten beneficiaries selected, only two of them have passed the high school examination. The remaining are either school dropouts or were attending non-formal education classes. Even their parents were illiterate or school dropouts. However, all of the beneficiaries had high educational aspirations for their children.

### *Individual cases (names changed)*

**Sumitra**, a 17-year-old girl, was born with congenital deformities of limbs. Both of her palms were deformed and one leg is half as short as the other. Her parents are landless labourers. Nevertheless, she has become self-sufficient, future she will be able to further develop her skills and thus be able to earn more.

**Sudhir**. This local postman attended the course in Warli painting after completing schooling up to the 11<sup>th</sup> standard. His father was a traditional artist. As a child he used to go with his father to paint *chowk* at the time of wedding ceremonies. Although he is getting a handsome salary of Rs. 4,000, he augments this income by making Warli painted articles like greeting cards or panels. He gets an average of Rs. 1,000 per month by selling these items. He regrets that he cannot take more orders, as he does not have sufficient time due to his job. Though he knows that there is a market for these kinds of artistic products, due to lack of accessibility his earnings are limited.

**Suryakant.** This 19-year-old bakery worker received training from his fellow workers. He could not get through his SSC examination. Later on he joined the institute as a bakery worker. Now he is not only an expert in his job but also handles bakery accounts efficiently.

He gets Rs. 25 per day. But this is not the end of the story. He was inspired by the objectives of the ASSP and decided to spend his leisure time in educating others. When he came into contact with the ASSP, he was thoroughly impressed by its objectives and activities. He thought that it was his moral responsibility to do something for society. He therefore started conducting adult education classes in his *pada*. He observed with pride that 25 women attend these classes. He does not expect monetary reward for this additional work.

**Meena.** An affectionate caretaker of the children, Meena did not attend formal school at all. Her parents were barely literate. As they were landless labourers, they were forced to keep Meena at home to look after her younger deaf and dumb sister. She started attending *sahaj shikshan* (i.e., NFE) classes along with her younger sister. Through NFE, she completed fourth grade studies and appeared for the fourth grade examination in the formal stream. She received training under a medical practitioner and assisted her in clinic work for 6-7 years. Later, the institute employed her as an ayah. Now she is well trained in preparing nutritious food and looks after the health and hygiene of the children including her own daughter, whom she brings to the centre every day.

As her husband does not have a permanent job, she is pleased with her regular income of Rs. 450 per month. She has opened a recurrent account at the post office, where she saves Rs. 50 per month. According to her, her confidence is the result of the training and experiences she had at the institute.

### *Conclusion*

The last twenty years have witnessed a gradual change in the tribal lifestyle. There have been transformations in attitudes, beliefs and preferences. These changes are not merely due to the narrowing gap between urban and rural culture, but result from painstaking efforts taken by the ASSP. The institute had first started educating tribal people with the broad objective of overall development. It has succeeded in attracting local people and has been able to win their confidence during the process.

Compared to the other IGP schemes, the tailoring course functions smoothly. So far 50 women have completed the course. More and more women want to enroll. This does not mean that it is very popular but it is the only course available for women in the vicinity. We note that only those women with their own sewing machines can continue to stitch clothes. The investigators also spoke to some other candidates who were not included in the list of beneficiaries, but did complete the course. The interviews revealed that none of them is able to earn more than Rs.300 per month. Due to the poverty of the people of the surrounding region, their orders are few. These earnings cannot bring dramatic changes in their standard of living but as the tribal lifestyle is very simple, most of

these women are satisfied with their meager incomes. Few of them wish to acquire further training and thereby add to their income.

Warli art products can get a good return if appropriate marketing is done. At present, only four of the trainees are practicing their craft. Three of them are employees of the ASSP. Due to the absence of strong links with the market for obtaining orders, this enterprise cannot flourish. Special efforts for marketing might well increase the demand.

In actual fact, the bakery and ayah training programmes were started in order to fulfil the institute's need for trained workers to look after the tribal children at the centres and prepare food for them. They were not aimed at developing skills training for income generation. In the case of the bakery, those who were trained were accommodated at the ASSP as employees. As the cost of building furnaces and acquiring raw materials is very high, none of the employees could think of establishing his own bakery. Like bakery workers, ayahs were also trained with the intention of accommodating them at the ASSP.

Even though income generation is an important issue in this tribal pocket, more crucial and primary problems demand attention. ASSP chooses to emphasize these problems which it deems more pertinent for improving the standard of living of the local people. However, it is also important to provide skills for income generation, because most of the tribal people have to depend on wage labour on the neighbouring farms for their livelihood. It is hoped that in future programmes could be developed to meet the income generation requirements of these ethnic minority people and make them an economically self-reliant community.



## Summary and Conclusions

### Overview

The removal of poverty has been by far the most important developmental strategy adopted by the developing countries in their post-liberation phase. There is a unanimous opinion that in the poor countries production planning needs to be specifically geared to the satisfaction of basic human needs. In India, the need for poverty alleviation has been recognized almost since its independence from colonial rule 50 years ago.

In the last four decades, programmes specifically designed and addressed to the cause of poverty alleviation amongst the poor have been implemented throughout the country. Simultaneously, the control of population through family welfare programmes and the eradication of illiteracy through special literacy drives were conceived and implemented as important planks of human development. The last two decades have witnessed considerable improvement in the literacy levels and also appreciable reduction in the total fertility rate. Non-formal Education (NFE) programmes have been vigorously implemented to attract those who never went to school or who dropped out for various reasons, not the least important being dire poverty. While NFE may not be directly linked with poverty alleviation programmes, it is clear that basic education forms the basis for skill development and empowerment of the deprived which in turn enables the poor to participate in poverty alleviation programmes.

## **The Effects of Programmes for Poverty Alleviation, Literacy and Family Welfare**

When we think of alleviating the poverty of the rural masses, we think of various ways of transferring purchasing power into the hands of the poorest among the poor, of meeting their basic needs through social investments and also putting a check on their growing numbers. In India, poverty alleviation programmes are given high priority in the national development plans and hence large-scale funding is provided for large-scale wage employment programmes undertaken in rural areas, and for programmes that provide financial and infrastructural assistance for incremental income earning through self-employment in agriculture and allied activities, industries, services and business. In addition, there are training programmes in production skills for rural as well as urban youth who are illiterate, neo-literate or school dropouts. A special scheme for women and children in rural areas is also being implemented. Similarly, special development programmes are dedicated to improving the lives of people residing in drought-prone, desert and remote hill areas.

It is generally accepted that the operation of these programmes over the last 3-4 decades has resulted in lowering the poverty level. About 30 years ago, almost 55 per cent of the population was estimated to be below the poverty line. According to official data, the percentage dropped to 36 in 1993-94 and to 26 in 2001. As indicated in the first section of this report, the UNDP human poverty index for 1995-96 gives the figure of 36.7 per cent for India. There may be variations in the estimates by different sources, but it is generally believed that the number of people living below the poverty line has steadily come down in the last two decades. The extent to which the poverty alleviation

programmes mentioned above have contributed to this decrease is, however, difficult to assess quantitatively.

The importance of NFE in this country where almost half of the world's illiterates live was widely recognized in the 1960s. However, actual NFE projects got under way only in the late 1970s. The NFE programmes were implemented by a large number of NGOs and voluntary associations that were locally based and enjoyed the confidence of local communities. Such an atmosphere was necessary in the rural areas, especially for increasing the enrolment of girls. The newly introduced Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Educational Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and the Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) programme also aimed to provide basic education to rural children, especially in the most remote and poorly served districts.

Literacy has progressed well in the decade after India signed the Jomtien declaration. NFE was reinforced and strengthened to reach all corners of the country. The literacy rate rose by 13 percentage points between 1991 and 2001 (from 52 to 65 per cent). Interestingly, for the first time the rate of increase in literacy was higher for females (14.9 percentage points) than males (11.7 percentage points). The male-female gap in literacy rate has also come down from 24.8 (1991) to 21.7 (2001). NFE is believed to have helped increase female literacy, as this is a mode far better suited to rural girls than formal full-time schooling. However, there is hardly any scope for complacency when we learn that, according to the latest official statistics, 29 per cent of the children of school-going age (6-14 years) were not attending school in the year 2000. Almost 60 per cent of these children were girls.

The national rate of population growth has come down from 24.8 per cent in 1971 to 21.3 per cent in 2001, in spite of the increased number of couples in the reproductive age groups. The demographic transition phase characterized by a drop in the death rate accompanied by a fall in the birth rate seems to manifest itself in India even if rather late. However, the rate of population growth is still high, being more than 2 per cent per annum, which is a stumbling block to the quick alleviation of poverty in this country.

### **At the Micro-level**

What have we learnt from this study? The study has certainly shown that there is a large number of young men and women in the countryside who are literate (or newly literate), willing to learn new skills and who can work for themselves. What is more important to know is that their number has steadily grown over the last 2-3 decades and that they cannot be gainfully employed in the traditional family enterprises. The fragmentation of land holdings, an influx of factory-produced goods into rural areas, and the increasing use of labour-saving equipment and machinery in the rural vocations and professions have resulted in unemployment and frustration among the rural youth. With both formal and non-formal modes of education reaching even the smaller villages, the levels of literacy have increased.

A noteworthy development is that an increasing number of village girls are now taking to education in Maharashtra state, where this study was conducted. But parents are still reluctant to allow them to go outside the home for employment or to set up their own shops or service centres. These girls seek

to learn skills, which they can use only at home. Moreover, even after marriage, young women in rural families who want to earn an income receive no encouragement from husbands and in-laws.

For all of the programmes in this study, the young men and women interviewed by researchers were between 15 and 30 years of age, were literate (being mostly drop-outs at different stages or students at NFE classes), and were willing to learn any skills that would enable them to start income-generating self-employment enterprises. There is no relationship between the traditional family occupations and the new skills learnt. The emphasis is on self-reliance rather than wage employment. Men prefer to learn technical skills (mechanical, electrical, electronic, workshop technology, etc.) while women prefer activities like tailoring, knitting, embroidery, baking, and pathology lab work. In urban areas, the demand is for skills leading to small-scale production of domestic consumer goods. Computer literacy courses have recently been introduced and are in great demand by young women and men, in both urban and rural areas.

All of the vocational training programmes are conducted according to the principles and methods of NFE. There is generally no insistence on any minimum level of educational qualifications, although trainees are expected to be able to read and write. There is a great deal of flexibility when it comes to course content, course duration and the scheduling of classes. Much emphasis is placed on practical work, learning through doing or working. Hands-on experience is given greater importance than theoretical teaching.

Capital shortages and the inability to find new markets for goods and services in the rural areas, which are being increasingly invaded by the urban sector,

are the two main problems faced by these trained young men and women. Nevertheless, the increasing demand for these non-formal modes of vocational training clearly shows that such training is beneficial for many. Several success stories were noted during the course of this study. Some individuals claimed that because of the training and especially the hands-on experience, their earning potential has multiplied three or four times.

We can say by way of a final conclusion that the non-formal mode of vocational education is a cost-effective and sustainable model, contributing to the potential of individuals to generate their own incomes and improve their standard of living. It helps create a new culture of rural entrepreneurship that is no longer dependent on the declining traditional occupations.

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