CHAPTER 9
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1. The socioeconomic impact of INFEP was assessed on the basis of responses of the learners (the direct beneficiaries) and responses of the teachers, supervisors and key persons (the indirect beneficiaries).

Learners' Views

2. The sample learners were quite clear about the end results of their enrollment in the learning centers (Tables 9.1 and 9.2). Basically, they expected three to four benefits which were inter-related: (i) to learn in general, (ii) to learn accounting, (iii) to know how to write a letter, and (iv) to get a job. Besides, the adult learners also mentioned "assisting children in their study" as an additional expectation. How far they have acquired the different cognitive skills (against their expectations as listed in Tables 9.1 and 9.2) has been reported in the Chapter 7: The achievement of learners. What has INFEP delivered to them in socioeconomic terms? On the basis of the learners' perception, the following developments were reported:

(i) Over 65% of the adult learners believed that their social status had improved (very much: 12.68%; somewhat: 52.44%) due to enrollment in INFEP's learning centers (Table 9.3).

(ii) About a half of the adult learners (53.67%) opined that their participation in the learning centers positively influenced their standard of living (very much: 9.66%; somewhat: 44.01%). There was not much difference between the government-managed and the NGO-run learning centers in this respect (Table 9.4).

(iii) The most perceptible and significant difference between the before-after situations of INFEP's intervention was observed in the realm of life skill-related matters for both adolescents and adults (Tables 9.5 and 9.6). The learners, whether belonging to government-managed or NGO-run learning centers, were better informed with regard to the nine life skill-related matters due to the INFEP intervention. The highest improvements (positive differences between before-after comparison of INFEP) took
place in the knowledge of use of sanitary latrine, dowry (as a social crime), and early marriage of girls (as undesirable). For the adolescent learners, the proportions of those with increased knowledge in these skills were found to be 70.75%, 79.83% and 80.54% respectively. For the adult learners, these proportions were 65.42%, 77.81%, and 80.60% respectively.

**Teachers’ and Supervisors’ Views**

3. The teachers and the supervisors of the program were involved in its delivery/administration. Therefore, it was not expected that they would evaluate INFEP without any bias. Field impressions revealed that the teachers had to run the learning centers within resource constraints. Modest resources e.g., physical space (someone’s outhouse or a thatched-roof bamboo house), educational materials, low educated (up to grade 10 in most cases) and less trained teachers and the difficult task of educating over-aged adolescent and adult learners were found during field visit. Both the teachers and the supervisors identified a number of things to make the impact of INFEP (or similar programs) more effective (Tables 9.7 and 9.8). Indirectly, they hinted that the impact of INFEP was not fully satisfactory. To make INFEP more successful, they observed that more consciousness-raising social movement, complementary credit program for the socially disadvantaged, better training for the teachers/supervisors, more effective participation of the local community, improved physical space for learning centers, and similar other arrangements were required.

**Key Persons’ Views**

4. A sample of 545 key persons were interviewed to obtain their views on the performance of the program. The key persons included from the top civil administrator of the district i.e., the Deputy Commissioner down to the local (grassroots-level) elite. As expected, most of the key persons belonged to the Center Management Committees (CMCs) either as president, member, or member-secretary. From the views of the sample key persons the following could be observed:

(i) About 85% of the key persons considered INFEP to be successful (Table 9.9) and about 95% of the respondents thought that it left a positive impact on the learners (Table 9.10).
An overwhelming majority (about 95.60%) of the respondents viewed that the overall impact of INFEP was positive (Table 9.11). On the degree of INFEP’s quality (in terms of its performance vis-a-vis popular expectation), 34.31% of the respondents considered it to be very good and 65.69% rated it to be good, and none rated it as bad (Table 9.12).

An overwhelming majority (95.22%) of the key persons felt that the success of INFEP gave a fillip to enrollment in the mainstream primary schools, leading to the conclusion that INFEP played a complementary role to formal primary education (Table 9.13).
CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
1. Based on the findings of this study and a review of the literature on nonformal education in other developing countries, a number of conclusions and recommendations are made below.

Conclusions

2. There are over 30 million illiterate adults in Bangladesh even after organizing literacy programs during the last seven years. The present literacy rate for the population aged 15 and above being only 51 percent, the study team would agree with the National Education Policy Formulation Committee (NEPFC) that there is a need for: (i) a nonformal education channel (parallel to the formal system) for the out-of-school children and the dropouts of primary schools and (ii) a literacy program for the illiterate adults.

3. INFEP has been a reasonably successful experiment. It has achieved most of its targets and has established an institutional and a program framework for further NFE projects. The results of the experiment lead to the following broad conclusions:

   (a) It should be possible to eradicate illiteracy in Bangladesh within a period of 10 years or even earlier.

   (b) It should also be possible to raise the adult literacy rate (for people aged 15 and above) to 80% by the end of the Fifth Five-Year Plan period (1997-2002).

   (c) Both directly and indirectly INFEP has contributed to an increase in primary enrollment. While some of the dropouts have been enabled to re-enter the formal system, the illiterate adults who have become literate are more conscious than ever of the need for having their children enrolled in primary schools.

   (d) It will be difficult to ensure universal functional literacy through the formal primary system alone. There will be a need, over the next one decade, to have a nonformal education channel parallel to the formal system to cater for the hard-to-reach and the out-of-school children as well as illiterate adults of the age group 15 and above.
INFEP has covered 82 thanas. It will be necessary to bring the remaining 408 thanas under similar or more effective programs/projects.

The success of NFE projects will be greatly dependent on the provision of meaningful GSMKs in which the local community can play an effectively role.

Recommendations

4. The removal of illiteracy being a constitutional obligation, the literacy movement should be recognized as a national program of the highest importance. Accordingly, the President/Prime Minister may make an appeal to people at all levels to contribute to and support nonformal education (NFE) and adult literacy in all possible ways.

5. Recently a National Council for Mass Education has been constituted to review the progress of implementation of the nonformal education projects, examine the policy issues, and suggest guidelines for new initiatives and implementation strategies. The Council, which should be viewed as the highest policy-making body, should meet at least once every four months and focus its attention on the policy issues including matters concerning interministerial coordination. In particular, the Council should formulate a detailed policy on the financing and implementation of NFE and adult literacy projects during the next one decade.

6. NEPFC, in its recent report (1997), made the following recommendations on nonformal education and adult literacy:

(a) A 3-year nonformal primary education program should be introduced for the age group 8-14. It will be a center-based program, each center catering for a maximum of 35 learners. The class duration will be 3 hours a day and the contact length will be 800 hours a year. Persons completing the program will acquire skills comparable to those of grade 5.

(b) An adult literacy program will extend over a period of at least 6 months. The classes will meet 5 or 6 days a week, at least 2 hours a day. The literacy teachers, having at least grade 8-level education, will have foundation training for 15 days and refresher training for 10 days during the 6-month period.

(c) By the year 2000, at least one Gram Shikkha Milan Kendra (GSMK) should be set up in each village and by the year 2005, one GSMK in each ward should be upgraded into a Loke Kendra (Community Center), to be managed
and run by the concerned Union Council.

(d) To ensure greater operational flexibility and public participation in policy formulation, DNFE should be transformed into an autonomous Bangladesh Mass Education Foundation, registered under the Societies Act. It will have a General Council (consisting of 21 members), which will constitute a 7-member Executive Council for a 3-year term.

(e) There should be set up a National Academy for Mass Education (NAME), which will also be an autonomous body. The Academy will be primarily concerned with the training of literacy personnel, research and studies, and materials development. The Technical Support Services Wing of DNFE will serve as the base of the proposed Academy.

7. The study team is of the view that the recommendations of NEPFC deserve consideration. In executing a massive NFE program, many of the management problems cannot be dealt with routinely under the existing government rules and regulations. The interest of the program will be best served by transforming DNFE into an autonomous body. Also, the involvement of union councils in the provision and management of GSMKs is likely to be an important step toward greater public participation in NFE and adult literacy.

8. The study team found TLM to be a potential answer to combat adult illiteracy. In the districts of Chuadanga and Lalmonirhat, TLM has been identified as a successful, cost-effective experiment. It created a lot of enthusiasm, involving both the general mass of people and public servants of the various ministries. The results of the experiment being encouraging (with the success rate close to 90%), the study team would recommend replication of TLM in other districts.

9. In Chuadanga's TLM, a sum of Tk. 31.28 million came as government grant from DNFE and Tk. 0.31 million as public contribution. Based on the experience of Chuadanga, other districts where TLM is yet to be introduced may like to set a target of mobilizing about 5% of the total cost of the program through greater public participation. Furthermore, additional resources for literacy programs can be generated and used locally through a literacy tax, which will be similar to the education cess that used to be collected in the 1950s and 1960s at the rate of 12.50% of land revenue.

10. TLM has been, to a great extent, an administration-driven program. The NGOs have not been actively involved in its implementation. It should be possible to devise a mechanism to involve both NGOs and local groups (clubs, mosques, etc.) in its implementation. Although the district administration will continue to lead and guide the Program, the implementation
mechanism need not be rigid and uniform in all cases. Some amount of diversity in implementation will be both possible and desirable.

11. Currently TLM ends with an evaluation of the learners’ achievement in four basic skills at the conclusion of the 6-month program. Some have proposed a mid-term evaluation as well. Some have suggested that throughout the program, teaching and testing should go together so that the fear of examination may be removed or reduced. The need for a well thought out evaluation plan remains obvious and deserves close examination.

12. TLM is based on voluntary involvement of the concerned groups and has not provided for monthly salary or honorarium for the teachers. The study team has been told that a modest monthly honorarium (about Tk. 400) will greatly contribute to TLM’s effectiveness and generate enthusiasm among the teachers. The suggestion deserves consideration.

13. The success of a program depends, to a great extent, on effective supervision. Currently, DNFE has no full-time government field staff (similar to TEO/ATEO) at the thana level for professional supervision of NFE projects. Consequently, it is recommended that pending creation of the post of Thana Nonformal Education Officer (TNEO), the feasibility of placing the NFE and adult literacy centers under the supervisory jurisdiction of the Thana Education Officers and Assistant Thana Education Officers (who are under the administrative control of the Directorate of Primary Education) be explored so that they become responsible for both primary and mass education.

14. DNFE’s implementation capability at the district level needs to be increased. The delegation of some of the powers to the district level will be worth considering. Also, the creation of a post of Assistant District Coordinator (ADCO) will help strengthen monitoring, supervision, and training. With the creation of 64 posts of ADCOs, the posts of the 10 Monitoring Associates may become redundant.

15. An important head of expenditure of NFE and adult literacy programs is the provision of teaching-learning materials and equipment. As the programs are extended, the number of learners will increase, and with the increase in the number of learners, economies of scale may become available, thus reducing unit costs of production. A competent study group having expertise in the production of teaching-learning materials may be involved in examining the issue. Also, the post of a Material Development Specialist may be created at DNFE’s headquarters.

16. A multi-disciplinary research cell may be set up at DNFE to evaluate the existing teaching-learning materials before these are replaced or reproduced. The current primers, teachers’ guides, training manuals, and continuing education materials can be improved in
terms of content, language, presentation, illustration, coverage, and other suitability measures. All future teaching-learning materials need to go through a process of pretesting before these are adopted for general use.

17. Monitoring is an important dimension of NFE and adult literacy programs. At the district level, INFEP's database depended on manual processing. No microcomputer was available at the DCO's office and there was no data entry operator on his staff. The study team would recommend that a dependable database should be created early through provision of one microcomputer and one data entry operator for the DCO's office. At the national level, DNFE's MIS staff will need to be trained and its database must be streamlined.

18. External evaluations of INFEP programs have been made after the termination of the programs. Generally, there has been a significant time gap between the closing down of a learning center and evaluation of learner achievement with the result that neither the learners nor the concerned teachers and supervisors are available any longer. It is, therefore, recommended that external evaluations should take place immediately after or slightly before a program is terminated.

19. A baseline survey of client groups (both male and female), persons likely to be locally available as teachers and supervisors of NFE programs, and possible locations of NFE centers and GSMKs should be undertaken by the concerned NGO before setting up NFE centers and GSMKs. A report on the findings of the baseline survey should be made available to the concerned DCO.

20. The 64 District Coordinators and the 10 Monitoring Associates of DNFE, recruited direct through a selection committee, have a master's degree in a basic subject but are without a professional qualification in education. The study team would like to point out that with a professional qualification in education or nonformal education, their services could be better utilized as core trainers/master trainers as well. Future vacancies in the positions of District Coordinators and Monitoring Associates should be filled from among suitably qualified candidates having a professional degree or diploma in education/nonformal education, preference being given to those having experience of using computers.

21. DNFE may consider redesigning its structure, keeping in view its roles and functions. The study team would recommended that 25% of DNFE's senior positions at the level of director/deputy director should preferably be filled through direct recruitment from among persons having experience in the areas of NFE and adult literacy.

22. DNFE will be well advised to streamline its documentation section and publish a
detailed annual report on the implementation of its NFE and adult literacy projects. This will require a strong database covering the activities of the various wings of DNFE.

23. There is a strong argument in favor of integrating the adult literacy program with the income-generating programs of the other ministries. The teaching-learning materials of INFEP included valuable messages on population and family welfare, income generation, livestock rearing, rights of women, nutrition, environment, etc. However, effective linkage between adult literacy and poverty alleviation projects is still lacking. Often the hopes of the learners that credits will be available on completion of the literacy program have not materialized. This will have a dampening effect on the future projects. Experiences elsewhere suggest that to be successful, literacy programs need to be closely linked with income-generating activities and programs for fighting poverty.

24. It is widely believed that unless the neoliterates have opportunities of using their newly acquired literacy, it will be almost impossible for them to retain the literacy level they attained, and within a couple of years, the investment on the literacy program will cease to be meaningful. Consequently, there is an urgent need for an effective post-literacy program. GSMKs with library, recreational facilities, and opportunities of training in IGAs need to be established on a permanent basis. The costs can be shared by all the concerned ministries rather than by DNFE alone. There is a consensus that GSMKs can serve both as community and post-literacy centers. Some have suggested that they can also serve as literacy centers for: (i) those who failed to be enrolled in the literacy program, (ii) those who dropped out of it, and (iii) those who failed to achieve the minimum literacy level.

25. The teaching force of the NFE and adult literacy programs should include not only unemployed persons who read up to grade 9 but also qualified Imams of local mosques, retired teachers of schools and madrashahs, and students passing leisure time after public examinations. The involvement of these groups will enhance the strength of the literacy movement in social mobilization.

26. There is a need for giving greater attention to the training of the literacy personnel at various levels. The duration of training for teachers and supervisors of NFE and adult literacy programs should be increased. (DNFE recognizes the need for increasing the duration of training of teachers and supervisors). Suitable training programs can be organized throughout the year by the proposed NAME and more PTIs may be involved in the provision of foundation and refresher training courses. A longer list of core trainers having field experience of NFE and adult literacy (together with a professional qualification in education/nonformal education) should be developed. An evaluation of the training courses offered each year may be made by the NAME.
27. It is recommended that the DNFE officials concerned with training should have a professional qualification in education or nonformal education.

28. Although INFEP availed of the services of 4 international and 3 local consultants (involving consulting services of a total of 54 person-months), the study team is inclined to conclude that there is still a need for professional training on the part of DNFE officials. It is, therefore, recommended that a meaningful tailor-made intensive training program of 2-3 months' duration may be organized jointly by the Institute of Education and Research of the University of Dhaka and the Institute of Primary and Nonformal Education of the Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology. DNFE officials concerned with training, monitoring and evaluation, continuing education, and materials development may be required to go through the course, and those whose performances do not prove satisfactory may not be allowed to continue at DNFE.

29. The requirements of various positions at DNFE should be spelled out, and persons proposed to be deputed to DNFE should meet the prescribed criteria.

30. The Institute of Education and Research of the University of Dhaka and the Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology have recently introduced courses on nonformal education in their academic programs. The Bangladesh Open University and other teacher training institutions (PTIs and TTCs) also may include similar courses in their academic programs. Appropriate research studies on specific issues concerning NFE and adult literacy may be supported by the universities.

31. It is strongly felt that the mass media can play a more effective role in the literacy movement. The radio and the TV can devote at least half an hour a day to NFE and adult literacy programs. The national and the regional dailies also can bring out suitable materials (at least one-fourth of a page) once a week for the neoliterates. The recent experimental use of video developed by the State Resource Center in Calcutta, West Bengal, to assist both teacher training and classroom instruction for adult literacy may be reviewed for possible application of such technology by DNFE.

32. Outstanding voluntary efforts in the area of NFE and adult literacy should be recognized through awards given at divisional or national level.