

My Experiences in Adult and Lifelong Learning in India and Abroad (1984-2024): An Autoethnography

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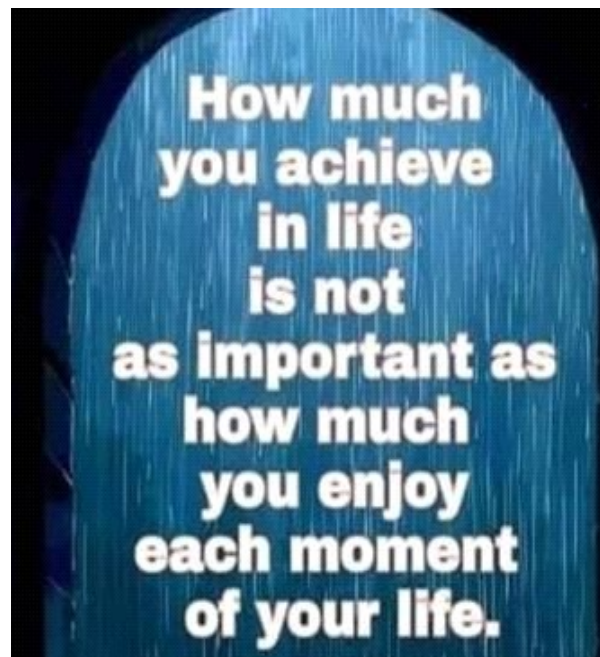
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Professor S.Y. Shah interviewed a renowned scholar in Adult Education- Professor H.S. Bhola of Indiana University, USA whose encouragement paved the way for this write-up.



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About the Author

Professor S.Y Shah, the Patron of the IAEA since 2025, has been a life member of the Association for over four decades, during which he served as Vice President, Treasurer, Executive Editor, and Editor of the Indian Journal of Adult Education at different periods. During his career, Prof. Shah held several positions viz; Lecturer in Education at the National Council of Educational Research and Training, Assistant Director, Director and Professor of Adult Continuing Education Programme at Jawaharlal Nehru University, Senior Fellow at the National Institute of Adult Education and Joint Adviser (Education Division), Planning Commission, Government of India. Internationally, he has had teaching and research stints at several institutions, including: DAAD Visiting Professor at Duisburg-Essen University and Julius Maximilian University, Germany; Erasmus Mundus Visiting Scholar of the European Commission at Aarhus University, Denmark; Development Fellow of the Association of Commonwealth Universities at Warwick University, UK; Kellogg Visiting Scholar at Syracuse University, USA and Senior Social Science Fellow of the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute at the University of Toronto, Canada.

He has designed and taught innovative courses at Indian and foreign universities; undertaken 21 research projects, and contributed significantly to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of numerous adult education initiatives, particularly those of the National Literacy Mission and the IAEA. Prof. Shah has also served as a consultant to several organisations, including UNESCO (India), Commonwealth of Learning, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), and Asian South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE). He has been a member of several expert bodies, including the Standing Committee of the University Grants Commission (UGC), Advisory Committee of the Adult Learning Documentation and Information Network of the UIL, Advisory Board of World Literacy of Canada, Advisor to Rotary Club of India, and Co-Coordinator of the ASEM Network on Professionalisation of Adult and Lifelong Learning.

He has made 30 presentations at several international conferences held in the US, UK, Germany, Canada, Denmark, France, South Africa, Finland, Norway, Malaysia, Vietnam, Philippines, Indonesia, Nepal, Taiwan, Bangladesh, Thailand, Brazil, Sweden and South Korea. He has over seventy publications, including *An Encyclopaedia of Indian Adult Education*, the special platinum jubilee publication *-75 Years of the Indian Adult Education Association: Some Glimpses*. He wrote

the screenplay for the film on IAEA, which is available on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzuLhAbOGR4>

During his long association with IAEA, Prof. Shah took the initiative to plan and establish the International Institute of Adult and Lifelong Education (IIALE) at the IAEA premises in 2002 and served as its Director for more than two decades. Under his leadership, the IGNOU Study Centre was established at IIALE to offer Master's, Diploma, and Certificate programs in Adult Education. In collaboration with the National Literacy Mission (Government of India), UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), IIALE and Indira Gandhi National Open University, he designed an innovative program - Participatory Adult Learning Documentation and Information Networking (PALDIN) for the professional development of adult education functionaries which has been recognised as one of innovative programme in the field of Adult Education in a global survey conducted by the Slovenian Institute of Adult Education In 2000 He, established the Indian chapter of the International Reading Association and served as its President for two years, followed by over a decade as Executive President Prof. Shah has not only participated in most of the programmes of the Association but also designed and coordinated several programmes viz. "Recent developments in the field of Adult Education", 'Research methods and trends' for nine years and the Visiting Scholar Colloquium for four years.

In recognition of his outstanding contributions to the field of adult and lifelong learning, Prof. Shah has received numerous honours and awards, including Nehru Literacy Award (2007), Induction into the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame, USA (2015), Honorary Fellowship of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, Hamburg (2017) Sardar Patel International Literacy Award of Commonwealth Association for the Education and Training of Adults, UK; International Association of Education for World Peace, USA; and The Global Open University, Milan (2002). His publications are widely accessible through academic platforms such as Academia.edu, ResearchGate, and the IIALE website, www.iiale.org; Further details of his academic and professional contributions may be accessed at: <https://sites.google.com/view/drsyshah/home>

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I emailed the initial draft of this manuscript to 50 carefully chosen people including senior colleagues, my contemporaries, friends, and young researchers who had shown interest and were willing to review it. It is gratifying to note that as many as 44 people responded. Some provided feedback in person or over the phone, while others shared detailed comments in writing or appreciated the draft. They all concurred that the write-up might make a good source of information for researchers. The scholars listed below deserve my sincere gratitude for their selfless time and perceptive observations. However, none of them is accountable for the opinions expressed in this write-up.

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3. Professor Arne Carlsen, Former Director, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, Hamburg, Germany.
4. Professor Asha Patil, Former Director, Department of Lifelong Learning, SNDT Women's University, Mumbai.
5. Professor Asoke Bhattacharya, President, Reading Association of India, Kolkata.
6. Professor J.P. Dube, Former Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Delhi.
7. Professor V.K. Dixit, Former Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Delhi.
8. Professor E. Jyrwa, Dean, School of Education, North Eastern Hill University, Shillong.
9. Professor W.J. Morgan, Professor Emeritus, Cardiff University, Wales, UK.
10. Professor Tom Sork, Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada.
11. Professor P.A. Reddy, Former Director, Department of Adult Education, S.V. University, Tirupati.
12. Professor Rajesh, Head, Department of Adult Continuing Education and Extension, University of Delhi, Delhi.
13. Professor L. Raja, Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, Gandhigram Rural University, Madurai.
14. Professor Shikha Kapur, Head, Department of Extension Education, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi.

15. Professor Vandana Chakrabarti, Former Pro-Vice Chancellor, SNDT University, Mumbai.
16. Professor N.V.R. Kapali, Former Director, Department of Adult & Continuing Education, University of Madras.
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26. Dr. Bhaskar Chatterjee, Director General & CEO, Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs, New Delhi.
27. Shri. Sanjeev Roy, National Key Expert, Education, EU Policy Outreach Partnership, New Delhi.
28. Dr. Shalini Singh, Director, Center for Lifelong Learning, University of Science & Technology, Meghalaya.
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30. Dr M. V. Lakshmi Reddy, Associate Professor, School of Education, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi.
31. Dr. Saigita Chitturu, Associate Professor, Center for Lifelong Learning, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai.
32. Dr. Bani Bora, Senior Consultant, Cell for National Center for Literacy, NCERT, New Delhi.
33. Ms. Lisa Krolak, Head Documentation Center, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, Hamburg, Germany.
34. Dr. Ulrike Hanemann, Former Senior Programme Specialist, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, Hamburg, Germany.

35. Dr. K.V. E. Prasad, Process and Institutional Development Consultant & Evaluation Specialist, Bangalore.
36. Dr. A. Mathew, Former National Fellow, National Institute of Educational Planning & Administration, New Delhi.
37. Dr. V. Mohankumar, Former Director, Indian Adult Education Association, New Delhi.
38. Dr. Khaleda Ghani Dutt, Senior Lecturer, Department of Special Studies, Stockholm University, Stockholm.
39. Dr. Arundati Bhattacharya, Research Associate, Educational Administration & Foundation, Southern Illinois University, USA.
40. Shri M. Rajagopalan Nair, Former Secretary General, Lok Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi.
41. Shri Shekhar Nambiar, Consultant in Media, Advocacy, Public Affairs, Content & Editorial Writing, New Delhi.
42. Ms. Mamta Mishra, Former Executive Director, World Literacy of Canada, Toronto, Canada.
43. Smt. Nishat Farooq, Former Director, State Resource Center, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi.
44. Ms. Parinita Batra, Doctoral Student, Department of Adult Continuing Education & Extension, University of Delhi, Delhi.

1. Introduction

The contributions made by several academicians, administrators, and activists to developing Adult and Lifelong Learning in India as a discipline of study and professional field of practice remain largely unknown. Even though a perusal of the existing publications provides details of the policies and programmes, it does not give any information about the experiences, insights, or roles of various people associated with the programmes at different points in time. Without such information, it may be challenging to write an authentic history of Indian Adult Education. Although I requested that some of them write about their significant contributions and experiences, none expressed interest. Hence, I began interviewing some of them whenever they visited the office of the Indian Adult Education Association (IAEA) in New Delhi, and I published the transcripts of their interviews in *the Indian Journal of Adult Education* at various points in time. After I interviewed the renowned scholar, Professor H.S. Bhola of Indiana University, who was familiar with my work in the field of Adult Education, he suggested that I document my professional experiences. In fact, I slept over his suggestion for over five years and finally took it up when I was invited to speak on my experiences at the University of Delhi on International Literacy Day on September 8th, 2022. The following reminiscences and reflections on my experiences aim to throw light on the challenges of developing Adult and Lifelong Learning as a discipline of study and professional field of practice in India, besides discussing the role of contemporaries and my humble contributions and varied professional experiences.

I have been working in the field of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning in various capacities and durations at universities in India and abroad, as well as for governmental, non- governmental, and intergovernmental organizations, since 1984. This has not only enriched my knowledge of the subject but also paved the way for making academic contributions and developing lasting friendships with a number of renowned scholars from different countries. My professional career provided me with several opportunities to design new courses, teach students from different countries, and conduct research at several universities in India and abroad, including Jawaharlal Nehru (New Delhi), Syracuse (USA), Toronto and British Columbia (Canada), Warwick and Nottingham (UK), Julius Maximilian and Duisburg-Essen (Germany), and Aarhus (Denmark). I also had the chance to work on short-term projects sponsored by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), which was earlier known as the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE), UNESCO India, Commonwealth of Learning, Asian South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult

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Education (ASPBAE), International Reading Association, currently known as the International Literacy Association, World Literacy of Canada, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), and National Literacy Mission (NLM). Apart from working with government organizations, viz., the Planning Commission as a Joint Advisor and the National Institute of Adult Education (NIAE) as a Senior Fellow, I was closely involved with non-governmental organizations, viz., the Indian Adult Education Association as a Vice President, the Reading Association of India as the Executive President, and the International Institute of Adult and Lifelong Education (IIALE) as the founder Director, which provided me with innumerable opportunities to take up a variety of research and developmental activities. Broadly, my work and contributions have been in the areas of History of Adult Education, Training, Lifelong Learning, Professionalization, and Open Distance Learning, including designing and teaching a number of discipline-based courses, planning and implementing innovative professional development programmes, field activities, bringing out publications, and editing journals. All through, my main concern has not only been striving to strengthen Adult Education and Lifelong Learning as a professional field of practice but also developing it as a discipline of study and, in that process, contributing to the expansion of its knowledge base.

I have attempted the following write-up mainly relying on my memory, as I did not keep any diaries or notes and did not have access to official files. I deliberately avoided mentioning the names of certain individuals, as I did not want to hurt their sentiments. My approach has been thematic and covers the following:

- My entry into the field of Adult Education
- Research in the History of Adult Education
- The First University Department of Adult Education in India
- Developing the first Adult Education Course at Jawaharlal Nehru University
- Introduction of Lifelong Learning in India
- Teaching Experiences at Overseas Universities
- Association with the UNESCO Institute for Education and Designing a Professional Development Programme
- Working with the Government
- Working with the Indian Adult Education Association
- Setting up an International Institute of Adult and Lifelong Education
- Working with international NGOs
- Some Awards
- Retrospect and prospects.

2. My entry into the field of Adult Education

I have often been asked how I entered the field of Adult Education. Although I have an M.A. in History, M.Ed., and M.Phil., Ph.D. in History of Education, I lack formal professional qualifications or training in Adult Education. However, I did have some experience of working in Non-Formal Education at the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) as a Lecturer in Education from 1976 to 1983. During this tenure, I got a chance to work on India's first pilot project on "Non-Formal Education for Dropout and Unenrolled Children in Rural Areas" in two villages in the State of Uttar Pradesh, viz., Bhumiadhar (Nainital district) and Baruali (Aligarh district). My tenure at NCERT provided me with an opportunity to work with eminent educationists and travel to different parts of the country in connection with participation in training programmes, workshops, and seminars, which facilitated my interaction with local teachers and administrators. In this process, I learned about the educational developments in different parts of the country and gained valuable experience and exposure to rural society and issues related to education.

After serving in the government organization (NCERT) for over seven years, I got an opportunity to move to a university when I was appointed as an Assistant Director of the Adult Continuing Education Programme at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in 1984. When I joined the university, the University Grants Commission (UGC) had already provided funds to the university to initiate an Adult Education programme with the active involvement of students, following the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) launched in 1978. Since having earned both my Master's and Doctoral degrees from JNU and had experience in the field of Non-formal Education, my teacher, Professor Tapas Majumdar, an eminent economist who was the Honorary Director of the Adult Education Programme at JNU, encouraged me to apply for the position of Assistant Director.

Following my appointment as an Assistant Director, I began working in the field of Adult Education. Since I had no prior knowledge of Adult Education, I read several books and articles on the subject to familiarize myself with the field. Following the UGC Guidelines, I was expected to set up literacy centers on and around the campus with the active involvement of students. However, Professor Majumdar had a different view on the role of universities in Adult Education. He was of the opinion that a university like JNU, which focused on postgraduate teaching and research, should not mechanically follow the UGC guidelines and function like an NGO and set up literacy centers but focus on designing Master's programmes and

take up discipline-based research in the broad areas of Social Sciences like History, Economics, Psychology, and the Sociology of Adult Education. He suggested that a few literacy centers could be set up on an experimental basis to develop new models of imparting literacy. Since the UGC grant was meant for setting up literacy centers for imparting literacy, it was not possible to divert the grant for research without the approval of the funding agency. Hence, he wrote a letter to the then Chairperson of UGC, Dr. Madhuri R. Shah, seeking permission to utilize the grant for research. When I was sent to UGC to follow up on the matter and I met the then Deputy Secretary, Dr. M.L. Mehta, who was in charge of Adult Education, he told me that our job at the university was purely temporary with the limited purpose of imparting literacy to the non-literates, and as soon as the target was attained, the project staff would be terminated. By engaging in research, the basic purpose would not be achieved. However, he advised me to await the decision of the UGC Standing Committee on Adult Education. To my surprise, I came to know that, in spite of objections from some members of the Committee, the Chairperson granted permission to JNU to utilize the grant for research as a special case, keeping in view the focus of JNU on research. After receiving the UGC letter, Professor Majumdar encouraged the staff members to initiate discipline-based research.

3. Research in the History of Adult Education

Due to my background in the History of Education, I chose to focus my work on the History of Adult Education. During my literature survey, I discovered a limited number of publications in this area specifically concerning the History of Adult Education in India. Most of these publications were descriptive in nature and lacked references to primary sources. Since I had a background in the History of Education, I decided to work in the area of the History of Adult Education. While surveying the literature, I came across a limited number of publications in the area of the History of Adult Education in India written in a descriptive manner without reference to primary sources. While reviewing some of the publications, I noticed that the State of Bihar had launched a very successful literacy campaign during the 1930s with the active involvement of students and I was curious to know more about the campaign methodology and materials so as to learn from Bihar experience and adopt them in JNU. I prepared a project proposal on “A Study of Mass Literacy Campaign in Bihar during 1938-39” and submitted it to UGC. After the approval of UGC, when I started working and collecting materials from different repositories in Delhi and Patna, I came across several documents on Adult Education that were not easily available to scholars and hence I took photocopies of relevant documents. I also came to know that a number of documents and files were available in the Record

Room of the Ministry of Education. I was fortunate to get special permission to visit the Record Room of the Ministry of Education in Shastri Bhavan mainly because of the letter written by Professor Majumdar to the then Education Secretary- Shri. Anil Bordia for granting me permission to consult documents in the Record Room. After getting the permission, I started visiting the Record Room, and during the second week of my visit, Shri. Bordia sent for me and wanted to know the details of my research. After discussions about my research, he encouraged me to continue work in the area, as he felt that there is a dearth of good publications in the field of Adult Education based on primary sources. He gave me a copy of his book on *Readings in Adult Education*, (1967) which I read with great interest and came to know of his long association and work in the field of Adult Education. He was a rare civil servant who took a great interest in Adult Education throughout his career. I was delighted that he found time to interact with a young researcher like me and encourage research in spite of occupying the senior position of the Education Secretary to the Government of India. He also told me that the Government of India will be shortly setting up a National Institute of Adult Education which may have several positions for researchers and I should be on the lookout for a suitable position. During my visit to the record room, I was surprised to see that several important documents and reports on Adult Education were thrown out in the corridor marked as “to be destroyed” as they were not considered important to be sent to the National Archives for preservation. When I further discussed the matter with the in-charge of the Record Room, he informed me that the Ministry assigns the job to an officer to weed out unimportant documents annually who often do not consider Adult Education to be an important area and hence such documents are discarded. However, he was kind enough to permit me to take away several documents on Adult Education from the discarded materials.

My survey and visit to the Record Room and National Archives of India gave me an opportunity to collect a variety of materials that could be helpful for future scholars and hence, I compiled them as a *Source Book on Adult Education* which was published by the Directorate of Adult Education (DAE) of Government of India¹. Based on the analysis of documents collected from different repositories in Patna and Delhi, I prepared a paper on *A Study of Mass Literacy Campaign in Bihar* and it was published in the *Journal of Education and Social Change*². My work in the area of History of Adult Education was noticed by the Directorate of Adult Education and I was given the assignment of preparing a monograph on History

¹Shah, S.Y. (1988). *A Source Book on Adult Education*. New Delhi: Directorate of Adult Education.

²Shah, S.Y (1989).” A Study of Mass Literacy Campaign in Bihar”, *Journal of Education and Social Change*. Vol. 111, No.1.

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of Adult Education for the professional development program of adult educators designed by the DAE. After the publication of the monograph by the Directorate of Adult Education³, I planned to work on the preparation of a detailed History of Adult Education not only based on unpublished sources but also on the interviews of a number of experienced people in the field of Adult Education. With this idea, I visited the library of IAEA to explore the available material and interview Dr. S.C. Dutta, the then President of the Association. After I taped his interview⁴, Dr. Dutta mentioned the forthcoming golden jubilee celebrations of the Association in 1989 and the plan to publish a series of state-level studies on Adult Education. When he came to know that I had published a paper on the mass literacy campaign in Bihar, he requested me to prepare a monograph on Adult Education in Bihar since he could not find a competent person to take up the work within a short time. I accepted his request and prepared the monograph and it was published by the IAEA and released during the Golden Jubilee celebrations in 1989⁵.

Apart from actively engaging in research and publications, I was also involved in organizing two field programs viz., Continuing Education Program at a nearby urban slum, i.e., Kusumpur Pahadi and *Each One Teach One* Program at JNU, following UGC Guidelines. However, I was curious to know about the origin of the program and started consulting experts and reviewing the literature which revealed that the program was originally conceived by an American Presbyterian missionary Dr. Frank Laubach during the 1930s. Starting from the Philippines, he traveled to more than a hundred countries to promote the program and develop literacy primers in several languages. Known as the “Literacy Ambassador”, he visited India and met Mahatma Gandhi who endorsed his program. I felt that without consulting the relevant documents and literacy primers developed by him in several languages, it may not be possible to understand why and how he developed the program and succeeded in promoting it in several countries. To know more about his work and papers, I wrote to the Laubach Foundation in Syracuse inquiring whether I could get access to his papers for my research. Welcoming my interest in researching Laubach, his son Bob replied that all the papers and books of his father comprising fifty boxes have been donated to Syracuse University. Bob also informed me that the university had received a huge grant from the Kellogg Foundation to procure, classify, and

³Shah S.Y. (1995). *Indian Adult Education: A Historical Perspective*. New Delhi: Directorate of Adult Education.

⁴Shah, S.Y. (1988). “Some Aspects of Indian Adult Education: S.C. Dutta’s Ideas and Involvement in the Promotion of Adult Education in India”, *Indian Journal of Adult Education*, Vol. 49, No.1.

⁵Shah, S. Y. (1988). *Adult Education in Bihar*. New Delhi: Indian Adult Education Association.

catalog papers and books from eminent adult educators and organizations. It had set up an Adult Education archive and encouraged research on the collection by providing visiting scholar awards to interested researchers. Since my research was mainly based on the collection of Laubach, I succeeded in getting the Kellogg Visiting Scholar Award (May 1989) which covered my travel, boarding, and lodging for a month at Syracuse University. After working on the collection and interviewing his son and Professor Alexander Charters, Roger Heimstra, and others familiar with the work of Laubach, I gave a presentation on “American Interest in Indian Adult Education” at the university and an exit interview on my research, as stipulated in the award.

In view of the extensive collection of Laubach, I could not go through all the materials within a short period of one month and hence I requested an extension of two months which was denied. However, I was told that during the next year, there will be an international seminar where all those who worked on the Syracuse Collection will be invited to present a paper based on their research and if I decide to present a paper, I can apply for two months stay to collect further materials for my research. Accordingly, I applied and got an opportunity to present my paper on “Laubach in India” at the seminar and permission to stay for two months to collect further materials. During my stay at Syracuse, I came in contact with Professor Alexander Charters, an expert in the field of Comparative Adult Education who not only arranged my meeting with Dr. Bob Laubach and officials of Laubach Foundation over dinner at his home but also, remained in touch with me for several years. Drawing my attention to a replica of the Taj Mahal kept in his study, he recalled his experiences of his visit to India and meeting with Shri. J. L. Sachdeva, Director of IAEA. Being the President of the International Society for Comparative Adult Education (ISCAE), he persuaded me to join the Society and sent me an invitation to participate in an International Conference of the Society scheduled to be held in Ibadan, Nigeria during 1991.

However, I could not attend the conference as I was working at the Planning Commission and it was not easy to get permission to travel abroad. Based on the extensive materials collected, I could not only write and publish two papers on the “Contribution of Frank Laubach to the Development of Adult Education in India”⁶ and “Laubach in India”⁷ but also as a book on *Each One Teach One – Laubach’s*

⁶Shah, S. Y. (1990). “The Contributions of Frank Laubach to the Development of Adult Education in India (1935-70)”. *Perspectives in Education*, Vol. 6, No.4.

⁷Shah, S. Y. (1991). “Laubach in India”, *Courier*, Spring.

*Methods and Materials*⁸. While going through the Laubach collection, I came to know that one of his colleagues Dr. Welthy Honsinger Fisher who worked with him for several years and later established Literacy House in Lucknow had donated all her materials to the Mugar Memorial Library at Boston University and it would be helpful if I could consult her collection to know more about their work in India. Accordingly, I visited the Mugar Library but was disappointed that access to the Fisher collection was restricted and needed prior permission. Since I was on a short visit, I could not extend my stay to consult the Fisher collection.

During the period of my focused research in the area of the History of Adult Education, I collected a variety of materials: documents, research, evaluations, unpublished papers, books, and information about different organizations in the field of Adult Education in India. Since these materials were not easily accessible, I compiled them as an *Encyclopedia of Indian Adult Education*⁹ for the reference of future scholars. I took the draft copy of the manuscript of the Encyclopedia to the then Director General (DG) of the National Literacy Mission, Shri. Bhaskar Chatterjee with a request for a foreword. After glancing through the manuscript, Shri. Chatterjee agreed to write a foreword and decided to get it published by the National Literacy Mission. Appreciating my work, he told me that such a work should have been ideally undertaken by the Directorate of Adult Education and directed the Director of DAE to give me ten thousand rupees as a token reimbursement of the expenses I might have incurred in connection with the preparation of the Encyclopedia.

More than the monetary reward, I was overwhelmed by his kind gesture and appreciated his way of encouraging young scholars. It was rare for the government to reimburse expenditures without raising any demand. I got several chances to interact with him and found him among the few committed civil servants who took deep interest in furthering the cause of Adult Education. I invited him to chair the Professor James Draper Lecture delivered by Professor Chris Atkins, (Nottingham University) at India International Center on October 10, 2008, and other programs organized by the IAEA on different occasions which he graciously accepted. However, I got an opportunity to interact with all the Director Generals of the National Literacy Mission, apart from Shri. Bhaskar Chatterjee, I was quite impressed by the commitment and devotion of Dr. L. Mishra, the first DG of the National Literacy

⁸Shah, S.Y. (1991). *Each One Teach One: Laubach's Methods and Materials*. New Delhi: Indian Adult Education Association.

⁹Shah S.Y. (1999). *An Encyclopaedia of Indian Adult Education*. New Delhi: National Literacy Mission.

Mission, who worked like a literacy missionary. He was a true Gandhian, a prolific writer, and an eloquent speaker. Whenever I invited him to deliver the keynote address, he came with thorough preparation with a well-written paper and delivered the lecture for an hour. Both Mr. Chatterjee and Mr. Mishra were easily accessible to literacy workers, worked with great zeal, and radiated an aura of optimism about literacy programs.

Since the Encyclopedia was released by the then President of India Shri K.R. Narayanan on the International Literacy Day of 1999 at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi, it received wide publicity and came to the notice of the UNESCO India Director Prof. M. A. Moegiadi, who was searching for a scholar to bring out a volume of selected papers on Adult Education in India. He invited me to his office to discuss the details of the project and commissioned the work of reviewing 1,500 published papers during the period (1950-2000). I was supposed to select twenty papers that could be published by the UNESCO India Office as a volume - *Adult Education in India - Selected papers*¹⁰. The work was taken up jointly with Professor C.J. Daswani who was serving as a Consultant at the UNESCO India office during that period.

I sent the above two publications to some of my friends in India and abroad and I was pleasantly surprised to hear from one of them, Professor James A. Draper from Toronto University, who was in search of a scholar who would be interested in contributing a chapter on India for a book on *Chronology of Adult Education in Commonwealth Countries* that he was editing. Accepting his invitation, I contributed a chapter on India and it was published by the Malaysian Division of the Commonwealth Association for the Education and Training of Adults¹¹. Mainly because of my publications in the area of Adult Education, I got an invitation from Professor J.S. Rajput, the then Director of NCERT who was editing an *Encyclopedia of Indian Education* to contribute a chapter on Adult Education in India and that was published by NCERT in 2001.

During my early days in JNU, I used to get the *Courier*, a newsletter published by the Asian South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education. In one of the issues, I saw a notification inviting papers for an international seminar organized by the Finnish Adult Education Organizations during May-June, 1988. I sent a paper on

¹⁰Daswani C.J. & Shah S.Y (Eds). (2000). *Adult Education in India: Selected Papers*. New Delhi: UNESCO.

¹¹Shah, S. Y. (2001). "Indian Adult Education Chronology", In James A. Draper (Ed). *South and East Asia Adult Education Chronologies in Commonwealth Countries*, Sedang: University Putra Malaysia.

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“Adult Education for People: Some Indian Experiences” and it was accepted as a lead paper from Asia since the Chinese scholar who was expected to present the lead paper could not attend. The paper was subsequently published as a monograph by the Finnish Adult Education Organizations in 1989. I was invited for a week with an air ticket and accommodation in Helsinki. The visit gave me a chance to know Finnish culture and meet several adult educators from Europe, especially the President of the Organization, Dr. Timo Toiviainen. After my presentation, I was interviewed by Ms. Lisa Veenkivi for Finnish Radio. After about two years, Ms. Veenkivi visited JNU to interview several academics for a Finnish Radio Programme on Asian Culture and Education. During the previous year, I received a letter from Professor James A. Draper of the University of Toronto whom I had interviewed earlier; informing me of an international seminar on “Literacy in Industrialized Countries” scheduled to be organized by the International Council for Adult Education in Toronto in October 1987. He informed me that if I am interested in attending the conference, I could apply to the ICAE President for a CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) scholarship earmarked for participants from developing countries to cover international travel and accommodation in Toronto. I took a chance and applied and was awarded the scholarship. I was pleasantly surprised to get a business class ticket from the ICAE. During the conference, the participants were taken to the office of ICAE, which gave me a chance to familiarize myself with the programs of the organization and meet Professor Budd Hall, the Secretary General of ICAE and a renowned Canadian adult educator.

The office of UNESCO India mailed my publication on *Adult Education in India- Selected Papers* to UIE and several other UN offices. Having got a chance to go through it, a Senior Program Specialist, Dr. Madhu Singh at the UIL e-mailed me and expressed her desire for a meeting during her visit to Delhi to discuss a project on Open Distance Learning (ODL). When I met her, it was a surprise to know that she was a former student of JNU and we had many common friends. During the course of discussion, she wanted to know whether I would be interested to work on the “Role of ODL in training grassroots level literacy workers in India” and I agreed, as I had been working in the area of training. Since it was an international project covering several countries, an international seminar was organized in Johannesburg (South Africa) where all the country studies were presented and later published by the UIL in 2004¹². Although Dr. Singh was interested in undertaking collaborative projects with me, it did not materialize as she passed away immediately

¹²Shah, S. Y. (2004). “Exploring the Potential of Open Distance Learning for the Training of Grassroots Level Workers”, In Madhu Singh & Veronica McKay. (Ed.) *Enhancing Adult Basic Literacy*, Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education.

after her superannuation. After her death, Ms. Anja, daughter of Dr. Singh contacted me and I reminded her about her mother's wish to donate all her books on Adult Education to the Library of IAEA. Subsequently, she honored her mother's wish.

After a gap of several years, my interest in the History of Adult Education was revived when the IAEA launched the Platinum Jubilee celebrations in 2014. Since there was no comprehensive volume on the achievements of IAEA during the last seventy-five years, (1939-2014), Shri. K.C. Choudhary the President of IAEA requested me to bring out a coffee table publication. After surveying several reports and documents of the Association, I brought out a volume on "*Seventy-Five Years of Indian Adult Education Association: Some Glimpses*" co-authored with Shri K. C. Choudhary, which included a number of photographs¹³. Based on this publication, I prepared a script for a short film on IAEA and it was made and uploaded on YouTube¹⁴. During the preparation of the publication on the IAEA, I came across the tremendous contributions made by Dr. S.C. Dutta, one of the former Presidents of the IAEA, and I thought his contributions needed to be publicized. I therefore, organized a National Seminar at India International Center, New Delhi on March, 18, 2018, coinciding with his hundredth birth anniversary, and published a paper about his contributions to Adult Education¹⁵.

Apart from the above researches in the area of History, I have undertaken 26 research, evaluation, and consultancy projects in the field of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning, which were funded by both national and international organizations. These projects covered various topics such as policy and practice of Lifelong Learning¹⁶, Training,¹⁷ Open Distance Learning,¹⁸ Financing of Adult Education,¹⁹

¹³Shah S.Y (2017). *Seventy-Five Years of Indian Adult Education Association*, New Delhi: Indian Adult Education Association.

¹⁴YouTube Film on Indian Adult Education Association. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MwabLKf11FU&t=4s>

¹⁵Shah, S. Y. "Dr. S. C. Dutta's Contributions towards Professionalization of Adult Education in India". *Indian Journal of Adult Education*, Vol. 80, No. 1, 2019: pp. 50-55.

¹⁶Shah, S. Y. (2007). "Policy and Practice of Lifelong Learning in India". In Yangwa Keee (Ed) *Finding Places in Lifelong Learning in Asia*. Seoul: Korean Adult Education Association.

¹⁷Shah, S. Y. (1990). "The Training of Adult Educators and the University System in India: Themes, Techniques and Issues". *International Journal of University Adult Education*, Vol. XXIX, No.3.

¹⁸Shah, S. Y. (2010). "Mapping the Field of Training in Adult and Lifelong Learning in India" In Regina Egetenmeyer and Ekkehard Nuissl (Eds) *Teachers and Trainers in Adult and Lifelong Learning*. Frankfurt am Main: Peterlang.

¹⁹Shah, S. Y. (2008). *Financing Adult Education Programmes in India*. Kolkata: Indian Paulo Freire Institute.

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Professionalization of Adult Education,²⁰ International Cooperation and Participatory Adult Learning Documentation and Information Networking²¹. As a result of these projects, I have authored several publications on these topics. Besides, I have contributed to the course materials for the Post Graduate Diploma Program in Adult Education and Certificate Program in Lifelong Learning developed by Indira Gandhi National Open University during 2008-2009²². I prepared contents of two units and reviewed contents of three units on Adult Education in India under the Ministry of Human Resource Development of Government of India Project: *National Mission on Education through ICT* during 2017. I also designed a four-credit course on *Policy and Programs of Lifelong Learning: National & International Perspective* for the Master's program at SNDT University in 2021 and two optional courses, namely *International Perspectives on Adult Education* and *Innovations in Adult Education* for the Master's Program of University of Delhi during 2022.

4. First University Department of Adult Education in India

Apart from my research work and coordinating field programs in JNU, I was also exploring the possibilities of designing Master's Program in Adult Education. It was mainly due to the encouragement of Dr. Anita Dighe, the then Director of Adult Education Unit in JNU, that I started working on designing a Master's program in

²⁰Shah, S. Y. (2006). "Professionalization of Indian Adult Education" In P. Adinarayana Reddy and Uma Devi (Ed) *Current Trends in Adult Education*. New Delhi: Sarup & Sons.

Shah S. Y. (2015). "Professionalization of Adult Education in India: Challenges and Issues". *Indian Journal of Adult Education*, Vol.76. No. 2.

Shah S. Y. (2012), "Role of Valid pack in Professionalization of Adult Education in Asia: A case study of India". *Journal of Educational Sciences*. Vol. 14. No.2

Shah, S. Y. (1998). "Professionalization of Indian Adult Education", *University News*, Vol. 36, No. 42.

²¹For details of two learning packages, see : <https://aladin.uil.unesco.org/paldin/index.html>

²²Course Materials

Shah, S. Y. (2008). "Historical Perspective on Adult Education India". A Unit for the Post Graduate Diploma Programme in Adult Education, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi.

Shah, S. Y. (2008). "Current Policy and Programmes of Adult Education in India". A Unit for the Post Graduate Diploma Programme in Adult Education. Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi.

Shah, S. Y. (2009). "Policy and Programmes of Lifelong Learning in India". A Unit for the Post Graduate Certificate Programme in Adult Education, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi.

Shah, S. Y. (2009). "Adult Education during the Five-Year Plans in India". A Unit for the Post Graduate Certificate Programme in Adult Education, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi.

Shah, S.Y. (2017). Prepared Contents of Two Units and Reviewed Contents of Three Units on Adult Education in India under the Ministry of Human Resource Development of Government of India Project— National Mission on Education through ICT. *University News*, Vol. 36, No. 42.

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Adult Education. From my discussions with her, I came to know that only two universities in India - Madras and S.V. University were offering Masters Programs in this area during 1980s. Although the University of Rajasthan had set up a Department of Adult Education in 1962 and appointed an eminent scholar Dr. Sardar Sohan Singh as the Honorary Director to initiate Adult Education programs, it was only after the MoU between the University of British Columbia and Rajasthan in 1964, that a number of Adult Education programs were launched. During 1964-69, one-year program at undergraduate level was initiated with the academic support of five Canadian Professors of Adult Education – Prof. J. Roby Kidd, Prof. James A. Draper, Prof. John K. Friesen, Prof. William L. Day and Prof. Knute Buttedahl. However, it did not continue beyond three years due to lack of job opportunities for the students, the departure of Canadian Professors and change in the Vice-Chancellor at Rajasthan University. I felt that if I could learn from the experience of Rajasthan University in designing a course in Adult Education and setting up a department, it may greatly help me in planning a similar program in JNU. My visit to the Rajasthan University did not yield any information, as most of the faculty members associated with the program had retired and moved out, and the relevant files of the Department were not traceable. Hence, I tried to get more information from the five Canadian Professors involved with the Rajasthan University project. While I was trying to get the details of Canadian Professors, I got a chance to attend an international conference of the Commonwealth Association for the Education and Training of Adults (CAETA) held at Ukai Dam in Surat in 1987. During the conference, I met Professor James Draper of the University of Toronto who was very actively involved in the Rajasthan project. He agreed to meet me at India International Center where he used to stay during his visit to Delhi.

During the one-hour discussion with Professor Draper, I got an overview of the four- year project of Rajasthan University and his experiences working in Rajasthan. He told me that the idea of starting a course on Adult Education was the brainchild of Dr. Mohan Singh Mehta, the then Vice Chancellor of Rajasthan University, who had served as an Ambassador in several countries and was quite familiar with the Adult Continuing Education Programme of North American Universities, especially the University of British Columbia. Because of his stature as a diplomat and acquaintance with senior bureaucrats, he succeeded in getting a four-year project with funding support from the Canadian Government to set up a Department of Adult Education at Rajasthan University.

Professor Draper shared his anguish and felt very sad that there was hardly any comradery between Indian and Canadian teachers. He told me that on several occasions when the faculty meetings were called even though the Canadian

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Professors were on time, Indian teachers turned up very late, hardly participated in discussions, and rarely showed any interest in the programme. Rajasthan project came up with a lot of expectations and it bears testimony to the key role played by the Vice-Chancellor and Canadian Professors. In spite of Canadian resources, the expertise, and the leadership of the Vice-Chancellor, the program of Adult Education did not succeed at the University of Rajasthan, partly because of the lack of interest of Indian faculty members and limited job opportunities to the students.

Professor Draper advised me to talk to other members of the Rajasthan team, especially Professor John Friesen, and consult the files related to the Rajasthan project available at the Archives of the University of British Columbia to get a full picture. He also informed me about the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute in New Delhi, which provides scholarships to Indian scholars to visit Canadian libraries and archives to carry out research on themes related to Indo-Canadian Cooperation. Following his advice, I applied and succeeded in getting a Senior Social Science Scholarship, which enabled me to visit Canadian Universities and archives and interview several people connected with the Rajasthan project. While Professor Tom Sork of the UBC helped me in getting access to UBC Archives, Professor John Friesen provided me with materials from his personal collections kept at home. At the request of Professor Tom Sork, I gave a presentation on the topic of my research at the University of British Columbia which was attended by the faculty and students. I had very fruitful discussions with both Professor Friesen and Professor Sork over several lunches which made my stay at UBC very memorable. After the data collection, I felt that I should not just focus on the cooperation between the two universities but look at the whole scenario of Indo-Canadian cooperation in Adult Education by including the cooperation between Canadian and Indian NGOs in the field of Adult Education. After the analysis of data, I wrote a paper and it was published in the Golden Jubilee magazine of World Literacy of Canada²³.

5. Developing the first Adult Education Course at Jawaharlal Nehru University

I continued to explore the possibilities of developing Master's Program in Adult Education. As a first step, I drafted a proposal for initiating Master's Program and it was included in the agenda item of the Advisory Committee meeting of the university held during 1989. Since the Advisory Committee consisted of very distinguished

²³Shah, S. Y. (2005). "Canadian Contributions to Indian Adult Education: An Overview" In *Homage to the Light of World*, Lucknow: Literacy House.

external members viz., Shri. Anil Bordia, Education Secretary, Government of India, Dr. Rajesh Tandon, Chairman (PRIA), Ms. Lalita Ramdas (Ankur), Shri. Anil Sinha, Director, (DAE) and Chaired by Professor M.S. Agwani, Vice Chancellor, JNU, I thought that the proposal would be approved and work would be taken up. Dr. Anita Dighe, the then Director of the Adult Education Unit (JNU) argued for developing a Master's Programme in Adult Education very convincingly. Shri. Anil Bordia not only fully supported the idea but also felt that such a program may provide professionally qualified manpower to the expanding program of Adult Education in the country. However, Professor Agwani, Vice Chancellor did not support the idea and felt that since all the Departments in JNU are offering a Master's program, there is no need to set up a Department of Adult Education to offer r teaching program. Instead, the role of the Adult Education Department should be to focus on extension activities by identifying a backward area where the students from JNU could work on some local problems and try to find solutions. I was quite surprised when the Vice Chancellor fully vetoed the idea of the Education Secretary of the Government of India. After the meeting, it was a pleasant surprise that the Vice Chancellor invited all the members for lunch at his residence. It was during lunch that I came to know that Shri. Anil Bordia was a former student of Prof. Agwani in Udaipur and hence he did not hesitate to express his views. It was because of their long association that the Vice Chancellor made an exception to chair the meeting of the Advisory Committee of Adult Education and host lunch at his home which was very unusual for a normal official meeting. The Advisory Committee recommended the constitution of an Adult Education Unit to manage the program.

Notwithstanding the lack of support from the Advisory Committee, I continued to pursue my interest in developing a course on Adult Education. I met Professor Ashok Mathur, the then Dean of the School of Social Sciences, and sought his advice about the future course of action. He told me that official approvals are needed only if I offer credit-based courses. In fact, all the teachers in the university have the freedom to develop and offer non-credit courses to the interested students and they can be given a certificate of participation. Encouraged by the advice of the Dean, I designed a non-credit course that was similar to a regular four-credit course in terms of contents and contact hours. I designed an attractive poster highlighting the importance of Adult Education and put it up on the notice boards everywhere in the University. Within a week, about 22 students enrolled and I started giving weekly lectures in the afternoon so that students did not miss their regular classes. To make the course interesting, I showed some films and invited experts from the Directorate of Adult Education and NGOs to share their expertise and experiences. After the successful completion of the course, the students were given a Certificate of Participation.

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The course was offered in the next semester and 34 students were enrolled. The number of students increased to 42 in the third semester and after the completion, the students felt that since they attended the same number of lectures as for credit courses, they should get credit. They were prepared to comply with the requirement of submitting two term papers and appearing for a three-hour examination as in a regular course. I advised them to submit a request to the Vice Chancellor duly signed by all the students. A group of five students met the Vice Chancellor and submitted their demand for a credit course in Adult Education. The Vice-Chancellor forwarded the application to Professor Utsa Patnaik, the Dean of the School of Social Sciences to examine the matter. The Dean called me to discuss the background and details of the course. I briefed her that I started the course as advised by her predecessor Professor Ashok Mathur and I have been offering the course to the interested students during 1996-98. She said that she does not know much about Adult Education and requested me to convene a meeting by inviting all the Chairpersons of the School of Social Sciences and some Experts in the field to learn about the importance of starting a credit course in Adult Education. The Dean chaired the meeting and patiently listened to the discussions. After getting convinced about the importance of Adult Education, she suggested that I submit a formal proposal to the Board of Studies. I subsequently submitted a formal proposal to start a four-credit course. Before the discussion, the Dean presented the background of the course and while approving it, said that it is for the first time in JNU that a course is being introduced. Unlike all other courses, it was demanded by the students and had been tried out as a non-credit course very successfully. After the approval of the course (AE - 401: Adult Education in India), I offered it for fifteen years (1999-2014). After my superannuation, the course was discontinued as my post remained vacant. The attendance for this course ranged from 3 to 32 during different semesters.²⁴

I developed the course after reviewing some of the Master's curricula of selected universities. Since the students were to study one course only, I was keen to provide them an overview of the important topics in Adult Education. Hence, I selected sixteen topics, coinciding with sixteen papers offered in the regular Master's Programme. Instead of the lecture-based method followed in regular courses, the course was transacted with the help of selected films and discussions, special lectures by grassroots-level workers, officials from the National Literacy Mission, and a review of important books. Before the start of my lecture, I always enquired from

²⁴Shah. "Adult Education in Indian Universities: A Case Study of Jawaharlal Nehru University", *Indian Journal of Adult Education*, Vol .58. No.3. 1997, pp.50-55.

the students the reasons for taking up the course. Most of them felt that knowledge of Adult Education would help them prepare for the Civil service examination. In fact, after a couple of years of teaching, I got a letter from a District Collector informing me that since he had taken a course on Adult Education, he could successfully organize Adult Education programs in his district and would be very happy if I could visit the program. I also came across a girl who said she wanted to know more about Adult Education as her father was working in this area. On further probe, I came to know that she was the daughter of the then Director General of the National Literacy Mission, Shri Jag Mohan Singh Raju.

In order to review the implementation of its Guidelines in different universities, the UGC constituted Expert Committees in 1998 and an Expert Committee headed by Professor R. Takwale visited JNU and held discussions with the Vice-Chancellor. The Committee observed that JNU had neither set up a Statutory Centre for Adult Education nor changed the designation of the staff from non-teaching to teaching. As a result, JNU could not offer regular courses in Adult Education as suggested in the Guidelines. The Committee requested the Vice Chancellor to do the needful. Professor Asis Dutta, the then Vice-Chancellor replied that since there is no critical mass of at least five faculty members to justify the creation of a full Centre, it may be difficult to get the approval of the Executive Council. However, he assured the Committee that the issue would be discussed in the next meeting of the Council.

When the issue was taken up in the Executive Council meeting, it was suggested that if not a full-fledged Center, a Group of Adult Education could be created and the designation of the staff be changed, so that a regular teaching program could be offered. Following the approval of the Executive Council, the university issued orders to change the designation of the Director as Professor, Assistant Director as Associate Professor, and Project Officer as Assistant Professor. The Adult Education Unit was re-designated as the Group of Adult Education in 1999.

After a couple of years, I pursued the idea of creating a full-fledged *Center for the Study of Lifelong Learning* in consultation with my colleagues, drafted a proposal, and sent it to the Chairpersons of different Centers of the School of Social Sciences for their comments during 2007. While most of the Chairpersons appreciated the idea, it was not approved at the meeting of the Board of Studies. The Dean felt that since a Center for Educational Studies already existed in the school, the creation of another center for Adult Education may not be a viable proposition. It was further argued that since the Center for Educational Studies was finding it difficult to attract good students, the creation of another center may not be a good idea. It was decided

that an expert committee be constituted to explore the possibilities of merging the Group of Adult Education with the Zakir Hussain Center for Educational Studies. However, the actual process was delayed due to Covid and various other reasons and the Group which had five faculty members was left with only one Associate Professor who continues to work under the headship of the Dean of the School of Social Sciences. Thus, in spite of my continued efforts to create a full-fledged statutory Center for Adult Education and initiate the Master's Programme in JNU, we did not succeed. The faculty members of the Group developed some optional papers and enrolled doctoral students. I feel that our efforts did not succeed mainly due to the bias against Adult and Lifelong Learning as a discipline of study in the university system and the inability of faculty to garner support from the university community.

6. Introduction of Lifelong Learning in India

It was after the UNESCO publication of Jacques Delors Report on Learning - The Treasures Within in 1996, that the program of Lifelong Learning became widely known. To publicize the program and orient the policy makers and administrators about the program, UNESCO Institute for Education organized a series of policy dialogues in different countries. When UIE organized such an Asian Policy Dialogue in India at Hyderabad during 2002, I got an invitation to participate and present a paper on "Living and Learning in an urban slum" based on my work undertaken in an urban slum – Kusumpur Pahadi - in New Delhi. This project aimed at providing training to a group of women living in that slum and to set up a crèche for their children, so that they could make a living without moving out²⁵. The program was implemented in collaboration with the Mobile crèche of India and State Resource Center of Jamia Millia Islamia. While the former provided training to the women, the latter prepared reading materials related to the theme of setting up crèche at the slum.

Since my participation in the Hyderabad Conference helped me understand the concept of Lifelong Learning, I began to take interest in the subject when UGC nominated me as a member of the Expert Committee on Adult Education in 2005. Thereafter I got involved with the preparation of Eleventh Five Year Plan Guidelines on Adult and Continuing Education. Subsequently I started researching on Lifelong Learning which led to an invitation to present a paper on "Policy and Practice of Lifelong Learning in India" at an international conference held in Seoul in 2007.

²⁵Shah, S. Y. (2002). "Continuing Education for Women in Urban Slums" In Madhu Singh (Ed.) *Institutionalizing Lifelong Education*. Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education.

While the UIE focused on orienting policy makers and administrators about Lifelong Learning, two European academics viz., Professor Soeren Ehlers and Edward Vickers of Institute of Education of University of London who were actively involved with the development of European Masters Programme in Lifelong Learning (MALLL) visited the University Grants Commission of India and met the then Vice Chairman, Professor Moolchand Sharma (2006-2009) to discuss the European Memorandum of Lifelong Learning and MALLL, and explore the possibilities of promoting Masters Programme on Lifelong Learning in Indian universities. At that time, UGC had already prepared the Eleventh Five-Year Plan Guidelines on Adult Continuing Education and Extension (2007-12) but the Commission had not formally approved it. It seems that Professor Sharma was convinced about the need for introduction of Lifelong Learning in universities and felt that the idea needs to be included in the Eleventh Plan Guidelines. Since I was a member of the UGC Expert Committee on Adult Education during the period (2005-7) and based in Delhi, he sent for me and briefed me about his meeting with European experts. He suggested that the idea of Lifelong Learning should be introduced in the Guidelines simply by replacing the terminology Adult Education by Lifelong Learning. However, I expressed my views very clearly that it would not be correct as the two concepts are altogether different and the whole idea needs detailed discussion in the Guidelines. Agreeing with me, he pointed out that since the meeting of the UGC Standing Committee will be held the next day, there is hardly any time and at best, the terminology of Lifelong Learning should be introduced simply by replacing the term Adult Education with Lifelong Learning. He said that he would give a detailed presentation on Lifelong Learning to the members of the Standing Committee and later organize a series of regional meetings of Vice Chancellors to discuss the importance of introducing Lifelong Learning in universities.

Since I had already written a paper on Lifelong Learning, and published by the South Korean Adult Education Association in 2007, I took out certain paragraphs from that paper and revised the Eleventh Five-year Plan Guidelines as suggested by the Vice Chairman. Subsequently, UGC funded a National Workshop on Lifelong Learning at the University of Rajasthan for all the Directors of Adult Education during the year 2006.

Further workshops could not be organized as the term of Professor Sharma at UGC had ended and subsequent developments were not much in favor of promoting the idea of Lifelong Learning. Although UGC funded several universities to organize workshops to discuss the idea of Lifelong Learning and I was invited to give keynote

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address at four universities viz., North Eastern Hill University²⁶, University of Jammu,²⁷ University of Kerala,²⁸ Tata Institute of Social Sciences,²⁹ many academics had difficulty in comprehending the difference between the two terminologies. Looking back, I feel that had Professor Sharma stayed for another two years, he would have invited European experts and organized workshops and oriented the academic community in India about Lifelong Learning.

The delegation of European experts also met the officials of the Ministry of Human Resource Development of the Government of India to apprise them about the European Memorandum of Lifelong Learning. Since the idea appealed to the officials, they drafted a new program titled Lifelong Education and Awareness Programme (LEAP). When the Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-17) was drafted, it did not find a place and instead, the Adult Education Programme was named as *Saakshar Bharat* (Literate India) because of the need to focus on imparting literacy to a large number of illiterates. Besides, it was argued that the Hindi word for Lifelong Learning - *Ajeevanand shiksha aur umarbhar seekhna* – may not be very user friendly and appealing to the learners and divert the attention from the main task of eradicating illiteracy³⁰.

The idea of introducing Lifelong Learning was revived when the UIL organized an international Conference in New Delhi in collaboration with the NLM to present the “Draft Guidelines on Prior Learning” during June 29-30, 2012. Shri. Sanjeev Roy, who had done European Masters in Lifelong Learning, was appointed as a Consultant at NLM to work out the implementation strategies of Lifelong Learning, especially prior learning. During the course of his assignment, he got a UIL Fellowship to work on assessment of prior learning and he happily went to UIL, Germany to prepare a detailed plan of implementation strategies of prior learning in India. To his surprise, when he returned, his tenure of consultant was not renewed and there was nobody to take up the work and the idea of developing Lifelong Learning remained suspended. Although twenty-two Indian students had done European Masters

²⁶Key Note Address delivered on “Lifelong Learning and Skill Development “at an International Conference, organized by North Eastern Hill University, November 8, 2011.

²⁷“Key Note Address delivered on “Role of Lifelong Learning in Higher Education,” at National seminar organized by Jammu University, March 9, 2012.

²⁸Key Note Address delivered on “Conceptual Evolution of Lifelong Learning,” at National seminar organized by University of Kerala, April 10, 2012.

²⁹Key Note Address delivered on “If Not Now, when: Meeting the Challenges of Lifelong Learning in India” at the International Conference organized by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, October 16, 2012.

³⁰Based on the information provided by the officials of NLM.

Programme in Lifelong Learning during the ten-year period 2005-15³¹, but none of them could get a faculty position in any of the University Departments of Adult Education in India. In fact, I felt sorry that a candidate who had done European Masters and Doctorate in Lifelong Learning was not selected when he appeared for an interview for the position of an Assistant Professor in an Indian university where I was a member of the Selection Committee. In spite of my best efforts, the Chairman of the Selection Committee did not support the candidate although his performance at the interview was the best. Later when I got an opportunity, I discussed the issue with him and he categorically stated that the university has several considerations apart from the qualifications, and to manage the university he has to accommodate several interests. Subsequently, I received an e-mail from the candidate accusing me of yielding to the pressure. I replied to him saying that as I was only one of the three experts of the Selection Committee comprising of seven members, my role was very limited. I wished him all the best.

My interest in Lifelong Learning developed further when I visited the Danish School of Education in 2008 on an Erasmus Mundus Visiting Scholarship, took up a study about the European Policy on Lifelong Learning, and interacted with several experts working on Lifelong Learning. During this time, I came to know about the ASEM (Asia Europe Meeting) Research Hub and its six networks (<https://asemllhub.org/>). I got a chance to join one of the Networks on Professionalization of Adult Education Teachers and Trainers when Professor Nuißl Ekkehard, Director of the German Institute for Adult Education (DIE) invited me to attend an international conference of the European Society for Research in Adult Education on “Teachers and Trainers in Adult Continuing Education” held at Bonn during November 2- 3, 2013. I presented a paper on “*Challenges of professionalization of Adult Education in India.*” Towards the end of the workshop, a Network on Professionalization of Adult Education was set up and I was nominated as the Coordinator from Asia. I continued my work in this area and delivered keynote addresses and made presentations on related themes in several workshops held in Vietnam, Philippines, France, Germany, Indonesia and India and published a number of papers³². After about ten years of working in this area, I resigned from the network and nominated a younger colleague in my place.

³¹Information provided by Professor Søren Ehlers who coordinated the programme during 2005-2010.

³²For details visit the following site: <https://iiale.academia.edu/SYShah/CurriculumVitae>

7. Teaching Experiences at Overseas Universities - USA, Canada, UK, Germany & Denmark

I was fortunate that I got several opportunities to teach at a number of Universities in the USA, Canada, Britain, Germany and Denmark. Everywhere, I found students to be very punctual in attending lectures and taking active part in discussions in the class. Most of them were very mature and had some work experience or involved in part-time work. My first experience of teaching overseas students was at the Syracuse University, USA during May 1989 where I had gone as a Kellogg Visiting Scholar. I was asked to participate in teaching a course on History of Adult Education focusing on the work of Dr. Frank Laubach, as I was researching on him. Since the classes were held once a week, between 6-9 p.m., I was given the key of the building where the lecture halls were located. As I had not visited the building earlier and it was very dark, I did not see any students around. I preferred to wait outside in the cold and hesitated to open the building. Exactly at 5:50 p.m., two senior persons of 45-50 years arrived and wished me as they might have been briefed about me. They helped me open the building and put on lights and escorted me upstairs where the classroom was located. In the corner of the classroom there was provision for refreshments as the students were coming after work and driving for an hour to reach the University. From my interaction with them, I came to know that both of them were school teachers and they were enrolled for a course in Adult Education with the hope of finding a job in the NGO sector. After 45 minutes of my introductory presentation, we discussed several related issues for about fifteen minutes. The session resumed after a break of half an hour for refreshments. I gave them some basic reading materials. They were asked to go through it in the class and make a brief presentation on the salient points. Since the students were employed, had family commitments and may not have time, it was very essential that they read the basic text and reflected in the classroom. After the class, the students helped me in locking up the building and dropped me to my guesthouse.

Unlike Syracuse where I taught only two students, at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the Toronto University, Canada (where I was on a Shastri Indo- Canadian Senior Social Science Fellowship for four months, January-April 1994, I got an opportunity to teach over one hundred students along with Professor Draper, who was offering a Certificate Programme in Adult Education for over twenty-five years. Since the programme was for employed people, the lectures were held once a week in the evening during 6-9 p.m. I was quite surprised to see more than one hundred students enrolled in a Certificate course in Adult Education. Of the three hours, one hour was spent on self- introduction by the students. While

Professor Draper gave a brief introduction on the role of Canadian NGOs in Adult Education, he requested me to give a similar presentation on India. It was a rare experience for me to interact with over hundred students who took great interest in knowing about Adult Education in India. During my stay at OISE, I got several opportunities of attending seminars and lectures by eminent scholars. In fact, the Department of Adult Education at OISE was one of the biggest in Canada with over half a dozen distinguished faculty members. But over the years, the number of faculty came down and the Department was merged with the Department of Social Work. As requested by Professor Draper, I gave a seminar on “Adult Education in India” at the Department.

I spent three months (May-July, 1991) at Warwick University in UK on a Development Fellowship of the Association of Commonwealth Universities. In fact, I got the fellowship mainly because of Professor Paul Fordham who recommended my name for the Fellowship and gave me affiliation with his university. As I had written a paper on training which was peer reviewed by him for publication in the *International Journal of University Adult Education* and his research interest was on training, he felt that my presence would be helpful in furthering the research on training. Although I was pursuing my research on *Indo-British Cooperation in Adult Education*, I was invited to teach a course on “Adult Education and Development” for the Masters students along with Professor Paul Fordham. Since all the students of Adult Education were employed, classes were held during the second weekend of the month. Every month one course was covered during the weekend and in a year; all eight courses were completed. The students came on Friday evening and stayed till Sunday afternoon in the nearby hotels. On Friday, the class was held from 6-9 p.m., on Saturday from 9-5 p.m., and on Sunday from 9-12 noon. Professor Fordham had an informal style of teaching. Since there were only six students, who were in the age group 40-50 years, they were all seated on sofas. Professor Fordham came to the session carrying a number of books and sat comfortably on a sofa along with me. His style of lecture was very informal. He briefly introduced the topic and showed the book and specific pages to be read. After his talk, he requested me to add on. After a session of 90 minutes, there was half an hour break and I was surprised to see that the students and Professor headed to the nearby pub for a beer instead of coffee.

Pubs were very common on the Warwick University campus. Since the dinner was over by 5.30 p.m. in the dining halls at the campus, I observed that most of the students headed to a huge pub on the campus, which was very lively with music and bright lights. When I discussed this with my friend, he told me that pubs are an

integral part of most of the campuses in the UK. Another striking feature of the Warwick University campus was the one-hour live music by the students at the central park, from 12–1300 hrs. Students ate lunch while listening to music. The campus had a theatre that screened regular films so that the students and faculty could enjoy recent films without traveling to the city center. The university had arranged my accommodation in one of the hostels on campus. A cleaning lady, keen to know about India, used to visit my room twice a week. During the course of our talks, she suggested that I visit Shakespeare's birthplace, Stratford-upon-Avon, which was about forty-minute drive from the campus. Since it was connected by bus, I visited the place on a Sunday. After touring the village, I visited a local shop and found a wall hanging with the following write-up titled as Desiderata which appealed to me.

Go placidly amid the noise and the haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible, without surrender, be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even to the dull and the ignorant; they too have their story. Avoid loud and aggressive persons; they are vexatious to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain or bitter, for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself. Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career; however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time. Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals, and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself. Especially do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment it is as perennial as the grass. Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth. Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness. Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore, be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be. And whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace in your soul. With all its sham drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be careful. Strive to be happy.

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The above desiderata were found in Saint Paul's Church, Baltimore dated 1692. It was titled "Desiderata" (Latin for "things desired"), was publicized by Max Ehrmann of Terre Haute, Indiana during 1920s and distributed as a Christmas card in the 1930s. After Ehrmann died in 1945, his wife published the piece in a book of his poems (1948).

I purchased the above desiderata, framed it and placed at the entrance of my home.

During my stay at Warwick University, I met Professor Alan Rogers, one of the renowned British scholars in the field of Adult Education, whom I had met earlier during the CAEATA conference he organized in collaboration with the South Gujarat University at Ukai Dam in Surat in 1987. As I traveled with him in a car from Surat to Ukai Dam, I got the opportunity to spend more time with him and learn about his research interests. Because of his long experience of working as a Visiting Professor at the University of Madras, S.V. University, Tirupati, and South Gujarat University, he was very familiar with the developments of Adult Education in India, and I decided to have a detailed interview with him to record his experiences of working in India. Afterward, I kept in touch with him, and he regularly sent me his publications. After the establishment of IIALE, when I organized an international conference in 2002, he extended full support through his organization, "Uppingham Seminars," and sponsored several overseas participants. Later, when I received the British Academy Research Award in May 2008, mainly due to the recommendation of Professor W.J. Morgan, I got a chance to interact with Professor Rogers. As I was researching British influence on Indian Adult Education, he suggested that he has a good collection of relevant materials at his home in Reading and that I should consult them. He not only gave me a lift in his car from Nottingham to Reading but also made sure that his secretary escorted me from the city center to his home. The Secretary showed me where the books are kept at home and left soon after, instructing me to lock the door when I leave the house. I prepared a cup of tea and consulted relevant materials.

My visit to Nottingham brought me in touch with Professors W.J. Morgan and Chris Atkins, who were the two faculty members at the Department of Adult Education. As requested by Dr. Atkins, I gave a lecture on PALDIN at his Department. Later, I invited both of them to deliver the Professor James Draper Memorial Lecture organized by IIALE in New Delhi. Professor Morgan kept in touch with me through regular e-mails and sent me a copy of his publications. After I finished the study on British influence on Indian Adult Education, I sent the draft to Professor Rogers, and he made the necessary corrections. The study was published as a paper in a

book, *The Contested Terrain: Perspective on Education in India* edited by Sabhyasachi Bhattacharya and published by Orient Longman in 1998. My association with him continued for long. When I organized an international conference at Duisburg-Essen University in 2008, he accepted my invitation and delivered a keynote address at the Conference.

As an Erasmus Mundus Visiting Scholar of the European Commission, I spent four months (October –December 2008) at the Danish School of Education researching European Policy on Lifelong Learning and teaching the students of the European Masters Programme who were mostly from Asian and African countries. To my surprise, I noticed that local students attended a separate session where they were taught in the Danish language and hence, I did not get any chance to interact with local students. By segregating international and local students, a golden chance to promote international understanding was lost. In the public seminar I spoke, there were no Danish students. Unlike India, where the duration of one contact session was one hour, each session was three hours in Denmark with numerous group activities. The students discussed selected issues and presented them in the class. As a teacher, my main task was to introduce the topic in brief and encourage the students to work in teams of 3-4 students on selected aspects of the main topic and make presentations. Teamwork and group discussions were an integral part of teaching sessions in Denmark and most European countries³³.

During my stay at the Danish School of Education, I occupied the room of a Danish Professor who was in India at the same time. In fact, the Danish Professor had come to meet me to learn about my research interest and told me that although she was affiliated with the University of Delhi, she found it difficult to travel to the university daily. Since she was staying very close to JNU, she wondered whether she could get a place to work in JNU. As I was shortly leaving for Denmark, I offered my office room to her with the approval of the Dean. In return, she gave me the key to her office room at her university, for my use during my visit there. Although I visited the school regularly, I hardly got any chance of interacting with other faculty members. It seemed to me that Danish academicians were confined to their rooms and did not encourage socializing during office timings. It was a pity that there was no common programme to facilitate interaction with the Danish faculty and the visiting scholars. However, Professor Søren Ehlers and Professor Lis Hemmingsen, who were coordinating my visit, took good care of me during my stay. I visited a

³³Shah, S.Y. (2017). "My Experiences of Teaching in a German University," *Indian Journal of Adult Education*. Vol. 78 No 3, pp 37-44

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Folk High School in Elsinore and learned about various activities. I found it to be an excellent center of non-formal learning where students could spend a year, living and learning in groups. These schools provided space for students to take a break from formal education to reflect on their future courses and either learn a language or pursue their hobbies. I was quite surprised to meet an Indian student who was staying at a Folk High School after his 12th examination for a period of six months learning the Danish language and music. He joined Folk High School as his father was working at the Indian Embassy in Copenhagen. Although India had set up such schools in Bihar and Karnataka, they did not flourish mainly due to socio-economic factors. In India, parents commonly do not have the resources to send their children for a non-formal programme of 6-12 months.

My visit to Denmark was followed by the visit of Professor Ehlers and Professor Hemmingsen to India to participate in an international conference held at the North Eastern Hill University. Subsequently, Professor Ehlers visited several universities in India to deliver lectures. He was invited to serve as a Visiting Professor at the University of Delhi and a Distinguished Professor at the International Institute of Adult and Lifelong Education. Through his lectures and publications, he made a name for himself among Indian teachers and students.

During my stay in Copenhagen, I got an invitation to attend an international conference held at the Danish School of Education. While traveling on a bus to the conference venue, I happened to sit next to Professor Regina Egetenmeyer of Wurzburg University. During the course of our conversation, I came to know of her interest in undertaking collaborative research and inviting guest faculty to teach at her University under the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Services) Programme. She also told me that her university has an India Center and some exchange programmes are already going on in the field of Political Science. She expressed her interest in exploring the possibilities for collaboration in the field of Adult Education if I was interested. I continued my correspondence with her and expressed my desire to work out collaborative programmes. She informed me that she would send my CV to DAAD for funding support to invite me as a Visiting Professor for a semester to teach three courses to the Masters Students at her University. She succeeded in getting funding support from the DAAD and I was invited as a Visiting Professor for a semester. (October 2013 - January 2014). After a gap of three years, I was invited again as a Visiting Professor for a month to offer a course.

Teaching in a German University was a new experience for me. I had the privilege of being invited twice as a DAAD Visiting Professor to teach the Master's

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students of Julius- Maximillian University, Wurzburg, one of the oldest and reputed universities in Germany. The visit materialized mainly due to the initiative taken by Professor Regina Egetenmeyer, who is deeply interested in promoting internationalization. With the support of DAAD and the India Centre at Wurzburg, she has been quite successful in promoting cooperation between India and Germany. During my stay, she took good care of me and invited me to her home.

During my visit in November 2016, I designed and taught the following course: *International Networks and Organizations in Adult and Lifelong Learning*. During my earlier visit of three-month duration (October, 2013-January, 2014), I designed and taught the following three courses: 1) *International Perspectives on Adult and Lifelong Learning*; 2) *Global Perspectives on Innovations in Adult Education*; and 3) *Asian Perspectives on Participatory Lifelong Learning and Information and Communication Technologies*.

I noticed that universities in Germany prefer to use the term “seminar” in place of course. From the beginning, I could feel that the entire teaching-learning process is planned in a professional manner at the J.M. University. Unlike India, where some broad topics and a reading list is given for different courses, the learning outcome for each seminar is spelt out in Germany so that the students know in advance, how they would be benefitted from the seminar. The schedule of lectures is prepared in advance, specifying the topic of different lectures, date, time and classroom where the lecture would be held. All these details and materials related to the seminar are uploaded on the university website three months in advance so that the students could decide about the choice of the seminar depending on their interest and convenience. A brief CV and the photo of the teacher are also given so that the students get to know the academic background of the teacher. Questions related to the course can be asked in the question-forum on the university website. Each seminar comprised of 12- 16 lectures of two hours each, per week. Since I had offered three seminars during the three months, the classes were held every alternate day. Sometimes, two lectures are held in continuity depending upon the convenience of students who are generally employed.

Instead of following the traditional method of lectures, I had negotiated the transaction of curriculum with the students with a view to seeking their opinion. All of them did not want long lectures which they considered to be monotonous. As per discussion, the following methodology was adopted to teach the topics. After I introduced the topic with the help of Power Points for about 30-40 minutes, the students were given 15-20 minutes to read some basic reading material comprising

of not more than 10 pages already uploaded on the website so that they could get more clarity and I could be sure that the students have read some basic text in the class. This was followed by a relevant video presentation where an expert in the field would discuss some aspects connected with the topic. While the written matter introduced the students to the scholarly publication, the video familiarized the students with the experts in the field and gave them an opportunity to see and listen to them. This was followed by group discussion where 4-5 students formed a group and discussed various issues identified in the topics. This was done to enable the students to practice peer group discussion and working in a group. Subsequently, group reports were presented and followed by open discussion in the class. Since all the students had laptops with them and classrooms had Wi-Fi and were technologically well equipped, teaching teaching-learning process was very smooth. During the last ten minutes, students were asked to write down the main points covered in the topic based on recapitulation. After the class, the students could refer to other reading materials available in the library and prepare detailed notes. As a teacher, I intervened whenever necessary, helped the students acquire relevant knowledge, and in the process, helped them develop different competencies of listening, reading, writing, discussion, working in groups, and presentation during the session. The students appreciated this methodology and reported that it helped them derive maximum benefits within two hours of attending a session in an interesting and participatory manner. The examination was based on the submission of a 15- 20-page essay on a topic selected in consultation with the teacher. The students are given detailed guidelines on writing the essay and its evaluation. Each student is required to submit a certificate of self-declaration that the essay is self-written and not plagiarized.

The assignment is uploaded on the university website. I introduced book review as an important assignment to enable the students to develop the competency of critical reading and reflection and make sure that they are familiar with at least two recent publications related to the seminar. I selected the two recent publications of UNESCO—viz. *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education* and *Rethinking Education* which are rated highly by scholars in the field of Lifelong Learning. Although all the students submitted the reviews, I found the reviews written by two students worth publishing and accordingly forwarded them for publication in the *Indian Journal of Adult Education*. I noticed that the students were regular in attending lectures and came well prepared. I noticed that all the thirty students who opted for my seminar were girls. Since they were employed and self-supporting, they were very serious and committed to their studies. I never saw them in a hurry to leave the classroom. I was quite happy to see the involvement of students in administrative work. The maintenance of the attendance sheet and providing technical

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support to the teacher was entrusted to one of the students who is employed on a part-time basis by the university. One of the striking features of the German university system is a very lean administration. In Germany, the Head of the Department is assisted by two or three students who work on an hourly basis attending to several administrative tasks. In some of the Departments of the university, there is only a part-time Secretary responsible for managing the office work. This is in contrast to India where the Head of the Department is typically assisted by two or three full-time staff members.

The Field Visit to the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), Hamburg was an interesting aspect of the seminar on International Networks and Organizations in Adult and Lifelong Learning. Since the students had already learned about the role of the UIL, the field visit was aimed at providing them with an opportunity to observe its functioning and role in the promotion of Lifelong Learning and to meet the specialists working at UIL. During the visit, the students spent a whole day at the Institute where they listened to presentations by the faculty members on various ongoing programmes and research projects. Students also got a chance to visit the UIL Library and Documentation Centre and browse through recent publications. They were also briefed on UIL scholarships, the provision of internships, and other research facilities. The visit in fact helped the students establish personal contact with some of the staff members of the UIL. During the visit, some of the students had the chance to visit the Ethnology Museum located adjacent to the UIL. Ms. Lisa Krolak, Head of the Documentation Center of UIL took great interest in coordinating the visit of students to UIL.

After my return to India, Professor Regina, along with two students, visited JNU to explore the possibilities of collaboration. Since JNU did not have a Master's Program, I took her to the University of Delhi which had such a programme. As I was acquainted with the then Head of the Department of Adult Continuing Education, Professor Rajesh, he welcomed the idea very warmly. Shortly after, the process of collaboration started and it has been continuing over the past ten years. It provided a lot of opportunities for the faculty] and students to participate in the exchange programmes. Although I arranged a visit of Professor Egetenmeyer to Indira Gandhi National Open University and some discussions were held regarding collaboration with the authorities of the University, no progress was made due to certain administrative reasons. I also put Professor Regina in contact with Dr. M.V. Lakshmi Reddy, Program Coordinator of PGDAE at IGNOU, who was invited to participate in the International Winter School, held at Wurzburg University. Professor Regina also visited SNDT University in Mumbai and held discussions with Professor Vandana

Chakrabarti, Pro- Vice Chancellor of the University, resulting in the signing of a MoU. Although a student from SNDT University was offered a fellowship to attend the Winter School in Wurzburg, the student could not make it due to the short notice. As there was a provision to invite two Professors from India for a month to teach a course at Wurzburg University, Professor Regina requested my assistance in identifying suitable candidates and I recommended Professor Chakrabarti and Dr. Anita Priyadarshini from IGNOU. Both visited Wurzburg as Guest Faculty for a month and performed admirably. It was surprising to me that when I tried to schedule an appointment with a Director of the Department of Adult Education at a Delhi-based university; she refused to meet the German delegation, as she was not interested in international collaboration. However, another Professor of the Department graciously hosted the German delegation at the University Canteen. Hence it is not surprising that only one University in India, the University of Delhi, entered into a MoU with Wurzburg University which benefitted more than eighty students and several faculty members to attend international workshops held at Wurzburg during the past ten years (2013-22).

On the invitation of Professor Nuisl Ekkehard, Director of the German Institute of Adult Education, whom I had met during the European Conference on Lifelong Learning, I spent a semester (January-April, 2011) as a DAAD Visiting Professor at the Duisburg Essen University in Germany. I was expected to offer a course on “Documentation, Dissemination and Networking in Adult Education” and I found that there were only four female and one male student who opted for my course. Instead of delivering lectures, I followed a discussion-based approach mode which the students actively participated and enjoyed. In the class, students asked questions and I only answered their queries. Out of curiosity, I asked the male student why he opted for a course in Adult Education. He told me that since the Adult Education course would be less rigorous, he would get ample time to get involved in student politics on campus and learn the nitty-gritty of politics. Since his desire was to enter mainstream politics after the university, he opted for a lighter course. Apart from teaching, I also guided a Kenyan student for her Master’s dissertation. As a part of my Visiting Professorship, I organized an International Workshop on the theme of my research “International Cooperation in Adult Education”. About 25 people, including three from India, attended it. On the invitation of Professor Ekkehard, I delivered a public lecture on

“Teaching Literacy to Millions” at the German Institute of Adult Education in Bonn on March 10, 2011.

While serving as a DAAD Visiting Professor at Duisburg Essen University from January-April, 2011, I shared the office room with Professor Katarina Popovic (another DAAD Visiting Professor) from the Department of Andragogy at the University of Belgrade. We often discussed common issues over coffee and became good friends. Later when she was elected as the Secretary General of the International Council for Adult Education, she invited me to prepare a country study on “Adult Education in India: Provision of Opportunities for Literacy, Numeracy and Basic Skills” The study was part of the UNESCO- GMR study on Rural and non-formal adult education, which she was coordinating.³⁴

8. Association with the UNESCO Institute for Education & Designing a Professional Development Program

My association with UIE started in 2003 when I attended the Mid-Term Review of the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA-V) held in Bangkok from September 6-11, 2003. During the conference, every participant was expected to attend a workshop of their interest. I signed up for a workshop on ALADIN-(Adult Learning Documentation and Information Network) which was a network of several Adult Learning organizations in different countries providing a variety of information. Since India did not have such a network, I explored the possibilities for starting such a network with the ALADIN Coordinator Ms. Lisa Krolak. She readily endorsed the idea and sanctioned a project to conduct a survey of different Adult Learning Organizations in India. I identified about two hundred organizations in India, collected basic data about them, and prepared *A Country Study on Participatory Adult Learning Documentation and Information Network (PALDIN)* in 2005. In order to discuss the different issues faced by these organizations, a national workshop was convened. One of the demands at the workshop was to develop a short course on the management of adult learning organizations. The idea of developing such a course was discussed with the UNESCO Institute for Education and National Literacy Mission. Both of them agreed to partially support the initiative. However, the bulk of funds needed for the development of the course materials were provided by the University Grants Commission of India through the E-learning programme. After having procured the funds, I organized a three-day international workshop to design course contents and identify experts to prepare the reading materials written in a self-learning mode. Within the next six months and

³⁴Shah, S. Y. (2018). “Adult Education in India: Provision of Opportunities for Literacy, Numeracy and Basic Skills”. *Indian Journal of Adult Education*, Vol.79. No. 3.

with the help of twenty national and international experts, two learning packages on *Participatory Adult Learning Documentation and Information Networking* (PALDIN) were developed and uploaded on the UIL website for wider accessibility and trial.

However, during the next three months, hardly ten readers accessed the materials. Subsequent interviews with the potential readers revealed that without a certificate, most of the readers were not interested in accessing the materials. Since neither JNU nor UIE was authorized to offer a diploma through distance mode, the only viable option was to approach IGNOU to explore the possibilities of offering such a course. Since I had worked as a part-time Senior Consultant at IGNOU to develop a Certificate Programme for *Preraks* (Facilitators) sponsored by the Commonwealth of Learning, I had some familiarity with IGNOU. I took the two learning packages to the then Vice Chancellor of IGNOU, Professor Rajasekharan Pillai with a request to get the materials reviewed and explore the possibilities of using them for a Postgraduate Certificate Programme in Adult Education. After going through the materials, the Vice Chancellor felt that the materials were well-written by experts and could be used to offer a Postgraduate Certificate in Adult Education. Accordingly, he constituted a Committee under the Chairmanship of the then Pro Vice-Chancellor of IGNOU. After deliberations, the Committee felt that with some additions, a Postgraduate Diploma Programme in Adult Education could be launched. To facilitate the work, I was appointed as a Part-time Senior Consultant and Dr. M.V. Lakshmi Reddy, a Senior Faculty member at the University became the coordinator for developing the programme.

Dr. Reddy took up the work with great zeal and commitment and within a year, PG Diploma in Adult Education (PGDAE) was launched. Further, he also expanded it into a Master's Degree. The adult education community welcomed these programmes as it fulfilled a long-felt need. Since there was no specialized institute, which could serve as a study center for the Adult Education programme, I took the initiative to approach the Vice Chancellor of IGNOU, Prof. Nageswar Rao, to get the International Institute of Adult and Lifelong Education (IIALE), which was actively involved with the development of the programme, recognized as a Study Center for the Adult Education Programme. After the recognition of the IIALE as a Study Center, several workshops were organized for the students and it continues to provide academic support to the registered students. Since our Institute has a MoU with the Julius Maximilian's University in Wurzburg, some of the Masters students also got a chance to attend a ten-day workshop at Wurzburg University in Germany.

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Within a couple of years, it became evident that contrary to expectations, the PGDAE and Masters Programme did not succeed in attracting a large number of students. I discussed the issue with Ms. Lisa Krolak of UIE and she decided to commission an evaluation study of the programme. The study revealed that many students could not enroll in the course due to the high fees. Hence UIE decided to reimburse the course fee as a scholarship to five students who completed the PGDAE programme with a view to attracting more students. Since UIL could not send the scholarship amount directly to the students, the scholarship money was transferred to the IIALE to organize a programme and distribute the scholarship. However, after the first year, an objection was raised by the Ministry of External Affairs, since the IIALE was not registered under FCRA (Foreign Contribution Regulatory Act) leading to the abandonment of the idea of receiving and distributing money from UIE.

My association with UIE continued as I was nominated as a member of the Advisory Committee of ALADIN (Adult Learning Documentation and Information Network). This provided me with an opportunity to attend international workshops held at several locations and meet a number of specialists from UIE. During these workshops, I met two persons from UIE viz., Professor Arne Carlsen (Director) and Dr. Ulrike Hanemann, Senior Programme Specialist, who involved me in several projects. While Dr. Hanemann invited me to undertake a field visit to Bangladesh and prepare a country report on the literacy programme in that country, Dr. Carlsen provided me with several opportunities to participate in workshops and conferences held in Hamburg (Germany) and Seoul (South Korea.) In Seoul, I moderated the first plenary session of the Midterm Review of CONFINTEA (International Conference on Adult Education) and made a presentation on “Lifelong Learning for Living Together” on October 25, 2017. Prof. Carlsen also extended support when I organized the field visit of Masters Students of Wurzburg University to UIL and addressed them. Earlier when he came to New Delhi for a meeting on Prior Learning and presentation of the “Draft Guidelines on Recognition, Validation and Accreditation” held during June 29-30, 2012, I invited him to visit the IIALE and subsequently offered him the position of an Emeritus Professor at IIALE which he graciously accepted. My association with UIL also resulted in receiving two invitations to attend the ICAE (International Council for Adult Education)

World Assembly held at Malmo, Sweden, during June 13-16, 2011, and in Montreal during June 10- 13, 2015. While I made a presentation on “Capacity building of adult educators” at the thematic workshop on Training in Adult Educators in

Malmo, my presentation in Montreal centered on “Innovative learning package developed for the capacity building of adult educators through Open Distance Learning mode”. Additionally, during the Assembly, I participated in a symposium titled “Six Blind Men and an Elephant: The Futile Quest for Consensus on the Competencies Required for Good Practice” organized by Professor Tom Sork. My association with UIL continued and I got an opportunity to serve as a Member of the UNESCO Expert Group on the “Recognition, Validation, and Accreditation (RVA)” of basic education for youth and adults as a foundation of Lifelong Learning and attend two meetings of the Expert Group held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris during July-November 2016.

9. Working with the Government

During 1991–92, I got the opportunity to work for the Planning Commission of India on deputation from JNU. In fact, I was searching for an opportunity to work for the Planning Commission because I wanted to learn how educational plans are made and how funds are allocated. I was motivated because the ASPBAE had given me an assignment to prepare a study on the financing of Adult Education in India. Although I had started collecting relevant documents and conducted interviews with several officials, I believed that by becoming a part of the Planning Commission, I would have access to a lot of inside information that may not be available to outsiders. Hence, when I came across an advertisement for the position of Joint Advisor in the Education Division of the Planning Commission, I promptly applied, and appeared for an interview at the UPSC (Union Public Service Commission), and was selected. My position gave me free access to all the important documents and the chance to attend different meetings of the Commission. My main assignment was to write the chapter on Education in the Eighth Five-Year Plan (1992–97) and also work on the Report of the NDC Committee on Literacy, besides chairing some of the Working Group meetings related to the Eighth Five-Year Plan. During one of these meetings chaired by the then Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, Shri. Pranab Mukherjee, and attended by the Union Minister of Education, Shri. Arjun Singh, Dr. Chitra Naik, Member (Education), and Shri Anil Bordia (Education Secretary), the discussion centered on finalizing the allocation to the Education sector, I observed how the Education Secretary argued for an enhanced allocation to Adult Education and how the Advisor (Education) vehemently opposed, as he felt that more funds should be allocated to Elementary Education. After a lot of discussion, the Deputy Chairman supported the enhanced allocation to Adult Education mainly keeping in view the opinion of Dr. Chitra Naik and the arguments of Mr. Bordia.

The credit for an increased allocation to the Adult Education budget during the Eighth Plan should definitely go to them. After the meeting was over, Shri Bordia turned towards me and said that “an academician like you should be at the National Institute of Adult Education and not in the Planning Commission, where any bureaucrat could do the routine work”. Reflecting on the comments of Shr. Bordia, I felt that as I had learned how the plans and fund allocations are made, collected important documents, and completed my paper on the financing of Adult Education in India, it may be the right time for me to move on to an academic institution. Hence, I applied for the position of Senior Fellow at the newly established National Institute of Adult Education (NIAE) and was selected as one of the four Senior Fellows in 1992. Although my work at the Institute was to develop a professional development programme for adult educators, I could not complete it as my tenure of the deputation from JNU was coming to an end and there was also a lot of uncertainty regarding the continuation of the Institute. I, therefore, preferred to return to my parent institution. During my short tenure at NIAE, I initiated a project for developing an archive of Adult Education and visited Seva Mandir, an important non-governmental organization in Udaipur, to survey the papers of Dr. Mohan Singh Mehta and prepare photocopies of important documents. I also worked on a project on “Research Trends in Indian Adult Education,” funded by the UNESCO Institute for Education, Hamburg (1992–93). While at NIAE, I got an invitation to participate and present a paper on “International Co-operation in Indian Adult Education” at the International Training Workshop held at the University of Nottingham during April 12–18, 1993. During my two-year stint in the government (1991–93), one year at the Planning Commission, and one year at NIAE, I interacted with several civil servants whom I found to be very scholarly and diligent. Most of them had great admiration for good academicians and their writings. I continue to be in touch with some of them even today.

At an international workshop on “Training and Cooperation in Literacy in India: Plan of Operation”, convened jointly by UNESCO and the National Literacy Mission (NLM) in New Delhi on 17 November 1998, I met Ms. Rameshwari Handa, Director, NLM. During the course of our discussion on the programmes of NLM, she told me that after working out the details of the evaluation of Total Literacy Campaigns, NLM would be focusing on the evaluation of State Resource Centers and if I was interested, she would recommend my name to the DG of NLM to develop an evaluation design for SRCs. Since it was a very challenging assignment, I agreed to develop an evaluation model and selected two SRCs located in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh for pilot testing of the evaluation tools and techniques. After the successful completion of the evaluation of the two SRCs, an Expert Committee was appointed

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under the Chairmanship of Late Shri. Mushtaq Ahmed, a renowned expert in the field of literacy, which reviewed the tools and methodology and approved it without substantial changes. I had the satisfaction of contributing to the work of the NLM.

My association with government programmes continued as I regularly received invitations to serve as Chairman and Expert Member of several Committees and Task Forces of the National Literacy Mission, especially in the areas of Research, Evaluation, and Training. I also served as a member of the UNESCO-NLM Award Committee, which helped me become familiar with the work of several organizations in the country. I noticed that the awards were given objectively, without any extraneous influence or interference. Having had the chance to participate in several programmes of the NLM since the beginning, I felt the need to bring out a publication highlighting the achievements of the National Literacy Mission Authority (NLMA). I discussed this idea during an informal luncheon meeting with Shri. Raju (DG, NLM) at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. Although he did not commit, later I came to know that he discussed the idea with Dr. V. Mohankumar, Director of the Indian Adult Education Association, and requested that he submit a formal proposal on behalf of the IAEEA. Shri K. C. Choudhary, General Secretary of the Association, entrusted me with the responsibility of drafting a detailed project proposal for submission to the NLMA. Following the review and approval of the proposal by the NLMA and the release of funds, the work was initiated in a systematic manner. It was undertaken with the cooperation of fifteen experts in the field who were commissioned to write on various aspects of the programmes of NLM, viz., Dr. L. Mishra, Professor Anita Rampal, Dr. Anita Dighe, Professor C. J. Daswani, Dr. Anita Priyadarshini, Dr. A. Mathew, Professor Denzil Saldanha, Prof. Vandana Chakrabarti, Shri. Prem Chand, Dr. Y. L. Das, Smt. Nishat Farooq, Dr. Mridula Seth, Prof. Asoke Bhattacharya, Dr. V. Mohankumar, Shri B. Sanjay and myself. Due to various reasons, the manuscript remained unpublished for a long time. As it represented an important work undertaken by eminent scholars and there were regular requests for it from scholars, I decided to upload the publication under the title, *Two Decades of National Literacy Mission of India*, at [Researchgate.net](https://www.researchgate.net) and [Academia.edu](https://www.academia.edu).

I gained valuable experience of working in government during my tenure at the Planning Commission of India. During the preparation of the *Report of the NDC Committee on Literacy*, I interacted very closely with Dr. Chitra Naik, Member (Education), and learned how to critically analyze educational documents and write in a cohesive way. I was quite impressed by the copious notes written by Shri. M.R. Kolhatker, Advisor (Education), who was my immediate boss on various subjects.

He guided me in preparing Cabinet Notes on different subjects, answering Parliamentary questions, and writing speeches for Shri Pranab Mukherjee, the then Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission. Attending meetings was a regular part of my work, and I learned how to argue on various issues related to Education, arrive at a consensus, and draft the minutes in an objective manner. Apart from attending the high-level meetings of the National Development Council chaired by the Prime Minister, I also attended and chaired some of the Working Group Meetings of the Eighth Five-Year Plan. During discussions, I observed that some of the state-level officials were not very supportive of allocating liberal grants for Adult Education, as they found it challenging to organize programmes with the active involvement of local community members and activists. Though a very senior, experienced, and eminent educationist, Dr. Naik's dealings with her juniors were very informal and exemplary. Probably because of her gentle demeanor and an aura of sisterly love, she was known as Chitra "Tai" (elder sister).

10. Working with the Indian Adult Education Association

I came to know about the Indian Adult Education Association (IAEA), one of the oldest and most prominent NGOs established in 1939, after a chance meeting with Dr. S.C. Dutta, the then President of the Association. I met him during the train journey from New Delhi to Ukai Dam (Surat district, Gujrat), where we headed to attend an international workshop organized by the Commonwealth Association for the Education and Training of Adults (CAETA) in 1986. During the journey, Dr. Dutta spoke with passion and conviction about the activities of the IAEA and motivated me to become a member of the Association. After my return to Delhi, I visited the IAEA, filled out the application form, and enrolled as a life member of the Association in 1987. Since then, I have been invited to attend seminars and meetings at regular intervals, which gave me a chance to interact with the office bearers and a number of grassroots workers. During one such visit to the IAEA, Shri K.C. Choudhary, President of the Association, requested that I coordinate the ten-day Research Methodology Course, which the Association had started the previous year. I gladly accepted the assignment and continued to coordinate the programme for nearly a decade (1992–2001). I also expanded the programme by adding a section on recent developments in the field of Adult Education, so that the participants could get not only some knowledge about research methodology but also a comprehensive idea of recent developments in the field. During the ten-day workshop, I took the participants to JNU for a field visit to familiarize them with the Adult Education course I was teaching. The participants took great interest in the course and wanted to know whether IAEA could organize a certificate programme in Adult Education

for those already working in the field. In fact, Dr. S.C. Dutta visited JNU in 1987 and met Dr. Anita Dighe, Director of the Adult Education Unit, and me to explore the possibilities of designing a short professional development programme for grassroots-level workers. After discussions, it was decided that the programme could be designed in collaboration with the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA). Accordingly, a meeting was scheduled at NIEPA after a week. Sadly, while speaking about the need for designing a professional development programme, Dr. Dutta had a heart attack and passed away on December 4, 1987.

On several occasions, I organized public lectures at the IAEA whenever eminent adult educators from overseas visited Delhi. Besides, I coordinated annual public lectures instituted in the names of Professor James Draper and Robby Kidd. Upon the request of Shri K.C. Choudhary, I coordinated the two National Seminars on Research and the Role of Media at the India International Centre during the year 1994. My contributions to the IAEA came to the attention of the Rotary Foundation, leading to my appointment as an Advisor to the Foundation for planning and implementing a literacy programme for a period of two years. During this period, I was invited to give a presentation on “New Dimensions in Adult Literacy in India” at the Presidential International Conference on Literacy organized by the Rotary Foundation in Kolkata, on March 12, 2016.

11. Setting up an International Institute of Adult and Lifelong Education

Being the Vice President of the IAEA, I regularly visited the Association and organized several workshops and seminars. I felt that it had tremendous potential to develop as an International Institute of Adult and Lifelong Education (IIALE) since it had a huge collection of specialized publications on Adult Education and excellent credentials and infrastructure. Besides, after the closure of the National Institute of Adult Education in 1994, there was a need to have such an organization to promote Adult Education in the Indian subcontinent. I discussed the idea with Shri K.C. Choudhary, the then-president of the Association, who not only welcomed the idea but also requested that I prepare the blueprint for such an organization. I drafted the details of the institute, and it came up in 2002 with an international conference. Shri Choudhary was designated as the Chancellor, and I was made the Honorary Director of the Institute. A number of eminent scholars from India and abroad were nominated as Distinguished, Emeritus, and Visiting Professors. The main aim of the institute was to promote Adult Education as a discipline of study and field of practice through research, academic programmes, and publications. It started with the organization of an international conference in collaboration with Uppingham Seminars (UK),

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Jamia Millia Islamia, and the National Literacy Mission at the India International Centre in New Delhi on December 11–13, 2002. Since then, IIALE has been organizing a number of programmes with the aim of developing Adult Education as a field of practice and discipline of study. (<https://www.iiale.org>) I designed a ten-day residential visiting Scholar Colloquium for doctoral students under the auspices of the Institute. I also started a biannual *International Journal of Adult and Lifelong Education* in 2003 to publish articles by overseas scholars or on themes related to other countries. It was discontinued after a couple of years, as we did not get articles from overseas scholars. Although I have been associated with IJAE as a Guest Editor for a couple of years and later as an Executive Editor for several years, I was given the responsibility of editing the journal after the departure of Dr. V. Mohankumar, Director of IAEA, who was looking after the work of the journal with dedication and diligence. After I took up the Editorship in 2020, I redesigned the journal and constituted an International Advisory Board consisting of eminent scholars from India and overseas. Since the Chancellor gave me freedom and budgetary support to initiate interesting academic activities, I could plan a number of international workshops, seminars, and Dr. James Draper Memorial Lectures. The Institute also brought out two publications, viz., *International Perspectives on Lifelong Education (2009)* and *International Dimensions of Adult and Lifelong Education (2016)*. In order to take up collaborative programmes with overseas universities, I worked on developing Memoranda of Understanding with several overseas universities, viz., Julius Maximilian's and Helmut Schmidt (Germany), Aarhus University (Denmark), the University of British Columbia (Canada), and the University of Stockholm (Sweden).

The programmes of the International Institute attracted several scholars from overseas. I met Dr. Kazi Rafiqul Alam, Chairman of the Dhaka Ahsania Mission, a leading NGO in Bangladesh, at an international conference held at the University of London. In the course of our discussion, Dr. Kazi expressed his desire to set up a similar institute in Dhaka and invited me to be the Director of the proposed Institute. However, due to family commitments, I politely declined the offer. Since Dr. Alam requested that I suggest some other suitable name, I took the liberty of recommending the name of Professor Asoke Bhattacharya, one of the most distinguished scholars in the field of Adult Education in India. As he was staying in Kolkata, was proficient in Bangla, and had a lot of international experience, I convinced Dr. Alam that he would be the right person to set up and head the Bangladesh Institute of Lifelong Learning. Accepting my recommendation, Dr. Alam invited Professor Bhattacharya as the Director of the proposed Institute in Dhaka. Professor Bhattacharya accepted the offer and did some excellent work as the Director of the Institute until he left due to the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2021.

12. Working with International NGOs

The World Literacy Council of Canada (WLC) was a leading international non-governmental organization that did pioneering work in the area of literacy for over five decades in several countries, including India. During my stay in Canada, Professor Draper introduced me to Ms. Mamta Mishra, the then Executive Director of WLC, and since then, I have continued my interaction with her. During my visit to the office of WLC to collect materials for my study on Indo-Canadian Cooperation in Adult Education, she extended full support and gave me access to important documents of WLC. When the WLC set up an India Office in Varanasi, she nominated me as a member of the India Advisory Board. It gave me an opportunity to work closely with the planning and implementation of field programmes for WLC in Eastern Uttar Pradesh. As desired by her, I designed a curriculum for organizing a basic literacy programme in selected villages in Eastern Uttar Pradesh. Besides, I also worked on a project funded by the International Reading Association on *Teaching Reading through the Same Language Subtitling* with a group of women at the WLC office. WLC provided bicycles to all the literacy workers, who were young girls in the 15–20 age groups. They worked with children during the morning hours, 1000–1200 hrs. and then with adults during the afternoon, 1200–1400 hrs. Working with WLC brought me in touch with several Canadian Adult Educators who visited India on different occasions. Since I was closely associated with WLC, I was invited to participate in the Golden Jubilee celebrations of WLC held in Toronto in 2008. While the function was going on and I was in the middle of delivering a speech, a message came about the sad demise of Professor James Draper, a former President of WLC who had played a crucial role in promoting cooperation between India and Canada. Being highly self-reliant and aware that his end was nearing, he had made arrangements for his body to be sent directly to the crematorium from the hospital. Ms. Mamta Mishra and I were the only two individuals who attended the cremation ceremony. It was a peculiar experience to be present at the funeral of such an esteemed scholar without any friends or family members in attendance. Despite the closure of the India office of WLC, my connection with Ms. Mishra has persisted, as she has been visiting India every alternate year. Our association remains intact.

As a life member of the ASPBAE, I received several invitations to participate in the regional workshops and conferences organized by the Association from time to time in Indonesia, Bangladesh, the Philippines, and India. After I completed a study on “Policy and trends in financing adult literacy in India” sponsored by the ASPBAE, I was nominated along with Shri K.C. Choudhury to attend a workshop organized by the German Adult Education Association (DVV) in Berlin on developing

“Curriculum Globale” (a global curriculum for Adult Educators). Subsequently, I participated in several discussions organized by the DVV on themes related to Adult Education and published in their Journal, *Adult Education and Development*.

During an International Conference organized by the Commonwealth of Learning, Vancouver, and the National Open School at Hyderabad in 2001, I met Dr. Sakil Malik, the Executive Director of the International Reading Association, one of the prominent NGOs, which was exploring the possibilities of setting up an Indian affiliate of the IRA to promote reading habits among children and adults in India. He was keen that I take the initiative in opening an Indian Chapter. I welcomed the idea and discussed it with Shri Choudhary, who fully endorsed it. As suggested by Shri. Choudhary, I worked out the details of the organization and succeeded in setting up an Indian affiliate of the IRA by enrolling over one hundred members in 2002. The formation of the Reading Association of India provided many opportunities for several members to participate in national and international seminars organized by the Association (<http://www.readingindia.org>). IRA extended an invitation to India to organize an Asian Literacy Conference in New Delhi during the year 2015. Since the IAEA, the parent body of the IRA did not have permission to receive foreign funds; we could not organize an international conference in Delhi. Hence, a request was made to Smt. Kallolini Hazarat, past President of IRA, World Education Fellowship, and Gujarat Research Society. She graciously accepted our request and organized a very successful Asian Conference in Mumbai from January 28–29, 2016.

13. Some Awards

I have always found joy in working in the field of Adult Education without seeking recognition. However, I am grateful that some of my senior colleagues have acknowledged my contributions and recommended me for certain awards. I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Arne Carlsen, Director of UIL, for inviting me to participate in an international Consultative Group Meeting of CONFINTEA VI Midterm Review held in Hamburg, Germany, on May 16–17, 2017. During the meeting, a special event was organized where I (along with five others from Germany, South Africa, Belgrade, Vietnam, and Mexico) was conferred with the UIL Honorary Fellowship, which came as a pleasant surprise.

In November 2015, Professor Tom Sork of UBC recommended me for induction into the International Adult Continuing Education Hall of Fame in the USA. I felt honored when he not only introduced me at the award ceremony but also presented

me with the plaque and medal. It was unexpected, and I learned that I was the second Indian to be inducted into the International Hall of Fame.

Another pleasant surprise came when I received a letter from the General Secretary of the IAEA informing me that I had been selected for the Nehru Literacy Award in 2007. I had never applied or campaigned for any award, and these recognitions came as unexpected surprises.

Additionally, I received the Sardar Patel International Literacy Award during an international seminar on Urban Literacy held at the India International Centre, New Delhi, in December 2002. This award was jointly instituted by the Commonwealth Association for the Education and Training of Adults (UK), the International Association of Education for World Peace (USA), and the Global Open University, Milan. I am grateful to Professor Nanu Bhai Joshi, Director of the Department of Adult Education at South Gujarat University, for recommending me for this award.

In 1996, I participated in the National Essay Competition organized by the National Literacy Mission and was fortunate to win the First Prize. I received the certificate from the President of India at a function held on International Literacy Day at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi.

I am grateful for these honors and recognitions, which I received unexpectedly and without actively seeking them.

14. Retrospect and Prospects

Reflecting on my experiences of working in the field of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning for over three decades, I have observed that the growth of Adult Education in India as a professional field of practice and discipline of study has been slow, sluggish, and gradually declining over the years. Although there was significant growth in Adult Education programs and infrastructure following the launch of the National Adult Education Programme in 1978 and the National Literacy Mission in 1988, the field has faced challenges in terms of policy and funding support. Various programs, such as the Centre-Based Literacy Programme, Each One Teach One, Total Literacy Campaigns, and Continuing Education, contributed to the increase in the literacy rate from 52.21% to 74.04% between 1991 and 2011. University Adult Education and State Resource Centers, along with the involvement of non-governmental organizations, also played a crucial role. However, over time, these programmes and institutions gradually deteriorated due to the lack of sustained support

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and investment. The closure of several State Resource Centers in 2018, which had made significant contributions in terms of literacy materials and training programs, led to the loss of valuable research and publications. Although efforts were not made to preserve these materials for future use, with the abrupt termination of the SRC staff in 2019, the materials remained inaccessible or were discarded. To ensure the growth and sustainability of Adult Education in India, policymakers and funding agencies need to provide continued support and investment in the field. It is also essential to preserve the knowledge and expertise developed over the years, particularly the work done by State Resource Centers and University Departments of Adult Education.

Recognizing the importance of preserving these materials for future researchers, I suggested procuring them and keeping them in the Library of the Indian Adult Education Association (IAEA). However, my attempts to procure materials from the State Resource Centers were met with no response. In order to document the excellent work done by several SRCs, I suggested that the IAEA commission studies of selected SRCs and pay a token honorarium of Rs. 25000/- (twenty-five thousand) to the former Directors of SRCs for writing a brief history of their institutions. In spite of repeated requests, only two Directors of SRC, viz., Smt. Nishat Farooq of Delhi and Smt. Nandini Kajuri of West Bengal submitted the requested write-up. I got a chance to highlight the importance of procuring all the materials for SRCs at the Advisory Committee meeting of the Cell for the National Centre for Literacy (set up at NCERT) held on July 12, 2022.

I also emphasized the importance of acquiring the rich collection of Adult Education books from the National Institute of Adult Education (NIAE) after its closure. Thanks to the efforts of Dr. V. Mohankumar, the then Director of the IAEA, and the approval of the Director-General of the National Literacy Mission (NLM), the NIAE collection of two thousand books was successfully transferred to the IAEA. However, it has been disheartening to witness the lack of importance given to Adult Education books by many libraries, leading to their disposal due to limited space and perceived lack of demand. I felt sad that about two hundred publications, research studies, seminar proceedings, and monographs that I had collected from twenty-seven countries and donated to the JNU library, though they were cataloged and kept at the library during my tenure, were weeded out after I superannuated since the new Librarian felt that there was neither any demand nor space for Adult Education publications.

In light of the significance of old and rare books for research, I proposed the digitization of such books to the President of the IAEA. Due to resource limitations,

progress in this area has been slow. Overall, the challenges and limitations in preserving and promoting Adult Education materials and resources in India have hindered the growth of the field. Efforts must be made to address these issues, including sustained support from policymakers, investment in research and publications, and the digitization of valuable resources to ensure their accessibility and preservation for future generations.

Although the number of universities in India increased from 150 to over 800 during the last four decades (1981–2021), the number of Departments of Adult Education came down from 103 to 38 during the same period. While five Departments of Adult Education offer Master's degrees in the main subject, the rest offer Master's degrees in Rural Development, Development Extension, Human Resources, and short-term courses. It seems that Adult Education, as a discipline, has not taken root in the majority of Indian universities. The main reason may be traced to the fast pace of setting up the Departments of Adult Education during the 1980s, when there was hardly any qualified professional manpower in the country to serve as faculty. Since Dr. Madhuri R. Shah, the UGC Chairperson during the period 1981–86, being a strong believer in Adult Education, was very keen to introduce Adult Education in the universities; she not only sent letters to all the Vice Chancellors but also released liberal grants. In a hurry to utilize the grants, many universities appointed persons with limited or no understanding of the subject at a time when there were very few qualified persons in the field. Although the UGC Guidelines clearly stated that the Departments should undertake research, teaching, and extension, most of the Departments focused only on extension programmes as the faculty had no idea of the subject or training, and there was no provision in the grant for developing courses or undertaking research. Unlike the Departments of Biotechnology, which were established during that period in a phased manner with a lot of collaborations with overseas universities and the preparation of professional manpower, the Departments of Adult Education were set up in a hurried manner. Besides, the UGC policy considered Adult Education as a short-term project and designated the staff as Project Directors, Assistant Directors, and Project Officers and not teachers. Hence, they could not develop and offer a Master's programme. I discussed these issues with Dr. Madhuri Shah during an interview with her. When I asked her why she set up so many Departments in such a short period of time, she responded that if she had not introduced Adult Education in universities, her successor may not have taken an interest in doing the same. To quote her, "I introduced the seeds of Adult Education in Indian universities. It depends on the soil of universities and how they nourish it. Being a strong believer in Adult Education, I did my best when I got a chance to promote it." Unfortunately, her successors, with the exception of Professor

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Armaity Desai (1999–2004), did not take much interest in Adult Education. UGC released funds annually, and there were unusual delays in the release of grants, mainly due to the shortage of funds. However, during the tenure of Dr. Armaity Desai, UGC constituted expert committees to visit different universities to review the progress of Adult Education programmes, grade them, and allocate additional funds. After her tenure, there was a further shortage of funds, and UGC did not release funds for Adult Education, which led to the closure of several Departments of Adult Education. Unlike Central universities, which received hundred percent funds from the UGC and could take over the responsibility of Adult Education after the initial five-year plan period, most of the state governments did not provide funds, which led to the closure of the University Adult Education programme in their respective states.

Based on my experience at JNU and other universities, I feel that there is a strong bias against Adult Education as a discipline of study in the university system. It may be partially due to the ignorance of academics about it or they were equating it with basic literacy and extension programmes. Since the programme made its debut in most of the Indian universities as a five-year plan project with basic literacy and field programmes, the faculty did not develop discipline-based courses, undertake research, or bring out publications, and hence did not get due recognition. Even when some of the Departments developed Master's programmes, they could not attract good students. During discussions with students, it became clear that most of them opted for Adult Education as a last choice. The two Departments of Adult Education, which came up with well-qualified faculty and international collaborations at Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati (1972) and the University of Madras (1978), though they functioned well for over four decades, weakened with the superannuation of the senior faculty members and declining enrollment of students. Besides the limited job opportunities might have discouraged many students from opting for Adult Education. Hence, many departments were closed when the faculty members retired.

The development of the discipline depends on the quality and quantity of research and publications. During the last three decades, publications in the area of Adult Education were very limited in India compared to other Social Science subjects, since several faculty members did not take up research and publications, especially after they became Professors. It seems that promotion was an important motivating factor for publication, especially among senior faculty members. It has been observed that most of their publications were co-authored with doctoral students. During my interaction with a number of doctoral students, I observed that most of them were not genuinely interested in research and used the opportunity to prepare for the civil service examination or were on the lookout for employment. With its recent decision,

the UGC (Minimum Standards and Procedures for Award of Ph.D. Degree Regulations, 2022) has done away with the mandatory requirement of publishing two research papers in peer-reviewed journals or presenting them at conferences, the incentive to publish papers among doctoral students may further decline. Similarly, the announcement by the UGC that a Master's Degree with 55% marks will be the minimum qualification required for appointment as an Assistant Professor instead of a Ph.D. degree does not augur well for the promotion of research or the quality of teaching.

Based on my experience of evaluating twenty-nine doctoral theses from several universities in India, I observed that with a few exceptions, the quality of research was generally subpar and not deserving of the doctoral degree. I, however, did not reject them but recommended them with constructive suggestions for improvement. In fact, some of the supervisors requested that I recommend the thesis for the award so that the students could leave campus. I felt that if the doctoral students could get some professional guidance apart from their advisors, they could enhance the quality of their research. With a view to helping doctoral students from different universities consult experts and research materials available at IAEA; I designed a residential Visiting Scholar Colloquium. The Colloquium provided them with an opportunity to spend ten days at the IAEA discussing their research with experts and peers, in addition to utilizing the wealth of materials available in the IAEA Library. All expenditures for travel and stays were met by the IAEA. The feedback from the students who had participated in the programme earlier was very encouraging.

While serving as the Editor of the *Indian Journal of Adult Education*, I noticed that peer reviewers rejected almost 60% of articles due to poor quality. It is very saddening to note that most of the writers do not carry out the suggestions given by the peer reviewers. With a view to training young scholars to write papers for publication, a ten-day training programme has been launched recently by the International Institute of Adult and Lifelong Education. I feel that if the senior academics mentor young scholars very seriously and consistently and keep a dignified distance from them, it may go a long way in improving the quality of research and publications. While guiding the students, I have followed my experience of pursuing a Ph.D. under the guidance of an eminent historian, Professor Sarvepalli Gopal, at JNU and how he guided me. I met him on the second Wednesday of every month at 11 a.m. with my work for ten minutes, and our discussions were focused. Whatever write-up I submitted to him was meticulously corrected by him and returned to me within a week. He never discussed any personal or general issues and kept his distance. He cleared my thesis for submission within the minimum stipulated time of twenty-two months.

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He was a role model as a research supervisor. I observed that dignified teachers would be very understanding and helpful to students, and most of them continued to do research and publish regularly. I have tried to follow such teachers. When I published my thesis, I dedicated it to my Supervisor, Professor Gopal, along with Professor Tapas Majumdar and Professor Karuna Chanana, who helped me in several ways, as a token of my appreciation and gratitude. Since Professor Gopal had moved out of Delhi, I mailed him a copy, and he thanked me for my dedication and suggested that I keep up the good work.

I have observed that since some doctoral students get motivated by the research and publications of their teachers and follow their style of working, it is very important for teachers to continue doing research independently and publishing regularly. I have always tried to do all the work connected with the writing of papers myself and have not sought the assistance of students. With the exception of four publications where I collaborated with my peers, all the other publications were undertaken by me independently. Although some of my students whom I guided wanted to include my name as a co-author, I discouraged them so that they could take full credit for their work. At the beginning of my career, when I was working as a Lecturer, I wrote a paper under the guidance of Professor D.S. Rawat, Head of the Department of School Education, NCERT, and included his name. He called me and, very gently, told me to delete his name and take full credit for the paper. He told me that even though the chances of getting the paper accepted for publication may increase by adding the name of a senior teacher, it will ultimately get published if the quality of the paper is good. He, however, advised me to take up collaborative publications with peers, as one can learn a lot by working in a team. Following the advice of my teacher, Professor Tapas Majumdar, I was not in a rat race to publish. I worked on themes that really interested me and where I could contribute to the pool of knowledge. He told me to spend at least 3-6 months referring to all the relevant materials, reviewing them thoroughly, and writing and rewriting the paper before sending it for publication. Since I followed his advice, I could publish only a limited number of papers, unlike some of my friends, who focused on bringing out several papers within a short time. I realized the importance of quality publications when I sat in on the Selection Committee meetings and found that candidates with a large number of papers often did not have depth and were rejected. Hence, I advised my students to focus on quality and not quantity.

During the last three decades, I had the privilege and pleasure of interacting with a number of eminent scholars from different countries, viz., Canada (Professors James A. Draper, John K. Friesen, and Tom Sork), the UK (Professors Paul Fordham, Alan Rogers, and W.J. Morgan), Denmark (Professor Soeren Ehlers and Professor

Arne Carlsen), Germany (Professor Nuisl Ekkehard, Regina Egetenmeyer, and Dr. Madhu Singh), and the USA (Professor Alexander Charters, Roger Heimstra, and H.S. Bhola), with whom I had interesting academic discussions and developed lasting friendships. I had invited most of them to visit and deliver lectures at the International Institute of Adult and Lifelong Education. Some of them continue to serve as Visiting, Distinguished, and Emeritus Professors at the Institute. Of all the overseas scholars, four of them visited India repeatedly, viz., Professor Alan Rogers, Professor James Draper, Professor Soeren Ehlers, and Professor Tom Sork, to participate in academic programmes. However, Professor James Draper has visited India every alternate year since his first visit to Jaipur in 1962 as a Visiting Professor at Rajasthan University. He told me that he believed he was an Indian by birth and felt at home in India. Even after the completion of his tenure at Rajasthan University in 1965, he accepted an assignment as Resident Director of the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute in New Delhi for a year and later a Fellowship of the Indian Council of Social Science Research to write a book on *Adult Education: A Focus for the Social Sciences*, which was published by IAEA in 1989. He took an active part in the Adult Education programmes organized by several Indian universities and non-governmental organizations, especially the IAEA, Seva Mandir, and Literacy House. He presented a set of his publications and a file containing all his correspondence with Indians over three decades to the IAEA for future researchers. These materials are currently being digitized and will be hosted on the IAEA website. In view of his long-standing association with IAEA and manifold contributions to Indian Adult Education, he was conferred an honorary doctorate by the Rajasthan Vidyapeeth, Udaipur, and later presented the Special Diamond Jubilee Award during the annual conference of IAEA held in Lucknow in 2000. Along with the plaque, he was also given a coconut, which he carried all the way to his home in Toronto. As per his wish, he was cremated with the coconut in his hand. To perpetuate the memory of Professor James Draper, the IAEA instituted the Professor James Draper Memorial Award, and the first award was given to Ms. Mamta Mishra, Executive Director of World Literacy of Canada, at a special function organized at the India International Centre in 2006.

I have noticed that only two Indians, Professor H.S. Bhola of Indiana University and Dr. Madhu Singh of UIL, have been very active on the international scene through their lectures and publications. With their demise, there is a vacuum, and young scholars from India need to step into their shoes through research and publications and make a mark at an international level. Hence, I have been trying to identify young, promising scholars and mentor them to excel in the field of Adult Education at the national and international levels.

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Looking back, I feel my contributions have been mainly in designing an innovative professional development programme for PALDIN, which was recognized as an innovative programme in the field of Adult Education in a global survey of Adult Education programmes conducted by the Slovenian Institute of Adult Education during 2013. Apart from developing and teaching a number of innovative courses, delivering keynote addresses, and serving as an expert member of important committees of NLM, IAEA, IIALE, UIL, UGC, WLC, and various universities, I have made significant contributions in the areas of History of Adult Education, Lifelong Learning, Professionalization, Open Distance Learning, Financing, and Training. I succeeded in establishing the International Institute of Adult and Lifelong Education and Reading Association of India and strived to strengthen the IAEA through a number of activities. Over the course of four decades, my work in the field of Adult and Lifelong Learning has provided me with innumerable opportunities to participate and make over 40 presentations at various national and international conferences, workshops, and seminars held at different places in India and abroad, including Germany, Norway, Canada, Denmark, the USA, Sweden, the UK, Finland, Malaysia, South Africa, Indonesia, Thailand, Brazil, Nepal, South Korea, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Vietnam, New Zealand, Taiwan, and France. I have made multiple visits to the USA, Canada, Germany, and the UK for academic work.

Currently, I am focusing on preparing a detailed history of the Indian Adult Education Association, documenting the experiences of academics, administrators, and activists who have made significant contributions to the field and mentoring doctoral students through the Visiting Scholar Colloquium and other programmes of IIALE. I believe that my experiences and reflections will be useful for future generations of adult educators and scholars in India and elsewhere, as they face similar challenges and opportunities in advancing the field and understanding its trajectory. However, my journey in the field of Adult and Lifelong Learning has not been an easy one. When I started my career, the discipline was not very well established in India, and there was a lack of awareness and appreciation for its importance. I faced challenges in convincing academic institutions and policymakers about the need to develop Adult Education as a distinct discipline of study and a professional field of practice. It was a daunting task to bring together different stakeholders from different backgrounds, interests, and priorities and make them work towards a common goal of promoting Adult and Lifelong Learning. Drawing from my experiences, I strongly believe that the future direction of Adult and Lifelong Learning should prioritize making concerted efforts to explore the possibilities of utilizing Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and artificial intelligence to promote learning among adults. Furthermore, in order to strengthen Adult and

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Lifelong Learning as an academic discipline of study and a professional field of practice, concerted efforts must be made to develop innovative professional development programmes, undertake basic research, and bring out quality publications. I feel that young scholars need to do consistent research in a selected area so as to develop some expertise and make significant contributions to the field.

I have been fortunate to receive unwavering support and encouragement from numerous academics and administrators, with particular gratitude extended to Professors Tapas Majumdar, Anita Dighe, James Draper, Dr. L. Mishra, and Shri. Anil Bordia, Shri. Bhaskar Chatterjee and Shri. K. C. Choudhary. Their support has enabled me to make modest contributions to the field of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning. I must express my deepest appreciation to two organizations that have played a pivotal role in my professional journey. The Indian Adult Education Association has supported my professional work since 1987 offering valuable assistance in numerous ways. Likewise, Jawaharlal Nehru University has given me the necessary academic freedom, administrative support, funds and facilities throughout my thirty years of service. (1984 to 2014).

Photographs



Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam former President of India presenting the Nehru Literacy Award to Professor S.Y. Shah on July31, 2008.



Acceptance speech by Professor S.Y. Shah
(transcript of the speech is given in the Annexure).

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Professor S.Y. Shah was inducted into the International Hall of Fame (USA) by Prof. Tom Sork in 2015

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Professor Shah sharing his experiences of working in the field of Adult Education at Oklahoma University, USA after induction into the Hall of Fame, USA, 2015.



Professor Shah with Professor Regina Egetenmeyer (4th from left) and Masters Students of the Julius Maximilian's University of Wurzburg, Germany, 2016.



Professor Shah at the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) during a field trip in 2016. Professor Arne Carlsen, Director, UIL, (on my left) and Lisa Krolak, ALADIN Coordinator) (on my right) and some students from the Julius Maximilian's University of Wurzburg, Germany

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Professor Arne Carlsen, Director, UIL presenting UIL Fellowship to Professor S.Y. Shah, 2017.



Seven Honorary Fellows of UIL with the Director UIL, Hamburg, 2017. From right to left: Dr. Sylvia Schmelkes (Mexico), Le Huy lam (Vietnam), Professor S.Y. Shah (India), Professor Ekkehard Nuissl (Germany), Professor Catherine Odora Hoppers (South Africa), Professor Katarina Popovic (Serbia), Professor Veronica McKay (South Africa) and Dr. Arne Carlsen, Director, UIL

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Professor Shah receiving the First Prize in the National Essay Competition Organized by the National Literacy Mission from the then President of India. Shri Shankar Dayal Sharma at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi on September 8, 1996



Professor Shah made a presentation on “Financing of Adult Education in India”, at a “High-Level Research Seminar on Adult Literacy: What Policies and Programs Really Work?” UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, Hamburg, December 12-13, 2011

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Invited presentation on “Lifelong Learning for Living Together” at the International Symposium on Lifelong Learning, organized by Suwon City Council, South Korea, October 24, 2017.



Professor Shah moderating the first Plenary Session of CONFINTEA held at Suwon city, South Korea on October 23, 2017.

My Experiences in Adult and Lifelong Learning in India and Abroad (1984-2024)



Professor Shah delivering a Lecture at the Stockholm University, October 4, 2018.

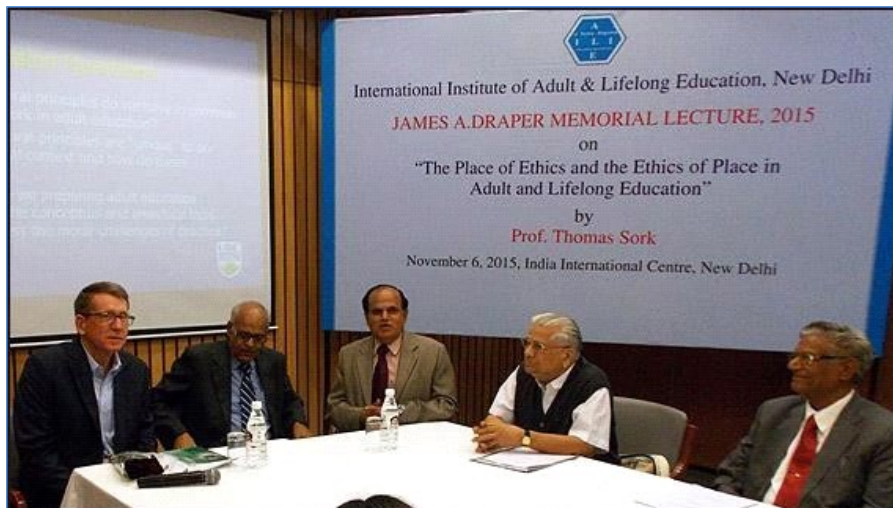


Professor Shah welcoming Professor Regina, Professor Sabine Schmidt Lauff and Students of Wurzburg University during their visit to the International Institute of Adult and Lifelong Education in 2018.

My Experiences in Adult and Lifelong Learning in India and Abroad (1984-2024)



Professor Shah addressing the Visiting Scholar Colloquium at the International Institute of Adult and Lifelong Education on October 18, 2016.



Professor Shah coordinating Professor James Draper Lecture by Professor Tom Sork (on the extreme left) at India International Center, New Delhi, on November 6, 2015.

My Experiences in Adult and Lifelong Learning in India and Abroad (1984-2024)



Professor Shah speaking at the International Seminar on Professionalization of Adult Education held at India International Center, New Delhi on August 29, 2014. On his right is Dr. Mohan Kumar, Director, and IAEA and on left is Professor Regina Egetenmeyer.



Professor Shah Coordinating Professor James A Draper Lecture delivered by Professor John W. Morgan of Nottingham University, UK (on my right) in 2009.

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Professor Shah chairing Professor James Draper lecture being delivered by Professor Sabine Schmidt Lauff of Helmut-Schmidt-University, Hamburg at IIALE in 2018



Professor Shah soliciting the comments by the learners of PALDIN held at SRC, Kerala during September 2013

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Professor Shah interviewing Professor B.S. Garg, Visitor, International Institute of Adult and Lifelong Education about his experiences on May 19, 2015



Professor Shah interviewing Shri K.C Choudhary, President of IAEA about his professional experiences in Adult Education on March 10, 2015.

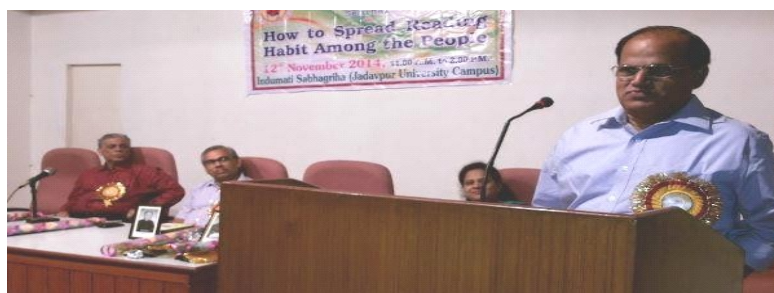
My Experiences in Adult and Lifelong Learning in India and Abroad (1984-2024)



Professor Shah sharing his views on the future programmes of IAEA on the occasion of Platinum Jubilee Celebration on October 10, 2015.



Professor Shah welcoming the Resource person Professor Anita Dighe at the Research Methodology course organized jointly by the Group of Adult Education, JNU and IAEA on October 6, 2002.



Professor Shah delivering keynote address at the Zonal conference of Reading Association of India in Kolkata on November 12, 2014.

My Experiences in Adult and Lifelong Learning in India and Abroad (1984-2024)



Professor Shah chairing the Asian Literacy Conference held in Mumbai during January 28-29, 2016.

My Experiences in Adult and Lifelong Learning in India and Abroad (1984-2024)



Professor Shah in discussion with Professor Usha Sharma, In-charge of the Cell for National Center for Literacy (NCERT) during her visit to IIALE on May 13, 2022 (first on my right), Dr. Bani Bora, Senior Consultant (on my left) and Ms. Kalpana Kaushik, Director, IAEA facing Dr. Bora.



Professor K. Ramachandran, Advisor, Africa-India Institute of Educational Planning & Administration & Chairman of the Focus Group on Adult Education (NEP, 2020) in conversation with Professor Shah during his visit to IIALE on May 9, 2022.

My Experiences in Adult and Lifelong Learning in India and Abroad (1984-2024)



Professor Shah welcomes the newly elected President of IAEA - Professor L. Raja at IAEA on July 16, 2021. On the left side is Shri K.C. Choudhary, Chief Advisor and on the right side - Shri Suresh Khandelwal (General Secretary)



Professor Shah welcomes Professor N.K. Ambasht, former Chairman of NIOS as the new Visitor of IIALE on April 9, 2022.

My Experiences in Adult and Lifelong Learning in India and Abroad (1984-2024)



Professor Rajesh, Head of Department of Adult Continuing Education and the students of Delhi University interacting with Prof. Shah about his professional experiences during their visit to IAEA on May 17, 2023.



Shri Bhaskar Chatterjee releasing the book on *International Perspectives on Adult and Lifelong Education* by Professor S. Y. Shah at India International Center on the occasion of Professor James Draper Lecture by Professor Chris Atkin of Nottingham University (Extreme left) on October 10, 2008.



Shri K.R Narayanan, President of India releasing the book - *An Encyclopedia of Indian Adult Education* at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi on September 8,1999.

Annexures

a. Acceptance speech delivered after receiving the Nehru Literacy Award on July 31, 2008

I deem it a rare honor and great privilege to have been conferred the prestigious Nehru Literacy Award by the former President of India - Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. In fact, it was a pleasant surprise when I got the communication in this regard from the Secretary of the Association, Dr. Madan Singh. I accept the award with utmost humility and gratitude to the Indian Adult Education Association especially its President, Shri. K.C. Choudhary and Patron, Professor B. S. Garg. When I found out the names of those who received this award earlier, like Professor Malcolm S. Adiseshia, Professor Ram Lal Parikh, Dr. Madhuri R. Shah, Dr. L.D. Mishra, I feel humbled and know that I have to do much more work in the field of Adult Education to be really worthy of it.

On this occasion, I would like to recall one question which has been often asked by my friends and colleagues. How did I enter the field of Adult Education? Was it a deliberate choice or compulsion of circumstances? Here I would like to express sincere gratitude to my teacher Professor Tapas Majumdar, an eminent economist, and the former Honorary Director of the Adult Education Programme at Jawaharlal Nehru University, who not only offered me an opportunity to work in this field but also encouraged and guided me to focus on research and publications and strive to develop Adult Education as a discipline of study. He felt that University Adult Education should be qualitatively different from government programmes and should aim at strengthening Adult Education as a field of practice and discipline of study mainly through research and publications. He was of the view that the role of the university should not be confined to setting up hundreds of literacy centers following official guidelines but to establishing a few centers on an experimental basis with a view to generating new knowledge. His views greatly appealed to me and guided my subsequent work. Since I had a background in the History of Education, having done my Doctorate in that field under the distinguished historian Professor Sarvepalli Gopal, I decided to concentrate on the History of Adult Education. Looking back, I feel the decision to focus on historical research in Adult Education, which is a relatively neglected area, has been very fruitful. As I began research and reviewed the literature, I realized that hardly any efforts have been made in this area. The few publications on the History of Indian Adult Education, written by experienced adult educators were mainly based on reports and personal observations and did not make use of a variety of primary sources like personal papers, diaries, minutes of meetings, and other unpublished sources without which it would be difficult to do justice to historical writings. The mainstream historians considered research on issues related to Education

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to be a marginal field and invariably ignored Adult Education. Most of the publications on the History of Indian Education hardly discussed Adult Education.

My search for primary sources for undertaking historical research took me to many archives and libraries in India and abroad. I noticed that there is not only a lack of awareness about the importance of Adult Education in India but also disinterest in preserving documents related to this area. In government departments, a regular annual exercise is undertaken for weeding out unimportant documents. When I was working at the Planning Commission, I was assigned the job of weeding out unimportant documents of the Education Division. To my surprise, I found that all the files related to Adult Education were marked as “not important” and “to be destroyed”. On further examination, I found that those files pertained to the National Adult Education Programme which was one of the most significant initiatives in the field of Indian Adult Education. I told the Section Officer who was assisting me to mark them as “Most Significant - To be preserved”. He looked shocked and told me that if such unimportant files of the Education Division were to be preserved, there will be no storage space in the Record Room of the Planning Commission. He was confident that in all probability Adult Education files would not be selected by the National Archives- the official repository of government documents. Hence it is not very surprising that the National Archives of India has very few documents related to Adult Education. The same situation seems to prevail in the Ministry of Human Resource Development. When I was granted special permission to consult the records kept at the Record Room of the Ministry by the then Secretary Mr. Anil Bordia, I found that the corridor leading to the Record Room was littered with files to be destroyed and I had to walk over it. Out of curiosity, I picked up a file which was about the setting up of the first important institution in Adult Education – the National Fundamental Education Center which contained several papers and correspondence of the former Education Secretary, Dr. Prem Kirpal. Since they were to be destroyed, I sought the permission of the Record Room in Charge to have the file for my research and I was told that they cannot be given as they are marked for destruction. In the absence of important files which record the observations of officials, it would be difficult to know how and why certain policy decisions have been taken. Hence there is a need to sensitize the officials about the importance of Adult Education and preserving the key files. This task may be taken up as a legitimate activity of professional organizations like the Indian Adult Education Association.

The situation in Non-Governmental Organizations is more pathetic. Due to the lack of trained staff, shortage of resources, and awareness about the importance of preserving documents, leading Adult Education institutions like the Seva Mandir in Udaipur established by Dr. Mohan Singh Mehta, and Literacy House established by Dr. Welthy Fisher and Indian Adult Education set up in 1939 have not done much to preserve their heritage. In connection with my research on Dr. Mohan Singh Mehta

who set up the first University Department of Adult Education in India, I visited Seva Mandir and found that the documents were just dumped in the basement and with great difficulty, the Administrative Officer could locate a file on Adult Education in which Mohan Singh Mehta had recorded his views on University Adult Education. While in the Literacy House, some of the selected documents are exhibited in the library, they are neither cataloged nor preserved properly. Being associated with the Indian Adult Education Association which has a history of seven decades and functioned as a think tank and is closely associated with the planning and implementation of several important programs of the government of India and international organizations, I discussed the need for preserving important documents and photographs of our predecessors with the President Dr. K.C. Choudhary, who endorsed the idea. I hope in due course, the Association will have a digital archive of all its publications, papers, and photographs. In this connection, I feel the IAEA being the premier national professional organization should make systematic efforts to collect important papers and documents from all the Non-Governmental Organizations involved in Adult Education to be systematically catalogued and preserved and made available to scholars.

I have observed that most of the Adult Educators who have done excellent work at the grassroots level and in that process gained rich experiences and insights have rarely bothered to record their work and ideas for the benefit of others. Perhaps, they had neither the time nor resources or training to document the work. When I discussed the importance of documentation with Dr. S.C. Dutta, earlier General Secretary of the IAEA, he told me that it would be better if the academicians who have the time and training, interview the field workers and administrators and record their views for publication and research. Following his suggestion, I started the process by interviewing him as he had long years of experience in the field of Adult Education. His interview threw light on the key role played by Dr. Robby Kidd, the renowned Canadian Adult Educator in formulating the recommendations on Continuing Education in the *Report of Indian Education Commission, 1964* (Kothari Commission). Subsequently, I interviewed Professors James Draper, Alan Rogers, and H.S. Bhola who brought out the influences of Canada and Britain on shaping University Adult Education in India. From these interviews, I came to know that while Dr. Mohan Singh Mehta was keen to promote need based Continuing Education Programme through universities; Dr. Malcolm S. Adiseshia did not favor the idea and felt that universities should promote Andragogy and offer Masters and Doctoral Programmes. Their views had direct bearing on the Adult Programmes offered by the Universities of Rajasthan and Madras where they served as Vice Chancellors.

The interviews with some of the civil servants especially Dr. Bhaskar Chatterjee and Jagan Mathew- both of whom served as the Director General of National Literacy Mission, revealed the intricacies of financing and various hurdles in the

path of utilization of funds for Adult Education. From the interview with Shri. S.K. Mukherjee, a former Chief Secretary of Bihar who participated in the Mass Literacy Campaign in Bihar during 1939-40 and the study of papers given by him, it became clear that the strategies of the Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) of Ernakulum District (Kerala State) in 1989 were no different from those of Bihar and perhaps TLC model owes its origin to Bihar. In the absence of official files, such interviews with activists and civil servants would generate valuable resources for writing an authentic history of Adult Education. Perhaps it would be a good idea if the Indian Adult Education Association sponsors an Oral History Project at the national level so that interested members of the Association could join this project by identifying and interviewing selected Adult Educators in different parts of the country who have made significant contributions to the field of Adult Education.

As the Chinese saying goes, a single conversation with a wise man is better than ten years of study, it would be worthwhile to document the work, experiences, and wisdom of our Adult Educators which would not only motivate others but also shed light on the growth of Adult Education in India.

I conclude here by thanking the IAEA for bestowing on me the Nehru Literacy Award in recognition of my humble contributions to the field of Adult Education.

(b). Transcript of an interview conducted by a radio jockey- Mr. Pederson from FM Radio (Denmark) on January 6, 2009

Mr. Pederson: Thank you, Professor Shah, for agreeing to talk to us. I will ask a few general questions and you may freely share your observations for the benefit of our listeners. I have observed that India has made tremendous progress in the IT sector and billionaires are increasing in the country. Yet, I wonder why India has the largest number of nonliterates in the world. What could be the reasons?

Professor Shah: The number of nonliterates is gradually decreasing. The Census of India (2001) shows that the number of non-literates has declined during the last decade. Yet there are a massive number of nearly 300 million non-literates in the country. This is partly due to the failure to universalize elementary education and partly because of the ineffectiveness of adult literacy programmes. Although India has succeeded in expanding school education, there are high dropouts and the quality of teaching also remains far from satisfactory. The success of literacy campaigns was not followed up by effective post-literacy programmes thereby paving the way for the relapse of neo-literates into illiteracy. Currently, India has started laying more emphasis on improving the quality of teaching and introduced midday meals to attract and retain children in schools. Besides, with the institutionalization of the Adult

Education programme by establishing Continuing Education Centers, it is hoped that progress would be faster. India is also trying to use ICT for the promotion of literacy. Asia's biggest software company - TATA Consultancy has designed computer based functional literacy programme and a Professor of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, Dr. Brij Kothari has developed an innovative programme called Same Language Subtitling for teaching literacy through popular film songs telecast through the National television. With the concerted efforts of the state and civil society, the literacy scenario in India will change very soon.

Mr. Pederson: Currently, you are in Denmark as an Erasmus Mundus Scholar engaged in teaching European Masters Programme in Lifelong Learning and researching on the European policies and programmes of Lifelong Learning. How did you get into the field of Adult Education?

Professor Shah: I entered this field about three decades back when I joined the National Council of Educational Research and Training as a Lecturer in Non-formal Education. At that time India had just initiated a pilot project on nonformal education for rural development and I got a chance to work in that project located at Bhumiadhar near Nainital- a hill resort in north India. My eight years of developmental work at NCERT took me to almost all the states in the country which helped me to gain insight into the educational problems. I started wondering about the rampant illiteracy in the country and decided to study and focus more on the causes of illiteracy. Then, when Jawaharlal Nehru University from where I did my PhD, set up an Adult Education Unit I applied and got selected as an Assistant Director of Adult Education. The University job opened up more avenues for research at several overseas universities of Toronto, Syracuse, Nottingham and Warwick. These visits and interactions with distinguished adult educators strengthened my resolve to focus on Adult Education.

Dr. Pederson: You have been a university teacher for long and may have had several observations on University Adult Education. What is the status of University Adult Education in India Vis a Vis other countries?

Professor Shah: As in other countries, Adult Education remains a marginal field of study in Indian universities. Hardly 20 % of universities (80 out of 400) are involved in Adult Education. Although 10 universities offer Master's program in Adult Education, they do not attract good students. During the Tenth Five Year (2002-7) when I served as an expert member of the Standing Committee of the University Grants Commission, I noticed that notwithstanding the financial support

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of the UGC to universities to open 20 new departments of Adult Education, not more than five universities responded. Most of the university administrators were not interested in Adult Education mainly due to personal biases and ignorance about Adult Education. There is a need to change the mind set of universities towards Adult Education. If the University Adult Educators undertake quality research and bring out excellent publications, I think, it may help to change the attitude of university community towards Adult Education.

Mr. Pederson: You have been associated with Indian Adult Education for over three decades. Could you please tell us about the current scenario of Adult Education and some of the challenges and achievements and strengths and weaknesses?

Professor Shah: India is one of the biggest democracies with over a billion people of whom about 70% are below the age of 35 years. Over the years, India has built a strong administrative machinery for the planning and implementation of Adult Education programmes comprising National Literacy Mission at the federal level and State Literacy Missions at the provincial level, and Literacy Committees at district levels along with several institutions like the Directorate of Adult Education, twenty-five State Resource Centers for providing academic support to the programme. Besides there are nearly 300 *Janshikshan Sansthan*s (Institute of Peoples Education) for providing skill training to neo-literates and unemployed youth and eighty university departments that offer a variety of continuing Education courses, Master's and doctoral level programmes and undertake research and evaluation. India has a vibrant NGO sector that has been involved with Adult Education activities. Indian Adult Education Association is one of the oldest and biggest professional organizations keeping the flag of Adult Education flying high. In spite of the well-articulated policy of *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (Education for All) and successful literacy campaigns, our literacy rate is only 64.84 %. In absolute numbers, there are nearly 300 million nonliterates. Imparting basic literacy to a massive number scattered in different parts of the country and speaking various languages is one of the challenges facing us. Added to this is the need to provide a meaningful Continuing Education to an increasing number of (about 110 million as on March 2008) neo literates coming out of literacy programmes. There is not only a dearth of committed professionals to implement the programme but also an inadequate supply of neo literate reading materials. Innovations and use of ICT in Adult Education have been very minimal. Research and evaluations are very weak Over and above, the funding for Adult Education is too insufficient and the political will has been fluctuating. Given the size of the country and limitations of resources, India has made steady progress in developing a well- defined infrastructure for the planning and implementation of Adult Education programmes, setting up a large number of Institutes

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of Peoples Education for imparting grassroots level skill training to youth and developed interesting ways of using ICTs like the television and computers for teaching literacy and innovative programmes like the *Mahila Samakhya* (women's empowerment) which have won international recognition.

Mr. Pederson: I understand that India has a strong network of civil servants and some of them have done excellent work in the field of Adult Education. What are your observations on the role of bureaucracy in Adult Education?

Professor Shah: Yes, India has a strong civil service. As you have mentioned, some of them have excelled in Adult Education. In fact, I have been closely following the functioning of the Director Generals of the National Literacy Missions since 1988. During the last two decades, there were six Director Generals and I got plenty of opportunities to personally interact with most of them, observe their style of functioning, and know their views through their talks and from their colleagues. I could classify these six DGs into two categories: The first category was those who had a deep understanding and took a keen interest in the programme and were easily accessible to literacy workers and worked like literacy missionaries. They were very articulate and had a non-bureaucratic approach to the programme. They seem to derive great pleasure and pride in their work. The second category was those who functioned in a highly bureaucratic manner. For them, Adult Education was just another government programme to be implemented as desired and directed by the Minister. They disposed of the files as and when they were submitted by their subordinates and had limited interaction with literacy workers. Minimum involvement with the programme and workers was their motto. Adult Education thrived during the tenure of the first category when India received international recognition for Adult Education. The Director General being the key bureaucrat, it is natural that their leadership and enthusiasm matter most.

Mr. Pederson: You are closely associated with Non-Governmental Organizations in India, especially the Indian Adult Education Association. How did you get involve with IAEA? What has been your role in IAEA and specific contributions to the field of Adult Education?

Professor Shah: I have had plenty of opportunities to visit several NGOs in different parts of the country and study their work. Apart from being a member of the India Advisory Board of World Literacy of Canada and India Literacy Board, I continue to serve the IAEA as a Vice President. My association with IAEA began when I started attending some of the programmes organized by the Association and delivering lectures in the Research Methodology courses and occasional seminars.

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Later, Mr. K.C. Choudhary, then General Secretary of IAEA entrusted me with the work of planning and coordinating the academic programmes and extended help in editing the Indian Journal of Adult Education. Subsequently, he provided me an opportunity to serve the IAEA as a Vice President. In that capacity, I took an active part in conceiving and coordinating national seminars and workshops on the Role of Media in Adult Education and Evaluation. During the course of my active involvement with the activities of the IAEA, I felt that IAEA being one of the oldest and biggest organizations of Adult Educators in the country needs to play a more active role in the professionalization of Adult Education not only at national level but also at international level. This, I felt could be better achieved through the establishment of an International Institute as an offshoot of IAEA.

With the closure of the National Institute of Adult Education, there has been a vacuum. I discussed this idea over a relaxed lunch at India Habitat Center with Mr. Choudhary who not only welcomed the idea but also designated me as Honorary Director of the Institute to work out further details. I conceived the International Institute of Adult and Lifelong Education as an autonomous, nonprofit, and nongovernmental organization with the main aim of professionalizing Adult Education by strengthening and promoting Adult Education as a distinct field of practice and discipline of study. The Institute began functioning in December 2002, with an international seminar on Urban Literacy organized in collaboration with DFID, Uppingham Seminars, National Literacy Mission, and Delhi State Resource Center. Since then, the Institute has been actively pursuing several professional activities. I would like to mention the two important initiatives of the Institute viz., publication of an International Journal of Adult and Lifelong Education and organization of Professor James Memorial lectures which I conceived with the support of the Chancellor, Mr. K.C. Choudhary. Apart from this, I took the initiative of designing a professional development programme for the middle-level functionaries of Adult Education through Open and Distance Learning mode with the support of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning and University Grants Commission of India. The course materials were later accepted by the Indira Gandhi National Open University for developing a six-month Diploma Programme. I have served as an expert member of the Executive Committee and National Award committees of the National Literacy Mission of the Government of India and developed the techniques and tools for the evaluation of the State Resource Centers and did two pilot evaluations of the State Resource Centers of Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat.

Mr. Pederson: Lastly, I would like to know your experiences of living and learning in Denmark.

Professor Shah: I have gained very rich and valuable experiences in Denmark.

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Danish people are considered to be the happiest in the world. I tried to find out what made them happy. Apart from the welfare system and very high standard of living, the people prefer to talk less and hardly interfere in others' affairs. They are very conscious of their responsibilities and commitments. They trust everybody. The nation believes in the honesty and self-accountability of citizens. In the education system, self-learning is encouraged. They are true believers of Lifelong Learning.

(c). Transcript of an interview on Skype conducted by Professor Richard Patterson of Chicago University on November 18, 2015.

Professor Richard Patterson: Hello Shah. Congratulations on being inducted into the International Hall of Fame (HOF) in Adult Continuing Education. How do you feel? How did it happen?

Professor Shah: Thank you, Patterson. I am delighted to join the HOF. I knew about the HOF and was quite familiar with the work of several members of the HOF as I used to give an assignment to my Master's students to select two eminent adult educators (one from India and one from overseas) and discuss their work in the class. They invariably visited the website of HOF and selected one international adult educator from the members. I had no idea how the persons were selected by the HOF. Then, one day I got an e-mail from Prof. Tom Sork, Senior Associate Dean of the University of British Columbia and a member of HOF that he wanted to recommend my name to the HOF and if interested I should send him a copy of my CV. Needless to say, I complied with his request. Based on my CV, he undertook the tedious task of preparing my nomination papers. He informed me that he would request Professor Budd Hall to second my name. The nominator has to personally attend the function and introduce the nominee and hand over the plaque and medal which he did with pleasure.

Professor Patterson: What is your educational background and how did your professional career begin and when did you enter the field of Adult Education?

Professor Shah: I did two Masters Degrees viz., History and Education and M. Phil and Ph. D in History of Education from Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi. My professional career began as a Lecturer in Education at the National Council of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi where I got the chance to work in India's first non-formal education project at Bhumiadhar in Nainital District and later at Baruali in Aligarh district for about eight years. Subsequently, when JNU launched the Adult Education programme, I was appointed as an Assistant Director of the Adult Continuing Education programme. With my long experience in

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training and material development in the area of non-formal education, I had no difficulty in initiating Adult Education programs in the university.

Professor Patterson: What were your significant works in the field of Adult Education?

Professor Shah: Apart from the mandatory work of planning and managing Adult Continuing Education programmes in and around the campus of JNU, I devoted a lot of time to do research in the history of Adult Education. The credit should go to my teachers, late Professor Tapas Majumdar and Sarvepalli Gopal who told me to focus on research and publications as it would justify my position in the university as an academic and earn respectability. Since I had a background in history, I started research in the area of history of Adult Education. Broadly, I worked in three areas viz., history of Adult Education, international cooperation, and professionalization.

I have observed that though there were several documents in Adult Education, they were scattered and not easily accessible to researchers or policymakers. Hence, I began by collecting and editing all the important documents related to Indian Adult Education and brought out a *Source Book* and an *Encyclopedia of Indian Adult Education* which were readily published by the National Literacy Mission of Government of India. Then I started identifying eminent adult educators and examining their ideas and work. Since during those days, the university was implementing the Each One Teach One programme originally developed by Dr. Frank Laubach - an American Presbyterian Missionary, I began studying his ideas and work. As he had donated all his papers to Syracuse University, I travelled to Syracuse with a Kellogg Visiting Scholar Award and studied his collection which was kept in 56 boxes and edited a volume on his work in India which was published by Indian Adult Education Association. During the late 1980s, when India had launched literacy campaigns, I was curious to know the origins of the campaign approach. Since my readings showed that Bihar had launched a successful literacy campaign as early as the 1930s, I researched and wrote a book on Adult Education in Bihar which was again published by IAEA on the occasion of Golden Jubilee. Then I was invited to write a piece on the history of adult education in India for the Encyclopedia of Education published by NCERT.

Since one of my tasks at JNU was developing the discipline of adult education and introducing a teaching programme, I started reading about the development of University Adult Education. I came to know that as early as the 1960s, the University of Rajasthan had set up the first Department of Adult Education in India. My colleague Dr. Anita Dighe suggested that I study the Rajasthan experience to gain some insights into the development of University Adult Education. At that time, I had a chance to meet late Professor James Draper

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- one of the persons closely associated with the setting up of the Department of Adult Education at Rajasthan University. From my interactions with him, I came to know the role of several Canadians in the promotion of University Adult Education in India. This led me to focus on international cooperation and examine overseas influences on Indian Adult Education and I brought out two publications on the role and influence of Canada and Britain on Indian Adult Education.

Professor Patterson: I understand that you are the Co-coordinator of the Asia Europe network on Professionalization of Adult Education. When and how did your work in the area of Professionalization of Adult Education begin? Did you face any challenges?

Professor Shah: My work on the Professionalization of Adult Education began in JNU. One of my mandates at JNU was to develop the discipline of Adult Education and design professional courses in Adult Education. It was not as easy as I had thought. When I discussed the idea with the then Dean of the School of Social Sciences late Professor Ashok Mathur, he was not sure whether the students in JNU would be interested in such a course and he suggested that I should offer a non-credit course on Adult Education to ascertain the interest of students. Following his advice, I designed a non-credit course and advertised and some of the students responded. I taught the course once a week for a semester and initially, 24 students registered for the course and I gave them a certificate of participation. In the subsequent three semesters, the number of students increased to 34 and 42. The last batch of students felt that the course should be offered as a regular credit course and they submitted a memorandum to the Vice Chancellor which was forwarded to the Dean and I was asked to design a credit course. Thus, an Adult Education course was introduced in JNU mainly due to the demand from the students.

During my interactions with several literacy workers, I came to know that a number of them were keen to take up a professional course in Adult Education to improve their knowledge. But they were not interested in joining a full-time course. They felt that if there was a short course through Open Distance Learning mode, they could pursue it along with their job. I took up the challenge and with the support of UGC and UNESCO Institute for Education and National Literacy Mission and the active cooperation of several academics, a short course on Participatory Adult Learning and Documentation and Networking (PALDIN) consisting of two learning packages were developed and it was hosted on the UNESCO website so that interested Adult Education functionaries could benefit. Since most of the learners were keen to have a certificate from a recognized university, I approached the then

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Vice Chancellor of Indira Gandhi National Open University- Professor Rajashekar Pillai with a request to explore the possibilities of expanding the learning package into a Diploma program. The university reviewed the materials and in due course, expanded it to a Post Graduate Diploma Programme in Adult Education. A global survey undertaken by the Slovenian Institute of Adult Education identified PALDIN as one of three innovative professional development programs for adult educators. My interest in professionalization was not confined to developing professional courses, but I felt that a professional institute would be a great help in furthering professionalization. Hence, I was exploring the possibilities of setting up an Institute.

Professor Patterson: How did you pursue the idea of setting up an Institute of Adult and Lifelong Education?

Professor Shah: Since I was working as a Senior Fellow at the erstwhile National Institute of Adult Education in New Delhi, where I was engaged in designing professional development programmes and other activities, I had an idea and understood the importance of such an Institute in furthering Professionalization of Adult Education. Subsequent to the closure of the Institute, there was a demand for such an Institute in different forums of Adult Education. As I was the Vice President of IAEA and actively involved in several activities of IAEA, viz., designing and directing short courses on research methodology and recent developments in Adult Continuing Education, organizing seminars, workshops and editing the *Indian Journal Adult Education*, I felt that if such professional activities are undertaken under the aegis of an Institute, it would command better recognition. I discussed the idea with Dr. K.C. Choudhary, President of IAEA during an informal luncheon meeting. He not only welcomed the idea but asked me to prepare the blueprint of such an institute. All the members of the Executive Committee of the IAEA endorsed the idea and the Institute was registered as a non-profit organization in 2002. I am happy to say that, the institute has succeeded in getting the cooperation of a large number of national and international scholars and it is functioning well for over a decade.

Professor Patterson: What are the major achievements of the Institute?

Professor Shah: The Institute started functioning with an International Seminar on Urban Literacy supported by the British Council and National Literacy Mission. Although the institute launched an *International Journal of Adult and Lifelong Education* which I edited for over three years, it could not be continued due to the lack of quality articles. With the support of the UNESCO Institute for Education, a study of adult learning organizations in India was undertaken which led to the development of a professional development programme (PALDIN). We have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of British Columbia

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(Canada), J.M. University, Wurzburg (Germany) for undertaking collaborative programmes and exchange of faculty and students. We have been organizing annual James Draper Lectures by eminent scholars. We have an active publication plan.

Professor Patterson: As the Director of the institute did you face any challenge?

Professor Shah: Because of the strong support of the Chancellor and other members of the Institute, I did not face any problem in managing the Institute. However, lack of interest among the faculty in taking up research programmes and bringing out publications has been an important issue. Besides attracting young scholars to take an active interest in Adult and Lifelong Learning has been a big challenge. Hence, we are planning to grant a number of Visiting Scholar Awards to young scholars and Scholar in Residence Awards to senior academics to visit the Institute and carry out their research.

Professor Patterson: I understand that you were very closely associated with NGOs, especially IAEA. What were your experiences of working with NGOs?

Professor Shah: I have had a rewarding experience of working with NGOs especially - IAEA for over two decades. For about a decade when I was the Vice President of IAEA, I took an active interest in organizing short courses on research methodology and recent developments in Adult Education in collaboration with JNU. During my tenure as a member of the India Advisory Board of World Literacy of Canada for over a decade, I designed an innovative curriculum for their Adult Education programme in eastern Uttar Pradesh. I observed that NGOs invariably welcomed the academic guidance provided by academicians.

Professor Patterson: I have seen from your CV that you worked as a Joint Advisor in the Planning Commission and served as a Chairman of the Twelfth Five Year Plan Sub Group on Adult Education and a member of several Committees of the government. What has been your experience of working with the Government?

Professor Shah: Working in Government was a great learning experience for me. In fact, I joined the Planning Commission mainly to understand how the five-year plans are made and how funds are allocated. I got an opportunity to learn the art of drafting the chapter on Education of the Eight Five Year Plan and understand the intricacies of policy formulation. Based on my experience in the Planning Commission, I wrote a paper on Funding of Adult Education. In fact, I enjoyed working in Government and during my interactions with some of the senior civil servants especially late Mr. Anil Bordia, Dr. L.D. Mishra, M.R. Kolhatkar, and

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Bhaskar Chatterjee; I found them to be very competent and committed to Adult Education. Though serving as bureaucrats, some of them were better than university professors in terms of their scholarship, analytical skills, and command of language. I have had the privilege of observing and working with all the Director Generals of the National Literacy Mission and I observed that the success of the literacy programme depended primarily on the quality of their leadership.

Professor Patterson: I have noticed that you have traveled to over thirty countries in connection with conferences, meetings, research, and teaching. What were some of the highlights?

Professor Shah: I got an opportunity to teach and do research in several overseas universities viz., Syracuse, Toronto, Nottingham, Warwick, Duisburg Essen, Wurzburg, and Aarhus. The academic atmosphere in those universities was very stimulating and helped me carry out good research. The time I spent abroad, broadened my vision. The students took an active interest in discussions. In all my lectures, some time was given to group discussions among students on various aspects of the lecture. Some of the contacts, I had developed led to collaborative projects and lasting friendships.

Professor Patterson: What are your current interests and activities?

Professor Shah: Currently my interest is in writing the history of the Indian Adult Education Association which has completed 75 years. Since UNESCO has nominated me as one of the

fifteen members of the international Think Tank in Recognition, Validation, and Accreditation of Prior Learning, I will be carrying out research in this area during the next year. I would also like to work towards developing our Institute as an excellent academic institution and function as a Think Tank in Adult and Lifelong Learning. I would also like to develop an Adult Education archive at the institute which includes interviews with eminent Adult Educators and all the relevant documents.

Professor Patterson: In your acceptance speech, you said that your profession has been your pastime. What did you mean?

Professor Shah: I meant that I really enjoyed my work in the field of Adult Education both as a teacher and researcher. Since I did research only on those topics which really interested me, I enjoyed the process and it was never a burden. Besides, I made friends with some of the eminent Adult Educators from all over the

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world. I was fortunate that because of my work in Adult Education, I got several invitations to attend conferences and workshops from national and international agencies and universities which were rewarding professionally and personally.

Professor Patterson: Frankly speaking, Professor Shah, I am really impressed by your achievements and I hope you will continue your work in the field of Adult Education like a true lifelong learner. Thank you for the interview.

Professor Shah: It was a pleasure talking to you, Professor Patterson. Thank you very much.

(d). Transcript of an interview conducted by Ms. Lisa Christopher, a freelance journalist from Germany on May 16, 2017.

UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) Hamburg conferred Honorary Fellowships on seven distinguished personalities from different continents in recognition of their extraordinary contributions to lifelong learning. All seven have over long careers, made a substantial impact in relation to UIL's mandate in research, capacity building, networking, and publications in Lifelong Learning, with a focus on Adult and Continuing Education, literacy, and non-formal basic education. The fellowships were conferred at an award ceremony held on 16 May 2017.

The following are the excerpts from the interview with Professor Shah.

Ms. Lisa Christopher: Welcome to the class of 2017 of Honorary Fellows of the UIL and congratulations Professor Shah. How do you feel after joining the illustrious group of distinguished Honorary Fellows of UIL?

Professor Shah: I feel honored and humbled. In my wildest dreams, I never expected to be honored by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. In fact, I consider the recognition by the UIL very important because it is given by the UN organization specializing in Lifelong Learning. I am extremely grateful to UIL and Dr. Arne Carlsen, Director for this honour.

Ms. Christopher: Please tell us something about your association with UIL and its programmes.

Professor Shah: I have been associated with different programmes of UIL for over a decade. I had a chance to work with the Head of Documentation -Ms. Lisa

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Krolak, on the ALADIN- India project and later on the development of a learning package on Participatory Adult Learning Documentation and Information Network. Later I worked with the Senior Programme Specialist- Dr. Madhu Singh on a distance learning project and then with another Senior Specialist- Dr. Ulrike Hanemann on a Bangladesh Literacy Project and Recognition, Validation, and Accreditation of Prior Learning. I have known Dr. Arne Carlsen much before he joined UIL, when he was the head of the EU Masters Programme in Lifelong Learning at the Danish School of Education in Copenhagen where I was a Visiting Scholar. My interactions with him increased after I joined the ASEM Network on Professionalization of Adult Education. Apart from working on different projects and interacting with UIL specialists, I have lectured on UIL and its role in the promotion of lifelong learning as a part of a master course on International Networks and Organizations in Lifelong Learning which I had taught at Julius Maximilian's University, Germany in 2014 and 2016. As a part of the course, I escorted a group of students on a field visit to UIL which provided a rare chance to them to meet and listen to the presentations by UIL specialists and visit the library and documentation center. I participated in several seminars, workshops, and expert committee meetings organized by the UIL during the last decade. I have served as a review editor of the UIL journal - the International Review of Education. I have also published in the Journal. I continue to be a Member of the ALADIN Advisory Committee of the UIL.

Ms. Christopher: What benefits did you or your country derive from the association with UIL?

Professor Shah: Apart from deriving immense personal benefits in terms of enriching professional knowledge and networking with experts from different parts of the globe, I could work towards strengthening adult education as a professional field. UIL supported my initiative in developing a learning package for the professional development of adult educators which was adopted and expanded by the Indira Gandhi National Open University into a Post graduate Diploma programme. I could succeed in getting five UIL scholarships to Indian students with a view to promoting the Diploma programme. UIL being the only UN institution focusing on lifelong learning, its publications and research have been a great help in my teaching and research work. UIL also gave me free access to the journal.

Ms. Christopher: I understand that you are the founder and Director of the International Institute of Adult & Lifelong Education in New Delhi, India. What is the role of your Institute in the promotion of adult and lifelong learning?

Prof. Shah: IIALE has the potential to play a key role in the field of adult

education not only in India but also in the entire South Asia since there is no such institution in the region. Although more than half of the illiterates belong to this region; and India and other countries have been implementing several literacy programmes, the problem of illiteracy has been continuing. As several researches and evaluation studies have traced the ineffectiveness of the literacy programme to the poor quality of programme staff, we have to focus on improving their professional qualification and competence. This implies the need to focus on the professionalization of adult education. Hence, the main thrust of IIALE has been in this area, and with the support of UIL, we have developed a learning package for the professional development of adult educators which is hosted on the UIL website. This learning package has led to the development of the Certificate, Diploma, and Masters Programme by the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). Our Institute functions as the study center of IGNOU. Over the last decade, IIALE has succeeded in getting the cooperation of a large number of distinguished scholars from India and abroad. Since we have MoUs with the universities of Wurzburg and British Columbia, the students and teachers from these institutions have been visiting IIALE and participating in several activities.

Ms. Christopher: What is your current research interest?

Professor Shah: Since I am the co-coordinator of the ASEM Network on Professionalization of Adult Education, I am keenly interested in research in this area. Being a historian, I am currently researching and writing the history of the Indian Adult Education Association which has completed 75 years. Besides I am also interested in policy studies.

(e). Transcript of an interview conducted by Mr. Kuldeep Kohli - a freelance journalist of Vancouver on Indo-Canadian Cooperation in Adult Education on March 28, 1994.

Professor S. Y. Shah of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi was awarded the Senior Social Science Fellowship of the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute in 1990 to undertake research on the collaborative program between the University of British Columbia and Rajasthan University operationalized during the four-year period- 1964-68. As a part of the fellowship Prof. Shah spent two months each at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, And Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto. Apart from collecting relevant primary source materials from the Archives of UBC and Toronto University, Professor Shah interviewed some of the Canadian Adult Educators.

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One of the highlights of his visit was the meeting with the 98-year-old renowned Canadian Adult Educator- Dr. John Friesen who served as the Director of the UBC -Rajasthan Project during 1964-66 and Dr.Bill Dey and Professor James Draper who were the two Canadian Advisors for the project during 1966-67.

Following are the excerpts from the interview with the freelance Journalist Mr.Kuldeep Kohli of Vancouver.

Mr. Kohli: Welcome to Canada, Professor Shah. What is the main purpose of your visit to the University of British Columbia?

Professor Shah: My visit is primarily in connection with the research study on “Indo-Canadian Cooperation in Adult Education”. As a part of my major research project in the area of International Cooperation in Adult Education, I have already published a paper on “Indo- British Cooperation in Adult Education” and now I would like to look at the Indo-Canadian scenario especially because of the significant contributions of Canada to the development of Adult Education in India since the 1950s. Although Canadian contributions to and influence on Indian Adult Education have been through the Government and Non-Government channels and universities, currently I will be focusing on universities. While there were several collaborative projects between Indian and Canadian universities in different fields, in the present study, I will be focusing on the four collaborations in the field of University Adult Education, viz., Rajasthan and UBC(1964-68), Toronto and Udaipur (1975-76); St: Francis Xavier University and Poona(1984-86); McGill and Jadavpur Universities (1989-92). Of all these projects, the collaborative project between UBC and Rajasthan is significant as it helped Rajasthan University develop the first University Adult Education programme in India mainly following the Canadian model. Since the records of the project are at the UBC Archives and two of the Canadians who worked in the project are currently living in Vancouver, I hope, I could collect sufficient materials for my research.

Mr. Kohli: How did you get interested in the area of International Cooperation?

Professor Shah: My interest goes back to almost two decades. Having had a Doctorate in the History of Education and an opportunity to work as an Assistant Director of the Adult Continuing Education Programme at JNU in 1984, then Director of Adult Education Professor Tapas Majumdar encouraged me to focus on the History of Adult Education -an area ignored by historians. When I started going through the few existing publications -all by non-historians and other primary source materials available at the National Archives and Nehru Museum Library, I realized

how Indian Adult Education has been influenced by overseas ideas, institutions, and individuals at various points of time and yet this aspect has not adequately covered in the publications and hence I decided to initiate research in this area during the 1980s. One of my responsibility at JNU being the development of the Adult Education programme , I started reading about University Adult Education in other countries and came to know how the Canadian Adult Educators viz., Dr. John Friesen, Dr. James Draper, Dr. Roby Kidd, Knut Buttedahl, Bill Dey, Glen Eyford and Alan Thomas who tried to help the Rajasthan University develop its Adult Education programmes mainly following the Canadian model of community-based continuing education. Subsequently, when I met Dr. James Draper in 1987, I interviewed him about his experiences of working at Rajasthan University. With further readings and interactions with several Canadian and Indian Adult Educators, I realized that there has been considerable cooperation between India and Canada in several fields including Adult Education and I decided to carry out further research on this topic.

Mr. Kohli: Could please elaborate on Indo-Canadian Cooperation in Adult Education?

Professor Shah: The relationship between India and Canada has been very friendly and warm since the 1950s and there have been several successful collaborative programmes in Adult Education between the two countries carried out through Governmental and non- governmental channels and universities. India was the first country to pilot test the Canadian Farm Radio Forum in the 1950s and later adapted it with some modifications as an important program for the farmers which continued as *Krishi Darshan* of the All India Radio. During the 1950s the World Literacy of Canada a fan NGO, set up the Literacy House at Lucknow to train literacy workers and prepare materials which became renowned in Asia for its work. Currently, under the leadership of Mamta Mishra, World Literacy of Canada continues its excellent work at several Eastern U.P districts. This year WLC launched a massive project of imparting one year of training based on a specially prepared Manual for four hundred women from very backward areas with a stipend. The Coady International Institute of Canada has been collaborating with several NGOs since the 1960s and promoting the philosophy of the Antigonish Movement in India. Apart from Collaborations through non-governmental channels, there has been successful cooperation between Rajasthan University and the University of British Columbia 1964-68), Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and Udaipur University (1975-76); St. Francis Xavier University and Poona University (1984- 86), McGill University and Jadavpur University during 1989-92. Of all these collaborations, the Rajasthan project has been very unique for several reasons.

Mr. Kohli: Why did you select the UBC –Rajasthan project as a case study? Was it a successful project?

Professor Shah: I have focused on this particular project not only because it was the first project between an Indian and Canadian University but also due to the availability of source materials and access to several Canadians and Indians who were associated with this project. Although I am still in the process of analyzing the rich untapped primary source materials collected from the Archives in Canada and India and my notes of interviews and other materials given by Dr. James Draper and Dr. Friesen, I feel that the UBC and Rajasthan project has been a successful as it achieved all the objectives viz., designing and launching community-based continuing education programmes, expanding the extension programmes, planning an evening college and correspondence courses, organizing training programmes for literacy workers; launching a Diploma Programme in Adult Education, and identifying potential Indians for training in Canada. What is striking is that the Canadian Advisors did not confine their work to university but also took a wider interest in professionalizing Indian Adult Education by encouraging the formation of Adult Education associations in Rajasthan, participating and delivering lectures in several seminars and workshops, and bringing out publications. Dr. Friesen’s report on the University Adult Education based on the Conference of Vice Chancellors (1965) is considered to be an important document.

Mr. Kohli: Can we draw some lessons from the experiences of the Project especially when India and Canada are seriously pursuing the agenda of Cooperation? Can it be considered as a good demonstration project?

Professor Shah: Some of the experiences and insights from the Rajasthan project may be very useful for future collaborations. The project, in fact showed what precautions should be taken in the future. As told by Dr. Bill Dey, the project had several structural weaknesses. As per the Agreement, Canada was expected to send a team of two Advisors each year and the tenure of one year was too short to effect changes in the university system. No serious attention was given to developing a cohesive team of Indians and Canadians and they worked in tandem. There was no consistent support of from the Rajasthan University and the State government. While Dr. Mohan Sinha Mehta, who was the Vice Chancellor during the first year of the project extended unstinted support, his successor Professor. M. V. Mathur was very cautious and often slow in making decisions. Besides, as said by Dr. Friesen, “the vagaries of administration and finances often hindered the progress of the project.” Because of the inherent weaknesses in the project design, it cannot be considered to be a good demonstration project.

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I feel that the project was far ahead of time. It was only in 1977 that the University Grants Commission of India brought out the policy document –*Extension as the Third Dimension of Higher Education*, but launched a package of funds and guidelines in 1983-84. Since the job opportunities were limited for adult educators during the 1960s, there was no enrolment for the Diploma program, after the first three years. The efforts made by Dr. Mehta to persuade the UGC to follow the Rajasthan pattern of community-based continuing education were strongly opposed by Dr. Malcolm Adiseshiah who believed that the main role of universities was to offer discipline-based courses in Andragogy. However, the Project did succeed in building lasting relations among several Canadians and Indians, and some of the Canadians especially Dr. Friesen and his wife Marta still continue as unofficial Ambassador of India in Canada. In spite of living in ten countries and traveling all over the world, their love for India continues unabated and is reflected in their drawing room which is full of the Rajasthan paintings and artifacts and warm feelings towards India.

In fact, it is not possible to discuss all the details of the project right now. Yesterday I gave a seminar at the Faculty of Education on this topic and it was followed up with lively discussions mainly because of the presence of Dr. Bill Dey who served as an Advisor in the Rajasthan project and Professor Tom Sork who is familiar with India.

Mr. Kohli: What did the Canadians gain by participating in the Rajasthan project?

Professor Shah: Four of the seven Canadians who worked in the Rajasthan project with whom I could talk, felt that they gained tremendously in terms of the rich professional experience of working in a developing country like India. They had the satisfaction of working towards strengthening Adult Education in India. While Dr. Draper opined that the Indian experiences gave a new Asian perspective to his teaching and research in literacy in Canada, Dr. Friesen and Bill felt that the project changed their personality. They valued their personal ties with several Indians which continued even after the conclusion of the project.

Mr. Kohli: How did the Indians respond to Canadian contributions to Adult Education in India?

Professor Shah: While all the Indians I could talk to appreciate the genuine concern for and commitment of the Canadians to the development of Indian Adult Education, and their role in strengthening it, Indian Adult Education Association initiated Roby Kidd and James Draper Memorial Lectures and awards in their honor.

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The Rajasthan Vidyapeeth University awarded Honorary Doctorate to Prof. James Draper in appreciation of his work in India. Some of the Indians were motivated to pursue further studies in Canada.



The Above photo shows Dr. John K. Friesen and his wife Marta Friesen briefing the former Prime Minister of India – Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru about the Rajasthan Project in February 1962. According to Friesen, Nehru warmly endorsed the project “as an urgent need for India’s universities”.

(Photo from the Friesen Collection)

Mr. Kohli: Ever since Canadian Prime Minister Harper identified India as a growing economy and expressed Canadian interest in India, several Canadian Universities have been keen to collaborate with Indian Universities. What are your suggestions in this regard?

Professor Shah: For a successful collaboration in the field of Adult Education, interested Canadian universities should identify those Indian universities that are committed to Adult Education and where Extension permeates the entire university system. Besides the selected university should have an Adult Education Department consisting of a minimum critical mass of 3-5 faculty who are familiar with the Adult Education programmes in overseas universities. Perhaps it would be a good idea to start the collaboration with a research project. Since the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute provides liberal funds and fellowships and encourages cooperation between Canadian and Indian universities, it may not be difficult to make a beginning.

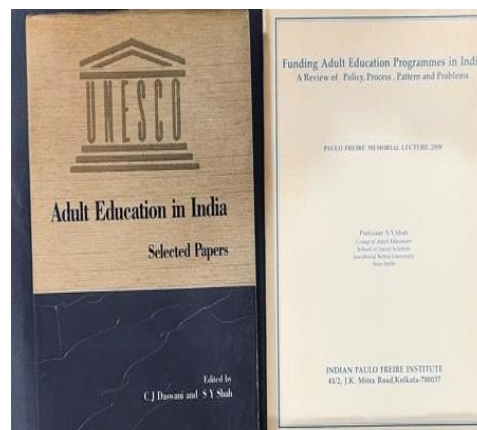
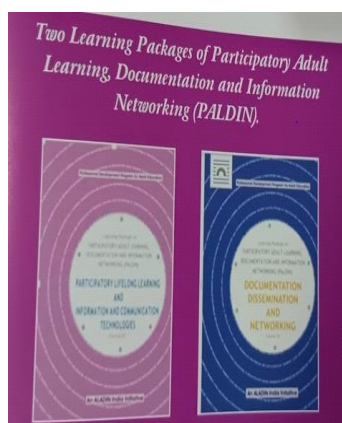
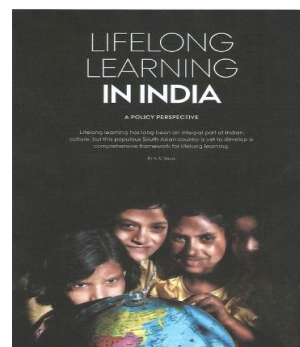
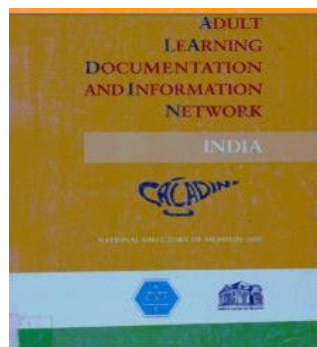
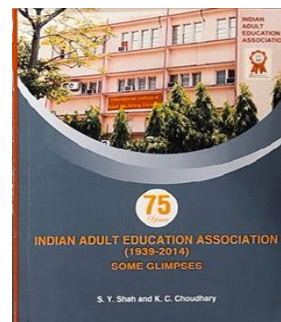
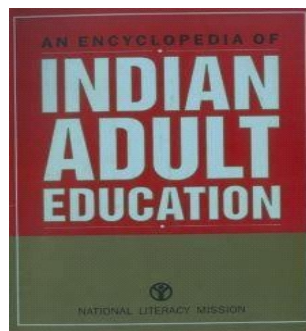
Mr. Kohli: Thank you, Professor Shah. Hope to see your publication soon.

Professor Shah: Thank you for making me reflect on some aspects of Indo-Canadian Cooperation in Adult Education. Bye & have a good day.

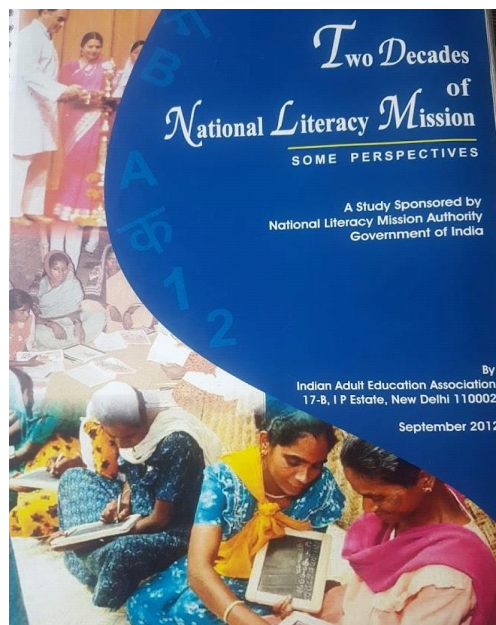
My Experiences in Adult and Lifelong Learning in India and Abroad (1984-2024)

Select Publications

(A copy of the following publications is available in digital format and print at the Library of IAEA and at the website of IIALE)



My Experiences in Adult and Lifelong Learning in India and Abroad (1984-2024)



Two Decades of National Literacy Mission - A research project funded by the NLM. The project was designed and coordinated by Professor Shah during 2011-12.

