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ADULT EDUCATION IN RURAL IRAN  
PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

BY

MOHAMMAD GHZNAINI HASHEMI

A Thesis

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MOHAMMAD GHAZNAINI HASHMI

## ABSTRACT

Iran is primarily an agricultural country with 70 percent of its people living in rural areas. The rural people suffer from an extremely low level of living, the absence of proper health, and the lack of adequate education. A great majority of these people (84 percent of the total rural population) are illiterates who are backward in their social, cultural, economic, and political life. Emphasis has so far been placed on the education of urban people, and the people in cities have acquired a modern outlook, while the rural people have remained static. Thus, there is a wide social gap between the two segments. This problem makes the task of rural adult education a crucial one. Without giving the vast number of illiterate peasants adequate education, they would remain a burden on the development programs of the country. Adult education can develop new attitudes among rural people, and can provide them with education in all aspects of community life.

In this study an attempt has been made to analyze adult education in rural Iran. A survey of social, economic, and political conditions of adults in rural Iran has been made, and the impact of change upon rural life has been described. The major needs and aspirations of the people have been discussed, with special emphasis upon the role

of adult education in meeting the farmers' needs. The existing adult education activities, also, have been carefully analyzed, with regard to the prevailing social, economic, and political conditions of rural Iran, the needs of the adults and their aspirations. In addition, a survey of adult education programs in some other countries like the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Turkey, and Mexico has been presented. The main purpose in such a survey has been to formulate some basic recommendations for the improvement of rural adult education in Iran.

In the analysis, some urgent needs for the improvement of adult education in rural Iran are identified. These include planning, motivation, training of teachers for adult classes, preparation of suitable primers and audio-visual aids, women's education and the expansion of adult education budget. Some recommendations have been made in the hope that they will contribute to the extension of adult education in rural Iran. These recommendations have been mainly based on the practices and experiments of the countries mentioned above, and the recommendations of the World Congress of Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy held in Tehran in 1965.

It is hoped that if the suggested solutions are properly taken illiteracy among farmers would be reduced, and the adults in rural Iran would live a richer and a fuller life and would be more able to face their problems.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The term adult education is as variously defined as the term education itself. "No wholly satisfying definition is possible because the term has been used to designate so many widely different kinds of activities, sometimes with the implications of excluding other types."<sup>1</sup>

Although, adult education is a world-wide undertaking it assumes different forms in different countries. In countries where a large proportion of the population is unable to read, adult education largely centres on the elimination of illiteracy but in other countries, for example European countries, its main emphasis is on the organization of leisure or more advanced vocational training. In Iran the term is used to mean 'adult literacy' and it is this meaning that is dealt with in this study.

#### A. The Problem

A major educational problem in Iran is the reduction of the present high rate of illiteracy, especially in rural areas. According to a sample survey done in 1963, the percentage of literate people in urban areas, above the age

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<sup>1</sup>John D. Willard, Rural Adult Education (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1933), p. XI.

of ten, came to about 49 percent (males 60%, females 38%), while in rural areas it was 16 percent (males 27%, females 4%).<sup>1</sup>

The higher literacy rates in urban than in rural areas is due to a more widespread availability and utilization of educational facilities in urban areas. These low literacy rates are the result of the disproportionate efforts of the Ministry of Education in distributing education, between rural and urban areas.

But the problem is a more complex one than simply a matter of distribution of efforts by the Ministry of Education. It is a complex problem with economic, financial, and social facets. Like other developing countries,

Iran finds itself involved in a vicious circle of illiteracy and low productivity. On the one hand, literacy and a reasonable average standard of education are pre-requisites for the efficient exploitation of natural resources, the development of agriculture and industry, the employment of modern techniques and the proper functioning of the administrative machine. On the other hand, illiteracy not only acts as a brake on the speedy accomplishment of these aims but results in low productivity leading to a shortage of the very funds that are needed to finance the struggle against it.<sup>2</sup>

The country has an area of 628,000 square miles or about one-fifth of that of the United States. According to

<sup>1</sup>Ministry of Education, General Statistics Publication (in Persian) (Tehran: 1963), Vol. I, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>The Iranian Co-ordinating Committee of the World Congress of the Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy, Presenting Iran (Tehran: Printing Office of the Ministry of Culture and Arts, 1956), pp. 66-67.

the 1956 Census, the population at that time "was 18,954,704 of which 9,644,944 were males. Therefore, it appears that for every 104 males there are 100 females."<sup>1</sup>

The rate of population increase is estimated to be between 2.2 to 2.8 percent (an average of 2.5 percent is accepted), which gives a population of 23,445,000 in 1965. The population is 70 percent rural and 30 percent urban and tribesmen form some 15 percent of the whole rural population.<sup>2</sup>

These facts on rural-urban distribution of the population and on rates of illiteracy, indicate that there is a great need for the expansion of education in Iran, especially in rural areas. But the question arises as to what kind of education: of the children of school age or of the adults? To put it differently can Iran disregard the conditions of its adult population and concentrate its efforts on the new generation? or is it feasible and more appropriate to conduct a two-fold approach directed towards its youngsters and its adults population at the same time?

The experiences of other nations<sup>3</sup> have shown that educational development has to take into consideration both the adult and the young generations of the society. This is because of the fact that in reality the youngsters cannot

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<sup>1</sup>Ministry of Education (Bureau of Statistics), Educational Statistics in Iran (Tehran: 1962), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup>The Iranian Co-ordinating Committee of the WCME, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

<sup>3</sup>This is dealt with in Chapter IV.

be properly educated if their parents remain seriously ignorant. The parents and the home situation are as important as the school.

Furthermore, from the simple human resource side no country can afford to waste the great potential for national growth that is found in its adult population.

The government of Iran has realized the need for adult education, and has for many years conducted adult education programs. In spite of the attempts made by the government, the problem is still serious, and the task is not completed yet (only 16 percent of people above 10 years of age were literate as recently as 1963). This indicates that other ways and means must be sought, and new experiments should be carried on or adopted to accomplish this job.

#### B. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to survey the conditions of adults in rural Iran, and the efforts made by the government to improve their educational standards. After such a survey, the efforts of some other countries in the field of adult education such as Philippines, Turkey, Puerto Rico, and Mexico are reviewed. The ultimate objective is to come up at the end of this study with some basic recommendations for Iran.

#### C. The Limitations of this Study

This study has been limited to adult education in rural Iran. Tribes, though a part of the rural areas, have not been dealt with in this thesis. However, some reference has been

made to tribal education in describing adult education activities. Also adult education programs in the cities have been dealt with only in as much as they are connected with such activities in the rural areas.

#### D. Outline of the Study

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter II is a survey of the conditions of the adult population of Iran, with emphasis on rural areas, especially with regards to education. In Chapter III a survey of the attempts in Iran in the field of adult education is presented, and analyzed.

In Chapter IV some successful experiments in some other countries are described, and the possibility of their adoption for Iran is considered.

The last chapter includes the recommendations for the improvement of adult education in Iran, based on facts of Iranian life, and on the experience of other countries in this field.

## CHAPTER II

### CHARACTERISTICS OF RURAL IRAN

In this chapter, a brief survey of the existing conditions of the rural people in Iran will be presented as a background picture to adult education activities.

#### I. A SURVEY OF THE SCENE

Iran today covers an area of 628,000 square miles, approximately one-fifth the size of the United States. It lies between the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf and has common frontiers with Iraq, Turkey, Soviet Russia, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

Only about one-tenth of Iran's total land area is arable. Seven-tenths of the area is mountainous or desert and two-tenths is forest or grazing land.<sup>1</sup>

Iran's main food producing area lies in the northern part of the country along the Caspian Sea and on the mountain slopes and villages. The availability of water has been a determining factor in the settlement of population. The most thickly settled areas are the Caspian region, Khorassan, Azarbayejan, and the Persian Gulf coast.

The main industry of Iran is agriculture. The principal

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<sup>1</sup>Herbert Vreeland, Iran (New Haven: Human Relation Area Files, 1957), p. 30.

products of the country are wheat, barley, rice, tea, tobacco, cotton, sugar-cane, and fruits and various kinds of vegetables.

The second industry of Iran is oil. "Iran ranks fourth in the world in oil potential, after the United States, the USSR, and Venezuela."<sup>1</sup>

Livestock raising is another source of national wealth. The principal animals are sheep, goats, oxen, horses, and poultry. Minerals include coal, iron, salt, manganese ore, copper, nickel, silver, lead, red oxide, and borax.

The population of Iran is approximately 70 percent rural and 30 percent urban, and tribes form some 15 percent of the total rural population. Of the male working population of 5.3 million in 1956, 57 percent were engaged in agriculture, 14 percent in industry and 29 percent in other occupations.<sup>2</sup>

The country is divided into thirteen Ostans or provinces. There are about 186 towns and about 50,000 isolated villages all over the country. Table 1 shows the thirteen Ostans of Iran and their population.

"The Iranian race is descended mainly from the old Indo-European (Aryan) stock, but with large admixture of other racial strains, of which Turkish is the chief."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

TABLE 1

POPULATION OF IRAN BY PROVINCE  
AND SEX ACCORDING TO SAMPLE  
SURVEY - DECEMBER 1963(1)  
(In Thousands)

Name of Province	P O P U L A T I O N		
	Total	Female	Male
IRAN	22,523	11,048	11,475
Central Province	4,814	2,353	2,461
Mazandaran	1,601	796	805
Gilan	1,470	728	742
East Azarbayejan	2,702	1,321	1,381
West Azarbayejan	796	376	420
Kermanshahan	1,694	816	878
Khoozestan	2,446	1,194	1,252
Farsand Banader	1,611	795	817
Kerman	878	443	435
Khorasan	1,895	942	953
Esfahan	1,825	900	925
Kurdestan	546	261	285
Baloochestan and Sisten	245	124	121

(1) Source: Ministry of Interior, General Statistics Publications, Vol. II, 1963 (in Persian) p. 1.



The dominant language of Iran is Persian or Farsi, and more than two-thirds of the entire population speak it. The other major language is Azarbajejani Turkish spoken by about one-fourth.

The official religion of the country, the Shiah sect of Islam, is held by the majority of the people (98.5 percent are Moslems, out of which 93 percent are Shiahs). The other minorities recognized by the government are: Armenians, Jews, Assyrians, Zoroastrians, and Ismailis.

#### A. SOCIAL CONDITIONS

The social structure of a country gives an invaluable insight into the dynamics of human relations.

In the light of these social conditions, problems facing adult education will be seen more clearly and remedies to these problems will be more effective.

##### 1. The Family

The most important and fundamental social unit in Iran is the family. In Iran family life centres very much in one's own home and the homes of his relatives. Thus the family "with its closely knit structure extends outward into a great circle of uncles and aunts, cousins and in-laws."<sup>1</sup>

Peasant families, generally, have few kin ties beyond the village and remain in one village over long periods of time.

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<sup>1</sup>H.I.M. Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, Mission for My Country (London: Hutchinson, 1960), p.247.

Most marriages are between people of the same village. The family, consisting of related males and their wives, unmarried sisters, and children, live and work together as an economic unit. Men do the heavier field work, but are assisted in the fields by the women and children. Women and children may also spin yarns and weave rugs. Most products are used locally and the village is self-sufficient in most respects.<sup>1</sup>

The support of family is the primary responsibility of the father, the head of the family. In urban areas the responsibility is shared if the husband and wife are both working. A villager's son usually follows the profession of his father and helps him in farm works. That is why boys are greatly valued in the rural areas. The family size differs in the rural areas from its size in cities. Rural families may consist of as many as ten children in addition to three or four who may have died early in life. Villagers believe that 'God has given the teeth, therefore he gives the bread,' then why bother themselves with restricting the number of children? A family with such a size cannot enjoy a happy living and the result is poverty and disease.

The village life is too slow. During most of the year the men spend their days working in the land. Towards evening they come back and may drink a cup of tea in the local tea-house, then go to bed and rise early in the morning to follow the same procedure. On Friday, the day of rest, they go to the mosque or sit in the sun and smoke a

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<sup>1</sup>Herbert H. Vreeland, op. cit., p. 250.

pipe. Every ten or twenty minutes one may say a word or exchange some simple idea about the weather, his crops, or his troubles, or visit a friend who has paid a visit to one of the holy places. The women nurse their babies, or wash and cook, or busy themselves with carpet-making. There is no movement in village life and no recreation exists and a spirit of sadness dominates its atmosphere. This process becomes even slower in the winter when in many parts of the country the land is not worked. The men visit the tea-house more often and women stay most of the time inside their small houses.

Rural women traditionally have no career outside their family. In the cities, however, women enjoy more freedom and are employed as secretaries, school teachers, nurses, factory workers and the like. This freedom is the result of several reform movements which took place in the country.

The first movement to recognize the social status of women was during the period when Reza Shah came to power (1922). At that time, few of the Iranian girls and women were educated. Women were not allowed to come out of their homes without wearing a length of black cloth called chador. Reza Shah set about establishing the first government school for girls in Iran. He also attacked the tradition of the veil, and between the years 1930 to 1936 he could overcome many difficulties in this respect. After 1936 the veil was discarded, and thus Iran "became the second Moslem country

(preceded by Turkey) officially to outlaw the veil."<sup>1</sup>

Participation of village women in social activities since then was less restricted and they had more freedom. They could circulate more or less freely outside their homes while doing their daily work. Village girls often became well acquainted with their future husbands before they married.

The movement which began during the reign of Reza Shah resulted in greater equality of both sexes and was enforced by several other movements. The result was that today women are allowed, by law, to pursue their studies and take jobs and be paid equally as men.

The real break-through came, however, on February 28, 1963, when women were allowed to participate in parliamentary elections. The urban women of Iran, since 1963, have formed their own associations and knowing the implications of their emancipation have embarked on activities to educate their illiterate 'sisters' in rural areas and further the interest of the members of their sex.

There are now more than twenty such associations in the capital of the country, with many branches in the other cities. "Some of these twenty associations are of the nature of professional unions such as the organization of women doctors, nurses and teachers while others work for charitable

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<sup>1</sup>H.I.M. Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, op. cit., p. 231.

purposes."<sup>1</sup> There is also a High Council of Women's Association, which coordinates the works of all associations in the country. One of the recent works of this High Council is a plan suggested in 1966 to form Women's Literacy Corps to teach rural women or areas near the cities.

## 2. Religion

Religion is an essential part of the farmer's life. The rural people are extremely religious-minded. The events of everyday life are made intelligible and bearable to the Iranian farmer only by constant appeal to the supernatural. The peasant begins his work by saying "God willing." To him happiness or misery is the Will of God, and he accepts them with saying "May God give His blessings." When he is asked about his health, he says, "I am well, praise be to God." Thus there is no need to worry; all goes well if God wishes. The Iranian farmer is more concerned with his prayers and religious rites than urban people. Men of religion are more powerful in villages than in cities.

Morality is a highly valued property to the rural people. Moral values include honesty, truthfulness, justice, kindness, frankness, sympathy and loyalty. To the peasants, to be immoral, is to be irreligious, and any person devoid of moral qualities is looked down upon.

In rural Iran, religious instruction is of great importance and mosques are sometimes used as schools.

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<sup>1</sup>Ministry of Information, Iran Today (Tehran: n.d.), Vol. II, p. 18.

Adults are eager to learn reading the Koran. This is a good starting point in adult education.

### 3. Education

Education in Iran has traditionally been limited to small groups and the education of masses has been neglected. "The basic philosophy has been to train an intellectual elite who will occupy the directing positions in society."<sup>1</sup>

Upto the beginning of the present century education was in the hands of religious groups, and the government had no responsibility for it. The Constitution of 1906 emphasized education as a government responsibility, and in 1910 and 1911 the Parliament passed bills for creating a Ministry of Education and organizing a system of public education. In 1911 a law was passed by the Parliament making education at the primary level compulsory. This was the beginning of a new era in education in Iran.

It was not until the time of Reza Shah that education received its proper emphasis. "Reza Shah was greatly concerned with the need both to extend and to secularize education. He also determined that women should share in its benefits."<sup>2</sup> Schooling until his time was a privilege for boys, and girls were not allowed to attend schools because of religious restrictions. Reza Shah established,

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<sup>1</sup>Herbert H. Vreeland, op. cit., p. 269.

<sup>2</sup>The Iranian Co-ordinating Committee of WCME, op. cit., p. 62.

for the first time, schools for girls, During his reign the number of schools multiplied by six times what they were before his coup d'etat. Institutions of higher learning including agricultural, technical, military, and teachers' training colleges in addition to the University of Tehran, all were established in his time. Adult classes were also organized for the first time by his decree.

In 1943, early in the reign of the present Shah, a law was passed emphasizing the previous law of free and compulsory education for all children between the ages of six and twelve, and committing the government to implementing the law of compulsory-free education within ten years. But because of the lack of schools and shortage of teachers these goals were not implemented. In 1961, in the Karachi Conference, Iran undertook to implement the law and bring all children to school within a period of twenty years. From that year on the Ministry of Education started to make serious efforts in this respect. "The statistics of primary school enrolment show that in 1917-18 there were only 24,033 pupils in schools. In 1940-41 this reached 167,682 and by 1960-61 the total enrolment of primary schools was close to a million and a half, and in 1964 it reached 2,030,000 pupils."<sup>1</sup>

In Table 2 the enrolment in primary schools for the last four years is given distributed by rural and urban

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<sup>1</sup>Ministry of Education, Present Educational System of Iran (mimeographed), n.d., pp. 33-34.

regions.

TABLE 2

NUMBER OF PRIMARY PUPILS DISTRIBUTED BY URBAN AND RURAL REGIONS (IN THOUSANDS)(1)

Year	Urban Areas	Rural Areas	Total
1960	863	573	1,436
1961	950	604	1,554
1962	1,041	678	1,719
1963	1,111	729	1,841
1964	1,189	841	2,030

(1) Source: Ministry of Education, Present Educational System in Iran, op. cit., p. 34.

Table 2 illustrates an important characteristic: while the rate of increase in the number of students in the rural areas has been higher (32 percent) than that of the urban schools (27 percent), the fact remains that 58 percent of all children in the primary schools are enrolled in urban areas, which have only 30 percent of the total population of the country, while 42 percent of the children are enrolled in rural areas which have 70 percent of the population.

#### 4. Health Conditions

The rural people, in Iran, are ignorant about sanitation



practices and health habits. Most of them attribute health and sickness to the will of God. They make their children to wear charms for protection against bad luck and the evil eye. Nazar Ghorbani, a dried sheep's eye plus a bit of rock salt, is used commonly for children to protect them from illness.

As the standard of living is very low in rural areas, the rural people become devitalized and hence easy victims to some serious diseases such as tuberculosis, diarrhea, dysentery, and typhoid. The rural people do not know about vaccination and inoculation during the outbreak of epidemics, and thus they do not know its importance.

Water supply is a major problem in the rural areas. Very few of the villages have pure drinking water. The villagers usually take their drinking water from qanats, irrigation ditches, wells, rivers and springs.

Housing is another problem. The rural people cannot provide each member of the family with a separate room, and they usually live in single-room houses. The parents along with their children sleep in the same room, which may possess a single small window.

Villagers are ignorant of the danger which may be caused by throwing garbages in the open. They deposit animal wastes near their houses. These places help breed the flies, and serious diseases follow.

Infant mortality is very high in rural Iran. This is because the children are delivered by untrained village women.

"Between 25 to 50 percent of all infants born alive die in their first year."<sup>1</sup> Diseases associated with child-birth also cause a high death rate among mothers.

The government of Iran has been active in recent years in the field of health. A permanent school for rural sanitary workers has been established, and these workers have shown their effectiveness in many areas. In many of the provinces local participation and support has been achieved. The Ministry of Health has been very active and its work in the summer of 1965, when the cholera was epidemic, was tremendous. A recent achievement in the field is the creation of Health Corps in 1964. The members of the Health Corps program are selected from among the doctors and those who have finished their studies in related fields of medicine. Instead of entering the army these are sent to rural areas.

#### B. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Iran is an agricultural country, and more than three-fourths of its population work on land. According to the 1956 census "in the rural areas agriculture with 76 percent of all employed persons was the leading industry followed by manufacturing with 8 percent, services with 6 percent and construction with 4 percent of the employed."<sup>2</sup> The village is the fundamental unit in Iranian agriculture. Fifty thousand

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<sup>1</sup>Herbert H. Vreeland, op. cit., p. 235.

<sup>2</sup>Ministry of Interior, National and Province Statistics of the First Census of Iran, November 1956 (Tehran: June 1962), Vol. II, p. xxiv.

villages in the country, range in size from twenty to three hundred families.

Other people think of Iran mainly as an oil-producing country, probably because of its huge petroleum output. But agriculture is still the first industry of the country accounting for 23 percent of the national income as compared to 17 percent from oil.

In spite of the fact that 76 percent of the population of Iran are employed in agriculture, yet agricultural product is very low. This low productivity is due to a number of factors of which the following can be mentioned: first, only about 10 percent of the area of the country is cultivated, while much more could be exploited. Second, from this fraction only half is under cultivation at any given time. Third, the soil is poor in many parts of the land due to lack of fertilizers, light rainfalls in most of the country, insect pests and primitive agricultural methods. Fourth, lack of capital. Fifth, reliance on dry farming as a result of the scarcity of water. Sixth, lack of accessible roads to most villages, thus farmers cannot take their products to markets in time. And, finally, lack of education which remains the most important factor that accounts for this low productivity.

In recent years steps have been taken to mechanize agriculture, and several model farms have been developed in which the agricultural extension workers trained by Agricultural Extension Organization demonstrate modern techniques

of farming to peasants. Most of these extension workers now travel around the country and give guidance and advice to farmers. One of the achievements made through the work of this organization has been the increasing interest of peasants in using new and better seeds and varieties of crops instead of local seeds and crops.

Another source of income for the country is livestock. Livestock are of tremendous importance in Iran's economy. Iran is said to have "more than half as many sheep as in the entire United States, and millions of goats and cattle."<sup>1</sup> These provide the country's meat and milk together with hides and wool for industries, including the making of world-famous Persian carpets. Many of these constitute the Iranian exports: raw wool, hides, lambskins and animal intestines (used for sausage casings and other purposes).

Tribesmen are the main stock raisers, but there are also numerous peasants who own flocks. "Flocks are almost as important as crops to the peasants,"<sup>2</sup> especially in the western part of the country. The villagers use the dairy products and sometimes meat for their food.

The shortages of pastures and animal diseases are the two big problems for livestock raising. In recent years, veterinarian teams, from the Ministry of Agriculture

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<sup>1</sup>H.I.M. Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, op. cit., p. 197.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 212.

or Health, have gone about the country treating livestock and vaccinating them against disease.

### 1. Agricultural Methods

The agricultural methods used in Iran are largely primitive. "In most of Iran the peasant works the land with a very simple plow, equipped with an ironclad wooden tongue. The plow is usually drawn by oxen, donkeys, or camels."<sup>1</sup> This method is very slow and a very large number of workers are needed.

Tractors have made their way into Iran, especially in recent years. "The Development Bank has purchased many tractors and combines, and has drilled numerous deep wells."<sup>2</sup> Besides, private companies or persons who own tractors rent them out to peasants. To apply modern practices in agriculture the Pahlavi Foundation has sent more than one hundred young farmers to West Germany to study modern techniques.

At present only about one out of every three acres of Iran's farmland is under cultivation in any given year. This is done to preserve fertility or increase it by natural means. There is very little fertilization of land. Animal and chemical fertilizers are commonly lacking, and animal manure is widely used as fuel. Near the cities or towns, household refuse is mixed with the soil and used as fertilizer after a long period of time. As a result, the area

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<sup>1</sup>Herbert H. Vreeland, op. cit., p. 193.

<sup>2</sup>H.I.M. Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, op. cit., p. 203.

around towns is better fertilized than outlying areas. In some areas the earth from the ruins of old buildings and walls is used to help improve the soil. Pigeon manure is also used in some parts of the country. Recently the government has begun to manufacture fertilizers and distribute them at a low price so that small cultivators can afford to buy them.

"Methods of irrigation in Iran are also of ancient origin, but they reveal an engineering skill in which an Iranian may well take pride."<sup>1</sup> Three methods of irrigation are in use: open channels, wells, and qanats (underground channel). Wherever streams or rivers are found channels are dug and divided among the fields. Sometimes these channels are connected with dams. Iran now has "three major dams, built within the last decade, as well as a number of smaller modern dams in various parts of the country."<sup>2</sup>

The second method of irrigation is through the use of wells. There are numerous shallow wells some of which are operated by animals and some by men. Many artesian and deep wells have been drilled in recent years by the government and are in use.

The third method is the use of qanat or kariz. A qanat is an underground water channel running from the base of a mountain to the areas to be irrigated. The qanat carries

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<sup>1</sup>Herbert H. Vreeland, op. cit., p. 183.

<sup>2</sup>The Iranian Coordinating Committee of WCME, op. cit., p. 77.

water as far as thirty kilometers. The usual method of its construction is that a deep well is sunk near the foot of the mountain at a depth of 60 to 300 meters. Access wells are constructed at every fifty or sixty-meter intervals. These wells are connected to each other by tunnels, and the water runs through the tunnels until it reaches the area where it is needed. The water is then distributed through irrigation ditches. One qanat may be sufficient to irrigate upto 80 hectares. Qanats are costly and time-consuming to construct, and very expensive to maintain in good shape.

## 2. Agricultural Reforms

Until 1961 most of the Iranian villages were owned by one or more landlords, some of whom possessed many villages. About one-fifth of the total 50,000 villages in the country belonged to those owning more than one village.<sup>1</sup>

In 1961 a law was passed under which a landowner possessing more than one village was permitted to keep one and was obliged to sell the others to the government in 15 annual instalments, in order to be resold to the peasants. This was later called 'Phase One' of the land reform. But it was not until January 1963 that land reform took its real shape.

On January 9, 1963, when the First Congress of Farm Co-operatives was holding its first session, the Shah in

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 109-110.

his address to the peasants' representatives put forward a six-point program of reform (later called Sixth of Bahaman Reforms) subject to the approval of the people through a national referendum.

On January 26 of the same year, these basic reforms were approved by the nation. They were:

1. Sweeping land reforms under the law which was approved on January 9, 1961, and the abolition of the 'landlord-peasant' regime in Iran;
2. Nationalization of all the forests;
3. Sale of state-owned industries to the public to finance land reforms and agricultural development projects;
4. Provision for industrial workers to share in the net profits of the factories in which they work;
5. Amendment of the obsolete election laws of the country; and
6. Establishment of an Education Corps to wipe out illiteracy.<sup>1</sup>

The implimentation of these reforms has affected the whole social, economic, and political situation in Iran. The first and the sixth items, especially, have changed the basis of rural society of Iran and are of concern to the present study.

Before the land reforms the Iranian land tenure system was generally based on the division of the five productive elements of the crop — land, water, animals and equipment, seeds, and labour. The landlords usually provided the first two

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<sup>1</sup>Ministry of Education, op. cit., p. 4.



and received two-fifths of the crop, and the remaining were contributed by the farmers who received three-fifths. But the peasants who would usually borrow money from the landlords for their living would have to give a large amount of their shares, if not all of it, to the landlords to pay the debts. Thus they were always in debt and consequently in poverty. The landowners who live mostly in towns and big cities would take the profits away from the villages and spend them in towns. The result was that the income of rural population was always low, and the development of villages was sacrificed to that of towns. Thus, there is no wonder that the peasants living in poverty, migrated in large numbers to the cities in search of work and fortune. Agricultural production stagnated and could not keep pace with the growth of population in the country. In such conditions, the necessity of a land reform to change the social and economic situation in rural Iran was great.

"In order to put an end to this state of affairs, and to lay the foundations for a new rural society, the Shahanshah began distributing the Crown Estates on February 26, 1951,"<sup>1</sup> in the hope that landlords might follow his example. As a result, the Parliament in 1961 passed the law referred to earlier, constituting the first step in land reform.

The land reform bill approved on the Six of Bahaman of 1962 by a national referendum introduced 'Phase Two' of the land reform "affecting as it did the 100,000 smaller

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<sup>1</sup>Ashraf Ahmadi, 12 Years in Constructing a New Iran (1953-1964) (Tehran: Kayhan Presse, n.d.), p. 11.

landowners who held about 63 percent of the country's farm land."<sup>1</sup> These owners were given three alternatives: "They could grant the peasants a thirty-year lease, or sell them the land on terms agreed to by both sides, or divide the land between themselves and the peasants in the same proportion as that in which the crops had previously been shared."<sup>2</sup>

The statistics available on land distribution indicate that by June 1965, the second phase of the land reform had been carried out in 17,508 villages. The program is going ahead with more speed, owing to the decision to give more power to the provincial land reform authorities. The government has claimed that by September 1966 the second phase will be completed.

### 3. Industry

"The Iranian economy is at present dominated by two main industries, agriculture and oil."<sup>3</sup> Fifty percent of all industrial labor are employed by oil industry. The third important industry in Iran is the textile industry.

"Industry, though still in its early stages, has grown rapidly during the post-war years, largely as a result of the country's development plans, which are one of the outstanding economic features of the period."<sup>4</sup> Great numbers of

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<sup>1</sup>The Iranian Coordinating Committee of WCME, op.cit., p. 110.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 110-111.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

villagers are employed as workers in the new factories. The government owns and operates enterprises in many parts of the country. The government factories are mainly the following: sugar factories, copper refinery, cement, textile, chemical, silk, tea, and tobacco factories. A steel factory is going to be launched soon.

Village industries come next to agriculture. The main industries are furniture-making, pottery, carpet-weaving, smithing, etc. The Caspian Sea is rich in many varieties of fish. Caviar, which is one of Iran's exports, and famous all over the world, is the product of fishing in the north.

### C. POLITICAL CONDITIONS

Before 1906, the time of the revolutionary movement which resulted in a constitutional government, Iran was under the rule of absolute monarchs. Since then, the country has established a democratic government composed of three branches:

The executive, whose power is vested in the Cabinet and in government officials who act in the name of the Shah; the judicial composed of a hierarchy of courts from district courts up through a Supreme Court; and, the legislative whose bills do not become law until signed by the Shah.<sup>1</sup>

The legislative is composed of two separate branches: The National Consultative Assembly called Majlis or Parliament, and the Senate (both of which now serve for a term of four years). The members of Majlis and half members of the

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<sup>1</sup>Donald N. Wilber, Iran: Past and Present (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1960), p. 150.

Senate are elected from each district in proportion to the population. All citizens who have reached the age of twenty-one are entitled to vote, with the exception of members of the armed forces and convicted criminals.

The political awareness of people differs in degree. The urban people especially those living in large cities are more politically conscious than rural people. "The peasants have remained largely unaware of the possibility of influencing political life. They do their daily chores with little more knowledge than their ancestors of the political struggles being waged around them and often in their name."<sup>1</sup> They are not fully aware of their civic rights and duties. Being ignorant of the meaning of political rights, they think of votes as saleable goods, and being poor they are tempted to sell their votes for a small amount of money.

The peasants' only contact with political life, in the past, was during the elections for the Parliament when they exercised their privilege of voting for their landlords, the only candidates they knew. Even today that the serf-landlord system is abolished through land reform, they are still politically ignorant. They show little interest in getting out from the traditional shelter of being governed, into the perplexities and responsibilities of governing themselves.

This ignorance is partly the result of the past

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<sup>1</sup>Herbert H. Vreeland, op. cit., p. 84.

system and partly the result of illiteracy in rural areas. Lack of communication between the 50,000 villages and the outside world has been another cause for this ignorance. Most of the villages are isolated from each other and situated in remote areas. These villages have no trade outside themselves, nor have they any external social or political contacts with the outside world, and are self-sufficient in almost every way. These villagers have the least interest in reading because everything can be learned by word of mouth from fellow villagers. Radios, though now available in most villages, have been of no help in this respect: their programs are directed towards city dwellers and have very little in common with the affairs of the rural people.

#### 1. Village Administration

The administrative head in an Iranian village is called kad khoda who is elected and paid by the villagers, and is responsible for the affairs of the village. He is also a member of the House of Justice, established in recent years in most villages. The House of Justice is supposed to manage local affairs and settle the disputes between the villagers. The main purpose in establishing this 'House' has been to use the powers of the rural people for improvement and development of the villages.

There are two aspects to kadkhoda's role in the village. He represents the 'Government' in assisting

gendarmes in their contacts with the villagers, and in his close cooperation with other government agents such as: school teachers, agricultural extension workers, Education Corps, Health Corps, and Development Corps. On the other hand, he is the paid representative of the villagers, and is therefore responsible for carrying out their will. He is the contact man between the village and the government and non-governmental agencies which have relations with the village people. Kadkhoda must also work with village councils and cooperatives.

## 2. Village Councils and Cooperatives

"In 1956 the Parliament passed a law establishing village councils as legal entities with substantial borrowing powers."<sup>1</sup> The main initiative for carrying the law rests with the Community Development Department. This Department is responsible for establishing the Councils, and encouraging villagers to participate in its activities. The Village Council is responsible for carrying out the local improvement projects and help set up village cooperative. The Village Council also gives advice to the peasants on application of modern agricultural methods, and in constructing roads, bridges, bath houses, schools, mosques, wells, workshops, etc. The members of the Village Councils were previously trained by the agents of the Community

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<sup>1</sup>H.I.M. Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, op. cit., p. 205.

Development Department, but since 1965 when the Development Corps Program was started, they are trained by the Corpsmen.

The Development Corps Program is expected to implement projects set for rural areas and improve their conditions. Its members are selected from among the engineers, and graduates of the University in scientific branches, who instead of their military service in the army are sent to rural areas.

The rural cooperatives, organized by the Village Councils, are financed by the rural people. In 1960, there were 500 cooperatives all through the country.

## II. ILLITERACY IN IRAN

Now that we have presented a survey of social, and economic conditions of Iran focusing on the conditions of adults in these areas, we can move to the heart of the matter, that is, illiteracy. For the important thing in such a survey is that it gives the background to the main problem of this study on the illiteracy of adults in rural areas. Illiteracy is not an isolated symptom; it is in many ways a result of social and economic conditions. People who are socially advanced and economically well-off would not have a problem of illiteracy.

This hinges on the basic theoretical controversy, namely, whether social and economic conditions can be improved through literacy or whether literacy can be provided through improvement of social and economic conditions. Briefly, at

this point it can be said that both are correct, but in this study one basic assumption is that in order to improve the social and economic conditions of a people the most appropriate starting point is provision of literacy.

Data on illiteracy in Iran are obtained from two principal sources: the 1956 census, and the sample survey of 1963.

"The United Nations Population Commission has recommended that illiteracy should be defined for census purpose as the ability both to read and to write a simple message in any language."<sup>1</sup> This was also the criterion used in the 1956 census and the sample survey of 1963. Thus in the following tables the persons who could only read were regarded as illiterates.

According to the 1956 census, there were 10,873,337 persons, 10 years and over, who could not read and write. This represents a proportion of 85.1 percent of the total population at that age level. A breakdown of this figure into males and females gives 77.8 percent for males and 92.8 percent for females.

Table 3 gives the percentages of illiteracy in 1956 for the population of Iran 10 years and over, and for each selected age group and by sex. From this table it is seen that the percentage of illiteracy is higher among females of this age group. The rate of illiteracy is low for the age groups 10-19 years, especially in the case of male

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<sup>1</sup>UNESCO, Progress of Literacy in Various Countries (Paris: 1963), p. 13.



TABLE 3

PERCENTAGE OF LITERACY BY AGE AND SEX OF THE  
POPULATION 10 YEARS AND OVER FOR IRAN:

NOV. 1956  
(In Thousands) (1)

Age and Sex	Total	Total Literate	Percent	Total Illiterate	Percent
Iran (both sexes)					
10 years and over	12,784	1,911	14.9	10,873	85.1
10 to 19 years	3,243	830	25.2	2,413	74.8
20 years and over	9,541	1,081	10.3	8,460	89.7
<u>Male</u>					
10 years and over	6,542	1,454	22.2	4,088	77.8
10 to 19 years	1,685	579	34.5	1,106	65.5
20 years and over	4,857	875	17.0	982	83.0
<u>Female</u>					
10 years and over	6,242	450	7.3	5,792	93.7
10 to 19 years	1,558	250	15.9	1,308	84.1
20 years and over	4,684	200	3.8	4,484	96.2

(1) Source: Ministry of Interior, National and Provincial Statistics of the First Census of Iran, op. cit., p. 45.

population (34.5 percent literate).

While the difference in illiteracy rates is great between males and females, this difference becomes even greater between the rural and urban population. This is illustrated in Table 4.

It is clearly seen that the percentage of illiteracy in rural areas is higher than it is in urban areas, especially

TABLE 4

PERCENTAGE OF LITERACY BY AGE AND SEX  
AND BY URBAN-RURAL RESIDENCE FOR IRAN  
NOVEMBER 1956 (1)

Age	U R B A N			R U R A L		
	Total%	Male%	Female%	Total%	Male%	Female%
10 years and over	33.3	45.2	20.6	6.0	10.8	1.0
10 to 19 years	52.1	63.4	39.9	10.4	17.7	2.5
20 years and over	22.6	34.1	10.8	4.2	8.1	0.4

(1) Source: Ministry of Interior, National and Provincial Statistics of the First Census of Iran, op. cit., pp. 45-47.

in the case of adults (20 years and over). The difference is considerably high when the female population of both urban and rural areas are compared with male population. The difference is striking when the female population of urban and rural areas are compared, especially considering the fact that 70 percent of the total population of Iran is rural. (The rate of literacy is 20.6 times higher in urban female population, 10 years and over, compared with rural female population).

To show the literacy rates in the different provinces of Iran, Table 5 is presented which gives the rates of literacy in the different provinces of Iran among the population 7 years and over divided by different age groups and by sex and urban-rural residence.

From table 5 it is seen that the percentage of literacy is highest in the Central Province and lowest in Kurdistan, and Baloochestan Provinces. It also shows that the literacy rate is highest in the 10-19 age groups

for all provinces, and the two provinces mentioned above have the lowest rates of literacy for females.

Since these percentages are taken from a census in 1956, it would be useful to examine other figures based on a sample population survey conducted more recently, in 1963. A comparison between the 1956 census and the sample survey of 1963 shows considerable progress in literacy both in urban and rural areas of the country (15.7 percent for both sexes in urban and 10 percent in rural areas). Considering the progress of literacy for each sex separately, it is seen that the literacy rate has grown among urban males by 14.8 percent, and by 16.2 percent among males in rural areas, while the progress for females has been 17.4 percent in urban areas and 3 percent in rural areas. It can be deduced from these differences, that during the 7-year period educational opportunities have improved considerably. Table 6 shows this progress.

TABLE 6

PROGRESS OF LITERACY IN THE POPULATION  
OF IRAN, 10 YEARS AND OVER, BY SEX  
AND URBAN-RURAL RESIDENCE  
1956-1963<sup>(1)</sup>

Sex	The 1956 Census		Sample Survey 1963		Increase in the rate of Literacy	
	Urban%	Rural%	Urban%	Rural%	Urban%	Rural%
Both Sexes	33.3	6.0	49	16	15.7	10
Male	45.2	10.8	60	27	14.8	16.2
Female	20.6	1.0	38	4.0	17.4	3.0

<sup>(1)</sup> Sources: National and Provincial Statistics of the First Census of Iran: Nov. 1956, op. cit., p. 45, and General Statistics Publication, op. cit., p. 2.

A further comparison of the 1956 census and the sample population survey of 1963, shows a considerable increase in the rate of literacy in all provinces of Iran. This rate of increase, however, has not been the same between rural and urban areas in these provinces, but it is obvious from Table 7 that the progress was much higher in urban areas.

Table 7 gives the rates of literacy for 13 provinces of Iran, by sex and urban-rural residence.

TABLE 7

LITERACY BY SEX AND URBAN-RURAL  
RESIDENCE OF THE POPULATION  
10 YEARS AND OVER FOR IRAN  
AND THE PROVINCES: SAMPLE  
SURVEY, DECEMBER 1963  
(PERCENTAGES)<sup>1</sup>

Name of Province	Literate in Urban Areas			Literate in Rural Areas		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Iran	49	60	38	16	27	4
Central Province	57	66	47	25	45	4
Gilan	58	67	49	26	42	8
Mazandaran	38	54	22	26	42	11
East Azarbayejan	39	53	24	4	8	-
West Azarbayejan	46	61	31	9	17	-
Kermanshahan	44	55	33	11	19	2
Khoozestan	46	56	35	5	10	0.5
Fars and Bander	47	56	37	18	30	5
Kerman	39	49	29	23	34	13
Khorasan	49	61	36	20	36	4
Esfahan	40	52	28	13	24	2
Kurdestan	47	61	32	6	11	0.2
Baloochestan and Sistan	49	61	37	13	26	0.5

(1) Source: Ministry of Interior, General Statistics Publications, op. cit., p. 2.

## III. CONCLUSION

The social, economic, and political forces in rural Iran have significant implications for adult education. This is because adult education is influenced by the environment in which it functions. The present conditions in rural Iran, as described in this chapter, indicate that: masses of rural people are, to a large extent, unaware of their rights and duties as citizens and are ignorant of their own potentialities and powers. Their lives consist of a perpetual and monotonous struggle to make a living, yet most of the productive work in the country is theirs. A poor economy based upon primitive agricultural practices, ill-health, poor sanitation, lack of communication, and high illiteracy characterize rural Iran. Although, attempts have been made to change these conditions, and the situation has rather improved, nevertheless there is much more to be done.

Rural life is undergoing rapid changes, exemplified by land reform schemes and various government and individual projects. But the problem of illiteracy remains largely unsolved. In the following chapter the focus will be on programs and efforts directed to combat illiteracy among the adults of rural areas. This chapter and the following one will then present a comprehensive picture about conditions in rural Iran from the social and economic as well as from the educational angles.

## CHAPTER III

### ADULT EDUCATION IN RURAL IRAN

In this chapter, a survey of the attempts in the field of adult education in rural Iran will be presented, and the present efforts in this field will be described. The main objective of this chapter is to analyze the present adult education programs in Iran and point out their weaknesses.

#### I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The history of adult education in Iran can be divided into two periods: the period before World War II, and the period after World War II upto 1961 the time of revolutionary reforms in Iran. Each of these periods will be dealt with separately.

##### A. Literacy Campaigns Before World War II

Before 1906 when the Constitutional Monarchy was proclaimed in Iran, there was little interest shown in education either by the government or by the people generally. Education was limited to the children of religious leaders and the wealthy classes. The Constitution of 1906 made the government responsible for education, and in the year 1910 a ministry of education was set up to take care of

the education of the Iranian citizens. In 1911, the Parliament passed a law of compulsory education, but the Ministry of Education could not enforce the law and the progress of education remained very slow so much so that, after a period of eleven years, in 1922, "Iran had only 440 primary schools with 43,000 students, 46 government secondary schools with 9,300 students, and one college with 91 students."<sup>1</sup>

After 1922, the year when Reza Shah carried his coup d'état, expansion in education became more rapid. Reza Shah was very much concerned about education; he proclaimed the Act of Compulsory and Free Education which was passed by the Parliament for the second time in 1927. Under his rule many new elementary and secondary schools were established, and students were sent abroad on government scholarships. He also established the University of Tehran in 1934. However, since the vast majority of the population of Iran were illiterate, and none of these programs could bring literacy to adult masses he, in 1936, issued the first Literacy Campaign Decree.

A Department of Adult Education was immediately set up after this Decree as part of the Ministry of Education; the major responsibility of this Department was to spread literacy among the adult population. In the first year of its program, 700 literacy classes were opened throughout the country, mostly in urban areas. The course of study

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<sup>1</sup>The Iranian Co-ordinating Committee of WCME, op. cit., p. 62.

covered two seven-month sessions, and the schools were open four evenings per week, with two shifts scheduled for each evening. One group attended from 5 to 7 p.m., and another from 7 to 9 p.m. These two seven-month sessions were organized in such a way that students were brought up to the level of fourth grade, and those who passed an examination given at this level received a certificate of four-year primary education.

The teachers who worked in these literacy training classes, were teachers in the existing primary schools with no special training for work with adults. Also the primers prepared for these classes were quite difficult for the beginners.

The statistics available on such classes indicate that from 1936 to 1940 approximately 150,000 adults attended these classes.<sup>1</sup> However, with the outbreak of World War II the program came to a standstill.

#### B. Literacy Campaigns After World War II

For some years after World War II the Iranian Government was busy with problems created by the War. Beginning with 1953, however, the government planned various adult education programs for rural and urban areas of the country some of which are still going on and others have been integrated with other programs. The following are programs

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<sup>1</sup>Ministry of Information, Education in Iran (in Persian), (Tehran: n.d.), p. 15.



designed for adults and carried on in the country since the end of World War II.

1. The Fundamental Education Program (1953-1961)

In 1953, the Ministry of Education requested the Education Division of the United States Operation Mission to Iran (USOM/Iran) to assist in setting up a new educational program for the rural areas. The outcome of this request was the Fundamental Education Program whose objective was to provide free education for rural people for the purpose of making them literate and to help them become better citizens.

To carry out this program, the Ministry of Education created the Department of Fundamental Education with its central office in Tehran and branches in the Ostan Offices of Education. The responsibilities assigned to this Department were as follows:

- a. To train village teachers for the new program.
- b. To prepare learning materials for illiterate adults and new literates.
- c. To secure assistance from other governmental, non-governmental, and international organizations.
- d. To supervise the program throughout the country.

The program started as a joint program between the Ministry of Education and the USOM/Iran. From the third year onward, the USOM support decreased and the Ministry of Education gradually took full charge of the program. The Ministry had to carry the financial burden of salaries

of teachers and staff, rent for school buildings, and various other expenses.

To implement the program, villages which already had schools were chosen. The work was given to teachers who were native villagers, or those who had lived and worked in villages and who were more likely to be accepted and respected by villagers. These teachers were already receiving a salary from the Ministry and were content to extend their hours of work for an additional allowance of few hundred rials each month.

In some villages married teacher couples were assigned who worked as a team and were called Shahrestan leaders.<sup>1</sup>

As the program began to take shape the need for trained workers became evident. The Ministry of Education, under fellowship programs, arranged for two of its well experienced staff members to visit countries which were carrying on similar programs, such as Haiti, Canada, and Mexico. It was also arranged for two Iranian educators to visit India in a five-week program.

After they returned, these staff members, with the assistance of technicians from the Ministries of Health and Agriculture started a training course for Ostan Supervisors and Shahrestan leaders in Tehran. The subjects taught in the training course were psychology of adults as learners, methods of teaching reading and writing, rural sociology

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<sup>1</sup> Shahrestan is a geographical section of a province (Ostan).

and local leadership, child care, home management, sewing and cooking for women; basic facts about health and agriculture, and some practical vocational training such as carpentry and metal work.

The Ostan Supervisors in turn held courses for Fundamental Education village teachers at the Ostan level, teaching them the same things.<sup>1</sup>

The teachers instructed adults in reading, writing and arithmetic. A primer was prepared called "We Learn to Read and Write" and a supplementary reader was published to follow it. Other materials such as "The Home and Health", "Poultry and Livestock", "General Village Health", "Trees-Forests and Orchards", and "We Work Together"<sup>2</sup> were also developed for new literates. These materials were distributed without charge in all the rural areas where the program was being carried on. In addition to the materials mentioned a number of publications for publicity purposes were prepared.

Upto 1961 the program was carried on in 200 pilot centres and 475 villages located in 123 shahrestans throughout Iran. The staff consisted of a small headquarters, 14 Ostan Supervisors, 275 Shahrestan leaders, and 773 village teachers. Annually about 22,110 villagers attended classes

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<sup>1</sup>Luanna J. Bowles, The Story of Fundamental Education in Iran (Tehran; n.d.), pp. 32-33.

<sup>2</sup>H.I.M. Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, op. cit., p. 244.

under this program.<sup>1</sup>

In 1961, the Fundamental Education program was integrated into the Adult Education Program which was carried on by the Ministry of Education under another organization called the Department of Adult Education. The reasons for this merger were:

- a. The Ministry of Education did not have enough teachers to spare as full-time village leaders.
- b. The funds were not available.
- c. Some of the regional Education Chiefs could not appreciate the value of the program, and thought that the activities of the program were not educational.
- d. The two departments within the Ministry were carrying out similar programs.

During its eight years (1953-1961) the Fundamental Education program despite the fact that it lacked many facilities worked very effectively and expanded rapidly. The selection of teachers, their short-term training, supervision and the presence of team workers who worked as leaders all were important features of this program. The kind of activities it included were quite suitable for the development of rural areas.

## 2. Adult Education Program (1956-1961)<sup>2</sup>

Because the literacy movement had been stopped for a long time after World War II, a decree was issued in 1956 by

<sup>1</sup>Ministry of Information, National Campaign Against Illiteracy (in Persian), (Tehrah: n.d.), p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>This survey relies heavily on the following two sources: Ministry of Information, Education in Iran, op. cit., and Ministry of Information, National Campaign Against Illiteracy, op. cit.

the Shah for another Literacy Campaign. To carry out the Shah's decree the Ministry of Education assigned this responsibility to the Department of Adult Education. The objectives of the new literacy campaign were:

- a. To make all people from all social classes literate.
- b. To provide facilities for those groups of people who desired to further their education beyond the fourth grade.
- c. To provide classes in arts and crafts, and in foreign languages.

In order to meet these objectives the Department of Adult Education was given the following duties:

1. To publicize the advantages of literacy.
2. To prepare courses of study.
3. To prepare learning materials
4. To supervise all kinds of literacy classes, under any organization, governmental or non-governmental.
5. To supervise all kinds of evening classes in elementary school subjects, and all vocational classes.
6. To secure assistance of other government and private organizations in carrying out literacy programs.

To achieve wide publicity the new Department of Adult Education used such media as newspapers, magazines, television, radio, public speeches, and parades. In 1961, one week was announced as the Literacy Week throughout the country. The Shah opened a newly-established night school for adults and taught the first lesson himself. On the same day, the members of the two houses of the Parliament, religious leaders, press

men and various other groups attended literacy classes and gave lessons.<sup>1</sup>

Courses of study were organized on the basis of two seven-month sessions, involving two hours each evening five days per week. The adults who would successfully pass the examination at the end of this period would receive a certificate equivalent to the fourth grade of primary school.

The main subjects taught in these classes were reading, writing and arithmetic; also subjects like health, civics, and ethics were sometimes discussed. For those who wished to continue their schooling, grades five and six were also conducted in some of the evening schools.

The course was free and textbooks were distributed among students without charge. Occasionally note-books and pencils contributed by charity organizations, factories, commercial agencies or private individuals were distributed freely among students of these classes.

One of the important duties of Adult Education Department was preparation of teaching materials for the use of literacy classes. For this purpose a group of technicians who had had experience in simplified writing, and some of whom had studied modern techniques abroad, were invited by the Ministry of Education to cooperate in the preparation of readers. The result of this cooperation was the two

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<sup>1</sup>Ministry of Information, Education in Iran, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

readers: "Let Us All Become Literate" and "Let Us All Live Better". Various types of posters and flash-cards were also prepared to accompany these two books. In addition a 'Guidebook for Teaching Adults' which was to help teachers of literacy classes was printed and distributed among instructors of adults.

Another important task of Adult Education Department was training of teachers. Those who taught in adult literacy classes were of three types: the first were those who had attended the elementary teacher training courses at the normal schools. The second were those who had some teaching experience. The third, mostly rural teachers, were those who had nine years of schooling and had received no training.

Because none of the teachers in these three types had training necessary to teach in adult classes, the Adult Education Department arranged short training programs for its teachers. In 1956, the first year of the program, a training course for 1500 teachers was conducted in Tehran. These teachers were supposed to work in literacy classes. Among these teachers representatives from Ostans were also included. During the fifteen days when the training course was conducted, the trainees were instructed theoretically in methods of teaching adults and in adult psychology.

After the termination of the course, the Ostan trainees returned to their respective Ostans or Shahrestans where they in turn conducted similar training courses for

prospective teachers of adult classes. They taught the teachers what they had learned in the training course in Tehran.

In 1959, another fifteen-day training course was arranged in Tehran, this time for 300 principals of evening schools, with representatives of Ostan Adult Education Centres. Methods of teaching the 3-R's and subjects such as health, home-management, ethics, and civics were taught in these classes. The principals were supposed to pass the information they had got to their teachers, so that the illiterates would be provided with a broader background of general information related to their daily life.

Another aspect of the activity of the Adult Education Department of this kind was conducting special courses for army officers, junior gendarmerie officers, police department members, and nurses. The training of these groups was carried out by members of the Adult Education Department or by technicians invited by the Department for this purpose. These groups, when trained, were responsible to teach literacy and basic school subjects to military conscripts, gendarmes, illiterate policemen, prisoners, and persons working in hospitals or patients in sanitoriums. Similar courses for factory and workshop representatives were also given.

Besides conducting evening school for adults, the Department of Adult Education supervised other literacy classes conducted by or for the Army, Gendarmerie, Police,



Prisons, Factories, Workshops, and other classes including private night schools. Each of such organizations had assigned one hour per day to its literacy programs. The teachers were members of the organizations' own staffs who were supposed to have attended a short course of training held by the Adult Education Department. The courses for illiterates in the army, gendarmerie, police, air-force, prisons, and among other government employees were compulsory. The Ministry of Education furnished the readers but all other costs of the class operations were borne by the concerned organizations.

In addition to classes held by the Department of Adult Education and the organizations mentioned above, the Agricultural Extension Agents, Community Development workers, and the Ministry of Health have had special programs for the education of adults in the rural areas. The Agricultural Women Home Extensionists also conduct literacy classes in the villages where there are no schools.

Statistics on various literacy classes are not available, except for those classes run by the Department of Adult Education, Army, Gendarmerie and Police. By way of a statistical summary Table 8 gives the number of adults who attended the classes held by the Adult Education Department or others that were supervised by it between 1956 and 1964.

TABLE 8

NUMBER OF PERSONS WHO ATTENDED  
LITERACY CLASSES (1956-1964)  
(In Thousands)<sup>(1)</sup>

Year	Number of Classes	Classes held by Adult Ed. Department		Army Conscripts	Gen- darmes	Police and Pri- soners	Total
		Men	Women				
1956-57	6,858	172	60	0	8	17	257
1957-58	9,505	200	52	90	18	17	377
1958-59	12,058	245	57	90	11	17	420
1959-60	16,958	237	65	113	11	17	443
1960-61	15,450	216	55	113	11	4	399
1961-62	15,450	244	63	117	11	4	439
1962-63	16,750	225	86	100	9	2	422
1963-64	16,750	243	64	76	8	2	393

(1)

Source: Ministry of Information, National Campaign Against Illiteracy (in Persian), (Tehran: n.d.), p. 12, and Ministry of Education, Three Years Activity in Education (in Persian), (Tehran: Jam Press, 1965), p. 7.

## II. THE PRESENT ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN RURAL IRAN

Beginning with 1961, the time when the land reform was introduced, and when the two departments of Fundamental Education and that of Adult Education were merged, rural areas

have received special attention from the government. New Programs were started to bring up the educational standards of the villagers, and other programs aimed at raising their social, economic, and political conditions of living.

The six-point reform of 1963, and the emancipation of women in the same year brought many changes to the rural areas of the country, and affected the lives of millions of Iranian farmers.

The present adult education activities are basically of three types: Government, private, and UNESCO programs. In what follows each will be taken separately.

#### A. GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

##### 1. Merged Fundamental/Adult Education Since 1961

As it was mentioned earlier in this chapter, the two programs of Fundamental Education and Adult Education were merged in 1961. The merged programs, previously carried through two different departments, were then undertaken by a new organization called the General Department of Adult Education. This new Department was set up with five sections each having a special responsibility. The five sections were responsible for:

- a. Adult education programs in urban areas.
- b. Adult education programs in rural areas.
- c. Supervision of literacy class<sup>es</sup> (conducted by other organizations).
- d. Supervision of evening schools (related to the Department).

e. Administrative staff.

The educational program of the General Department of adult education, following the merger, remained basically the same as it was under the two separate departments.

Since 1961, the General Department of Adult Education has continued the previous activities, and its policy in rural areas has been to carry on Fundamental Education activities, where literacy classes had been established. It has also prepared new teaching materials with the aid of the UNESCO. The new materials prepared with the financial assistance of the UNESCO are booklets like: What Can We Do to be Healthy? We and Our Children, Proper Nutrition, Family Relationships, Our Homes, and Knowledge and Life. The statistics on adult classes conducted by this Department show that during the four years 1961-1965, a total of 1,297,156 adults have attended literacy classes in both urban and rural areas.

2. The Education Corps (Sepah Danesh)

In the period between 1961 to 1963 various reforms were instituted in Iran, all aiming at rural development. A decree known as 'the Decree of Land Reform' was approved by the Cabinet in 1961, which was a major step in this direction.

With the beginning of land reform the problem of educating the village people came to the fore. The Karachi Conference of 1961 had estimated that by 1980 all villages

in Iran with a population of more than one hundred should have their own primary schools, providing six years of compulsory education. However, because of the great numbers of children in rural areas who were out of school this remained only a dream. Thus an emergency educational program was put forward by the Shah in September 1962. The Shah conscious of the problems of backwardness of rural areas and the necessity for an urgent solution, had written in 1961 in his book 'Mission for My Country' the following:

For the moment I think everybody agrees that incompletely prepared teachers can help our children incomparably more than no teachers at all; but only through a drastic action will all our children be taught as they deserve.<sup>1</sup>

On October 13, 1962, the Shah issued an order for the formation of the "Education Corps", which was later included in the six-point reform program approved in a national referendum on January 26, 1963.

The plan for these "Education Corps" consists of recruiting high school graduates and sending them to rural areas as teachers in lieu of the eighteen months that they have to spend in military service. Education Corpsmen are selected from among conscripts twice each year, and are given an intensive four-month training in modern teaching methods and military training, and then they are sent to the villages to teach. There, they work for fourteen months under the supervision of the Ministry of Education.

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<sup>1</sup>H.I.M. Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, op. cit., p. 251.

The major responsibility in executing the program is shared by the two Ministries of War and Education, but the other Ministries also cooperate to put the plan into effect.

In the Ministry of Education the work is shared by four general departments: General Department of Planning and Studies, General Department of Teacher Training, General Department of Adult Education, and the General Department of Elementary Education. Each of these departments is responsible for a specific phase of the program. The Department of Teacher Training is responsible for the educational aspects of the four-month training course of Corpsmen. The Department of Adult Education prepares readers for adult classes and kerosene lamps for evening schools where there is no electricity. And the Department of Elementary Education supervises the recruits during the fourteen months of service as teachers in the rural elementary schools.

The major objective for the "Education Corps" program is the provision of minimum educational opportunities for the children in rural areas. Amir Birjandi the author of "The Education Corps Project in Iran" defines the objectives of the Education Corps in this way:

Education of rural people should be broad in its context. Teaching the 3 R's and education for accumulated knowledge is not enough. It serves to raise the expectations of poverty-stricken people, but if there is no possibility for a better life, such education will result in social and political chaos. Therefore, in this situation, educational problems should not be dealt with in isolation. What is required is an integrated,

wholesome approach towards helping rural people which simultaneously attacks educational, economical, social and political problems. It should be a program of education for 'planned change'. This, in effect, makes the Education Corpsman essentially a multi-purpose village level worker.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the Education Corps program is not merely a program limited to teaching the 3 R's, but has social, economic and political aims. These activities of this program include:

- a. Teaching adults in evening classes in order to eliminate illiteracy and encourage the adults to read subjects of interest to them.
- b. Starting small village libraries and circulating reading materials to the literates.
- c. Organizing recreational groups and youth groups, teaching games, and scheduling physical education contests.
- d. Organizing rural Boy Scout Troops in the villages.<sup>2</sup>

To provide the Corpsmen with the necessary skills to conduct the above mentioned activities, special subjects such as educational psychology, rural sociology, scouting, and health education and sanitation are offered during a four-month training program. After the training period is over, the Corpsmen are sent to villages to complete the remaining fourteen months of their term of service. Afterwards a Corpsman may continue to teach in the village, and if he

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<sup>1</sup>Amir Birjandi, The Education Corps Project in Iran (A Work Plan for Rural Development), Third edn., (Tehran:1965), p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

wants he can be employed by the Ministry of Education provided that he takes a second one-year advanced course at the Education Corps Teacher Training College at Karaj.

During their teaching the Corpsmen wear uniforms, with the rank of seargent, and remain under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. The supervision is done by a group of teachers selected by the Ministry of Education from among those who have had long experience in working in rural areas. One supervisor is assigned to every twenty village schools.

The Education Corps program is the concern of the various governmental organizations, and each participating organization takes care of the expenses which pertain to its activities, such as recruiting instructors and furnishing teaching materials. During the four-month training course food, lodging, clothing, transportation, and salaries of the Corpsmen are paid by the Army, but when they are assigned to villages "the school expenses and the corpsmen's salary is paid by the Government of Iran Plan Organization from the village primary Education Fund of the Budget."<sup>1</sup>

The villagers also contribute to the program financially. The funds collected from villagers are spent for construction of school buildings in the villages. No foreign financial or technical aid is given for this program.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 24.



The statistics on the activities of the Education Corps, as stated in the report of the Iranian representatives submitted to the World Congress of Ministers of Education in 1956, indicate that until then a total of 14,382 Corpsmen have been sent to villages, 4,599 of which have been employed as permanent teachers after their service was over. The same report puts the number of children attending schools conducted by the Education Corps at 381,585 boys and 97,681 girls. In addition, 244,616 men and 8,084 women have attended the evening classes held by these Corpsmen.

### 3. Women's Organizations

In 1963, when the right to vote was given to women, they decided to take part in literacy campaigns and help eradicate illiteracy from among the women of the country. The Ministry of Education in that year set up the Department of Women's Educational Activities to supervise and plan for such work. Several well-known women educationists were appointed to coordinate the activities of this Department and those sponsored by the High Council of Women's Organizations.

The Department of Women's Educational Activities and the High Council of Women worked out a plan in 1965, designed to provide educational opportunities for illiterate females of the country. The aim as stated in this plan was, besides combating illiteracy among women, to train them in

"health education, home-making, civic duties, and vocational skills which they need for their jobs."<sup>1</sup>

The activities concerned with women's literacy are divided between the two organizations. The High Council of Women's Organizations has the following responsibilities:

1. To encourage qualified women to teach in the literacy classes and to seek their cooperation in enlisting more people in teaching such classes.
2. To provide funds to pay teachers and traffic fees to the people who voluntarily teach in the classes.
3. To encourage illiterate women to attend the literacy classes.
4. To pay for equipment, supplies and materials used in the classes.
5. To provide suitable place for literacy classes in the areas where no school building exist.<sup>2</sup>

The Department of Women's Educational Activities is responsible for the following:

1. To establish training classes for prospective teachers of literacy classes.
2. To make available school buildings for the literacy classes to be held in the evenings.
3. To arrange time-tables and to prepare textbooks.
4. To advise and guide teachers and evaluate their work wherever necessary.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ministry of Education, A Tentative Five-Year Plan in Literacy and Education for Adults in Iran (mimeographed) (Unpublished: n.d.), p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

The two organizations agreed on shared responsibilities such as inspection, guidance, supervision, collection of statistics and making proposals in the course of work.

The activities of the two organizations have so far been mostly limited to urban areas, but another plan is under consideration and promises the formation of Women's Education Corps for rural areas. The statistics on classes held by the two organizations indicate that in 1965 a total of 24,000 women have attended 867 classes.

#### 4. The Experimental Projects in Literacy Training

A significant indication of the serious intention of the government to improve the conditions of adults in rural areas was the experimental projects conducted on literacy training. In 1964, the government decided to select some areas and start experimental projects in literacy training on people between 12 and 45 years of age. If the outcomes of these projects prove to be desirable the plan was to extend them to other areas of the country. The selective programs are being carried at present in the two areas of Fars Province and Qazvin.

For the project in Qazvin, first a committee of highly respected people and those with good reputation interested in social welfare was organized. Then a survey was carried on to find out the number of illiterates in the locality. Two other steps were taken before the project

was started: one was preparation of teachers to teach in literacy classes, and the second motivating people to participate in the program. To achieve the first a short course was given to all public elementary school teachers and voluntary individuals in the locality. For publicizing the program and motivating people two procedures were chosen: first, many of the religious leaders made speeches encouraging people to take part in the literacy campaign, and second the members of the committee, by personal prodding, made the illiterate adults register in classes.

The project is now being carried on and according to the data supplied by the Iranian Report to the World Congress of the Ministers of Education in 1965, a total of 124 classes in Qazvin area with 10,000 adults were involved in the first year of this project. The number of illiterate adults in these two areas according to the survey was 140,000.<sup>1</sup>

##### 5. Tribal Education

Tribes form about 15 percent of the total rural population of Iran. The tribesmen seldom visit cities and lack access to many of its advantages. A large proportion of the tribal people live in a migratory way. Their basic means of livelihood is husbandary, cattle breeding

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<sup>1</sup>Ministry of Education, A Report on the Literacy Campaigns in Iran (in Persian), (Tehran: 1965), p. 18.

and dry farming, but the most primitive techniques are used for these purposes. They often have to cover long distances for their water supply. The standard of sanitation and hygiene is very low and communicable diseases are common among them. They have little familiarity with the administrative machinery of the modern society. Keeping records of births, deaths, and marriages has little meaning to them.<sup>1</sup>

The tribal population of Iran consists of Qashqai, Bavir Ahmadi, Mamassani, Khamseh, Bakhtiari, Kurds, Lurs, Baluchi, Turkomani, Arabs and Azarbajejani tribes. The first five tribes are nomadic and the others are semi-nomadic.

The rate of illiteracy among these tribes is very high and only a few of the tribesmen, usually those related to tribal head families, can read and write. Superstition dominates tribal thinking, and there is a prevalent belief in predestination among them.

To eradicate illiteracy from among the tribesmen, the government in recent years has started a project which is limited to Fars Province: Qashqai, Bakhtiari, Bovir Ahmadi, Mamassani, and Khamseh tribes. The project is carried out by the tribal elementary teachers who have been trained, since 1951, in the Tribal Normal School of Shiraz. No statistics are available for the classes held

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<sup>1</sup>Ministry of Education, Tribal Education in Iran, (Tehran: Kayhan Presse, 1965), p. 3.

under this project.

The main objective of this program is to teach tribesmen the rudiments of literacy, and create strong bonds of national unity among them by making Persian language the unified spoken language. Many tribes speak in special dialects of Persian or other languages.

#### 6. Other Programs

Since 1954, the Iranian Army has conducted a number of anti-illiteracy classes in its military units for conscripts. Before 1961 these classes used a textbook prepared by the Army, but since then textbooks prepared by the Ministry of Education were used. Those who taught in these classes were military men and they were trained by the Department of Adult Education. According to Overseas Consultants, Inc., "91 percent of the soldiers who entered the Army were illiterates and approximately 95 percent of the illiterate soldiers were taught to read after three or four months."<sup>1</sup>

A Persian source indicates that, annually, "about 100,000 young Iranian soldiers learn to read and write as well as the essentials of arithmetic,"<sup>2</sup> in these classes. It should be noted that most of the soldiers come from rural areas and this, obviously, affects the life of rural

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<sup>1</sup>Overseas Consultants, Inc., Report on Seven Year Development Plan, Vol. II, (New York: 1949), p. 99.

<sup>2</sup>Ministry of Information, Iran Today, Vol. II, Serial No. 12 (Tehran: n.d.), p. 27.

areas to a great extent.

The Iranian Imperial Gendarmeries has also sponsored a literacy program for the gendarmes with the assistance of the USOM/Iran and U.S. Gendarmerie Mission (1954). The program is still carried on by the Iranian Gendarmerie with the cooperation of the Ministry of Education. According to the latest statistics a total of 8,000 gendarmes attended these classes in 1964.<sup>1</sup>

Similar classes have been conducted by the Police for the illiterate policemen and the convicts in prisons. There the convicts are taught to read and write and are trained in arts and crafts.

Mention should be made of the two recent programs of the Ministries of Health and Agriculture for rural areas. These two programs are: the Health Corps, and the Development Corps. The two programs function in isolation, and no coordination exists between the activities of these and other programs for rural areas.

#### B. PRIVATE PROGRAMS

Private programs in adult education are mainly of two types: industrial and private night schools. "Industrial night schools and adult extension classes are organized under the administration of the Ministry of Labor under a Council of Ministers' decree dated 22 Tir 1326(1947)

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<sup>1</sup>Ministry of Education, A Report on the Literacy Campaigns in Iran, op. cit., p. 15.

which states that all factories must provide classes, supply teachers, pay the wages of the illiterate workers during the time they attend, and pay a bonus of 5 percent of the salary to all workers who study for one year and obtain a certificate indicating that they are literate."<sup>1</sup>

These classes are supervised by the Department of Adult Education and use the texts prepared by it. Small factories usually do not follow this decree and neglect it, but in large industries which require skilled people these classes are regularly held, and literacy or educational attainment is prerequisite to promotion. Many of the workers in these industries come from rural areas. Statistics on these classes indicate that in 1965, a total of 32,200 workers attended these classes.

Private night schools are established by private individuals, mostly teachers. These schools offer courses for beginners and advanced courses for those who wish to continue their education at the secondary level. The standard of teaching for beginners in these night schools is higher than that of the government evening schools.

The number of the private night schools in 1965 was 2,000. According to a law passed in recent years, each private night school must have one literacy class for which no fee should be charged. These schools are limited to cities. Statistics on the number of adults attending these

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<sup>1</sup>Overseas Consultants, Inc., op. cit., p. 100.



schools are not available.

#### UNESCO'S PROGRAMS

UNESCO has been very active in Iran in recent years and has helped in the literacy programs carried out there in many respects. It extends help to the Education Corps, Teacher Training College of Karaj financially, and supports the Adult Education Department in preparing materials for evening schools with its contributions. UNESCO's experts and advisors, also work in the Ministry of Education and assist the Ministry in planning its educational programs.

One of the most valuable programs of UNESCO in Iran was started in 1964, an account of which is given in the following quotation:

Iran is one of the five countries selected by UNESCO to participate in a pilot educational experiment to be carried out with United Nations' financial support. The aim is to evaluate the effects of an intensive literacy campaign on economic development, and to apply the experience gained to other areas. Three regions of Iran have been chosen, all of which are the scene of important new economic developments — Khuzistan, where development centres round the Dez Dam; Ispahan, where industrial expansion is taking place; and Mazandaran, a particularly important province as regards land reform on account of its comparatively dense rural population. The method used will be to mobilize all the region's educational resources, including mass media, in an intensive literacy campaign linked with improved vocational training.<sup>1</sup>

UNESCO also organized the 1965 World Congress of Ministers of Education on Eradication of Illiteracy in

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<sup>1</sup>The Iranian Coordinating Committee of WCME, op. cit., p. 68.

Tehran upon the invitation of the Shah of Iran. In this Congress "the efforts made and results obtained in Member States, and the activities undertaken internationally were discussed."<sup>1</sup>

One of the proposals at the opening session of the Congress by the Shah of Iran was that each country should devote part of its military budget to UNESCO to start an international literacy campaign. On May 2, 1966, the Shah took the first step in this respect by sending one-day budget of the army to UNESCO.

To summarize the activities of the present adult education programs in Iran, Table 9 lists the various agencies that concern themselves with literacy, and gives statistics on the number of people that were involved in these programs in 1964-65. This table, in fact, is a statistical summary of what was mentioned in this chapter about the various activities in adult education.

### III. CONCLUSION

The increase in the volume of adult education activities in rural Iran and certain recent trends such as the establishment of the Education Corps, Health Corps, Development Corps, Experimental Projects, Women's Department, and UNESCO's programs, described in this chapter, are indications of the government's serious concern to improve the rural conditions. However, the present adult education activities

TABLE 9

NUMBER OF PERSONS WHO ATTENDED LITERACY  
CLASSES HELD BY VARIOUS AGENCIES IN  
1964-1965  
(In Thousands) (1)

Name of the Program	Number of Classes	Urban Areas		Rural Areas		Total
		Men	Women	Men	Women	
General Department of Adult Education	19,500	261	91	45	7	404
Education Corps	11,841	0	0	135	8	143
Women's Organization	867	0	24	0	0	24
Experimental Project	474	1	0	10	0	11
Tribal Education	-	-	-	-	-	-
Army	-	19	0	43	0	62
Gendarmerie	-	9	0	0	0	9
Police and Prisons	-	3	0	0	0	3
UNESCO	-	-	-	-	-	-

(1) Sources: Ministry of Education, A Report on the Literacy Campaigns in Iran, op. cit., pp. 15-18; and Ministry of Education, Three Years Activity in Education, op. cit., p. 7.

in rural Iran lack several important factors which should be considered for sound achievement. Before we can embark on a discussion of such factors it is only appropriate that we look into what is happening in other countries in the field of adult education. This is what the following chapter will do.

## CHAPTER IV

### ADULT EDUCATION IN SOME OTHER COUNTRIES

One of the basic tenets of democracy is that equality requires a common foundation of knowledge. The advanced countries have expanded their primary and secondary education to include the majority of their population and they also have emphasized adult education in the belief that through reading people learn about human rights, and become more capable of self-improvement, self-fulfillment, and enlightened, independent action. They have considered it essential to attack illiteracy and eradicate it as a condition of progress. In fact, many of them have been successful in accomplishing such a task. Soviet Russia is an example. "Fifty years ago, Russia was among the backward nations with a high rate of illiteracy. Today, in the Soviet Union, less than 10 percent of the population is illiterate,"<sup>1</sup> an improvement that is the direct result of establishing adult education programs and expansion of schooling.

In this chapter an attempt is made to survey the

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<sup>1</sup>Irwin Isenberg, The Drive Against Illiteracy (New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1964), p.15.

efforts of some countries which have similar conditions as in Iran, in the field of adult education. They are described in this chapter as they might suggest valuable ideas and approaches for Iran.

### I. THE PHILIPPINES

The Philippines is mainly an agricultural country. About eighty percent of its population of 24 million (1958) live in the rural areas, and they constitute the backbone of the nation.

One of the most serious problems which the Philippines had to tackle after the Pacific War in 1941 was the task of reconstruction and unification.<sup>1</sup> The population of the Philippines are derived from diverse nationalities. Along with this problem, there was another problem, namely, the high rate of illiteracy estimated at 51.2 percent in 1939.<sup>2</sup> The people of the Philippines like the people of all the under-developed countries, especially in rural areas, suffered from poverty, disease and ignorance. Agriculture which was their mainstay was largely primitive in its forms and practices. In the words of Isabelo Tupas, the superintendent of schools in the Philippines, the people were engaged "in the same age-old occupations" and used "the same antiquated instrument of labour"; their

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<sup>1</sup>From Dr. Habib Kurani's notes taken during a world trip studying the problems of education and rural development in 1957, Values Derived from the Commission's Trip Around the World, (Mimeographed), p. 18.

<sup>2</sup>UNESCO, Progress of Literacy in Various Countries, op. cit., p. 122.

homes were "painfully uniform, and generally bare of facilities of health, sanitation, and comforts."<sup>1</sup>

In answer to the above problems, and in order to better the conditions of the people, the government of the Philippines, immediately after the inauguration of the Republic in 1949, decided to conduct adult education activities on a large scale. The responsibility was given to the Bureau of Public Schools which opened the Division of Adult and Community Education.

The objectives which underlined the philosophy of the adult education movement in the Philippines were two:

1. The eradication of illiteracy and the promotion of better ways of life for those of the population who have not yet received the benefits of education.
2. The improvement of community life in all its aspects, through the provision of vocational, recreational, social, and other educational opportunities for adults to make themselves more efficient citizens.<sup>2</sup>

To attain the above mentioned objectives two distinct courses were offered: a course for functional literacy and another for continuing education. The course in functional literacy was given in adult literacy classes and the each-one-teach-one plan or as it is called in the Philippines the "Little-teacher" plan.

Under the little teacher plan a school child was

<sup>1</sup>Isabelo Tupas, Philippines Rural Problems and the Community School (Manila: 1955), p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Bureau of Public Schools, Adult Education in the Philippines (A pamphlet), (Manila: n.d.), p. 2.

supposed to teach his or her illiterate parents or members of the family to read and write. This meeting together of child and parent for a common purpose was regarded as a useful way of giving the family a new outlook and a new interest, and creating a new bond.

The students, especially those in secondary schools, were encouraged and in some communities where the number of illiterates was high, required to teach one adult illiterate for a certain period of time during the school year. The adult pupil could be a servant, a neighbour, or a friend.

The each-one-teach-one plan had special significance to the Government of the Philippines. It could reach more people, especially those adults thwarted by their false pride. It was effective and economical, and most of all through the interaction of the child and adult, the authoritarian spirit in the family was diminished.

The ordinary classes conducted for adults also used the each-one-teach-one method. The duration of the course in these classes was for 60 hours, where emphasis was on functional literacy.

The production of reading materials of current interest to the adults, research and evaluation, and the training of adult teachers and supervisors, were of utmost importance. In preparing the teachers modern techniques and procedures were followed. They were also trained to conduct surveys on the needs, problems, recreation, number of families, occupation, income, percentage of literacy,



death rate and the like in the communities they were going to work in. The teachers were also asked to help in preparing instructional materials.

This adult education movement in the Philippines caused the development of a new concept which led to the launching of the community school program in 1949. The community school program in the Philippines has been one of the most successful experiments in the field of adult education. It is the belief of the competent observers that the social, economic and political life of the Philippines has been changed because of the emergence of the community school there.

Since then the achievements and success of adult and community education in the Philippines have been great. The community school is responsible for a great proportion of the success in the field of adult education. This school is defined by the Bureau of the Public Schools of the Philippines as follows:

The community school is one whose program is aimed at promoting the optimum growth and development of the school child, giving basic education to the out-of-school youths and adults, and helping effect improvement in all aspects of community living.<sup>1</sup>

The community school takes into consideration the mores and traditions of the people. It helps people use their leisure time profitably and inculcates the spirit of citizenship in them by helping each individual to realize

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

and acquire his worth and stature not in isolation but in relation with the group of which he is a part. It also encourages the people to participate in the activities of the school. The adults are encouraged to visit the classrooms, to exchange views with the teachers and the children, to serve as resource persons on topics about local conditions, and to observe the activities done in schools. The interest of the people in schools is thus aroused by their direct involvement.

The improvement of health and sanitation is another function of the community school. The teachers and students go out to the community to render public service. They show the people how to keep clean.

Because of the important role that the teachers play in the community school, they are carefully selected and prepared. They must know the conditions, needs, and problems of rural life. They must know the aspirations of rural people, their customs, their labor, their fears, their frustration, and their potentials. It is for this reason that the teachers must preferably be from the rural areas. Having all these qualifications, they are selected for a special training period. During the training period which can last for as long as four years, their beliefs, attitudes and competencies are developed, and they are trained in research and evaluation.<sup>1</sup> Also in-service

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<sup>1</sup>This paragraph is based on Bureau of Public Schools, The Community School of the Philippines (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1954), pp. 60-65.

education programs are designed every year for them, in which they can participate and exchange views on their teaching difficulties.<sup>1</sup>

With these functions of the community school elaborated and accepted in the Philippines, there is little wonder then, when one reads in UNESCO's publications of 1962 that that rate of illiteracy in the Philippines has been reduced from 51.2 percent to 25 percent. It is evident that the Philippines owes a great deal of this success to its community school.

## II. PUERTO RICO

Puerto Rico is an overpopulated island. Within an area of 3,435 square miles, live 2.3 million persons, causing a density of 674 persons per square mile.<sup>2</sup> This constitutes one of the most critical problems of the country.

Before the onset of the modern era in 1940, the Puerto Ricans were helpless. The majority of the people were suffering from malnutrition. They were poor, ill-fed, diseased and ignorant.

Agriculture upon which the island depended for existence was very primitive. Industry was limited to a few big concerns who exploited the masses. Puerto Rico

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>UNESCO, World Survey of Education (Vol. III; New York: International Documents Service, 1961), p.1400.

was in a vicious circle of under-development. "There was a rich elite, and far below it an impoverished and sickly peasantry."<sup>1</sup> About forty percent of the total population was illiterate.

After 1940, with the election of Louis Munroz Marin, a new era for Puerto Rico began. An industrialization program known as "Operation Bootstrap" was launched. Some 500 new factories were established which brought about rise in the average family income and produced marked changes in the socio-economic structure and the living pattern of the island.

Along with industrialization a new educational program for adults was started. The idea of 'self-help' was introduced to the people, and the community members were encouraged to take an active creative work of nation building.

In the last two decades Puerto Rico has achieved a break-through of the vicious circle of under-development, and its people are now enjoying an increasing prosperity. Many factors have played their part in this rapid progress. Adam Curle mentions the following factors as being responsible for Puerto Rico's extraordinary social and economic development:

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<sup>1</sup>Adam Curle, Educational Strategy for Developing Societies (London: Tavistock Publications, 1963), p. 78.

The massive emigration to the USA; direct financial help and highly favorable conditions for trade; the large amount of American investment. It can be said in relation to the last point at least that investment would not have been on nearly so big a scale in a declining economy—circular causation can move in an upward as well as a downward spiral. But a major factor pushing the spiral upwards appears to have been the release into the economy, through such schemes as Operation Bootstrap, of a greater proportion of the population, and the widespread education which has enabled them to take an increasingly competent part in it.<sup>1</sup>

In Puerto Rico there has been a notable effort to provide adults and adolescents with adequate education through evening schools. These schools consist of grades one to eight including classes for illiterates and directed especially to rural people. One of the programs in this respect is the agricultural Extension Service which gives instruction and practical demonstrations in agriculture and home economics with the object of increasing the income and standard of living of the rural population. The program "aims at promoting the social, cultural, recreational, intellectual and spiritual life of rural people."<sup>2</sup>

Another program in this respect is the 'Division of Community Education', which aims at the development of the social and economic life of rural population by creating a desire among them to use their own resources in the solution of their problems through cooperative action.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>2</sup>H.W. Howes, Fundamental, Adult, Literacy and Community Education in the West Indies (Paris: UNESCO, 1955), p. 32.

The selection, training and supervision of teachers in these programs and others were of utmost importance. Great effort was made to find suitable men from among rural people, men who knew the rural areas and rural people. The selected ones were given a three-month course of training, every year followed by refresher courses of in-service training. The training of teachers is one factor which has been influential in the success of Adult education programs, but there have been other factors sharing in this success. These factors are chiefly motivation of adults to participate in classes, provision of materials based upon the life of adults and their interests, needs, and habits, and carrying research. Each of these phases were given proper emphasis in Puerto Rico's adult education programs. Dr H.W. Howes gives the following remarks on the materials prepared in Puerto Rico for adults:

In Puerto Rico there has been a notable effort to provide materials based upon the life of the adult his interests, needs and habits. Among these are posters which initiate the reader in reading. They are preferred to books as they are the product of the student's own activity, composed by him and written in his own vocabulary. It has been noted that they facilitate good reading habits, because the attitude of the reader towards the material is a receptive one. Interest in reading is thereby promoted in a natural manner, and the posters add and augment the vocabulary and develop correct forms of reading. One of the chief problems of most people engaged in literacy campaigns is the lack of provision of suitable reading material when a degree of literacy has been established. In Puerto Rico, a number of excellent readers have been specially produced, and all on topics of interest to the adult.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

## III. TURKEY

Turkey is mainly an agricultural country. Three-fourths of its population live in rural areas. Before the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 by Kamal Ataturk, more than 92 percent of its population were illiterates. The health conditions of the people was very bad, and they were suffering from diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, trachoma and the like.

There was a large gap between the 'masses' and the 'intellectuals'. The intellectuals, though small in number, were the privileged and educated. This gap was a hinderance to the democratic way of life in Turkey.

Agriculture was very primitive and industries were limited. The national income was very low and people were poor. Facilities for recreation and self-development, particularly in the rural areas of the country, did not exist. People spent their leisure time in unconstructive activities.

With the establishment of the Republic the conditions were changed. Many industries were established. Education received special emphasis from the Republic Government. "John Dewy, Paul Monroe, and other well known educators were asked to come and introduce the latest educational ideas."<sup>1</sup> To combat illiteracy night schools for adults were opened everywhere. The government announced that jobs

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<sup>1</sup>Frank C. Laubach, Teaching the World To Read (New York: Friendship Press, 1947), p. 31.

would go only to those who could read and write.

Since the establishment of the Turkish Republic many attempts have been made to decrease the rate of illiteracy among the population of Turkey. A survey of these attempts is presented below.

#### A. National Schools

The first government in the Republican regime paid special attention to the needs of the adult population for increasing the level of literacy among the people. The Minister of Education at that time "sent a circular to provinces requesting the governors to take the initiative in stimulating the interest of the people in education, extending educational activities to people of all ages and classes and creating the necessary organization."<sup>1</sup> The rate of illiteracy among the Turkish people at that time was very high, about 91 per cent.

The scripts in use at that time were very difficult to learn. In order to increase the level of literacy, Turkey had to find a way to overcome this difficulty. In 1928 a new Latin alphabet was designed, "and stationary and mobile courses for teaching the new alphabet were opened for adults on a basis of compulsory attendance."<sup>2</sup> At the beginning not only the teachers but all civil servants and

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<sup>1</sup>Nuseret Koymen as quoted by Turhan Oguzkan, Adult Education in Turkey (Paris: UNESCO, 1955), p.18.

<sup>2</sup>Turhan Oguzkan, op. cit., p. 18.



volunteers who had learned the new alphabet were employed as instructors. In the first year of the program more than one million attended these courses, in 20,000 institutions called 'national schools' created for this purpose.

National schools were of two kinds, stationary and mobile, and were of two grades: A and B. The schools which were opened in regular school buildings in cities, towns or villages were called stationary, and those which operated for a certain period of time in villages without schools were mobile. Stationary and mobile schools of type A were for those who did not know how to read and write, or who knew only the Arabic alphabet. The purpose of B schools was to further the education of those who had finished the A school. The course in B schools contained reading, composition, arithmetic, health and civics. Teachers of all national schools were trained in the content, material and methods of teaching. In case of difficulty, supervisors and administrative personnel were available to help.

In preparing the primers for these schools special attention was given to the needs of the adults, and separate readers were prepared some for city people and others for villagers. A magazine and several simple readers were also prepared for those who finished the courses of the national schools.

## B. Farmers' Education

In order to raise the standard of education and skills of the farmers in Turkey, special courses were offered jointly by the Ministries of Agriculture and Education. Agricultural schools, various agricultural centres and model farms opened centres for farmers' education. The courses given for adults in these centres covered "a variety of subjects including sericulture, olive growing, poultry raising, seed selection, canning, dairy products, horticulture, forest protection, soil conservation and many others."<sup>1</sup>

Another approach in spreading modern agricultural methods in villages was the special importance given to the classes in agriculture in the Teachers' Training Schools for young village teachers. These schools were situated in the agricultural regions in order to provide practical opportunities for work in agriculture. The teachers, after the termination of their training period were expected to help the villagers improve their agriculture, besides their regular teaching jobs.

## C. Technical Travelling Courses

One of the most successful adult education programs in Turkey was the Technical Travelling course program for villagers, especially women. These were first established in 1939 and the number has gradually increased

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

since then. They offer courses "in carpentry and farriery to equip the farmer with the necessary skills and tools and to train village craftsmen who could operate workshops in the villages."<sup>1</sup> The courses for village women included sewing, embroidery, child care, and home economics.

The teachers were graduates of vocational institutions who were given a course of one or two months on the techniques of working with adults. The course was for eight hours a day totalling forty-four hours per week for a period of 28 weeks. Such courses usually began in October and ended in April, a time when villagers are less busy. When a course was completed in a village, it was moved to another one. One-fourth of the working hours of these courses was devoted to teaching literacy to villagers.

The experiment in Turkey has been so helpful to villagers that "the Ministry of Education receives hundreds of requests from villagers all over the country"<sup>2</sup> asking for it.

#### D. University Programs

On the university level there are some good attempts to improve the conditions of adults. The University of Istanbul organizes evening courses for adults and arranges "University Weeks." During this week a group of professors

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

✕ <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

take trips to villages to study their features, make investigations and give lectures for the villagers. The University professors discuss with the villagers their different problems and give them suggestions on various problem. The Ministry of Education makes use of the results of investigations done by university professors.

On the whole, the adult education programs in Turkey have contributed much for the development of the national life of the people of Turkey. The rise of literacy in Turkey illustrates the progress that has come about through the adult education activities. An account of this progress is given by Irwin Isenberg when speaking about Turkey: "Literacy has risen from less than 10 percent when the republic was founded in 1923 to nearly 60 percent at the present time."<sup>1</sup>

#### IV. MEXICO

The Federal Government of Mexico initiated its adult education activities in 1922 through an intensive campaign of primary school building for the peasantry. Hundreds of schools were established in which reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, history and civics were taught in elementary form. But as the schools did not aim at adults in their teaching, the Ministry of Education set up "cultural missions" or travelling schools in 1925.

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<sup>1</sup>Irwin Isenberg, op. cit., p. 16.

The aim in establishing such cultural missions was to improve the quality of teaching and the way of life in the rural communities.

In 1943, the cultural missions were revised creating three kinds of cultural missions:

- a. Rural missions for the poorer rural districts.
- b. Special missions for the poorest districts, and suburbs of the capital.
- c. Mobile missions, with station wagons equipped with radios, loud-speakers, microphones, and libraries.<sup>1</sup>

Since then, the work of these missions became clearer. In the words of Dr. Howes, their aim was to

teach people of the rural districts how to fertilize and tend the soil, select seeds, irrigate the fields and improve cattle raising. They give instruction in hygiene and the improvement of home life, teach housebuilding, furniture making, construction of the hen houses, planning of vegetable gardens and orchards, nutrition, the making of simple clothes, organization of small home industries, of child care, home nursing, etc. Cultural missions also foster social and recreational activities, games, and sports, dancing, music, singing, theatre, recitation, reading, popular lectures, film shows, radio, etc. They conduct campaigns against illiteracy, create popular libraries and organize social centres. The heads of these missions all<sup>2</sup> have a personal knowlege of rural life problems.

The teaching program in the cultural missions lasts from one to five years or more, depending on the number and nature of the problems to be solved. The great

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<sup>1</sup>H.W. Howes, op. cit., p. 38.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

problem in Mexico is the provision of enough missions with well-equipped missionaries. If the missionaries stay too long in one place, other areas may be untouched for a long period. The solution found to this problem was to leave behind at least one member of the mission team permanently to do the follow-up work, when teams of missionaries move to other local communities.

There were other experiments in adult education in Mexico the most important of which was the one conducted in 1945. In that year it was estimated that there were 10,500,000 Mexicans, or about half of the population, who were illiterate. The then President of the federal government of Mexico issued a decree that all illiterates between six and forty years of age must learn to read and write and that all literates should be responsible for teaching them. Dr. Laubach gives an account of this decree by writing: "A law required every Mexican to learn or teach or pay a fine. Both the President and his wife taught. Ten million sets of lessons were published for free distribution."<sup>1</sup>

A chain responsibility was organized which made each governor responsible for his state, each mayor for his municipal area. Under these came the school officials, heads of farming communities, officers of army posts, anyone with legal or moral authority. Thus, 7,000 points of contact were established through which instructions from

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<sup>1</sup>Frank C. Laubach, op. cit., p. 31.

the capital could reach everywhere.<sup>1</sup>

To provide primers the newspapers lent their printing machines to the government during the off hours, and the government paid only the printers' extra wages.

The public response to the anti-illiteracy programs was great. Churches and clubs, labor and employer groups formed volunteer teaching corps and university students offered to teach the illiterate adults.

It has been estimated that after the first year of the literacy campaign, 7,000,000 students were enrolled in the anti-illiteracy classes.<sup>2</sup> The example of Mexico demonstrates the effect of cooperative efforts and clarity of purpose in improving the standard of the people.

#### V. CONCLUSION

This chapter attempted to trace the growth of adult education in some countries other than Iran, and to describe its various forms. The selected countries are in many ways similar to Iran; all are agricultural countries, all have more than two-thirds of their population living in rural areas, and all have had high rates of illiteracy. Then all these countries have undertaken ambitious programs to cut down the number of their adult illiterates. These programs and the experiments that have been conducted

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<sup>1</sup>Taken from Aldana Benigono, The Educational System of the Philippines (Manila: University Publishing Co., Inc., 1949), p. 285.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 286.

might suggest some valuable ideas to Iran.

By way of summary one can say that the results attained in these countries have been due largely to three things:

1. Training of teachers has been emphasized by all the countries considered in this chapter. It is clear also that these countries have emphasized the selection of teachers of rural background or others who are interested in working in rural areas.

2. Preparation of learning has been especially emphasized in Puerto Rico, where teaching materials are prepared in regard to the life of the adults, their interests, needs and habits.

3. One of the problems of the adult education movement is persuading adults to learn. The experiences of the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Turkey and especially Mexico show that the success of such programs has been largely due to the motivation of the people to participate in the programs.

What can Iran learn from these different countries? This is the question that will be considered in the next chapter.



## CHAPTER V

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The development of Iran calls for the active and productive participation of millions of illiterate adults existing in rural areas of the country, in the social, economic, and political life of the nation. The need for the emancipation of these people is urgent, and should be met through the extension of education. The educational system must provide for the educational needs of both the young generation who have not yet begun to work, and the generation that have already become adult without having had the benefit of the essential minimum of education. To quote the World Congress of Ministers of Education held in Tehran:

There is no contradiction between the development of the school system on the one hand and of literacy work on the other. Schooling and literacy supplement and support each other. National education plans should include schooling for children and literacy training for adults as parallel elements.<sup>1</sup>

If education is to become a progressive force in a community, it must be directed to adults as well as to children. It is the adults who hold the power in their

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<sup>1</sup>UNESCO, World Congress of Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy, op. cit., p. 2.

hands, make important decisions and to a great extent guide the fate of the children. Consequently, it is upon this part of a community that a considerable part of educational efforts should be spent, otherwise the work of the school-teachers may have little lasting value.

The vicious circle of poverty and ignorance which characterizes the rural areas in Iran can only be broken by liquidation of the high rate of illiteracy found there, through the extension of adult education activities. The rural people are ignorant, bound by superstition and tradition. They are sick, unskilled, oppressed and uninterested in national life. Iran cannot hope to make significant progress when so large a number of its people are illiterates. Therefore, the first recommendation is to increase all efforts for the expansion of both school education and adult education in the rural areas of Iran.

But to achieve this purpose there are various other conditions to be met and efforts to be made. In the rest of this chapter these conditions and efforts will be the main centre of attention.

#### A. Planning

The success of adult education programs, or for this matter any program, demands careful planning. Such planning leads to more effective results and makes the successful execution of the activities easier; it saves wastage of energies and resources, it facilitates dividing

the work among a number of organizations, and it makes it possible to prepare much of the materials needed in advance.

Adult education requires the cooperation of various government departments and a great variety of private undertakings and private groups. The activities of these different departments and organizations involve a delicate problem of coordination.

One of the most severe handicaps of the present adult education activities in Iran is the lack of proper planning and coordination. There is no specialized organization to provide the required planning. No research has been done to determine the needs of the communities. The villager in most places is approached at various times by the representatives of various government agencies, and he is often confused. The Health Corps program of the Ministry of Health and the Development Corps program of the Ministry of Agriculture are two examples. These Corps carry out their activities in isolation, each aiming at individual aspects of rural life. It is a commonplace knowledge now that the economic aspects cannot be detached from the broader social aspects; life is basically a unit. Uncoordinated efforts may not only be ineffective, but it can very well be a waste of the country's resources.

The rural scene, therefore, must be looked at as a whole, and efforts to raise its standard of living should be carefully planned and coordinated. The World Congress of Ministers of Education commenting on this problem has

recommended that

It would seem useful, however, to set up a national literacy centre or service, to which the planning team responsible for the interdisciplinary studies needed in drawing up the programmes would belong. In this way the various elements of a functional literacy programme will be fitted into a plan which defines its successive phases, itemizes its components, develops a strategy in relation to its aims and tactics in relation to its resources.<sup>1</sup>

The writer believes that this policy, as recommended by the World Congress, should be adopted and a planning office within the General Department of Adult Education should immediately be created. The following are some suggested functions for this office:

- a. A capable and dedicated staff should undertake planning the different programs.
- b. This staff should set up the program schedules, the general procedure of action, and the budget estimates.
- c. It should be the source from which general suggestions and guidelines for the preparation of materials, training of teachers, and other things related to adult education programs, are disseminated.
- d. It should be responsible for research and special studies needed for the adult education programs.
- e. In order that programs may be well planned and effectively coordinated, other ministries or organizations carrying out adult programs should be personally represented in this office. If this is not possible, the office should always be in contact with them.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

## B. Motivation and Publicity

One of the major needs for the success of adult education is publicizing the program and motivating the adults to participate in it. The desire to be literate exists among vast numbers of illiterate adults, but they are often ashamed to admit they are illiterate; besides fear of failure or of ridicule often prevents them from doing so. The teacher or the adult leader must be aware of these points in approaching adults. They must have a thorough understanding of adult nature: why do adults join social groups? what are their needs and interests? why do they choose certain activities and not others? How do they learn?

Programs, in Iran, are often based on what an individual or small group think people ought to be interested in, rather than on what they really want and need. Besides, the publicity programs are mostly limited to cities and do not reach the rural areas. The result is described by the Overseas Consultants in its 1949 Report regarding adult night schools:

Students enter, stay a few nights, and leave. Except in a few large centres there seems to be no continuing of work. Some schools which are supposed to be operating are in fact closed. Children of nine and ten years of age are enrolled in classes with men of forty. The content and the method of teaching is generally poor even for children and is entirely inappropriate for adults.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Overseas Consultants, Inc., op. cit., p. 99.

When such a situation exists, it is no wonder if the programs are received with indifference and apathy from the people. Of all the needs and problems of adult education, the psychological one is perhaps the most important. It lies on the shoulder of the leaders of the adult education programs, and those who are in a position of leadership, to find ways and means for creating the desire, and the drive on the part of adults to learn. To do this nation-wide programs of intensive propaganda should be made.

Dr Laubach suggests the following in this regard:

A month before a literacy campaign opens the government or mission that is to sponsor it may plaster posters on village walls, printing in a vivid and attractive fashion useful information about the most burning needs of the villagers: the latest prices of the commodities they wish to sell or buy, where they can get better plows or seeds for less money, how to get legal help without being robbed in the litigation, how to prevent rats from destroying their crops — an information that is badly needed by the villagers. If only two or three in the village can read these posters they will gain prestige among the people and make the others eager to learn to read.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time every contact with the world outside the village must be encouraged. There are a large number of people who are extremely helpful in this respect:

1. The road builders. Any improvement in transport may make an impact. The quality of animals used for transportation, jeeps, a cheap postal service as well as better roads may make a difference, but the road is the clearest

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<sup>1</sup>Frank C. Laubach, op. cit., p. 114.

in its influence. It brings travellers to the villages who talk of distant or little known places arousing curiosity in what there is on the other side of the mountains and what is to be seen in the nearest town. Villagers themselves begin to travel and bring back tales which arouse further interest. Very soon trade develops and this creates willingness in the villagers to learn in order to be able to check the record of these dealings.

2. The second group are the traders who are often the contact of the villagers with cities. Once trade is developed or a shop is opened in a village, the question of keeping accounts arises which would create a desire in the villager to learn. Furthermore, the earning of money to enable him to spend at the shop, encourages the villager either to travel to the market himself or to sell his products to a dealer. In either case he is severely handicapped if he cannot read and write. This creates the needed readiness in him which could motivate him to join literacy classes.

3. Government officials such as agricultural extension officers, nurses and others who arrive, occasionally, at villages with posters, leaflets and pamphlets. These should be composed in such a way that they arouse the curiosity of the villagers to know what is in them, and the villagers who can read assume prestige in the eyes of other villagers many of whom would be moved to imitate him.

4. There has always been the desire to read the Koran. The religious approach in motivating rural people is very significant, and should be considered as a basic tool in creating the desire to read. Furthermore, there are other incentives that can be resorted to. Elections and the reading material that appear with them also make the people want to read. Some parents are spurred on by a desire to keep up with their children, and at a later age are anxious to read letters from their children who are either serving in the army or are working in towns.

5. Finally, radios and motion pictures should be used to urge the adults to learn. These are very effective media in this respect. Furthermore, it frequently happens that many people in a village become literate while no reading material is available. In these special circumstances schools should be asked to produce a weekly village news-sheet or newspaper written by those who can write including the children, and posted in the middle of the village for all to try to read. As there is but one copy, coloured illustrations may be used, followed by single explanatory simple sentences. The subjects may include the school activities, village news, and national affairs of interest to villagers.

### C. Procedure

A large part of the success of an adult education program depends on how classes are arranged. Because of



the difficulty in enforcing the compulsory education laws and the child labor acts in Iran, especially in rural areas, many children work during day and in the evening they join adult classes. The adults will get discouraged if they reveal ignorance of a subject or make mistakes in the presence of the youngsters. Besides, the experience of the two groups are not at the same level.

The practice of having the children and the grown ups together in one class should be discontinued. Instead it is suggested that the students of such classes be divided into two sections. If the number of students is small and does allow this division, students below 20 years of age should be seated and taught separately from the adults. When the adults are being taught, the younger group should be kept busy with other tasks so as to divert their attention from what goes on in the teaching of the adults.

The time schedule for adult classes is of utmost importance, and should be carefully planned. The dates and hours of the classes should suit the adult learners, and the children as well. The most suitable period for adult classes is from November to April. In other periods they are overworked in their fields. The appropriate time for running the adult classes is in the evening. On the whole, the school year for adults should be short and should not last more than four or five months.

The teachers should appreciate the skills and

knowledge of the illiterate person. Illiterate farmers often survive in conditions in which many literate people would fail. They are experts on crops or animals and have a wealth of knowledge including folk-tales and customs. Their surroundings often present the kind of challenge which is an education in itself. Thus the teacher should be modest not arrogant, and act with respect and understanding towards the illiterate adults. This is very essential for gaining the confidence of the adults.

#### D. Female Education

It was stated before that, according to the Sample Survey of 1963, the percentage of literacy among the rural female population was 4 percent (see Table 7). Reasons for women's illiteracy vary, the basic ones being religious prejudices, the wrong attitude of men, and their ignorance. A Moslem Iranian villager believes that women should be segregated from men and kept at home. The strict segregation of women has become an established custom. In social functions women are segregated from men; then they are not allowed to speak with strangers, especially men from cities. Many villagers oppose to the women becoming literate. They think that the expectation of a literate women would rise, and they are afraid that they would lose their dominance over their wives. In many a home, the husband's mother is unwilling to see the wife become literate because she might become unable to dominate her and rule the home. In short, the only accepted and approved role for women is home-making, although they often help men in fields and

contribute to the family's income by making carpets.

But it is precisely in home-making where women's education can have its most far-reaching effects. It is in the home that attitudes are fixed, ways of life established and traditions continued. The profound change in patterns of behaviour and expectations depends on a great part upon the attitude of the home-maker.

The crucial role that women play in the upbringing of their children, in every society whether rural or urban, makes literacy more important for them. Patterns of poverty are established early in life, thousands of children grow up in homes where education, ambition and hope are as scarce as money. Many of these children, when attending school use their parents, especially mothers, as sources of knowledge. When the mothers, or parents, are illiterate, questions from children are not encouraged, and the adults are sometimes embarrassed by their ignorance. If a woman is ignorant the family life cannot be meaningful. The Second World Conference on Adult Education in the following quotation emphasizes the importance of women education:

Education begins at home. In the family the part played by the mother is of inestimable influence; she is, indeed, an educator, and her particular needs, in this role, must be a matter of concern for adult education.<sup>1</sup>

Women's education, therefore, should have a high priority not only on social and human grounds, but because

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<sup>1</sup>UNESCO, Second World Conference on Adult Education, Education Studies and Documents, No. 46, (Paris: UNESCO, 1963), p. 13.

it is very likely that their education might be the way for removing social, cultural, and psychological barriers to the advancement of a nation. Unfortunately adult education and extension services in rural Iran have so far tended to offer disproportionately little to women.

Adam Curle in his book Educational Strategy for Developing Societies writes the following with reference to women's education:

The loss to the poor nations through the under-education and under-employment of women is so enormous as to warrant special study in any planning project. It is worth recalling that the Russians have always worked on the assumption that women possess 50 percent of the world's brainpower.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, it is recommended that women's education in rural Iran be given high priority, and measures be taken to motivate their participation in adult literacy classes. Benefiting from the recommendations of the World Congress of Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy of Tehran, it is suggested that "methods of teaching women to read and write should be adopted to their specific motivation and need," and that "in the education of adult women attention should be given to civic and social education so as to enable them to take a more active part in community life as well as family life."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Adam Curle, op. cit., p. 138.

<sup>2</sup>UNESCO, World Congress of Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy, op. cit., p. 7 (Com.II).

Considering the "Technical Travelling Course" for village women in Turkey, it is recommended that such a program be adopted for rural Iran. Through such a program women can be trained in home-making, house keeping, child care, cooking, sewing and the like. Family planning should be included in this program and emphasized.

The dates and hours of attending classes should suit the women. Because women are busy in their household affairs from morning till noon and again from late afternoon till night, the class hours for them should be planned in the early afternoon. Because of the strict segregation of women in rural areas, it would be appropriate to follow the team-work practice of Fundamental Education where a husband and wife are appointed to villages for adult education purposes. In the meantime, the Ministry of Education's Department of Women's Educational Activities, should be expanded to embrace the rural areas.

#### E. Training of Teachers

Effective instruction in adult education calls for trained mature teachers who understand the interests and needs of adult illiterates and who can approach them with an understanding of adult psychology. There is no question that the quality of the teaching staff in an adult education program determines, more than any other factor, the success of that program. The training of teachers for adult education must be different from training for ordinary

school teaching, or from training in methods used in elementary or secondary classrooms.

So far, little consideration has been given to training special teachers for adult education in Iran. The teachers engaged in teaching adult classes are those who teach in the village elementary schools most of whom have not even been trained for teaching in elementary school let alone adult classes. The two-week training courses designed for preparing them to teach adults is hardly enough, especially that these courses are not given every year. In the case of Education Corpsmen the four-month training period, of which two-thirds is devoted to teacher training, is mostly spent on methods of teaching in the elementary schools and not on adult classes. In addition, these Corpsmen lack many essential things: they are young and inexperienced, and they come mostly from cities and know little about the problems of rural people. They lack the ability to adapt themselves to, and identify themselves with, the community in which they work.

Other reasons make both ordinary village teachers and Education Corpsmen less qualified to teach in adult classes: for example:

a) Because of their work with school children during the day, they are too tired to have the enthusiasm that adults require.

b) Because of their work with children, they develop an air of patronage and authority that adults do not like.

It is difficult for them to shift from the authoritarian attitude that they take towards children in day-time, to the friendly and brotherly attitude that the adults expect.

c) Because of their teaching duty in school, they are only available at night, while most women adults find it convenient to attend classes during the day. On the other hand, men are free at night and mostly they want to study late between 8 to 11 O' clock. This creates a problem for the teacher, for if he teaches until 11 p.m. or midnight, he cannot teach the children the following morning.

The question of quality is not the only handicap to the present rural adult teachers. Their number is also very small, compared with the vast demand in the rural areas. There are still thousands of Iranian villages which have no schools at all.

In the light of the above, the following recommendations are offered by way of improving the quality of teachers as well as increasing their quantity:

1. Procedures in the selection of primary school teachers to serve as teachers of adult classes need to be improved. Candidates should not be recruited from among those who need additional money only, but from among those who show evidence of real interest in working with adults, and readiness to participate in special training classes. The recommendation of the Division of Community Education in Puerto Rico should be adopted, namely, that utmost care

must be taken in the selection of teaching personnel for adult classes from among "men and women who already have the basis of the outlook and attitudes necessary for working in rural areas, than to hope that trainees will acquire them during training."<sup>1</sup> Care should be taken to select teachers who possess a good command of language in order to impress adults. An adult school teacher must also be old enough to perform his duties successfully.

The chosen primary school teachers, whether trained or untrained, should be given a training course to prepare them to teach in adult classes. This course should at least be of six or ten weeks duration as it is in Puerto Rico. After such a training course the teachers should remain under supervision, and each year short in-service training courses should be arranged for them.

In general, the training course should include the following subjects: psychology and sociology of rural people, educational psychology with emphasis on adult learning, methods of teaching adults, methods of using audio-visual and other teaching aids, aims and objectives to be achieved in teaching adults. Besides, they should be trained in the skill of understanding the needs of adult learners (social, physical, mental, political, occupational, agricultural and the like). The World Congress of Ministers of Education has emphasized the last point by saying:

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<sup>1</sup>Dr. H.W. Howes, op. cit., p. 71.



Specialized personnel should, furthermore be trained:

- 1) in research methods for selecting the teaching material which should constitute the content of functional literacy work and of continuing education phase.
- 2) for the adoptation of the teaching material to the basic vocabulary in use by adults.
- 3) in the most efficient proper use of the material in teaching.<sup>1</sup>

The Ministry of Education should establish such training courses in various parts of the country, for the training of all teachers in the capital of the country is not possible, and often it is inconvenient to many teachers.

2. In view of the limited number of primary school teachers and Education Corpsmen and the great demand for them, the following measures are suggested that might help in meeting this demand:

a) The literate youths of the villages where there are no schools should be recruited to teach in adult classes after giving them some training for the purpose.

b) The "little-teacher" plan followed in the Philippines, or the 'each-one-teach-one' method can be adopted on a general basis. Dr. Laubach the advocator of each-one-teach-one method describes the scope and importance of this plan in a very remarkable way:

It is easy to demonstrate how quickly illiteracy could be eliminated if every educated person had the patriotism to devote a few hours of his time

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<sup>1</sup>UNESCO, World Congress of Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy, op. cit., p. 3.(Com.II).

TABLE 5 - PERCENT LITERATE BY AGE AND SEX FOR IRAN, THE CENSUS PROVINCES, AND CENSUS DISTRICTS: NOVEMBER 1956 (1)

Census District and Census Province	Both sexes						Male						Female					
	Total 7 years and over	7-9 years	10-19 years	20-24 years	25-54 years	55 years and over	Total 7 years and over	7-9 years	10-19 years	20-24 years	25-54 years	55 years and over	Total 7 years and over	7-9 years	10-19 years	20-24 years	25-54 years	55 years and over
Iran -----	15.4	18.8	25.6	14.1	10.2	6.5	22.4	24.0	34.4	22.2	16.5	11.2	8.0	13.4	16.1	6.4	3.1	1.4
Urban -----	34.6	45.4	52.7	32.1	23.1	14.8	45.9	52.3	64.0	44.5	35.9	24.7	22.4	38.4	40.5	19.0	9.1	4.4
Rural -----	6.1	7.1	10.7	5.3	4.2	3.1	10.9	11.7	18.1	10.3	7.7	5.7	1.2	2.4	2.6	0.8	0.5	0.1
Central Census Province -----	34.6	44.3	51.2	32.6	24.1	16.8	43.3	49.3	58.4	42.5	34.2	25.4	25.0	39.3	45.1	21.6	12.5	7.6
Urban -----	45.0	59.5	64.0	41.9	32.5	23.7	54.0	63.3	69.9	51.5	45.1	35.9	34.8	55.7	57.4	30.1	17.9	11.5
Rural -----	12.4	17.9	22.8	9.7	6.9	5.0	19.7	25.1	33.5	17.2	12.0	8.8	4.7	10.4	10.2	2.7	1.2	0.5
Gilan Census Province -----	12.5	15.8	21.4	10.1	8.3	5.4	18.6	20.7	29.4	16.0	14.1	10.3	6.3	10.9	13.3	4.7	2.1	0.6
Urban -----	36.9	53.2	57.1	32.2	22.6	14.3	48.0	58.8	66.6	45.8	36.4	26.6	26.0	47.7	47.6	21.4	8.4	2.4
Rural -----	6.0	6.8	10.2	4.8	4.4	3.3	10.9	11.5	17.8	9.3	8.1	6.5	1.1	2.1	2.5	0.7	0.3	0.1
Mazandaran - Gorgan Census Province -----	15.7	18.2	24.2	11.3	8.5	5.0	21.1	24.6	34.7	18.7	14.5	9.5	6.0	11.5	12.6	4.3	1.8	0.6
Urban -----	32.5	47.0	50.4	28.5	20.7	11.2	44.3	55.1	63.3	39.8	33.6	20.8	20.2	38.9	36.6	16.2	6.5	2.0
Rural -----	8.3	10.5	15.3	6.7	5.2	3.4	14.5	16.7	25.3	12.7	9.5	6.6	1.9	4.1	4.3	1.1	0.5	0.2
East Azarbaijan Census Province -----	10.2	11.6	17.5	8.9	7.1	4.5	16.3	16.3	25.7	15.0	12.5	8.3	5.9	6.6	8.3	2.9	1.4	0.3
Urban -----	26.9	32.9	42.2	24.0	17.8	11.8	40.0	43.2	58.6	37.3	31.1	20.6	13.1	22.4	24.7	10.7	4.5	1.1
Rural -----	4.2	4.2	7.2	3.7	3.0	2.3	7.7	7.2	12.4	7.3	5.7	4.3	0.5	1.0	1.2	0.3	0.1	-
West Azarbaijan Census Province -----	10.7	11.5	19.3	10.6	6.3	3.6	16.9	17.0	29.6	17.7	10.8	6.3	4.1	6.0	9.1	3.5	1.1	0.1
Urban -----	29.4	39.7	49.5	27.7	17.8	10.2	41.6	46.9	65.7	59.4	30.7	17.9	15.4	25.4	32.1	13.1	3.8	1.0
Rural -----	4.9	4.9	8.9	4.9	2.9	1.9	8.8	8.9	16.4	9.4	5.1	3.3	0.7	0.9	1.5	0.7	0.3	0.2
Kermanshah Census Province -----	11.1	12.6	19.9	9.9	7.3	4.8	16.7	16.5	27.6	16.9	12.4	8.2	5.1	8.6	11.7	3.8	1.5	0.4
Urban -----	28.8	37.5	48.6	26.6	17.7	11.2	39.7	43.4	59.5	39.9	29.5	19.4	17.2	31.1	36.4	14.0	4.9	0.1
Rural -----	4.3	4.0	7.1	4.0	3.4	2.4	7.9	6.9	12.9	8.3	6.2	4.1	0.6	1.1	1.2	0.4	0.2	0.1
Kordistan Census Province -----	6.5	8.0	10.8	6.1	4.8	3.5	10.6	11.4	16.6	11.1	8.1	6.1	2.1	4.5	5.1	1.4	0.5	0.2
Urban -----	28.8	41.2	47.1	24.2	19.8	12.8	40.1	30.1	61.3	34.1	34.4	21.7	15.8	32.1	32.5	10.6	3.4	1.5
Rural -----	3.5	3.5	4.9	3.5	3.0	2.5	6.5	6.2	9.1	7.0	5.3	4.4	0.4	0.9	0.9	0.3	0.2	-
Khoosistan - Lorestan Census Province -----	14.1	19.3	24.3	15.5	8.3	4.5	22.0	26.2	36.0	23.8	14.3	8.0	6.0	12.9	12.7	4.3	1.4	0.3
Urban -----	30.5	43.0	48.6	28.1	18.4	9.1	44.0	51.9	65.4	44.6	30.5	16.9	15.9	33.9	30.5	11.2	3.8	1.0
Rural -----	4.5	5.4	7.7	4.3	3.1	2.3	8.0	10.0	14.7	9.1	5.6	4.1	0.5	1.3	1.1	0.4	0.1	-
Fars - Banader Census Province -----	14.5	18.6	25.8	12.8	9.1	6.3	21.5	24.9	34.9	20.4	15.1	11.5	7.1	12.4	16.0	5.6	2.1	0.6
Urban -----	33.7	45.8	55.1	29.9	26.8	12.6	44.3	52.3	64.8	40.5	33.9	22.8	22.4	39.2	44.2	18.7	6.9	2.0
Rural -----	6.3	7.7	10.3	5.5	4.6	3.8	11.6	13.7	18.5	11.1	8.4	7.1	0.8	1.6	1.6	0.6	0.2	0.1
Kerman Census Province -----	9.9	12.8	17.4	8.8	6.2	4.5	14.9	16.5	25.8	15.0	10.3	8.2	4.7	39.9	10.5	3.7	1.4	0.4
Urban -----	28.9	42.7	48.5	25.6	17.5	10.6	38.6	48.0	58.4	34.8	29.1	19.9	19.3	37.5	38.4	16.5	6.3	1.7
Rural -----	5.7	7.1	9.8	5.0	3.9	3.3	9.9	10.7	15.6	9.9	6.9	6.0	1.5	3.2	3.6	1.0	0.4	0.1
Khorasan Census Province -----	11.1	12.0	18.2	10.2	8.1	5.3	17.6	16.6	26.2	17.5	14.0	9.6	4.3	7.4	9.2	3.6	1.3	0.4
Urban -----	29.9	37.2	46.5	27.6	19.7	13.2	42.9	46.1	61.0	41.6	33.2	23.5	16.7	28.8	31.5	14.3	5.5	1.8
Rural -----	5.8	5.3	8.9	5.5	4.8	3.4	10.5	9.1	13.4	10.5	8.9	6.3	0.7	1.5	1.6	0.7	0.1	-
Esfahan - Yazd Census Province -----	14.8	16.5	24.6	15.5	10.0	7.1	23.8	23.4	35.9	23.7	17.6	13.3	5.6	9.3	11.9	4.4	2.1	0.8
Urban -----	24.8	28.8	39.7	23.8	16.3	11.0	37.4	37.0	53.3	38.5	28.2	20.5	11.9	20.4	24.4	9.8	4.5	1.7
Rural -----	8.3	8.9	14.2	7.0	6.1	4.6	15.0	15.2	23.8	13.8	11.1	8.7	1.4	2.3	3.1	1.1	0.6	0.2
Baloocheestan - Sistan Census Province -----	5.7	6.3	10.6	5.5	3.2	1.7	9.5	9.1	16.3	10.6	5.6	3.1	1.7	3.1	3.8	1.4	0.4	0.1
Urban -----	31.0	45.8	47.4	26.2	21.2	11.3	43.8	34.3	63.2	39.0	33.7	21.5	16.1	33.4	29.6	11.8	4.0	0.7
Rural -----	3.2	3.4	6.6	2.9	1.7	1.2	6.0	5.9	11.3	6.2	3.1	2.3	0.3	0.5	0.8	0.3	0.1	-

(1) Source: Ministry of Interior, National and Provincial Statistics of the First Census of Iran, op. cit., p. 77.

TABLE 9 - PERCENT LITERATE BY AGE AND SEX FOR IRAN, THE CENSUS PROVINCES, AND CENSUS DISTRICTS; NOVEMBER 1956 (1)

Census District and Census Province	Both sexes						Males						Females					
	Total 7 years and over	7 - 9 years	10 - 19 years	20 - 34 years	35 - 54 years	55 years and over	Total 7 years and over	7 - 9 years	10 - 19 years	20 - 34 years	35 - 54 years	55 years and over	Total 7 years and over	7 - 9 years	10 - 19 years	20 - 34 years	35 - 54 years	55 years and over
Iran -----	15.4	18.8	25.6	14.1	10.2	6.5	22.4	24.0	34.4	22.2	16.5	11.2	8.0	13.4	16.1	6.4	3.1	1.4
Urban -----	34.6	45.4	52.7	32.1	23.1	14.8	45.9	52.3	64.0	44.3	35.9	24.7	22.4	38.4	40.3	19.0	9.1	4.4
Rural -----	6.1	7.1	10.7	5.3	4.2	3.1	10.9	11.7	18.1	10.3	7.7	5.7	1.2	2.4	2.6	0.8	0.3	0.1
Central Census Province -----	34.6	44.3	51.2	32.6	24.1	16.8	43.3	49.3	58.4	42.5	34.2	25.4	25.0	39.3	43.1	21.6	12.3	7.6
Urban -----	45.0	59.5	64.0	41.9	32.5	23.7	54.0	63.3	69.9	51.5	45.1	35.9	34.8	55.7	57.4	30.1	17.9	11.5
Rural -----	12.4	17.9	22.8	9.7	6.9	5.0	19.7	25.1	33.5	17.2	12.0	8.8	4.7	10.4	10.2	2.7	1.2	0.5
Gilan Census Province -----	12.5	15.8	21.4	10.1	8.3	5.4	18.6	20.7	29.4	16.0	14.1	10.3	6.3	10.9	13.3	4.7	2.1	0.6
Urban -----	36.9	53.2	57.1	32.2	22.6	14.3	48.0	58.8	66.6	43.8	36.4	26.6	26.0	47.7	47.6	21.4	8.4	2.4
Rural -----	6.0	6.8	10.2	4.8	4.4	3.3	10.9	11.5	17.8	9.3	8.1	6.5	1.1	2.1	2.5	0.7	0.3	0.1
Mazandaran - Gorgan Census Province -----	13.7	18.2	24.2	11.3	8.5	5.0	21.1	24.6	34.7	18.7	14.5	9.5	6.0	11.5	12.6	4.3	1.8	0.6
Urban -----	32.5	47.0	50.4	28.5	20.7	11.2	44.3	55.1	63.3	39.8	33.6	20.8	20.2	58.9	56.6	16.2	6.5	2.0
Rural -----	8.3	10.5	15.3	6.7	5.2	3.4	14.5	16.7	25.3	12.7	9.3	6.6	1.9	4.1	4.3	1.1	0.5	0.2
East Azarbaijan Census Province -----	10.2	11.6	17.5	8.9	7.1	4.5	16.3	16.3	25.7	15.0	12.5	8.3	5.9	6.6	8.3	2.9	1.4	0.3
Urban -----	26.9	32.9	42.2	24.0	17.8	11.8	40.0	43.2	58.6	37.3	31.1	20.6	13.1	22.4	24.7	10.7	4.5	1.3
Rural -----	4.2	4.2	7.2	3.7	3.0	2.3	7.7	7.2	12.4	7.3	5.7	4.3	0.5	1.0	1.2	0.3	0.1	-
West Azarbaijan Census Province -----	10.7	11.5	19.3	10.6	6.3	3.6	16.9	17.0	29.6	17.7	10.8	6.3	4.1	6.0	9.1	3.5	1.1	0.1
Urban -----	29.4	39.7	49.5	27.7	17.8	10.2	41.6	46.9	65.7	39.4	30.7	17.9	13.4	25.4	32.1	13.1	3.8	1.0
Rural -----	4.9	4.9	8.9	4.9	2.9	1.9	8.8	8.9	16.4	9.4	5.1	3.3	0.7	0.9	1.5	0.7	0.3	0.2
Kermanshahan Census Province -----	11.1	12.6	19.9	9.9	7.3	4.8	16.7	16.5	27.6	16.9	12.4	8.2	5.1	8.6	11.7	3.8	1.5	0.4
Urban -----	28.8	37.5	48.6	26.6	17.7	11.7	39.7	43.4	59.5	39.9	29.5	19.4	17.2	31.1	36.4	14.0	4.9	0.1
Rural -----	4.3	4.0	7.1	4.0	3.4	2.4	7.9	6.9	12.9	8.3	6.2	4.1	0.6	1.1	1.2	0.4	0.2	0.1
Kordestan Census Province -----	6.5	8.0	10.8	6.1	4.8	3.5	10.6	11.4	16.6	11.1	8.1	6.1	2.1	4.5	5.1	1.4	0.5	0.2
Urban -----	28.8	41.2	47.1	24.2	19.8	12.8	40.1	30.1	61.3	34.1	34.4	21.7	15.8	32.1	32.5	10.6	3.4	1.5
Rural -----	3.5	3.5	4.9	3.5	3.0	2.5	6.5	6.2	9.1	7.0	5.3	4.4	0.4	0.9	0.9	0.3	0.2	-
Khoozestan - Lorestan Census Province -----	14.1	19.3	24.3	15.5	8.3	4.5	22.0	26.2	36.0	23.8	14.5	8.0	6.0	12.9	12.7	4.3	1.4	0.3
Urban -----	30.5	43.0	48.6	28.1	18.4	9.1	44.0	51.9	65.4	44.6	30.5	16.9	15.9	33.9	30.5	11.2	3.8	1.0
Rural -----	4.5	5.4	7.7	4.3	3.1	2.3	8.6	10.0	14.7	9.1	5.6	4.1	0.5	1.3	1.1	0.4	0.1	-
Fars - Bandar Census Province -----	14.5	18.6	25.8	12.8	9.1	6.3	21.5	24.9	34.9	20.4	15.1	11.5	7.1	12.4	16.0	5.6	2.1	0.6
Urban -----	33.7	45.8	55.1	29.9	26.8	12.6	44.3	52.3	64.8	40.5	33.9	22.8	22.4	39.2	44.2	18.7	6.9	2.0
Rural -----	6.3	7.7	10.3	5.5	4.6	3.8	11.6	13.7	18.5	11.1	8.4	7.1	0.8	1.6	1.6	0.6	0.2	0.1
Kerman Census Province -----	9.9	12.8	17.4	8.8	6.2	4.5	14.9	16.5	23.8	15.0	10.3	8.2	4.7	39.9	10.5	3.7	1.4	0.4
Urban -----	28.9	42.7	48.5	25.6	17.5	10.6	36.6	48.0	58.4	34.8	29.1	19.9	19.3	37.5	38.4	16.5	6.3	1.7
Rural -----	5.7	7.1	9.8	5.0	3.9	3.3	9.9	10.7	15.6	9.9	6.9	6.0	1.5	3.2	3.6	1.0	0.4	0.1
Khorasan Census Province -----	11.1	12.0	18.2	10.2	8.1	5.3	17.6	16.6	26.2	17.5	14.0	9.6	4.3	7.4	9.2	3.6	1.3	0.4
Urban -----	29.9	37.2	46.5	27.6	19.7	13.2	42.9	46.1	61.0	41.6	33.2	23.5	16.7	28.8	31.5	14.3	5.5	1.8
Rural -----	5.8	5.3	8.9	3.3	4.8	3.4	10.5	9.1	15.4	10.5	8.9	6.3	0.7	1.5	1.6	0.7	0.1	-
Esfahan - Yazd Census Province -----	14.8	16.5	24.6	13.5	10.0	7.1	23.8	23.4	35.9	23.7	17.6	13.3	5.6	9.3	11.9	4.4	2.1	0.8
Urban -----	24.8	28.8	39.7	23.8	16.3	11.0	37.4	37.0	53.3	38.5	28.2	20.5	11.9	20.4	24.4	9.8	4.3	1.7
Rural -----	8.3	8.9	14.2	7.0	6.1	4.6	15.0	15.2	23.8	13.8	11.1	8.7	1.4	2.3	3.1	1.1	0.6	0.2
Baloocheestan - Sistan Census Province -----	5.7	6.3	10.6	5.5	3.2	1.7	9.5	9.1	16.3	10.6	5.6	3.1	1.7	3.1	3.8	1.4	0.4	0.1
Urban -----	31.0	43.8	47.4	26.2	21.2	11.3	43.8	34.3	63.2	39.0	33.7	21.5	16.1	33.4	29.6	11.8	4.0	0.7
Rural -----	3.2	3.4	6.6	2.9	1.7	1.2	6.0	5.9	11.3	6.2	3.1	2.3	0.3	0.5	0.8	0.3	0.1	-

(1) Source: Ministry of Interior, National and Provincial Statistics of the First Census of Iran, op. cit., p. 77.

to teaching one illiterate. If, for example, only 8 percent of a country is literate, the entire country could be made literate within five years by geometrical progression, if each one would teach just one other each year. If each literate teaches one the first year there will be 16 percent the second year. If each of the 16 percent teaches one there will be 32 percent literate the third year; the fourth year there will be 64 percent, and the fifth year 128 percent. This would make up for the rising population.<sup>1</sup>

Dr Laubach gives also the following example from India in support of his method:

In little Aundh State of India, in 1939, the Prince himself and his Queen set the example by going out and singing songs about the need of being literate and by teaching illiterates. The schools were all closed and the children instructed to go home and devote as many hours to teaching their parents and neighbours as they had been devoting to study. The result was startling! It was officially stated that in three months half the people in the state had been taught to read and not one rupee had been spent for teachers.<sup>2</sup>

3. Volunteers from among high school and university students can be recruited to work during their vacations. These volunteers should be interested in teaching and helping others, willing to participate in training courses, take their work seriously, and show respect for their fellow human beings. After their selection, they must be trained in short courses and then appointed to villages. They should be closely supervised during their work.

Especially the high school and university students who wish to become teachers should be chosen for voluntary

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<sup>1</sup>Frank C. Laubach, op. cit., p. 118.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 118-119.

teaching. They will gain experience after their graduation when they become regular teachers. Retired teachers may also be approached for this purpose.

4. The religious leaders in the villages could be of great influence in literacy teaching. The Mullas are primarily interested in literacy in terms of reading the Koran. It is a very suitable starting point and the Mullas should be encouraged to teach whatever they wish provided this helps adults to learn to read.

#### F. Materials

Preparation of adult education materials is a crucial part of adult education programs. The preparation of these materials should be based on the needs of the people who are going to benefit from them. This aspect has been neglected in Iran. Experts have been asked to write primers without considering whether they are familiar with the needs and interests of those for whom the primers are written. The preparation of materials is a specialized task which needs special skills. Just because a doctor is an expert in a particular disease does not qualify him to prepare a pamphlet for semi-literate villagers on the prevention of diseases. There are other principles involved besides being an expert in the field, such as social values, mores and traditions of the people which should be considered in the preparation of the materials.

Adults must be provided with meaningful reading materials, or they see no value in reading at all. The material they read with interest is that which is related

clearly to the problems they have faced, or are facing.

Furthermore, the primers and publications prepared for adults often use vocabulary mostly pertinent to city dwellers, with little regard for rural conditions and rural people. The primers for teaching literacy to adults should make great use of rural life and rural vocabulary.

Enrolling adults in a class, teaching them basic reading skills and conferring on them certificates will not fulfill the aims of adult education. The main objective of literacy campaigns is to equip the illiterate adults with basic literacy tools which would enable them to find their way through further readings of their own choice. If the adult feels that he has not benefitted from his study, he will resolve that he has wasted his time and will consequently dissuade others from attending classes. Under such circumstances, all expenditure in time and money will be wasted and the program will be a failure.

In the light of the above, the writer recommends:

- 1) to locate writers who are able to abandon their urban ideas and style and write with easy words, short sentences, and short paragraphs.

- 2) The primers should not be teaching instruments for the adult learners only but for their teachers as well. This is because of the fact that most of the adult teachers are not trained at all.

3) Those who prepare these primers, as in Puerto Rico, should carefully and thoroughly study the common interests of adults in their particular areas. "In every community there are certain spheres with which the adult is in touch of which he needs knowledge; the government, education, work, recreation, health, nutrition, and housing."<sup>1</sup> These subjects should provide the framework for primer construction.

4) The readers which follow the basic primer should be written in easy language, and the vocabulary used in them should be taken from the common experiences of the learners. These reading books should be made attractive with pictures, clear writing, proper paper and attractive cover, thus helping the primer find its way among the people.

5) "Materials designed to help new literates to keep up their knowledge and to meet their desire for learning should be planned and produced at the same time as teaching materials. Literacy means lasting literacy, and hence continuing education. The struggle against ignorance has often failed because steps were not taken in time to keep up the ability to read fluently."<sup>1</sup>

6) As the neo-literates cannot always afford to buy adequate books for their follow-up readings, it is necessary to start village libraries. The library service

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<sup>1</sup>UNESCO, World Congress of Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy, op. cit., p. 8 (Com.II).

would serve two purposes: it would prevent relapse into illiteracy which can be very quick, and would bring a gradual change in the outlook of the people by the different books it contains. A village library would be also of benefit to children who have left school. Therefore, the village library should have books to suit all villagers, whether children, or women, or men. In places where there are no schools to sponsor library activity, travelling libraries should be created and used.

#### G. Audio-Visual Aids

Audio-visual aids are of major importance in an adult literacy course. They contribute to learning through stimulating interest, through appealing to a number of senses, through concentrating a great deal of information into a concise form, and through providing an experience that is common to all the students.

Pierre Fourre, a UNESCO expert in adult education enumerates the following by way of indicating the advantages of the audio-visual aids:

1. They eliminate language barriers as they usually have a universal appeal.
2. They reach a wide audience, i.e. from two or three hundred at a cinema show in a medium-sized hall to millions in the case of a radio broadcast.
3. Visual aids make teaching concrete and amplify words by pictures. It may therefore be said that they: focus attention, make memorization easier, carry convictions. Most of them even operate by suggestion (like the cinema, partly



owing to the surrounding darkness) and positively command attention for what they have to impart. This is an enormous advantage, although it is not without its dangers.

4. They bring the whole world to the Centre. They make it possible to show every aspect of existence: underwater life, a heart operation, cells and microbes, sun-spots, the most remote tribes, former civilization.<sup>1</sup>

Because of their great contribution in effective teaching of adults, it is recommended that the use of audio-visual materials be expanded to rural Iran, and their preparation be made an integral part of teaching materials. Most of the villagers in Iran have radios at their disposal. Thus it is suggested that special programs to motivate rural adults be developed and broadcasted. These programs should be prepared according to the vocabulary of rural people, and should include subjects that would be of benefit to them such as health and sanitation, agriculture, animals, local songs, folk-lore stories and other subjects of immediate interest to adults. The radio should be used to create an atmosphere which will broaden the adults' personality and stimulate him, by widening his social and cultural horizons.

The audio-visual aids must be used purposely and according to the findings of experimental research. Audio-visual materials are not useful if the teacher does not use them properly and correctly. This means that teachers

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<sup>1</sup>Pierre Fourre, Adult Education Techniques in Developing Countries (A Greek Case Study) (n.p., n.d.), p. 69.

should be trained to make proper use of these media.

#### H. Financial Needs

Money is essential for the success of any program. Without adequate funds to take care of the needs of the programs, they are doomed to failure. While the demand for adult education is so great in Iran, only 2.2 percent of the whole budget of the Ministry of Education is allocated to adult education activities while 48.2 percent of the budget is devoted to elementary education (nearly all programs in rural Iran are financed by the government).<sup>1</sup> That children need an education is not a debatable point. What is debatable is whether Iran can go very far with their education without also educating their illiterate parents. Many village teachers in Iran have called attention to the fact that once their pupils leave school they become absorbed by the darkness that prevails in the village. Many of these boys and girls forget in a short time even the simple skills like reading and writing. Furthermore, their previous superstitions, customs, and traditions remain with them. The same point is illustrated by Irwin Isenberg:

The success of primary schooling is dangerously undermined in areas where there is widespread adult illiteracy. Many children are discouraged from enrolling at school, and large numbers are permitted to leave before they have completed the course and before they have become fully literate. Even when it is possible to make attendance compulsory, many who return to live in illiterate communities soon lose the knowledge they had acquired at school and relapse into illiteracy.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>These percentages are obtained from Social Affairs Section, Education (Tehran: Aug. 1961), (Mimeographed), p. 34.

<sup>2</sup>Irwin Isenberg, op. cit., p. 19.

It is not the intention of the writer to de-emphasize the importance of elementary education, but it is his intention to stress his belief that the allocations for adult education must be greatly increased. If the aim of economic growth and raising the productivity of rural people is to be attained, Iran must train the adults who are already on the job and make adult education into a popular mass movement. Obviously, this increase in productivity cannot be done if the allocations for adult education remain low.

Expenses in adult education do not have to be derived exclusively from the national budget. There are other ways and means for obtaining the necessary finances, the following are some suggestions:

1. The principal items of expense in adult education are for teachers' allowances, training of teachers and supervisors, publicity, printing the materials and the transportation of supervisors and teachers. The expenses for these items can be reduced through:

- a. enforcing the council of Ministers' decree of 1947, previously mentioned, which provides that every employer or factory must set up classes to teach workers to read and write.

- b. adopting the "each-one-teach-one" method or the "little-teacher" plan of the Philippines.

- c. encouraging the participation of volunteers to teach in adult classes.

- d. private agencies which can provide cars or buses should be properly motivated to provide transportation.

2. The villagers themselves, as was described in the case of the Education Corps program, should contribute to the program and support it financially; to do this effectively the villagers must be properly approached and motivated.

3. Religious foundations are numerous in Islamic cultures and in Iran in particular. These foundations have always been willing to help in welfare programs. "The Shrine of the Eight Imam in Meshed is the recipient of the income from a Pious Foundation which has approximately five hundred villages under its administration."<sup>1</sup> These villages have not been included among the distributed villages covered by the Land Reform Laws, because they belong to a Religious Foundation called Astan-i-Ghods-i-Razawi. This Foundation should be made responsible for the financing of adult education programs in its villages.

4. International Organizations and Agencies such as the United Nations and the UNESCO should be approached for more financial aids. UNESCO, at present, is offering help in the form of pilot projects and experts.

#### I. Evaluation and Research

Evaluating a program means, simply, determining the extent of its success in achieving its aim, and judging its worth according to some definite scale of values. It

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<sup>1</sup>Overseas Consultants, Inc., op. cit., p. 119.

provides a sound basis for further planning. "Evaluation" the World Congress of Ministers of Education believes "must include both pure research and operational research used to make a rapid interpretation of results with a view to the immediate improvement of the strategy, means and methods. The two types are complementary and both are equally necessary."<sup>1</sup>

Research has been completely neglected in Iran and little evidence of evaluation in rural adult education programs is available. Even in the widely popular Education Corps program research has received only very scanty attention.

In this connection, the writer submits the following proposals:

1. Any person who is in a position to make any kind of judgment about the adult education programs should be brought into the evaluation process. The following groups, particularly, should be approached: the adults as participants, the teachers, the supervisors, the administrative staff who direct the programs, and experts or specialists from the universities. The judgment of adults should be obtained from them individually through personal interviews.

2. Borrowing from the experience of the Philippines it is suggested that adult teachers be trained in research

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<sup>1</sup>UNESCO, World Congress of Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy, op. cit., p. 8 (Com.II).

methods and evaluation procedures. This would enable them to conduct surveys on different aspects of rural life, and administering tests. A knowledge of testing techniques would enable them to evaluate the effectiveness of their own work, the primers, the audio-visual aids, and the programs as a whole. Experience in these aspects should be a part of their training programs.

3. Borrowing from the experience of Turkey under the "University Week", it is recommended that such a plan be adopted and used for the improvement of the rural areas. This is particularly advisable as Iran has seven universities. A group of professors and university students from each Ostan can formulate a list of the most needed projects which can be carried out within their own province. The result of their research could be submitted to the Ministry of Education as a basis for evaluating the success of adult education programs. Such a plan would not only raise the educational standards of the villagers, but also would give them more confidence in the programs.

The foregoing discussion of the needs of rural adults in Iran and the suggestions made for increasing their literacy, are based upon an analysis of conditions in Iran, the experiences of other countries and the recommendations of the World Congress of Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy. While the proposals made

in this chapter may sound too ambitious, it should be emphasized that they are made with great love that the writer has for his country. If not applicable in the short run, they might help in pointing the direction in the long run.

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