ADULT LITERACY AND DEVELOPMENT IN SIERRA LEONE: IDEALS AND REALITIES

By

ABU MOHAMED BOCKARIE

B.A. (Hons.), Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, 1977
Diploma in Education, Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, 1978
Diploma in Adult Education, Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, 1981
M.Ed., University of Ottawa, 1989

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Department of Educational Studies

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

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ABSTRACT

Developing successful *'literacy for development programmes'* for adults remains a critical issue for many Third World policy makers and educators. The purpose of this study was to describe and analyze Sierra Leone's educational reform policies and practices between 1970 and 1992 with regard to adult literacy in order to understand the factors associated with the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes. The chief theoretical perspective that informed the research concerned the socio-economic, educational, historical and political ecology of adult literacy work. Literacy work was problematized as a complex process deeply rooted in a nation's social, economic and political structures. A conceptual framework depicting three analytic categories of factors associated with the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes in Third World societies was developed from an extensive review of literacy literature. These categories were labelled as macro-level factors, meso-level factors and micro-level factors. The *'orchestration'* or *'combination'* of all three analytic categories of factors was viewed as critical in understanding the factors associated with the success and failure of adult literacy programmes operating in the country.

The basic method of data collection was semi-structured interviews. Other data sources included policy documents, official statistics and observations.

The study found that seven principal factors were associated with the success and failure of adult literacy programmes. It was the conclusion of the study that: (i) international forces, social-historical features of Sierra Leone society as well as organisational and administrative support were as critical to the success or failure of adult literacy programmes as were the educational features and circumstances of illiterate adults; (ii) contrary to the rhetoric expressed in policy documents and pronouncements, the solutions to Sierra Leone's underdevelopment problems were probably beyond the reach of increased literacy *per se* to remedy and; (iii) in their current form, adult literacy programmes were probably functioning as instruments of the state and the nation's elites, contributing to the legitimation of government and elite authority. The implications of the study for policy, practice, theory and further research as well as the recommendations arising from it are discussed.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The Research Problem

Post-colonial Third World states face many basic problems. Economic, social and even political stability continue to be less certain and growth and development are usually difficult to plan and assure. At the same time, the drive for individual and social development in these societies requires, among others, that traditional beliefs and practices continue to be re-appraised in accordance with contemporary needs and trends. Of fundamental relevance is the development of a system of education realistically suited to the needs and resources of the state concerned.

Following independence in the 1950s and 1960s, the development of the education system became one of the top most priorities on the national agendas of Third World societies. The diagnosis of the situation of these "backward countries" pinpointed the lack of education as one of the important factors explaining the numerous problems of underdevelopment. The interpretation of the problem was the rationale for the massive expansion of the formal education system. The basic assumption was that the pressing need for development on the part of these so-called underdeveloped countries could hardly be achieved unless greater proportions of their population were exposed to the type of knowledge, attitudes and skills offered by the formal education system.

By the mid 1970s, however, the limitations of the formal educational model had already emerged. Formal schooling, while promising long-term solutions, provided no short-term answers to development problems facing Third World societies. Consequently, one of the principal tasks of several Third World governments became that of re-structuring or reforming the educational system. In many of these countries, educational reform policies were formulated and implemented with the principal objective of making the system of education more relevant and suitable to the needs and development aspirations of the nation concerned.

The Republic of Sierra Leone was no exception. In Sierra Leone, like elsewhere in the Third World, the problems associated with the formal schooling system as well as its relationship with the development process began to intensify by the end of the 1960s. From about 1970, policy makers and educators started to stress the need for educational reforms in order to relate the nation's educational objectives to its overall development goals and aspirations. As well, it was observed that educational reforms would demonstrate some practical manifestation of the government's commitment to social, economic and political development through education. New educational policies and practices would therefore be required in order to reflect these concerns.

Against this backdrop, the government of the All People's Congress (APC) party, which was in power between 1968 and April, 1992, formulated a series of educational reform policies, several of which were translated into new programmes designed to accomplish clearly defined objectives. Adult literacy, which was to be an integral part of adult education, emerged as a national priority, second only to elementary/primary education. As well, adult literacy was viewed as an educational strategy for development, aimed, in part, at enhancing economic growth, social equity as well as improvement in the lives of the nation's illiterate population. Other key policy issues spelled out in the reform documents included a definition of literacy; measures designed to promote recruitment efforts; a strategy for adult literacy; the issue of resource allocation; organisational, administrative and technical support, particularly the need for a national infrastructure for adult literacy; as well as a variety of educational issues, like the curriculum and instructional-learning resources (Ministry of Education, 1970, 1976, 1977; Ministry of Development and Economic Planning, 1974).

From about 1980 to the early 1990s, a few national studies dealing with various aspects of adult literacy work across the country had emerged (Ministry of Education/Unesco, 1981; Bockarie, 1981; Malamah-Thomas, 1986; Mbang, 1986: Pemagbi, 1991, Thompson, 1988b, 1989; Ministry of Education, 1991, 1993). In general, these studies highlighted what they considered to be a bewildering variety of problems facing adult literacy programmes, problems that were viewed as largely eroding the effectiveness of these programmes in their ability to deliver literacy skills to their clients. Among the key problems highlighted in these studies were low recruitment and completion rates; high drop out rates among instructors and learners; poor instructor qualifications and training; inadequate literacy resources; inadequate learner motivation as well as inadequate curriculum implementation.

The key problems associated with the existing body of Sierra Leonean research and literature on adult literacy would appear to be twofold. Firstly, they have employed research approaches and processes that were either largely descriptive or strictly empirical, thereby limiting the utility of these studies for theorizing about the relationship between adult literacy and development as well as adult literacy and Sierra Leonean society at large. In other words, while they have generally highlighted problems, existing studies have failed to critically analyze these problems or offer a meaningful critique of the nation's educational reform measures in regard to adult literacy. In fact, as far as this researcher is aware, none of these studies has investigated the crucial issue of factors associated with the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes within the Sierra Leone context. Secondly, these studies have focussed almost exclusively on the educational features of adult literacy programmes (i.e., curriculum, instructional and learning issues); to the near exclusion of analysis of the influence of organisational factors as well as social and historical features or conditions of Sierra Leonean society on the outcomes of programmes. This de-contextualisation of adult literacy activities may have limited the explanatory power of these studies in terms of the problems encountered in adult literacy programmes which, in turn, may have restricted their usefulness, particularly in issues involving the successful formulation and implementation of educational reform policies and practices with regard to adult literacy.

This study sought to complement the existing body of research on adult literacy programmes operating in the country. The theoretical base for the study was developed from an extensive review of current research and literature on literacy and development as well as successful and unsuccessful adult literacy programmes in Third World societies. From the review of literature, a conceptual framework depicting three analytic categories of factors associated with the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes was developed and used to analyze the nation's educational reform policies and their outcomes with regard to adult literacy. The analytic categories were labelled as macro-level factors, meso-level factors and micro-level factors. Macro-level factors were threefold, namely; social and historical conditions of a society; the influence of international forces on a society as well as issues of state policy and commitment. Meso-level factors involved issues of policy implementation; specifically, organizational, administrative and technical support for agencies/organisations and programmes. Micro-level factors were twofold, namely; educational issues involved in the delivery of literacy, like the curriculum, instruction and learning as well as a broad array of individual-level attributes and circumstances of the nation's illiterate adults, like concerns about families, economic survival, jobs and attitudes towards literacy. The "orchestration" or "combination" of all three categories of factors was viewed as critical in understanding the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes operating in the country (ICAE, 1979; Youngman, 1990; Minnis, 1993; Mundy, 1993).

In terms of research approach, the study embraced micro-level, meso-level and macro-level perspectives thereby combining educational; organisational, administrative and technical as well as social-historical issues respectively in the research process. By grounding adult literacy work in the socio-economic, educational, political and historical experiences of Sierra Leone society, this study, in the researcher's view, is likely to constitute a more realistic piece of scholarly work and, in the process, offer meaningful and practical suggestions to help minimise, or eliminate, the obstacles facing adult literacy programmes operating in the country. As well, the study would attempt to show how complex and interconnected are social-historical; international; organisational, administrative and technical as well as educational factors in influencing the outcomes of adult literacy programmes. Such a study is probably timely as development theorists and international development agencies, like Unesco, continue to debate the effectiveness of literacy programmes in Third World societies and the relationship that exist between literacy work and the development process in these societies.

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe and analyze Sierra Leone's educational reform policies and practices between 1970 and 1992 with regard to adult literacy in order to provide some insights and understanding into the factors associated with the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes operating in the country. The following were the specific objectives of the study:

- To describe and analyze the nature and structure of the nation's educational reform policies with regard to adult literacy.
- To describe and analyze the nature and structure of the nation's educational practices with regard to adult literacy.
- To identify the principal obstacles associated with the successful outcomes of adult literacy programmes and make recommendations for minimising or, if possible, eliminating them.
- To establish the extent to which there was a discrepancy between policy objectives in adult literacy and the outcomes of these programmes.

Educational policy constitutes the outgrowth of some fundamental social, economic and political forces. These forces generate political activity among a variety of interested groups and individuals with varying ranges of influence. This activity affects and produces the formal and legal expressions of policy which represents a consensus of the values and choices of the more influential of those who participated in the process. This study was not concerned with the overall process of educational policy making in Sierra Leone between 1970 and 1992 but rather, with analysis of the end product (i.e., policy documents) and the resulting actions and reactions in the form of programmes. The focus of the study was on the state, the nation's political economy as well as the organizational context of adult literacy programmes, including programme sites, as the places where individuals associated with adult literacy would be expected to interact (Torres & Schugurensky, 1993).

When the concepts of "success" and "failure" are used in studies of educational programmes generally, they inevitably convey a variety of images and explanations depending on, say, the individual's perspective of the organizational and socio-cultural context in which programmes are embedded, types or characteristics of the programmes themselves as well as the underlying ideology of development espoused by providing organisations and/or programmes (Fingeret, 1990; Charnley & Jones, 1979). These studies have generally acknowledged that multiple definitions or measures of "success" and "failure" exist based on the perceptions of the different groups of stakeholders associated with literacy and adult education. For instance, government officials and agency/organization representatives may be more inclined to define "success" and "failure" in terms of the larger framework of their understanding of the general purposes, intended outcomes and objectives of programmes. Instructors would generally define both concepts in terms of their ability to help adult learners learn, in other words; to help learner's achieve the specific objectives they had set for themselves prior to their registration for the course and these may be cognitive, attitudinal or social. As well, adult learners may define "success" and "failure" in terms of the acquisition of new skills as well as their ability to utilize such skills in a variety of contexts, including their environments (Fingeret, 1990).

Consequently, in view of the relative nature of definitions of "success" and "failure" in literacy and adult education literature, this study did not seek to describe and analyze Sierra Leone's educational reform policies and practices on adult literacy against the researcher's own criteria of factors related to successful and unsuccessful outcomes. Rather, the issue of successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes would be judged by the numbers of illiterate adults believed to have acquired literacy skills as reported in official statistics compiled by the Ministry of Education. A comparison with the target estimates outlined in the nation's educational reform documents would help put the statistical data into perspective. As well, the assumption was made that the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes operating within the Sierra Leone context could not be understood separately from: (i) the nation's social and historical conditions or features; (ii) the influence of international forces; (iii) the organizational and administrative contexts of programmes; (iv) learner and instructor circumstances as well as their attitudes towards literacy and illiteracy; (v) the general educational environments of programmes and; (vi) the nature of interaction between instructors and adult learners in the instructional and learning processes.

In those societies of the Third World where adult literacy programmes have been judged successful, like Cuba, Tanzania, Nicaragua and Mozambique, the supportive role of the state has been considered very critical (Lind, 1986, 1988; Bhola, 1984a). In Sierra Leone, like elsewhere in the Third World, the state not only plays a dominant or overwhelming role in educational policy making, it is also legally responsible for the provision, financing, organization, administration, evaluation and assessment of all educational programmes, including adult literacy. Partly in acknowledgement of its overwhelming role in education, expressions of state support and endorsements for adult literacy in Sierra Leone abound in official documents and pronouncements, some of which date as far back as the colonial era (Mambu, 1983; British Council, 1993). Yet as Bhola (quoted in Hamadache & Martin, 1986) cautions, mere state rhetorical endorsements and support for adult literacy are not enough. Rather, a "... more reliable measure would unquestionably be found in the extent of [state] financial, human and material resources ..." allocated to adult literacy activities (p. 22). Thus a crucial issue that would be carefully examined and analyzed in this study relates to the extent and nature of actual state support provided for adult literacy; specifically, government education financial and other resources allocated to adult literacy; measures designed to promote recruitment efforts and their outcomes; the kinds of organisational, administrative and technical support available to adult literacy programmes as well as support provided in regard to curriculum implementation and instructional-learning resources. By the critical analysis of the actual extent and nature of state support, the study would be able to provide some insights into the discrepancy between the rhetoric expressed in reform policy documents in regard to adult literacy and the outcomes of these programmes.

The focus of the study was on the views of four groups of stakeholders or social actors (i.e., government officials, agency/organization representatives, literacy instructors and adult learners) who would be normally associated with literacy and adult education in the country. The assumption was made that the expectations, value orientations as well as general views and opinions of these groups regarding adult literacy work would vary and, in some cases, even appear conflicting and contradictory. Consequently, the objectives, value orientations and general opinions of each group would be viewed as critical not only in terms of the ways educational policies would be formulated, but also in the ways literacy and adult education programmes would be organised and administered (Torres & Schugurensky, 1993).

Operational Definitions

A number of key words used in this study have been operationally defined. They are the following:

Literacy Policy

The definition of policy used in this study is based on that offered by Anderson and Bakker (1969) in their historical analysis of secondary education in Sierra Leone. In this study, policy is viewed as a course of action regarding adult literacy as expressed in:

(a) Parliamentary acts relevant to adult literacy.

(b) Rules and regulatory functions of the government, through the Ministry of Education, in conformity with such acts.

(c) Application and adjudication of acts, rules and regulatory functions by those officials and agencies with authority and responsibility for them.

(d) Direct statements of a policy nature by government officials, like the President or the Minister of Education.

(e) Appropriation of resources by the government, through the Ministry of Education, to adult literacy in the context of the proportions of allotment to various other sub-sectors of education (pp. 2-3).

Literacy Practice

As used in this study, literacy practice refers to all those activities involved in the translation of educational reform policies in the area of adult literacy into concrete programmes. Such activities may relate to a wide variety of issues, like the allocation of resources; measures designed to promote recruitment efforts, including their outcomes; the kinds of organisational, administrative and technical support available as well as the educational environment of adult literacy programmes, like curriculum, instructional and learning issues.

The State

In the Republic of Sierra Leone, several government Ministries, like Defence; Agriculture; Health; Social Welfare and Rural Development, are involved in the delivery of adult literacy. While this phenomenon is acknowledged, the state as used in this study, is defined as the Ministry of Education which is, by law, the agency responsible for government guidance, financing, organization, administration, evaluation and assessment of all education programmes, including adult literacy.

Programme

For the purpose of this study, a programme refers to all the classes or courses operated by an adult literacy providing agency/organization. Thus several programmes, as agencies/organisations present, are perceived to be operating across the country although only ten of these were invited to participate in this study.

Literacy

The definition of literacy used in this study is based on that offered in **The 1970 White Paper on Educational Policy** produced by the Ministry of Education. That document defines literacy as the:

> ability to encode and decode combinations of letters into words in a meaningful way such that information can be received and conveyed through written material (Ministry of Education, 1970, p. 7).

Significance of the Study

This study attempts to foster an understanding of the factors related to the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes operating within the Sierra Leone context. By attempting to use research-based information to influence educational policy and practice with regard to adult literacy in Sierra Leone, the study should be of value to the nation's policy makers and educators, particularly those concerned with the promotion of literacy among the nation's illiterate adult population. It is assumed that those whose responsibility it is to define educational policy and practice (i.e., policy makers and educators) will be able to carry out their tasks in a much more realistic and efficient way when the factors that enable, influence, constrain and hinder success in literacy programmes are better understood, preferably, through research.

As well, knowing about the complexity of the factors associated with successful and unsuccessful adult literacy programmes may be helpful to policy makers and educators in their attempt to optimize success in these programmes. Hopefully, the study will help broaden the knowledge of policy makers and educators about the factors associated with the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes beyond the narrow focus on mere government rhetorical endorsements in support of adult literacy or reforms in curricula, instructional and learning issues associated with these programme. The assumption is made in this study that international forces, social and historical conditions of a society as well as organizational and administrative factors may be as critical in shaping the outcomes of literacy programmes as are the educational features of these programmes.

The study provides an analysis of education reform policies and practices in the area of adult literacy that may be of value to further research dealing with other aspects of education in Sierra Leone, like each of the sub-sectors of schooling. As well, because of the relationship between educational policies and social forces, the study may be of value to future national research efforts in the social sciences in which the primary focus may lie in fields (health) other than education.

By generating some theoretical propositions to help us better understand the specific factors associated with successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes, this study is likely to constitute a useful contribution to the debate on, and knowledge base for, literacy and adult education within the Sierra Leone context. As well, it may be of value to the continuing attempts towards a substantive theory on adult literacy, particularly in regard to Third World societies.

Although its focus is on adult literacy work within the Sierra Leone context, this study is potentially useful for comparative purposes. Since the situation or conditions facing adult literacy programmes in Third World societies are considered largely identical, the study may be helpful in providing a basis for research concerned with analysis of educational reform policies and practices with regard to adult literacy in other Third World societies.

Structure of the Dissertation

The remaining sections of this dissertation have been organised as follows:

The review of literature for the study, including the conceptual framework, is presented in Chapter Two. The conceptual framework, which is derived from a synthesis of the literature on literacy and development as well as successful and unsuccessful literacy programmes in Third World societies, will guide the presentation and analysis of the findings of this study.

Chapter Three presents the research design. It includes an examination of the research orientation and process, data gathering methods and procedures, data sources, data analysis and interpretation procedures as well as some brief information on the respondents invited to participate in the study.

The contextual framework is presented in Chapter Four. It deals with the broader social, economic, political, as well as historical forces of Sierra Leone society; those conditions that would, hopefully, be transformed by adult literacy activities and which, at the same time, would likely have a profound influence on the nature and structure of the nation's educational reform policies and practices in regard to adult literacy.

Chapter Five presents a descriptive overview and analysis of (i) the nature and structure of the nation's educational reform policies between 1970 and 1992 with particular emphasis on adult literacy and; (ii) the nature and extent of the nation's educational practices between 1970 and 1992 with particular emphasis on adult literacy. A concluding summary identifies the key dimensions of adult literacy policy and practice that would constitute the focus for investigation and analysis.

Chapter Six deals with the presentation and analysis of the findings of the study. The process is guided by the conceptual framework depicting the three analytic categories of factors associated with successful and unsuccessful outcomes of Third World adult literacy programmes developed for the study.

Chapter Seven discusses the research findings; the issue of discrepancy between the rhetoric expressed in policy documents on adult literacy and the outcomes of these programmes; the limitations of the research; the implications of the study for policy, practice, theory and research as well as recommendations arising from the study.

CHAPTER 2: OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This Chapter is divided into two sections. Section one presents an overview of selected literature on literacy and development. It includes a review of literature on the role of the state in literacy work as well as the relationship between literacy and the labour market. The second section presents a review of literature on successful and unsuccessful adult literacy programmes in Third World societies followed by the presentation of the conceptual framework developed for the study.

The Relationship Between Literacy and Development: Review of Selected Literature

While the relationship between social, political and economic factors and literacy has been widely recognised in the literature, conceptualisation of their interaction remains a matter of immense controversy among scholars and researchers. Part of the reason for the controversy lies with the concept of "development" itself, since any conceptualisation of the term must contain a diagnosis of the origins of the "development problem" as well as the appropriate strategy for its solution. In general, conceptualisations of "development" have tended to reflect conflicting and even contradictory positions based largely on differing assumptions, among researchers and scholars, about the definition, nature and objectives of the development process and, by implication, the nature, definition, causes and consequences of underdevelopment. Thus any meaningful review of the literature on the relationship between literacy and development, particularly in a Third World context, must start with a brief overview of the theoretical perspectives on the concept of "development."

Overview of Mainstream Development Theories

An examination of the literature suggests that development concepts have undergone some intensive scrutiny and re-appraisal over the last few decades, although, for this study, the focus is on the review of the mainstream development concepts, namely; the modernisation and dependency perspectives.

During the 1950s and 1960s, development was defined almost exclusively in terms of economic growth. The theories of "human capital" and "modernisation" set the premises of its relationship with literacy; people are the main wealth of a country, but it is necessary to transform that "raw material" through schooling if there was to be a significant impact on the development process (Bock, 1982; Hettne, 1990). In other words, "human resources ... constitute the ultimate basis for the wealth of nations ... [thus] ... a country which is not able to develop the skills and knowledge of its people, and to utilize them effectively in the national economy will be unable to develop anything else" (Harbison, 1973, p. 115). The essential input into the development process, according to this perspective, was viewed as capital, technology and education and the output was quantified in economic terms using such indicators as Gross National Product (GNP); Per Capita Income; employment, infrastructure as well as modern industrial and agricultural production. The assumption was made that once the growth process gained momentum, an "invisible hand" would take care of the distributional dimension. In other words, the "trickle down" effect of growth would increasingly, though slowly, lead to a more equitable distribution of wealth.

Consequently, during the 1950s and 1960s, Third World underdevelopment was essentially viewed as a product of a number of socio-economic factors, in particular, the result of low economic productivity which was, itself, a reflection of the underdeveloped and primitive nature of human resources in these societies (Bock, 1982). In other words, Third World societies remained underdeveloped because they lacked a sufficient number of citizens with the appropriate skills, attributes and values considered necessary in the modernisation process. Such assumptions were primarily responsible for the massive educational explosion in these societies during the 1950s and 1960s. Schooling was widely viewed as the principal way towards modern economies as well as social, political and cultural change in these societies. As well, literacy was seen as the instrument that would shape the minds and behaviour of Third World people, so that they could better fit and reinforce the modern society. Adult literacy work, like education generally, was viewed largely as the acquisition of technical skills, ability and competencies. At the same time, the success of educational programmes, like adult literacy, was almost exclusively perceived as contingent on reforms in the educational features of these programmes (i.e., curriculum, instruction and learning issues) by qualified educational experts.

At the international level, this perspective of development advocated the supply, by the rich and industrialised countries, of the:

> "missing components" to the developing countries and thereby to help them break bottlenecks or remove obstacles. These missing components may be capital, foreign exchange, skills or management ... a rationale for international aid, technical assurance, trade and investment (Kenneth Jones, 1986, p. 107).

By the late 1960s, however, the evidence had become overwhelming that this conventional perspective on development had failed as:

> Poor countries remained poor, in fact some became poorer; while the rich grew richer. Although there was an increase in the middle and high income earners in the developing nations, the vast majority of the population remained in poverty (Blunt, 1988, p. 45-46).

Consequently, from the early 1970s, these conventional development perspectives were seriously scrutinised and challenged by other scholars and researchers. The dependency school became one of the major critics. Scholars and researchers writing within the perspective not only questioned whether Third World societies would ever follow the development patterns set by industrialised societies but the need to instil modern traits and values in Third World individuals. The problems of Third World underdevelopment, rather than being a problem of individuals, were viewed as historical and structural. In other words, these groups of scholars and researchers generally perceived Third World underdevelopment as a historical and structurally different kind of situation that was partly generated by, and attributed to, the nature of the relationship of these countries with capitalist industrialised societies (Kitching, 1989; Blomstrom and Hettne, 1988).

There are wide variations within the dependency school but the central thrust of authors writing within this school is the focus on the problems of Third World underdevelopment. In general, the dependency school maintains that there exists, in a given entity - say within the international system or in a country- a variety of units and subunits, some of which enjoy substantial resources while others do not. Since the units and subunits are believed to be structurally and historically linked to each other, development for one unit, known as the "centre", could signal underdevelopment for the other, referred to as the "periphery", given the shift of needed resources in favour of the "centre". In other words, the "centre" is said to exploit the "periphery" to support its own development and in so doing, creates the latter's state of underdevelopment, a process Frank called the "development of underdevelopment" (quoted in Hettne, 1990, p. 90). The "centre" may have been undeveloped at one point, but it was never systematically underdeveloped.

Thus, reformulation of the development problem along the lines of the dependency perspective suggests the "peripheral" societies of the Third World are tied to a type of international capitalist system that yields a perpetual state of underdevelopment in these societies. In other words, domination and power relationship sustain underdevelopment in the "periphery" whose economic surplus is appropriated by the dominant and developed "centre". The penetration of capitalism is singled out as the principal cause of underdevelopment, since the "peripheral" Third World societies are unable to break the chains binding them to the industrialised capitalist economies of the west In other words, since " ... the 'periphery' is deprived of its surplus, development in the 'centre' implies underdevelopment in the 'periphery'" (Hettne, 1990; p. 91). The development strategy advocated by this school is for the "peripheral" countries to disassociate themselves from the world market and stress self-reliant development.

While the modernisation paradigm drew on psychological reductionism for the explanation of individual and social behaviour in the development process, the dependency perspective adopts a sociological strategy that focuses on the transformation of social structures and units as well as institutions, all of which are generally construed as the real obstacles to the development process (Bock, 1982).

There is, however, a major problem associated with the dependency school. By simply describing Third World underdevelopment in terms of external forces, the dependency perspective would, in general, appear to have failed to account for national policy processes and other societal conditions that could undermine or promote development efforts in these societies. As some scholars and researchers (Cardosa & Faletto, 1979: Carnoy and Samoff, 1990) have pointed out, the problems of Third World underdevelopment must be interpreted in reference to both international factors as well as historical and political processes within these societies. In other words, this group of scholars and researchers suggest that Third World underdevelopment is not simply a reflection of international forces but also a result of particular historical and structural factors, specifically; the product of particular histories, social movements, nature and type of state and government, class allegiances as well as policy and practice choices, of the particular society concerned.

From this historical-structural perspective, then, development becomes a question of empowerment and liberation for the oppressed segments of society or the international system. In other words, along with economic growth, development becomes an issue of social and economic justice for the poor, like the elimination of poor health conditions, malnutrition, illiteracy, inadequate agricultural and industrial output, poverty, disease and social inequality (Freire, 1985; Blunt, 1988). The poor and other vulnerable groups of society must then become both subjects and objects of the development process.

The basic objective of development programmes then becomes enabling the poor to participate in the transformation of their own conditions and environments. As well, rather than simply becoming "objects and passive recipients of knowledge", the perspective advocates the transformation of the poor "into the subject and active creator of knowledge" (Oakley & Marsden, 1984, p. 7). The result, it is hoped, would be the capacity of vulnerable groups in society to organize themselves into a "countervailing power [able and willing] to confront the already well established power configuration within any particular context" (ibid, p. 26). Ultimately, these groups would be able to eventually question the social, economic and political situation that supports sustained poverty; their lack of economic, political and social opportunities as well as opportunities for participation in economic, political and social institutions.

The approach taken in the review of literature on literacy and development as well as successful and unsuccessful adult literacy programmes which follow is anchored in this historical-structural perspective. The perspective acknowledges that literacy, like education generally, is not a self-contained code but rather, ties in with not only the social, economic, political, cultural, educational and historical structures of the society in which it is embedded but, in some ways, with international forces which stem principally from the nature of the relations of the society concerned with international capitalist societies. In other words, rather than a simple technical issue or practice requiring technical and technological solutions by education experts, the relationship between literacy and development, according to this perspective, is understood as a complex process that is deeply rooted in the social and historical conditions of a society (Torres, 1990; Simmons, 1980). And like the relationship between literacy and development, the success or failure of adult literacy programmes depends on the interplay of a complex set of social, historical, international, organizational and administrative as well as educational factors.

Literacy and Development: Overview of Selected Literature

The literature on literacy and its relationship to development is substantial. Yet prior to the 1980s, there was a dearth of research on literacy particularly in the Third World; a surprising phenomenon given its perceived relevance to social and economic development. King (1978) attributes this dearth of research to the observation that for a long time, literacy was viewed as a sphere of practice rather than one of research or analysis. In addition, Lind (1986) and Oxenham (1980) suggest that the paucity of literacy research before the decade of the 1980s was probably due to the interdisciplinary nature of the field. In other words, the integral relationship that literacy has with other fields of study, like psychology, sociology, economics and politics, was viewed as having some constraining impact on research efforts in the field. As Oxenham (1980) explains it:

> The study of literacy ... is a young branch of investigation. Its growing pains are compounded by another fact of modern science, for which the ruling code-word is 'interdisciplinarity'. Literacy as a phenomenon requires for its explanation the attention of at least eight academic disciplines. They range from studies concerned with micro electrical impulses of the human brain to those which examine the struggles between the governing few and the subordinated masses of great empires (p. ix).

There has been a considerable resurgence of interest in literacy since 1980 and this dynamic derives, in part, from the sudden discovery of "pockets of illiteracy" in industrialised societies. This discovery has drawn attention to the fact that illiteracy is no longer just a Third World problem; a phenomenon that has, in turn, led to continued attention to, and research on, literacy and illiteracy in industrialised societies. Another factor responsible for the resurgence of literacy derives from the continuing desire among international development agencies (like Unesco) as well as Third World policy makers and educators to increase literacy rates among Third World populations. The continuing desire for industrialisation of Third World economies is widely perceived as requiring a literate, skilled, disciplined and socialised labour force. As well, more profound political and social transformation in Third World societies, particularly those which have followed the socialist pattern, like Nicaragua, Tanzania, Mozambique, Ethiopia and Cuba, have motivated demand for increased literacy among the adult population.

In general, the literacy practice of Third World societies has continued to draw attention to the dialectical relationship between literacy and social, economic and political factors. In countries where mass campaigns have been launched, like Nicaragua, Tanzania and Cuba, literacy work was viewed as a means to a comprehensive and integrative set of ends - social, economic and political- as defined by the state. In others that have opted for the selective and functional strategy, like India and Mali, literacy efforts have been integrated with work-related activities among selected occupational groups in the hope and expectation that it would facilitate increased production and productivity which, in turn, would contribute not only to increased incomes but to significant national economic growth and development. As well, international development agencies, like Unesco, have acknowledged the integrative role and nature of literacy in regard to a nation's political economy. Unesco, in particular, has continued to play a decisive role in the promotion of literacy as a factor and condition of social, economic and political development in Third World societies. During the 1960s and 1970s when the concept of functional literacy was worked out and the Experimental World Literacy Programme (EWLP) was launched, the emphasis, by Unesco, on the links between literacy and economic growth in Third World societies had clearly emerged. In recent years, Unesco has also emphasised the theme of literacy as "a basic human right" for the poor and disadvantaged members of society.

Yet while the relationship between literacy and political, social and economic factors has been emphasized, few studies on adult literacy in Third World societies have analyzed the nature of that interaction. As Carron and Bordia (1985) put it, in the absence of research-based information, simplistic theoretical propositions have been often used by literacy exponents to explain its beneficial interaction with development. The result has been a lack of understanding of the breadth and depth of the "literacy problem", particularly in Third World societies where illiteracy rates are greatest.

Studies on adult literacy in Third World societies have been generally limited largely because of a paucity of research resources (Shaeffer & Nkinyanyi, 1983). As well, major research efforts undertaken on behalf of the Third World, like the Experimental World Literacy Programme (EWLP) undertaken by Unesco/UNDP during the 1960s and 1970s, while credited with making renewed efforts at examining Third World literacy problems, had results that have been described as "generally disappointing" (Jones, 1988). As the author put it, the study failed to clearly establish the beneficial impact of literacy on development and, internationally, Unesco has never been able to demonstrate the linkage between increases in literacy rates and the development process. In other words, it would appear that the EWLP study ended with very little information available for use in subsequent adult literacy programmes.

In addition to the Unesco/UNDP study, a number of case studies on adult literacy have now emerged. Bhola's (1984a) work titled: **Campaigning for Literacy**, presents case studies of literacy campaigns in eight countries, including Cuba, Burma, Brazil, Tanzania and Somalia. Each of the countries which participated in the study, with the exception of Brazil, had undertaken a socialist revolution after which literacy was viewed as a broader process of social, cultural, political and social transformation. Countries that have undertaken a socialist revolution, like Nicaragua, Tanzania, Mozambique and Ethiopia, have generally provided eloquent examples of the introduction of literacy in the hope of effecting social and economic change along with major political reforms. This is not to suggest that successful literacy work is the exclusive preserve of only socialist oriented Third World societies. In fact, Bhola (1984a) suggests that all societies are quite capable of ideological commitment and they have the power to sensitize and mobilize public opinion in support of nationally defined issues. Consequently, even in capitalist oriented Third World societies where the authority of the state would be usually restricted by constitutional means, authorities could challenge citizens to action and mobilise them in support of mass literacy if they so desired. The author cites Brazil as an example of sustaining commitment by the state to mass literacy through the institutional arrangement formalized as MORAL.

While the Bhola (1984a) study provided comprehensive descriptive information about the literacy campaign undertaken by each of these countries, there was no attempt at theorizing about the relationship between literacy and the political economy of each nation or about the nature of the dialectical relationship which literacy bore to the development process of each society. In fact, in much of the literature on mass campaigns in socialists societies, like Bhola's study, there appears to be an underlying, implicit assumption of a deterministic relationship between literacy and the transformation of social realities in favour of subordinate classes.

In addition to Bhola's (1984a) work, a few other studies and literature have also examined national efforts to achieve greater literacy among the adult population, principally in Third World societies (Miller, 1985; Graff, 1987a; Arnove and Graff, 1987; Wagner, 1987; Freebody and Welch, 1993). Some of these works have also examined the nature of the interaction between literacy and political, economic and social factors in Third World societies and, in general, the findings of these studies could be characterised as contradictory at best. Miller's (1985) work, for instance, provides some evidence of the existence of a theoretically-informed and field-operational model of literacy promotion within a Third World context. The Nicaraguan government had hoped that the campaign would influence the formal schooling system as well as the nation's overall development and, in some ways, it would appear to have succeeded on both counts (Lankshear, 1993). According to these authors, the beneficial effects of the campaign on community organisations and, consequently, on the development of the nation were probably incalculable. As well, the campaign was of special significance to the role of women in the future of Nicaragua. By creating an opportunity for women to participate in large numbers and on equal footing with men, the campaign appeared to have changed the image of women and it also had profound effect on the nation's institutions.

Graff's (1987a) study points out that the definition, roles and functions of literacy could not be understood outside their social and historical contexts. He questions the efficacy of the "literacy myth" and suggests that historically in industrialised societies, like England and Sweden, "it would be hard to demonstrate that the degree of literacy improvement was equalled by increases in indexes of well-being, democracy, and other social changes". He goes on to state further that "developments in literacy and schooling tend to follow, rather than precede or cause, economic and social development. This is not often recognised in most development schemes" (pp. 377-378). Yet a number of scholars of literacy work (Bhola, 1984a) continue to argue that the question is not which comes first, literacy or development, but rather that literacy really only takes root when there is a perceived need for its usage.

Even in the context of Third World societies, examples abound in which a significant and rapid rise in literacy rates would appear to have made no meaningful impact on the economies or general living standards (Griffith, 1990; Street, 1984; Jones, 1988; Wagner, 1987). For instance, in a historical study on the relationship between literacy and economic development in Mexico, Fuller and Gorman (in Wagner, 1987) noted that higher literacy levels seemed to have had beneficial economic effects in urban areas, particularly in manufacturing and commerce. However, the growth of literacy seemed to have had adverse effects (other than a few rare cases) in the countryside. The authors also suggested that causal links between literacy and development must be viewed with circumspection. In addition, they mentioned that it was important to distinguish between the rise in literacy levels and the development of the schooling system; literacy rates having risen even before the introduction of the mass education system. The authors conclude that greater equality or socioeconomic development does not necessary result from mass literacy but from fundamental social structural changes in society. In essence, they suggest that mass literacy bears little relationship to changing patterns of inequality or socioeconomic development, especially in Third World societies.

In the more recent past, some studies on literacy have focussed on class-based distinctions as well as gender issues in literacy work (James, 1990; Graff, 1987a; Stromquist, 1986, 1988, 1990). These studies have suggested that illiteracy was linked to contextual factors in which social class distinctions, general levels of socio-economic development, linguistic affiliations as well as marginalization of certain groups play significant and mutually supportive roles in the literacy process. In terms of gender issues, these studies suggest that the subordination of women is related to the sexual division of labour and to the control of women's sexuality which in turn affects their participation in literacy activities. Literacy work is generally viewed as male-dominated with the result that programmes have failed to acknowledge gender differences in education. Consequently, gender issues emerge as a primary concern in literacy programmes which must seek to avoid the perpetuation of female stereotypical roles. In other words, programmes should provide women with the skills and knowledge related to reproductive tasks, productive work, emancipation and empowerment (Stromquist, 1988). Gender-based studies have, in general, acknowledged that efforts to enable poor and marginalized women to become literate, especially in Third World societies, required the pressures of agencies/ organizations, individuals and even governments committed to large-scale social transformation.

The work by Arnove and Graff (1987) explores literacy campaigns from a historical perspective and shows that the notion of a campaign is not exclusively a 20th century phenomenon and may not be restricted to only socialist-oriented societies. By broadening the definition of literacy campaigns beyond the usual notion, the authors include many other undertakings that do not necessarily have those characteristics that are typical of the 20th century efforts, namely; (i) high level of national commitment to eliminating illiteracy; (ii) mobilisation of a society for social and economic change in which mass literacy is one component among many; (iii) national and local commitment of human and financial resources; (iv) flexibility of method according to context because of the need for maximum participation on the part of the entire population. The contributors to the case studies compiled by Arnove and Graff (1987) present contrasting perspectives on the utility of mass campaigns. Some of them claimed that the campaigns were probably greatly overrated; that the costs outweighed the gains; that the incremental gains of campaigns were small by comparison to schooling literacy and that the campaigns had failed to establish the nature of interaction between literacy and development. Others, such as Bhola, concluded that "adult literacy is inherently progressive, and adult literacy is even radical in its assumptions and consequences" (p. 267). In other words, while it is by no means the panacea for all social and economic ills, literacy, according to some of these contributors, may build on the potential of individuals and collectivities and can empower them to reduce levels of hierarchies as well as transform the dynamics and structures of inequality to make societies more humane.

The perspective taken in the studies mentioned above was identical to that taken by some of the contributors to the case studies on literacy compiled by Freebody and Welch (1993). As well, in spite of some major country-to-country variations carefully documented throughout the study, most of the contributors pointed to the debt crisis and declining government spending on social services, including education, (in the case of Third World countries, due partly to structural adjustment) as well as dwindling external aid as having considerable adverse impact on schooling and adult literacy, particularly in Third World societies. The works of some of the contributors thus introduced a slightly different dimension to literacy work in Third World societies, namely; the influence of external aid as well as the impact, on Third World economies, of their integration into the capitalist world economies. In spite of the considerable progress reported by Unesco, some of the contributors pointed to problems that, in their view, were making it extremely difficult to sustain international, national and local efforts for adult literacy activities, particularly in Third World societies.

For several years, particularly during the 1960s and 1970s, studies on adult literacy in Third World societies focussed almost exclusively on the problem of "methods". As literacy work was viewed as an educational phenomenon, the central concern of researchers and educators was on the issue of appropriateness of methods. For instance, there was the Traditional or Laubach method which involved the teaching of the 3Rs, namely; Reading, Writing and Arithmetic. There was also the Functional Literacy method in which the focus of literacy training was on the acquisition of technical, vocational and cognitive skills designed to increase production and productivity. This method belongs to the "human capital" theory as well as the psychological orientation to development. There was also the consciousness-raising or Psycho-Social method associated with Freire (1972). This method sought to overcome not only illiteracy but conditions of oppression of marginalised and poor groups in society.

More recently, however, studies and literature on literacy have centred around the issue of strategies as well as the "kinds of literacies" or, better still, the "approaches to a definition" of literacy. With regard to strategies, three trends have now emerged. Firstly, mass literacy efforts have been viewed as two-pronged, namely; the expansion of primary schooling and adult literacy provision. While in industrialised countries, the issue of illiteracy is viewed as a continuum for children and adults alike, many Third World societies have kept the discussion on schooling and adult literacy separate. A selective strategy has been used in societies where resources and political commitment appear weak or lacking. It involves the identification and selection of special or priority groups and/or regions (like women, workers and rural areas) for literacy training. A number of countries, like Nicaragua, Tanzania and Ethiopia, have employed the mass campaign strategy which, as Bhola (1984a) puts it, views literacy work as "business not as usual" (p. 35). This strategy has sought to mobilise entire nations for literacy which is viewed as part of the broad package that promises concrete social change in favour of the poor.

With regard to the "kinds of literacies", the debate continues about literacy as either a functional instrument or as a liberating, empowering and self-fulfilling instrument (Hamadache & Martin, 1986; Freire, 1985). In other words, literacy is viewed either as a set of basic skills, abilities or competencies or as a mechanism for a higher quality of life (Hunter, 1987). Literacy has also been viewed as a social practice or a special pattern of socialisation. The study by Scribner and Cole (1981) identified three different kinds of literacies among the Vai each of which was tied to a particular context of use. Literacy, then, has now been seen as a social construction and as a condition determining and being determined by the social order. Cognitive claims made on behalf of literacy have now been generally related to the context and practice of literacy. Literacy has also been defined as a particular structure of discourse; in other words, manners in which people communicate (Scollon & Scollon, 1981). In recent years, references have been also made to "Green Literacy". This is viewed as literacy that equips learners with daily skills of survival and improvement of their economic and social conditions with a sense of care or respect for factors that enhance ecological harmony (Usang, 1992).

Yet still, literacy work has been viewed as either adaptive-oriented or transformative-oriented (James, 1990) Adaptive-oriented programmes which are identical to Street's (1984) technical or autonomous model of literacy, view illiteracy and literacy as essentially educational issues. Illiterates are viewed as having "deficits" which need some correction, through their participation in literacy programmes, to enable them to contribute to their own, and by implication, the nation's development. Transformative-oriented programmes, like Street's (1984) ideological model, view literacy and illiteracy as reflections of broader social, historical and structural realities of society. Literacy programmes are viewed as helping illiterates critically assess and understand the social and historical context in which they live. In other words, such programmes assume that "the meaning of literacy depends upon the social institutions in which it is embedded ... .[and] that the teaching of reading and writing depends upon a whole set of socio-economic, cultural and political structures" (Street, 1984, p. 8).

The studies and literature reviewed above do not necessarily suggest that there is no relationship between literacy and political, social and economic factors of society or that literacy work should follow or not precede development. Rather, what they show is that the nature of the interaction between literacy and the development process is extremely complex, deeply rooted in a nation's social, economic and historical structures. In this sense, literacy work must be viewed " ... as part of a larger process of change, not as a mere fine-tuning of the individual's outlook and technical skills" (Jurmo, 1989, p. 23). In other words, it must be problematized as a historical phenomenon or examined within the particular interplay of social, economic and political forces which come to bear upon it. As Hunter (1987a) explains:

> Illiteracy is not an isolated phenomenon. It can neither be understood nor responded to apart from the complex of social, political and economic issues of which it is but one indicator ... Poverty is the underlying cause of illiteracy. Without any proven will or ability to break the chains of poverty, no government has been able to make significant progress towards universal literacy ... Literacy cannot be understood as a remedial programme designed and delivered by zealous missionaries to those 'in need'. Rather, literacy levels will increase where there is a commitment to goals of equity and justice and where the educationally disadvantaged are able to be involved in shaping their own learning within the context of reshaping the social, political, economic and cultural environment within which they live. If we begin with programmes that promote participation and direction by learners, that degree of openness can become a first step toward the larger, more socially and economically inclusive change that will provide the basis on which universal literacy can be realized (pp. 4-7).

In another piece of scholarly work, Hunter (1987b) also cautioned against viewing literacy work as an exclusive educational problem. Rather, she suggests, literacy work must be perceived as a complex web of social, historical, political, economic and educational issues. As she put it:

> The practitioner who defines literacy as a set of skills or as the ability to use skills within work, community or cultural settings is in danger of placing the entire burden of change on the individual adult learner. The people with limited skills

> become the focus of needed change. On the other hand, when literacy is seen in the context of social realities, social, political and economic structures are identified as the focus of needed change. Access to knowledge and the power to create and to use social knowledge become the crucial issues (p. 26).

As noted in the review of the theoretical perspectives on development presented earlier, the approach to literacy and development as well as successful and unsuccessful adult literacy programmes taken in this study was based on the historical-structural perspective. Unlike human capital and modernisation theories of development, this perspective views the relationship between literacy and development, like successful and unsuccessful literacy programmes, as grounded " ... in a historical structural analysis of the processes of economic, social and political structures of society" (Torres, 1990, p. 40). In other words, the problems of literacy programmes in Third World societies, like Sierra Leone, are viewed as complex and deeply rooted not only in the socio-economic, political, historical and educational experiences of the nation concerned but also in the extent of the nation's participation in the capitalist world economy. Consequently, the analysis of the relationship between literacy and development in Third World societies, like the factors associated with successful and unsuccessful literacy programmes in these societies, must involve a deeper analysis of a nation's social, economic, political, historical and educational features as well as the influence of international forces on the outcomes of programmes. Based on the review of literature on the relationship between literacy and development presented in this section, the historical structural perspective was considered to be of great potential importance for a more convincing analysis and understanding of the factors associated with successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes in Third World societies, like Sierra Leone.

The review of literature presented in this section will conclude with an overview of literature on the role and nature of the state as well as the relationship between literacy and the labour market. Analysis of the nature and role of the state as well as the relationship between literacy and the labour market may be critical to any understanding of the issues pertaining to educational reform policies and practices in Third World societies, including the factors associated with the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes.

Literacy and the State

Probably because of the limited successes enjoyed by some Third World societies, particularly in terms of increased literacy rates among their populations, literacy work has now been widely viewed not so much as an educational issue but as an issue of state or political commitment. In this sense, the work of literacy programmes could not be fully understood without some analysis of the educational role of the state which, in general, provides and controls literacy activities in Third World societies. As well, it is at the level of the state that decisions are made about literacy policy and practice. In fact, in Third World societies generally, literacy programmes organised and implemented by agencies other than the state (churches, mosques, trade unions and community based groups) are relatively insignificant in quantitative terms of enrollment numbers, and even these programmes would, in general, be shaped by state authority. As M'Bow (in Hamadache & Martin, 1986) points out, Third World "governments have a key role to play in a field where the establishment of objectives, the choice of strategies and the mobilisation of the nation's energies, of its material, financial and human resources to make literacy an instrument for the achievement of the necessary social changes are primary essentials" (p. 22). It is largely because of this dominant role of the state in determining issues of educational policy and practice that researchers and adult educators would be normally expected to examine its nature and role.

In general, explanations of the state's role in literacy involves some examination of the theories of the state, defined as "explanations of how political men and women interact individually and collectively" (Carnoy & Levin, 1985, p. 36). For instance, in particularly capitalist societies, the state is viewed as a consensual, collective representation of its members.

This "common good" or apolitical theory of the state relates to the modernisation and human capital perspectives of development and it postulates the state without an ideology of its own. Literacy work, like the state which provides and controls it, is viewed as a neutral endeavour in the sense that programmes would be presumed to be working in the general interest of all the citizens involved in them, particularly the learners. In other words, there is no attempt to analyze the political and economic context of these programmes since the programmes are not expected to question the social, political and economic structures in which they are embedded. For instance, by viewing literacy as exclusively an educational issue and illiterate individuals as having "deficits" that need to be corrected or fixed in order to enable them to fit into mainstream society, most functional literacy programmes would be informed by the "common good" or apolitical theory of the state. Such programmes would generally focus on issues of production and productivity raising skills.

This "common good" theory of the state and its role in literacy and schooling is at odds with the class-based perspectives of the state which view the state as an arena of conflict among different groups in society. This perspective suggests that there is the potential for both increases in social reproduction and legitimisation of the status quo as well as democratic growth (Carnoy & Levin, 1985). For instance, the state may be seen as a complex set of public institutions which the dominant classes in society seek to control or influence in order to advance their own agendas. Although other classes would sometimes succeed in influencing the state (e.g. to extend trade union or student rights), their relative weakness puts them at a disadvantage. Thus state intervention in educational programmes, like adult literacy, tends towards strengthening the legitimacy of the dominant classes and towards sustaining the existing economic system. Literacy programmes, like education generally, become an important element in the legitimisation of social hegemony as well as extension of state or elite authority. Graff's (1987a) work suggests that, historically, this has been the role performed by literacy. It was used, in age after age, to solidify the social hierarchy, empower elites, and ensure that people lower in the hierarchy accepted the values, norms and beliefs of the elites, even when it was not in their self-interest (or class interests) to do so.

Today several Third World states, including particularly those that have opted for the selective literacy strategy, have continued to use literacy programmes to build support for the existing economic, social and political order (Mehran, 1992). In these societies, adult literacy programmes appear to have been co-opted by the state and employed as instruments of social legitimisation as well as the extension of state authority.

Yet the potential for democratic growth within the system means that literacy work could have "unintended consequences" beyond those anticipated by the state. As well, some Third World states have attempted to represent the interest of marginalised and poor groups in society. In countries like Nicaragua and Mozambique, for example, literacy programmes were designed to expand the capacities of marginalised and poor groups to be involved in the making of social, economic and political decisions affecting their lives. Yet such programmes have been few probably because of concerns, especially among state officials, of the unintended consequences of mass literacy. In general, government involvement in literacy, particularly in Third World societies, has been designed to reinforce existing social, political and economic order in the societies concerned (Freire, 1985).

Thus in this study, analyzing the role of the state in literacy, particularly as it relates to the nature and structure of its educational reform policies and practices in the area of adult literacy, was considered critical. For instance, what is the nature and role of the state in relation to education generally and literacy and adult education in particular? What is the nation's prevailing development ideology as advocated by the state? What is the nature of the relationship between literacy and development? What is the nature of the state's relationship with industrialised societies or with the capitalist world economy? The answers to these and related questions would provide the framework for analysis and discussion of the nature and role of the state in regard to literacy and adult education.

Literacy and Access to the Labour Market

Ever since the launching by Unesco of the Experimental World Literacy Programme (EWLP) in selected Third World societies and the sudden discovery of illiteracy in industrialised societies, the "literacy problem" has continued, in some ways, to focus on the issue of the economy, specifically, the cost of illiteracy as well as the relationship between literacy and access to the labour market. In industrialised societies, in particular, a number of studies have attempted to analyze the relationship between literacy or illiteracy and the economy. In general, these studies and literature have noted that increasingly sophisticated technology was requiring an ever-increasing threshold of basic education among the productive population; an observation that continues to inform much of the discussion on literacy or illiteracy in industrialised societies. For instance, Thomas (1983) has pointed to national economic stagnation and decline as one consequence of an illiterate Canadian workforce. In addition, Harman (1987) notes that modern workplaces are "large, sophisticated, complex arenas no longer capable of sustaining themselves with word-of-mouth orientation and informal on-the-job training" (p. 22). He estimates that during the mid 1980s, American businesses spent about $210 billion annually on employee training and education, including "a major and concerted effort to upgrade various aspects of literacy" (pp. 38-39). As well, Kozol's (1987) work attempts to quantify some of the macro-costs of illiteracy and semi-literacy to the United States by indicating the ways by which literacy and illiteracy may be intertwined with the nation's economy.

But the debate on the relationship between literacy or illiteracy and a nation's economy has not been confined to industrialised societies alone. Fisher (1982) presents a comparative analysis of societies with higher illiteracy rates (i.e., higher than 66%) with those with higher literacy rates (i.e., less than 34% illiterates). He concludes that:

> The indicators examined ... point in the same direction; the 'have nots' in terms of literacy are also worse off in terms of life expectancy, infant mortality, educational provision, communications, nutrition, health services, food production and income: their industry is less developed, their agriculture is less productive. But this is only part of the tragic reality, for within these countries with high illiteracy rates where nearly everyone is deprived: the illiterate is even worse off than his compatriots; his living conditions are worse, and his life is one of drudgery (p. 161).

While some of these studies have acknowledged the correlation between worker literacy level and his or her job performance, there are still others which suggest that correlation may not be dependent on labour market conditions per se nor is it entirely restricted to the literacy background of workers. In fact, Graff (1987a) makes the point that, historically, literacy had no significant relationship with employment. Rather, literacy programmes stressed behaviours and attitudes that were viewed as appropriate to good citizenship and moral behaviour, largely those perceived by the elites in society.

Other studies have also offered some thought-provoking views on the role of literacy in the labour market. Levine's (1986) study suggests that some employers screen and test job applicants for literacy which, he admits, put semi-literate and illiterate applicants at a distinct disadvantage. However, his study also found that for certain employees, "job design appears to have been deliberately premised on a worker without reading and writing competencies" (p. 144). He noted that on the shop floor, "reading and writing constituted minuscule aspects of ... those semi-skilled and unskilled job categories located towards the bottom of each plant-wide hierarchy." Such a situation, the study suggested, "did not square with the considerable importance the recruitment policies of large employers attach to the selection of a literate workforce" (p. 136).

In an effort to help us understood the relationship between literacy and access to the labour market, Levine's (1986) study distinguished between "job literacy" and "employment literacy". The former, he indicated, concerned a "set of job tasks that require the worker to read and write" and did not appear to have been universal in the industries he studied. The latter he defined as "the employers perceived need to document aspects of the relations that exist between themselves, employees, trade unions and the state" (p. 139) and is therefore required of every worker whether or not he/she uses "job literacy" in performing his/her tasks. The study suggests that, beyond the actual need for job or employment reading and writing, literacy was used by employers as a proxy indicator for other attitudes and behaviours that they viewed positively. The literates had successful records at school and so they were "trainable".

Harman (1987) makes the same point. Literacy alone was not what employers sought in applicants; "in so far as gaining access to work is concerned, it appears that certification is more important than literacy" (pp. 33-34). In this connection, he points to the escalation of stated prerequisites for given jobs which go far beyond the skills actually required and which place such jobs further and further from the reach of the semi-literate and illiterate. "The supply of candidates with higher levels of formal schooling has so increased that employers have raised the ante ... . supply has influenced demand" (p. 54). What these studies and literature suggest is that the literacy required by employers differs among occupation and types of firms; however, particularly in less skilled occupations, literacy and schooling backgrounds may not be as significant as other attributes.

There are still other studies and literature that have continued to question past assumptions about the role of literacy in the labour market. Carnoy (1980), for example, has observed that the labour market is segmented into primary (i.e., white-collar, managerial and professional workers) and secondary sectors (i.e., blue-collar labour and agricultural workers). He suggests that workers cannot freely move between the two "segments". Thus literacy and schooling may improve access to jobs only in a limited sense (i.e., within each segment). In other words, it would appear likely that this segmented nature of the labour market (and the accompanying inadequacy of occupational opportunities it generates) is not the result of illiterates or other secondary sector employees lacking "deficits". Rather, the problem may relate to the systematic structural inequalities inherent in the entire social, economic and political system (Bock & Papagiannis, 1983). If one accepts this argument, as this researcher does, then it is unlikely that the acquisition of literacy skills by secondary sector employees, particularly those in Third World societies, would remedy the situation. In fact, since the literacy taught in most Third World adult literacy programmes is generally perceived as inferior education (in comparison to schooling), it is even likely that such programmes would only reinforce the segmented nature of the labour market in these societies.

The work by King (1980) is particularly relevant for Third World societies. He notes that, in general, linkages between educational institutions and employment agencies are non-existent. In addition to the segmented nature of the labour market in these societies, King suggests that literacy may after all not be viewed as absolutely necessary for employment in the relatively large and viable informal urban and rural sectors of the economies in these societies. It is perhaps this sector, the study notes, that has been widely neglected in discussions on the relationship between literacy and employment in Third World societies.

In Sierra Leone, like elsewhere in Africa, adult literacy work, at least in the thinking of state officials, agency/organization representatives and even literacy instructors, would normally be designed for learners engaged in informal sector economic activities as well as secondary sector employment. It is thus posited in this study that, in some ways, the success of these programmes would depend on the perceptions of these groups regarding the usefulness of literacy skills in their daily occupational activities. If, in general, they viewed the acquisition of literacy skills as critical to their daily survival or their political, social and economic wellbeing, they would more likely be willing to participate in these programmes. Alternately, it was assumed that the reverse would occur if literacy skills were viewed as irrelevant. Thus a key issue that would be examined in this study relates to the structure and performance of the nation's employment market, in particular; the perception of respondents regarding the relationship between literacy skills and access to the labour market.

This brings to an end the discussion on the overview of literature on the relationship between literacy and development. The next section presents a review of literature on successful and unsuccessful literacy programmes. It is followed by the conceptual framework developed for the study.

Successful and Unsuccessful Adult Literacy Programmes in Third World Societies: Theoretical Interpretations

When the concepts of "success" and "failure" are used in studies on adult literacy programmes generally, they inevitably convey a variety of images and explanations depending on: (i) the socio-cultural and political contexts in which programmes are embedded; (ii) the underlying ideology of development and its relationship with literacy; (iii) the nature and character of the programmes themselves and; (iv) the larger framework of purposes and objectives of programmes (Fingeret, 1990; Charnley & Jones, 1979). These studies have generally acknowledged that multiple definitions or measures of "success" and "failure" exist based on the perceptions of the different groups of stakeholders associated with literacy and adult education. For instance, government officials and agency/organization representatives may be more inclined to define "success" and "failure" in terms of the larger framework of their understanding of the general purposes, intended outcomes and objectives of programmes. Instructors would generally define both concepts in terms of their ability to help adult learners learn, in other words; help learner's achieve the specific objectives they had set for themselves prior to their registration for the course and these may be cognitive, attitudinal or social. As well, adult learners may define "success" and "failure" in terms of the acquisition of new skills as well as their ability to utilize such skills in a variety of contexts, including their environments (Fingeret, 1990).

Consequently, in view of the relative nature of definitions of "success" and "failure" in literacy and adult education literature, this study did not seek to provide universal definitions of "success" and "failure"; nor was the researcher attempting to analyze Sierra Leone's educational reform policies and practices with regard to adult literacy against his own criteria of factors associated with "success" and "failure". As noted in Chapter One of this study, the issue of successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes would be judged by the numbers of illiterate adults believed to have acquired literacy skills as reported in official statistics compiled by the Ministry of Education. A comparison with the target estimates outlined in the nation's educational reform documents on adult literacy would help put the statistical data into perspective. As well, the assumption was made that the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes operating within the Sierra Leone context could not be understood separately from: (i) the nation's social historical conditions or features; (ii) the influence of international forces; (iii) the organizational and administrative contexts of programmes; (iv) learner and instructor circumstances as well as their attitudes towards literacy and illiteracy; (v) the general educational environments of programmes and; (vi) the nature of interaction between instructors and adult learners in the instructional and learning processes.

An extensive overview of the literacy literature indicates that three analytic categories of interrelated factors are generally considered critical to the successful or unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes in Third World contexts. These have been labelled as macro-level factors, meso-level factors and micro-level factors. In the context of this study macro-level factors are threefold. Firstly, they relate to historical-structural features of a society; those that pertain to the political, socio-economic, historical and traditional conditions governing the society and which have the ability to enable or constrain literacy efforts. Secondly, such factors relate to the influence of international factors on adult literacy activities.

As well, macro-level factors pertain to the issue of political or state commitment to adult literacy which could be articulated in several ways, including the formulation and implementation of literacy policy. (Lind, 1986, 1988; Unsicker, 1987; Bhola, 1982, 1984a; Hamadache & Martin, 1986; Noor, 1982; Ryan, 1985a; Mundy, 1993). Meso-level factors are described as "... those that determine the administrative implementation of the policy-related factors ..." (Lind, 1988; p. 22); in the case of this study, the organisational, administrative and technical support available to agencies/organisations and programmes across the country. Both macro-level and meso-level factors are also referred to as the "external" features associated with the successful or unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes in the sense that they lie outside the immediate province of these programmes and yet exert considerable influence on the outcomes of these programmes. Micro-level factors are of two types. Firstly, they relate to educational issues; issues that pertain to the curriculum, instruction and learning in literacy programmes (Lind, 1988). As well, micro-level factors relate to a broad array of individual-level attributes and circumstances of illiterates and, in some cases, even instructors. Such attributes and circumstances may involve concerns about families, jobs, economic survival as well as personal security. They may also pertain to personal motivation for literacy, individual attitudes and perceptions towards literacy and illiteracy as well as family structure and characteristics (Youngman, 1990; Minnis, 1993).

While cautioning that the specifics could vary among countries and that "each country must devise a programme that takes account of its own special circumstances" (Hamadache & Martin, 1986: p. 33), the literature emphasises the importance of integrating elements of factors within and among all three analytic categories in order to enhance the prospects for the successful outcomes of adult literacy programmes. Since the presentation and analysis of data for this study would be framed around these three analytic categories, the Chapter shall examine each of them.

Macro-Level Factors

Macro-level factors associated with successful or unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes are, in general, not products of careful research. Rather, they emerge primarily from experience (i.e., opinion-based). As mentioned in the preceding paragraph, such factors are of three types, namely; social-historical features of a society; international forces; and state or political commitment. In Third World societies generally, the influence of social-historical features, like socio-economic, political, traditional and historical conditions of a society as well as international forces, like external aid, on the outcomes of literacy programmes have been judged as considerable. In other words, while these factors do not directly determine literacy policy, they have the potential to either enable or constrain the successful implementation of these polices, say, in terms of the resources likely to be available, the strength of state commitment or even recruitment efforts. At the same time, such broad social and historical conditions of a society (i.e., its social, political, historical, economic and traditional features) as well as the influence of international forces on that society may have some direct bearing on the personal circumstances and attributes of illiterates, and this, in turn, may influence their perceptions of, and participation in, literacy activities. Consequently, such factors constitute a major focus for analysis in a study like this one.

In Third World societies, like Mozambique, Tanzania and Nicaragua, where literacy work has been judged successful, the issue of state or political commitment has been considered critical (Bhola, 1984a). As M'Bow (quoted in ICAE, 1979) puts it:

> ... Victory over illiteracy can only come from the political resolve of the country concerned. There is clear evidence that whenever a government has tackled the problem because it was a precondition of other social changes, the results have been favourable (p. 7).

The articulation of state or political commitment in support of adult literacy is generally borne out of the utterances of state officials and, at the same time, it may be contained in relevant policy documents and publications. State or political commitment to literacy must, however, not be restricted to mere rhetorical utterances of state officials on the relevance of combatting mass adult illiteracy or the formulation of comprehensive literacy policies. Rather, a more reliable measure of state commitment is in the extent to which it is translated into practical terms at the programme level. State literacy policies, for instance, must be accompanied by efforts towards transformation of other social, economic and political structures of society in order to reward the acquisition of literacy skills. As well, the articulation of state commitment must be reflected in, among others, the establishment of technical and administrative agencies for literacy promotion; measures designed to promote recruitment efforts, the allocation of government education resources to literacy efforts as well as the design and establishment of postliteracy programmes for continuity in the education of new literates.

Thus in this study, the perceived influence of these macro-level factors on adult literacy activities would be closely examined and analyzed. For example, how have social, historical and international forces influenced literacy activities? What is the nature and character of the literacy policies formulated and implemented since the 1970s? In what ways have the priorities attached to literacy and adult education been reflected in the allocation of state education resources by the Ministry of Education? In what ways have the measures designed to promote recruitment efforts influenced participation in adult literacy activities? These and related questions would provide the framework for analysis of the enabling or constraining influence of macro-level factors on the outcomes of adult literacy programmes.

Meso-Level Factors

Meso-level factors refer to those "... that determine the administrative implementation of the policy-related factors ..." (Lind, 1988; p. 21). In other words, these factors relate to organisational, administrative and technical issues involved in adult literacy work and, in this study, they were specifically viewed as: (i) the planning models for literacy adopted by the agencies/organisations, including the Ministry of Education; (ii) general administrative strategies for adult literacy programmes and; (iii) the issue of co-ordination and collaboration of agencies/organisations and programmes.

Three categories of agencies/organisations are generally involved in the implementation and promotion of adult literacy programmes in Third World countries, namely; governmental (e.g. Ministries), quasi-governmental (e.g. universities and parastatal agencies) and nongovernmental (e.g. churches and mosques) organisations and agencies (Townsend Coles, 1977). This multiplicity of agencies/organisations and, by implication, programmes in these societies has led to increasing calls for co-operation and co-ordination for successful literacy work. Co-operation, involves the participation of agencies, like the mass media, not directly involved in providing literacy but whose support may be critical for positive results (ICAE, 1979; Noor, 1982; Ryan, 1985a). It also means the involvement of learners or their representatives in the planning and organization of literacy programmes (Jurmo, 1989; Lind, 1988). As is the case in India, co-operation has also been used to refer to the availability of professional and institutional support (from, say, the university and other research institutions) for adult literacy work, particularly in such critical areas as material and curriculum development, staff training and research.

In addition to co-operation with other agencies that may not be directly involved in providing adult literacy, co-ordination and collaboration among literacy providers and their programmes are also considered critical to successful literacy work. In other words, in Third World states where literacy work has been judged successful, the significance of some form of co-ordinating mechanisms has been repeatedly emphasised. As Hmayounpour (1975) put it:

> The principal determinant of the success of a literacy programme whether mass or selective in scope, is its capacity to mobilize the required resources and implement effective co-ordination and control mechanisms. Questions of method, while important, are secondary to organisational requirements. This lesson suggests that much more attention needs to be paid to developing and maintaining effective organisational mechanisms (p. 17).

ICAE (1979) regards co-ordination as critical to the success or failure of adult literacy programmes because it "... lies at the heart of literacy programs ..." and, as well, provides an opportunity for a "... clear delineation of roles and responsibilities" without which "administrative mix-ups are inevitable and may even mean failure for a literacy program" (p. 17).

The literature identifies two categories of co-ordinating mechanisms for adult literacy work in Third World countries. On the one hand are countries, like Mali and Jamaica with, a single national semi-autonomous co-ordinating mechanism that has "... a clear mandate for its operation, status within government, and a budget sufficient to carry out co-ordination ..." (ICAE, 1979, p. 18). Along with the single co-ordinating body, however, sub-committees exist charged with the responsibility to provide direct service to literacy at regional and local levels. This suggests a recognition for some form of flexible educational infrastructure that encourages participation as well as decentralisation and delegation of authority. The second form of co-ordination mechanism is found in countries that "... have recognised that a mutual development and sharing of resources by all educational sub sectors is vital for systematic national growth" (Noor, 1982, p. 170. In such countries, National Ministries of Education have assumed direct responsibility for the co-ordination and administration of all educational activities, including literacy and adult education. There are, however, other countries that, for a variety of reasons, have assigned the task of co-ordination and administration to Ministries besides National Ministries of Education. Among such countries, the author includes Bolivia, Brazil, Columbia, Ghana, Haiti, Indonesia, Libya and Peru. In such cases, however, the Ministries would normally continue to maintain regular contacts with National Ministries of Education, primarily to acquire technical assistance (say in the form of curriculum development) and quite often, the author adds, there are in place interministerial steering and co-ordinating committees to ensure some adequate networking at the highest level of decision-making.

Micro-Level Factors

As noted earlier, micro-level factors, as used in this study were of two types. Firstly, they relate to individual-level attributes and circumstances and the extent to which they are viewed as enabling or constraining literacy activities, particularly in regard to recruitment and participation efforts. Such attributes and circumstances would relate to family situations, jobs, issues of economic survival as well as personal security. They may also pertain to issues of personal motivation for literacy, individual attitudes and perceptions about literacy or even family characteristics. While they are described as individual-related, such attributes and circumstances are clearly derived from the broad social and historical features or conditions prevailing in a society (Youngman, 1990; Minnis, 1993). Micro-level factors were also viewed as the educational features of adult literacy programmes, specifically; curriculum, instructional and learning issues. The significance of these educational features stems, in part, from the fact that, together, they constitute the actual tools designed to help learners acquire the levels of literacy skills set out in policy documents. In other words, these features are associated with issues that affect the cognitive outcomes of adult literacy programmes, specifically those that directly or indirectly affect learning in adult literacy classes.

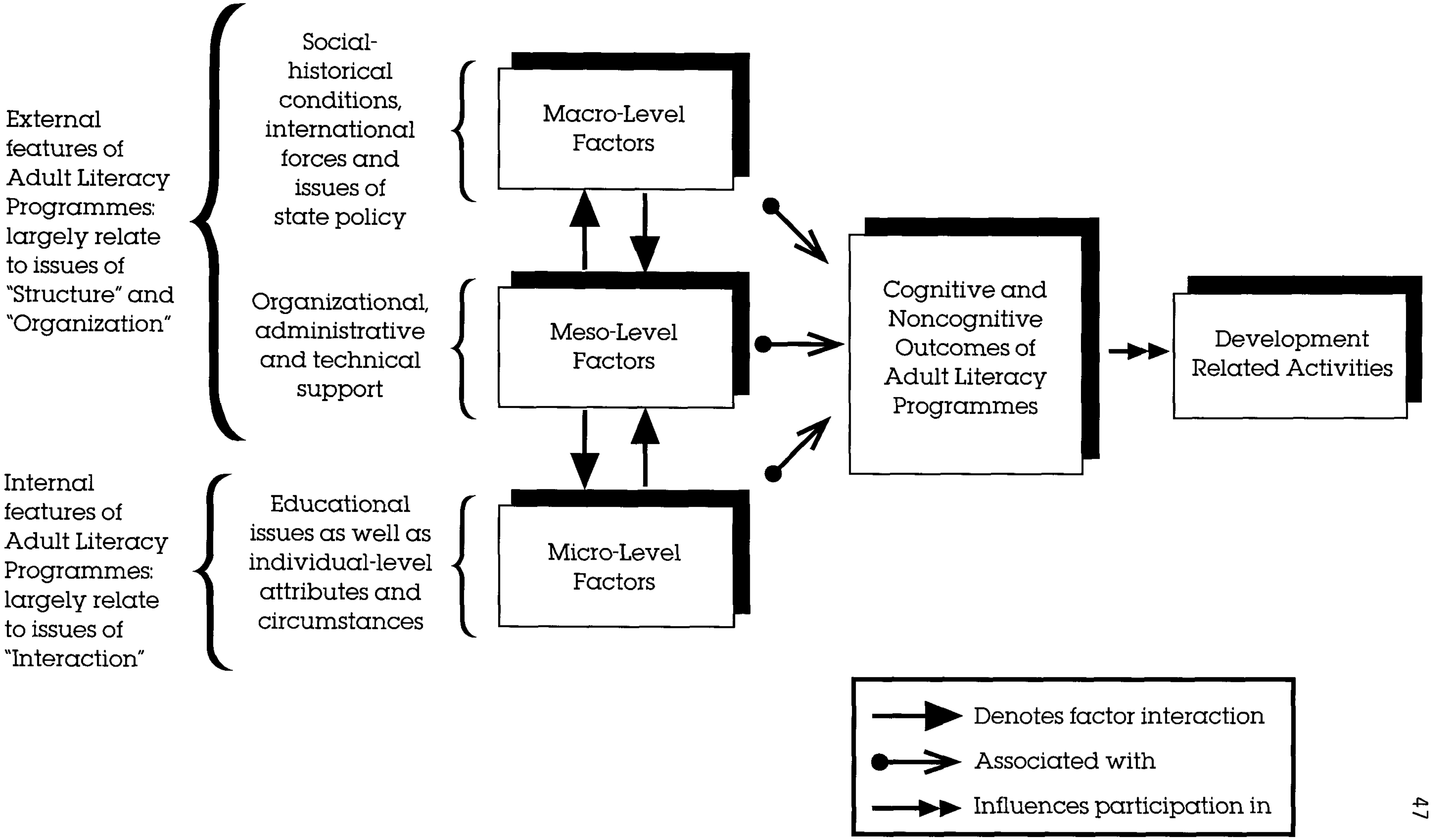
The literacy literature identifies several micro-level educational factors associated with the successful outcomes of adult literacy work. These are described as instructional-learning methods and processes; curriculum content and implementation; availability and appropriateness of instructional-learning resources; instructor qualification and training; timing and duration of classes; transport facilities (particularly in urban centres); the issue of language of instruction and learning as well as appropriateness of physical facilities or instructional-learning environment.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework underlying this study revolves around two central ideas. Firstly, the existence of considerable interaction both within and among the three analytic categories of factors that are associated with the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of literacy programmes. In other words, the three analytic categories of factors must be examined in relation, rather than in isolation, to each other. Secondly, literacy work is viewed not as an end in itself but as a development strategy; specifically, as a means to a comprehensive set of ends; economic, social-structural, and political (Bhola, 1984a).

Figure 1 depicts a model showing the three analytic categories of factors associated with the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes in Third World societies and the perceived relationship that the successful outcomes of these programmes might have on the development process in these societies. The model is informed by the theoretical interpretations of successful and unsuccessful literacy programmes presented in the preceding

Fig. 1 **A Model Depicting Three Interactive Analytic Categories of Factors associated with the Successful and Unsuccessful Outcomes of Adult Literacy Programmes in Third World Societies.**


External features of Adult Literacy Programmes: largely relate to issues of "Structure" and "Organization"
Social-historical conditions, international forces and issues of state policy
Macro-Level Factors
Organizational, administrative and technical support
Meso-Level Factors
Internal features of Adult Literacy Programmes: largely relate to issues of "Interaction"
Educational issues as well as individual-level attributes and circumstances
Micro-Level Factors
Cognitive and Noncognitive Outcomes of Adult Literacy Programmes
Development Related Activities
Denotes factor interaction
Associated with
Influences participation in

segment of the section above. Since Third World adult literacy programmes are generally designed with some social, economic and political orientation in mind, the model presupposes that literacy work must be accompanied by transformation of other structures of society (like the labour market as well as other social, political and economic institutions) in order to enable new literates to be involved in the making of social, political and economic decisions affecting their lives which, in turn, would, hopefully, promote social economic and political development. This perspective has been generally supported in Third World literacy literature (Easton, 1989). Easton's work suggest that the failure of Third World adult literacy programmes was, in general, a reflection among adult illiterates in these societies about the very limited utility of literacy skills in their environments. Consequently:

> Strategies for better local accumulation and reinvestment of economic surpluses--such as the institution of locally and democratically managed marketing and credit structures--can ... create radically new conditions for the acquisition and uses of literacy because they multiply the number and importance of transactions to be managed and create new structures of accountability (p. 440).

This is the point emphasised in the conceptual framework developed for the study. Unless there are genuine attempts by Third World governments and educators to transform those social structures that promote and perpetuate inequalities as well as disempower socially subordinate groups (who are usually the target groups for these classes) adult literacy classes are less likely to have large scale or durable success.

Thus in spite of the narrow quantitative definition of "success" and "failure" adopted in this study, life after the successful completion of literacy tests and exams was viewed as equally critical as new literates encounter and successfully complete literacy related tasks in their lives as well as in their environments. The acquisition of literacy skills then becomes the initial step in the educational hierarchy as, ideally, new literates would be able to continue their schooling; acquire jobs and/or promotions; engage in some income generation projects or some other types of social, economic or political activity of their preference. Literacy skills are, in essence, perceived to have some influence on the: (i) personal achievement of new literates (i.e., increase in confidence associated with literacy or improvement in self-reliant practices); (ii) affective social achievement (i.e., improved family life and relationship; (iii) socio-economic achievement (i.e., improved civic participation or getting a better job) and; (iv) enactive achievement (i.e., the application of literacy skills to a wide range of development related activities (Charnley & Jones, pp. 176-177).

On the left of the model are the three analytic categories of factors that are collectively associated with the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes in Third World societies. The three analytic categories are labelled as macro-level, meso-level and micro-level factors. As used in this study, Macro-level factors are viewed as the enabling or constraining influences of social historical structures (i.e., social, economic, political, historical and traditional features or conditions of a society) and international forces on adult literacy activities. As well, such factors related to the issue of state or political commitment; in particular the allocation of state education financial resources as well as the kinds of measures designed to promote recruitment efforts. Meso-level factors are viewed as threefold, namely; literacy planning; administration of programmes as well as co-ordination and collaboration of programmes. Micro-level factors refer to both educational features of programmes (i.e., curriculum, instructional and learning issues) as well as a broad array of individual-level attributes and circumstances as manifested by illiterates and, to some extent, literacy instructors; attributes and circumstances that are likely to influence their perceptions of, and participation in, adult literacy activities.

From this overview of selected literature on the factors associated with the successful or unsuccessful outcomes of literacy programmes and the conceptual framework underlying this study, it becomes clearly evident that in societies of the Third World where literacy work has been judged as successful, focussing on a single set of factors does not adequately explain the complex and interconnected nature of the literacy process itself. Consequently, instead of a single factor or set of factors, there are several guiding principles which in their "orchestration" or "contribution" explain the successful or unsuccessful outcomes (ICAE, 1979). This is the perspective taken in this study which is designed to provide some insights and understanding into the factors associated with the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes operating within the Sierra Leone context.

As noted in the overview of literature, one macro-level factor associated with the successful or unsuccessful outcomes of literacy work in societies of the Third World relates to the perceived impact of historical structures; those conditions (like political, economic, social, historical forces) that have shaped (and continue to shape) the society in question as well as its literacy activities. What this implies is that although these historical structures do not directly determine literacy policy, they have the ability to influence policy, say, in terms of the strength of state or political commitment; recruitment efforts as well as the availability of resources for literacy efforts. In short, the larger social-historical context of a society comes to bear on the outcomes of the literacy effort. Consequently, this study shall describe and analyze the historical structures of Sierra Leone society in an effort to put literacy work into context. In societies of the Third World, in general, the economic crisis, size of the foreign debt and changes in the capitalist world economy have combined to reduce education spending. With education spending shrinking and formal schooling expanding, literacy and adult education programmes which serve groups with hardly any political clout are sometimes condemned to see their resource capacity and quality reduced, which automatically leads to the issue of state or political commitment.

The driving force for adult literacy in Third World societies, as noted earlier, comes primarily from the state. Besides the fact that the state plays a dominant and overwhelming role in educational policy-making, including adult literacy, it is also at the level of the state that decisions are made about policy implementation, including the role that would be assigned to other agencies/organisations in literacy. It is the state that is responsible for the design and establishment of postliteracy programmes in order to guarantee new literates the opportunity to continue their learning. It is the state (through its leaders) that provides both the means and incentives for participation in adult literacy activities. As well, in several countries, the works of both quasi-governmental and nongovernmental organisations are occasionally subsidised with the resources of the state. In some cases, like in Mexico, Tanzania and Nicaragua, the state has not only provided technical and administrative agencies for adult literacy activities but it has also offered incentives and rewards (moral, political, material and economic) for recruitment in literacy activities. Usually, the state has very clear objectives which literacy work is expected to serve. Such objectives may be ideological and/or economic and could include areas like nation-building and national unity, empowerment of individuals, social and economic development as well as legitimisation of the regime in control. Thus in this study, the issue of state commitment is central, particularly with regard to the allocation of government education financial resources as well as the creation and maintenance of a literate sustaining environment usually through the establishment of programmes for postliteracy.

Another element of state commitment that is examined and analyzed in this study relates to the measures designed to promote recruitment efforts among instructor and adult learners; sometimes known as motivation for literacy. It has already been noted that it is the state that provides the motivation for literacy through incentives and rewards for recruitment and successful completion in adult literacy activities. This issue of motivation at the levels of the learners, communities and even the government has been considered central to Third World adult literacy efforts. King (1978) explains it in this way:

> Because of the nature of the clientele the touchstone of most literacy analysis is motivation examining the nature of the constraint upon participation in literacy classes, the reasons for dropping out so soon, the resistance of particular groups such as women ... The issue is not just the individual motivation, but the

> motivation of the government or agency concerned. Indeed the two are intimately connected, since it is the apparent lack of individual motivation for literacy that impels literacy experts to concentrate on motivation or commitment on the national level. Outside of the context of an ongoing national campaign, it is undeniable that literacy is the one level of education in the Third World where people are not clamouring for greater access or more provision (p. ii).

It is therefore not surprising that many Third World governments and literacy agencies/ organisations have continued to emphasize the need to design specific measures to promote recruitment efforts, particularly among adult learners. In several societies of the Third World, literacy has been generally perceived by the state, agencies/organisations and, in some cases, even individuals, as one of the several factors that would improve socio-economic and political conditions and support the development of human and material resources. Consequently, in countries where a skilled and literate labour force has been considered critical, adult literacy programmes have been accompanied by the introduction of innovations and improvements in agriculture and industrial production. In Nicaragua and Tanzania, for example, remarkable success in literacy work is said to have been achieved by linking literacy with concrete programmes for socio-economic and political change (Freebody & Welch 1993). In this sense, literacy work was perceived as playing a role in social and economic organization and modernisation. The assumption was made that illiterates would be motivated by the potential inherent in literacy and so, they would see some need for acquiring literacy skills.

However, in as much as literacy acts to transform socio-economic conditions, it may also be influenced by these conditions. According to Oxenham (1980) "it may be the case that the greater the degree of illiteracy in a society, the less will be the concern of the illiterate about being illiterate" (p. 6). He points out that although literacy is perceived as a means to a comprehensive set of ends:

> If the ends are not perceived or being perceived, are not of much importance to the perceiver, then there is neither ground nor motivation to acquire the means to them. It would follow then that any pressure to promote literacy would usually accompany some larger purpose: literacy would be for something (Oxenham, 1980, p. 6).

The point which follows from this is that larger socio-economic and political reforms are critical to the successful outcomes of adult literacy programmes. But while this may be so, it has not always been clear that such reforms alone will necessarily provide the needed motivation for literacy. For instance, in many Third World countries, there is often a prevalence of certain countervalues brought about by the almost overnight material and financial successes of "prosperous illiterates" whose achievements challenge education and literacy as assets. And as Oxenham (1980) points out; "it is patently possible for societies of hunters, gatherers, subsistence cultivators, nomadic cattle herders, and even traders as in the case of the Kikuyu of Kenya and the market mammies of West Africa, to get along to their own satisfaction without being able to read and write at all" (p. 7). And offering such people the opportunity to read and write, Oxenham continues, does not necessarily mean that all of them will jump upon the literacy bandwagon, given the fact that there may be a general indifference to literacy or as Fingeret (1983) put it, illiterates may be able and willing to trade their skills for literacy. It is, consequently, in this context that some analysis of the measures designed to promote recruitment efforts has been viewed as critical in this study, How have these measures influenced recruitment efforts? What kinds of constraints are perceived to have been placed on recruitment efforts?

In the review of literature, meso-level factors were described as those that relate to good planning, administration and co-ordination of adult literacy programmes. Such activities must involve some participation of learners, community leaders and agencies, like the mass media, that may not be directly involved in literacy but whose participation may be critical to the success of programmes. In some countries of the Third World, particularly those that have launched mass campaigns, it is the state, as implementer of literacy policy, that establishes administrative and educational agencies to promote adult literacy. Yet other states, especially those that have opted for the selective literacy strategy, have allowed for the increased involvement of other agencies/organisations (besides government Ministries) in adult literacy activities although ultimate authority in the field still continues to reside with the state itself. But the involvement of these 'other' agencies/organisations has quite often led to a proliferation of programmes; thereby raising concerns about the need for co-ordination and collaboration among agencies/organisations and programmes. Thus in this study, the works of state and other agencies/organisations responsible for literacy planning, administration and co-ordination would be closely examined in order to determine the extent of their perceived effectiveness and efficiency as well as the perceived impact of their activities on the outcomes of adult literacy programmes in the country.

The case has been made that the successful outcomes of adult literacy work depends, in part, on the extent to which curriculum, instructional and learning issues are responsive to national and local conditions. A number of studies and literature have emphasized the importance of a variety of micro-level educational issues like; (i) the importance of starting instruction and learning from the needs of adult learners; (ii) the need to make the curriculum as concrete as possible using resources of practical relevance to learners; (iii) the availability and appropriateness of instructional-learning resources, like blackboards, pencils, pens, textbooks, Teachers' Guides as well as other forms of instructional and learning aids; (iv) instructional and learning methods and processes that are conducive with adult education principles; (v) suitability of venues available for classes; (vi) hours and days classes are convened as well as programme duration; and (vii) an acceptable language for instruction, learning and preparation of literacy resources (ICAE, 1979; Noor, 1982; Cairns, 1982). In this study, analysis of micro-level educational issues would focus on some of these issues, as perceived by each of the four groups of respondents, in particular; the availability of a national adult literacy curriculum and the extent of its implementation across programmes in the country; the issue of the physical and material conditions of adult literacy classes; the issue of instructional-learning resources; the issue of instructional-learning methods and processes; the issue of instructor training and qualification as well as timing (and duration) of literacy programmes. Ryan (1980) suggests that the timing and duration of programmes constitute major problems in Third World literacy programmes.

> The learning opportunities offered in literacy courses are limited by time...Many adults require more time to achieve literacy than classes provide. On the other hand, increasing the duration of courses by dividing them into stages has usually had the effect of increasing drop-out (p. 63).

The choice of English as the language of literacy is viewed as problematic in this study given that some studies and literature have shown that instruction and learning in the mother tongue is critical in the acquisition of literacy skills. As Lind (1988) put it; "... the complicated learning tasks involved in adult literacy acquisition in a non literate society obviously increases if the medium of literacy teaching is a second language" (p. 24). In other words, it is now widely acknowledged that literacy classes are more likely to succeed when the medium of instruction is the mother tongue as "the use of the vernacular creates interests in learning, contributes to lower drop out rates, and instills pride in traditional culture and oral literature as has been found in programmes in Mali, Nigeria, Peru ..." (ICAE, 1979, p. 62).

In spite of this acknowledgement however, Third World societies, like Sierra Leone, have experienced difficulty in the adoption of mother tongue literacy largely because of the multiplicity of languages along with the expenses that are likely to accompany such a practice. As Baucom (1978) puts it:

> First of all, it can be a very expensive proposition ... Some countries may have ten, twelve, fourteen or more different spoken dialects or languages. The cost of writing books, training teachers and conducting literacy programmes in each of these languages can be overwhelming ... It is doubtful if groups of limited size will ever be able to support a reading literature. As a result, all reading materials will have to be subsidised perpetually or become the property of an elite ... Another drawback ... is that the people themselves might display resistance to learning literacy in the home language. If there is a widely used standard language, it may well be that this is the language the people want to learn to read (p. 40).

Hamadache and Martin (1986) echo similar sentiments. Illiterates may be unwilling to acquire literacy in the mother tongue:

> because of the prestige of the official language, which is the language of the political, administrative and legal authorities and the medium used in formal schooling. In addition, there are both practical reasons (access to employment, administrative operations, etc.) and cultural reasons (access to the press and the literature available) (p. 80).

Clearly because of these problems associated with literacy instruction and learning in the mother tongue, Ryan (1980) suggests that:

> For pedagogical reasons, it may be best to begin with the mother tongue ... or more accurately with a language which the learner commands fluently ... but this best choice will often prove a practical impossibility or, if possible, may lead to a dead end if there are no opportunities and incentives to regularly read and write in the mother tongue. The practical implication ... is that many learners will be seeking to achieve literacy in languages which they do not command fluently. Thus, the literacy class is going to be engaged in two district forms of instruction: a second language learning and literacy training (p. 67).

Thus in this study, the perceived impact, on adult literacy programmes, of instruction and learning in a second language is examined. Sierra Leone is a multilingual society and although English is the official language, it is spoken by only about 20% of Sierra Leoneans. The nation is a predominantly non-literate society and it may not be easy to teach this widely unknown language to illiterates.

In addition, in Third World societies generally, recruitment in literacy programmes, unlike schooling, is largely considered voluntary which raises the issue of the importance of timing and duration of classes. In Sierra Leone, for example, the substantial majority of illiterate adults (who constitute about 80% of the total population) would normally be engaged in rural and urban informal economic activities. Unless classes are scheduled with the nature of these activities in mind, there are bound to be serious problems with recruitment efforts. Also, about 80% of the nation's population is muslim which suggests that religious commitments, particularly during the holy month of Ramadam when moslems are expected to go without food and water throughout the day, may have serious implications for class attendance, especially for potential adult learners.

Concluding Summary

This Chapter has presented an overview of selected literature on the relationship between literacy and development as well as the factors associated with successful and unsuccessful outcomes of literacy programmes in Third world societies. Human capital and modernisation theories of development were criticised for stripping literacy work of the context in which it is embedded. By viewing literacy work as basically an educational problem, these perspectives, it was argued, may be limited in terms of their explanatory power of both the relationship between literacy and development as well as the factors associated with successful and unsuccessful outcomes. Consequently, an offshoot of dependency theory; specifically the historical structural perspective, was used in framing this study. This perspective suggests that Third World underdevelopment, like the factors associated with successful and unsuccessful literacy programmes, is a reflection of both international and national factors. Literacy work, according to this perspective, is viewed not as a simple educational problem but as a complex process that is deeply rooted in the social and historical structures of a society as well as in international forces.

Based on an extensive review of the literature on successful and unsuccessful literacy programmes from this perspective, a conceptual framework depicting three analytic categories of factors was developed. These were described as macro-level, meso-level and micro-level factors.

- Macro-level factors were viewed as threefold, namely; social and historical features or conditions of a society; international forces as well as issues of state or political commitment.
- Meso-level factors pertained to issues related to adult literacy planning; administrative strategies for programmes as well as issues relating to co-

operation, co-ordination and collaboration among agencies/organisations and programmes.

- Micro-level factors referred to both the educational features of programmes (i.e., curriculum, instructional and learning issues) as well as broad array of individual-level attributes as well as circumstances of illiterates and, to some extent, even instructors; attributes and circumstances that were likely to influence their perceptions of, and participation in, adult literacy activities.

The case was made that the three analytic categories must be examined in relation to, rather than in isolation of, each other. As well, while the study defined "success" and "failure" in quantitative terms (i.e., successful completion of literacy courses by adult learners through an exam system), the assumption was made that life after the successful completion of literacy tests and exams was viewed as equally critical as new literates encountered and successfully completed literacy-related transactions in their lives as well as in their environments.

In analyzing Third World education systems, Sadler (quoted in Crossley and Vulliany, 1984) observes that "... we should not forget that the things outside the schools matter even more than the things inside the schools, and govern and interpret the things outside ..." (p. 196). In this study, 'the things outside' were viewed as social, historical, international as well as organisational and administrative factors (i.e., macro-level and meso-level factors) and 'the things inside' pertained to educational issues (i.e., micro-level factors) as well as individual-level attributes and circumstances of the nation's illiterate adults and, to some extent, literacy instructors as well. By combining both 'things', this study sought to bridge the gap between national studies and literature that have focussed on curriculum, instructional and learning issues and those that have stressed either organisational or social and historical concerns. These issues are further examined in the research design which follows in the next Chapter.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

General Research Orientation or Approach

Some educational researchers have suggested that the strategy employed in any piece of scholarly work must, in part, grow from the larger theoretical and conceptual framework which organizes how the particular phenomenon under investigation is viewed. The framework, in turn, is derived from the researcher's assumptions about the nature of knowledge itself; research purpose and objectives; the kinds of questions that would be answered; beliefs about the relationship between the researcher and the issue under investigation as well as the appropriateness of the procedures employed in data collection, analysis and interpretation (Yin, 1994; Feagin, et al., 1991; Merriam 1988; 1989; Nelson et al., 1992).

The research orientation employed in this study was largely derived from the propositions referred to above. From the onset, the study was premised on a research strategy that focussed on the analysis of educational reform policies and practices in the context of a Third World society and while "... the logic of this type of research derives from the world view of qualitative research" (Merriam, 1988, p. 16), this study embraced both qualitative and quantitative data gathering methods. Studies that embrace such multimethod strategies have been viewed as pertinent in research efforts designed to analyze the extent to which a discrepancy existed between Third World educational policies and the practices of schooling in particular contexts (Crossley & Vulliamy, 1984; Walker, 1985; Maliyamkono, 1980).

The use of qualitative research strategies have been viewed as rare among Third World educational researchers, including even those whose studies have been conducted in terms of analysis of educational reform policies and practices. In fact, some scholars have maintained that several Third World researchers have, quite often, embraced conventional quantitative research strategies even in those instances when either a qualitative strategy or a combination of quantitative and qualitative research strategies was viewed as more appropriate and relevant to the phenomenon under investigation (Shaeffer & Nkinyanyi, 1983; Shaffer, 1986). Without denying the value of such quantitative oriented studies, it must be observed, however, that the findings of some of them may have been far less insightful, particularly in regard to issues of successful and unsuccessful educational reform policies and practices. By their exclusive reliance on complex statistical research methods and procedures for data analysis and interpretation, these conventional quantitative studies appeared to have failed to capture the perspectives of their respondents. As some researchers have pointed out, it is extremely difficult to understand human behaviour without some reference to the meaning and purposes people attach to their activities (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Merriam, 1988). As well, such studies may be of very limited value to Third World policy makers and educators since they have been unable to reveal the extent to which organisational factors and social structural factors have enabled or constrained educational reform efforts. In other words, the principal limitations of these quantitative oriented studies derive from their inability "... to provide a richness and depth to the description and analysis of the micro events and larger social structures that constitute social life" (Feagan, et al., 1991, p. 6).

The nature of this study, in particular its purpose and objectives as well as the questions it sought to answer, consequently dictated the choice of a combined qualitative and quantitative research orientation. The purpose of this study was to describe and analyze Sierra Leone's educational reform policies and practices between 1970 and 1992 with regard to adult literacy in order to provide some insights and understanding into the factors associated with the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes operating in the country. The research orientation, consequently, sought to describe, analyze and interpret the organisational and broad social context in which adult literacy programmes were embedded (i.e., organisational and social structural context) as well as one which was designed primarily to illuminate the processes of interaction and the meaning it had for a group of stakeholders or social actors (i.e., agents) associated with adult literacy activities. In other words, the research strategy was one that sought to combine the interactionist and interpretive perspectives at the micro level with the more sceptical and critical organisational as well as social structural perspectives at the meso-level and macro-level respectively in the research process. A narrow concern with organisational issues or social structure in this study was likely to have precluded a better understanding of the processes of interpretation by which these organisational issues or social structures were produced as well as the ways by which they could be transformed. At the same time, a micro-level interactionist and interpretivist study of educational features of literacy programmes was likely to have failed to take into account those organisational and structural factors that could have constrained or enabled individual or social action. Consequently, a micro-level analysis of the educational features of adult literacy programmes was enhanced by analysis of the organisational and structural elements or conditions. As well, analysis of the organisational and structural factors was enriched by analysis of the educational features of these programmes. Thus the analysis of micro-level issues (i.e., educators features) with meso-level issues (i.e., organisational and administrative factors) as well as macro-level (i.e., social and historical features) was likely to have yielded far more insightful and convincing accounts of the factors associated with the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes within the Sierra Leone context. By combining these levels in the research strategy, the study was able to shy away from either an exclusive positivistic view or technocratic analysis of literacy programmes or a moral or ideological exhortation regarding adult literacy. Instead, the strategy ensured a critical examination and analysis of organisational issues and social structures without neglecting events and actions of human agents associated with adult literacy activities (Silverman, 1985). As Lloyd (1991) states, it is only through the combination of these perspectives in the research process that researchers would be able to investigate "... all aspects of the social totality ... for their mutual influence and casual relationships" (p. 215).

The literature has acknowledged the diverse purposes of educational research, among which are the improvement of educational practices (at the levels of both policy and programme implementation) the generation of new, or contribution to existing, theoretical propositions as well as the testing of theory (Hammond, 1989, Husen, 1988). Alongside the general objective of contribution to existing theoretical propositions on adult literacy in Third World societies, this study sought, as one of its objectives, to provide information that would, hopefully, help to improve adult literacy practice within the Sierra Leone context. Studies, like this one, which seek to improve educational practice have also been referred to as decision-oriented studies (Lind, 1988). Two crucial features associated with such studies, like qualitatively oriented research generally, relate to; (i) the way the researcher's influence on the processes of investigation, analysis and interpretation of the findings are addressed and (ii) the interplay among the theoretical propositions informing the study, the research data as well as the research purpose and objectives in the generation of new, or contribution to existing, knowledge with regard to the subject under investigation.

The debate about the nature of the relationship between the researcher and the phenomenon under investigation remains, probably, inconclusive. Yet as Lind (1988) points out "the belief in social science as a neutral social inquiry has been challenged and the role of the social context and the researcher as a person are now generally acknowledged" (p. 32). Consequently, the issue of relationship between the researcher and the subject under investigation is best handled through "... explicitness, openness and honesty regarding the [researcher's] premises". In order words, the "value premises" of the researcher should be made explicit in the research process in order to avoid "hidden biases" (Lind, 1988, p. 32). As Myrad (quoted in Lind, 1988) puts it:

> a 'disinterested social science' has never existed and, for logical reasons, cannot exist. The value connotation of our main concepts represents our interest in a manner, gives direction to our thoughts and significance to our inferences. It poses the questions without which there are no answers ... Value premises should

> be explicitly stated and not hidden as tacit assumption ... They should thus be kept conscious ... this is our only protection against bias in research, for bias implies being directed by acknowledged valuations (p. 33).

Consequently, with regard to the issue of researcher influence on the subject under study, two particular areas of sensitivity in the study should be acknowledged. The first relates to some prospect for bias and subjectivity on the part of the researcher because of his long standing involvement in literacy and adult education work in the country, largely through his association with the Sierra Leone Adult Education Association (SLADEA). The second was whether respondents interviewed could be expected to interact with the researcher in his current role of researcher rather than the previous and future role of a colleague adult educator. The first question involved the extent to which data collected for this study could be heavily influenced by the scope of the views and biases of the researcher himself, given his knowledge and understanding of the adult literacy situation in the country. In the second case, the question was whether respondents would wittingly or unwittingly collude during interviews to give the researcher what they assumed he wanted to hear.

Partly in an attempt to address the issue of researcher biases, some opportunity was provided for respondents to scrutinize the interview data generated in the study in order to verify that the researcher's representation of the interview data were actually that offered by them. With regard to the issue of interaction with respondents, the researcher's overall impression was that they were, for the most part, quite unconcerned with his previous association with SLADEA, particularly as the office had long being filled. The interview sites were usually at agency/ organization offices, literacy sites or other venues determined by respondents. And once agencies/organisations had been identified, the researcher had very little control over the selection of instructors or adult learners who would participate in the interviews. The fact that agencies/organizations were, for the most part, willing to put their documents and records at the researcher's disposal, even at short notice, as well as to readily accept him as observer at their meetings would suggest that they were quite comfortable with him as a researcher. The overall impression was that respondents co-operated out of kindness and a general interest in the study.

With regard to its epistemological orientation, the process of knowledge generation adopted in this study was one that viewed knowledge creation as an interactive process in the sense that the researcher, his/her theoretical perspectives informing the study as well as the phenomenon under investigation influenced each other. Thus the study was conducted through a process of constant interaction among the research data, theoretical perspectives on successful and unsuccessful adult literacy programmes as well as research purpose and objectives. Given the study's predominant qualitative orientation, it would seem obvious that the researcher would interact with respondents about their perspectives on adult literacy activities which was the focus of the study. Little, if any, research that seeks to analyze educational reform policies and practices, particularly in Third World contexts, could be conducted without some kind of data collection from and with people in a position to have an important outlook on the topic under investigation. Thus, through the research process the researcher interacted with respondents, not to study them, but primarily to have some insights and understanding of the factors they associated with the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes within the Sierra Leone context.

Selection and Characteristics of Respondents

In all, a total of fifty-five respondents participated in this study. Preliminary contacts with them was through a letter which outlined, in some detail, information about the study, including the procedures for maintenance of respondent anonymity; the issue of data confidentiality; the right to withdraw at any time as well as a request for completion of a consent form indicating a willingness to participate in the study (see Appendix 1). Since the researcher was out of the country, a local contact person was retained to assist with the preliminary arrangements. In the two week period following the researcher's arrival in Freetown in November 1992, meetings were held with respondents, mainly state officials and agency/organization representatives, to discuss the study, generally, including dates for interviews; other data collection methods and procedures; selection of instructors and adult learners who would participate in the study as well as the literacy sites that would be visited for observations. In general, the researcher had no control over the selection of instructors and learners for the study as responsibility for that was assigned to the participating agencies/organizations.

The focus on understanding and gaining insights into the factors that were associated with the success and failure of adult literacy programmes dictated a need to select a sample from which as much data as possible could be generated. Thus the sampling selection was designed to assure variety, but not necessarily representativeness. As well, the selection was weighted by considerations of access and the opportunity to learn most about adult literacy programmes. The sampling was purposeful or purposive, comprising some of the most important agencies/organizations and individuals who, in the judgement of the researcher, were among those who knew most about literacy work across the country (Merriam, 1988; Linderman, 1990). According to Goetz and Le Compte (1984), this form of sampling procedure requires that the researcher establishes a basic criteria necessary for units to be included in the study after which he/she proceeds to find a sample that matched these criteria. The researcher creates a "... recipe of the attributes and proceed [s] to find or locate a unit that matches that recipe" (p. 77).

Thus in addition to the principal criterion of the opportunity to learn most about literacy programmes in general and the factors that were associated with the success and failure of these programmes, in particular, a minimum of six years involvement in literacy activities was required on the part of agencies/organisations invited to participate in the study. The selection of the research sample, primarily agencies/organisations and government officials, was guided by the researcher's experience; some assistance from the contact person based in Freetown as well as references to recent national studies and literature on literacy and adult education. Once selected, agencies/organisations, in turn, helped in the selection of their instructors and adult learners to participate in the study. As well, agencies/organizations were responsible for the selection of sites and classes that were visited and observed during the data collection process. Among government officials, the basic criteria for selection was knowledge and involvement in adult literacy activities, especially at the level of policy formulation and implementation.

In terms of breakdown of respondents into categories, there were five state officials (representing about 10% of respondents), ten agency/organization representatives (or 18% of respondents), twenty literacy instructors (or 36% of respondents) and twenty adult learners (or 36% of respondents). With regard to gender breakdown of respondents, one state official (or 20%), four agency/organization representatives (or 40%), eight instructors (or 40%) and eleven adult learners (or 55%) were females. Two instructors and adult learners were drawn from programmes organised by each of the ten participating agencies/organisations. The majority of state officials (i.e., four) were drawn from the Ministry of Education, the government agency that is directly responsible for issues pertaining to the formulation and implementation of educational policies, including literacy and adult education. To these officials generally, like the government, literacy and adult education work was perceived as helping to solve problems of production and productivity; efficiency of workers as well as issues of illiterate marginality. Some, but not all, of them were perceived by the researcher to be highly educated, reasonably well paid and belonged to the upper class of Sierra Leone society.

The basic characteristic of the ten agencies/organisations invited to participate in this study reflected, in general, the broad categories of literacy providing agencies/organisations operating in the country as presented in the previous Chapter. Two of these were government agencies, namely; The Ministry of Education and The Ministry of Health. Two were quasi-governmental agencies, namely; The Sierra Leone Labour Congress and The Sierra Leone Ports

Authority. The remaining six were nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) which was symptomatic of the active role played by NGOs in the provision of adult education, including literacy. Two of the NGOs, The Christian Extension Services and The Canadian University Services Overseas (CUSO), were branches of foreign organisations which were involved in the direct provision of adult literacy. The other four were national NGOs, namely; The Crystals Youth Club, The Sierra Leone Adult Education Association, The People's Educational Association as well as The Provincial Literature Bureau and Bunumbu Press. These ten agencies/organizations were judged to have been among the major providers of adult literacy programmes across the country.

Like government officials, agency/organization representatives emphasised an economic orientation to literacy activities. In some ways, the situation of representatives, as measured by income, schooling and status, was viewed as largely contingent on that of the agency/ organization to which they were attached. Thus in some of the agencies/organizations, representatives were perceived as well paid; highly educated and enjoyed a high socio-economic status. The reverse was equally true of representatives of other agencies/organizations; poor schooling, low pay and low socio-economic status.

As noted earlier, the selection of instructors and adult learners who participated in this study was the responsibility of agencies/organizations. In general, however, literacy instructors were elementary/primary school teachers who supplemented their incomes by teaching adult classes during the evenings, even though several of them did not appear to have had the necessary training and qualification for adult instruction. Instructor salaries varied considerably depending on the agency/organization for which they worked. In general, however, instructor salaries ranged from about 10% to 15% upwards of the minimum salary.

The majority of adult learners receive very little or no fixed incomes. They would be normally engaged in informal sector economic activities (farm and non-farm activities) or in secondary sector jobs in the modern sector (security personnel, cooks and drivers). In general, adult learners appeared to be living under social structures dominated by individuals or groups that exercised control over their conditions of life. Those on fixed incomes receive, on average, about 5% of the minimum salary.

Data Collection Methods and Procedures

A crucial methodological consideration in the research approach for this study was the need to employ a variety of data gathering methods and procedures in order to compile the study. This combination of multiple data collection methods has often been seen as a strategy that adds rigour, breath and depth to a study (Merriam, 1988; Feagin et al., 1991). The basic method of data collection for the study was semi-structured interviews involving the use of open-ended questionnaires. The authenticity or credibility of the interview data were confirmed through a combination of data gathered through other methods and procedures, like records and documents, including those produced by international development agencies of relevance to Sierra Leone; official statistics compiled by the Ministry of Education, particularly in regard to recruitment efforts and funding as well as field notes recorded from observations at literacy sites visited as well as deliberations at meetings to which the researcher was invited as an observer. This combination of data collected through other methods and procedures served to check the interview data as well as to ensure that the widest possible sources were drawn upon and that the study was made as comprehensive as possible. The researcher's personal experience in literacy and adult education work in the country was also an important method of data collection.

A more detailed examination of the various data gathering methods and procedures employed in this study is as follows:

Interviews

The basic method of data collection for this study was semi-structured interviews involving the use of open-ended questionnaires. Guidelines for the interviews (see Appendix 1) were mailed to respondents in advance of the interviews which were all recorded on cassette tapes. The interview questions were wide and varied and the process lasted for about two hours. The objective of the interview process was to get the views of respondents about adult literacy work generally and, in particular, the factors that they associated with the success and failure of adult literacy programmes operating in the country. In the case of literacy instructors and adult learners, the interview questions were modified (see Appendix 1) to enable them to discuss issues for which their knowledge and understanding were judged by the researcher to have been appropriate and adequate. The interviews with adult learners were conducted in Krio which, as brought out in the next Chapter, is the nation's lingua franca. This researcher, himself a Sierra Leonean, understands and speaks Krio fluently, suggesting that, in this particular case, language was hardly a major barrier.

The interview process was based on the theoretical assumption that interviews are products of "situated understandings grounded in specific interactional episodes" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 353) and, reflect the mood, voices and feelings of individual respondents (Marcus & Fischer, 1986). The interview practice adopted in this study was thus aimed at empowering respondents to produce their own narrative accounts which, in turn, were viewed as adequate representations of a more "realistic" picture of adult literacy activities within the Sierra Leone context.

While each interview commenced with some clear knowledge of the issues on which the researcher was seeking the perspectives and comments of respondents, he was able to let the order and time spent on each issue evolve during the process, usually through a conversational style. In some cases, respondents introduced elements that had not been anticipated but which appeared to have added new dimensions to the study. Usually, towards the end of each interview, the researcher took time out to check the ground covered using a shortened version of the interview guidelines for that purpose. At the end of each interview, an appointment was set up with the respondent to allow for some discussion of the interview data; a measure that was viewed as one way of enhancing the credibility of the interview data.

Documents and Records

Another data gathering method employed in this study, besides interviews, was documents and records, mainly those produced by the Ministry of Education as well as agencies/ organisations. The kinds of documentary materials included the nation's educational reform policies with respect to literacy and adult education; National Development Plans; research and evaluation reports; reports on conferences, meetings and workshops; programme and course plans and proposals (like mission statements) as well as yearly reports compiled by the Ministry of Education and other agencies/organizations. Besides national documents, another important source of documentary data came from the work of international development agencies, like Unesco, as well as journal articles and other types of scholarly literature on literacy and adult education in Sierra Leone. Records included attendance registers, official statistics on literacy and adult education, particularly in regard to funding and recruitment efforts; and minutes of meetings. The overview of educational reform policies and practices with regard to adult literacy presented in Chapter Five was, in essence, derived from the review of these documents and records.

The use of documents and records as data sources was derived from the view of the two as narratives which were much closer to speech. Consequently "the researcher analyzes the narrative ... and dramatic structures of a text [and records] ... for a close interpretive reading of the subject matter at hand" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 358). As well, documents and records are widely viewed as important data sources in a study, like this one, since they:

> can ground an investigation in the context of the problem being investigated. Analysis of this data source lends contextual richness and helps to ground an inquiry in the milieu of the writer. This grounding in real-world issues and day-to-day concerns is ultimately what the naturalistic inquiry is working toward (quoted in Merriam, 1988, p. 109).

The use of documents and records as data gathering methods helped to provide an opportunity for confirmability (or other wise) of the interview data since they were viewed as providing a "truer" indication of the "meanings" attached to the nation's educational reform policies and practices in regard to adult literacy. As well, examination of official statistics on literacy and adult education helped put respondents' views on political commitment in support of adult literacy, a major focus of this study, into some proper context.

While the study was about analysis of the nation's educational reform policies and practices with regard to adult literacy between 1970 and 1992, much greater emphasis was placed on the examination of documents and records covering the period from the mid 1970s through the early 1990s. In general, the selection of documents and records was guided by access; the opportunity to learn most as well as concerns about confirmability of interview data.

Field Visits and Observations

Another important data collection method or procedure employed in this study was observations of literacy classes during field visits to programme sites; deliberations arising from meetings as well as informal discussions during visits to agency/organization offices. While in Sierra Leone for data collection, the researcher requested, and was granted, permission by the Ministry of Education and agencies/organisations to attend some of their meetings as an observer. The intention was to enable him to listen to some of the deliberations at these meetings, and where necessary, to record highlights of the deliberations that pertained to issues related to the study. In all, a total of about seven such meetings were attended, three of which were convened by the Ministry of Education. The issues discussed at these meetings, and on which notes were recorded, included government support for literacy and adult education; the issue of the economy and adult literacy; administration of programmes; instructional and learning resources; instructor training and qualification as well as drop out rates from programmes. In addition to participation at meetings, the researcher made frequent visits to agency/organization offices during the data collection process. Informal discussions with agency/organization staff (usually those not participating in interviews) often took place during some of these visits. The discussions, which were recorded as field notes, generally pertained to various dimensions of adult literacy activities relevant to the study and they consequently constituted another important method of data collection.

With regard to field visits to literacy sites, a total of ten programme sites were visited and about twenty class sessions were observed; with each visit, including observations, lasting for about two and half hours. The general procedure was to undertake field visits only after the interview with the agency/organization representative had been conducted and some additional information about the programme acquired through examination of records and documents. The selection of the sites visited as well as the class sessions observed were done in consultation with the respective participating agencies/organisations.

The basic purpose of the field visits to literacy sites was data gathering and so, while some impromptu informal discussions occurred, interaction with respondents during the process was generally reduced to the minimum. Observations of class sessions were recorded as field notes and the kinds of evidence generally gathered pertained to the research questions as well as the need for confirmation (or other wise) of interview and documentary data. The kinds of information gathered during observations related to the extent of availability of instructional-learning resources (blackboards, chalk, books, pens, pencils, etc.); instructional and learning methods used in classes; attendance and drop out rates through examination of registers and other programme records where these were available as well as the general nature of the instructional-learning environment (type of seats available and venue for classes). Field notes recorded from deliberations at meetings and visits to literacy sites have been used to enrich the findings of the study.

Related Field Experience

The final data source for this study was the researcher's experience in literacy and adult education work in Sierra Leone. The long association of this researcher with the Sierra Leone Adult Education Association, one of the leading national nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) providing adult literacy (and a participant in this study) provided him with an opportunity to deepen his understanding about a variety of issues relevant to the adult literacy activities, including the factors that could be associated with the success and failure of these programmes.

Such experience was clearly useful not only in regard to data collection, but also in analyzing, presenting, and interpreting the data. Patton (1980) has pointed to the researcher's experience as a valuable data source as well as an important component of data triangulation.

Data Analysis Procedures

Researchers have identified a variety of techniques to help "make sense" out of qualitative data, like the kinds collected in this study. These techniques have included Patton's (1980) interpretive approach with its emphases on the relevance of patterns, categories and basic descriptive units of data; the network strategy of Bliss et al., (1983) which focusses on categorisation; the quasi-statistical approach of Miles and Huberman (1984) with emphasis on a procedure referred to as "pattern coding" as well as the integrative spiral strategy or approach of Dey (1993) which emphasises description, categorisation, connection and interpretation of data. In spite of the differences in approach and language, the general emphasis among these authors is on how to categorise or classify qualitative data as well as to establish connections within and between the categories or classifications generated in order to provide some meaningful understanding and interpretation of the data. Such tasks, in essence, constitute the central theme in the analysis of qualitative data.

Based on the works of these and other authors, some standard procedures or processes for analysis and interpretation of qualitative data have now emerged and these could be summarised as: (i) continuous reference to, and reflection on, data during field work or the data collection process; (ii) compilation of some analytic field notes as useful theoretical propositions on the phenomenon under investigation emerges during data collection; (iii) following data collection, shifting through bits of data in order to classify them or identify emerging patterns, themes or ideas for categorisation. This would require the development of some conceptual framework to render the data understandable; (iv) the development and testing of the views emerging from the categories of data (i.e., emerging themes, patterns and ideas) in order to search for patterns, themes and ideas; (v) classification of concepts generated in order to make connections among them (i.e., internal relationships within concepts are examined and applied back to the data to see if there is a real empirical fit) to help produce some account of the analysis and (vi) subject the theoretical propositions generated from the data to the literature reviewed for the study in order to determine how the findings help in the generation of new knowledge (or contribution to existing knowledge) in regard to the phenomenon under study.

These, in essence, were the procedures followed in the analysis of data for this study. The analysis process was viewed as an on-going activity thereby making it both formative and summative (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). In other words, some data analysis was done during field work although the bulk of the work was deferred until the end of data collection. The importance of the analysis-in-the-field strategy stemmed from the opportunity it provided to direct the data collection process in a more productive manner. In other words, it paved the way for some preliminary search for patterns, common themes or ideas arising or emerging from the data. According to Burgess (1988), it is through this preliminary process of searching for patterns, themes and ideas that:

> some direction is given to further investigation, to further observations being made and further field notes being established ... often the activities that are observed in the setting are followed up in other settings. In this way, initial ideas are followed through so that patterns ... emerge (pp. 26-27).

In addition to the opportunity to direct the data collection process, the analysis-in-the-field strategy also allowed for the taking of some preliminary measures designed to ensure the credibility of the research findings (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Lather, 1986). Almost immediately after each interview (usually within two weeks), crucial portions of the interview data were highlighted or summarised and forwarded to individual respondents along with a request for another meeting. The idea was to grant respondents some opportunity to verify that the researcher's representation of the interview data (as presented in summary form) were actually those offered by them. While the original intention was to accomplish this task with each of the fifty-five respondents, only about 24% of respondents (i.e., two state officials, two agencies/organisations, five instructors and four learners) were able to participate in such meetings. The majority of respondents were busy and the time available for data collection was generally too short. Yet even among respondents for whom formal meetings were not possible, verification and clarification of interview data were usually sought and attained through other measures, including telephone conversations. Through these measures, an additional number of twenty respondents were contacted (i.e., two state officials, five agency/organization representatives, seven instructors and six adult learners), bringing the total participation rate in the data verification and clarification processes to about 60% of respondents.

The analysis of the interviews, the principal method of data collection, started with the formal transcription of the recorded cassette tapes. Thereafter, relevant portions of data in the interview transcripts for each of the fifty-five respondents were isolated using as guidelines both the conceptual framework as well as the research questions for the study. The objective was to search for patterns, common themes or ideas that fitted into the three analytic categories of factors brought out in the conceptual framework. The isolated bits of data (and the emerging themes and patterns) were then assigned to their respective analytic categories based, largely, on the judgement of the researcher. For instance, bits of data pertaining to political and economic issues were viewed as macro and thus assigned to that category. As well, data bits regarding organisational and educational issues were viewed as meso and micro respectively and thus assigned accordingly. Yet while data units were assigned to their respective categories, they were, at the same time, closely examined in order to determine the connections that existed among them. The sorting and assigning of data units into their respective categories were accompanied by the linking of the units with respondents within each of the four groups in order to determine the number of people belonging to each group that mentioned each data portion. Because of the uneven spread of the total number of respondents, it was decided that rather than a majority of total respondents, a majority of respondents belonging to each of the four groups would have had to mention something before it was viewed as a factor and thus worthy of mention in the presentation and analysis of the findings of the study. Each factor mentioned in the interviews would then be analyzed in terms of whether the majority of respondents within each group related it to the success or failure of adult literacy programmes operating within the Sierra Leone context.

As mentioned earlier, the credibility and trustworthiness of the analysis of the interview data were checked through the use of the other data sources for the study, like official statistics, field notes recorded from observations and deliberations as well as records and documents. For instance, official statistics were used to check the credibility of the interview data regarding the issue of political commitment in support of adult literacy, particularly in regard to government financial allocations as well as measures designed to promote the recruitment of instructors and adult learners. In this sense, quantitative data were used to check the credibility and trustworthiness of the qualitative analysis of the interview data. In addition, records and documents, like attendance registers as well as field notes, were useful in checking the credibility of other aspects of interview data. In the final analysis, the results of this study were integrated, analyzed, interpreted and discussed against the backdrop of the literature reviewed as well as the research purpose and objectives. As well, the findings explained the meaning of the work for theory generation as well as for educational reform policies and practices on adult literacy within the Sierra Leone context and, perhaps, Third World societies in general.

The Chapter concludes with a statement of the research questions for the study.

Principal Research Questions

1 What factors are perceived by state officials, agency/organization representatives, literacy instructors and adult learners as associated with the successful outcomes of adult literacy programmes operating in the country?

2 What factors are perceived by state officials, agency/organization representatives, literacy instructors and adult learners as associated with the failure of adult literacy programmes operating in the country?

Subsidiary Research Questions

- In what ways, and to what extent, have social-historical conditions of Sierra Leone society and international factors influenced adult literacy activities across the country?

- To what extent has political commitment in support of literacy, as espoused in reform policies, been reflected in concrete allocation of government education financial resources to literacy and adult education programmes?

- To what extent have the measures designed to promote recruitment efforts succeeded in encouraging the general public to successfully participate in adult literacy activities as literacy instructors or adult learners?

- In what ways have the organisational, administrative and technical support available to programmes influenced adult literacy activities?

- How have issues relating to the curriculum as well as instructional and learning resources influenced the outcomes of adult literacy programmes?
- In what ways have instructional and learning methods and processes influenced the outcomes of adult literacy programmes?

The next Chapter presents the social and historical context of Sierra Leone. It describes the broad social, political, historical, economic and traditional conditions of Sierra Leone society; those conditions that would not directly determine the nation's educational reform polices and practices with regard to adult literacy but which, nonetheless, would have the potential ability to enable or constrain literacy efforts. It is in this sense that the understanding of the nation's social and historical context was considered critical in the study.

CHAPTER 4: SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF SIERRA LEONE

This Chapter presents a descriptive overview of the broad social and historical forces that have influenced (and continue to influence) Sierra Leone society; those forces or conditions which would, hopefully, be transformed by the educational reform policies and practices with regard to adult literacy and which, in turn, would likely have a profound impact on the outcomes of the nation's educational reform efforts. As mentioned in the literature reviewed for this study, these factors do not directly determine state education policy but they are, nevertheless, likely to influence the extent of state and individual commitment to literacy both in terms of, say, the allocation of resources, attitudes towards literacy as well as the ability of individuals to spend time teaching or learning. The Chapter begins with a brief overview of the nation's political economy during the British Colonial era.

British Colonial Heritage

European contacts with modern Sierra Leone began during the 15th century with visits by Portuguese explorers and traders on their way to and from India. These early Europeans set up trading posts where European manufactured goods, like household utensils, clothes and weapons, were exchanged for gold, ivory and, later, slaves (Binns & Binns, 1992). In spite of these initial contacts, however, actual European influence and presence only came towards the end of the 18th century when the "Freetown Peninsular" was founded by British Philanthropists as a home for freed slaves from Europe and North America. The settlement, which became known as the "Province of Freedom" was expected to form a nucleus for the spread of European civilisation and Christianity not only among the people of the Sierra Leone hinterland but throughout the west coast of Africa. Christian Missions were sent to the Peninsular to assume responsibility for this proselytizing mission and, at the same time, serve as forerunners of British colonial rule which began with the declaration of the "Freetown Peninsular" as a British Crown colony in 1808 (Wyse, 1989).

Initially, British Colonial Authorities conceived of the 'Freetown Peninsular' as an agricultural settlement but they were quick to realize that the settlers (i.e., ex-slaves or liberated Africans), who numbered around 70,000 by 1864, were ignorant of tropical agriculture (Wyse, 1989; Corby, 1990). Consequently, commerce became the alternative economic activity as settlers were encouraged to travel to the hinterland where they exchanged manufactured goods with tropical products, like palm oil, palm kernels, kola nuts, timber, piassava and gold. Trade with the hinterland eventually expanded leading to the development of a cash crop economy during the first half of the 19th century (Kallon, 1990).

Following the recognition of the "Freetown Peninsular" as a British Colony at the Berlin Conference of European Powers in 1884 to 1885, along with the continuing expansion of trade with the hinterland, it soon became clear to the British that the economic and commercial survival of the Freetown settlement depended on colonial control of the interior. Consequently, a British Protectorate was declared over the Sierra Leone hinterland in 1896 in the face of strong local resistance. The current borders of Sierra Leone were determined towards the end of the last decade of the 19th century through Agreements with the French and the Americans, both of whom had interests and influence in neighbouring Guinea and Liberia respectively (Kallon, 1990).

The consolidation of British rule in the country was followed by increased exploitation of Sierra Leonean labour based on a system of obligatory cash crop cultivation and industrial work, both of which were reinforced by colonial laws and tax regulations (Wyse, 1989). The need for money to pay taxes and to pay for commodities and services introduced by the British forced Sierra Leoneans to pick up employment as producers of cheap raw materials - palm oil, palm kernels, ginger and piassava - for British industries. Furthermore, with the discovery of diamonds, gold, iron ore and platinum in parts of the Protectorate during the decades leading up to 1950, Sierra Leoneans were also employed in newly established subsidiary firms of British industries which were granted exclusive rights to the exploitation of these minerals. In an attempt to enlarge the market over which profitable trade with the Protectorate could be conducted, the British constructed a railway during the 1930s. This was followed in the 1950s with a "lorry revolution"; in other words, the construction of some semblance of a road network across the country (Kallon, 1990). By the 1950s, the colonial economy had come to be based on the provision of services, cash crop production as well as mineral exploitation. The British benefitted from the system by acquiring cheap raw materials and minerals for British industries.

Administratively, the British established a dual system of administration, one for the "Freetown Peninsula" which was re-named the colony, and another for the hinterland then referred to as the Protectorate. The colony was to be directly administered by Colonial Authorities who were required to govern according to British laws, customs and traditions. In the Provinces, however, the British introduced a system of "Indirect Rule". Traditional rulers remained in charge of administration but they were to be supervised by British officials whose advice in all matters of administration were to be strictly followed. Traditional authorities who disobeyed the colonial administration were severely punished and such punishments included swift removal from office and installation of rulers with no traditional authority to govern as well as public flogging and imprisonment (Abraham, 1978). The dual system of administration was also reflected in the designation accorded to Sierra Leoneans. Those from the Protectorate were referred to as "British-Protected Persons" while Sierra Leoneans living in the Colony were regarded as British subjects. The distinction in administration between the Colony and the Protectorate ultimately disappeared during the 1950s in the face of considerable opposition from the nation's educated elites, particularly those from the Protectorate, so that by independence in 1961, a uniform system of administration had emerged. Yet the initial administrative dualism between the colony and the Protectorate during the colonial period would appear to have had some far-reaching development implications for Sierra Leoneans living in both administrative areas; a trend that seem clearly noticeable up to this day.

The Socio-Economic and Political Context of Modern Sierra Leone

Geographic and Demographic Characteristics

The Republic of Sierra Leone is located on the west coast of Africa. It is bounded to the north and north-east by the Republic of Guinea; to the south and south-east by the Republic of Liberia and to the west by the Atlantic Ocean. The country has an area of about 27,925 square miles (or 73,320 square kilometres), which makes it one of the smallest independent states on the African Continent; about the size of Scotland and one-tenth the size of Texas (Institute of Education, 1991). The climate is tropical with two clearly defined seasons, namely; a hot dry season from November through April and a heavy rainy season from May to October.

Three population censuses have been conducted since independence; in 1963, 1974 and 1985. Based on the 1985 census estimates, the nation's population comprised 3,520,212 inhabitants and it was composed of 1,774,157 females and 1,746,055 males (Sarif, 1989). The population was estimated at about 4.145 million in 1990, representing an increase of about 18% on the 1985 estimates (Binns & Binns, 1992; Sarif, 1989). About 80% of the nation's inhabitants live in scattered rural settlements of less than 1000 inhabitants which is likely to pose serious problems with respect to the provision and accessibility of social services, including adult literacy programmes. Freetown, the nation's capital, occupies less than 10% of the total land area of Sierra Leone but it accommodates about 13% of the entire population, due, in part, to rural-urban migration. The national population growth rate is estimated at 3% per annum and, as well, the age structure of the population is youthful with an estimated median age of 19 years (Sarif, 1989). The youthfulness of the population is likely to increase the demand for social services, including education, to support the increasing number of children.

Life expectancy at birth is estimated at 46 for men and 50 for women, making it one of the lowest in the world. As well, child and infant mortality rates calculated at 1,000 births are estimated at 165 and 273 respectively, thereby making them the highest in the world. It is the combination of these factors and others discussed in this Chapter that have made Sierra Leone one of the poorest countries in the world (Binns & Binns, 1992).

Political and Administrative Structures

In April 1961, the United Kingdom transferred political power to Dr. Milton Margai, leader of the SLPP (i.e., Sierra Leone Peoples' Party), a political organization dominated by the "traditio-modern" elites (i.e. chiefs and the educated middle class) of Sierra Leone society (Lavalie, 1985). When Dr. Margai's died in 1964, power passed into the hands of Albert Margai, the new leader of the Party. With its base firmly rooted in imperfect modern chieftaincy, the leaders of the SLPP did not develop a strong centralised political organization that could mobilise the broad mass of the people and impose its ideology on the state. It was partly as a result of this that the party lost power to the APC (i.e., All Peoples' Congress Party) in the General Elections of 1967. Siaka Stevens, the leader of the All People's Congress Party, became Prime Minister in 1968 and following the declaration of Republican status in 1971, he became Executive President; a position he held until his resignation in 1985. After Steven's resignation, power passed into the hands of his hand-picked successor, Joseph Momoh, who had previously been elected the new leader of the APC.

At independence in 1961, the goals and objectives of the new state were clearly defined in its constitution and these have, in general, remained essentially the same in the subsequent constitutions of 1971, 1978 and 1991. They were defined as:

> a free, parliamentary and democratic society;
>
> a just and egalitarian society
>
> a unified, strong and nationally conscious society;
>
> acceleration of national economic growth and development;
>
> a land of bright prospects and equality of opportunity for all citizens (Government of Sierra Leone, 1961, pp. 1-3).

Thus for both the APC party as well as the SLPP before it, political idealogies would, at least in theory, be guided by these ideals. In this sense, both parties saw themselves as agents of national integration and development as conceived within the framework of the goals and objectives of the new state. This was particularly important in view of the fact that political conflict across the country, particularly during the years immediately following independence, became "tribalised and regionalised" with the Mendes in the south and the east supporting the SLPP and the Temnes and Krios in the north and west supporting the APC. In fact, while the declaration of the one-party state by the Government of the APC in 1978 has been viewed as a betrayal of the nation's constitutional ideals, justification for the measure derived, in part, from the desire to unify and integrate the various tribal and regional factions across the country (Sesay, 1989).

In the Republic of Sierra Leone, except for the first seven years immediately following independence when the SLPP was in power until 1967 and a year of military rule up to April 1968, the APC party remained the most dominant political force directing the nation until its overthrow in a military coup in 1992. The APC party was established in 1960 with a leadership consisting of a class of "commoners", like clerks, drivers, elementary school teachers and trade unionists (Lavalie, 1985). The leadership of the Party was younger and it came from lower class backgrounds than the well established SLPP leadership. As well, the APC party, like the SLPP, professed to be an ideologically based party but unlike the SLPP, the APC party had a clearly defined socialist outlook, at least in theory. The constitution of the APC Party (quoted in Stevens, 1984) declared that the Party was dedicated to the creation of Sierra Leone as:

> a welfare state based upon a socialist pattern of society in which all citizens, regardless of tribe, colour or creed, shall have equal opportunities and where there shall be no exploitation of man by man, tribe by tribe or class by class (p. 411).

In addition, the constitution of the All People's Congress (APC) party sought to:

> narrow the social, cultural and economic gaps between the different segments of our population, to make possible their unification and integration and to build a national consciousness transcending ethnic and regional loyalties (quoted in Stevens, 1984, p. 411).

The basic goal of the Party was declared as the maintenance of:

> The welfare of the people of Sierra Leone within the framework of social justice, dignity, security and personal freedom ... [recognising]..that the achievement of these aims involves higher health and education standards, improved housing and public amenities, full employment, increased productivity, and the most efficient use of the country's resources (quoted in APC Secretariat, 1982, p. 256).

Later constitutions, party and electoral documents appear rather ambiguous about the socialist character and objectives of the APC Party. This has led to the claim that while professing to be a 'non-marxist party' of African socialism, the APC party failed to adopt a well-defined socialist ideological stance in practice. In fact the Party's Five-year development plans did not contain any blueprint that would usher in the projected welfare state. Rather the plans were based on a capitalist economy thereby further accelerating the integration of its economy into the western capitalist mainstream. For instance in its 1973 election document, the party noted that its ideology was now "liberal socialism". As the document (quoted in Sesay, 1989) put it: "we believe that labour must be rewarded ... the harder people work, the greater would be their reward" (p. 207). In fact, President Steven's himself denied his party's claim to a socialist ideology by declaring that he "was too old to be a communist". In his autobiography, the President noted that:

> It is very well for people in the west to say that I am a communist or I am a liberal, but in the Third World we cannot afford this sort of luxury ... As I have

> stated before, my party does not owe anything to a particular ideology ... it is a party of practical aims ... The APC does not stand for communism or conservatism, it stands for Sierra Leone and her people (Stevens, 1984, p. 270).

Thus in spite of its socialist theoretical orientation, the APC party, like the SLPP before it, followed a capitalist ideology in practice. And probably because of the party's ambivalent stance regarding its socialist orientation, issues pertaining to class hardly feature in government documents or in discussions with Sierra Leoneans generally, including policy makers and educators, even today. In other words, there appears to exist a lack of critical awareness of social class distinctions and gender-based issues in Sierra Leone society generally as well as in the field of education, including adult literacy programmes.

Under President Momoh, the All People's Congress party developed and promoted a philosophy of "constructive nationalism" which involved:

> the principle of putting the interest of the nation over and above the interest of individuals and factions ... [and thus] serve as an effective counter to the parochial and sectional tendencies in our society. Our goal is to develop a truly pluralist society with liberty and freedom for all (Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1987, p. 3).

In general, Sierra Leone politics during the era of the APC party was essentially a very personalised affair. In other words, the party was a loose alliance based upon factional loyalties and personal interests rather than ideologically oriented claques. The APC party's initial objective - that of a socialist oriented party-was undermined by its policies in office, personal enrichment, and strategy of incorporation. The party's propaganda activities sought to legitimise, if not eulogize the governmental roles and policies of President Stevens, and later President Momoh, and their cabinets (Riley, 1983; Riley & Parfitt, 1987).

For administrative purposes, the nation is divided into four main regions - the Western Area (i.e., the former colony), the Northern, Southern and Eastern Provinces (i.e., the areas previously referred to as the Protectorate). Freetown, the nation's capital and seat of government, lies in the Western Area. The three Provinces are divided into districts which are further subdivided into 148 chiefdoms. In addition to Freetown, other large urban centres are Makeni in the north, Bo in the south as well as Kenema and Koidu in the east.

Social Structure

While commitment of the All People's Congress party to a socialist ideology was lacking in actual practice, its rhetoric, particularly during the early years in office, often implied a class concept of Sierra Leone society. In his address to the National Delegate's Conference of the APC party in 1970, President Stevens reaffirmed the commitment of his party and government to the establishment of a society based on wealth creation and fair distribution, including social and economic justice.

> In the past, too few have been enjoying too much of our national wealth; and too many have had to make do with too little ... It is the objective of this government to ensure that this gap is narrowed; to see that fair shares prevail; for without this, we run into the same old patterns ... of the strong exploiting the weak. This we will not tolerate ... My government has three aims in all we do and every Minister in the government has been instructed to subject every measure he takes to the test of these policy aims which are ... to increase our national wealth; to set aside a proportion to build for the future for our children and grandchildren; to create a society based on social justice (The APC Secretariat, 1982, p. 356).

President Steven's address implied the need for some direct state intervention in the economy, especially mining, manufacturing and commerce, in support of the poor as well as the development of the nation's productive forces. Yet recent studies and literature have suggested that the practical measures instituted by the APC party under President Stevens only succeeded in concentrating the nation's wealth and resources in the hands of the privileged few. In this sense, the measures would appear to have actually militated against poverty groups thereby further exacerbating further inequality (Kaplan, et al., 1976; ILO/JASPA, 1981). President Momoh, Steven's successor, acknowledged "... this growing disparity and inequality in the opportunities open to our people ..." and, like his predecessor, committed his government and party to social and economic justice for the disadvantaged (Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1986, p. 5).

While the issue of class hardly appears to feature in discussions with Sierra Leoneans generally, including policy makers and educators, some limited literature on the nature of class formation in the country has, nevertheless, emerged. Mukonoweshuro (1986) suggests that in the Republic of Sierra Leone, ethnicity and ethnic factors have not been the principal determinants of class formation. Rather, the present class structure of Sierra Leone society dates back from the colonial era, when the upper echelons of society comprised the colonial bureaucracy and the Lebanese traders who controlled the nation's commercial activities. Today, the colonial bureaucracy has been replaced by the nation's senior bureaucrats who, along with the alien commercial Lebanese minority, constitute the nation's upper class. Next to them, on the social scale, is the petty bourgeoisie of civil servants, teachers, doctors, lawyers and several others. The numerically small working class remains, like in the colonial era, exploited but the members appear to be insufficiently organised or ambivalent to form effective labour movements to support their interests (Luke, 1984). In the rural areas, the peasant farmers form the majority of the population, and, in general, they comprise the bulk of the nation's population.

Sierra Leone is a society with great cultural diversity (Kaplan, et al., 1976). Eighteen ethnic groups or tribes exist across the country. According to the 1985 census estimates, the Mendes (in the south-east) and the Temnes (in the north) together account for more than 30% of the nation's population. Other ethnic groups include the Kissis, Krios, Limbas, Konos, Susus, Madingoes, Sherbros, Yalunkas and Fullas. The commercial and official language is English and Creole (i.e language of the krios) is the lingua franca. There has been some research towards developing a written form and grammar for the four principal or official languages - Mende, Temne, Limba and Creole - but this has yet to provide a base for substantial written material for the nation's literacy activities. The result has been the continued emphasis on the use of a neutral language (i.e., English) for the acquisition of literacy skills both in and out of the schooling system.

With respect to religious beliefs, about 80% and 20% of Sierra Leoneans regard themselves as Muslims or Christians respectively (Konteh, 1991). The strong Islamic influence among ethnic groups, particularly those in the Northern Province, like the Temnes, has had some serious implications for Western education in some parts of the country. In spite of the adherence to Islam and Christianity, traditional religious beliefs and practices remain strong among the various Sierra Leonean ethnic groups. In general, fatalism is still prevalent in the world view of the masses of Sierra Leoneans, particularly illiterates, as witchcraft, magic and sorcery are widely practised. People in the rural areas, in particular, often resort to herbalists and juju men (i.e medicine men) during illness or in moments of crisis and death of children is mostly attributed to witchcraft or magic rather than malnutrition or disease. There is also the fatalistic belief that God will always provide food for mankind. Consequently, no one can die because of mere hunger or malnutrition and so there is no need deliberately to limit family size. In addition to these beliefs and practices, secret societies (referred to as bush schools) continue to feature in the socio-cultural fabric of all ethnic groups.

In general, there are no marked differences among the various ethnic groups in the area of land ownership. Among almost all ethnic groups, like the Temnes, Mendes and Limbas, ownership of land and other categories of property is communal; in other words, land and property belong to all members of the family. The term "family" usually refers to members of extended family, which includes kinsmen of two or more generations, linked by blood or marriage and residing in the same household. In the extended family, the oldest male member or the grandfather is accorded a great deal of respect and deference, because he is presumed to be nearer the ancestors whose protection is considered vital for the living members.

Besides the issue of property ownership, there is another element of Sierra Leone society that is interesting to examine and this relates to the general position of women. Among most of the ethnic groups, sex, age and kinship determine the division of labour. In Sierra Leone, like elsewhere in sub-saharan Africa, women traditionally bear the responsibility for the majority of tasks involved in reproducing the life of the village. In addition to bearing and caring for children, they prepare food for the household, fetch water, look after the welfare of their husbands and do about two-thirds of the farm work. There are however no laws banning women from any profession.

In addition to being characterised by its almost exclusive reliance on female farming, Sierra Leone is a society where polygamy is generally considered a normative form of marital arrangements. Four kinds of marriages exist; christian, muslim, civil and customary. The majority of marriages in the country are customary, contracted according to the customs and practices of particular ethno-cultural groups. Unlike Muslim marriage where the man is allowed four wives, in customary marriage, a man may have as many wives as he can afford. Customary and Muslim marriages are common among rural illiterate adults who, in general, perceive polygamy to be related to labour power, increased production and, therefore, wealth (Institute of Education, 1991).

Patriarchy, patriarchal and, in some cases, maternal relations characterize social relations among the majority of ethnic groups in Sierra Leone society. For most of these groups, kinship and lineage connections form the structure for many interpersonal relations and provide the basis for the formation of groups that carry out and control a range of social, political and economic activities that are functions of other institutions in Western societies (Kaplan, et al., 1976). The size and composition of kinship and lineage groups vary. For most ethnic groups, like the Temnes and Limbas, persons related to each other through their common patrilineal descent from a male ancestor form kinships and lineages. In some cases, however, descent through both males and females is important although there is generally a strong orientation to partrilineality. In most of these ethnic groups, marriage is perceived as a social contract not between individuals but between two lineages. Consequently, the wife or wives of the man and those of his brothers and patrilineal uncles are conceptually and linguistically wives of the lineage. In this sense then, women are generally perceived as having absolutely no rights. While women carry the heavier farming workload, they have no right of ownership to what they produce or to other forms of household property. Traditionally, power and authority are vested in the hands of the husband who exercises absolute control over what is produced and distributes it as he pleases. Both the wives and children are considered the property of the husband and, in general, the wives have very little social and economic alternatives opened to them except, perhaps, to endure the exploitation and oppression from their husbands. As well, a man's heirs are primarily his brothers in order of age down to the eldest son of the eldest brother in the next generation; in other words, inheritance and succession follow the male line. But while practically all ethnic groups view women as the property of their husbands, there are no laws banning women from any profession. Among the Krios as well as educated men and women from other ethnic groups, women have the right to own property as well as other forms of production, say in the form of monthly wages and salaries. Indeed many educated women occupy key positions in government, the private sector and in traditional law and medicine.

Economic and Labour Market Structure

The Republic of Sierra Leone shares the features of a peripheral and dependent capitalist economy with other former British Colonies on the West Africa. In terms of structure, the nation's economy (along with the employment opportunities it generates) is composed of a relatively small and shrinking modern or formal sector; a well-developed, fairly large and growing informal urban sector as well as a rural or traditional sector which includes both farm and non-farm economic activities. Modern sector economic activities include mining (i.e., gold, diamonds, bauxite and rutile); manufacturing, largely in import-substituting products, like cigarettes, beer and beverages; commerce and services. The informal urban sector supports a variety of small-scale enterprises, like clothing manufacture; machine and vehicle repair; shoe-mending; tailoring; carpentry; personal service providers, like cooks and security personnel as well as petty service and retailing activities, like street hawking. The traditional or rural sector comprises agricultural and non-agricultural economic activities, like fishing, forestry, cash crop production, subsistence farming, black-smithing, cassava processing, gara dyeing, woodcarving and basket making (Central Statistics Office, 1987, 1990).

In general the traditional or rural sector has been characterised by its predominantly primitive nature; in other words; the almost exclusive use, by most peasant cultivators, of rudimentary farming techniques; the complete lack of technical skills among the majority of peasants; an extremely high illiteracy rate in the rural areas where the overwhelming majority of peasants live as well as the very low levels of productivity among peasants, almost all of whom produce mainly for subsistence. The leading crop in the country and the staple diet of the population is rice. Among the fruits produced are vegetables and spices grown for home consumption and local sale. Other fruits grown include oranges, grapes, mangoes, potatoes, cassava, maize, yams, groundnuts and sorghum. Cash crops include cocoa, coffee, palm oil, palm kernels, piassava and ginger.

Table 1 brings out the sectoral distribution of the nation's economically active population or labour force (12 years old and over) based on data compiled by the Central Statistics Office (1987, 1990, 1991). In 1985, the modern sector of the economy generated slightly below two-thirds of the GNP and employed less than one-fourth of the labour force. The relative stability of this sector over the period between 1974 and 1985 was due in part to the remarkable growth in service-sector employment throughout the 1970s and early 1980s. In terms of labour force

Table 1: **Sectoral Composition of the Economically Active Population or Labour Force (12+ years) Based on Data Compiled by the Central Statistics Office**

Economic Sector	**1963**	**1974**	**1985**	**1990**
1. Modern/Formal Sector	183,972	212,352	134,401	201,344
% of labour force	20%	19%	18%	14%
Estimates of contribution to GDP	75%	77%	61%	59%
2. Traditional Rural Sector	732,324	805,168	485,468	934,763
% of labour force	77%	73%	65%	65%
Estimate of contribution to GDP	25%	23%	21%	23%
3. Informal Urban Sector Activities	Data unavailable	Data unavailable	89,624	172,572
As % of labour force	--	--	6%	12%
Estimates of contribution to GDP	--	--	18%	18%
4. Unemployed	31,264	88,400	37,458	129,429
As % of labour force	3%	8%	11%	9%
5. Totals	945,380	1,106,000	746,951	1,438,097

Source: Central Statistics Office (1987, 1990, 1991) participation rate, the traditional or rural sector dominated the nation's economy throughout the period, generating on average about a third of the GNP and employing about two-thirds of the labour force. The informal urban sector employed about 12% of the urban labour force and contributed about 6% to the GNP in 1985, the first year during which such data were compiled. Official unemployment rates for 1963, 1974 and 1985 were estimated at 3% 8% and 11% respectively. In the modern sector, however, unemployment rate was estimated at about 40% in 1985 (Institute of Education, 1991).

In 1990, the nation's labour force was estimated at about 1,438,097 workers, representing an increase of about 93% over the 1985 figures (Central Statistics Office, 1990, 1991). Of this figure, modern sector employment was estimated at about 14% of the labour force, down from 18% in 1985. The contribution of this sector to the nation's GNP, however, remained fairly stable, estimated at about 59%. Traditional or rural sector employment held steady at about 65% of the labour force, while in the informal urban sector, the labour force jumped from 6% to about 12%; indicating its immense potential for urban sector employment in the country. The contribution of both sectors to the nation's GNP was estimated at about 23% and 18% respectively, indicating a remarkable improvement in the case of the informal urban sector. Official unemployment was estimated at about 8% of the labour force, down from 11% in 1985. In the modern sector, however, the unemployment was estimated at about 50% in 1990 (Kallon, 1990).

In terms of performance since independence in 1961, the nation's economy, which remains dependent on, and integrated with, the capitalist world economy, appeared to have fared impressively well during the 1960s and early 1970s. There was considerable expansion in the modern sector of the economy during the period largely as a result of favourable world market forces and prices of the nation's mineral exports, like gold, diamonds, rutile, iron ore and bauxite as well as its cash crops, like cocoa, coffee, palm kernels, palm oil, ginger and piassava

(Kallon, 1990; Weeks, 1992). With the expansion of the modern sector of the nation's economy came a steady increase in modern sector employment as well as in state revenue, averaging, around 10% annually during the period (Kallon, 1990). And as state revenues increased President Stevens and his APC party government steadily increased funding for infrastructural services so that by the mid 1970s, the government, under President Stevens, became the largest modern sector employer (Hayward, 1989).

With the advent of the oil crisis in the 1970s, the nation's economic situation began to stagnate and by the mid 1980s, economic decay had set in (Hayward, 1989). The problems of the economy were viewed as both external and internal. Externally, the problem was due to the nation's continued dependence on the capitalist world market for both oil or energy as well as technology in a period of rising prices and a declining terms of trade and falling world market prices for its shrinking exports. This integration into, and dependence on, the capitalist world market made the nation and its economy vulnerable to external pressures and factors as determined by forces over which the government had very little or no control. The problems of the economy were also internal, namely; large scale mismanagement of the nation's resources; a fiscal crisis due to increased smuggling of minerals and the development of a parallel economy which undercut the nation's revenue base as well as rampant official corruption by government officials under President Stevens (Kallon, 1990; Riley, 1983; Parfitt and Riley, 1987).

By the mid 1980s, the nation's economic crisis have become virtually endemic (Hayward, 1989). A 1990 report by the government acknowledged the severity of the nation's economic problems and its devastating impact of Sierra Leoneans, particularly illiterate peasants and the working class.

> The sluggishness of the economy is fully reflected in other indicators of performance: per capital GNP, measured at $US 390 in 1982, is estimated to have declined to $US 244 in 1987. Present GNP is not expected to have increased. Exports, which stood at $US 130 million in 1985, are believed to be in the range of $US 105-110 million for the current financial year (FY 1989/90) ... There has been a noticeable increase of some 20 per cent in imports, elevating

> the trade deficit to $US 56 million ... Inflation continues to be high in excess of 100 per cent annually during the decade [1980s] ... The worst sufferers are the small farmer with no surplus to sell, the small trader and the self-employed small entrepreneur ... The inflation and depression have had serious social implications (Government of Sierra Leone, 1990, pp. 5-6).

When President Momoh took office in November, 1985, he promised to end official corruption and mismanagement of the nation's resources as well as to rebuild the nation's crumbling economy by cutting waste through the removal of "ghost workers" on the government's payroll. The new President also promised to develop the nation's growing informal sector, particularly the rural or traditional economy. A few years after taking office, however, the euphoria and optimism that had greeted his assumption of office turned into disillusionment when it became obvious that the economic crisis was deepening still further and official corruption was reaching alarming proportions (Binns & Binns, 1992).

At the insistence of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), President Momoh launched a structural adjustment programme in 1986 in an effort to combat the economic and fiscal crises. The programme involved the taking of drastic policy measures in the area of the economy, including the removal of subsidies on rice, gas and kerosene; decontrol of prices of basic consumer goods; the floating or devaluation of the leone, the nation's currency; retrenchment or massive lay off of public sector employees as well as increases in the prices of the major export crops. A fairly recent study concluded that the position of the poor had worsened under structural adjustment while that of the elite and business community had remarkably improved (Longhurst, et al., 1988). In fact, the rise of modern sector unemployment, estimated as 50% in 1990 (Kallon, 1990), has been largely attributed to structural adjustment which, as noted earlier, involved the retrenchment or lay off of public sector workers. The economic decay and structural adjustment measures would appear to have dampened job prospects for schooling graduates, including those from the university. Today, hardly any new modern sector jobs are created by the economy besides teaching and even this profession would appear to be on the verge of saturation. The fact that university graduates are now being recruited to teach in elementary/primary schools, a phenomenon that was unthinkable only a few years ago, suggest that this is probably the case.

The nation's economic crisis was further compounded in March 1991, when rebel troops from neighbouring Liberia invaded parts of the Eastern and Southern Provinces. As the war dragged on, President Momoh was accused of deliberately prolonging the conflict (by refusing to adequate arm the nation's military on the war front) in order to delay the holding of multi party elections as provided for under the new 1991 constitution. The crisis finally came to a head in April, 1992 when a group of young soldiers, demoralised by the lack of government support for the war efforts, overthrew the government in a bloodless coup. The new government, which remains in power, promised, like President Momoh's government before it, to rebuild the nation's crumbling economy, put an end to official corruption as well as the mismanagement of the nation's resources. The extent to which these objectives would be realized remains to be seen.

Concluding Summary

This descriptive overview of the nation's social and historical context has highlighted the socio-economic, political, historical and traditional conditions of Sierra Leone society; conditions which the nation's policy makers and education planners hoped would he transformed by, among others, the acquisition of literacy skills. At the same time, however, these conditions, while not directly determining educational reform policy, were likely to have a profound influence on the outcomes of literacy activities across the country. For instance, the youthful nature of the population was likely to increase the demand for schooling to support the increasing literacy needs of children and young adults at a time when the nation's political economy probably limited the ability of the state to increase the financial and other resources available to educational programmes, including adult literacy. As well, the devastating impact of the economic crisis on the peasant population is likely to affect their ability and willingness to spend time learning. The same could also be true of potential instructors with regard to their ability or willingness to spend time teaching. It is also likely that the rebel war, which is believed to have led to the destruction of life and property in several villages across the country, would create problems for literacy work, particularly in terms of recruitment efforts as well as resources available for adult literacy activities. Furthermore, traditional and cultural factors, including the prevalence of strong fatalist beliefs among the masses of Sierra Leoneans, especially peasants and, to some extent, even the working class, might influence their perceptions about literacy, especially if the literacy taught in adult classes was viewed as inadequate in terms of the provision of genuine opportunities for their social and economic advancement.

Politically, policy makers and educators continue to view mass literacy as critical to the achievement of the goals and objectives of the new state. For instance, literacy continues to be viewed as an instrument of national integration and unity in a country with so many diverse ethnic groups as well as regional and tribal organisations which appeared to have mushroomed during the decades of the 1970s and 1980s, in spite of the declaration of the single-party state. The increased production and productive capabilities resulting from the acquisition of literacy skills, it is hoped, would result in increased wealth, from cash crop production, for both peasants and the nation. In the case of peasants the expectation was that their integration into the market economy would ultimately mean a rise in their economic and social status.

Clearly then, to its different social actors (especially policy makers, agencies/ organisations and instructors) and purely from a developmental perspective, adult literacy work, like schooling generally, continues to be viewed as critical in the life of the nation, economically, morally, socially and politically. This study was not concerned with the investigation of the actual impact of literacy on the nation's social, economic and political conditions or on the socio-economic and political lives of new literates. Rather, the study was interested in understanding respondents' perceptions of the enabling and constraining influences of these social and historical conditions on the outcomes of adult literacy activities.

The next Chapter presents a descriptive overview of the nation's education reform policies and practices between 1970 and 1992, with emphasis on adult literacy.

CHAPTER 5: LITERACY AND DEVELOPMENT IN SIERRA LEONE: OVERVIEW OF POLICIES AND PRACTICES

This Chapter presents a descriptive and analytic overview of the nature and structure of Sierra Leone's educational reform policies and practices with regard to adult literacy from 1970 through 1992. The first section presents a brief overview of literacy work during the British colonial era as well as the educational policies and practices that emerged immediately following independence in 1961. It is then followed, in section two, by a descriptive and analytic overview of the nature and structure of the nation's development and educational reform policies with regard to adult literacy since 1970; in particular, the goals and objectives of such policies as well as the broad themes that inform them. The section concludes with an overview of the nature and structure of the nation's educational practices at the levels of both schooling as well as literacy and adult education. A concluding summary of the Chapter is then presented.

Overview of Educational Policies and Practices up to 1970

Education during the British Colonial era.

As noted in the previous Chapter, British official presence in Sierra Leone started with the annexation of the "Freetown Peninsular" as a crown colony in 1808 but colonial occupation was not completed until the end of the 19th century in the face of strong local resistance, particularly from the hinterland peoples. Following the imposition of colonial rule, the authorities sought to re-structure and develop the nation's economy and education system to serve British Colonial commercial, industrial and administrative interests (Fyle, 1986; Banya, 1993; Kallon, 1990). To perform this function effectively, a class of Sierra Leoneans was required; a class that would be created by the education system.

Thus, like elsewhere in colonial Africa, British involvement in education was designed to serve one key function, namely; to provide the human resources needed to service the lowest echelons of the colonial administrative machinery as well as the colonial economy (Sumner, 1963). In other words, the objective of colonial education was to develop the capability of Sierra Leonean workers and other functionaries, without running the risk of creating a critical and thinking people. The emphasis was on increasing the production and productive capabilities of workers employed in the industrial and agricultural sectors of the colonial economy. In regard to employment in the colonial administration, the volume and quantity of education given to Sierra Leoneans were the barest minimum necessary for such auxiliary posts as clerks, interpreters, preachers and pupil teachers. As Lord Macauley (Misra, 1961), one of the chief architects of British Colonial policy, put it in reference to India: "we must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern - a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect" (p. 49). This notion of British colonial education was not restricted to India alone but to all other British Colonies, including Sierra Leone.

In general, the educational system introduced by the British in Sierra Leone was designed to keep colonialism functioning and lucrative. Education was extremely limited and tightly controlled by the colonial authorities. In the hinterland areas, for example, education was limited to the "ruling class", mainly the sons of traditional rulers who were generally viewed as natural allies of colonial authorities and whose children, it was hoped, would less likely be critical of colonial rule. In this way, education would "Europeanise" the Sierra Leonean so as to make him/her more profitable to the colonial power, imposing a social order which facilitated economic domination and exploitation without threatening colonial rule (Corby, 1990). The "native" Sierra Leone was to receive enough of "white culture" and Christian principles to enable him/her to become obedient and disciplined but not enough to become skilled, independent-minded and active. In short, the interest of British Colonial Authorities in education was limited to the extent that it might enhance the production and productivity capabilities of Sierra

Leoneans and that it did not raise mass expectations of salaried employment and other privileges reserved for the few (Sumner, 1963; Thompson, 1988a). Unfortunately, the high illiteracy rate across the country suggests that this elitist conception of education continues to be the trend in the country up to this day.

Review of Educational Policies and Practices up to 1970.

The contradictions inherent in British Colonial exploitation, especially in the area of the education of an African elite to service colonial administrative and economic interests was to eventually lead to independence in British Colonial Africa during the 1950s and 1960s. After the Second World War in Sierra Leone, and particularly during the 1950s, an increasing number of Sierra Leoneans demanded, and, to a large extent, received an academically oriented education which was widely viewed as carrying some lucrative financial and other rewards. It was this new type of education that ultimately produced a new Sierra Leonean elite; those Sierra Leoneans who by virtue of their schooling, held occupations that enabled them to accumulate power and prestige in society as well as become the ruling class after independence (Corby, 1990). In 1958, only three years to independence, the first all-Sierra Leonean cabinet of SLPP (Sierra Leone People's Party) politicians was formed. Having won two General Elections in 1951 and 1957, the SLPP, a party that was dominated by the nation's intelligentsia and which professed a capitalist oriented ideology, led the country to independence in 1961 (Lavalie, 1985).

British Colonial education had, to a large measure, a heavy influence on the government of the new state since its members were, after all, among its direct beneficiaries. One area where this influence was readily obvious was in the nature and structure of the education and development policies that were formulated by the SLPP government immediately following independence in 1961. Four instruments guided the nation's development and education policies during the decade of the 1960s, namely; (i) **The White Paper on Educational Development in 1958;** (ii) **The Ten Year Plan for the Nation's Economic and Social Development, 1961/62 through 1971/72;** (iii) **The Report of the Education Planning Group of 1961 and;** (iv) **The Development Programme in Education, 1964 - 1970,** commonly referred to as the **Sleight Report.**

The central themes expressed in each of these educational policy instruments were derived from the broad goals and objectives of development as spelt out in the first **National Development Plan** produced by the Ministry of Development and Economic Planning (1962). The development goals and objectives were described as:

> - political: the promotion of national unity and consciousness as well as a parliamentary system of government in Sierra Leone society.
> - economic: the acceleration of national economic growth and development.
> - social: the attainment of a standard of living where all Sierra Leoneans, irrespective of tribe, religion, political affiliation or geographical region, are able to satisfy their basic needs, particularly with regard to health and education.
> - cultural: the promotion of a positive national identity through the development and maintenance of a climate conducive to intellectual and artistic creativity. (pp. 1-3)

These goals and objectives, themselves informed by the goals and objectives of the new state mentioned in the previous Chapter, were ultimately embraced by policy makers and educational planners as the necessary foundation for national policies and practices in education. In other words, education was assigned a key role and responsibility in the achievement of these development goals and objectives. In all the policy documents referred to above, including the **National Development Plan,** policy makers and educational planners placed considerable emphasis on the development of the nation's human resources through formal schooling. **The 1958 White Paper,** for example, declared as government's long term goals, the quantitative and qualitative expansion of the formal schooling system as well as the introduction of "fee-free primary education" since this educational sub sector was widely viewed as the basic foundation for the eventual achievement of universal literacy across the country. In addition, **The White Paper** noted that the ultimate objective of educational policy was viewed "not as the narrow one of individual enlightenment but a steady and beneficial development of the goals of the social, economic, cultural, religious and political structure of the territory" (Ministry of Education, 1958, p. 1).

The key educational policy objectives outlined in **The 1958 White Paper,** namely; the expansion of the schooling system, development and training of human resources as well as the emphasis on elementary/primary schooling as the agent for mass literacy, were generally maintained in the other policy documents. For instance, in both **The Sleight Report** as well as **The Report of the Educational Planning Group of 1961**, policy makers and development/ education planners continued to emphasize the important role of education in the nation's development; then understood largely as investment in human capital. **The Sleight Report** (in Samuels, 1969) put it in this way:

> The economic and social development of this country depends to a tremendous extent on the quality of the country's resources. As the citizenry becomes more literate and knowledgeable, chances for constructive change are improved. A child may improve his performance by learning to read and write. He can add to his knowledge of the social and political processes by reading newspapers. As a child learns he wants to know more. The ability to read and write will also heighten his interest in the world around him, and will also make him more willing to accept change, when he understands what the changes are all about. (pp. 14-15)

The importance attached to formal schooling as a national development strategy was also underlined in **The Ten Year Plan of Economic and Social Development for Sierra Leone, 1961/62 through 1971/72,** which noted that:

> The entire educational system is part of the total investment in human capital, along with the provision of medical and health facilities, sanitation and water supply, etc. But education, seeking as its aim the development and discipline of mind and hand, occupies an honoured place among those other types of

> investment as a basic requisite for economic and social development (Ministry of Development and Economic Planning, 1962, p. 74).

The document further noted that "government's short and long term aim in education is equality of educational opportunity for all and that [educational] growth will be determined by the need for skilled manpower as well as the reduction of foreigners in some specific positions ..." (pp. 74-76). The "special positions" were widely understood as those in certain segments of the nation's economy, public service as well as education, particularly in the area of teaching (Sumner, 1963).

Thus the major thrust of the educational reform measures introduced during the period immediately following independence came from the need for educational expansion; increasing the national literacy rate as well as the desire for the development and training of the nation's human resources. In spite of the 153 years of British Colonial "civilising mission" in Sierra Leone, only about 7% of the population was literate at the time of independence in 1961 (Thompson, 1988a). For the government of the new state, therefore, education emerged as a key national priority and development strategy during the first decade of independence.

With regard to literacy practice, three broad themes were clearly discernible from the policy documents on education prior to 1970, namely; (i) education as a key national development strategy; (ii) the need for increased financial allocation to education and; (iii) the need for expansion in education at all levels, particularly elementary/primary schooling which was viewed as the key agency responsible for the achievement of universal literacy. Yet except for the general emphasis on education's role in the nation's development, policy documents remained, at best, ambivalent on how education would actually perform the development role it was assigned. With regard to the issue of financing, there was no detailed examination of the financial implications of education although there was a recognition, by government, that costs would increase with educational expansion. And, indeed, state expenditure on education increased considerably throughout the decade of the 1960s, averaging between 20% to 25% of total government expenditure annually during the period (Banya, 1993).

By far, however, the major practical steps were undertaken in the area of educational expansion; particularly in primary/elementary schooling. For instance, in the 1970/71 academic year, the number of children attending elementary/primary schools across the country was estimated at 166,107 pupils; representing an increase of about 103% over the enrollment figures for 1960/61. As well, enrollments in secondary schools stood at 33,318 in 1970/71, representing an increase of about 370% over the figure for 1960/61 (Hinzen, 1987). Similar trends occurred in all the other sub-sectors of formal schooling.

Yet while massive increases occurred at all levels of the nation's education system, this was not the case in regard to literacy and adult education. In fact, this sector emerged as the weakest aspect of the nation's education system both in terms of policy and practice during the first decade of the nation's independence. This trend would appear to have started during the British Colonial era. As Thompson (1988a) put it:

> There is no convincing evidence to show that colonial authorities promoted literacy for adults. Their major pre-occupation was formal schooling which was tailored to meet the demands of the colonial bureaucracy, the church and the commercial sector (p. 1).

This lack of interest in literacy and adult education by British Colonial authorities was further evidenced in the fact that the field was widely viewed as an appendage to formal schooling. In fact, a document produced by the British Council office in Sierra Leone suggests that references to adult education, including literacy, in educational policy documents up to 1970 were generally relegated to footnotes and budget provisions for the sub-sector were stated in uncommitted terms. As **The 1958 White Paper** (quoted in British Council, 1993) put it:

> Government recognises the growing need for wider and more varied facilities not only for young people but for adults as well and will give consideration to the establishment of Adult Education Centres and to the expansion of this work generally as and when funds are available (p. 1).

This lack of interest by colonial authorities meant that, for the most part of the colonial era, adult literacy work was the responsibility of missionaries.

Government involvement in adult literacy activities started with the establishment, by the Colonial government, of the Provincial Literature Bureau in Bo in the Southern Province in 1946. The Bureau was charged with responsibility for the promotion and co-ordinating of adult literacy work in the then Protectorate. Literacy supervisors were hired to start classes in selected villages in the Protectorate and the most advanced students were selected for further training, after which they returned to their own villages to continue the various programmes. The success of this variant of the Laubach "Each One Teach One" method was however limited by a lack of follow-up reading materials for those who completed their courses and apathy among villagers, a majority of whom could not be sold on the idea of acquiring literacy skills in a predominantly non-literate society (Samuels, 1969).

A more active government involvement in adult literacy came in 1957, when responsibility for the field was shifted from the Provincial Literature Bureau to the Ministry of Social Welfare. In its first policy pronouncement on the subject, the Ministry (in Mambu, 1983) described a literate adult population as critical to the nation's economic and social development. At the same time, however, the Ministry recognised that:

> There are not sufficient financial resources to be provided for a scheme of universal literacy at government expense, nor is there the machinery capable of compulsory literacy ... [and so] ... adult literacy programmes must be based on voluntary efforts and must be looked upon as a co-operative venture shared by the illiterate community, the educated community and the government (p. 202).

Throughout the decade of the 1960s, adult literacy work remained largely marginal as the major preoccupation of the SLPP government continued to be with formal schooling. The provision of formal schooling for the young was probably viewed as the best way to fight illiteracy which would ultimately be eliminated by the passing away of the older illiterate population. Yet, in spite of the limited state interest and commitment, a flurry of activity in adult literacy took place during the 1960s. For instance, the Ministry of Social Welfare launched limited literacy campaigns in parts of the Provinces between 1961-1962 with financial support from the United Kingdom. A good deal of statistical and other relevant data on the campaigns are unavailable but, like the activities of the Provincial Literature Bureau before it, there is evidence to suggest that the effectiveness of these campaigns were seriously undermined due to the lack of follow-up materials for learners who completed their courses, financial constraints as well as apathy for literacy among the villagers (Samuels, 1969). In addition to the campaigns, a National Literacy Committee was established by an order of the Prime Minister to assume responsibility for the co-ordination and collaboration of literacy agencies/organisations and their programmes. As well, particularly following the Unesco Conference of Ministers of Education in 1965, the functional or work-oriented strategy became the nation's preferred literacy strategy. Finally, responsibility for literacy and adult education was formally transferred to the Ministry of Education in 1968. And within the Ministry of Education, the sub-sector was initially placed under the auspices of the Planning Unit.

In spite of this flurry of activity, government interest in, and commitment to, adult literacy was widely viewed as inadequate during the decade of the 1960s. While it was willing and ready to invest financial and other resources in formal schooling, the new state continued to heavily rely on external sources for financial, material and professional assistance for literacy and adult education activities. In the field, adult literacy work was left to voluntary agencies/organisations and largely through the efforts of these agencies/organisations, about 4,918 learners were enrolled in the 215 courses operating in the country in the 1966/67 academic year (Samuels, 1969). If one assumes that the government of the new state was only willing to invest its educational resources in priority areas, then its apparent unwillingness to invest in adult literacy would suggest that the field was not considered an educational priority during the 1960s.

Overview of Educational Policies and Practices: 1970 to 1992.

The first decade of independence witnessed a considerable expansion in enrollments at all levels of the formal schooling system; a trend that has continued up to the present. Justification for the educational explosion, as mentioned in the preceding section, derived from political, economic, social and cultural considerations. By 1970, however, the limitations of formal schooling had began to emerge and around the mid 1970s, the problems had intensified. Like elsewhere in Africa, the problems of the schooling system were viewed as both educational and non educational. The educational problems included low enrollment ratios; high drop out and low retention rates; repeater problems; widespread relapse into illiteracy; poorly trained and paid teachers; inefficient educational management systems; irrelevant curriculum and methods as well as poor utilisation of resources, resulting in waste. The non-educational problems were viewed as attitudes towards schooling among some ethnic groups, particularly for girls; the lack of fit between schooling and the labour market leading to the phenomenon of educated unemployment; the burden of education to poor parents who were expected to meet the cost of uniforms, books and other schooling materials; the continuing population explosion which made universal literacy an unachievable objective for many years to come as well as the elitist nature of the system which continued to favour some groups or regions over others (ILO/JASPA, 1981; Thompson, 1988b; Hilderbrand, 1991).

Equally important, particularly during the decade of the 1970s, was the emerging realization among the nation's policy makers and educational planners that, from a development perspective, the impact of schooling literacy was probably long-term. It was unlikely that young children would be able to make significant contribution to development after completing only a few years of elementary schooling. In other words, formal schooling, although promising long-term solutions, provided no short-term answers to the problems of development. At the same time, adults who were already in the labour force and whose increased skills would be immediately productive remained largely illiterate. In fact, a report by the International Labour Organization (in Ministry of Development and Economic Planning, 1983) estimated that fully 87% of the nation's labour force was illiterate in 1970.

The problems facing the new state in regard to education are highlighted in Table 2. The Table presents data on the literacy/educational levels of the nation's population as well as its labour force as compiled and reported by the Central Statistics Office. In spite of the educational explosion of the 1960s and early 1970s, data from the Table suggest that fully 71% of the nation's population five years old and over as well as 87% of its labour force were illiterate in 1974.

Table 2: Literacy Levels of the Total Population and the Labour Force/Working Population Based on Reports of the Three Population Censuses (Actual figures)

Level of education/Literacy attained	Total Population (5+ years)			Labour Force/Working Population (12+ years)		
	1963	1974	1985	1963	1974	1985
None (i.e., illiterate)	1,627,745	1,904,476	1,891,863	862,960	962,200	555,681
Elementary/primary schooling	135,067	269,105	476,611	56,280	65,254	76,527
Secondary schooling	36,037	128,093	270,421	18,760	55,300	115,472
Higher education (i.e., includes Teacher, Vocational/Technical and University education)	3,910	12,650	26,570	9,380	23,226	17,271
Totals	1,802,759	2,314,324	2,665,465	947,380	1,106,000	746,951

Sources: Central Statistics Office, (1987, 1990)

Against this backdrop of problems associated with formal schooling as well as the high incidence of illiteracy among the nation's population, including its labour force, the government of the All People's Congress (APC) party, which came to office in 1968, launched a number of educational policy initiatives beginning in 1970. If the schooling system was designed to contribute to the nation's development, policy makers and education planners now argued, then adult literacy would more likely do so at probably a much faster and cheaper rate; faster because adults learn at a much faster pace than children and cheaper because they would be already engaged in some type of socio-economic activity in the informal sector.

The education reform policies formulated and implemented by the government of the All People's Congress Party were collectively designed to make the system more relevant to the nation's development aspirations. Virtually all the policies formulated had some direct bearing on literacy and adult education activities and so the examination of each of them is particularly relevant for the study. They were: (i) **The 1970 White Paper on Educational Policy;** (ii) **The Education Chapter of The Five Year National Development, 1973/74 through 1978/79;** (iii) **The 1976 Sierra Leone Education Review: All Our Future;** (iv) **The Education Chapter of The Three Year National Development Plan, 1983/84 through 1985/86** and; (v) **The 1991 Constitution of the Republic of Sierra Leone.**

In addition to these policy documents, a number of pronouncements/declarations of a policy nature, particularly in regard to literacy and adult education, came from President Momoh and some of his Ministers of Education. The structure and nature of each of these policies constitute the basis for the descriptive and analytic overview that follow.

The 1970 White Paper on Educational Policy

The basic thrust of the **1970 White Paper** derived from the educational platform issued by the APC party in its manifesto for the 1967 General Elections which was won by the party. In that platform, the party had committed itself to fighting illiteracy if it was elected:

> We realize that the progress of any country is determined by the percentage of literate and educated citizens. The All People's Congress would, if elected by the population of Sierra Leone to form a government, give priority first and foremost to the development and expansion of educational facilities ... The fight against illiteracy within the shortest possible time would be considered the most

> important sphere of our struggle and activities (APC Secretariat, 1984, p. 315-316).

The **1970 White Paper**, the first educational policy document released by the government of the APC party, was clearly informed by considerations about the role of education in development as well concerns about the high rate of illiteracy across the country. **The White Paper** noted that:

> The general aim of our educational policy is to provide any child with an education which takes fully into account: (a) character development, (b) his/her interests and abilities; (c) the manpower needs of the country and; (d) the economic resources of the state; so that his/her education can be of use to the country and, at the same time, provide opportunities for him/her to be successful in life. (Ministry of Education, 1970, pp. 1-4).

Clearly, then, in spite of the emerging problems associated with formal schooling, the objectives of educational policy as contained in **The White Paper** showed that policy makers and educational planners still continued to express high hopes about education and its role in both individual and social development. The key operational objectives and priorities identified in **The White Paper** included continuing educational expansion, particularly at elementary/ primary, secondary and technical/ vocational levels; ensuring relevance of the entire educational system to the development needs of individuals and the nation as well as improvement in educational quality (ibid.).

But the educational reform issues addressed in **The White Paper** were not restricted to only formal schooling. For the first time, the nation's policy makers and educational planners came out with an assertive enunciation on adult literacy. As **The White Paper** put it:

> The high rate of illiteracy among citizens, particularly in rural areas is considered to be one of the most important obstacles impeding the political, economic and social progress of the country ... [thus] in addition to schooling, literacy for adults must be given top-most attention by government which will continue to work in partnership with voluntary efforts (Ministry of Education, 1970, pp. 5-6).

But while **The White Paper** appeared to have kept policy issues on schooling and adult literacy separate, it, at the same time, called for a strategy or approach that viewed literacy as a continuum for both children and adults. As the document put it:

> Government is fully aware of the need for a two-pronged educational advance in this country. The expansion and improvement of educational facilities for the young is only one of these. The other must be a vigorous programme of adult education, which includes literacy. This is all the more important since in the 1963 census, only about six percent of the population were found to be literate in any language (Ministry of Education, 1970, pp. 5-6).

And for the first time, policy makers and educational planners offered a definition for literacy. For purposes of adult literacy activities, literacy was defined in **The White Paper** as the "ability to encode and decode combinations of letters into words in a meaningful way such that information can be received and conveyed through written material" (Ministry of Education, 1970, p. 7).

In general, the key tenets outlined in **The White Paper** centred around the contribution of literacy to the development process; a strategy of a two-pronged approach to mass literacy through elementary/primary schooling and adult literacy programmes as well as an instrumentalist definition of literacy in the sense that it was viewed as a simple educational skill. Such a definition of literacy, while relating to the "deficit perspective", was probably in tune with the mood of the time. It is perhaps important to note that particularly in regard to adult literacy, there were no references to financing; measures designed to promote recruitment efforts; organisational and administrative issues as well as issues pertaining to the curriculum, instruction and learning at this stage of policy-making probably because of the expectation by authorities that the bulk of the activities would still be left to voluntary efforts. And in spite of the APC party's socialist orientation, educational policy documents pertaining to adult literacy made no specific references to the class character of educational programmes; the issue of class characteristics of adult learners or even the class orientation of the types of jobs in which adult learners were likely to have been engaged and for which they would be expected to train through the acquisition of literacy skills. In other words, there appears to exist a lack of critical awareness of social class distinctions and gender-based issues in Sierra Leone society generally as well as in the field of education, including adult literacy programmes. As well, the rhetoric of policy makers and educational planners at this stage continued to centre largely on the contribution of literacy to development; a rather surprising phenomenon, given the emerging experiences with formal schooling at that time. It was probably not coincidental that the formulation of **The White Paper** was not followed by any increased interests in adult literacy activities in the field. In fact, Ministry of Education/Unesco (1981) estimates that in 1971/72, only about 1,530 adult learners were enrolled in literacy courses throughout the country; down from an enrollment figure of 4,918 in the 1966/67 academic year.

The Education Chapter of the National Development Plan of 1973/74 through 1978/79

The nation's second **Development Plan** was launched by the government of the All People's Congress party in 1974. In addition to economic growth and the development of human resources, the second **Development Plan** also embraced a social dimension of development. As **The Plan** (Ministry of Development and Economic Planning, 1974) put it: "If investment in the economic sectors with a view to achieving rapid economic growth, and services such as education, health and social welfare are not expanded sufficiently, serious tensions may develop" (p. 235).

In general, the principal thrust of **The Plan** was that, in addition to economic growth and the development of human resources, development programmes would focus on social issues, like the elimination of poor health conditions, malnutrition, poverty, disease, social inequality as well as justice for the poor. And education was again viewed as critical in the achievement of such objectives. For the first time, educational programmes, particularly adult literacy programmes, were to be viewed as development projects. Like the **1970 White Paper**, **The Plan** also emphasised three key operational objectives, namely; (i) expansion in formal schooling, particularly at the primary/elementary, vocational/technical and teacher training levels; (ii) re-orientation of the content of education to make it more relevant to the needs of individuals and the nation and; (iii) a dual-pronged approach to mass literacy through elementary/primary schooling and adult literacy programmes.

But the rhetoric expressed in **The Plan** was not only confined to the idea of a dual approach to mass literacy as well as the incorporation of educational programmes as development projects as a number of other policy-related issues were also addressed. For instance, **The Plan** (Ministry of Development and Economic Planning, 1974) advocated a functional strategy to the development of literacy skills as:

> a valuable supplement to simple literacy training and could eventually benefit the latter ... [i.e., simple literacy] ... through a transfer of experience and the use of functional literacy materials. Functional literacy programmes, urban or rural, should be closely linked with agricultural or community development ... Such programmes should involve practical demonstrations of how the villagers improve their economic activities and other ways of life within their community (pp. 236-37).

While the **1970 White Paper** offered a definition of literacy, **The Development Plan** defined a functionally literate individual as a person who is able to:

> read, with some understanding, local newspapers to keep up with what is happening around him as well as to get information; to read simple materials on better living, better nutrition and sanitation practices, better ways of production especially for farmers, better health practices, like family planning; to keep records and solve simple arithmetic problems, to keep a simple book of account on income and expenditure (Ministry of Development & Economic Planning, 1974, p. 238).

In addition to the strategy of functional literacy as well as its definition, **The National Development Plan** also outlined specific targets for recruitment in adult literacy activities. It was estimated that between 1974 and 1992:

> About 500,000 learners would have enrolled and participated in [adult literacy] programmes organised by the Ministry [of Education] and other agencies ... Allowing for some unforeseen difficulties, like drop out, government expects that only half of this number [250,000] would be able to receive certificates ... In

> addition, government also expects that about 50,000 teachers would be able to participate, about 30,000 of these will be trained for teaching. And realising that participation efforts would not be easy, government intends to provide a variety of incentives and other benefits [to both instructors and learners] as, and when, funds are available. For this purpose, government will work co-operatively with other [literacy] agencies (Ministry of Development & Economic Planning, 1974, pp. 238-239).

The same document also recognised that the success of adult literacy work was unlikely "... without a much greater allocation of resources to literacy activities [and that] financial limitations may mean that increased funding for adult literacy is only possible at the expense of one or two levels of the education system" (p. 239). Recognising the need for some national organisational and administrative infrastructure for adult literacy activities, **The Plan** recommended that responsibility for literacy and adult education should be "... shifted from the Planning Unit of the Ministry of Education to an Adult Education Unit within the same Ministry ...." The newly created Adult Education Unit (AEU) would be expected to work in close co-operation with other government Ministries providing adult education, including literacy. At the same time, the re-organization of the Ministry of Education was expected to "... be accompanied by a relatively high increase of allocation in support of voluntary adult literacy activities" (ibid.).

In 1975, only a year after the launching of the second **National Development Plan**, the Ministry of Education declared literacy and adult education as the nation's second priority in education; primary/elementary education being number one (Ministry of Education, 1975, p. 7). As well, new initiatives were launched by the Ministry aimed at the establishment of regional and district branches of the Adult Education Unit and the revamping of the National Literacy Committee which would be charged with responsibility for organizational, administrative and technical functions in regard to adult literacy.

Yet, except for the broad outline of target estimates for recruitment, a functional literacy strategy, emphasis on voluntary literacy efforts as well as the need for a general organisational and administrative infrastructure, the rhetoric in the **National Development Plan** did not appear to have adequately addressed accompanying policy-related issues, especially funding for literacy and adult education. Policy makers and education/ development planners acknowledged that resources for adult education, including literacy, would have to increase and that incentives should be provided towards recruitment efforts but the policy documents failed to make clear how these would be accomplished. In fact, the kinds of incentives that would be provided were not specified. As well, literacy was still exclusively viewed as an educational problem. Illiterates were still viewed as having "deficits" and the acquisition of literacy skills was expected to enable illiterate workers to increase their production and productivity capabilities and, by implication, contribute to their own development as well as the development of Sierra Leone society. Since literacy work was viewed as an educational problem, it was probably not surprising that **The Plan** was silent on the issue of accompanying reforms of other structures of Sierra Leone society; structures that would reward the acquisition of literacy and, thereby, probably help create a demand for literacy skills among the illiterate population.

The Education Review of 1976: All Our Future

The 1976 Education Review has been described as probably the most comprehensive educational policy document in the sense that it embodied an excellent analysis of several aspects of the nation's education system and, at the same time, offered several recommendations for change and improvement (Newman Smart, 1993). The **Review** document was based on four key principles regarding the nation's education system, namely; relevance of the system to development; interdependence of different parts of the system; balanced expansion of various sectors within the educational system and self-reliant growth (Ministry of Education, 1976, p. 1-2). In addition to these principles, **The Education Review**, like the other policy documents referred to earlier, also recommended expansion of the schooling system, especially at the levels of elementary/primary, secondary, vocational/technical as well as teacher education. At the same time, the document stressed the need for the government to recover more of the cost of education from local consumers.

The recommendations of **The Education Review** were not restricted to schooling. The documents also took cognizance of the high illiteracy among the nation's adolescents and adults. As **The Review** put it:

> as regards the older age-group-adolescents and adults who have never attended school - they are at present outside the range of government support which goes only to the formal primary schooling system. It should be made possible for this group to find opportunities to acquire literacy skills through out-of-school educational programmes. Many of these people will already be working or looking for a means of livelihood mostly in traditional occupations such as farming, fishing, craft work and trading. Their major need is to become economically productive and, for this, the acquisition of literacy skills is essential (Ministry of Education, 1976, p. 6).

Thus, like some of the previous policy documents, **The Review** also stressed a functional literacy strategy. The rhetoric of policy makers and education planners continued to stress production and productivity orientations as literacy skills were viewed as instruments designed to help the nation's illiterate labour force, particularly those employed in informal sector economic activities, to increase their productivity and output.

In addition to the broad objectives of literacy policy, **The Review** also addressed a number of other policy-related issues regarding literacy and adult education. For instance, the document stressed the importance of the dual use of school buildings for adult literacy activities. As well Community Schools and Community Education Centres (CECs) would be established in different parts of the country to serve as venues for literacy and adult education courses. **The Review** estimated that, by 1991, a total of 500 Community schools and 1,320 CECs would have been established by the Ministry of Education (pp. 5-6).

The rhetoric in **The Education Review** also pertained to the need for incentives in order to sustain recruitment efforts. Depending on the availability of funds, the Ministry of Education undertook to provide limited incentives to instructors and learners. For instructors, such incentives would include opportunities for training and re-training as well as limited allowances and salaries. For learners, incentives would include allowances; free supply of literacy resources, like pens, pencils and exercise books; promotions, particularly in the case of secondary sector public employees, as well as some "fringe benefits", like grants or loans for the establishment of income-generation projects following the successfully completion of their courses. Like the other policy documents before it, **The Education Review** acknowledged the importance of voluntary agencies whose work "... in adult literacy in this country continue to be outstanding and would therefore be encouraged ... Government intends to subsidise their efforts if, and, when, resources are available ..." (Ministry of Education, 1976, pp. 10-11).

The Review also addressed educational issues in regard to adult literacy. Literacy courses, the majority of which would be organised and administered by agencies other than government Ministries, would generally last for two academic years. After that period, learners who were judged to have successfully completed their courses through an exam system would received certificates from the Ministry of Education. The exam would be conducted jointly by the Ministry of Education and the various literacy providing agencies and organisations. In addition, a variety of postliteracy activities and programmes would be made available to ensure that new adult literates stayed literate. The key requirements and qualifications for instruction were residency (especially in the rural areas), completion of a five-year course in secondary schooling as well as successful participation in instructor training and re-training workshops organised by the Ministry of Education and other literacy providing agencies. The language of literacy would remain to be "... English but government intends to pursue efforts designed to encourage the introduction of indigenous languages in these programmes as soon as resources are available" (Ministry of Education, 1976, pp. 10-14).

Thus for the first time, some measures of programme "success" or "failure", namely; exam performance, were defined in state policy documents. In addition, the emphasis on postliteracy programmes showed that life after the successful completion of adult literacy tests and exams would be viewed as equally critical as new literates encounter and successfully complete literacy related transactions in their lives as well as their environments. The acquisition of literacy skills would then become the initial step in the educational process as, ideally, new literates would be able to continue their schooling; acquire jobs and/or promotions; engage in some income generation projects or some other type of social, economic or political activity of their preference.

The Education Chapter of the National Development Plan of 1983/84 through 1985/86

The nation's third **Development Plan** was launched in 1984, at the beginning of the current economic decay. In addition to the goal of economic growth, development of human resources as well as social equity, **The Plan** acknowledged the growing importance of the nation's informal sector economic activities. As well, it noted that graduates from elementary/ primary schooling as well as drop-outs from these schools were unlikely to be absorbed in the shrinking modern sector of the nation's economy. Rather, their chances of employability laid in informal economic sector activities and this "... would require some investments in agriculture and promotion of small-scale industries by the government" (Ministry of Development and Economic Planning, 1984, p. 4). As well, **The Plan** advocated further reforms in the schooling system so that elementary/primary and secondary school pupils in particular "... are prepared with the knowledge, skills and attitudes which will help to facilitate their return to the rural and informal urban sectors of the economy, better equipped to raise their own levels of productive efficiency and contribute to the general improvement in the quality of life in society" (ibid, pp. 4-5).

With respect to adult literacy, the rhetoric in **The Plan**, like the previous one before it, emphasised the importance of the strategy of functionality: "adult literacy programmes will be designed to educate farmers and other [informal sector] workers on the methods of improving productivity" (p. 5). And in spite of the prevailing economic conditions, **The Plan**, perhaps too ambitiously, declared that "... there will be provisions of literacy and adult education programmes on a country-wide basis" (ibid.). This rhetoric was widely understood and interpreted by several providing literacy agencies/organisations and practitioners as indicative of government's intention to launch a mass literacy campaign.

The 1991 Constitution

The importance attached to literacy was also underlined in the 1991 multi-party **Constitution of Sierra Leone.** It called on the government to endeavour "... to eradicate illiteracy, and to this end direct its educational policy towards achieving free adult educational programmes [and] free compulsory basic education at primary and junior secondary school levels ..." (in Thompson, 1991, p. 104).

Policy Pronouncements/Declarations

In addition to these policy documents, recent educational pronouncements of a policy nature, particularly in regard to literacy and adult education have come from key state officials. For instance, in his opening address to the Nation's Parliament in 1986, the President (in British Council, 1993) re-affirmed his government's commitment to adult education, including literacy:

> Government is aware that it still has to cope with the problem of improving non formal education for the large number of illiterate adults in the country. Government will therefore continue to address this need in active partnership with nongovernmental organisations through their various adult education programmes (p. 2).

This policy pronouncement by President Momoh was, in essence, a re-affirmation of some of the issues expressed in the policy documents presented earlier, particularly in regard to the recognition of the problem of mass illiteracy as well as the increased role accorded to adult education agencies other than government ministries. This increased role of voluntary agencies, particularly in the provision of adult literacy, continue to be recognised by the state.

Another clear indication of the state's own vision for adult education work came from a policy pronouncement from the Minister of Education to a conference of Adult Education Providers in 1987. As the Minister (in Sierra Leone Adult Education, 1987) put it, all literacy and adult education programmes:

> Should reflect national goals and aspirations ... Considering the socio-economic conditions of our nation, we would want programmes that are relevant to our needs, programmes that encourage production; programmes that generate income; programmes that liberate our minds and reduce ignorance; programmes that make us behave responsibly. Let us have programmes that are functional and integrated ... (p. 84).

The basic thrust behind the policy pronouncement by the Minister was again reinforced in a similar pronouncement by President Momoh in 1990. The Head of state (in Pemagbi, 1991) described the nation's high illiteracy rate, especially among women, as an obstacle to progress and he re-affirmed his government's determination to eradicate illiteracy across the country:

> The extremely low literacy rates, especially in rural areas and among our women folk, presently limited the capacity of communities to fully participate in decision-making. This process of decentralization must therefore be accompanied by a major drive to improve adult literacy, especially of women, throughout the country. Let us therefore work with determination to eliminate adult illiteracy, now estimated by Unesco at 80%, by the year 1995 (p. 13).

For the first time, the objective of complete eradication was emphasised as government policy. Illiteracy, estimated at 80% in 1990, was, as the Head of State put it, to be wiped out within five years. Yet if the evidence since 1970 was any indication, then the goal of total eradication, while it probably would have made the President "feel good" about his government's continued commitment to economic growth and social equity through education, was probably only rhetoric unless, of course, there was a willingness to follow through with concrete government action.

This brings to an end the discussion on the nation's educational reform policies with regard to adult literacy since 1970. The next segment presents an overview of the nature and structure of its educational practices.

Review of Educational Practices: 1970 through 1992

Since the mid 1970s, the Ministry of Education has, largely through Ministerial orders, rules and regulations, been involved in the direct implementation of selective elements of the nation's educational reform policies reviewed above. The key strategies for implementation have included policies of: (i) tuition-free elementary/primary and secondary schooling as well as the establishment of new schools and institutions of higher learning, particularly in the Provinces; (ii) government scholarships to qualified candidates in institutions of higher learning and; (iii) study leaves with full salary to qualified candidates in institutions of higher learning. In the area of literacy and adult education, government implementation strategies have generally involved: (i) conclusion of agreements with foreign governments and agencies with regard to the provision of literacy and adult education; (ii) allowing agencies/organisations unimpeded access to different parts of the country to operate programmes; (iii) the establishment of Community Education Centres (CECs) and Community Schools to serve as venues for the holding of literacy courses; (iv) the provision of limited incentives and rewards to literacy agencies/organisations as well as for the recruitment of instructors and learners and; (iv) the supply of limited instructional-learning resources like pens, Teacher's Guides, exercise books, chalk, etc.

In addition to the strategies referred to above, limited "fringe benefits" in the form of a free supply of husked rice and other agricultural seedlings needed in planting have been provided as incentives for recruitment, particularly in rural areas. As well, limited financial grants and loans have also been made available to learners who successfully complete their courses. Such incentives have been designed to enable them to set up income-generation projects in activities like soap making, gara dyeing, cloth weaving, etc. In general, these projects have been understood as constituting postliteracy activities as they were expected to provide the context for further learning, skills acquisition as well as for earning a living (Ministry of Education, 1977, 1978).

One of the principal outcomes of government implementation strategies was the continuing expansion in formal schooling during the decades of the 1970s and 1980s as brought out in Table 3. The Table shows that during the 1990/91 academic year, for example, enrollment in elementary/primary schooling, the key agency for the achievement of universal literacy, was estimated at 367,426 learners, representing an increase of about 121% over the enrollment figure for 1970/71. At the level of secondary schooling, enrollment for 1990/91 stood at 97,047 learners, representing an increase of about 191% over the figure for the 1970/71 academic year. Similar trends were observed in the other levels of formal schooling. In teacher education, technical/vocational education as well as higher education (i.e., University), enrollment rates in 1990/91 had increased by 118%, 487% and 115% respectively over those for 1970/71. The highest percentage increase was recorded in technical/vocational education;

Table 3: Expansion in Formal Schooling for Selected Years between 1970/71 and 1990/91 (actual figures by sub sector)

Sub-sector	**1970/71**	**1975/76**	**1980/81**	**1984/85**	**1990/91**
Elementary/primary schooling	166,107	205,910	263,724	329,665	367,426
Secondary schooling	33,318	48,535	63,299	77,225	97,049
Teacher education	1,075	1,578	2,076	2,140	2,340
Technical/Vocational education	924	1,155	1,891	2,742	5,425
Higher (i.e., university) education	1,197	1,682	2,166	2,383	2,571

Sources: Ministry of Education (1970, 1976, 1990, 1991, 1992) an obvious reflection of the state's emphasis on the training and development of the nation's middle-level manpower (Ministry of Education, 1970, 1976, 1990, 1991).

With regard to literacy and adult education, perhaps the most significant outcome of government implementation strategies was the establishment of a national organisational and administrative infrastructure for the sub-sector within the Ministry of Education. By order of the Minister of Education, the composition, structure and functions of the National Literacy Committee (NLC) were reviewed in 1975 with the objective of making the Committee more effective and efficient in terms of the performance of its functions. Established in 1965 by order of the Prime Minister, the re-vamped NLC was officially declared a semi-autonomous agency within the Ministry of Education. The Committee was now charged with responsibility for organisational, administrative and technical functions in regard to adult literacy. Membership of the Committee would continue to include all adult literacy providing agencies/organisations as well as individuals interested in adult literacy. Specifically, the functions of the re-vamped Committee were:

> co-ordination, collaboration and promotion of adult literacy activities throughout the country.
>
> organization of conferences, seminars and public meetings in connection with adult literacy work.
>
> recommending lines of policy and programmes for the eradication of illiteracy in the adult population.
>
> serving as a liaison with all adult literacy agencies on matters affecting adult literacy classes.
>
> advising the Minister, through the Adult Education Unit, on standards of performance for participants in literacy classes, especially as they relate to the exam system.
>
> producing, in collaboration with the Adult Education Unit, follow-up reading materials for completers of literacy classes.
>
> organization of training courses for literacy instructors and other personnel in association with the Adult Education Unit of Ministry of Education.

> on the basis of information received from its regional, district and village branches, compile and produce reports on adult literacy activities throughout the country.
>
> advise the Minister, through the Adult Education Unit, on all technical matters relating to adult literacy, like the curriculum; instructor training and qualifications; language as well as production and distribution of teaching and learning materials (As cited in Mambu, 1983 pp. 205-206).

Regional branches of the NLC, comprising regional representatives of literacy agencies/organisations and individuals interested in literacy work at those levels, were also established. These branches were directly responsible and accountable to the NLC for their activities. The functions of the Regional Committees included:

> advising on issues of language and general professional policy for classes conducted in their respective regions.
>
> providing publicity for regional adult literacy programmes.
>
> bringing literacy workers in the regions together on a regular basis for information-sharing.
>
> communicate activities at the local level to the National Committee and vice versa (As cited in Mambu, 1983, pp. 205-206).

District, chiefdom and village branches of the NLC were also established primarily to generate interest and, thereby, encourage and sustain recruitment efforts in literacy activities. Membership of these local branches included representatives of learners, instructors, community elders as well as representatives of providing agencies/organisations, including the Ministry of Education. The nature of the composition, structure and functions of the re-vamped NLC were clearly designed to encourage mass participation and delegation of authority in regard to adult literacy activities across the country.

In addition to the re-structuring of the National Literacy Committee in 1975, the Adult Education Unit (AEU) was established by Ministerial order in 1977 with a Senior Education Officer as its head. This was in accordance with one of the recommendations contained in the Education Chapter of **The National Development Plan of 1973/74 through 1978/79.** The principal task of the Unit was to assume direct responsibility for the planning, organization, administration, supervision, monitoring and evaluation of all literacy and adult education programmes across the country. As it was part of the Ministry of Education, the Unit was directly responsible to the Minister of Education. There were six personnel working in the Unit in 1977, including a regional supervisor/organiser in each of the three Provinces. The supervisors/organisers were charged with the responsibility of supervising and monitoring all literacy and adult education programmes operating in their respective Provinces. As well, they were expected to assist in the planning, organization and administration of these programmes. In general, the newly created Adult Education Unit was charged with the following functions:

> plan, organize and administer all adult education programmes, including literacy, on behalf of the government.
>
> provide a mechanism for co-ordination and collaboration among government Ministries involved in the provision of adult education programmes, including literacy.
>
> motivate and mobilise the general public in support of adult education activities.
>
> create and sustain an environment that is generally conducive to adult education work.
>
> monitor, supervise and evaluate all adult education programmes operating in the country.
>
> provide material and professional support to agencies and organisations involved in adult education work, including literacy.
>
> carry out research on all aspects of adult education followed by publication and dissemination of the findings.
>
> provide opportunities and incentives for the training and re-training of adult education personnel, including literacy.
>
> establish contacts with international organisations for technical and professional assistance in the field of adult education, including literacy (Ministry of Education, 1978, pp. 4-5).

Regional and district branches of the Unit were established in 1979 and, in general, they were responsible for the performance of some of these functions at regional and district levels. In the performance of these functions, regional and district branches were directly responsible to the national office in the capital. The new Unit, including its branches, were expected to work in close collaboration with other providers of literacy and adult education programmes across the country. As well, it was expected that the establishment of the Unit would "... be accompanied by a relatively high increase of [financial] allocations ..." in order to enable it to effectively and efficiently perform the functions specified above (Ministry of Development and Economic Planning, 1974, p. 239).

Almost immediately following its establishment, the Adult Education Unit of the Ministry of Education launched a number of initiatives in regard to literacy and adult education. Most of the initiatives were based on the measures stipulated in the reform policies, particularly the elevation of adult education, including literacy, as the nation's second priority in education. The key initiatives of the Unit in regard to adult literacy were the following:

> specification of target estimates for recruitment and successful completion based on those provided in the Education Chapter of **The National Development Plan of 1973/74 through 1978/79.**
>
> a functional literacy approach (rather than simple literacy) would be emphasised. Literacy work would be viewed as development projects and, therefore, undertaken within the nation's development perspective or context.
>
> priority would be placed on literacy teaching and learning in English which was viewed as "neutral" (compared to literacy work in one of the four national languages) and, as well, would accelerate the transition of new literates into formal schooling.
>
> salaries, allowances and other fringe benefits would be provided to instructors and adult learners to encourage recruitment efforts. In the case of adult learners, the practice was derived from the observation that the provision of educational opportunities for adult illiterates was unlikely to create a massive demand among them without some accompanying incentives.
>
> a national curriculum was prepared based on a functional orientation to literacy and a two-year cycle. Instructors would have completed a minimum of five years of secondary schooling along with attendance and successful participation in a Four Week Training Workshop organised by the Ministry of Education and other providing agencies/organisations. In the rural areas, preference would be given to instructors who were residents of the communities concerned.

postliteracy activities would be encouraged either through income-generation projects or opportunities to new literates to continue their learning.

great emphasis would be placed on voluntary efforts, largely the work of nongovernmental organisations. They would be allowed unimpeded opportunities to launch literacy programmes as long as they have been registered with the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education, 1978, pp. 4-8).

Thus like the nation's educational policies, adult literacy practices and strategies, under the APC party government, made no specific references to the class character of educational programmes; the class characteristics of adult learners or even the class orientation of the types of jobs in which adult learners were likely to have been engaged and for which they would be trained through the acquisition of literacy skills. This would suggest, as brought out in the last Chapter, that the socialist orientation of the APC party was largely rhetoric and that, like the Sierra Leone People's Party government before it, the APC party adopted a classless educational model in practice. In other words, there appears to exist a lack of critical awareness of social class distinctions and gender-based issues in Sierra Leone society generally as well as in the field of education, including adult literacy programmes. And although exam performance was viewed as the principal determinant or indicator of "success" and "failure", there was, nevertheless, the recognition in state educational reform policies and practices that life after the acquisition of literacy skills was another measure of success as new literates encountered and successfully completed literacy related transactions in their day-to-day activities as well as in their environments.

Besides the National Literacy Committee and the Adult Education Unit, another outcome of the implementation strategy of the Ministry of Education since the mid 1970s was the proliferation of adult literacy agencies/organisations across the country. The incorporation of adult literacy programmes as development projects in the nation's **Development Plans** since 1970 along with the state practice of heavy reliance on voluntary efforts for the provision of adult literacy appeared to have encouraged the emergence of these agencies. The results of a

1986 survey of agencies/organisations and their programmes suggest that this was the case. The survey report (in Sierra Leone Adult Education Association, 1987):

> Listed 114 organisations/institutions (governmental and nongovernmental) providing about 141 adult education programmes ranging from literacy education to community development, health education, agricultural extension labour education, religious studies, arts and crafts and various forms of continuing education. Adult literacy organisations were in the majority, about 78 (about two-thirds) of all adult education providers and they provided about 112 (of the 141) programmes in the country. A substantial majority of all providing organisations (about 103) were nongovernmental organisations (p. 88).

An earlier survey jointly conducted by the Adult Education Unit of the Ministry of Education and Unesco in 1979/80 appeared to have arrived at a similar conclusion. The report (in Sellu, 1985) revealed that:

> Out of 123 (adult education) programmes listed in the revised National Directory according to the main areas of study or training, about 81 were in adult literacy, simple and functional literacy being the largest number of programmes. Literacy programmes were mainly in English. There were about 50 organisations involved in adult literacy activities, providing about 81 (about two-thirds) of programmes across the country. The majority of the 50 organisations providing literacy were non-governmental organisations, which provided about two-thirds of all literacy programmes in the country (pp. 6-7).

The reports of the two surveys suggest that between 1979 and 1986, the number of adult literacy agencies/organisations had increased from 50 agencies/organisations and 81 programmes to 78 agencies/organisations and 112 programmes respectively. This represented an increase in the number of agencies/organisations and programmes by about 56% and 38% respectively.

The two survey reports categorised literacy and adult education providing agencies/ organisations as governmental, quasi-governmental and nongovernmental. Government Agencies/Ministries involved in the provision of adult literacy programmes included Education, Health, Defence, Social Welfare and Rural Development as well as Agriculture. In the quasi-governmental category were The Sierra Leone Labour Congress and Ports Authority. Nongovernmental agencies/organisations were classified as both national and foreign. National nongovernmental agencies/organisations included The Crystals Youth Club (CYC), The Peoples' Educational Association (PEA, SL), The Sierra Leone Adult Education Association (SLADEA) as well as a variety of Christian and Islamic Missions. Foreign nongovernmental agencies/ organisations included The Canadian University Services Overseas (CUSO), The Christian Extension Services (CES), Plan International, The German Adult Education Association (DVV) and The United Nation's Children's Emergency Fund (Unicef).

This brings to an end the discussion on the nature and structure of the nation's educational strategies and practices with regard to adult literacy.

Concluding Summary

This Chapter has presented a descriptive overview of the nature and structure of Sierra Leone's educational reform policies and practices with regard to adult literacy. The general focus was on the reform policies and practices that have emerged since 1970, although the education reform policies and practices that were adopted immediately following independence in 1961 were briefly examined in order to provide a historical background for reforms as well as put the reform measures in perspective. Based on the issues discussed in this Chapter, government literacy policy initiatives are believed to be driven by four principal considerations; considerations that are themselves informed by the goals and objectives of the state of Sierra Leone. These considerations were:

> The acceleration of national economic growth and development as well as social equity.
>
> increasing the national literacy rate, especially in the rural areas.
>
> improvement in the lives of illiterates, particularly rural farmers, through the economic strategy of self employment and increased production and productivity.
>
> unification and integration of the nation as well as the creation of a feeling of national consciousness among the population.

With regard to adult literacy practice, government implementation strategies, as reviewed in the Chapter, were guided by the recognition that literacy and adult education was the nation's second priority in education. The strategies included:

> specification of broad target estimates for recruitment and successful completion;
>
> a functional approach to literacy instruction, learning and production of materials;
>
> English as the preferred language for instruction, learning and preparation of materials;
>
> provision of a variety of incentives for recruitment of instructors and learners;
>
> establishment of a national infrastructure in support of adult literacy, namely the Adult Education Unit and the National Literacy Committee;
>
> a clearly stipulated qualification for adult literacy instructors;
>
> the encouragement of postliteracy activities;
>
> a national curriculum for literacy; e.g. two-year cycle, the exam system, etc.;
>
> greater involvement of agencies/organisations other than the government in adult literacy activities; and
>
> exam performance as the principal indicator of "success" or "failure" although there was some recognition of other dimensions of both concepts.

In spite of these elaborate implementation strategies, the evidence suggest that success rates in adult literacy have been generally low. In fact, the 1979/80 adult education survey jointly undertaken by Unesco and the Adult Education Unit of the Ministry of Education mentioned earlier had pointed to evidence of inadequate government commitment to literacy and adult education, particularly in regard to the allocation of state education financial resources. The report noted that:

> The government was unable to allocate the needed resources for out-of-school education. The result was that the overall situation regarding adult education programmes in 1979/80 was not markedly different from that in 1971/72. It is still being conducted on a mainly voluntary basis. The teaching corps is still largely composed of volunteer primary school teachers who conduct literacy classes after school hours for a modest honorarium ... Financial inputs by the government in 1979/80 were less than those of nongovernmental bodies whose

> work was largely responsible for the increase in enrollments, estimated at 15,933 in 1978-80 (Ministry of Education/Unesco, 1981, p. 7).

This conclusion was probably surprising in view of the fact that this was the period when reforms in the area of literacy and adult education were being implemented and when one would have expected considerable commitment by the government to this particular educational strategy for development; at least in terms of allocation of state education resources as well as the launching of concrete measures designed to promote recruitment efforts. This was to have been expected in view of the elevation of this new educational intervention as the nation's second priority in education.

In general, the evidence suggests that government implementation strategies do not appear to have had any meaningful impact on the nation's adult literacy situation. For instance, about fifteen years after the launching of educational reforms in 1970, official statistics compiled during the 1985 census showed that about 80% of the nation's population and 74% of its labour force were illiterate (see Table 2) These alarming statistics regarding the nation's illiteracy situation have been again noted in a recent document produced by the Ministry of Education (1991). The document indicated that the nation's illiteracy rate stood "at 85% for women and 74% for men with a composite average of approximately 80%. These figures raise serious questions about the effectiveness of adult literacy programmes. It is still clear that much remains to be done to satisfy the [learning] needs of adult illiterates" (p. 22).

Drawing from the overview of the nation's educational policies and practices with regard to adult literacy presented in this Chapter, the presentation and analysis of the data for this study will focus on the following key areas:

> perceptions of the influence of social-historical features as well as international forces on the nation's adult literacy activities.
>
> the issue of political commitment to adult literacy, particularly the extent of allocation of government education financial resources as well as the measures designed to promote recruitment efforts.

planning, organisational and administrative issues, specifically; perceptions of the work done by the Adult Education Unit, the National Literacy Committee and agencies/organisations generally in these areas.

curriculum, instructional and learning issues in regard to adult literacy.

Based on the literature reviewed for this study, items one and two would relate to macro-level factors while the remaining two items would pertain to meso-level and micro-level educational factors respectively.

The next Chapter presents the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 6: RESULTS

This Chapter presents the findings of the study. It draws on data collected through semi-structured interviews (i.e., the principal data gathering method), official statistics as well as observations and deliberations recorded as field notes. As noted in Chapter Four of this study, which is the research methodology and procedures, the presentation and analysis of the findings are organised according to the conceptual framework which describes the factors associated with the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes. The Chapter has, therefore, been divided into three sections corresponding with the three analytic categories of factors presented in the conceptual framework, namely; macro-level factors, meso-level factors and micro-level factors.

The presentation and analysis of the findings in each section will follow the same procedures, namely;

> presentation of the findings based on the views expressed by the majority of respondents belonging to each of the four groups, namely; state officials, agency/ organization representatives, literacy instructors and adult learners.
>
> analysis of the findings in light of data collected through other methods, mainly official statistics and observations.
>
> interpretation of the findings based on the views of the majority of respondents within each of the four groups.

The findings presented in each section will be followed by a concluding summary which will:

> highlight contradictions, conflicts and similarities in the views expressed by the majority of respondents within each group.
>
> discuss the findings in each section in relation to the other analytic categories of factors described in the conceptual framework.
>
> discuss the findings in relation to the relevant elements of the nation's educational reform policies and strategies reviewed in Chapter Five.

The presentation and analysis of the findings begin with a re-statement of the research questions for the study.

Principal Research Questions

1. What factors are perceived by state officials, agency/organization representatives, literacy instructors and adult learners as associated with the successful outcomes of adult literacy programmes operating in the country?
2. What factors are perceived by state officials, agency/organization representatives, literacy instructors and adult learners as associated with the failure of adult literacy programmes operating in the country?

Subsidiary Research Questions

- In what ways, and to what extent, have social-historical conditions of Sierra Leone society and international factors influenced adult literacy activities across the country?
- To what extent has political commitment in support of literacy, as espoused in reform policies, been reflected in concrete allocation of government education financial resources to literacy and adult education programmes?
- To what extent have the measures designed to promote recruitment efforts succeeded in encouraging the general public to successfully participate in adult literacy activities as literacy instructors or adult learners?
- In what ways have the organisational, administrative and technical support available to programmes influenced adult literacy activities?
- How have issues relating to the curriculum as well as instructional and learning resources influenced the outcomes of adult literacy programmes?
- In what ways have instructional and learning methods and processes influenced the outcomes of adult literacy programmes?

Macro-Level Factors Perceived as Associated with the Successful and Unsuccessful Outcomes of Adult Literacy Programmes

As can be seen in Table 4, four principal macro-level factors stood out in the views expressed by the majority of respondents belonging to each of the four categories. These were described as:

- *support from international development agencies (i.e., donor or foreign support) to adult literacy agencies/organizations and programmes.*
- *limited forms of support from the Ministry of Education to selected literacy agencies/organisations and programmes.*
- *continuing decline of the nation's economy*
- *extent of political commitment in support of adult literacy by the Ministry of Education. Three subsidiary factors emerged in the views expressed on this particular principal factor.*

Besides these, no other factor emerged in the views expressed by respondents.

The findings on each of the four principal macro-level factors will be now presented.

Presentation of the Findings on Support From International Development Agencies (i.e., Donor or Foreign Support) to Adult Literacy Agencies/Organizations and Programmes

Table 4 indicates that support from international development agencies, also referred to as donor or foreign support, emerged in the views expressed by a substantial majority of respondents belonging to each of the four categories. The findings revealed that the factor was generally associated with the successful outcomes of literacy programmes. In fact, among the majority of respondents belonging to all four groups, donor or foreign support was widely credited with the limited success enjoyed by adult literacy programmes across the country. The findings indicated that external support was widely perceived to have involved the free (or partial) provision of a variety of instructional-learning resources, incentives for instructor and learner recruitment and retention as well as postliteracy activities.

Yet while acknowledging the heavy reliance by agencies/organisations, including the state, and programmes on donor or foreign support as well as its critical role in literacy success, the findings revealed that the majority of respondents within each group were also of the view that the level of donor or foreign support for literacy and adult education was in decline. In addition, although the factor's overall influence on the outcomes of adult literacy programmes

Table 4: **Macro-Level Factors Perceived as Associated With the Successful and Unsuccessful outcomes of Adult Literacy Programmes as Emerged in the Views of State officials (SO), Agency Organization Representatives (AR), Literacy Instructors (LI) and Adult Learners (AL).**

Macro-level factors perceived as success-related and failure-related (i.e., social historical factors, international forces and issues of state policy)	**# of respondents who mentioned factors organized by category.**				**Total # of respondents in whose responses the factor stood out**	**As % of total respondents (n=55)**
	SO n=5	**AR n=10**	**LI n=20**	**AL n=20**		
(i) Support from International Development Agencies (i.e., donor or foreign support) to adult literacy agencies/organizations and programmes	4	9	20	20	53	96
(ii) Continuing decline of the nation's economy	5	10	20	20	55	100
(iii) Limited forms of support from the Ministry of Education to selected adult literacy agencies/organizations and programmes	5	5	10	10	30	55
(iv) Extent of political commitment in support of adult literacy by the Ministry of Education	4	10	20	18	52	95
Subfactors						
- Issues pertaining to government funding for literacy and adult education	4	10	20	16	50	91
- Issues involving instructor recruitment and retention for literacy teaching	4	8	20	16	48	87
- Issues involving learner recruitment and successful completion	4	8	20	16	48	87

was viewed as positive, a rather interesting negative view of donor or foreign support was expressed by respondents.

Analysis of the Findings on Donor or Foreign Support in Light of Statistical Data

Table 5 presents statistical data on donor or foreign financial support received by selected adult literacy agencies/organisations and programmes covering the period 1980/81 through 1991/92. The data have been compiled from financial information provided by agency/ organization representatives as contained in a correspondence forwarded to them on the subject (see Appendix II). In all, financial data were collected and compiled from the information provided by four national donor or foreign supported agencies/organisations and programmes involved in the study, namely; the state itself (i.e., Ministry of Education), The People's Educational Association (PEA), The Sierra Leone Adult Education Association (SLADEA) and The Provincial Literature Bureau and Bunumbu Press. Since these four agencies/organizations and programmes were among the nation's principal beneficiaries of external aid for literacy and adult education, the data presented in Table 5 would probably constitute an accurate representation of the increased importance attached to the factor in literacy activities across the country.

In general, data presented in the Table would appear to support the widely held view of respondents belonging to each of the four groups regarding the heavy reliance on donor or foreign support as well as the pervasive influence of the factor on the successful outcomes of adult literacy programmes across the country. As the Table shows, financial support to the four agencies/organisations and their programmes increased steadily throughout the decade of the 1980s. Between 1980/81 and 1984/85, for example, the period that marked the beginning of the nation's economic decay as discussed in Chapter Four, financial support to all of them

Table 5: Estimates of Donor/Foreign Financial Support to Literacy and Adult Education, for 1980/81 (=100%) Through 1991/92 as Reported by Selected Agencies/ Organisations (actual figures in Million Leones: not adjusted for inflation)

Financial Year	Estimates of total grants received	Estimates of amount from grant allocated to adult literacy activities
1980/81	Le 75.6 / 100%	Le 39.3 / 100%
1981/82	149	157
1982/83	153	173
1983/84	154	178
1984/85	152	173
1985/86	165	197
1986/87	153	172
1987/88	165	206
1988/89	219	258
1989/90	219	264
1990/91	195	203
1991/92	190	190

Source: Selected Adult Literacy providing Agencies/Organisations (1994)

combined increased by about 52%. This trend continued during the second half of the decade, the period when the nation's economic crisis appeared to have reached epidemic proportions. Between 1984/85 and 1989/90, financial support to these agencies/organisations and their programmes increased by about 53%. The findings revealed that the principal donor agencies were the local liaison offices of the German Adult Education Association (DVV) (now replaced by the Adult Education Partner's Co-ordinating Office), the German Agency for Technical Co-operation (EZE), Unesco, through its regional office for Africa, as well as the United Nations Children Emergency Fund (Unicef), through its Freetown office.

As overall donor or foreign financial support for adult education increased, so too did the grant allocated to literacy activities by the various agencies/organisations. In 1989/90, for example, financial allocations to adult literacy made from the annual grants paid to them by donor or foreign agencies had increased by about 164% of the allocations for 1980/81, averaging about 55% of total yearly grants throughout the period. This trend would probably indicate the high level of priority attached to adult literacy by the various agencies/ organisations, including the Ministry of Education.

A brief comparison with government education financial resources allocated to literacy and adult education (see Table 6 and Appendix III) would put the statistical data on donor or foreign financial support into perspective. During the period 1975/76 through 1990/91, for example, total government education financial resources allocated to adult education, including literacy, amounted to about 28.998 million leones (calculated from actual yearly government financial figures presented as Appendix III). Compared to donor or foreign financial support figures of 75.625 million leones received by the four agencies/organisations in 1980/81, the year when such figures were at their lowest, total government literacy and adult education funding for the period between 1975/76 through 1990/91 represented only about 38% of that provided by donor or foreign agencies in 1980/81. In addition, between 1987/88 and 1990/91, an adult literacy programme for women organised by the Ministry of Education attracted a total of approximately 121 million leones in external funding from The German Agency for International Co-operation (EZE) and Unesco (Institute of Education, 1991). Compared with total government literacy and adult education financial resources of about 18.341 million leones during the same four year period and not counting aid to other agencies/organisations and programmes, this single grant amounted to about 85% of total government financial resources allocated to adult education, including literacy, between 1987/88 and 1990/91.

The Table indicates that from about 1990/91, donor or foreign financial support to the four agencies/organisations and their programmes began to decline. In 1991/92, for example, financial support for adult education fell by about 13% over that for 1989/90. And as overall support declined, so too was the grant allocated to adult literacy which fell by about 28% of that for 1989/90 (see Appendix III). This would again appear to support the views of respondents regarding what they considered to be the beginning of declining levels of donor or foreign support to agencies/organisations and programmes across the country.

Clearly, then, the statistical data presented in Table 5 would appear to support the views expressed by the majority of respondents belonging to each group. The data appear to support claims of heavy dependence on external aid by agencies/organizations and programmes across the country.

Interpretation of the Findings on Donor or Foreign Support to Agencies/Organisations and Programmes

Of the four macro-level factors reported in the findings of this study (see Table 4), donor or foreign support was one of two factors about which there was considerable agreement in the views expressed by the majority of respondents belonging to each of the four categories. As noted in the findings on the factor, a substantial majority of respondents within each group associated it with the successful outcomes of adult literacy across the country. Three international development agencies were perceived to be making substantial contributions to adult literacy work across the country. And among the majority of respondents belonging to all four groups, donor or foreign support was generally perceived as involving the provision of literacy resources as well as incentives for recruitment, successful completion and postliteracy activities.

The comment by this state official which appears below was instructive in regard to the perceived relevance attached to donor or foreign support to agencies/organisations and programmes among government officials generally:

> *Unesco is helping our programme considerably ... I mean since we began the programme or from about 1980 ... I am not sure when. But I can tell you that substantial money, pens, pencils, stationery, blackboards, you name it, we have been getting it. Unesco has really been helpful ... But not only Unesco ... The DVV, I mean, The German Adult Education Association ... They have been helping us since they came in 1980 or*

> *thereabouts. Perhaps without the help of these two agencies, we would have gone no where. Also Unicef has helped ....* (Interview with a Senior Education Official, Freetown. Transcript Code No SO/1, p. 11)

This respondent further suggested that donor or foreign support was fairly widespread among several national agencies/organisations, particularly the ones whose programmes had been generally considered successful:

> *It is not only our programmes, other Ministries also get help from abroad. Also DVV supports the PEA and SLADEA ... Without this help, many programmes will close ... I mean they will stop ... Also I believe Congress [i.e., The Sierra Leone Labour Congress] gets money from I think the ILO [International Labour Organization] ... Its all so wonderful ... because the government, I mean the last APC government, didn't do anything. But these agencies, they account for, I will say, maybe half or two-thirds of the learners who receive certificates. They pay salaries to teachers and sometimes even allowances to learners. Also they have helped with postliteracy, I think ... For instance, they assist with the production of materials and also in distributing the materials to new literates ... The only problem now, in my opinion, is that the help is not regular these days like it was in the past. I think they are now cutting down on the help they give, which is bad in my opinion ... because the programmes will suffer ...* (Interview with a Senior Education Official, Freetown. Transcript Code No. SO/1 p. 16).

Like government officials generally, agency/organization representatives, literacy instructors and adult learners also associated donor or foreign support with the successful outcomes of literacy programmes across the country. The views expressed by this agency/ organization representative below were typical:

> *We get assistance from DVV and sometimes, I think, from also Unicef and abroad ... They [i.e., donor/foreign agencies] pay our teachers, our organisers and, I believe, a few others ... And they also supply textbooks, exercise books, pens, pencils ... they give us many, many, more things, like bicycles, hondas and, I think, even vehicles so that we can go upcountry [i.e., the provinces] to see how our classes are doing. But many other agencies also get help ... I think SLADEA gets help from Unicef and also DVV ... Also PEA ... even the Adult Education Unit. They all get help. For me I will say the assistance has helped ... Maybe, I think, if such help was not there, things could have been worse ... There will be very few programmes and many, many more problems for the programmes ... I mean they will not succeed ...* (Interview with an Agency/Organization Representative, Freetown. Transcript Code No AR/1, p. 15).

In fact so critical was donor or foreign support that some agency/organization representatives appeared to have, at least partly, associated the problems encountered in adult literacy programmes to the:

> *... inability to get support from DVV ... or maybe Unicef ... or anywhere like, I think, America, London ... just anywhere. We have tried and, I mean, not only us ... Many agencies that I know have tried but man it has been difficult. So what do you do ... Teachers are not ready to teach, we cannot buy books ... no chalk. I mean there are many problems. If only our government was ready to do something ... but these crooks, they don't care at all, so I think ...* (Interview with an Agency/ Organization Representative, Freetown. Transcript Code No AR/3, p. 6).

The views expressed by the majority of literacy instructors and adult learners in regard to the relevance of foreign or donor support in adult literacy activities appeared to have generally reinforced those of government officials and agency/organization representatives. As can be seen in Table 4, the factor stood out in the views expressed by all literacy instructors and adult learners. And like the majority of state officials and agency/organization representatives, literacy instructors and adult learners generally associated the factor with the successful outcomes of literacy programmes. As this learner who was enrolled in a programme that was benefitting from donor or foreign support put it:

> *They [i.e. donor agency] have promised us some money to start making soda soap, gara, garri, foofoo ... and many things when we get our paper [i.e., the certificate]. When we learn how to make these things ... I think we start our own business ... You see, Sir, I think this is good because it will make us learn more and more so that we will finish and start to make some money ...* (Interview with an adult learner, Makeni. Transcript Code No AL/14, p. 5).

Yet while donor or foreign support was widely associated with the successful outcomes of adult literacy programmes, some rather interesting negative views about the factor were expressed by respondents, particularly state officials and agency/ organization representatives. As one government official ironically put it:

> *... everyone believes these agencies, I mean the DVV, maybe CUSO, or say the CES, Unicef, Unesco ... I mean everyone thinks they are doing a good job ... Nonsense ... maybe they are. But I am going to be the odd person out because I don't think so. In fact they are not helping ... And I can say this because some of them are very proud. They do not want to be supervised. They do things their own*

> *way. Can you believe it ... There is no respect for this Ministry [of Education] by some of these agencies ....* (Interview with a Senior Education Official, Freetown. Transcript Code No. SO/2, p. 8).

What this respondent suggested was that the over-reliance on donor or foreign support was probably undesirable given the fact that it had the potential to restrict Ministry of Education control over adult literacy agencies/organisations and programmes. Similar views were expressed by the majority of government officials and agency/organization representatives. Yet in spite of this, however, the majority of respondents belonging to each of the four groups were of the view that the beneficial impact of donor or foreign support on adult literacy far outweighed its negative elements.

The findings presented above have revealed that donor or foreign support was widely associated with the successful outcomes of adult literacy programmes by the majority of respondents belonging to all four categories. As well, the factor was viewed as fairly wide and varied usually involving free (or partial) supply of instructional-learning resources, the provision of incentives to instructors, learners and other literacy personnel as well as incentives for postliteracy activities.

While its perceived impact on the outcomes of adult literacy programmes was widely viewed as positive, the limitations of donor or foreign support, including what was considered to be an emerging trend of dwindling support, was, at the same time, acknowledged by respondents. In addition, in spite of the unanimity in the views expressed about the factor and its impact on adult literacy, the interpretations of the findings on the factor suggested some major differences between government officials and agency/organization representatives on the one hand and the other two groups on the other.

State officials and agency/organization representatives viewed donor or foreign support and its impact on adult literacy in general terms, (i.e., in terms of its overall impact on adult literacy programmes). Among all literacy instructors and adult learners, however, the factor was viewed in relation to its impact on their respective groups. For instance, adult literacy instructors were often quick to refer to the incentives donor or foreign support had made (or, in the case of those not receiving support, could make) available to them as well as the teaching resources it had, or could have, provided. Adult learners, however, saw donor or foreign support in terms of the free supply of learning resources; the provision of incentives, like transport allowances, and the prospects it had provided for the setting up of income-generation projects after graduation. Even adult learners belonging to programmes that were not receiving donor or foreign support were generally inclined to view the factor in relation to similar benefits.

The findings on the second macro-level factor, namely; the continuing decline of the nation's economy, will be now presented.

Findings on the Continuing Decline of the Nation's Economy

The second principal macro-level factor that emerged in the views expressed of the majority of respondents belonging to each category was described as the continuing decline of the nation's economy. As can be seen in Table 4, this factor stood out in the views of virtually all respondents in each group. Unlike donor or foreign support, however, this factor was widely associated with the failure of adult literacy programmes across the country. The findings revealed that the impact of the continuing decline of the nation's economy on adult literacy was generally viewed as reduced state spending on literacy and adult education, thereby affecting the implementation of some aspects of the nation's educational reform strategies and measures; the inability of individuals to spend time learning or teaching due to the social and economic hardships created by the economic crisis; the escalating cost of instructional and learning resources, like pens, pencils, books and other instruction-learning aids as well as a general indifference towards, and a lack of thrust for, literacy among the Sierra Leonean population.

Analysis of the Findings on the Continuing Decline of the Nation's Economy in Light of Field Notes

Claims of a devastating impact of the economic crisis on adult literacy activities appeared to have been supported by data collected through other methods, namely;

> general observations by the researcher as well as in informal discussions during visits to agency/organization offices and literacy sites.
>
> analysis of agency/organization records and documents, like minutes of meetings, annual reports, etc.
>
> deliberations at meetings to which the researcher was invited as an observer.

Evidence collected from these data sources, recorded as field notes, clearly suggests that the unfavourable economic climate was indeed a major problem:

> *The literacy problem is no doubt part of a broader crisis, namely; the nation's unfavourable economic climate. Even from mere observations, one gets the impression that the 'bread issue' [i.e., bare survival] would appear to be the major pre-occupation of ordinary Sierra Leoneans. Families have to be fed, children have to go to school and the old have to be cared for in what would clearly appear to be very difficult times. These pre-occupations would appear to be relegating literacy to the back stage among ordinary Sierra Leoneans. In other words, for many Sierra Leoneans, it would be fair to suggest that literacy does not appear to be a major priority particularly when it is not perceived to be providing genuine opportunities for social and economic advancement of the illiterate population* (Field notes: February 26, 1993).

The problem appears to have been further compounded by the continuing rising prices for basic literacy materials:

> *Complaints about rising prices for virtually everything appear to be common everywhere you go. Fundamental literacy materials, like primers, pens, pencils, exercise books or reading materials appear to be indeed expensive, particularly for people [learners] who would not normally have any incomes. Even for instructors and some learners with steady incomes, claims of a continuing reduction in the purchasing power of such incomes because of inflation would appear to be common. In other words, inflation appears to be seriously affecting vulnerable groups in Sierra Leonean society; the kinds of groups that would be expected to participate in literacy activities* (Field notes: February 26, 1993).

The problems would appear to have been worse for illiterate farmers in the provinces where the struggle for daily survival was probably hardest. The notes recorded from the deliberations at a number of meetings substantiate the point:

> *The general impression [at all three meetings] was that the [economic] crisis appeared to be only hardening some already negative attitudes towards literacy in the rural areas, particularly in conservative muslim communities. Prices of literacy materials were said to be much higher in villages, and that is, if such materials could be found. The common consensus [at the meetings] was that without some incentives to help minimize situational and psychological barriers, the hardships created by the crisis was likely to continue to undermine literacy efforts in several parts of the provinces* (Field notes: March 2, 1993)

Clearly then, these observations would appear to support the findings on the factor described as the continuing decline of the nation's economy. Claims of the inability of individuals to participate in literacy activities as well as the escalating cost of literacy resources would appear to have been supported in the field notes.

Interpretations of the Findings on the Continuing Decline of the Nation's Economy on Adult Literacy

As noted in the findings, the factor described as the continuing decline of the nation's economy stood out in the views expressed by virtually all respondents belonging to each of the four categories (see Table 4). The findings revealed that the factor was widely associated with the failure of adult literacy programmes across the country. At the same time, however, the interpretations of the problems varied considerably between state officials and the other three groups of respondents.

Among all government officials, the continuing decline of the nation's economy was widely perceived in terms of what they described as the impact of the rigid conditions imposed on the nation by the structural adjustment programme launched by the APC party government in 1986 and, to some extent, the rebel war. The remarks by this state official were typical:

> *I will say that perhaps the bad economy is one factor or maybe, the main factor that is responsible for the problems facing literacy programmes in this country ...*

> *I mean the bad economy is the main factor responsible for the failure of many of these programmes, in my opinion ... Well, my friend, let me tell you the fact ... in this country today things are difficult. You see, maybe, because of the structural adjustment programme, the economic conditions are horrible and difficult in the country. There is high inflation as prices keep rising day in and day out. The prices of everything, food, materials, books, chalk, I mean just about everything. Its a miracle how people survive in these very difficult economic times. The government, I mean the new government, is trying but things are still difficult especially as it is fighting this unnecessary [rebel] war with too much money spent on it ... maybe 500 million leones per month, I think. Also, you see there are no jobs even for people from FBC [University]. So you can see that we are all suffering except, maybe, for a few ... Obviously, illiterates are in a worse position ... I think so, at least the majority of them ...* (Interview with a Senior Education Official, Freetown. Transcript Code No. SO/1, p. 28).

And on the impact of the nation's economic crisis on adult literacy programmes, the respondent offered this opinion:

> *The government has had to cut back on education spending in this country because of the economic problems brought about by, I think, this structural adjustment programme. It means less money for literacy work generally. I will say also because of the economic difficulties, a lot of people do not take literacy too seriously these days in this country. People know they can make money even if they are illiterate. In fact, there are many people, I mean rich people, who are not literate. So when people [illiterates] see them, they say, even if I am not literate, I will still make money if I work hard. So you see, a lot of people think literacy is, maybe, not necessary. But I really think the people who think literacy is not necessary are wrong. For this country to go forward, I think, we need literacy for our people. This is why this structural adjustment thing is not helping at all in my opinion ... Look, I just told you that even university people don't get work easily these days. So, maybe, the illiterate person will say why should I bother since I will not get a job after all ... So you see some of the problems ...* (Interview with a Senior Education Official, Freetown. Transcript Code No SO/1 p. 28).

Like government officials, all agency/organization representatives, literacy instructors and adult learners generally associated the economic crisis with the failure of adult literacy programmes. Yet these groups offered a very different perspective on the problem from that of state officials. Among agency/organization representatives, the economic crisis was perceived in terms of both official corruption and structural adjustment. The views of this agency/ organization representative were typical:

> *You see, Sir, in this country, there is too much corruption, especially at the time of the APC. So now, because of the corruption, we have problems and things are very difficult ... Like the [literacy] materials, I mean the books, they are very*

> *expensive and so the teacher and the learner, I don't think they have the money to buy it at times ... Or sometimes, they have the money but they will buy something else like, maybe, food ... This is the problem ... for some of the organisations, they don't have no money and again the things, like the books, they are very expensive, I think ... So I will say corruption is the big problem ... and also the structural adjustment problem. I think it [structural adjustment] has made things very difficult also, but I will say that corruption is the main reason for the economic problem in this country ...* (Interview with an Agency/organization Representative, Freetown. Transcript Code No. AR/2, p. 8).

The perceived impact of the economic crisis on adult literacy was also viewed as severe by representatives of donor or foreign supported agencies/organisations and programmes. The views of this representative were generally typical. He indicated that there had been cuts in:

> *Our budget over the last few years and, I think, in the budgets of several other [donor or foreign supported] organisations that I know ... and since our budget is small, and, I think, the budgets of many other organisations, we have had to cut back on some aspects of our programme, like, I think, salaries and allowances to teachers or even the supply of materials ... I think several other organisations have done the same. There was no choice, in my opinion ... This is our dilemma ... We think literacy work is good for the country, especially for the farmers but we cannot work well because of these [economic] problems ...* (Interview with an Agency/organization Representative, Freetown. Transcript Code No AR/7, p. 11).

Unlike state officials and agencies/organization representatives, all literacy instructors and adult learners viewed the problem almost exclusively in terms of official or government corruption. Among instructors, the perceived impact of the economic crisis was viewed in terms of what they considered the gross inadequacy of incentives, like instructor allowances and salaries as well as the rising cost of instructional-learning resources. Among all adult learners as well, the unfavourable economic climate was viewed in terms of the escalating increase in the cost of fundamental literacy resources, like textbooks, exercise books, pens and pencils. And for learners generally, the problem was perceived to have been further complicated by the fact that, in addition to shouldering some of the costs of their own learning, they would normally be expected to shoulder the schooling expenses of their own children and, in some cases, children of other members of the extended family. And faced with rising costs and a choice between schooling expenses and expenses incurred in adult literacy programmes, adult learners generally preferred to provide for the schooling expenses of children. The result, in most cases, was that several learners often found it difficult or impossible to provide themselves with some of the fundamental resources required for successful participation in literacy activities.

The results presented above have clearly revealed that all four groups of respondents associated the factor described as the continuing decline of the nation's economy with the failure of adult literacy programmes. Yet interpretations of the problems varied considerably between state officials and the other three groups of respondents.

Among all government officials, the problems were blamed largely on external factors, specifically; the impact of the structural adjustment programme launched by the government in 1986 and, to some extent, the rebel war. And among them, the impact of the economic crisis was perceived in terms of reduced state education spending, including literacy and adult education. The reduced education spending was making it difficult or, probably, impossible for the Ministry of Education to provide adequate support to literacy agencies/organisations and programmes as well as to achieve some of the target estimates outlined in the educational reform strategies in regard to adult literacy presented in Chapter Five. As well, the findings revealed that the economic crisis was perceived by government officials to be encouraging a general indifference towards literacy among the population. The general indifference was largely attributed to three factors, namely; the extreme socio-economic hardship and deprivation in the lives of both literates and illiterates that would appear to have gone far beyond the capability of improved literacy to remedy; the lack of job prospects for schooling graduates, including those from the university, as well as the prevalence of counter-values in Sierra Leone society brought about by the financial and material successes of "prosperous illiterates". The successes of these "prosperous illiterates" were generally perceived to be encouraging both literates and illiterates to question the utility and value of literacy and schooling generally.

The views expressed by all respondents belonging to the other three groups differed sharply from those of state officials. Among agency/organization representatives, the problems were blamed on both internal and external factors; in other words, in terms of official or government corruption and, to some extent, structural adjustment respectively. Literacy instructors and adult learners blamed the problems almost exclusively on internal factors, namely; official or government corruption which, as indicated in the social and historical context of Sierra Leone presented in Chapter Four, became rampant during the late 1980s under President Momoh. All three groups blamed the crisis for the escalating cost of adult literacy resources as well as the inadequacy of instructor and learner incentives.

The findings on the third macro-level factor, namely; limited forms of support from the Ministry of Education to selected literacy agencies/organizations and programmes, will be now presented.

Limited Forms of Support from the Ministry of Education to Selected Literacy Agencies/ Organizations and Programmes

In addition to donor or foreign support as well as the continuing decline of the nation's economy, another macro-level factor that emerged in the views of state officials and half of the respondents belonging to the other three groups was described as limited forms of support from the Ministry of Education to selected literacy agencies/organizations and programmes (see Table 4). The views expressed on this factor were, however, far less clear-cut than those on the other two macro-level factors presented earlier. In fact, the findings revealed that the factor was simultaneously associated with the success and failure of adult literacy across the country.

Among all government officials, the factor was associated with the successful outcomes of adult literacy programmes. Among the other groups of respondents, however, the factor was simultaneously associated with the success and failure of literacy programmes largely because it was viewed as inadequate. Even among respondents within each of the four groups who associated the factor with the successful outcomes of literacy programmes, including state officials, the findings showed that there was some acknowledgement that the Ministry of Education could and should "do more" in support of adult literacy programmes across the country.

The findings revealed that the factor was generally perceived in terms of the formulation and implementation of adult literacy policies by the government, through the Ministry of Education; conclusion of agreements with foreign governments and agencies in support of adult literacy as well as the provision of limited instructional-learning resources to selected agencies/ organisations and programmes, including postliteracy activities.

Analysis of the Findings on Limited Forms of Support from the Ministry of Education in Light of Observations

The findings on the factor described as limited forms of support from the Ministry of Education to selected adult literacy agencies/organisations and programmes would appear to have been supported from general observations by the researcher recorded as field notes. Observations pertaining to the issue suggests that support from the government appeared to have been of various types:

> *In the office of the SEO [Senior Education Officer, Adult Education Unit] were stacks of materials, books, charts, pencils, pens, boxes of chalk, Teachers' Guides and several other items. The stacks appeared well organised and arranged; each carrying labels, or specific names [of agencies]; suggesting that the materials were probably meant for distribution [to agencies] for literacy activities. It was obvious, even at first glance, that the materials had been sitting there for a while, indicating that there were probably some problems with distribution* [Field notes: November 26, 1992]

But state support did not appear to have been limited solely to resources. Observations and notes recorded from the deliberations that occurred at one of the meetings attended by the researcher substantiate the point:

> *Government support, we [the meeting] were reminded came, among others, in the form of salaries and wages of professional and support staff [in the Ministry of*

> *Education and a few other agencies], sponsorship of students in adult education institutions, provision of office space and equipment to selected agencies and duty free concessions for [literacy and adult education] imports ....* (Field notes: February 10, 1993)

Government support for literacy and adult education was also viewed as moral in the form of tacit recognition of the activities of agencies/organisations and programmes:

> *Government's moral support to agencies [the meeting was also told] involved allowing them to operate unhindered in areas of their choice as well as participation in agency activities through providing, upon request, qualified personnel to serve as resource persons at seminars and workshops. Support also occurred by way of authorities attending official opening sessions of conferences and training courses organised by agencies* (Field notes: February 10, 1993).

Clearly, then, claims of limited government support would appear to have been supported in the observations made by the researcher recorded as field notes. Without some form of government recognition and support, literacy and adult education work would probably have been more difficult, if not, impossible.

Interpretations of the Findings on Limited Forms of Support from the Ministry of Education to Selected Literacy Agencies/Organization and Programmes

As noted in the findings, the factor described as limited forms of support from the Ministry of Education to selected agencies/organizations and programmes stood out in the views expressed by all state officials as well as half of the respondents belonging to the remaining three groups (see Table 4). While government officials associated the factor with the successful outcomes of literacy programmes, the findings revealed that the other three groups of respondents simultaneously associated it with the success and failure of programmes across the country. Among respondents within each of the four groups who associated the factor with the successful outcomes of literacy programmes, the interpretation of the factor as well as the way it was related to the successful outcomes of literacy programmes varied considerably. The views of this state official were typical of those expressed by her colleagues:

> *First ... .let me tell you point blank ... we [i.e., Ministry of Education] have been able to launch several key policies without which, I will say, there will probably not have been any direction for agencies and, maybe, even programmes ... This in, and by itself, at least to me, is important ... Also we have signed agreements with international agencies to work in this country or to support local agencies ... I think you will agree that without such agreements, they will obviously not have been here. More important is that, maybe not now because of budget problem ... but in the past, we made available to some agencies ... like, I think, the Crystals Youth Club, some materials for classes, teaching materials or learning materials, dusters, chalk, lamps ... All these have, I think, helped literacy work, at least I think so* ... (Interview with a Senior Education Official, Freetown. Transcript Code No. SO/1, p. 26)

Unlike government officials, respondents within the three groups who related the factor to the successful outcomes of adult literacy programmes (usually those that received or expected some form of support) viewed the support provided by the Ministry of Education almost exclusively in terms of literacy resources and incentives for recruitment, successful completion and postliteracy activities. As well, they considered existing forms and levels of support provided by the Ministry of Education to have been extremely limited and very irregular. The views of the agency/organization representative presented below were generally typical of those respondents belonging to the other three groups who associated Ministry of Education support with the successful outcomes of literacy programmes:

> *Well, the Ministry of Education has been, I think, helpful a bit ... They [i.e., Ministry] are now paying the salary of our Secretary which I think is good ... But in the other areas, like books or chairs or dusters and many other things, I don't think the Ministry is doing enough. I really hope the new government will do more. The previous government did not do much at all, in my opinion ... Some times, the materials for the programme were not received on time ... sometimes, nothing came at all ... But, on the whole, I think the government [Ministry of Education] has helped in a small way* ... (Interview with and Agency/Organization Representative, Kenema. Transcript Code No. AR/6, p. 11).

Like agency/organization representatives, those instructors and adult learners who associated Ministry of Education support with the successful outcomes of literacy programmes considered the scope of the support extremely limited. Many thought that the government "should do more" to support adult literacy programmes across the country, particularly in the area of resources and incentives for recruitment, successful completion as well as postliteracy activities.

The findings presented above clearly suggest some wide divergence of opinions on the factor described as limited forms of support from the Ministry of Education to selected adult literacy agencies/organisations and programmes. While acknowledging that support provided by the Ministry of Education was probably inadequate, all state officials, at the same time, associated the factor with the successful outcomes of literacy programmes. The findings revealed that to all government officials, support from the Ministry of Education was perceived to be of two types. The first was in the area of initiation and implementation of policies in support of adult literacy. An offshoot of such policies, in their opinion, was the conclusion of "Agreements of Co-operation" which allowed foreign agencies or their representatives either direct access to specific parts of the country to organize and run adult literacy programmes or provide support to national agencies/organisations and their programmes. Support from the Ministry of Education was also perceived to be in the form of very limited provision of adult literacy resources as well as incentives for literacy recruitment, retention and successful completion as well as postliteracy activities.

The views expressed by respondents belonging to the other three groups with regard to existing forms and levels of support provided by the Ministry of Education did not appear as clear-cut as those of state officials. In fact, as can be seen in Table 4, about half of all respondents belonging to each of these groups associated the support provided by the Ministry of Education with the failure of literacy programmes. And those belonging to these three groups of respondents who related such support to the successful outcomes of adult literacy programmes did not perceive it as agreements or policy formulation and implementation but rather, as literacy resources and incentives. As well, they viewed existing forms and levels of support for adult literacy from the Ministry of Education to have been extremely limited and very irregular.

In other words, while they related the factor to the successful outcomes of literacy programmes, respondents within these other groups expressed the view that, in general, the Ministry of Education still had to show far greater commitment to the support of adult literacy than was presently the case.

The findings on the fourth and final macro-level factor described as extent of political commitment in support of adult literacy by the Ministry of Education will be now presented. The findings on this factor were, in some ways, related to those on limited forms of support from the Ministry of Education that have been just presented.

Findings on the Factor Described as Extent of Political Commitment in Support of Adult Literacy by the Ministry of Education

As can be seen in Table 4, the factor, described as the extent of political commitment in support of adult literacy by the Ministry of Education, stood out in the views of a substantial majority of respondents belonging to all four categories. Three subsidiary factors emerged in the views expressed on this factor and they were described as:

- *issues pertaining to government funding for literacy and adult education.*
- *issues involving instructor recruitment and retention for literacy teaching.*
- *issues involving learner recruitment and successful completion.*

The findings revealed that the majority of respondents belonging to all four groups associated the factor described as the extent of political commitment in support of adult literacy by the Ministry of Education, including its three subsidiaries, with the failure of literacy programmes. In fact, when they were asked questions relating to these three subsidiary factors, even respondents who had originally associated support from the Ministry of Education with the successful outcomes of literacy programmes, including state officials, were generally quick to point to its inadequacy or irregularity. And it was usually because of this inadequacy or irregularity that these same respondents again related the factor to the failure of adult literacy programmes.

The findings on each of the three subsidiary factors will be now presented.

Findings on Issues Pertaining to Government Funding for Literacy and Adult Education

As can be seen in Table 4, the subsidiary factor, described as issues pertaining to government funding for literacy and adult education stood out in the views expressed by a substantial majority of respondents belonging to each of the four categories. The findings revealed that the majority of respondents within each group including, perhaps surprisingly, state officials, considered the financial resources allocated to adult education, including literacy, by the Ministry of Education as inadequate, particularly when placed in the context of Adult Education's declaration as the nation's second priority in education as well as funding to other sub sectors of education, like higher (i.e., university) education. It was largely because of its perceived inadequacy that the subsidiary factor was associated with the failure of literacy programmes by the majority of respondents belonging to each of the four groups.

Analysis of the Findings on Issues Pertaining to Government Funding for Literacy and Adult Education in Light of Official Statistics

A brief examination of official statistics with respect to funds allocated to the various sub-sectors of education appears to support the widespread perceptions of inadequate government funding for literacy and adult education expressed by the majority of respondents belonging to all four groups. The statistical data has been compiled from a variety of documents and records produced by the Ministry of Education and is presented in Table 6 (see actual yearly financial figures attached as Appendix 111).

The Table presents a summary of actual annual percentage increases (or decreases) in Ministry of Education funds allocated to various sub-sectors of education, arranged according

Table 6: Public/Government Recurrent Expenditure on Different Kinds of Education for 1975/76 (= 100%) through 1990/91 Organized by Level of Government Priority (actual figures in million Leones; not adjusted for Inflation)

Financial Year	Total Education Expenditure	Elementary/ Primary Education	Adult Education (including Literary)	Secondary Education	Vocational/ Technical Education	Teacher Education	Higher Education (i.e., University)
1975/76	23.8/100%	7.6/100%	0.2/100%	6.290/100%	0.238/100%	0.238/100%	5.123/100%
1976/77	105	97	100	108	100	100	120
1977/78	129	121	100	139	150	200	149
1978/79	139	132	150	150	200	200	169
1979/80	171	167	200	190	350	400	224
1980/81	207	214	250	247	400	350	212
1981/82	287	297	300	324	500	400	318
1982/83	399	412	400	461	600	500	425
1983/84	413	499	400	435	850	750	357
1984/85	442	567	500	510	1,200	750	312
1985/86	955	1,184	800	1,095	2,600	1,600	739
1986/87	1,755	1,707	1,850	1,648	6,250	3,320	1,643
1987/88	2,097	1,996	2,200	1,898	8,200	3,700	2,484
1988/89	2,322	1,608	2,550	2,509	12,950	4,600	3,933
1989/90	2,078	1,347	2,250	2,153	12,200	3,800	3,445
1990/91	2,178	1,413	2,000	2,348	11,600	3,850	3,492

Sources: Ministry of Education (1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1990, 1991, 1993) to government priorities in education, for the period 1975/76 through 1990/1991. The percentage increases (or decreases) in yearly financial allocations have not been adjusted for inflation because of the lack of reliable official data.

Moving from left to right, Table 6 starts with data on the percentage increases (or decreases) in total education expenditure for various financial years covering the period 1975/76 through 1990/91. This is then followed by data on the financial resources allocated to each of the six educational sub-sectors arranged according to the nation's priorities in education. Elementary/primary is the nation's priority in education, followed by literacy and adult education as well as the other sub-sectors. Higher (i.e university) education is sixth, which suggests that it is not a national education priority.

The Table indicates actual percentage increases (or decreases) in total government education financial expenditure allocated to each of the sub-sectors during the period 1975/76 and 1990/91. In 1990/91, total education resources had increased by about 2,078% of the figures for 1975/76. With respect to financial resources allocated to literacy and adult education in 1990/91, the Table shows a percentage increase of about 1,900% over the figures for 1975/76. The increase was higher than the percentage increase for elementary/ primary education but slightly less than the percentage increases in both total educational expenditure as well as in the other sub-sectors, including university education, which stood at about 3,392% in 1990/91.

Within adult education itself, resources allocated to literacy appeared to have fared impressively well during the period. The Ministry of Education estimates that between 50% and 65% of all yearly government literacy and adult education funding during the period was allocated to literacy activities, like study leaves with pay for some adult literacy personnel, scholarships for training, limited literacy resources to agencies/organisations and programmes, research, limited incentives for recruitment of instructors and adult learners as well as postliteracy activities. The general emphasis on literacy within adult education funding clearly supports the views expressed by the majority of respondents within all four groups. In a predominantly illiterate society, like Sierra Leone, "adult education" is sometimes loosely used by both literates and illiterates alike as synonymous to the eradication of illiteracy among the nation's population.

While the yearly percentage increase in financial resources allocated to literacy and adult education between 1975/76 and 1990/91 appears impressive on the surface, a comparison with the financial resources allocated to some of the other education sub-sectors, including those over which literacy and adult education enjoyed national educational priority, would put the statistical data in perspective. For instance, in the 1990/91 financial year, the increase in state funding for higher (i.e., university) education stood at 3,392% over the figures for 1975/76. At the same time, the percentage increase in state education financial resources allocated to elementary/primary schooling as well as literacy and adult education (the nation's first and second priorities in education respectively) in 1990/91 stood at 1,313% and 1,900% respectively over the figures for 1975/76. This would suggest that a significant percentage of the nation's education financial resources was allocated to higher (i.e., university) education even though it was not a national educational priority and should therefore not have, technically speaking, benefitted from such a relatively high increase in allocations. In fact, Table 6 shows that the percentage increase in financial resources allocated to higher (i.e., university) education was higher than that for total education resources in 1990/91. As well, even secondary and teacher education fared better, as the percentage increases in actual state education resources allocated to each of these sub-sectors in 1990/91 were higher than those for elementary/primary education as well as literacy and adult education.

Clearly then, Table 6 suggests that the allocation of government financial resources to the different sub-sectors of education did not reflect the change in policy orientations in favour of not only literacy and adult education but also elementary/primary education, which was viewed as the principal agency for the achievement of universal literacy in the country. The declaration of adult education, including literacy, as the nation's second educational priority in reform documents and the accompanying rhetorical endorsements of the sub-sector by key government officials, including President Momoh, were not reflected in any relative increase in government education financial resources to the educational sub-sector. Compared to resources allocated to other sub-sectors, including even those, like higher education, that were not the nation's educational priorities, funding for literacy and adult education fared very poorly. Interestingly enough, while literacy and adult education funding remained relatively dismal during the 1980s, the rhetorical endorsement of the sub-sector, particularly adult literacy, as a key national development tool by state officials continued. Clearly then, one can understand the criticisms levied against the Ministry of Education by the other three groups of respondents regarding what they perceived as its lack of interest in literacy and adult education. This was especially so in light of the fact, as brought in Chapter Five, that government rhetoric in support of literacy and adult education continued during the 1980s when it obvious that it was either unwilling or unable to allocate massive government financial resources to the educational sub-sector.

Interpretations of the Findings on Issues Pertaining to Government Funding for Literacy and Adult Education

As brought out in the findings on this subsidiary factor, the majority of respondents belonging to all four groups including, perhaps surprisingly, state officials, considered the financial resources allocated to adult education, including literacy, by the Ministry of Education as grossly inadequate, particularly when placed in the context of Adult Education's declaration as the nation's second priority in education as well as funding to other sub sectors of education. It was largely because of this that the subsidiary factor was associated with the failure of adult literacy programmes.

The interpretations of the problems associated with the inadequacy of government financial resources allocated to literacy and adult education, however, varied considerably between state officials and the three groups of respondents. Among government officials generally, the relatively poor state funding for adult education, including literacy, was perceived in terms of the continuing decline of the nation's economy as well as the rebel war. The comment by this state official was instructive in this respect:

> *... obviously, I mean, I will be the first to admit that the money available for adult education in this Ministry [of Education] is small, very small ... This is painful ... especially as it is, I think, second in the government's priority list in education ... But I tell you, it is not entirely our fault. You know the government is fighting a war ... I mean the rebels ... it costs about, I think, 1 billion leones ... every month or maybe, every two months. So you see, that is where the money goes because I think it is a priority. You see, the economic crisis is also making it difficult to get more allocations for adult education ... That is what I think. It is really frustrating because the government considers literacy a good thing for the country ... It is good because, like the farmers, it will help them increase their yield and make more money. This is also true of other workers, in my opinion ...* (Interview with a Senior Education Official, Freetown. Transcript Code No. SO/1, p. 26).

But while literacy and adult education funding was widely perceived as relatively inadequate by the majority of government officials, funding for adult literacy, as a percentage of adult education funding, was considered encouraging. Another state official offered this comment, which was typical:

> *You see in this country, when you talk of adult education, the first thing that people think of is adult literacy ... so when we get our budget ... we always spend about half on adult literacy ... sometimes, I think ... even more than half ... maybe even two-thirds, on average, I will say between 50% and may be 60% of our budget every year ... I think ...* (Interview with a State Official, Bo. Transcript Code No. SO/3, p. 7).

Like state officials, all agency/organization representatives and literacy instructors as well as a substantial majority of adult learners generally considered government financial resources allocated to literacy and adult education inadequate. Yet they offered a very different view from that of state officials. Rather than the economic crisis and rebel incursions, the relatively inadequate level of government funding was perceived by the majority of respondents within these groups, including perhaps surprisingly even those who had associated Ministry of Education support with the successful outcomes of literacy programmes, as probably one of the most glaring evidences of an extremely weak commitment in support of literacy and adult education on the part of the Ministry of Education. The views of this agency/organization representative were typical:

> *Sometimes, I doubt whether in this country, the Ministry [of Education] really cares about adult literacy ... Because, as far as I know, there is no money for it in the budget or maybe, there is some money but I think it is small, very small ... The agencies are trying because I think, all of them believe that literacy will help the worker ... They [workers] will learn to produce crops better and that will make them rich. So, you see, it [literacy] is good for the country. That is why when you think of it, the government say, or perhaps, I should say the last government, they said that adult education is the number two priority in the country, particularly adult literacy. But the problem is, if it is a priority or second priority, why should it not get the money ... or, maybe, it is a priority only in the name, but I don't think it can be so without the money ... This is what I think ...* .(Interview with an Agency/Organization Representative, Bo. Transcript Code No. AR/5, p. 13).

In fact, agency/organization representatives, particularly those who received no support from the Ministry of Education, expressed considerable disappointment about the inadequate level of government education financial resources allocated to literacy and adult education. As another agency/organization representative ironically put it:

> *We are reminded again and again that adult education [including literacy] ... is the government's second priority in education. This, to me, is, maybe, nonsense because there is no vote in the Ministry [of Education] or, maybe, there is a vote [i.e., funds] but I will say it is pennies. I think it is only a priority in words ... .It is a shame, especially when we all know that literacy will help the poor people ... Well, like to become aware or, maybe, increase their production, like the farmers ...* (Interview with an Agency/Organization Representative, Freetown. Transcript Code No. AR/4, p. 9).

Like agency/organization representatives, all literacy instructors and a substantial majority of adult learners considered the poor financing for literacy and adult education as a reflection of an inadequate commitment to adult literacy on the part of the Ministry of Education. Like government officials and agency/organization representatives, literacy instructors viewed the objectives of literacy work as important for the nation's illiterate population but they blamed the government and agency/ organizations for being insensitive to issues pertaining to instructor salaries, allowances and other kinds of benefits. If indeed the government, in particular, was really interested in adult literacy, they thought, a lot could have been done to create better working and learning conditions for both instructors and learners respectively.

Adult learners generally considered the poor funding for literacy and adult education by the Ministry of Education as evidence that, as one learner explained; '... *this government does not care ... about literacy ...*'(Interview with an Adult Learner, Makeni. Transcript Code. AL/16, p. 3). Or as another adult learner put it; '... *The government is trying to discourage us ... Perhaps they want us to remain in the dark ...*' (Interview with an Adult Learner, Kamakwe. Transcript Code No. AL/9, p. 4). Unlike the other groups, only very few adult learners agreed that the acquisition of literacy skills would lead to genuine opportunities for the social and economic advancement of new literates.

The findings presented above have clearly shown that while the majority of respondents belonging to each of the four groups viewed state education financial resources allocated to literacy and adult education as relatively inadequate, considerable variation was found in regard to their interpretations of the problems. Instead of a critical examination of their own actions, particularly in the area of the criteria for state education resource allocation to various sub-sectors of education, state officials blamed the problems almost exclusively on external factors, in particular; the impact of structural adjustment launched in 1986 and the rebel war. Structural adjustment was viewed by the majority of them to have exacerbated the impact of the nation's economic crisis on individuals. As well structural adjustment and the huge financial resources allocated to the prosecution of the rebel war by the government were viewed by officials as principal factors in the reduced state education spending, including spending for literacy and adult education. The speedy and successful prosecution of the rebel war was considered a national priority.

Agency/organization representatives, literacy instructors and adult learners, however, disagreed. The majority of respondents belonging to each of these three groups blamed the problems on the government. To these three groups of respondents, the problems, more than anything else, were a glaring evidence or indication of inadequate commitment to literacy and adult education by senior policy makers and bureaucrats within the Ministry of Education. And the statistical data presented in Table 6 (and Appendix 111) would appear to have supported the views expressed by these groups of respondents. The data revealed that while government rhetoric assigned a considerable degree of importance to literacy and adult education, very few state education financial resources appeared to have been allocated to the educational sub-sector.

With a few exceptions, the other three categories of respondents, especially agency/ organization representatives and literacy instructors, interpreted the inadequacy of state financial resources allocated to literacy and adult education as a reflection of either the general indifference of the government and the nation's elites to literacy and adult education or the fear that literacy work may be potentially threatening to the status quo. Limited state funding was therefore viewed as a way of exercising government and elite control over the educational sub-sector. Other respondents within these three groups interpreted the problems in terms of the preference by the nation's elites and bureaucrats to finance the education of their children at the nation's expense (through government scholarships), a phenomenon that was probably responsible for the allocation of massive state education financial resources to higher (i.e., university) education, at the expense of literacy and adult education, in spite of the latter's declaration as the nation's second priority in education.

The findings on the next macro-level subsidiary factor, described as issues involving instructor recruitment and retention for literacy teaching, will be now presented.

Findings on Issues Involving Instructor Recruitment and Retention for Adult Literacy Teaching

In addition to the allocation of government education financial resources, another element of political commitment to adult literacy examined in this study pertained to what is described in Table 4 as issues involving the recruitment and retention of instructors for adult literacy teaching, specifically; the extent to which the measures designed by the Ministry of Education and other literacy providing agencies/organisations to promote instructor recruitment and retention could be judged as successful in encouraging the general public to participate in adult literacy teaching. As brought out in the overview of the nation's educational policies and practices with regard to adult literacy presented in Chapter Five, the reform documents had called for a variety of measures designed to promote instructor recruitment efforts, like reasonable allowances and salaries, opportunities for training and re-training, as well as study leaves with full pay. Between 1974 and 1992, it was estimated that about 50,000 instructors (about 30,000 of whom would be trained and qualified for adult teaching) would have participated in adult literacy teaching across the country.

The findings on this subsidiary political factor revealed that the majority of respondents belonging to each of the groups related the issues involving instructor recruitment and retention to the failure of adult literacy programmes. Three specific issues emerged in the findings on this subsidiary political factor, namely; (i) the failure of the measures designed by the government and agencies/organisations to promote instructor recruitment, largely because of the influence of strong societal conditions on recruitment efforts; (ii) perceptions of a preponderance of untrained and unqualified instructors involved in literacy teaching and; (iii) perceptions of a high drop out rate among professionally trained and qualified instructors.

Analysis of the Findings on Issues Involving Instructor Recruitment and Retention in Light of Statistical Data

Existing official statistical data and documents on instructor recruitment and retention would appear to support the views expressed by the majority of respondents belonging to each of the four groups. The statistical data are presented in Tables 7 and 8 (see actual figures as Appendix iv). The data in both Tables have been compiled from a variety of unpublished documents and annual reports produced by the Ministry of Education.

Table 7: Adult Literacy Instructor Data Nation Wide as Reported by the Ministry of Education: 1974/76 through 1990/92

	1974-76	1976-78	1978-80	1980-82	1982-84	1984-86	1986-88	1988-90	1990-92	Total
Total # of instructors	813	976	1,354	1,078	938	713	655	589	567	7,683
% of female instructors	35	35	41	47	38	40	42	42	37	40
% of trained instructors	34	34	42	47	47	52	52	52	62	45
% of trained female instructors	45	45	40	43	43	46	46	46	36	49

Source: Ministry of Education (1977, 1981, 1990, 1991, 1993)

According to the statistical data brought out in Table 7, the total number of instructors reported to have been involved in adult literacy teaching between 1974 and 1992 was estimated at 7,683, about 3,062 (or 40%) of whom were females. Out of that total, only about 3,495 (representing about 45%) instructors were, by the Ministry's own definition, trained and, therefore, qualified for adult literacy teaching; in other words, they had successfully completed five years of secondary schooling and attended a month-long Training Workshop for Adult Literacy Instructors organised by the Ministry of Education and other adult literacy providing agencies/organisations. About 1,505 (or 49%) of all trained instructors were females.

The Table suggests that between the literacy cycles beginning 1974-1976 and 1978-1980, the number of instructors involved in literacy teaching increased by about 67%. Since government funding for literacy and adult education during the period remained relatively small (see Table 6), one can only conclude, as revealed in the Ministry of Education/Unesco (1981) survey report quoted in Chapter Five, that the increase was largely due to the work of nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) whose financial inputs, according to the survey report, were higher than those of the government. Besides, the nation's economic crisis was still in its infancy, suggesting that its impact on literacy instructors and adult learners was not viewed as devastating as it did during the 1980s.

As can be seen in Table 7, the rate of instructor recruitment for literacy teaching declined by about 58% between 1980 and 1992. This decline probably suggests that instructors might not have been actually interested in the intrinsic character of the job itself, but rather, the perceived benefits that, they believed, would accrue to them following their involvement in literacy teaching. Thus when such accompanying benefits were not perceived as available or inadequate, which would appear to have been the case during the 1980s, potential instructors were likely to become unavailable for literacy teaching and quite often, those who were involved in teaching became disillusioned and some of them eventually dropped out from programmes.

As revealed in the findings on this subsidiary factor, state officials blamed the economic crisis for the inadequacy of the measures designed to promote instructor recruitment; the assumption being that the financial and other constraints imposed on the government and agencies/organizations by the crisis were making the provision of reasonable incentives, like salaries and allowances, difficult, if not impossible. Yet given the fact that donor or foreign support to agencies/organisations and programmes increased steadily during the 1980s (see Table 5) it would appear that the economic crisis was only part of the problem. In fact, observations recorded on the subject suggest that the problem might also have had something to do with decisions concerning the way financial resources for literacy and adult education were allocated by the state and other agencies/organisations:

> *a rather interesting scenario has been observed. [Literacy] officials receive on average, about Le7,500 as honorarium for any meeting they attend. As of today I have attended five such meetings [as an observer] for which I have received the sum of Le37,500. [This is]..in excess of the amount instructors receive for the whole year. Instructor salaries range from about Le1,000 to Le1,5000 a month. Learners [in urban centres] receive about Le700.00 as transport allowance. The disparity is considerable. [I] enquired why this was so but people [i.e., officials] were not ready to discuss it. [They] thought it was too sensitive an issue. So I had to drop the subject* (Field notes: February 17, 1993).

Besides the low level of instructor recruitment, the data presented in Table 7 suggest that about 55% (or 4,188 instructors) of all instructors employed within the system were not trained and might perhaps not have been adequately qualified for adult literacy teaching. About 1,557 (or 51%) female instructors were not trained. The data support the views expressed by particularly government officials regarding the preponderance of untrained instructors involved in literacy teaching. This predominance of untrained and unqualified instructors was likely to pose serious problems in terms of instructional methods and processes adopted in adult literacy classes.

A comparison with the projected targets outlined in the nation's educational reform documents would help put the statistical data in perspective. As brought out in the review of educational policies and practices with regard to adult literacy presented in Chapter Five, the government had estimated that between 1974 and 1992, 50,000 instructors would have been involved in adult literacy teaching, about 30,000 of whom would be trained and qualified. Besides the general emphasis on training, however, the reform documents did not differentiate among the estimated target for instructor recruitment into gender, full or part-time or even volunteers.

Viewed in the context of the target estimates for instructor recruitment, the total number of 7,683 instructors reported to have been involved in adult literacy teaching revealed in Table

7 represented only about 15%. As well, the total number of 3,495 instructors reported trained was only about 12% of the total estimated figure. Clearly then, the statistical data presented in Table 7 support the views expressed by the majority of respondents within all four groups regarding the failure of the measures designed by the Ministry of Education and other literacy agencies/organisations to promote instructor recruitment efforts. The findings revealed that the failure of these measures was largely due to the constraining influence of societal conditions, especially political and economic issues.

In addition to the statistical data presented in Table 7, there is also evidence to support the prevalence of a high drop out rate among trained and qualified instructors. This is brought out in the statistical data presented in Table 8. The Table shows that during the two-year adult literacy cycle covering the period 1984-86, for example, about 673 instructors were reported to have been trained through short-term training courses organised by the Ministry of Education and various other adult literacy providing agencies/organisations. By July 1986 when the cycle ended, there were about 713 instructors teaching in adult literacy programmes and, of these,

Table 8: Estimates of Drop-out Rates Among Trained Adult Literacy Instructors as Reported by the Ministry of Education: 1984/86 through 1990/92

	1984 - 1986	1986 - 1988	1988 - 1990	1990 - 1992	Total
Total # of all instructors reported trained	673	613	585	562	2,433
% of female instructors reported trained	31	32	36	36	34
# of all trained instructors actually involved in adult literacy teaching by end of literacy cycle	371	341	306	352	1,370
Total number of all instructors (trained and untrained) actually involved in literacy teaching by end of cycle	713	655	589	567	2,524
Drop out % among all trained instructors	45	44	48	38	44
Drop out % among trained female instructors	18	20	33	37	27

Source: Adult Education Unit, Ministry of Education (1981, 1990, 1991, 1993) only 371 had been trained. Consequently, about 45% (or 302) of instructors initially trained were not involved in adult literacy teaching by the end of that literacy cycle. The situation did not appear to have markedly improved throughout the entire period. Between 1984 and 1992, about 2,433 instructors were reported to have undergone training; about 818 (or 34%) of whom were females. The total number of instructors actually involved in adult literacy teaching during the same period was estimated at 2,524; about 1,370 (or 54%) of whom were trained. This suggests that about 1,154 (or 46%) of all instructors trained during the period had not been involved in adult literacy teaching. For various reasons, largely societal conditions, they had dropped out either immediately after training or some time later. The drop out rate among trained female instructors was estimated at 27% during the period.

Clearly then, the statistical data presented in both Tables 7 and 8 support the views expressed by the majority of respondents belonging to all four groups. The data support claims that the measures designed by the Ministry of Education and agencies/organisations were unsuccessful in promoting instructor recruitment efforts, largely because, as the findings revealed of the constraining influence of broad societal conditions. The preponderance of professionally unqualified and untrained instructors as well as a high drop out rate among professionally qualified instructors would probably appear to have attested to this failure. One can only conclude from the data that instructors might not be prepared for adult literacy teaching without some adequate financial, material and/or moral incentives from the Ministry of Education and other literacy agencies/organisations.

Interpretation of the Findings on Issues Involving Instructor Recruitment and Retention

As indicated in the findings on issues involving instructor recruitment and retention, the majority of respondents belonging to each of the four groups associated the factor with the failure of literacy programmes. Yet the interpretations of the problems varied considerably among the different groups of respondents.

Among the majority of government officials, the problems were viewed in terms of the economic crisis which was believed to have been largely responsible for the failure of the measures designed to by the Ministry of Education and agencies/organisations to promote instructor recruitment. The views expressed by this government official were instructive in this respect:

> *Well ... in my opinion ... I will be the first to admit that this Ministry [of Education] ... and, maybe, I should say even the rich [donor or foreign supported] agencies should do more to encourage people to work as instructors. I will say that, maybe, our [Ministry of Education] efforts have been slightly disappointing considering the importance placed on [adult] literacy by the government. But let us remember also that the government is trying. I think there are now incentives, like salaries and allowances ... also we [Ministry of Education] give scholarships for training at FBC [University] and we also have organised workshops for the training of instructors. Maybe, they are not enough but we should also remember the government is facing an economic crisis ... So I think the government is trying ... People should understand. I really think the other agencies [donor supported], they should do more for all teachers, not only their own teachers ...* (Interview with a Senior Education Officer, Freetown. Transcript Code No. SO/1, p. 20).

And on the impact of the perceived failure of the measures designed to promote instructor recruitment on adult literacy programmes, the respondent offered this opinion:

> *Well, it is difficult to say exactly what the impact is ... But I think it probably has meant that in some programmes, especially in the villages, there are no literacy teachers or, maybe, not enough trained teachers ... Yes, this is the problem ... I mean since there are not enough trained teachers, there are many untrained teachers in the programmes. And without enough trained teachers, there are problems in the classes, I think ... Like bad teaching by the untrained teachers. For this Ministry [of Education] we will like to see more done in the area of training and re-training and salaries also ... But there is no money, I think ... I mean the government does not have money, so what can we do ... The other [donor supported] agencies that I mentioned before, they should help ...* (Interview with a Senior Education Official, Freetown. Transcript Code No. SO/1, p. 20).

Like government officials, agency/organization representatives, literacy instructors and adult learners associated the subsidiary political factor with the failure of literacy programmes. Yet the interpretation of the problems varied sharply from the views expressed by state officials.

Among agency/organization representatives, the problems were viewed as essentially political. The views expressed by this agency/organization representative were typical:

> *You see, it is one thing to say we want to recruit these numbers of people as teachers and another thing to actually work towards it. I am not sure I remember exactly but I think the government, I mean the last APC [All People's Congress] government, they wanted to recruit, or maybe train ... several thousand people to teach, or maybe several hundred thousand. As I said, I don't remember exactly now. But they did not create the necessary conditions that will make it conducive for people to want to teach adult literacy ... so you see the problem ... In my opinion, I can say that the government has not done much to encourage people to want to be involved. I mean to say it has not been able to galvanize the public to teach in these classes because, I think, the incentives are not good at all. They are too small ... We provide incentives to our instructors but we are only helping ... It is the government's responsibility, I think ...* (Interview with an Agency/Organization Representative, Freetown. Transcript Code No. AR/1, p. 11).

Like state officials, agency/organization representatives viewed the impact of the problems on literacy as serious. The views of another agency/organization representative on the issue were generally typical:

> *I really think it does not help these programmes at all. I really think so ... Firstly, as I said before, many people are not ready to teach. So they have to hire many teachers who are not trained to teach in the classes ... I don't think this is good. And also, for those teachers who are teaching, there are many problems. I mean, because the allowance or salary is small, it affects their work, I think. Sometimes, they will be late for class, they are absent and maybe, I think, they do not teach well at all ... sometimes they don't keep good registers and even other records ... so you see, it will be difficult to get information ... But the main way I think is that they [instructors] do not become devoted to teach because they are frustrated. It is true Sir ... You see Sir, this is what brings about the drop out among the teachers. Many of them go away because of this problem, I think so, Sir ...* (Interview with an Agency/Organization Official, Freetown. Transcript Code No. AR/2, p. 8).

Like agency/organization representatives, the majority of instructors and adult learners related the measures designed to promote instructor recruitment and retention to the failure of adult literacy programmes. Rather than agencies/organisations, literacy instructors were readily inclined to blame the Ministry of Education for its perceived lack of reasonable standards for incentives towards the recruitment and retention of potential and existing instructors. In fact, the limited incentives were perceived by both groups to be partly responsible for the high rate of drop out among professionally trained and qualified instructors in particular. Literacy instructors also perceived the subsidiary political factor in terms of low recognition (and with it low morale) accorded to them by the general public. The failure of the measures designed by the Ministry of Education and other agencies/organisations to promote instructor recruitment and retention was, in their opinion, partly attributable to this lack of public recognition and respect for literacy instructors. To the substantial majority of instructors and adult learners, the limited incentives along with the low social status for adult literacy instructors were generally perceived to be having an adverse impact on instructor teaching.

The findings on this subsidiary political factor presented above have revealed that the majority of respondents belonging to each of the four categories related the measures designed by the Ministry of Education and agencies/organisations to promote instructor recruitment and retention to the failure of literacy programmes across the country. And the statistical data on recruitment and drop out rates presented in Table 7 and 8 would appear to have supported the views expressed by respondents on the issues.

There were, however, as the findings showed, major differences in the interpretations of the problems. Rather than themselves (i.e., the government), state officials blamed the problem on the social and historical conditions of Sierra Leone society, especially the continuing decline of the nation's economy and, to some extent, the rebel war. The economic crisis was seen as responsible for the lack, or inadequacy, of material, financial and/moral incentives provided to adult literacy instructors. As well, government officials perceived the rebel war as partly responsible for the high drop out rate among instructors. Instructors working in parts of the Eastern and Southern Provinces, like adult learners, have had to flee for their safety in the wake of the continuing rebel war. Frequent transfers of elementary/primary school teachers (who simultaneously serve as literacy instructors) was also seen by government officials as a factor in the high drop out rate among literacy instructors, particularly in the provinces.

Agency/organization representatives interpreted the problems differently. To them, the problems were viewed as essentially political. In other words, like government officials, the majority of agency/organization representatives blamed the problem not on their agencies/organizations, but, primarily, on the government, which, in their view, had generally failed to create and sustain an environment conducive to the promotion of instructor recruitment efforts. Agency/organization representatives also attributed the failure by the government to achieve its target estimates for instructor recruitment, brought out in the overview of educational policies and practices on adult literacy in Chapter Five, to what they viewed as weak political commitment and support for literacy and adult education by the Ministry of Education.

Literacy instructors agreed with agency/organization representatives but only to some extent. While the majority of them loudly blamed the government which, from observation, appeared to have been the easiest target, instructors mildly blamed the problem on agencies/organisations as well. The majority of them expressed disappointment that agencies/organisations, especially donor or foreign supported ones, were not doing more for instructors by way of salaries, allowances and other types of incentives. Instructors could only be expected to teach effectively if the working conditions in the programmes made their life conditions generally satisfying but this was not perceived by the majority of them to have been the case. In other words, in the opinions of the majority of instructors, it was the low instructor morale, stemming principally from perceived poor working environment and conditions, that was responsible for the widespread lateness, absenteeism and high drop out rates among instructors.

Adult learners were generally sympathetic to, and understanding of, the plight and circumstances of their instructors. Yet, unlike instructors, they were not prepared to blame the problem on agencies/organisations, which, in their opinion, were only doing them and the nation a favour. Like agency/organization representatives, however, the majority of adult learners blamed the problem almost exclusively on what they viewed as government inaction.

The findings on the final subsidiary political factor, described as issues involving learner recruitment and successful completion in adult literacy courses, will be now presented.

Findings on the Subsidiary Political Factor Described as Issues Involving Learner Recruitment, Retention and Successful Completion in Adult Literacy Courses

As can be seen in Table 4, the subsidiary political factor, described as issues involving learner recruitment and successful completion in adult literacy courses, stood out in the views expressed by the majority of respondents belonging to all four groups. The findings revealed that the measures designed by the Ministry of Education and agencies/organisations to promote recruitment efforts among the nation's illiterate adult population were widely associated with the failure of adult literacy programmes across the country. For a wide variety of reasons, primarily societal conditions, both the Ministry of Education and agencies/organisations were perceived by the majority of respondents belonging to each group to have failed in their efforts to encourage the nation's illiterates to successfully participate in literacy courses.

Like in the case of the target estimates outlined for instructor recruitment, the reform documents, as brought out in the overview of educational policies and practices on adult literacy in Chapter Five, had estimated that 500,000 illiterate adults would have been reached by literacy activities between 1974 and 1992. Of that number, about 250,000 were expected to acquire literacy skills, after which, they would be awarded certificates by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education and other agencies/organisations were expected to make available a wide variety of incentives to illiterates to encourage their recruitment, retention and completion, like transport allowances; free supply of learning resources; making available day care centres alongside literacy centres, especially in urban centres as well as "seed crops" for planting purposes, particularly to rural learners. Like instructor recruitment measures, the findings revealed that the measures designed by the Ministry of Education and agencies/organisations were not successful in promoting recruitment efforts among illiterate adults for participation in adult literacy activities.

Analysis of the Findings on Issues Involving Learner Recruitment and Successful Completion in Light of Statistical Data

Available official statistical data compiled from documents produced by the Ministry of Education would appear to support the views expressed by the majority of respondents within each group regarding the failure of the measures designed by the Ministry of Education and other agencies/organisations to promote recruitment efforts among the nation's illiterate adult population. The data are brought out in Table 9 (see Appendix V for actual figures).

Table 9: Recruitment and Completion Rates in Adult Literacy Programmes Nation-wide as Reported by the Ministry of Education: From 1974/76 through 1990/92 Literacy Cycles

	1974-76	1976-78	1978-80	1980-82	1982-84	1984-86	1986-88	1988-90	1990-92	Total
Total # of learners recruited in literacy programmes	11,624	12,739	15,933	7,685	8,453	7,153	6,543	5,561	6,037	81,728
% female learners	28	31	25	28	25	28	20	21	42	27
% all completers	28	28	49	29	29	13	12	12	8	27
% female completers	34	30	32	31	28	21	25	20	10	27

Source: Ministry of Education (1977, 1991, 1993)

The Table shows that during the literacy cycles covering the period between 1974-1976 through 1990-1992, a total number of 81,728 adult learners had participated in adult literacy courses, about 22,468 (or 27%) of whom were females. Out of this, 22,173 (or about 27%) learners were reported to have successfully completed their courses and received certificates from the Ministry of Education. The completion rate for men and women was estimated at 26%

and 27% respectively during the period. As well, the drop out rate between the two sexes was about even, estimated at 74% for men and 73% for women. The slight differences in the recruitment, retention and completion rates between the two sexes suggest that they did not appear to have been seriously affected by differences in life and work conditions between men and women.

Yet while the data revealed no major gender-based differences in the drop-out and completion rates, major differences in participation or recruitment rates were found between males and females. According to the Table, only 27% of all adult learners who participated in literacy programmes were females. The low rate of female recruitment or participation was obviously related to the multiple roles of women (especially rural illiterate women) in Sierra Leone society as well as the negative effects of a male dominated society. The data revealed that men (particularly rural conservative muslim men) viewed literate women as a threat not only to their manhood but also to rural life. The findings revealed that husbands and other male relatives were generally opposed to female participation in literacy activities. Yet except for recruitment efforts, the data revealed no major differences in drop-out and completion rates between men and women, nor did the findings show any gender-based differences in the views expressed by respondents belonging to each of the four categories.

As can be seen in the table, enrollment rates in adult literacy courses increased by about 37% from 1974 to 1980, the period when the euphoria surrounding reforms in adult literacy were probably at their highest. Since government education financial resources allocated to literacy and adult education were relatively small and, by implication, the recruitment measures it could provide, one can only conclude, as noted in the Ministry of Education/Unesco (1981) survey report quoted in Chapter Five, that the increase in enrollment was due primarily to the financial and other inputs provided by agencies/organisations other than the government. In addition, the enrollment increase was probably due to the high expectations of the benefits to be derived from the acquisition of literacy skills, particularly among adult learners. Between 1985 and 1992, however, enrollment figures dropped by about 29%. The decreasing trend in enrollment coincided with the worsening of the economic crisis and the situation did not appear to have been helped by the increase in donor or foreign support during the period (see Table 5).

A comparison with the projected targets for recruitment and successful completion during the period, as outlined in the nation's reform documents, would put the statistical data in perspective. As noted in the overview of educational policies and practices on adult literacy presented in Chapter Five, the government had estimated that during the period 1974 through 1992, a total of 500,000 adult learners would have been recruited in adult literacy programmes, about half of whom were expected to successfully complete their courses and be awarded certificates by the Ministry of Education. Perhaps surprisingly, the original target estimates for recruitment and successful completion did not differentiate (for example, according to region or economic situation) and no internal priorities were set (for example, according to gender).

In relation to the original estimates for recruitment and successful completion, the statistical data presented in Table 9 would appear to support the views of respondents in regard to the subsidiary factor. The total number of 81,728 adult learners who participated in adult literacy programmes during the period represented only about 16% of the projected enrollment targets. This shows that a substantial majority of the nation's adult illiterates targeted for the acquisition of literacy skills were not reached by literacy activities by the end of 1992.

In addition, Table 9 indicates that a total of 22,173 adult learners were reported to have successfully completed their courses during the period. This represented about 27% of all adult learners involved in literacy activities. Viewed in the context of the target estimates of 250,000 learners for completion outlined in the reform documents, the total number of 22,173 completers represented only about 9%.

Clearly, then, the statistical data presented in Table 9 appear to support the views expressed by the majority of respondents belonging to each group with regard to the failure of the measures designed to promote recruitment efforts among illiterate adults across the country. The persistence of such low rates of recruitment, retention and successful completion in adult literacy programmes appear to support the widespread views expressed by the majority of respondents within each group regarding both the devastating impact of contextual factors, especially the worsening economic conditions, on adult literacy programmes as well as weak political commitment in support of adult literacy by the Ministry of Education.

Interpretations of the Findings on Issues Involving Learner Recruitment and Successful Completion

In the findings on issues involving learner recruitment and successful completion, it was noted that the majority of respondents belonging to each of the four groups related the subsidiary factor to the failure of literacy programmes across the country. As revealed in the findings, the measures designed by both the Ministry of Education and agencies/organizations to promote learner recruitment efforts were perceived to have generally failed to encourage illiterate adults to successfully participate in literacy courses. Yet the interpretations of the problems varied considerably among the four groups.

Among the majority of government officials, the problems were viewed largely in terms of the adverse influence of societal conditions, like socio-economic, historical and cultural issues. All these conditions were viewed by government officials to be creating a non-supportive environment for literacy. The comment by this state official was instructive in this respect:

> *Well, as I have already mentioned, the incentives are very small and so, I will say that I don't think it is a tremendous help at all ... The problem is that now the government does not have the money, in my opinion ... But there are other problems, I think ... Like the job issue. You see in this country, even people from college do not get jobs easily. And another point, I think custom or, maybe, tradition is important especially for women. Many men do not like their women to come to class and the women obey, especially in the villages. The custom is*

> *strong there ... So these are the real problems, I think, not the incentives. People [illiterates] say school is not for me ... It is for the child or the boys. These people, maybe, do not see the real benefits of literacy, especially now with the bad economy. And you see, in this country, there are many rich men, if even you write an 'A' as big as this building, they will know it. But that does not matter any way because they have the money ... But the thing is, we [Ministry of Education] still think literacy is important for this country. We really think it is difficult for us to progress as a nation with such high illiteracy. So we have to keep trying ... I mean to find ways to encourage people to become literate ...* (Interview with a Senior Education Official, Freetown. Transcript Code No. SO/1, p. 26).

Government officials also viewed the problems associated with low completion rates in literacy courses as well as high drop out rates among learners as basically educational; in other words, poor instructor qualification and teaching. Another state official offered this opinion on the subject:

> *I think the main thing here is bad teaching. You see, many of the teachers are not, I think, qualified to teach the adults ... .so when the people [learners] see that the teacher does not teach well, they say why am I wasting my time here ... so this is the problem, in my opinion ... bad teaching because the teacher, or maybe, a lot of them are not good, or should I say, they are not qualified ...* (Interview with an Education Official, Kenema. Transcript Code No. SO/4, p. 8).

Agency/organization representatives saw the problems differently. Like their views on issues involving instructor recruitment and retention, the majority of agency/organization representatives viewed the problems as basically political. The views of this agency/organization were typical:

> *I think if the government was serious about giving people some benefits, they will come. There are, I will say, other problems, like the teachers because some of them don't teach very well at all because they don't have good training in my opinion. This is not good for their teaching. But I think the real problem is the government ... There are no jobs ... also no promotion ... no salary increase ... no transport allowances. So you see, people don't eat the certificate. So you see, I think the government should do more. When this happens, people will become interested and they will come to class ... I really think so. The government should provide more benefits, especially for the people in the villages ... like I think rice or even money, like a loan. I don't think the Ministry [of Education] is doing enough at all and, if you ask me, I will say this why people don't come to class at all ... or if even they come, they only spend a short time [drop out] ... Well I really think they [i.e., agencies] are trying but it is not easy, especially for the ones that have no help [donor support] ... So I don't blame them ... It is, I think, the Ministry's [of Education] problem ...* (Interview with an Agency/Organization Representative, Freetown. Transcript Code No. AR/4, p. 14).

And another agency/organization representative offered this opinion:

> *I really think it is the government's fault. There is, I believe, no interest at all in adult literacy ... if the government has interest, it will help or maybe they will make it compulsory for people to come to class ... It will solve the problem so that people will join the class without no dropping out until they finish. Since there is no encouragements, and no force some people [learners] don't come or if they come, they will drop out sooner or later because, I think, they will say there is no support. This is what I think ... Like, Sir, in this country, we don't have postliteracy at all. I mean there are no programmes. So if even the people [learners] come and they get their certificates, they don't have nothing to do. They will not have any work [job] and also they will have no books to read. So they, become illiterate again. It is all the government's fault, I mean the Ministry of Education. They should provide the materials and, I think, the jobs also, if they want people [learners] to come to class ... You see, Sir, literacy is important for the people [illiterates]. So we should all try hard ... Well the agencies are trying but I think the government has to double its efforts. It is their problem, in my opinion. And the teachers too ... some of them, they don't teach well and they are not regular at all ...* (Interview with an Agency/Organization Representative, Bo. Transcript Code No AR/5, p. 7).

Like the majority of respondents belonging to the other two groups, literacy instructors and adult learners viewed the measures designed by the Ministry of Education and agencies/ organisations to promote learner recruitment and participation in literacy activities as generally unsuccessful. Literacy instructors blamed the problem on the Ministry of Education and agencies/organisations, both of which were perceived to have failed to improve the instructional-learning environments or conditions of literacy programmes. Like government officials and agency/organization representatives, instructors also emphasized the objectives of literacy work, especially for the nation's illiterates. Many were convinced that the programmes had the potential to contribute to development with some government and agency/organization support.

Adult learners blamed the problems on the other groups. As well, the majority of learners saw the problem in terms of what could be characterised as a discrepancy between programme objectives and the outcomes of literacy programmes. Unlike government officials, agency/ organization representatives and literacy instructors, adult learners were of the view that the dwindling level of incentives for recruitment, the perceived irrelevance or very limited utility of literacy skills in the daily or occupational transactions of most illiterates as well as the lack of real, genuine and lasting benefits, like jobs and other opportunities for social and economic advancement, were the key problems responsible for the low recruitment, retention and successful completion in literacy courses. And on each of these key problems, the data revealed no differences in the views expressed by both male and female learners.

The findings presented above have clearly revealed that the majority of respondents belonging to each group related the measures designed to promote learner recruitment and successful completion in literacy courses to the failure of literacy programmes across the country. The statistical data presented in Table 9 appear to support the views expressed by respondents on the subject. The statistical data suggest that efforts by the Ministry of Education and agencies/organisations to encourage illiterate adults to successfully participate in literacy activities could hardly be judged as successful. The interpretations of the problems, however, varied considerably among the different groups.

Government officials generally blamed the problems on the constraints posed by a variety of socio-economic, historical and cultural conditions of Sierra Leone society; conditions over which, in their opinion, the government had very little or no control. While remaining convinced that the acquisition of literacy skills would bring about genuine opportunities for social and economic advancement for the masses, government officials, nevertheless, were generally quick to cite such factors as the extreme social and economic hardship in the lives of illiterates created by the economic crisis; the immense opposition by husbands and other male relatives to female recruitment in literacy activities; the fact that schooling had historically been considered an arena for the young as well as the financial and material successes of "prosperous illiterates" as probably the principal factors responsible for the inadequacy of strategies for learner recruitment, retention and successful completion in literacy programmes. In addition to societal conditions, government officials also blamed the problems on the inadequate professional training and qualification of literacy instructors.

Like state officials, agency/organization representatives, including their female counterparts, were also convinced about the beneficial impact of literacy on the nation's illiterate population and the country at large. However, rather than blaming themselves for the failure of the measures designed to promote learner recruitment and completion rates, agency/organization representatives viewed the problems as essentially political. While they readily acknowledged the constraining influence of the societal conditions referred to by government officials, the majority of agency/organization representatives were of the view that with the necessary and adequate commitment in support of adult literacy by the Ministry of Education, the influence of such conditions would be eliminated or minimised. It was that political commitment that, in their opinion, was either completely lacking or, at best, extremely weak. These representatives referred to the near complete absence of postliteracy programmes across the country as a glaring evidence of lacking commitment and support for literacy and adult education on the part of the Ministry of Education. The lack of postliteracy programmes meant, in their opinion, that opportunities for applying literacy skills to the daily practices of new literates were lacking. In other words, neither the Ministry of Education nor the agencies/organisations themselves could guarantee new literates the opportunity to continue their learning.

Rather than their levels of professional training and qualification as well as poor teaching, literacy instructors blamed the problems on both the government and agencies/organizations. The inadequacy of learner incentives for recruitment and successful completion as well as the limited utility of literacy in learner environments were viewed as the principal factors in the failure of the measures designed to promote learner recruitment. Like government officials and agency/organization representatives, literacy instructors emphasized the beneficial impact of literacy, particularly in regard to issues of worker production and productivity.

The majority of adult learners blamed the problems equally on the government, agencies/organisations and literacy instructors. Government officials and agencies/organisations were blamed for what, in the opinion of learners, was a lack of inadequate incentives for learner recruitment. Literacy instructors were blamed for their frequent lateness and absenteeism, both of which were associated with the high rates of learner drop out from programmes. In addition, adult learners viewed the problem in terms of what could be characterised as a discrepancy between programme objectives and the outcome of literacy courses. To the majority of learners including women, perceptions that literacy acquisition was unlikely to lead to employment or genuine opportunities for social and economic advancement was probably the key factor in the failure of the measures designed to promote learner recruitment and successful completion in literacy courses. As well, it was viewed as the principal factor in the high drop out among adult learners.

Summary of Findings on Macro-Level Factors Perceived as Associated with the Successful and Unsuccessful Outcomes of Adult Literacy Programmes

The preceding section of this Chapter has presented the findings on macro-level factors. Each factor was presented in terms of whether or not the majority of respondents belonging to each of the four groups related it to the successful or unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes across the country.

As can be seen in Table 4, four principal macro-level factors stood out in the views expressed by respondents. One each of the factors, namely; donor or foreign support as well as the continuing decline of the nation's economy, was associated with the success and failure of literacy programmes respectively. The other two factors pertained to political issues and the findings revealed that they were simultaneously related to the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of literacy programmes. Three subsidiary factors, all of which were related to the unsuccessful outcomes of literacy programmes, emerged in the findings on the factor described as the extent of political commitment in support of literacy and adult education by the Ministry of Education. Where relevant, statistical data or observations recorded as field notes were used in support of the findings.

The results on each factor revealed some considerable agreement in the views expressed by the majority of respondents belonging to each of the four groups. At the same time, however, considerable variations were found in the interpretations of the problems, particularly in instances when the factor was viewed as relating to the unsuccessful outcomes of literacy programmes. Among all government officials, for example, the continuing decline of the nation's economy was viewed in terms of external factors, primarily the impact of structural adjustment and, to some extent, the rebel war. Structural adjustment was blamed by them for the exacerbation of the economic crisis. In addition to the relatively low state funding for literacy and adult education, government officials also blamed the economic crisis for the general indifference towards literacy across the country. As well, officials blamed the relative inadequacy of state education financial resources allocated to literacy and adult education as well as the failure of the measures designed to promote recruitment efforts on a variety of contextual factors. The economic crisis; rebel war; as well as the social, cultural and historical conditions of Sierra Leone society, presented in Chapter Four, were viewed as creating a non-supportive environment for literacy among the nation's literates and illiterates alike. The constraining influence of these contextual factors was clearly evident in the findings.

Agency/organization representatives agreed with the views expressed by government officials but only to an extent. To the majority of them, the economic crisis was viewed as the product of both external factors, largely structural adjustment, as well as internal factors, primarily official or government corruption. As well, while acknowledging the constraining influence of contextual factors on adult literacy programmes across the country, the majority of agency/organization representatives also blamed the problems of funding and recruitment not on themselves, but on the government. The near complete absence of any direction for postliteracy activities, for example, was viewed as evidence of limited state interest in adult literacy.

Both literacy instructors and adult learners blamed the economic crisis almost exclusively on corruption by government officials. As well, both groups blamed the crisis for the limited incentives as well as the increased cost of instructional and learning materials. Like agency/ organization representatives, literacy instructors acknowledged the constraining influence of a variety of societal conditions, like traditional, historical and socio-economic issues on the outcomes of adult literacy programmes. Yet the problems of inadequate funding as well as low recruitment of instructors and adult learners were, in the view of instructors, basically political and organizational. Politically, state support for adult literacy was viewed as relatively weak. Organisationally, the majority of instructors viewed agency/organization support for them as well as learners as inadequate. In general, there was, like government officials and agency/ organization representatives, hardly any self-criticism, by instructors, of their instructional methods or their levels of professional training and qualification on recruitment efforts. Whenever such issues were mentioned, they were generally viewed in terms of the inadequacy of instructional resources as well as instructor incentives.

While they blamed the government and agencies/organisations for inadequate literacy funding as well as instructor problems, the majority of adult learners at the same time blamed the other groups for the low learner recruitment and high drop out rates from classes. Agencies/organisations as well as the government were blamed for the lack of adequate learner incentives. Such views by learners would appear to suggest that they were probably not so much interested in the intrinsic value of literacy as in the benefits accompanying learner recruitment. If one accepts this observation, then the low recruitment and high drop out rates among learners could probably be due to perceptions regarding the unavailability of such incentives.

Besides the government and agencies/organisations, adult learners also blamed the problems associated with low recruitment and high drop out rates on the frequent lateness and absenteeism of instructors. As well, unlike the other groups who hardly questioned the ability of programmes to achieve their espoused objectives, several adult learners expressed views relating to what they considered the discrepancy between programme objectives and the outcomes of literacy courses. The perceived irrelevance or very limited utility of literacy in the lives of the nation's illiterate adult population, lack of job prospects as well as opportunities for social and economic advancement were viewed as contributing factors to low recruitment and high drop out in literacy classes. Similar differences in the interpretations of the problems were also revealed in the findings on some of the other macro-level factors. And on each of these problems, the data revealed no differences in the views expressed by both male and female learners.

Viewed in relation with the other analytic categories of factors brought out in the conceptual framework, the implications of the findings on macro-level factors could be potentially far-reaching. As noted in the review of literature for this study in Chapter Two, the findings on macro-level factors revealed the complex nature of the relationship between literacy work and the broad contextual as well as international forces. Consequently, the problems of literacy programmes in the country could not be explained simply by claims of inadequate political commitment. While such claims were clearly supported, as revealed in the findings on macro-level factors, the problems of literacy work must be also related to other broader contextual factors; social, economic, traditional and historical as well as international factors. As the findings in this section revealed, the enabling or constraining influence of these contextual and international forces on literacy programmes would appear to have been considerable.

In terms of the linkage with the other two analytic categories of factors brought out in the conceptual framework, the findings suggest that the factors described as donor or foreign as well as Ministry of Education support were likely to have some beneficial influence on organizational, administrative, technical as well as educational issues involving adult literacy work. The resources and incentives provided by the Ministry of Education as well as donor or foreign agencies would probably be helpful in terms of addressing some of the shortcomings of literacy work at organizational and programme or course levels. Conversely, contextual factors, especially the economic crisis as well as inadequate political commitment, were likely to intensify organizational and educational problems encountered be agencies/organisations and programmes. For instance, as the findings revealed, the social and economic hardship facing the nation's population, due largely to the economic crisis, may be limiting the ability of illiterates and, to some extent, instructors to participate in literacy activities.

In relation to the nation's educational reform polices and strategies on adult literacy, it is clear from the results presented in this section that the reform measures were not accompanied by any massive transfer of government education financial resources to literacy and adult education although the sub-sector was declared the nation's second priority in education. Equally important was the failure by the Ministry of Education to achieve its target estimates for recruitment in adult literacy activities as outlined in the nation's educational reform documents reviewed in Chapter Five. The statistical data on public recruitment in adult literacy activities as instructors (see Table 7) and learners (see Table 9) were probably flawed because it did not, in both cases, distinguish between new instructors and learners from existing cumulative ones. Yet, in spite of the unreliable data, it is clear from both Table 7 and Table 9 that the Ministry of Education failed by far to reach its original targets. Based on the findings presented in this section, it is clearly evident that some of the key factors responsible for the perceived failure of recruitment efforts for literacy were predominantly contextual, in particular, political, economic and cultural issues. Yet the statistical data would appear to indicate the danger inherent in target-setting. It is probably likely that the targets were unrealistic in terms of numbers and time-table and they were not based on any accurate assessment of the needs of both potential instructors and the illiterate population as well as the actual volume of government and agency/ organization resources that would be required to accomplish such an ambitious objective.

This brings to an end the presentation of the findings on macro-level factors. The results on meso-level factors will be now presented.

Meso-level Factors Perceived as Associated With the Successful and Unsuccessful Outcomes of Adult Literacy Programmes

Table 10 presents a summary of the findings on meso-level factors. As can be seen in the table, two principal meso-level factors emerged in the views expressed by respondents. They were described as:

- *proliferation of adult literacy agencies/organisations and programmes across the country.*
- *issues relating to organizational, administrative and technical support for adult literacy. Three subsidiary factors emerged in the findings on this factor.*

Table 10: Meso-Level Factors Perceived as Associated With the Successful and Unsuccessful outcomes of Adult Literacy Programmes as Emerged in the Views of State Officials (SO), Agency/Organization Representatives (AR), Literacy Instructors (LI) and Adult Learners (AL).

	# of respondents who mentioned factors organized by category.					
Meso-Level factors perceived as success-related and failure-related (i.e., organizational, administrative and technical support)	**SO** n=5	**AR** n=10	**LI** n=20	**AL** n=20	**Total # of respondents in whose responses the factor stood out**	**As % of total respondents (n = 55)**
(i) Proliferation of adult literacy agencies/organizations and programmes across the country	1	4	17	18	40	73
(ii) Organizational and administrative issues involved in the delivery of adult literacy	5	10	18	9	40	73
Subfactors						
- Issues pertaining to the administration of adult literacy programmes by agencies/organisations, including the Ministry of Education	5	10	18	9	40	73
- Issues involving co-operation, co-ordination and collaboration among agencies/organizations and programmes	5	10	18	6	39	71
- Issues pertaining to the planning of adult literacy programmes by agencies/organisations, including the Ministry of Education	5	8	14	4	31	56

Besides the two principal factors, including the subsidiary ones, no other factor stood out in the views of respondents.

The findings on the first meso-level factor will be now presented.

Findings on the Meso-level Factor Described as Agency/Organization and Programme Proliferation

The first meso-level factor that stood out in the findings was described, as can be seen in Table 10, as the proliferation of adult literacy agencies/organisations and programmes across the country. The findings revealed that the factor was simultaneously associated with the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes across the country. While the majority of government officials and agency/organization representatives associated the factor with failure, literacy instructors and adult learners related it to the successful outcomes of literacy programmes across the country. Among the majority of literacy instructors and adult learners, the factor was perceived to have brought literacy classes much closer to the homes of both learners and instructors, especially those in the rural areas. This, in essence, meant, in the opinion of both groups, that learners and instructors no longer had to travel long distances in order to attend classes. The findings revealed that among the majority of government officials and agency/ organization representatives, the factor was associated with the failure of adult literacy programmes largely because it was viewed to have intensified exiting problems of inadequate co-operation, co-ordination and collaboration among agencies/organisations and programmes.

Analysis of the Findings on Agency/Organization and Programme Proliferation in Light of Observations

The issues involving the factor, described in Table 10 as agency/organization and programme proliferation, appeared, although infrequently, in observations recorded on the subject. In general, observations pertaining to the subject recorded as field notes appear to support the findings relating to the factor, especially the views expressed by the majority of government officials and agency/organization representatives. The notes that immediately follow were recorded from observations at two meetings where the subject of agency/organization and programme proliferation was part of the deliberations:

> *The impression conveyed [from both meetings] was this. While some participants [mainly government officials] appeared visibly troubled by it [proliferation], others [agencies] were ambivalent about it. And although the implications [of proliferation] were sometimes viewed in unfavourable light, the general consensus [at both meetings] was that learners, in particular, appreciated the 'competition' because it seemed to have saved, at least some of them, the trouble of trekking long distances to attend classes (Field notes: January 21, 1993).*

This issue was further highlighted in the field notes recorded from some observations and experiences at one of the nation's major literacy centres:

> *All over this place [Bombali district in the Northern Province], the increase in the number of providers appears evident. In this particular area, there were about eleven centres, belonging, as I understood it, to four providers. This sounded intriguing since villages did not appear to have been far apart from each other. There should have been a need for some consideration to be given to the idea of integration [of programmes]. As the Sierra Leonean saying goes, 'where two or more bulls are fighting, only the grass suffers'. In this case, the increase in the number of providers may be actually hurting, rather than helping, literacy programmes unless there was co-ordination. [It is] probably understandable that authorities did not appear to have been amused by it [proliferation]* (Field notes: February 15, 1993).

Clearly, then, claims of agency/organization and programme proliferation appear to have been supported in the observations recorded on the subject. The increase in the number of adult agencies/organizations has led to a commensurate increase in the number of literacy programmes across the country. And without any minimizing of the adverse impact of the factor, as revealed in the findings, agency/organization and programme proliferation would appear to have been of some benefit to adult learners, especially those who reside in the rural areas of the country, where educational opportunities for even the young were extremely inadequate and of poor quality. Based on the findings on this factor, one could easily understand the claims made by literacy instructors and adult learners that agency/organization and programme proliferation appeared to have opened the door to literacy activities in areas where this might have, otherwise, not have been possible for peasants.

Interpretations of the Findings on Agency/Organization and Programme Proliferation

As noted in the findings, the factor, described in Table 10 as agency/organization and programme proliferation, was simultaneously associated with the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes. The findings revealed that the majority of government officials and agency/organization representatives associated the factor with the failure of adult literacy programmes. The factor was partly blamed for the intensification of the problems of co-operation, co-ordination and collaboration.

Among the majority of literacy instructors and adult learners, however, the factor was associated with the successful outcomes of adult literacy programmes. Literacy centres were no longer viewed as located far away, indicating that both instructors and learners did not have to travel long distances to attend classes. The comment by this instructor was instructive in regard to the importance attached to agency/ organization proliferation by literacy instructors and adult literacy learners generally:

> *I think, it is good, I mean when there are many organisations and, let me say, they all compete, it is good. They [i.e., agencies/organisations] will try to work hard, I think, because they will want their programmes to do well. So this is good ... Also, I think when we have many organisations, and they all have programmes, it is good for the village people, in my opinion. Because, you see, many villagers don't have no school so the people will be able to learn at the programme since, I think, they will say, the programme is near to them, it is good for them to learn. Also, I think when the programme is near to the people, it is good because, in my opinion, it will help them [learners] to pass [literacy exams] because, I think, they don't have any more to go to the next village to attend class ... or perhaps to another town. The class is near to their place and I think they will have more time to study. This is how I see it Sir ...* (Interview with a Literacy Instructor, Kenema. Transcript Code No. LI/7, p. 5).

While government officials and agency/organization representatives generally associated the factor with failure, a minority of respondents belonging to both groups, however, expressed favourable views about agency/organization proliferation. These comments by a donor or foreign supported agency/organization representative were generally typical of such minority views:

> *Well, sometimes, it is good to look at things positively. For me, there is one thing I think ... It [i.e., proliferation] is perhaps a help to the government in the sense that there are many organisations around ... Well, it has not, in my opinion, been possible for the government to meet its commitment in the area of CECs [Community Education Centres] for literacy activities. So if we view things from that perspective, maybe, the increase in the number of organisations has helped because they [i.e., agencies/organisations] have been able to establish more programmes in several parts of the country ... Maybe, this has provided more opportunities for those [learners] who desire to participate in classes. Maybe, this is a way to look at it. I really think, in some way, it [agency/organization proliferation] has helped ...* (Interview with an Agency/Organization Representative, Freetown. Transcript Code No. AR/7, p. 9).

The findings presented above have clearly indicated that, to the majority of respondents belonging to each group, agency/organization and programme proliferation was simultaneously associated with the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes across the country. And as mentioned before, the majority of government officials and agency/organization representatives related the factor to the failure of literacy programmes since agency/organization and programme proliferation was not perceived to have been accompanied by adequate co-operation, co-ordination and collaboration among agencies/organisations and programmes.

Among the majority of literacy instructors and adult learners, however, agency/organization and programme proliferation was related to the successful outcomes of adult literacy programmes. To both groups of respondents, the factor was viewed as "a good thing" largely because of the opportunities it was perceived to have provided for bringing adult literacy classes much closer to where illiterates lived, particularly those in the rural areas. In essence, then, the factor was perceived as an attempt to address some institutional obstacles to learner recruitment in adult literacy programmes, particularly in rural areas. The elimination or reduction of such institutional obstacles was widely perceived by literacy instructors and adult learners to be having a direct beneficial influence on the successful outcomes of adult literacy programmes. As well, the few agency/organization representatives and one state official who associated the factor with successful literacy activities saw some political usefulness in agency/organization and programme proliferation given that the Ministry of Education had been unable to achieve its target estimates for the establishment of two literacy and adult education institutions, namely; Community Education Centres (CECs) and Community Schools, as outlined in the nation's educational reform policies on adult literacy reviewed in Chapter Five.

The findings on the second meso-level factor will be now presented.

Findings on Issues Involving Organisational, Administrative and Technical Support for Adult Literacy

As can be seen in Table 10, the second principal meso-level factor that emerged in the views expressed by the majority of government officials, agency/organization representatives and literacy instructors was described as issues involving organizational, administrative and technical support for adult literacy. Three subsidiary factors stood out in the views pertaining to this factor. There were described as:

- *issues pertaining to the administration of adult literacy programmes by agencies/organisations, including the Ministry of Education*
- *issues involving co-operation, co-ordination and collaboration among agencies/organisations and programmes.*
- *issues pertaining to the planning of literacy programmes by agencies/organisations, including the Ministry of Education*

Besides these three, no other subsidiary factor emerged in the views expressed by respondents.

Unlike agency/organization and programme proliferation which was simultaneously associated with the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of literacy programmes, the findings on all three subsidiary factors revealed that the majority of government officials, agency/ organization representatives and literacy instructors related organizational, administrative and technical issues involved in the delivery of adult literacy to the failure of adult literacy programmes across the country. The majority of adult learners, however, saw nothing wrong with these issues and the few who expressed opinions on them were generally supportive of organizational, administrative and technical issues relating to the delivery of adult literacy.

The findings on each of the three subsidiary meso-level factors will be now presented.

Findings on Issues Pertaining to the Administration of Adult Literacy Programmes

As can be seen in Table 10, the first subsidiary factor that stood out in the views expressed by respondents was described as issues pertaining to the administration of adult literacy programmes by agencies/organisations, including the Adult Education Unit of the Ministry of Education. As noted in the introduction above, all government officials, agency/organization representatives and a substantially majority of literacy instructors associated the subsidiary factor with the failure of literacy programmes across the country. Unlike the other three groups, however, the majority of adult learners appeared generally supportive of the ways adult literacy programmes were administered by agencies/organisations, including the Ministry of Education.

Three key issues stood out in the findings on this subsidiary factor, namely; (i) inadequate government administrative control over agencies/organizations and programmes; (ii) low priority attached to the activities of the Adult Education Unit by senior bureaucrats within the Ministry of Education and; (iii) inadequate community involvement in the making of administrative decisions about programmes.

Analysis of Findings on Issues Pertaining to the Administration of Literacy Programmes in Light of Field Notes

Claims of widespread administrative problems facing agencies/organizations, including the Adult Education Unit (AEU), would appear to have been supported by data collected through other methods, namely:

> general observations by the researcher as well as in informal discussions during field visits to agency/organization offices and literacy sites.
>
> analysis of agency/organization records and documents, like minutes, annual reports, etc.
>
> deliberations at meetings to which the researcher was invited as an observer.

The notation below was recorded following a visit to the Adult Education Unit of the Ministry of Education, which, as noted in Chapter Five, is the government agency that is legally responsible for the organization and administration of literacy and adult education programmes in the country:

> *Time has passed but how things have remained relatively unchanged for adult education. The AEU appears to have remained highly centralized and bureaucratised which might be understandable since this is the general feature of government agencies. There were other issues however. The office was still located in a dilapidated building. Resources appeared to be scarce; only one old vehicle, two type writers, old tables and chairs some of which were half broken. Looking through the staff records, it was noted that only four staff members, out of a total of twenty five nation-wide were qualified adult educators. The problems appeared to have been worse in the Provincial and local branches of the Unit. One gets the impression that the Ministry [of Education] might be viewing adult education as an extra curricular appendage that must be carried out to satisfy funding organizations. It looks like the work was being giving to individuals, some of whom might not have been adequately motivated for the job. (Field notes: March 2, 1993).*

But administrative problems did not appear to have been exclusively confined to centralized and bureaucratic decision-making procedures as well as limited resources. The field notes recorded from observations at several meetings, which the researcher attended as an observer, highlight what was likely the key problem:

> *An interesting observation. At these meetings, the Ministry [of Education], especially its senior officials, was repeatedly criticised for its lack of support for adult education. The funding issue was repeatedly raised. The expression 'Ministry of Schools or, of School/Formal Education' was used several times in reference to the Ministry [of Education] ... The general consensus at these meetings was that adult education was losing out within the Ministry of Education. Surprisingly enough, Ministry of Education officials present at these meetings acknowledged, somehow grudgingly, that this was so although they observed that there was enough blame to go around. Agencies, they thought, must also share in the blame (Field notes, January 31, 1993).*

And indeed, administrative problems were not confined to the Adult Education Unit alone as agencies/organisations had their own share of the problem. In some instances, the problems appeared to have been extremely severe. The field notes presented below substantiate the point:

> *Like the AEU, many of the agencies appeared to be highly centralised and bureaucratic. As well, in some cases, the problem of resources appeared clearly evident at first glance; the heavy reliance on volunteer personnel including, in some cases, instructors; the lack of vehicles or other means of transportation; inadequate and poor monitoring and supervision of centres as well as inadequate and poor records and other forms of data on centres. In some cases, the problems related to fuel [gas] for agency vehicles as well as spare parts for maintenance. [This] was probably tied to the foreign exchange problem (Field notes: March 2, 1993).*

Clearly then, the field notes would appear to support the findings on the subsidiary factor described in Table 10, as issues pertaining to the administration of adult literacy programmes. The observations and experiences recorded on the subsidiary factor support the views expressed by the majority of government officials, agency/organization representatives and literacy instructors in regard to the subsidiary factor.

Interpretations of the Findings on Issues Pertaining to the Administration of Adult Literacy Programmes

As can be seen in Table 10, the subsidiary factor described as issues pertaining to the administration of adult literacy programmes stood out in the views of the majority of government officials, agency/organization representatives and literacy instructors. While the majority of adult learners expressed favourable opinions about administrative issues, the other three groups of respondents related the subsidiary factor to the failure of adult literacy programmes. At the same time, however, interpretations of the problems varied considerably among state officials, agency/ organization representatives and literacy instructors.

Among government officials generally, administrative difficulties facing adult literacy programmes were perceived largely in terms of inadequate administrative control over the delivery of adult literacy by the Ministry of Education. The comment by this state official was instructive:

> *Well, there are indeed very serious [administrative] problems in my opinion ... Perhaps, I will say that one problem is with the staff of the Adult Education Unit itself ... I mean the majority of the staff of the Unit, particularly those who work in the districts and, I think, even in the Provinces, are not well qualified. This is what I think. Also, I will say that another problem is that we [Ministry] don't have vehicles, bicycles or motor cycles, I mean logistic support, to help us monitor and supervise programmes or even distribute materials, like books, to classes especially in the Provinces ... Another problem, I think, is that several providers do not co-operate with the Ministry, like say, to monitor or supervise literacy programmes ... You see, in this country, it is the providers who run their programmes ... I mean there is very little role for the Ministry [of Education] ... I really think that this is perhaps the real source of the [administrative] problems. It is not like the schools where, I think, the Ministry has real authority. This is not good at all for literacy in my opinion because it is important for development in this country ... Like the farmers, they will learn how to grow crops and make more money ...* (Interview with a Senior Education Official, Freetown. Transcript Code No. SO/1, p. 12).

Like government officials, all agency/organization representatives considered the impact of administrative problems on adult literacy programmes as severe. Yet their interpretations of the problems varied considerably from those of state officials in one respect. The problems were perceived in terms of the low priority attached to the activities of the Adult Education Unit by senior bureaucrats within the Ministry of Education. The views of this agency/organization representative were typical:

> *Really, for me, Sir, I will say we have problems in this country, I mean to say the agencies have problems. But I really think it is not their fault ... I think it is the fault of the Ministry [of Education] in my opinion ... You see, Sir, in the Ministry, Adult Education is not a Division at all. It is only a Unit ... For me, if it is a Division, they will have more money in the budget and also, I think, they will have more staff and other materials. And, I think, the staff will be good. So you*

> *see, they will be able to work hard, like to supervise the adult literacy ... But you see, Sir, they don't have the people now, I mean the staff and even also, I think, they don't have the logistics, I mean like vehicles or even the money. So this is the problem. I think the people in the Ministry, like the SPS [Administrative head], the CEO [Professional head] and the others, like the Minister, I think they should make Adult Education a Division ... That will show that they have interest in it and, I think, people will know that adult education have respect ...* (Interview with an Agency/Organization Representative, Bo. Transcript Code No. AR/5, p. 11).

And on the perceived lack of interest in literacy and adult education by senior bureaucrats within the Ministry of Education, another agency/organization representative offered this solution:

> *Maybe we need a seminar for senior officials of the Ministry [of Education] to help sensitize them about the importance of adult literacy or, maybe, adult education generally ... I really think such a meeting is necessary. Who knows, maybe, some good things will happen for adult literacy after such a meeting. All of them claim that literacy work is important for the country and yet not much is done about it by the Ministry [of Education] ...* (Interview with an Agency/Organization Representative, Freetown. Transcript Code No. AR/7, p. 7).

The views expressed by the substantial majority of literacy instructors varied considerably from those of both state officials and agency/organization representatives. Among literacy instructors, the problems were perceived as inadequate community involvement in programme administrative decision-making. The comment by this instructor was typical in this respect:

> *There are many [administrative] problems, Sir, I think. But for me, Sir, the main thing is they [officials] make decisions without telling us ... Sometimes, they don't even consult the community, I mean the leaders. And for me, Sir, I think this is bad because the community people, they don't like it when they are not consulted about things for the programmes, I think ... so you see, they don't support the programme ...* (Interview with a Literacy Instructor, Makeni. Transcript Code No. LI/5, p. 4).

The results presented above have revealed that a substantial majority of government officials, agency/organization representatives and literacy instructors associated the subsidiary factor with the failure of adult literacy programmes across the country. Among the majority of respondents belonging to these three groups, the impact of the problems was generally perceived as inadequate monitoring and supervision in the field; lack of interest among some officials, particularly volunteers working with agencies/organisations, including the Ministry of

Education; inadequate distribution of limited literacy resources as well as an inadequate and inefficient management systems for the compilation and production of reliable statistical data on adult literacy.

But the interpretations of the problems varied considerably. Government officials were slightly critical of their own performance in regard to the administration of literacy programmes. They blamed the problem, in part, on the restricted Ministry of Education involvement in the administration of adult literacy programmes in the country. At the same time, state officials blamed agencies/organisations for what was viewed as their failure to question their own performance in this area. The low schooling of officials employed by several agencies/organisations, including the Ministry of Education; inadequacy of logistic support to programmes due to the economic crisis as well as the inadequacy of renumeration packages that could attract persons of adequate academic ability were viewed as key administrative problems.

Agency/organization representatives blamed the problem on the Ministry of Education. The low priority attached to the activities of the Adult Education Unit by senior bureaucrats within the Ministry of Education was viewed as the key source of the administrative problems facing literacy programmes across the country. At the same time, however, representatives were, somehow, critical of their own performance. They also blamed the problem on the inadequacy of qualified agency/organization personnel as well as financial and material resources for programmes; lack of interest among some officials, especially those working as volunteers; inadequate field monitoring and supervision of programmes by agency/organization officials; inadequate logistic support for programmes due largely to the economic crisis as well as general inadequacy of the delivery systems for adult literacy across the country.

Literacy instructors blamed the problem on government officials and agencies/organisations. Both groups were, in the opinion of instructors, underestimating the knowledge and concerns of community elders, whose support was considered critical to successful literacy work. The inadequacy of community involvement in programme decision-making was viewed by instructors as one of the key sources of administrative problems facing adult literacy programmes across the country.

Unlike the other three groups of respondents, the majority of adult learners were satisfied with the administration of literacy programmes across the country. And the minority of learners who expressed opinions on the subject were generally supportive of the ways programmes were administered across the country.

The findings on the second subsidiary meso-level factor will be now presented.

Findings on Issues Pertaining to Co-ordination, Co-operation and Collaboration Among Agencies/Organisations and Programmes

The second subsidiary meso-level factor that stood out in the views expressed by the majority of government officials, agency/organization representatives and literacy instructors was described, as can be seen in Table 10, as issues pertaining to the promotion of co-operation, co-ordination and collaboration among agencies/organisations and programmes. As noted in the introduction on the findings on meso-level factors, the majority of respondents within these three groups associated this subsidiary factor with the failure of literacy programmes across the country. At the same time, however, adult learners, generally, did not consider the subsidiary factor a major problem primarily because they appeared to lack sufficient relevant knowledge and information on the subject.

In some ways, the findings on issues pertaining to the promotion of co-operation, co-ordination and collaboration among agencies/organizations and programmes were directly related to those relating to agency/organization and programme proliferation. As noted in the findings on that factor, the majority of government officials and agency/organization representatives associated agency/organization and programme proliferation with the failure of literacy programmes primarily because of perceptions that the factor had not been accompanied by adequate co-operation, co-ordination and collaboration among agencies/organisations and programmes. Interestingly, when respondents were asked about their general opinions regarding issues of co-operation, co-ordination and collaboration, even literacy instructors who, like adult learners, had originally associated agency/organization and programme proliferation with the successful outcomes of literacy programmes, were often quick to single out the inadequacy of co-ordination, co-operation and collaboration among agencies/organisations and programmes. Like the majority of government officials and agency/organization representatives, literacy instructors viewed the National Literacy Committee (NLC), the state agency responsible for the promotion of co-operation, co-ordination and collaboration among agencies/organisations and programmes, as ineffective and inefficient.

Three key issues stood out in the responses on the ineffectiveness and inefficiency of the NLC, namely; inadequacy of resources; lack of co-operation from several member-agencies/ organisations as well as inadequate autonomy from the Ministry of Education.

Analysis of the Findings on Issues Pertaining to Co-operation, Collaboration and Co-ordination in Light of Field Notes

Claims that the National Literacy Committee (NLC), the state agency responsible for the promotion of co-operation, co-ordination and collaboration, was ineffective and efficient would appear to have been generally supported in the field notes recorded on the subject. The notes were recorded from general observations, experiences, informal discussions as well as from deliberations at meetings to which the researcher was invited as an observer. The notes quoted below were recorded after my first contact with the Adult Education Unit of the Ministry of Education.

> *The NLC was allocated an office within the Adult Education Unit. This would appear to have been an improvement on the past when, in spite of repeated requests [from providing agencies], the agency had no office of its own. There was, however, a flip side to such an arrangement. [It] reinforced the perceptions that the agency could not be completely autonomous [from the Ministry] as it*

> *claimed. The fact that the head of the Unit was still its Secretary suggests that, in theory at least, the two agencies could hardly be viewed as completely independent from each other (Field notes: December 4, 1992).*

But the lack of autonomy was only part of the problem. The field notes recorded from observations, experiences and informal discussions at literacy sites highlight the point:

> *It seemed that, in this country, several [literacy] providers preferred 'to go alone'. It looks like, in general, there was very little or no knowledge of other agencies involved in literacy activities even within the same operational area. The NLC was expected to function as a mechanism for co-ordination, to ensure that efforts were not duplicated and resources wasted. Observations from the field suggest that this was not the case. It would appear that the lack of co-ordination was still an unfortunate characteristic of literacy work in the country today (Field notes: February 15, 1993).*

The key problem of the National Literacy Committee (NLC) was, in many respects, one of inadequate resources. In two of the meetings to which the researcher was invited, the impression was conveyed that the committee lacked the necessary logistic and finances for effective performance:

> *The activities of the NLC were one of the key agenda items at both meetings. Government officials present noted that it had been impossible to convene [committee] meetings on a regular basis because of the lack of funds. It was agreed that the Ministry [of Education] would be again reminded about the subject. A meeting would be scheduled with the Minister himself (Field notes: February 11, 1993).*

The field notes would clearly appear to support the views expressed by the majority of state officials, agency/organization representatives and literacy instructors. The ineffectiveness and inefficiency of the NLC would appear to have been the key factor responsible for the problems associated with co-operation, co-ordination and collaboration among agencies/organisations and programmes across the country.

Interpretations of the Findings on Issues Pertaining to Co-operation, Co-ordination and Collaboration Among Agencies/Organisations and Programmes

As can be seen in Table 10, the subsidiary meso-level factor, described as issues pertaining to co-operation, co-ordination and collaboration stood out in the views expressed by the majority of state officials, agency/organization representatives and literacy instructors. While the findings showed that the majority of adult learners did not view the subsidiary factor as a major problem, government officials, agency/organization representatives and literacy instructors associated it with the failure of literacy programmes across the country. The findings revealed that the ineffectiveness and inefficiency of the NLC were viewed by all three groups to have resulted in the lack of an adequate mechanism for information-sharing on adult literacy as well as for the sharing of limited resources among programmes across the country. At the same time, the interpretations of the problems varied considerably between government officials on the one hand and agency/organization representatives and literacy instructors on the other.

Among all government officials, the problems of the NLC and co-ordination and collaboration, generally, were perceived as the direct result of agency/organization and programme proliferation. The NLC was generally perceived by them as lacking real authority and resources to successfully carry out its mandate. The comment by this state official was generally typical of all respondents belonging to this group:

> *Frankly, I will say that the Committee is only marginally effective ... I will say that the problem stems from two main factors or reasons. The first, I think is that it does not receive any grant from the government ... so there is no money or even personnel to do its work ... Also, I think, there is no way by which it can force providers to become members since it does not have real power ... And this brings me to the second point. I think many of the providers do not support the Committee. In fact they do not consider themselves as members which, I think, is bad ... I really think that the lack of co-ordination among agencies is a major problem for adult literacy work in this country ... especially now when we have several organisations providing literacy programmes. It is a serious problem, in my opinion ...* (Interview with a Senior Education Official, Freetown. Transcript Code No. SO/2, p. 13).

The impact of the problems on adult literacy was perceived as severe by this respondent:

> *Well, as far as I know, there has not been a study to determine this ... but I will say that, in my opinion, one area could be in the sharing of relevant information ... You see, without an efficient [literacy] Committee, it is difficult, in my opinion, for providers to share new ideas ... or maybe, new materials or even new information ... Another area, I think, is resources. I am sure you know that in this country resources are scarce for everything, including literacy work. So without*

> *an effective Committee it would be difficult to arrange for the sharing of resources among providers ... These are the few ways, I can think of ...* (Interview with a Senior Education Official, Freetown. Transcript Code No. SO/2, p. 13).

Among agency/organization representatives, the problems were viewed as the direct outcome of a lack of autonomy on the part of the NLC in view of its close association with the Ministry of Education. The views expressed by this agency/ organization representative were typical:

> *I think the Committee ... I really think it is useless in my opinion. I don't think many people, I mean the agencies, I don't think they want to work with the Committee because they say it is government ... The other point, I think, many people [agencies], I think they are afraid to join the Committee because they will say it will be government control and you see nobody [agencies] will want the government to control it. So this is the problem. I think if the Committee is not in the Ministry, I mean it is not control by the government, I think many agencies they will join it and even support it. Then it will work properly. This is my opinion about the Committee ...* (Interview with an Agency/Organization Representative, Freetown. Transcript Code No. AR/2, p. 10).

Still on the subject of the NLC's perceived lack of autonomy from the Ministry of Education, a representative of a donor or foreign supported agency/organization noted that the domination of the Committee's membership by Ministry of Education officials in practice was:

> *Bad, in my opinion, because it means the Committee will be directly controlled or heavily influenced by the government ... I don't think our organization want to be closely associated with such a Committee, I really don't ... And even other organisations do not want that, in my opinion ... This is a major problem, I think. There is too much government control or influence [of the NLC's activities] and I don't think it is a good thing ...* (Interview with an Agency/organization Representative, Freetown. Transcript Code No. AR/1, p. 12).

Like agency/organization representatives, literacy instructors generally perceived the NLC's problems as the lack of resources, infrequent meetings, lack of functioning of regional branches as well as a lack of, or inadequate, autonomy from the Ministry of Education. Unlike the other three groups, however, the majority of adult learners did not express sufficient relevant information and knowledge about the NLC and its activities. This might further indicate that regional and local branches of the NLC had long ceased to function because membership of subsidiary branches of the Committee was expected to include representatives of adult learners and community leaders. However, a minority of adult learners who expressed opinions on the subsidiary factor were generally satisfied with issues involving co-operation, co-ordination and collaboration among agencies/organisations across the country.

The findings presented above indicate that government officials, agency/organization representatives and literacy instructors associated the subsidiary meso-level factor with the failure of adult literacy programmes across the country. All state officials, agency/organization representatives and a substantial majority of literacy instructors (including even those who had earlier associated agency/organization and programme proliferation with the successful outcomes of literacy programmes) viewed the NLC as largely ineffective and inefficient in terms of serving as a mechanism for co-operation, co-ordination and collaboration among agencies/organisations and programmes. The impact of the NLC's problems was viewed in terms of the lack of a mechanism for information-sharing on adult literacy as well as for the sharing of limited resources among agencies/organisations and programmes.

There were, however, some major variations in the interpretations of the problems. Government officials blamed the problem on agency/organization and programme proliferation. As well, officials appeared to have, perhaps inadvertently, blamed the problems on the government for its failure to provide adequate support to the NLC. The Committee's problems were seen by them in terms of the lack of real authority and resources to successfully carry out its mandate as well as inadequate co-operation from several adult literacy providing agencies/organisations, whose support and commitment were considered critical to the success of the NLC's activities.

The views expressed by agency/organization representatives and literacy instructors were different from those of government officials in one respect. Both groups of respondents blamed the problem on the government. The committee's close association with the Ministry of Education meant, in their opinion, that it not only lacked autonomy, but that it was subject to bureaucratised and centralized decision-making processes, a principal feature of state agencies. As well, the government was blamed for the Committee's lack of resources, human, material and financial; the lack of operations of its branches at regional and local levels as well as the infrequent meetings that were generally marred by the absence of prominent members, thereby making decision-making difficult or, probably, impossible. Such obstacles, in their opinions, were seen as largely responsible for the inadequate co-operation, co-ordination and collaboration among agencies/organisations and programmes.

Probably because they appeared to lack adequate information and knowledge about the NLC's activities, adult learners were generally pleased with issues pertaining to co-operation, co-ordination and collaboration among agencies/organisations and programmes.

The findings on the third subsidiary meso-level factor will be now presented.

Findings on Issues Pertaining to the Planning of Literacy Programmes by Agencies/ Organisations, Including the Ministry of Education

The third and final subsidiary factor that stood out in the views of the majority of government officials, agency/organization representatives and literacy instructors was described, as can be seen in Table 10, as issues pertaining to the planning of adult literacy programmes by agencies/organisations, including the Ministry of Education. Like the other two factors already discussed, this subsidiary factor was widely associated with the failure of literacy programmes by the majority of respondents belonging to these three groups. Yet while government officials, agency/organization representatives and literacy instructors associated the subsidiary factor with the failure of programmes, the majority of adult learners generally appeared unfamiliar with planning issues. In fact, adult learners, in essence, saw nothing wrong with literacy planning and the few who expressed opinions on the subject were generally supportive of the ways programmes were planned.

Three key issues emerged in the findings on this subsidiary factor, namely; inadequate learner involvement in planning; absence of a macro-planning model from the Ministry of Education as well as constraints on learner or community involvement in planning.

Analysis of Issues Pertaining to the Planning of Literacy Programmes by Agencies/ Organizations, Including the Ministry of Education in Light of Field Notes

Claims of poor planning by agencies/organizations, including the Ministry of Education, would appear to have been supported in the general observations on the subject made by the researcher and which were recorded as field notes. The notes suggest that literacy planning was probably among the key issues to which very little attention was paid by agencies/organisations, including the Ministry of Education:

> *This issue [planning] did not appear to have featured prominently in [agency] documents at all. If, and when, it did, it was only in passing, emphasising rather loosely, the importance of involvement [in planning]. Observations, experiences and informal discussions in the field suggested that this was probably not the case however. It would appear that, at best, very little attention was paid to planning by several agencies, including, perhaps surprisingly, the Ministry [of Education]* (Field notes: February 21, 1993).

The issue of planning was further highlighted in the manner in which programmes were believed to have been launched by some agencies/organisations. The field notes recorded from observations and informal discussions at agency/organization and programme sites suggest what would appear to have been an emerging practice in regard to the launching of adult literacy programmes:

> *The idea of a [literacy] programmes is conceived by individuals, groups or agencies and, depending on their access to funding, a programme is launched. It would appear that the basic elements of programme planning are very rarely followed in several cases. Programmes appear to have been simply handed down to adults who might be interested in learning. Observations and informal discussions from the field did not reveal any [learner] involvement in instructional and planning decisions beyond their mere presence in classes (Field notes: March 1, 1993).*

The field notes would appear to support the findings on the subsidiary factor. Observations, experiences and informal discussions pertaining to the subsidiary factor suggest that poor planning was indeed a feature in most adult literacy programmes operating in the country.

Interpretations of the Findings on Issues Pertaining to the Planning of Literacy Programmes by Agencies/Organisations, Including the Ministry of Education

As can be seen in Table 10, the third and final subsidiary meso-level factor described as issues pertaining to the planning of adult literacy programmes by agencies/organisations, including the Ministry of Education, stood out in the views expressed by the majority of government officials, agency/organization representatives and literacy instructors. As noted in the findings, while the majority of adult learners did not consider the subsidiary factor a problem, the other three groups of respondents associated it with the failure of literacy programmes across the country. At the same time, however, interpretations of the problems varied considerably among the three groups of respondents.

All government officials were critical of what they perceived as inadequate or poor planning for the delivery of adult literacy. Along with the constraining influence of the social and historical features of Sierra Leone society, like socio-economic, traditional, historical and political conditions, discussed in the previous section, inadequate planning was widely perceived by them as partly responsible for the failure of the measures designed to promote learner recruitment and successful completion in literacy courses. And among all state officials, the problem was generally perceived as inadequate learner and community involvement in planning. The views of this government official were instructive with respect to the issue:

> *Well, let me be blunt. As far as I know, there is not much attention paid to planning models by, maybe, all the agencies ... And perhaps, sadly enough, this includes our own Ministry [of Education]. You see, in this country, we have not carried out an adult literacy campaign. So the planning of programmes is left to individual agencies ... But I think what happens is that people come up with the*

> *idea of running a [literacy] programme, they write a good proposal and send it abroad for money ... . When the money comes, they go to the village or, maybe, stay in Freetown and start a class ... . There is no needs assessment at all, I think. And also no consultation with the village people or learners. This is a major problem in my opinion ...* (Interview with a Senior Education Official, Freetown. Transcript Code No. SO/2, p. 16).

And on the perceived impact of inadequate planning on adult literacy programmes, the respondent offered this opinion:

> *It is not good, in my opinion. For example, I think it is important for the learners to be involved ... But you see, since the majority of the programmes, I think, do not involve these people, most learners are not ready to participate because, I think, they do not consider the programme as their own ... This is the way, I think, the bad planning has affected literacy programmes ... .I mean there is no community support and also weak attendance ...* .(Interview with a Senior Education Official, Freetown. Transcript No. SO/2, p. 17).

The views expressed by agency/organization representatives in regard to planning and its perceived impact on adult literacy programmes differed sharply from those of state officials. Unlike government officials, agency/organization representatives saw the problem as one of a lack of a clearly defined strategy for literacy planning by the Ministry of Education. The comments by this agency/organization representative was typical:

> *To tell you the truth, we do not have any planning step in this organization. And I will say for many other organisations, they do not have any planning steps too. And, in my opinion, it is maybe, because there is no [planning] direction from the government in this country ... Well, like, I think, the Ministry of Education should give us [agencies] some guidance [in planning] because many people [agencies] are implementing programmes in this country. But you see, even the Ministry of Education people, they only start programmes, no special planning steps at all ... I know this to be true ... So this is the main problem in my opinion. The government has to do something, I think ... Because there is nothing about planning, even in the Ministry of Education ... This is the fact, in my opinion ...* (Interview with an Agency/Organization Representative, Freetown. Transcript Code No. AR/4, p. 10).

And on this perceived lack of community or learner involvement in planning expressed by state officials, agency/organization representatives offered their own opinions. The views expressed by another representative were typical:

> *I really think there is ... maybe, we have a cultural problem here. You see the way I see it is that maybe many people [learners] are not prepared to be involved in making decisions about the programme, like planning decisions. Maybe, I think, people are used to receiving instructions ... But I don't know why ...* (Interview with an Agency/Organization Representative, Freetown. Transcript Code No. AR/8, p. 11).

Unlike government officials who generally considered inadequate planning to be having an adverse impact on literacy programmes, agency/organization representatives were, perhaps quite understandably, not quite sure about its impact. The following comments from two agency/organization representatives were instructive in this respect:

> *I don't know how it [inadequate planning] will affect us, I mean the programme. Maybe, I will say, if we plan good, more people will hear about the programme and they will come but I don't know for sure ...* (Interview with an Agency/Organization Representative, Freetown. Transcript Code No. AR/2, p. 7).

And as another agency/organization representative put it:

> *I really think it is difficult to tell. Maybe it is hurting the programme ... like say small enrollments ... But I can't really tell ... we need to look into this ... perhaps in the next evaluation. I think it is an important thing ...* (Interview with an Agency/Organization Representative, Kenema. Transcript Code No. AR/6, p. 7).

But while the majority of agency/organization representatives appeared to have been less enthusiastic about community or learner involvement in adult literacy planning, the same could not be said for literacy instructors. Like state officials, the majority of instructors were generally critical of both the Ministry of Education and literacy agencies/organisations for what they perceived as inadequate instructor, learner and community involvement in planning. The comment from this instructor was typical:

> *I think they, I mean the Ministry and the other providers, or, maybe, many of them, they don't have any good planning for their own programme. You see, I think they just begin the programmes, I mean they don't plan well, in my opinion. They don't include the teacher or maybe even the learner at all ... I mean in planning. Also I think many of them also, they don't include the elders. So you see the problem ... I don't think they plan well because I think, if you don't include the teacher or the learner or the elder, the programme will not work ... This is what they do, maybe not all of them, but the majority, I think ...* (Interview with a Literacy Instructor, Kamakwe. Transcript Code No. LI/2, p. 4).

Unlike the majority of respondents belonging to the other three groups, adult learners were generally unfamiliar with the technical dimensions involved in adult literacy planning. Interestingly, in spite of the claims by both state officials and literacy instructors about the lack of learner and community involvement and its perceived adverse impact on programmes, adult learners appeared generally satisfied with the status quo. In fact as Table 10 indicates, this subsidiary factor stood out in the responses of only one-fifth of all adult learners and all of them did not view literacy planning as a major obstacle.

The findings presented above have revealed that the majority of government officials, agency/organization representatives and literacy instructors associated the issues pertaining to the planning of adult literacy programmes by agencies/organisations, including the Ministry of Education, with the failure of literacy programmes across the country. At the same time, however, interpretations of the problems varied considerably among all three groups.

Government officials blamed the problems on agencies/organisations and, to some extent, the government. Inadequate learner and community involvement in the making of planning decisions by agencies/organisations, including the Ministry of Education, was perceived by them to be contributing to the failure of the measures designed to promote learner recruitment efforts. The assumption was that learners and community elders were less likely to be committed to the success of these programmes due to their lack of involvement in the making of planning decisions about the programmes.

Rather than being critical of their own performance, agency/organization representatives instead blamed the problem on the government. Through its lack of a macro-planning strategy for literacy work across the country, the Ministry of Education was perceived by them to be encouraging the prevalence of an atmosphere where inadequate adult literacy planning could flourish. And in addition to highlighting the constraints on involvement in planning, agency/ organization representatives, quite unlike government officials and literacy instructors, were, at best, ambivalent about the perceived impact of inadequate planning on the outcomes of literacy programmes.

Literacy instructors blamed the problems on both the government and agencies/ organizations. While blaming the Ministry of Education for its lack of macro-planning strategy for literacy work across the country, instructors equally blamed agencies/organizations for the inadequate learner or community involvement in literacy planning. At the same time, many of them appeared to welcome the problem since it, in essence, implied that literacy planning became, in many ways, the responsible of instructors.

Unlike the other three groups, the majority of adult learners did not consider literacy planning a major problem probably because they lacked adequate knowledge and information on the subject. Those who expressed opinions on the subject were generally pleased with the issues involved in adult literacy planning. This would appear to support the views expressed by agency/organization representatives regarding the constraints on involvement in planning.

Summary of Findings on Meso-Level Factors Perceived as Associated With the Successful and Unsuccessful Outcomes of Adult Literacy Programmes

The second section of this Chapter has presented the findings on meso-level factors. As can be seen in Table 10, two principal factors stood out in the views expressed by respondents. They were described as agency/organization and programme proliferation as well as organizational and administrative issues involved in the delivery adult literacy. Three subsidiary factors emerged in the views expressed on the second principal meso-level factor.

As revealed in the findings, agency/organization and programme proliferation was simultaneously associated with the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of literacy programmes. Among the majority of adult learners and literacy instructors, including female instructors and learners, the factor was viewed as "a good thing" primarily because of the opportunities it had provided for bringing adult literacy programmes closer to where illiterates adults lived. This was particularly important for the rural areas where educational opportunities were generally limited and where the majority of the nation's illiterates, especially farmers, lived. In this sense, agency/organization and programme proliferation was perceived as an attempt to eliminate or minimise institutional obstacles to recruitment and successful completion in adult literacy programmes, particularly in the light of the government's inability to provide adequate Community Education Centres (CECs) and Community Schools for adult literacy activities as outlined in the educational reform documents on adult literacy discussed in Chapter Five.

Among the majority of government officials and agency/organization representatives, however, agency/organization and programme proliferation was associated with the failure of literacy programmes primarily because the factor was not perceived to have been accompanied by an adequate mechanism for co-ordination and collaboration. Thus agency/organization and programme proliferation was perceived by both groups to have further exposed the ineffectiveness and inefficiency of the National Literacy Committee (NLC), the state agency that is officially and legally responsible for the promotion of co-ordination and collaboration.

The findings showed that the majority of government officials, agency/organization representatives and literacy instructors associated the second principal factor, including its three subsidiaries, with the failure of literacy programmes. The three subsidiary factors were described, as can be seen in Table 10, as issues pertaining to programme administration, co-ordination and collaboration as well as literacy planning. Unlike state officials, agency/organization representatives and literacy instructors, the results showed that the majority of adult learners, including females, did not view the three subsidiary factors as major problems.

Although government officials, agency/organization representatives and literacy instructors associated the three subsidiary meso-level factors with the failure of literacy programmes, the results showed that the interpretations of the problems varied considerably among all three groups. As well, with some minor exceptions, all three groups did not appear to have been highly critical of their own performances regarding organizational and administrative issues involved in the delivery of adult literacy. While government officials and agency/organization representatives traded blame for the problems, literacy instructors generally blamed the problem on both groups. For instance, government officials generally perceived the principal administrative problems facing adult literacy programmes in terms of the unwillingness of agencies/organisations to question their own performances in the area of programme administration. Agencies/organisations were, after all, directly responsible for the administration of programmes across the country. As well, the economic crisis was perceived to be responsible for the increasing administrative problems facing literacy agencies/organisations, including the Ministry of Education.

Agency/organization representatives, however, saw the principal administrative problems from what they thought was the lack of interest in the activities of the Adult Education Unit among senior bureaucrats within the Ministry of Education. Among adult literacy instructors, administrative problems were generally blamed on the government and agencies/organisations for what was perceived as the lack of community involvement in the making of programme administrative decisions. As the findings showed, similar differences in interpretations of the problems were also found in regard to the other subsidiary meso-level factors.

Viewed in relation to the conceptual framework, the findings on meso-level factors would appear to have been, in many ways, directly linked to those on broad macro-level factors presented in the preceding section of this Chapter, especially the influence of political, economic as well as international forces. In the face of relatively low government funding for literacy and adult education and with the Ministry of Education itself relying very heavily on external aid for educational programmes, including adult literacy, it is easy to understand the claim that agency/organization and programme proliferation was a direct bi-product of donor or foreign support. It could not have been otherwise. With a wide variety of incentives and literacy resources available from donor or foreign agencies, especially during the 1980s, it is not difficult to understand the proliferation of literacy agencies/organisations and programmes across the country.

The same linkage could be found between the problems pertaining to organizational and administrative issues involved in the delivery of adult literacy and broad political as well as economic factors. In other words, organizational, administrative and technical problems facing literacy agencies/organisations and programmes were, in some respects, the offshoot of the broader factors of inadequate political commitment in support of literacy and adult education by the Ministry of Education as well as the continuing decline of the nation's economy. The low priority attached to the activities of the Adult Education Unit by senior bureaucrats within the Ministry of Education; the ineffectiveness of both the National Literacy Committee and the Adult Education Unit as well as administrative problems facing agencies/organizations and programmes were, in many ways, due to a combination of contextual factors, especially political, cultural and economic issues. Such organizational and administrative problems were, no doubt, bound to have some corresponding influence on the educational features of literacy programmes operating in the country.

Viewed in the context of the relevant elements of the nation's educational reform policies and strategies on adult literacy discussed in Chapter Five, the results presented in this section indicate that the establishment of both the Adult Education Unit (AEU) and the National Literacy Committee (NLC), government agencies that were legally responsible for the organization and administration as well as co-ordination of adult literacy programmes respectively, were significant actions in the sense that they appeared to have provided some basic national infrastructure for adult literacy activities. Yet, as already noted, in spite of the establishment of both agencies, it is unlikely that the reform strategies in regard to issues of organization and administration of adult literacy could be judged as successful. As the results clearly showed, both agencies were widely perceived as ineffective and inefficient. It would appear evident that some prerequisite factors, like the issue of resources (i.e., financial, material and human) were ignored in their establishment, thus giving the impression that the implementation of the nation's adult literacy reform strategies in regard to organizational and administrative issues for adult literacy was probably just a political lip service.

This brings to an end the findings on meso-level factors. The results on micro-level educational factors will be now presented.

Micro-level Educational Factors Perceived as Associated With the Successful and Unsuccessful Outcomes of Adult Literacy Programmes

Table 11 presents the findings on micro-level educational factors. As can be seen in the Table, one principal micro-level educational factor, described as curriculum, instructional and learning issues involved in the delivery of adult literacy, stood out in the views expressed by the majority of respondents belonging to each of the four groups. As well, two subsidiary educational factors emerged in the findings on the factor, namely:

- *issues pertaining to the curriculum as well as instructional-learning resources.*
- *issues pertaining to instructional-learning methods and processes utilised in adult literacy programmes.*

Besides these two, no other subsidiary educational factor emerged in the views expressed by respondents.

Unlike the findings on both macro-level and meso-level factors where the majority of respondents belonging to each group associated at least one factor (or elements of a factor) with the successful outcomes of literacy programmes, the views expressed on the key educational factor, including its two subsidiaries, generally related to the failure of adult literacy programmes. This might indicate the perceived seriousness of the educational problems encountered at literacy sites or classes across the country. As well, it might also suggest that literacy agencies/organisations, including the Ministry of Education, might be hastily launching

Table 11: **Micro-Level Educational Factors Perceived as Associated With the Successful and Unsuccessful Outcomes of Adult Literacy Programmes as Emerged in the Views of State Officials (SO), Agency/Organization Representatives (AR), Literacy Instructors (LI) and Adult Learners (AL).**

Micro-Level educational factors perceved as success-related and failure-related (i.e., curriculum, instructional and learning issues)	**# of respondents who mentioned factors organized by category**				**total # of respondents in whose responses the factor stood out**	**As % of total respondents (n = 55)**
	SO n=5	**AR n=10**	**LI n=20**	**AL n=20**		
Curriculum, instructional and learning issues involved in the delivery of adult literacy	5	10	16	18	49	89
Subfactors						
- Issues pertaining to the curriculum as well as instructional-learning resources	5	9	16	18	48	87
- Issues pertaining to instructional-learning methods and processes utilised in adult literacy programmes	5	10	10	8	33	60

programmes in the naive belief that curriculum and instructional-learning issues could be easily worked out.

The findings on the two subsidiary educational micro-level factors will be now presented.

Findings on Issues Pertaining to the Curriculum as well as Instructional and Learning Resources

The first subsidiary educational factor that stood out in the views expressed by a considerable majority of respondent belonging to each group was described, as can be seen in Table 11, as issues pertaining to the curriculum as well as instructional-learning resources for literacy. As noted in the brief introduction to this section, the subsidiary educational factor was generally associated with the failure of adult literacy programmes by respondents.

Three key problems emerged in the findings on this subsidiary factor, namely; (i) inadequate implementation of the national literacy curriculum by agencies/organisations and programmes; (ii) inadequate instructional-learning resources for adult literacy and; (iii) problems associated with the material and physical conditions of adult literacy classes.

Analysis of the Findings on Issues Pertaining to the Curriculum as Well as Instructional-Learning Resources in Light of Field Notes

The field notes recorded from deliberations at meetings as well as observations during visits to literacy sites and classes appear to support the views expressed by the majority of respondents belonging to each group with regard to the issues pertaining to the curriculum as well as instructional-learning resources for adult literacy. For instance, claims of inadequate curriculum implementation appeared to have been substantiated in the notation below:

> *There was, in theory, a [national] curriculum after all. It stressed a functional orientation to literacy and it would appear to contain significant elements of the Tanzanian experience probably because policy makers were impressed by the successful [literacy] experience in that country. The major problem, it seemed, was lack of use [of the curriculum]. Some agencies did not appear to have been aware of its existence and those who did appeared to be simply ignoring it. A few*

> *agencies appeared to have something they called a curriculum. The truth of the matter, it seemed, was that in almost all the [literacy] sites visited, [about 16], the curriculum was what the instructor decided to teach. [I] wondered what impact this would have on the tests [exams].* (Field notes: February 12, 1993).

But the curriculum appeared to have been only part of the problem. The problem of literacy resources appeared clearly evident at several sites across the country:

> *Have now visited eighteen sites belonging to nine different agencies. Not surprisingly, the problem [of materials] was all too familiar and similar. At some sites, some teachers were late for classes and, in two cases, the classes had to be cancelled. But there was more; as fundamental materials, like primers, chalk, charts, follow-up texts, posters and other forms of stationery were either unavailable or in short supply. In about six or eight of the sites, there were no blackboards and so the teachers had to improvise one. At several of the sites, teachers taught without TGs [Teachers' Guides]. Materials for learners were also in short supply. They [learners], quite often, were seen sharing in the use of [reading] texts; about four to six to a text. The problem appeared to have been less severe at some sites [probably because of donor or foreign support] but the general trend was similar* (Field notes: February 12, 1993).

But the shortage of adult literacy resources was only part of the problem. The field notes highlight the point:

> *The use of schooling texts was rampant in these programmes. Such texts, mainly elementary and secondary school books, might be unsuitable for use in adult classes. As well, [the use of such books] raised questions about the functional orientation of these programmes. The nature of the texts suggested that the programmes might not, after all, be functional. In fact, many of the classes were traditional; they taught the 3Rs [Reading, Writing and Arithmetic]. (Field notes: February 26, 1993).*

Besides the problems associated with the curriculum and literacy resources, the field notes also appeared to have substantiated claims of inappropriateness of material or physical conditions of literacy classes:

> *In Bo, Kenema, Makeni and even Freetown [urban centres], classes were generally convened in the evenings in [elementary] school buildings. However, electricity supply in these places did not appear to have been regular. Lamps and candles were often used to provide lighting for classes. Another problem, it seemed, was that the furniture for school pupils might not be suitable for use by adults. Also, at some of the sites, classes did not begin on time. The janitor was late and so classrooms could not be opened on time. [It] looked like that was a common practice ... (Field notes: February 28, 1994).*

The problems appeared to have been more severe in adult literacy classes convened in villages across the country, particularly those where there were no elementary/primary schools. In several of such villages:

> *Classes were held in court barriers or, in some cases, old half falling community centres. Most of these buildings were located in noisy surroundings. There were quite a few centres with neither desks nor chairs. Learners sat on mats and benches brought from their homes. They used their knees as tables when writing. Since classes were generally convened in the evenings, there were also problems with lighting. There was no electricity in villages and candles and kerosene were far more expensive there than in urban centres. Another problem was with mosquitoes [which cause malaria] ... They were usually active in the evenings; thereby exposing learners to the possibility of catching malaria, which could be fatal. Also, in a few centres, different classes were conducted simultaneously in a single room ... (Field notes: February 13, 1993).*

Clearly, then, the field notes would appear to have supported the views expressed by the majority of respondents belonging to each of the four categories. The three specific issues that emerged in the findings appear to have been reasonably captured in observations on the subject recorded as field notes.

Interpretations of the Findings on Issues Pertaining to the Curriculum as well as Instructional-Learning Resources

As can be seen in Table 11, the subsidiary educational factor, described as issues pertaining to the curriculum as well as instructional-learning resources stood out in the views of a substantial majority of respondents belonging to all four groups. Yet the interpretations of the problems varied considerably among all four categories.

Among all government officials, the problems pertaining to the curriculum as well as instructional-learning resources were viewed in terms of what they considered the lack of implementation of the national curriculum for adult literacy as well as the escalating costs of adult literacy resources due to the economic crisis. The comment by this state official quoted below was typical:

> *I think there is a major problem here. I will say frankly that, in my opinion, we don't have a national curriculum for literacy like we have for primary or even secondary schools ... Well, we have something on paper ... The problem, in my opinion, is that nobody [i.e., agency/organization] bothers to use it [curriculum] ... or, maybe, very few providers use it. Some providers tell us they have their own curriculum ... others have nothing, in my opinion. And we [Ministry of Education] have not been able to get most providers to use the curriculum at all, I think ... This is the problem. It probably, more than anything else, tells you about our [Ministry of Education] seriousness about adult literacy ...* (Interview with a Senior Education Official, Freetown. Transcript Code No. SO/2, p. 18).

But the widespread lack of implementation of the curriculum was not perceived as the only problem:

> *There are acute shortages of materials in practically all programmes, I think. In fact, survey after survey conducted by this Ministry [of Education] has pointed to the problem of texts in most of the programmes. I mean, there are some times no exercise books for learners, no reading materials and even simple things, like pens and pencils, are often not available or, if available, very limited. It is the same for teachers ... I mean no teaching materials like Teaching Aids or Teacher's Guides, no chalk, dusters and blackboards, particularly in the villages ... This is certainly one of the most serious problems facing literacy work in the country in my mind ... It is, in my opinion, extremely difficult for people to learn under these poor conditions ...* (Interview with a Senior Education Official, Bo. Transcript Code No. SO/3, p. 9).

And as to why literacy resources were perceived to be inadequate, government officials expressed a general opinion. The comment by another state official presented below was typical:

> *I think it is a bi-product of the bad economy ... I say so because I really think that the bad economy has led to continuing increases in the prices of everything in this country today ... This means that things like exercise books, or textbooks, or even pens and pencils are perhaps expensive for several learners and, maybe, even teachers ...* (Interview with an Education Official, Bo. Transcript Code No. SO/3, p. 8).

The impact of the problems associated with the curriculum and inadequate resources on adult literacy classes was generally perceived as severe by government officials. As the same official put it:

> *Well, I think the impact is certainly not a good one ... because the problems are only likely, in my opinion, to add to the frustration experienced by teachers and learners in these classes ... I will not be surprised if the problems contribute to the drop out rate among them ... Another impact, I think is that the learner, and, maybe, even the teacher may not likely be prepared for literacy classes ... I mean if teachers and learners don't have the relevant materials, they cannot be*

> *expected to always come to class prepared, I think ... And of course, the problem also affects the learner in the exams ... I mean without any teaching and learning materials, it is easy to see why they [i.e., learners] fail in the exams ...* (Interview with an Education Official, Bo. Transcript Code No. SO/3, p. 9).

Like government officials, a substantial majority of agency/organization representatives viewed the impact of the issues associated with the curriculum as well as instructional-learning resources on adult literacy programmes to be generally severe. And, as well, the economic crisis was perceived as partly responsible for the inadequacy of literacy resources. Yet the interpretations of the problem by agency/organization representatives differed from those of state officials in one respect. To the majority of respondents belonging to this group, the problem was also perceived as one of a heavy reliance on imported resources. The comment by this agency/organization representative was generally typical:

> *Well, for my own part, Sir, I don't think there is a problem with the curriculum ... Well because we have own in this programme and it is working very well in my opinion. But you see, Sir, things, like the books or even like the duster or the blackboard, many programmes don't have them. Even here, I don't think we have enough because I think they are very costly. I mean the materials, they are expensive ... You see in this country, they don't make these materials ... I think the agencies or, maybe, the government, they have to find a way to make the materials here, I mean in this country. If this happens, the materials will be cheap, I think and the programmes will get them ... Also, maybe, they, I mean the materials, they will be useful, I think ...* (Interview with an Agency/Organization Representative, Bo. Transcript Code No. AR/5, p. 11).

In general, the views expressed by literacy instructors and adult learners regarding the subsidiary educational factor were similar to those of agency/organization representatives. As well, the impact of the problems on literacy programmes were viewed by both groups in terms of the continuing rising costs of instructional and learning resources. Yet unlike government officials and agency/organization representatives, literacy instructors and adult learners emphasized what seemed to be a related dimension of the problem. The views of this instructor were typical of those expressed by both instructors and adult learners:

> *But you know, Sir, the materials, like the books and the desks or the chairs and other materials, they are not the only thing ... Because sometimes when the teachers and the learners, they will come for class and they meet the doors locked*

> *... The headteacher sometimes complain that we do not clean the rooms, like say the candles or the cigarettes. But sometimes, we clean the place and even after that, he says he will not open the door. So this is the problem ... So you see, when the teacher and the learners, they pay the fare [transport costs] to come and the door is locked and there is no class, the next time they don't bother to come ... Also, Sir, you see there is sometimes no light and in fact, in the past, it sometimes took like six months without no light [electricity] in this city. People buy candles if they have the money ... And since we have classes in the evening, sometimes, especially during the fast month [Ramadam], both the learners and the teachers who are muslims, they will be tired to come, I think. So I will say it is not only book problems, there are many, many, more other problems, I think ...* (Interview with a Literacy Instructor, Freetown. Transcript Code No. LI/1, p. 7).

And like the problems associated with instructional and learning resources, the impact of the problems associated with the physical or material conditions of adult literacy classes were also perceived by both instructors and adult learners as equally severe. A typical view on the issue was expressed by this instructor:

> *For me, I will say the main thing is the material and the other things like the light [electricity] problem ... Because, I think, they affect the teacher and also the learner too, I mean in their work. Like the teacher, if there is no light or the class is lock or if he is not supply with the materials, like I will say, the Guide, and he don't have the money to buy it, I don't think he will teach well ... This is the problem especially for the materials, if the aid is not there, how can he teach ... This is bad because, some people [i.e., teachers] they just feel bad and give up ... I mean they drop out of the teaching business because, they say, I am wasting my time because there is no material and no pay, or good, pay ... I think it is the same problem for the learner. I mean, if there is no light and he don't have money to buy candles or if he don't have the materials and he don't have the money to buy it, how can he learn ... The tables, the chairs and the benches, they are sometimes not there [unavailable] ... so you see, Sir, this is the problem, I think ...* (Interview with a Literacy Instructor, Makeni. Transcript Code No. LI/5, p. 7).

The findings on this subsidiary educational factor have revealed that the majority of respondents belonging to each group associated the issues pertaining to the curriculum as well as instructional-learning resources with the failure of literacy programmes. Based on the findings, the perceived impact of the problems on adult literacy was viewed as contribution to the high drop out rates among instructors and learners; inadequate preparation for classes by both instructors and learners given the inadequacy of resources as well as increased failure rates at literacy exams.

There were, however, some major variations in the interpretations of the problems. Government officials blamed the problem of inadequate curriculum implementation on agencies/ organisations, probably indicating the state's inability or unwillingness to enforce their compliance. As well, the inadequacy of instructional and learning resources was blamed on the economic crisis. The escalating cost of adult literacy resources was perceived to have put them beyond the financial reach of some instructors and adult learners, particularly those in the rural areas. The poor economic circumstances of particularly rural instructors and peasant learners were making it difficult or, perhaps impossible, for them to acquire the resources needed for classes without some government or agency/organization support, which was also extremely limited or unavailable due primarily to the economic crisis.

Agency/organization representatives appeared probably satisfied with the "don't care" attitude displayed by the Ministry of Education with regard to curriculum implementation as, in essence, it meant that decisions about curriculum issues belonged to them. Like government officials, agency/organization representatives blamed the economic crisis for the escalating cost of instructional-learning resources. In what would appear as some criticisms of the government and agencies/organisations, representatives viewed the problem of inadequate literacy resources in terms of the heavy reliance on imported resources. They saw a need for the Ministry of Education as well as other providing agencies/organisations to look for ways of producing cheap locally available resources which, in their opinion, would be more relevant and useful in adult literacy work across the country.

While acknowledging the perceived impact of the economic crisis on literacy resources, both literacy instructors and adult learners blamed the other two groups for the inadequacy of instructional and learning resources for literacy. Adult learners were generally unable to identify problems related to the curriculum. However, literacy instructors, like agency/organization representatives, expressed satisfaction with the lack of active government and agency/

organization involvement in curriculum issues since, in effect, it meant that they (i.e., instructors) were directly in charge. In other words, in the majority of programmes across the country, it appeared that the curriculum was what instructors decided to teach.

Besides the curriculum and instructional-learning resources, literacy instructors and adult learners generally blamed agencies/organisations and the government for the problems assiciated with the physical and material conditions of the majority of literacy classes across the country. Among government officials and agency/organization representatives, the problems associated with the conditions of these classes were very rarely questioned, suggesting some underestimation, by both groups, of instructor and learner concerns. In both urban and rural areas, literacy classes were generally convened at night and both instructors and adult learners perceived serious problems with such arrangements. In urban centres, for example, the problems appeared to be one of a lack of access to elementary/primary school buildings which, in general, constituted the venue for adult literacy classes. Some headteachers were generally perceived as strongly opposed to the use of their school buildings for adult literacy activities. In addition to the lack of access, there was also the problem of electricity to provide light for classes in urban centres. Electricity was reported to be in short supply in urban centres across the country.

But the problems associated with the inappropriateness of physical facilities were perceived to have been even more acute in the rural areas. Unlike urban centres where the problem was one of shortage of electricity supply, there was often no electricity in the villages to provide light for classes and lamps and candles, which were expected to serve as substitutes, were generally unavailable or in short supply. As well, appropriate venues appeared to have been unavailable for classes in the villages. In several villages in the rural areas, classes were convened in temporary buildings which were not considered appropriate because of noisy surroundings or types of furniture. In addition, religious commitments as well as the nature of farming and other rural/traditional economic activities sometimes made it difficult for rural illiterate farmers to be recruited for adult literacy activities. Data collected for this study revealed that the commitment involved in the observance of the five daily prayers, one of the key tenets of the islamic religion, was perceived to be adversely affecting class attendance, particularly in muslim communities in the rural areas. This was particularly true during the holy month of Ramadam when muslims are expected to go within food and water throughout the day often leaving them pretty tired for literacy activities. As well, most rural illiterate peasants are farmers and so during the year, especially the peak farming periods, they leave their homes early in the mornings and returned at night, most times usually tired and with very little time and energy for literacy activities.

The findings on the second subsidiary educational micro-level factor will be now presented:

Findings on Issues Pertaining to Instructional-Learning Methods and Processes utilised in Adult Literacy Programmes

As can be seen in Table 11, the second subsidiary educational factor that emerged in the views of virtually all government officials and agency/organization representatives was described as issues pertaining to instructional-learning methods and processes utilized in adult literacy programmes. To both groups of respondents, the factor was widely associated with the failure of literacy programmes across the country. At the same time, however, the findings revealed that only a bare majority of literacy instructors associated the factor with the failure of literacy programmes across the country. As well, the majority of adult learners expressed very favourable opinions of the methods and processed utilised by their instructors.

Like the issues pertaining to the curriculum as well as instructional-learning resources, three major problems emerged in the findings on this subsidiary factor. They were: (i) issues relating to inadequate instructor training and qualification as well as literacy teaching and learning in a second language; (ii) problems associated with instructional and learning methods and processes and; (iii) inadequate skills and knowledge among instructors for functional literacy teaching.

Analysis of Findings on Issues Pertaining to Instructional-Learning Methods and Processes utilized in Adult Literacy Programmes in Light of Observations

Claims of problems associated with instructional-learning methods and processes utilised in adult literacy courses appeared to have been supported in the field notes recorded from observations of class sessions during visits to literacy sites. One of the key issues related to the inadequacy of instructor skills and knowledge for functional literacy teaching; a key objective of the government and agencies/organisations:

> *In this country, the strategy for literacy teaching and learning, in theory, appears to be incremental; employing the selective [functional] approach. But if, as government statistics suggest, a large proportion of instructors are not trained and, by implication, not qualified for the teaching of simple literacy skills, then it would probably not be difficult to figure out one of the principal problems in this area [i.e., functional literacy]. It may be extremely difficult for a simple elementary school teacher, even with training and qualification, to function as a polyvalent teacher with skills for, say, teaching literacy, politics, agriculture and health. In other words, to function as a literacy instructor and a community development agent at the same time; a task that functional literacy work entails. It would, therefore, be hardly surprising that most programmes do not concern themselves with the teaching and learning of technical and vocational skills. In almost all the programme sites visited and classes observed, the practice of simple literacy was clearly evident. It may be that besides the problems of [literacy] materials, teachers might not be able to measure up to such a task. (Field notes: February 20, 1993).*

But the problems were not confined exclusively to the lack of skills and knowledge for functional literacy teaching on the part of instructors. The field notes quoted below suggest what would appear to have been the underlying basic problem for literacy instructors across the country:

> *If the success of literacy programmes is partly contingent on the ability of teachers to effectively utilize the methods devised for programmes or courses, then the problems [for several programmes] appeared clearly evident, even at first sight. The difficulty, from observations in the field, appeared to have been that teachers, who for the most part are elementary or primary school teachers, were used to a dogmatic, rote learning, mechanical system of teaching in which the teacher functioned as the lone fountain of knowledge. With only limited training,*

> *several teachers, who were used to dealing with children, unavoidably had to rely on the only method [lecture] of teaching they knew from their own experiences with formal schooling.* (Field notes: February 20, 1993).

The stark reality of the inappropriateness of instructional methods utilised in literacy programmes across the country was further substantiated in the field notes that appear below:

> *The [class] commenced, as was frequently the case in these programmes, with the usual rituals, namely; exchange of greetings and silent prayers. The title of the lesson was 'Reading.' The teacher spent some time to write the sentences on the blackboard, during which period, learners sat quietly waiting for her to finish. Upon completing the writing, the teacher read aloud what she had written after which learners were instructed to repeat in chorus what she was reading or pointing to. The exercise took about ten to fifteen minutes. Then it was time for individual reading. Again, this involved the repetition of sentences, this time by individual learners. It was not clear whether learners actually understood the sentences they were reading or were only reading them by heart. The final step involved learners copying the sentences into their exercise books or, for those without books, on pieces of paper. [It] would appear that what learners actually learnt was to memorize as well as copy* (Field notes: February 26, 1993).

And at several other literacy centres and sites visited, it was observed that:

> *Spelling and grammatical mistakes were conveyed to learners from what teachers wrote on the blackboard. On numerous occasions, teachers combined capital with small letters or spelt some key words wrongly. Grammatical errors were common in teacher writings. As well, wrong pronunciations of key words by teachers were common* (Field notes: February 26, 1993).

Clearly, then, the field notes appear to support the views expressed by the majority of government officials and agency/organization representatives with regard to issues pertaining to instructional-learning methods and processes utilised in adult literacy programmes. Some of the specific issues that emerged in the findings on this subsidiary factor appeared to have been reasonably captured in the field notes.

Interpretations of the Findings on Issues Pertaining to Instructional-Learning Methods and Processes utilized in Adult Literacy Programmes

As can be seen in Table 11, the subsidiary educational micro-level factor, described as issues pertaining to instructional-learning methods and processes utilised in adult literacy, stood out in the views expressed by virtually all government officials and agency/organization representatives. To both groups of respondents, the factor was widely associated with the failure of adult literacy programmes across the country. However, the Table shows that only a bare majority of literacy instructors and adult learners associated the factor with the failure of literacy programmes and those who did so viewed the problem in terms of the inadequacy of instructional-learning resources. In fact, the majority of adult learners expressed very favourable opinions of the methods and processes utilised by literacy instructors.

All government officials were generally critical of the instructional methods and processes utilised in the delivery of adult literacy. Among them, the problem was perceived in terms of inadequate levels of instructor training and qualification as well as the widespread preference for literacy teaching in a second language. The comment by this state official was generally typical:

> *Of course there are serious problems here as well ... I will say, maybe, the first problem is with the teachers and the way they teach. You see many of the teachers, I think, are not adequately trained to teach adults even in simple literacy. So if they don't teach well in ordinary literacy, so how can they be able to teach the functional literacy ... There is also another problem. You see many teachers have problems with English. They don't speak it well or write it well, in my opinion. So you probably can see the problem here ... And the learners also, I don't think they really learn at all ... In my opinion, it is cramming [rote learning] all the way ... I mean many of them just cram to pass because I think this is what is needed [in the exams] ...* (Interview with a Senior Education Official, Freetown. Transcript Code No. SO/1, p. 23).

And on the perceived impact of the problems on adult literacy programmes, this official offered this opinion:

> *Well, I think the effect, in my opinion, is bad ... I mean since the teachers, I think, do not teach well because of, maybe, language problems, it affects the learners. I mean the learners sometimes don't do well in the exams because, maybe, they are not taught the things they are supposed to know in order to pass. I think the learners only memorise the notes and other things and so, sometimes, they don't do well at the exams ... so, I will say that this is one result, I mean the failure at the exams. And maybe, another effect is drop out among learners ... when they [i.e., learners] see that the class is not interesting, they don't come, I think. Another effect, I think, is poor teaching. I mean the teachers don't teach well ...* (Interview with a Senior Education Official, Freetown. Transcript Code No. SO/1, p. 23).

Agency/organization representatives agreed with government officials although they were generally inclined to view the problems in terms of those associated with the processes involved in instructor training. The comment by this agency/organization representative was generally typical of the way the problems were perceived by agencies/organisations:

> *I will be the first to acknowledge that we, I mean all providers, have problems in this area as well. I think one problem is that teachers, or maybe, the majority of them, do not have any training to teach in the classes ... So I will say that perhaps they do not teach well in the classes ... Teachers teach in the way they were taught in schools, or maybe, this was the way they are taught in the training programmes ...* (Interview with an Agency/Organization Representative, Freetown. Transcript No. AR/1, p. 16).

Unlike government officials and literacy agency/organization representatives, only half the total number of instructors associated the issues pertaining to instructional-learning methods and processes with the failure of literacy programmes. In general, the views expressed by instructors were supportive of those of agency/organization representatives. While these instructors considered the levels of their training and qualification for adult teaching inadequate, the problems were perceived as the bi-product of the ways they were trained as well as the inadequacy of appropriate and relevant instructional-learning resources.

Unlike the other three groups of respondents, less than half of the total number of adult learners considered instructional and learning methods utilised in adult literacy classes as major problems and even these respondents viewed it in relation to literacy resources. In fact the majority of respondents belonging to this particular group expressed favourable opinions regarding instructional and learning methods and processes.

The results on this subsidiary educational factor revealed that virtually all government officials, agency/organization representatives as well as a bare majority of literacy instructors associated the issues pertaining to instructional-learning methods and processes utilized in adult literacy programmes with the failure of literacy programmes. Like the issues pertaining to the curriculum as well as instructional-learning resources, the impact of this subsidiary educational factor was also viewed as contributing to high drop out rates among instructors and learners; widespread learning by rote among learners as well as poor exam performance by the majority of learners.

Yet while were was a general consensus among government officials, agency/organization representatives and literacy instructors regarding its adverse impact on adult literacy, the subsidiary educational factor was interpreted very differently by all three groups. Government officials interpreted the problems almost exclusively as inadequate instructor training and qualification; literacy teaching and learning in a second language (English) with which a substantial number of instructors and learners were generally unfamiliar; inadequate skills and knowledge among instructors for functional literacy teaching as well as widespread learning by rote among adult learners. Since such educational issues would normally be decided by state authorities and, to some extent, agencies/organisations, one can only conclude that government officials were, in essence, criticising their own performance.

By interpreting the problems as some offshoot of the processes carried out at instructor training courses, agency/organization representative appeared to be blaming both the government and their respective agencies/organisations since instructor training and re-training was a shared responsibility. If literacy instructors were viewed as faithful to methods and processes that were probably inappropriate, it was because, in the views of agency/organization representatives, they had been accustomed to such methods and processes from their experiences with formal schooling as well as the short-term training courses organised for them. As well agency/organization representatives viewed the problem in terms of paucity of resources available for instructor training and re-training.

To about half the total number of literacy instructors, the problems pertaining to instructional-learning methods and processes were interpreted almost exclusively in terms of inadequate resources. As well, instructors interpreted the problem as a bi-product of the methods and processes to which they had been generally exposed by their trainers during training courses as well as the schooling system.

Adult learners hardly questioned the instructional-learning methods and processes used in literacy programmes and the majority of them saw nothing wrong with such methods and processes.

Summary of Findings on Micro-Level Educational Factors Perceived as Associated with the Successful and Unsuccessful Outcomes of Adult Literacy Programmes

The third and final section of the Chapter has presented the findings on micro-level educational factors associated with the outcomes of adult literacy programmes. As can be seen in Table 11, one principal educational micro-level factor emerged in the views expressed by the majority of respondents belonging to each group. As well, two subsidiary educational factors stood out in the findings on the principal educational micro-level factor. The findings showed that the lone principal factor, including its two subsidiaries, were widely associated with the failure of adult literacy programmes across the country.

As noted in the introduction to this section, the fact that the issues involving the curriculum, instruction and adult learning were widely associated with the failure of literacy programmes might suggest that both the Ministry of Education and agencies/organisations were concentrating limited resources on the acquisition of literacy skills without due consideration of the need for consolidation and retention. As well, it might equally indicate that programmes were being implemented in the naive belief that technical issues involving the curriculum, instruction and learning could be easily worked out.

The findings revealed some widespread unanimity among the majority of respondents with regard to the perceived impact of the two subsidiary educational factors on adult literacy programmes. This was especially so in the case of the subsidiary factor that was described as issues pertaining to the curriculum as well as instructional-learning resources. Yet, interpretations of the problems varied considerably among the different groups.

While acknowledging the inability or unwillingness on the part of the Ministry of Education to enforce curriculum implementation, government officials, nevertheless, blamed the problems associated with the curriculum as well as instructional-learning resources on agencies/ organisations and the economic crisis. State officials viewed the lack of support from agencies/ organisations in the area of curriculum implementation as a major shortcoming of programmes across the country, especially as the bulk of the nation's adult literacy work was done by agencies/organisations other than the government. As well, the worsening economic climate was perceived to have made literacy resources very expensive for agencies/ organisations, instructors and adult learners alike.

Like state officials, agency/organization representatives blamed the economic crisis for the escalating cost of instructional-learning resources. As well, the heavy reliance by both the Ministry of Education and agencies/organisations on imported resources for adult literacy instruction and learning was considered a major aspect of the problem. The majority of representatives saw a need for the production and distribution of cheap, locally available resources for use in adult literacy programmes. As well, agency/organization representatives were generally pleased with the lack of enforcement of curriculum implementation by the state since it, in essence, implied that responsibility for such issues belonged to them and, to some extent, literacy instructors.

Literacy instructors and adult learners readily acknowledged the adverse impact of the economic crisis on instructional-learning resources. Yet the two groups blamed both the government and, to some extent, agencies/organisations for not only the inadequacy of instructional-learning resources but also for the problems associated with the physical and material conditions of adult literacy classes. Like the issues pertaining to the curriculum as well as instructional-learning resources, considerable variations were found in the views expressed among the different groups with respect to the issues associated with instructional-learning methods and processes utilised in adult literacy programmes.

Viewed in relation with the findings on macro-level and meso-level factors, the results presented in this section revealed the extent to which the educational features of literacy programmes were being influenced by organizational, administrative, societal conditions as well as international forces. As the findings showed, the educational problems of literacy programmes were closely linked with factors that were clearly external to the immediate province of the programmes; in particular, economic and political issues. The social and economic hardships experienced by illiterates and, to some extent, instructors, due largely to the economic crisis, was certainly a major constraint on the ability of both groups to participate in literacy activities. For instance, after a hard day's work on the farm, illiterate farmers appeared to be "resisting" the educational activities of literacy programmes primarily because such activities were not perceived as capable of bringing about meaningful social and economic advancement in their lives. As well, the shortage of instructional-learning resources, inadequacy of instructor training and qualification, the issue of material and physical conditions of literacy classes as well as inadequate implementation of the curriculum were all part of the broader package of problems relating to issues of inadequate political commitment as well as the declining economy.

But the constraining influence of these broader societal conditions and international factors on the educational activities of adult literacy programmes was only part of the problem. The educational problems of literacy programmes were also part of the broader problems of organizational, administrative and technical support for literacy. As the findings on meso-level factors revealed, organizational and administrative problems facing literacy programmes were, themselves, the offshoot of broader societal and international forces, particularly issues of inadequate political commitment as well as the continuing decline of the nation's economy. And in several ways, the educational problems facing literacy programmes were clearly part of the broader problems associated with organizational and administrative issues of literacy programmes; specifically, poor planning, inadequate co-ordination and collaboration as well as poor administrative practices by agencies/organizations, including the Ministry of Education.

In relation to the nation's educational reform policies and strategies on adult literacy, the results presented in this section suggest that the reform measures could hardly be judged successful, given the general lack of implementation of the intended curriculum and other educational problems encountered in adult literacy programmes. It is probably likely that the reform measures had exhibited a naive belief that educational issues concerning adult literacy, like instructor training and retraining, curriculum, and resources could be ignored or easily worked out. As noted in the findings on macro-level and meso-level factors, it would again appear that some major prerequisite factors, like financial resources for instructor training and retraining as well as instructional-learning resources, were not adequately worked out in the reform strategies involving educational adult literacy work.

This brings to an end the presentation and analysis of the findings of the study. While the study defined "success" and "failure" in quantitative terms (i.e., number of learners judged to have successfully completed their courses through an exam system), the findings pointed to perceptions of other dimensions or measures of both concepts. Clearly, all four groups of respondents viewed exam performance as the principal indicator of "success" and "failure". At the same time, however, the findings revealed that both concepts were also viewed in terms of the application by literates of the newly acquired skills to a variety of development-related activities in their lives as well as in their environments. The general emphasis on the need for some form of postliteracy activities, like income-generation activities, the lack of job or promotion prospects or opportunities for new literates to continue their learning, would suggest that this was the case.

Besides the general focus on the factors associated with the success and failure of adult literacy programmes, three broad issues were clearly evident in the findings of this study. In the first place, there was, in general, hardly any reference by respondents, including adult learners, to the class character of educational programmes; the issue of class characteristics of adult learners or even the class orientation of the types of jobs in which adult learners were likely to have been engaged and for which they would be expected to train through the acquisition of literacy skills. This would clearly indicate a lack of critical awareness of social class distinctions in Sierra Leone society generally as well as in the field of education, including adult literacy, among the different groups of stakeholders who participated in this study.

In addition, the data revealed no gender-based differences in the views expressed by respondents belonging to each of the four categories, including adult learners. As well, there were no major gender-based differences in drop-out and completion rates among learners (i.e., drop out and completion rates between the sexes were about even) although major differences were found in participation or recruitment rates between males and females. As the findings showed, only 27% of all adult learners were females. As brought out in the social and historical context of Sierra Leone presented in Chapter Four, the low rate of female recruitment or participation was obviously related to the multiple roles of women (especially rural illiterate women) in Sierra Leone society as well as the negative effects of a male dominated society. The data revealed that men (particularly conservative muslim rural men) viewed literate women as a threat not only to their manhood but also to rural life. The findings showed that husbands and other male relatives were generally opposed to female participation in adult literacy activities.

As well, the findings showed that the three analytic categories of factors associated with the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes presented in the conceptual framework must be viewed in relation to, rather than in isolation of, each other. Based on the findings of this study, it is clearly evident that broad societal conditions and international factors might be as critical in shaping the successful outcomes of adult literacy programmes operating within the Sierra Leone context as are the organizational, administrative and educational features of these programmes.

The next and final Chapter discusses the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This Chapter discusses the findings of the study. Section one presents a summary of the research followed by a discussion of the factors associated with the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes within the Sierra Leone context; some explanation of the discrepancy between educational reform policy objectives on adult literacy and the practice of these programmes as well as the limitations of the research. The second and final section discusses the implications of the study as well as the major recommendations arising from the research. A short concluding summary is then presented.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe and analyze Sierra Leone's educational reform policies and practices between 1970 and 1992 with regard to adult literacy in order to provide some insights and understanding into the factors associated with the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes operating in the country. The specific objectives of the study were:

- To describe and analyze the nature and structure of the nation's educational reform policies with regard to adult literacy.
- To describe and analyze the nature and structure of the nation's educational practices with regard to adult literacy.
- To identify the principal obstacles associated with the successful outcomes of adult literacy programmes and make recommendations for minimising or, if possible, eliminating them.
- To establish the extent to which there was a discrepancy between policy objectives in adult literacy and the outcomes of these programmes.

As brought out in the general descriptive and analytic overview of the nation's educational reform policies and practices on adult literacy presented in Chapter Five, government concern and interest in adult literacy stemmed largely from the perceived bearing of literacy on economic growth, social equity, national unity as well as improvement in the lives of illiterates themselves. While the implementation of adult literacy programmes across the country would thus be potentially guided by these policy considerations, the assumption was made in this study that the different stakeholders or social actors (in this case government officials, agency/organization representatives, literacy instructors and adult learners) associated with adult literacy activities would have conflicting and, in some cases, even contradictory expectations, value orientations and views about literacy programmes generally and, in particular, the factors associated with the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of these programmes.

One of the principal limitations of the existing body of Sierra Leonean research and literature on adult literacy is that it has focussed almost exclusively on the analysis of educational features of these programmes, thereby raising questions of not only the credibility of the findings but the utility of the findings in issues of educational policy and practice. This study tried to overcome this limitation. The research methods employed for the collection and analysis of data grew out of the conceptual framework which was, itself, derived from an extensive review of selected literature on literacy and development as well as successful and unsuccessful adult literacy programmes. The research embraced micro-level, meso-level and macro-level perspectives, thereby combining educational, organisational and administrative as well as socio-economic and historical issues respectively in the research process. Consequently, the study was an attempt to bridge the gap between national literacy studies and literature which have focussed on cognitive and linguistic factors and those that have stressed either administrative and organisational issues (meso-level factors) or macro-level societal and historical processes.

Also critical for this study was the generation of data through a variety of methods. While qualitative research methods were particularly useful, both qualitative and quantitative data gathering methods were employed. The primary method of data collection was semi-structured interviews involving the use of open-ended questionnaires. The sampling was purposeful, comprising some of the most important agencies/organizations and individuals who, in the judgement of the researcher, were among those who knew most about literacy work across the country. The research sample involved four categories of respondents, namely; five state officials (representing 10% of respondents), ten representatives of agencies/organisations (18% of respondents), twenty literacy instructors (36% of respondents) and twenty adult learners (36% of respondents), bringing the total number of respondents to fifty five. Two literacy instructors and adult learners were drawn from programmes organised by each of the ten participating agencies/organisations. In terms of gender breakdown of respondents, one (or 20%), four agency/organization representatives (or 40%) eight instructors (or 40%) and eleven adult learners (or 55%) were females. The interview questions related largely to the general purpose and objectives of the study and the discussions allowed respondents to explain and clarify issues. Respondents were asked a wide variety of questions, the objective being to get their opinions or views about adult literacy work, in general, and the factors that were associated with the success and failure of adult literacy programmes in particular. In the case of literacy instructors and adult learners, the interview questions were modified to enable them to explain and discuss issues for which their knowledge and understanding were considered appropriate and adequate. Data collected through the use of other methods, like analysis of official statistics, records and document analysis as well as field notes recorded from observations at literacy sites, informal discussions with agency/organization staff and deliberations at meetings, were used to validate and cross-check the interview data as well as to ensure that the widest possible sources of data were drawn upon, and that the study would be as comprehensive as possible.

The conceptual framework depicting the three analytic categories of factors associated with successful and unsuccessful adult literacy programmes derived from a synthesis of the literacy literature guided the presentation and analysis of the findings of this study. The results pertaining to each of the three analytic categories of factors depicted in the conceptual framework were presented in relation to, rather than in isolation of, each other. Following transcription, patterns or themes which emerged from the interview data were sorted out and assigned to the appropriate category (i.e., macro-level, meso-level and micro-level factors) based largely on the judgement of the researcher. And within each of the three categories, bits of data were organised and arranged in an attempt to grasp the basic themes or issues expressed in regard to the factors associated with the success and failure of adult literacy programmes. Because of the uneven composition of the sample, it was decided that a majority of respondents belonging to each of the four groups would have had to mention something before it was viewed as a factor and thus worthy of mention in the presentation and analysis of data for the study. Each factor mentioned in the views of respondents was analyzed in terms of whether the majority of respondents within each group related it to the success or failure of adult literacy programmes operating within the Sierra Leone context.

As the results showed, seven principal factors stood out in the views of the majority of respondents belonging to each of the four categories. The findings revealed that only one of the factors, namely; donor or foreign support, was widely associated with the successful outcomes of adult literacy programmes. Two factors, namely; the extent of political commitment and support to adult literacy by the Ministry of Education as well as agency/ organization and programmes proliferation, were simultaneously associated with the success and failure of these programmes. The remaining three factors, namely; the economic crisis, organizational, administrative and technical issues as well as curriculum, instructional and learning issues, were widely associated with the outright failure of adult literacy programmes across the country.

The study found some general consensus among all four groups of respondents with regard to their interpretations of the factors associated with the successful outcomes of adult literacy programmes. There were, however, marked differences between government officials and the other three groups of respondents with regard to the interpretations of the factors that were associated with the failure of these programmes. With very few exceptions, each group of respondents did not appear to have been critical of its own responsibilities for the failure of these programmes, preferring instead to blame the problems on the others, or especially in the case of government officials, on external as well as broad societal conditions, like those described in the social and historical context of Sierra Leone presented in Chapter Four.

While the study defined "success" and "failure" in quantitative terms (i.e., number of learners judged to have successfully completed their courses through an exam system), the findings pointed to perceptions of other dimensions or measures of both concepts. Clearly, all four groups of respondents viewed exam performance as the principal indicator of "success" and "failure". At the same time, however, the findings revealed that both concepts were also viewed in terms of the application by literates of the newly acquired skills to a variety of development-related activities in their lives as well as in their environments. The general emphasis on the need for some form of postliteracy activities, like income-generation activities; the lack of job/promotion prospects or opportunities for new literates to continue their learning, would suggest that this was the case.

In addition to the general focus on the factors associated with the success and failure of adult literacy programmes, three broad issues were clearly evident in the findings of this study. There was, in general, hardly any reference by all respondents, including adult learners, to the class character of educational programmes; the issue of class characteristics of adult learners or even the class orientation of the types of jobs in which adult learners were likely to have been engaged and for which they would be expected to train through the acquisition of literacy skills. This would clearly indicate a lack of critical awareness of social class distinctions in Sierra Leone society generally as well as in the field of education, including adult literacy, among the different groups of stakeholders who participated in this study.

In addition, the data revealed no gender-based differences in the views expressed by respondents belonging to each of the four categories, including adult learners. As well, there were no major gender-based differences in drop-out and completion rates among learners (i.e., drop out and completion rates between the sexes were about even) although major differences were found in participation or recruitment rates between males and females. As the findings showed, only 27% of all adult learners were females. As brought out in the social and historical context of Sierra Leone presented in Chapter Four, the low rate of female recruitment or participation was obviously related to the multiple roles of women (especially rural illiterate women) in Sierra Leone society as well as the negative effects of a male dominated society. The data revealed that men (particularly conservative muslim rural men) viewed literate women as a threat not only to their manhood but also to rural life. The findings showed that husbands and other male relatives were generally opposed to female participation in adult literacy activities.

As well, the findings showed that the three analytic categories of factors associated with the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes must be viewed in relation to, rather than in isolation of, each other. Based on the findings of the study, it was clearly evident that broad societal conditions and international factors might be as critical in shaping the successful outcomes of adult literacy programmes operating within the Sierra Leone context as were the organizational, administrative and educational features of these programmes.

The remaining segments of this section discuss the findings of the study followed by some explanation of the gap between literacy policy objectives and practice as well as the limitations of the research.

Discussion of Findings

The interpretation of the findings of this study suggests that four principal factors might be critical to the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes operating within the Sierra Leonean context. They are the following:

- societal or national conditions, like the extent of political commitment as well as the state of the nation's economy.
- influence of international factors, like donor or foreign support to literacy agencies/ organisations and programmes.
- organisational and administrative support for programmes.
- curriculum, instructional and learning issues associated with adult literacy.

Based on the conceptual framework developed for the study, the first and second factors would relate to macro-level factors while the third and fourth factors would pertain to meso-level and micro-level factors respectively.

Each of these four key factors would be discussed in light of the literature reviewed as well as the discussion on the social and historical context of Sierra Leone presented in Chapter Four.

Influence of Societal or National Conditions

One of the key factors associated with the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes within the Sierra Leone context, as evidenced in this study, could be described as societal conditions. As discussed in the literature review as well as the social and historical context of Sierra Leone presented in Chapter Four, these conditions do not determine educational reform policy and practice but they have the potential ability to enable or constrain adult literacy reform efforts. Among the societal conditions uncovered in the findings of this study, the question of the perceived impact of the declining state of the nation's economy as well as the extent of political commitment in support of adult literacy were probably the most critical.

As brought out in the literature review, the economic crisis facing Third World societies is widely viewed as a product of both external factors (like structural adjustment) and internal factors (like official corruption). As well, in some analysis of the impact of the economic crisis on Third World education systems, numerous studies and literature have identified a variety of ways by which the crisis was adversely affecting the outcomes of literacy programmes (Kelly, 1991; Freebody & Welch, 1993). Based on the information presented on the social and historical context of Sierra Leone in Chapter Four as well as data collected for this study, both of these observations were probably true in the case of Sierra Leone. As the findings showed, state officials and the other three groups of respondents viewed the economic crisis as the product of structural adjustment and official corruption respectively. As well, the data revealed that the economic crisis had led to the existence of extreme socio-economic hardships and deprivation in the lives of both literates and illiterates alike that probably went far beyond the capability of improved literacy to remedy. This was partly responsible for the poor recruitment and low moral of instructors and adult learners. Furthermore, the economic crisis and the resulting lack of job prospects for schooling graduates, including those from the university, suggested that the literacy taught in the adult classes, at least in the Sierra Leonean context, was in, and by, itself, probably not a factor in the generation of employment opportunities; a situation that was further compounded or complicated by the prevalence of counter-values within Sierra Leone society brought about by the financial and material successes of "prosperous illiterates". As revealed in the data collected for this study, such counter-values as well as the perceived irrelevance or very limited utility of literacy skills in the daily and occupational transactions of illiterates (who live in a predominantly non-literate society), were probably challenging both education and literacy as assets. The findings also showed that, at least among government officials, the economic crisis, was a factor in the relatively low government funding for literacy and adult education. As well, the crisis was widely perceived to be contributing to the general indifference towards literacy among the Sierra Leonean population. The findings of this study are supported by previous studies and literature on the impact of the economic crisis on the nation's educational system (Banya, 1991, 1993; Hildebrand, 1991; Thompson, 1989, Ministry of Education, 1991).

In addition to economic factors, another key societal feature was viewed as political, specifically the issue of state commitment in support of adult literacy. In those societies, like Nicaragua, Tanzania and Cuba, where adult literacy programmes have been judged as successful, the literature has pointed to the role of the government as extremely critical (ICAE, 1979; Lind, 1988; Miller, 1985). Data collected for this study suggest that the support provided by the Ministry of Education was simultaneously associated with the success and failure of adult literacy programmes across the country. This would probably point, as some literature (Freire, 1985) suggest, to the contradictory intentions of the state in its involvement and interest in literacy programmes. As brought out in the review of educational reform policies and practices on adult literacy presented in Chapter Five, the government continues to politically assign considerable importance to literacy. At the same time, however, the findings of this study revealed what would appear to have been some general government indifference to adult literacy in practice; a point emphasised by agency/organization representatives, literacy instructors and adult learners. If one accepts these findings, then such claims of general government indifference could be partly attributed to concerns among the nation's political elites and senior bureaucrats that mass literacy could be potentially threatening to the status quo since it could have unintended consequences. A recent study by Banya (1993) concluded that the nation's political elites and bureaucrats during the period 1968 through 1992 generally appeared to have been reluctant to deal with a mass literate population. The findings of this study suggest that this was indeed the case.

While government support was simultaneously associated with the success and failure of adult literacy programmes, the findings of this study suggest that its overall impact was probably negligible given that a substantial majority of respondents belonging to each of the four groups, including state officials, considered such support as weak and inadequate (see Table 4). Given its nature and level, the kinds of support provided by the state, as brought out in the findings of this study, were probably making no meaningful contribution to the successful outcomes of adult literacy programmes in real practice. For instance, if, as previous studies and literature have pointed out (Cairns, 1982; Lind, 1986, 1988; Noor, 1982), allocation of state education resources, especially financial, was one of the principal hallmarks of concrete manifestation of political commitment and support to literacy and adult education, then the evidence in this study suggested that this was not the case in Sierra Leone. As brought out in Table 6, state education financial resources allocated to literacy and adult education remained relatively dismal between 1975/76 through 1990/91 in spite of the continuing official rhetoric about the relevance of adult education in the nation's development as well as the sub-sector's declaration as the nation's second priority in education. The same was also true of the strategies and measures designed to encourage instructor and learner recruitment. Judged against the original target estimates outlined in policy documents reviewed in Chapter Five, Tables 7 and 9 showed that the measures designed by both the government and agencies/organisations to promote recruitment efforts failed by far to attract the general public into participation in adult literacy activities as instructors and learners.

But the problems associated with inadequate government funding as well as low recruitment efforts were not exclusively political. The findings also revealed the constraining influence of a wide variety of other societal features; the kinds of conditions described in the social and historical context of Sierra Leone presented in Chapter Four. For instance, rather than themselves, government officials generally blamed the problems of inadequate funding and low recruitment on the social, economic, traditional and historical conditions of Sierra Leone society. The other groups of respondents generally stressed the political, namely; the inadequacy of state commitment in support of adult literacy. Based on the literature reviewed for this study as well as the social and historical context of Sierra Leone presented in Chapter Four, both perspectives were probably accurate. As numerous studies have pointed out (Fingeret, 1983, Mehran, 1992), broad socio-economic, political, traditional and historical conditions of a society do influence, constrain and even hinder educational reform efforts in Third World societies. The findings of this study showed that in the case of Sierra Leone, the influence of these societal features on adult literacy activities were essentially viewed as constraining. Besides poor and inadequate funding as well as recruitment strategies and measures, these conditions, particularly political and economic issues, were viewed as largely responsible for the lack of interest in the activities of both the Adult Education Unit and the National Literacy Committee by senior politicians and bureaucrats within the Ministry of Education; the near complete absence of postliteracy activities; the widespread lack of implementation of the intended curriculum; escalating cost of adult literacy resources as well as the inadequacy of infrastructural support for programme administration. This would suggest the widespread perception of the adverse impact of such societal conditions on adult literacy. As some studies (Bock & Papagiannis, 1983; Watson, 1984) have pointed out, broad societal features are as critical in the successful outcomes of literacy programmes as are educational and organisational factors. The findings of this study indicated that, in the case of adult literacy programmes within the Sierra Leone context, this was probably the case.

The Influence of International Factors

The extent of the influence of international factors on the successful or unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes was probably the most significant factor uncovered in this research. By focusing almost exclusively on societal conditions or features, especially state commitment and support, several studies would appear to have ignored or underestimated the relevance of international factors, particularly external aid, in determining the successful outcomes of educational reform policies and practices on adult literacy in Third World societies, like Sierra Leone. For instance, as was clearly evidenced in the findings of this study, donor or foreign support to agencies/organisations and programmes was the only principal factor that was associated with the success of adult literacy programmes by the majority of respondents belonging to each of the four categories. In general, the findings revealed that external aid was probably the only major positive factor in the limited success enjoyed in adult literacy programmes across the country. These views would appear to have been supported in the data presented in Table 5, which showed that annual donor or foreign financial support to selected agencies/organisations and programmes increased during the decade of the 1980s. Yet the increased donor or foreign support appeared to have had only minimal or negligible impact on recruitment efforts. This might suggest the extent of the constraining influence of societal conditions described in Chapter Four and referred to earlier. As well, it might also have been related more to the outcomes of resource allocative decisions by government and agency/ organization authorities. It would appear that those decisions were not made in favour of learners and instructors and this might have contributed to the inadequacy of incentives for recruitment efforts, in spite of increased levels of donor or foreign support. In view of the increased reliance by both the state and literacy agencies/organisations on foreign aid, however, it would probably be true, as the results suggested, that without external aid, the problems facing adult literacy agencies/organisations and programmes would have been far more severe.

But the constraining influence of international factors on adult literacy activities was equally evident in the findings. The nation's economic crisis was the only major factor that was associated with the failure of literacy programmes by all fifty-five respondents. Government officials, in particular, viewed the crisis as one of the direct outcomes of structural adjustment (i.e., an international factor) with its emphases on a variety of austerity measures, like reduced social spending, including education, as a solution to the crisis. As well, officials viewed the social and economic hardships created by the economic crisis in terms of the inability or unwillingness of the general public to participate in adult literacy activities as instructors or learners. In the case of instructors, the findings revealed that financial and other incentives provided for literacy teaching were viewed as inadequate; a view that was underscored by claims of a continuing reduction in the purchasing power of the limited financial rewards due to rising inflation. For learners, including females, the problem was perceived in terms of: (i) the irrelevance or very limited utility of literacy in the lives and occupational activities of the illiterate population; (ii) the lack of job prospects and; (iii) the knowledge that the acquisition of literacy skills was unlikely to lead to meaningful social and economic advancement in the lives of the illiterate population. These findings are consistent with those of a few emerging studies and literature on successful and unsuccessful adult literacy programmes in Third World societies (Mundy, 1993; Lind, 1988; Gaborone, et at., 1988; Uniscker, 1987). As well, these results are identical with some previous national studies and literature on educational programmes, including adult literacy. These studies and literature have suggested that educational programmes designed to address the nation's high adult illiteracy rate would appear to have continued to create and sustain fairly high levels of external aid (Banya, 1988; Institute of Education, 1991).

The extent of reliance on donor or foreign support in adult literacy programmes, as evidenced in the findings of this study, is probably a reflection of the high levels of external aid attracted to Sierra Leone generally since independence in 1961. A 1990 Country Report by the Government to the UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries estimated that between 1980 and 1986, external aid constituted about 80% of total development resources, estimated at about 20 billion leones ($1 = Le500) annually during the period (Government of Sierra Leone, 1990, p. 12). As well, an unpublished document produced by the Institute of Education (1991) suggests that foreign sources provided the major share of development funding, including education, during the 1980s. And as noted in the previous Chapter, an adult literacy programme for women organised by the Ministry of Education attracted a total of approximately 121 million leones ($1 = Le500) in external funding from the German Agency for International Co-operation and Unesco between 1987/88 and 1990/91 (Institute of Education, 1991). Compared with total government literacy and adult education financial resources of about 18.341 million leones during the same period and not counting aid to other agencies/organisations and programmes, this single grant amounted to about 85% of total state financial resources allocated to literacy and adult education between 1987/88 and 1990/91. The inclusion of adult literacy activities as development projects in National Development Plans and other policy documents since 1970 would appear to have provided the opportunity for the government and other literacy agencies/ organisations to seek and attract foreign aid. Like several other societies of the Third World, the Sierra Leone government probably sees no contradiction between its interests and those of foreign capital and, as a result, there would appear to have been very little government concern over donor or foreign intervention in educational activities, including adult literacy. The nation's overall interests probably fit very well with those of the advanced capitalist societies and this would appear to have made it easier for the government and literacy agencies/organisations to seek and attract external funding (Banya, 1993).

While external aid was viewed as a powerful factor in the successful outcomes of these programmes, the results suggested that it was also considered somewhat controversial. As the findings revealed, the heavy reliance on external support was viewed as restricting national or Ministry of Education control over literacy agencies/organisations and programmes which were, at the same time, vulnerable to external pressures exerted by donor agencies, most of which would appear to have generally emphasised an economic rather than a political orientation as objectives of literacy. These criticisms are consistent with literature on donor or foreign aid to Third World societies (Freebody & Welch, 1993). Probably because of pressure from donor or foreign agencies as well as the nation's economic decline, the economic orientation appears to dominate the nation's literacy activities, reflected, in large measure, by the widespread theoretical emphasis on a functional approach (i.e., literacy for increasing production and productivity) to literacy by the state and the majority of literacy agencies/organisations. Yet as the findings revealed, the practice of the substantial majority of these programmes was in simple, rather than functional, literacy.

Even more critical in terms of the vulnerability of adult literacy programmes to donor or foreign pressures, as was suggested in the findings of this study, was the perceived impact of the current climate of "a cutback culture" in several donor countries and the resulting decline in donor or foreign support to adult literacy programmes. In the findings of this study, it was revealed that partly because of dwindling resources caused by declining donor or foreign support as well as the desire to make programmes self-reliant and self-supporting, several donor or foreign supported programmes had introduced registration and participation fees. In some cases, both instructors and learners had been also required to contribute towards the acquisition of instructional and learning resources. Yet, as the majority of instructors and learners pointed out, the impact of these measures was viewed as largely negative, mainly in the form of drop out, absenteeism and widespread shortage of resources. And the field notes recorded from observations at literacy sites receiving donor or foreign support suggested that the problems of resources, while not as severe as in other programmes, was, nevertheless, evident. In virtually all donor or foreign supported classes observed, like literacy classes generally, fundamental resources, like books, pens and dusters, were either unavailable or in short supply.

In addition to the analysis of the importance of international factors, the findings of this study have also pointed to the difficulty involved in moving towards decreased foreign or donor support and self-reliance in adult literacy programmes operating within the Sierra Leone context. As some literature has pointed out (Mundy, 1993; Uniscker, 1987) it is difficult to see how self-reliant development could be achieved in Third World societies largely because of the integration and dependence of their economies on the capitalist world economy as well the general similarity of interests between the political elites and bureaucrats in these societies and their colleagues in advanced capitalist societies. If one accepts the findings of this study, then it is probably obvious that Sierra Leone's integration into, and dependence on, the capitalist world economy has both enhanced and inhibited the successful outcomes of the nation's educational policies and practices with regard to adult literacy. As was revealed in the study, both donor or foreign support as well as structural adjustment were, respectively, related to the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes operating the country.

The Issue of Organisational, Administrative and Technical Support

Another crucial factor uncovered in this study pertained to poor and inadequate organisational, administrative and technical support to adult literacy programmes. A few studies and literature have suggested that the problems of Third World literacy programmes were essentially organisational rather than educational (ICAE, 1979). In the case of Sierra Leone, however, this study found that organisational issues were as critical as several other factors, including educational ones. In spite of the fact that agency/organization and programme proliferation was associated with the successful outcomes of adult literacy programmes, the findings also suggested that, in general, organisational, administrative and technical issues were widely viewed as problematic to the extent that the perceived impact of such issues on adult literacy programmes appeared to have far outweighed the advantages of agency/organization and programme proliferation. It was because of these issues that agency/organisational proliferation was also associated with the failure of these programmes.

The findings of this study revealed that organisational problems (see Table 10) were viewed as threefold, namely; general administrative problems; inadequate co-ordination and collaboration as well as inadequate planning. These problems were consistent with organizational problems identified in other studies and literature (ICAE, 1979; Noor, 1982) and, in the case of this study, they were probably symptomatic of the much broader problems of inadequacy of political commitment as well as the impact of the declining Sierra Leonean economy.

The results of this study revealed that government officials interpreted the administrative problems facing adult literacy programmes essentially as the product of poor administrative practices by agencies/organisations as well as inadequate control and authority over literacy agencies/organisations and programmes by the Ministry of Education. To these officials then, the solution to the problem laid, at least in part, in some level of centralisation of power and authority in the hands of the Ministry of Education which, after all, is the government agency responsible for the organization and administration of all educational programmes, including adult literacy, across the country. Yet based on the findings of this study, the Ministry of Education was unlikely to be equal to such a task without some major reforms, particularly in regard to the allocation of resources. This was the point brought out by agency/organization representatives who interpreted the administrative problems, not as products of their own administrative practices, but as the inadequacy of resources as well as a lack of interest in literacy and adult education by the nation's political elites and senior bureaucrats, including those attached to the Ministry of Education. In addition to the views expressed by state officials and agency/organization representatives, literacy instructors interpreted administrative problems as inadequate community involvement in the making of administrative decisions about programmes. Unlike the other three groups, adult learners did not view the issues involved in the administration of programmes as shortcomings. Many were unable to identify problems and those who expressed some opinions were of the view that everything was fine.

In addition to general administrative problems, another organisational issue pertained to the inadequacy of co-ordination and collaboration among literacy agencies/organisations and programmes. Several studies and literature have emphasised the importance of effective co-ordination and collaboration in the successful outcomes of literacy programmes (ICAE, 1979; Noor, 1982; Lind, 1988). According to these studies, co-ordination and collaboration must not only occur at both the horizontal level (i.e., among agencies at national levels) and vertical level (i.e., among regional and local counterparts of such agencies), but it must also involve co-operation with other sectors (like the mass media) not directly involved in adult literacy activities but whose support to literacy efforts may be critical to success. However, the findings of this study suggest that inter-agency co-ordination and collaboration was extremely minimal at best. While the establishment of the National Literacy Committee (NLC) was probably guided by concerns about the need and importance of inter-agency co-ordination and collaboration, the study found that this agency (i.e., NLC) was widely viewed as ineffective and inefficient. The NLC's problems, as evidenced in the findings, derived from several factors, including the inadequacy of resources, lack of co-operation from several literacy providing agencies/ organisations, its close association with the Ministry of Education as well as the lack of functioning of its regional and local branches. These findings have been supported in other national studies and literature (Pemagbi, 1991; Mambu, 1983; SLADEA, 1987).

Clearly then, the findings showed that the National Literacy Committee (NLC), like the Adult Education Unit, was unequal to its legal tasks and responsibilities. While the NLC's establishment would probably indicate that concrete possibilities and prospects for inter-agency and inter-sectoral linkages were being explored, the findings of this study showed that meaningful and sustained co-ordination and collaboration among agencies/organisations and programmes had yet to be achieved.

The final organisational problem uncovered in this study pertained to inadequate planning. As the results showed, this particular problem derived from what was viewed as a lack of a macro-planning model from the Ministry of Education, inadequate learner, instructor and community involvement in planning as well as constraints on learner or community involvement. If one accepts the findings of some involvement researchers (Cole & Glass, 1977) about the benefits, to programmes, of learner involvement in planning, then the inadequacy of such involvement could be hurting adult literacy programmes across the country. These studies suggest that programmes that are imposed on learners and are not related to development and/or national as well as local conditions are likely to have very little chances of success (ICAE, 1979). The evidence presented in this study suggests that adult literacy programmes operating in Sierra Leone may not be encouraging adequate instructor, learner and community participation in the making of organizational and administrative decisions. This lack of adequate participation appears to be a major factor associated with the failure of these programmes.

The findings of this study suggest that inadequate planning might be hurting literacy programmes in several ways. For instance, in addition to contributing to low instructor and learner recruitment, the impact of inadequate planning could also be explained by the absence, in most programmes, of what could be described as well-defined adult literacy strategies in practice. While adult literacy policies continue to call for a strategy of functional literacy, the findings of this study revealed that most of the programmes appeared to be in simple literacy, in other words; literacy training in the 3Rs, Reading, Writing and Arithmetic, that probably bore no direct relevance to the daily lives of learners. In general, government officials, agency/organization representatives and literacy instructors remained sincere in their conviction about the beneficial impact of literacy programmes on the nation's illiterates but the majority of adult learners flatly disagreed. Learners, including women, instead, pointed ironically to the discrepancy between programme objectives and the outcomes of these programmes as probably one of the principal problems. In addition to the emphasis on simple literacy in most programmes, there also appears to be a lack of sufficient articulation of the linkage between literacy and other development-related sectors like health, nutrition, agriculture and social welfare. If, as literature suggests (Bhola, 1984a), the success of literacy programmes is partly contingent on the integration of literacy work with such extension activities, then data collected for this study suggest that this was not the case in Sierra Leone. The literacy taught in the majority of these programmes did not appear to have been linked with the process of the learner's personal as well as national development; nor did it appear adequate for secondary sector employment or for enrollment in formal schooling. In other words, the findings suggest that adult literacy work, as currently practised, was probably marginalised and, in many ways, irrelevant, devoid of productive work and was considered an inferior education, with little impact on the living conditions of vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone society.

As well, poor planning appeared to have resulted in a general lack of a strategy of action at the level of agencies/organisations. For instance, the findings revealed that, quite often, no pre-studies of the available resources that adult literacy programmes, particularly those in rural areas, would require appeared to have been undertaken before programmes were launched. In addition, there would also appear to be an inadequate feasibility study of the language for literacy. This may be contributing to the failure by adult literacy programmes to achieve anticipated results since in most parts of the country, literacy in English appears completely impractical.

Curriculum, Instructional and Learning Issues

The fourth and final factor associated with the successful or unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes uncovered in this study pertained to curriculum, instructional and learning issues involved in the delivery of literacy. As brought out in the literature reviewed for this study, some Third World literacy agencies/organisations, including the state, have some times paid less attention to the educational issues involved in the delivery of literacy in the rather mistaken belief that such issues could be easily worked out. The findings of this study suggest that this was probably the case with the majority of literacy agencies/organisations operating in Sierra Leone. As the results showed, two key educational problems were perceived to be associated with the delivery of literacy, namely; problems associated with the curriculum and instructional-learning resources as well as discouraging instructional-learning methods and processes. Both educational problems were probably symptomatic of the larger problems facing adult literacy programmes, particularly the impact of the declining economy, inadequate state commitment as well as the influence of international factors. Such educational problems are identical with those identified in a few national studies and literature (Pemagbi, 1991; Thompson, 1988, 1989, Ministry of Education, 1993) as well as some Third World literacy literature (Lind, 1988; ICAE, 1979).

In this research, the problems associated with the curriculum and instructional-learning resources were viewed as threefold, namely: inadequate implementation of the intended curriculum by the majority of literacy agencies/organisations, inadequate and, in some cases, irrelevant instructional-learning resources as well as problems associated with the physical and material conditions of adult literacy classes, particularly in the rural areas. If, as some studies and literature, have pointed out (Knowles, 1988; Caillods & Postlethwaite, 1989), teaching-learning resources are key factors associated with the outcomes of educational programmes, then the findings of this study suggest that adult literacy programmes were probably suffering from both an unfavourable instructional-learning environment as well as the inadequacy of literacy resources. According to the findings of this study, the widespread use of schooling texts by both instructors and learners (raising questions of relevance particularly in the context of a functional literacy orientation); content inadequacy and irrelevance of even the limited resources available for use by adults; problems associated with venues where classes were convened as well as limited nature of vocabularies in several of the texts were clear obstacles to the successful outcomes of adult literacy programmes. In the case of the limited instructional and learning resources, the problem appeared to have been further compounded by the use of certain words that were either not particularly useful or commonly used, often being unknown to the majority of learners and, in some cases, even the instructors especially those in the rural areas. Several words appeared to have been simply listed outside of any context and in some cases, there were mixtures of nouns, verbs in different forms, geographical names and adjectives or adverbs. This could probably be considered normal in programmes in which teaching is in the mother tongue of learners. But in the case of these programmes, it would appear that the failure by agencies/organisations and the Ministry of Education to consider other criteria for selecting the vocabulary, such as the need to systematize the practice of elementary grammar, may be having some negative impact on instruction and learning in a second language (Baucom, 1978).

With regard to the other educational problem (i.e., discouraging instructional-learning methods and processes), the study showed that it was viewed as inadequate levels of instructor training and qualification; widespread use of what could be described as rigid, authoritarian and mechanical instructional methods and processes; widespread learning by rote and memorisation; literacy instruction and learning in a second language (i.e., English) as well as massive failure rates at literacy exams. These findings are consistent with instructional and learning problems facing adult literacy programmes in Third World societies (e.g Noor, 1982; Cairns, 1982; Lind, 1986, 1988). As well, they are identical to the findings of a few other national studies and literature on adult literacy (Thompson, 1989).

In Sierra Leone, like several other Third World states, literacy instructors are, for the most part, elementary/primary school teachers who are used to what could be described as a dogmatic, rote-learning mechanical system of instruction in which the instructor becomes the fountain of knowledge rather than a facilitator of learning (Knowles, 1988). As brought out in the findings, the field notes, recorded from observations at literacy sites, would appear to clearly support the views expressed by respondents with regard to the widespread use of rigid and authoritarian instructional methods and processes. If, as revealed in the findings of this study, literacy instructors had not been exposed to less directive instructional methods and processes through their experiences with formal schooling and, to some extent, training seminars and workshops, then it would be difficult to expect them to implement the style of instruction in which the instructor functioned as a facilitator rather than a director. A note of caution must, however, be sounded at this point. Unlike state officials and agency/organization representatives, literacy instructors and adult learners did not view instructional-learning methods and processes as major educational problems. Thus they did not consider such methods and processes as rigid and authoritarian or, as some literature has suggested (Freire, 1985), expressions of oppression or contempt for learners.

The findings of the study also revealed some other evidences of poor instructional-learning qualities. These included, as highlighted in the field notes, the transmission of spelling errors to learners from what instructors wrote on blackboards; the combination of capital and small letters by instructors; inaccurate pronunciation and spelling of some key words as well as the collective treatment of the class as a unit without due attention to differences in individual capabilities or even the previous literacy and language proficiencies of the learners. While such problems were partly viewed as the outcome of low schooling and inadequate levels of training and qualification among instructors, they were also probably part of the larger problems of the poor working conditions and instructional environment of instructors.

In addition to the rigid and authoritarian nature of instructional methods and processes, the results also revealed that the problems associated with increased failure and drop out rates were probably reinforced by literacy teaching and learning in a second language (i.e., English) as well as the nature of the literacy exam itself. In Sierra Leone, the emphasis on English as the language for adult literacy is driven by its prestige as the nation's official language; the language of business; the language of modern sector employment as well as the schooling system which potentially facilitates the link between adult literacy and formal schooling. The neutrality of English (as opposed to the national languages) would assist in the creation of a sense of national consciousness, unity and integration in an otherwise multi-ethnic society. The alternative of offering literacy in the nation's four principal languages, Mende, Temne, Limba and Krio, obviously has its advantages since some research has shown that people learn more and much faster when instruction is done in their first language (Baucom, 1978). But to change or re-write all instructional-learning materials into the four national languages would certainly be a costly undertaking and it would also involve considerable linguistic and curriculum implications, especially as instructors are only familiar with the use of English in literacy teaching. Besides, it could become a political issue, as some groups might resent the use of the language of other groups. As well, adult learners themselves would likely "resist" instruction in the national languages because of the advantages associated with literacy training in the official language.

In spite of these advantages, the results showed that the use of English as the language of adult literacy classes was a major obstacle and this was supported in observations during field visits to adult literacy sites. The findings revealed that in the overwhelming majority of cases, there was inadequate learner involvement in class discussions and activities probably because of the constraints posed by the use of English in these classes. As well, the skills of a majority of instructors, particularly those attached to rural programmes, were probably not adequate for literacy teaching in English, a problem that was further complicated by the inadequacy of literacy resources. The limited texts available did not appear to have been adapted to the needs of adult learners as well as the fact that English was not the mother-tongue of Sierra Leoneans in general. These views have been supported in previous studies and literature on adult literacy in the country (Pemagbi, 1991; Ministry of Education, 1992).

Besides the difficulty associated with conducting the adult literacy exam in English, the nature of the exam itself appears to be also encouraging drop out and failure. As the results revealed, several adult learners noted that the exam was difficult. This may be explained by the probability that the knowledge and skill required to pass the exam are not taught in some literacy classes. The reasons for this could stem from the inadequacy of resources, poor quality teaching, inadequate implementation of the literacy curriculum on which the exam is supposed to be based as well as rote learning and memorisation. The exam requires some degree of mastery of skills in understanding and reading short texts in English. As well, it requires written answers to questions on the content of the texts. It appears that such abstract use of reading and writing are not widely practised or taught in most of the literacy classes.

This brings to an end the discussion of the results. Both the findings as well as the discussion of the results have sought to uncover the complexity of the factors associated with the successful or unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes within the sierra Leone context. The study found that the successful or unsuccessful outcomes of literacy programmes depended on a complex set of four interrelated and interconnected factors, namely; international; societal; organisational, administrative and technical as well as educational factors. And in spite of the limited success enjoyed by literacy programmes, the findings of the study revealed that the overall influence of all four key factors on adult literacy programmes across the country were widely viewed as constraining.

The remaining segments of this section discuss the discrepancy between adult literacy policy objectives and the outcomes of these programmes as well as the limitations of the research.

Explanation of the Rhetoric-Reality Relationship in Adult Literacy Policy and Practice

A number of international development agencies, like Unesco, as well as development theorists (Watson, 1984) have invited researchers to examine the discrepancy between policy objectives and practice in Third World educational systems as a way of contributing to the achievement of meaningful and successful education reforms in these societies. While its principal purpose was to uncover the complexity of factors associated with the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of literacy programmes, this study also sought to respond to this invitation by exploring the discrepancy between the nation's educational reform policy objectives in regard to adult literacy and the subsequent achievements of adult literacy programmes. Based on the overview of the educational reform policies and practices on adult literacy presented in Chapter Five as well as the findings and discussions of this study, it is evident that an enormous gulf exists between the expectations in regard to adult literacy (as spelt out in policy documents) and the outcomes of these literacy programmes.

Perhaps one of the key areas in which there is some inconsistency between adult literacy policy and practice relates to the policy objectives outlined for adult literacy. As brought out in the descriptive overview of adult literacy policies and practices presented in Chapter Five, government concern and interest in adult literacy stemmed largely from the perceived bearing of literacy on economic growth, social equity, national unity as well as improvement in the lives of illiterates themselves. Such rhetoric was probably driven by the attempt by politicians to provide some emotive power for literacy, as well as to capture the imagination of illiterates and mobilise political, administrative and social will, including popular support, for adult literacy (James, 1990; Bhola, 1984a). This view derives from an apolitical perception of the role of literacy and adult education. Yet the nation's experience with formal schooling and the increasing problem of the "educated unemployed" during the decade of the 1970s would suggest that these objectives were probably too ambitious and inappropriate with the mood of the period.

Based on the overview of government policy objectives presented in Chapter Five, it would appear that government as well as agency/organization efforts towards mass adult literacy derived from what has been widely characterised as the "deficit" perspective (James, 1990). Illiterate Sierra Leoneans are perceived to have "deficits" which need to be corrected or fixed to enable them to contribute to their own development and, by implication, the nation's development. In other words, the principal task of literacy work would be to provide a means for elevating illiterate farmers and other vulnerable groups within Sierra Leone society from what the government and agencies/organisations view as a dreary and difficult condition. Yet, as numerous studies have indicated (Graff, 1987a; Fingeret, 1984; La Belle, 1986; Griffith, 1990; Freire & Macedo, 1987), the acquisition of literacy skills in, and by, itself is unlikely to contribute to any of the objectives outlined by the state unless it is accompanied by supportive social, economic and political structures. Some of these authors have pointed to countries like Tanzania, Cuba and Nicaragua as evidence that mass literacy does not necessarily contribute to economic growth, social equity and improvement in the lives of the new literates (Griffith, 1990). In fact, the point has been made that while they may be illiterate, farmers were probably more productive members of Sierra Leone society than some of the nation's literates (SLADEA, 1984).

The findings of this study suggest that the problems of literacy programmes reflected an accurate assessment, by the nation's illiterate adult population, of the limited utility of literacy, especially in resources-poor environments in the rural areas. Thus although government officials, agency/organization representatives and literacy instructors continue, as evidenced in this study, to stress that literacy work would potentially enhance the practice of better agricultural techniques, promote national unity, improve the living conditions of illiterates as well as raise the political consciousness of illiterates, the majority of adult learners, including females, flatly disagreed. As suggested in the findings, it would appear likely that after a hard day's work, illiterate farmers and other vulnerable groups were highly unlikely to want to be involved in an educational activity that was widely perceived to be of no benefit to them.

Besides the rhetoric expressed in literacy policy objectives which, while overestimating the capability of literacy as a national development tool, probably succeeded in making politicians "feel good" (James, 1990), the findings of this study suggest the existence of several other inconsistencies between literacy policy and practice, especially in regard to the issue of state commitment in support of adult literacy. As brought out in the overview of educational reform policies and practices on adult literacy presented in Chapter Five, the preferred state strategy of a functional approach to literacy (which is emphasised by structural adjustment) called for emphasis on the practice of better production and productivity raising methods as well as the linking of literacy to other development-related activities, like health, nutrition and family planning. These policy objectives appeared to have been based on the rather erroneous presumption that literacy skills would lead to an automatic increase in production and productivity. Yet the widespread use of the simple literacy method in most programmes suggests that the claims made by the state and other providing agencies/organisations about a functional orientation in programmes were probably only mere rhetoric. Indeed several studies and literature suggest that the process of increased production and productivity of workers laid outside the scope of literacy programmes (Bock & Papagiannis, 1983; Levine, 1982). As revealed in the findings of this study, several adult learners were of the view that the influence of their literacy skills were, at best, negligible when it came to issues like access to credit facilities and appropriate technologies; availability of cheap raw materials and access to fertilisers. This was the point highlighted in Fowler's (1978) study of the informal urban in Freetown, the nation's capital. He concluded that contrary the official rhetoric, the lack of literacy skills among farmers and other informal economic sector employees was probably not the major factor accounting for the low productivity in the sector. Rather, the issue was a need for official channels to create better loan and credit facilities; better markets for finished products as well as cheap raw materials, without which, the informal economic sector was unlikely to expand in spite of its immense potential. The findings of this study support this contention.

With regard to the relationship between literacy and secondary sector jobs, while the rhetoric of government officials, agency/organization representatives and literacy instructors continue to emphasize that literacy acquisition would help learners get jobs or, in the case of those already in employment, promotions, the majority of adult learners disagreed. Several learners suggested that other factors, like allegiance to the All People's Congress (APC) party or family connections, described as the "who you know syndrome?" were probably more critical in the acquisition of jobs or promotions than literacy skills. Such views have been supported in some literacy literature (Bock & Papagiannis, 1983).

Perhaps in no area was the rhetoric between adult literacy policy and practice as clearly discernible as in the area of allocation of state education financial resources to literacy and adult education. If, as several studies and literature have suggested (Bhola, 1984a, Rubenson, 1989; Psacharapoulos, 1989), the success of educational reforms is largely contingent on the allocation of adequate financial resources to reform efforts, then the findings of this study revealed that this was not the case in Sierra Leone. In spite of its recognition as the nation's second priority in education in policy documents, funding for adult education, including literacy, in relation to the other sub-sectors, did not appear to have improved during the period 1975/76 and 1990/91 (see Table 6). Government officials blamed the dismal funding on structural adjustment (and the resulting economic decay) as well as the rebel incursions. And, as clearly evident in the social and historical context of Sierra Leone presented in Chapter Four, such societal conditions would appear, in some ways, to have contributed to the reduced education spending by the government. Yet based on the findings of this study, one can understand the criticism levelled against the government for its continued rhetoric in support of literacy and adult education when it was clear that it was either unable or unwilling to allocate needed financial resources to literacy efforts, particularly during the 1980s.

In addition to inadequate state funding, the study also revealed the inadequacy of the measures designed to promote instructor and learner recruitment as well as a weak national infrastructure for adult literacy. In both of these areas, the study showed that the policy outcomes appeared to have failed to match expectations probably because of inadequate implementation of policy or incompletely analyzed financial and other resource implications. As brought out in the overview of the educational reform policies and practices on adult literacy presented in Chapter Five, the government had clearly spelt out the target estimates for recruitment of adult literacy instructors and adult learners during the period 1974 through 1992. Yet, like the policy objectives, the target estimates were probably ambitious and unrealistic. The gap between the estimates and the reality of achievement showed that some key pre-requisite factors, like a sound data base on adult illiteracy, the constraining influence of societal features, like traditional, social, economic and historical conditions as well as the issue of incentives for recruitment, were not adequately worked out. If, as some literature has suggested, the success of literacy programmes depends, in part, on visible evidence of the existence of successful and prosperous adult literates, then the lack of job prospects for schooling graduates, including even those from the university, as well as the low learner recruitment would probably suggest that the nation's illiterate population had ceased to believe the laudable rhetoric of politicians and other literacy agencies/organisations regarding the virtues of literacy skills (Hamadache & Martin, 1986, Psacharapoulos, 1989). Indeed, it has been stated that educational reforms in themselves are not possible without some parallel transformation in society (Engas, 1982). In the case of Sierra Leone, the findings of this study showed that largely because of the nation's political economy, state financial resources allocated towards literacy and adult education efforts were very limited. Increased foreign or donor support to agencies/organisations during the 1980s appeared to have had little impact on the recruitment of farmers and other marginalised groups for literacy activities probably because: (i) in spite of the single party system, literacy work remains essentially a voluntary endeavour, suggesting that participation is not compulsory; (ii) the devastating impact of the nation's economic crisis on marginalised groups in Sierra Leone society that would appear to have gone far beyond the capability of improved literacy to remedy; (iii) perceptions that literacy would not lead to any meaningful social, economic and political advancement in the lives of new literates; and (iv) perceptions of the irrelevance or very limited utility of literacy skills in the daily or occupational transactions of the majority of illiterates, especially those in the rural areas, in view of the fact that Sierra Leone is predominantly a non-literate society.

With regard to the issue of a national organisational and administrative infrastructure for adult literacy, the study suggested that the establishment of both the Adult Education Unit (AEU) and the National Literacy Committee (NLC), state agencies legally responsible for the administration and co-ordination of adult literacy programmes respectively, was probably significant in the reform efforts. Yet, based on the findings of this research, a gap could be said to exist between the roles the two agencies were expected to perform (as outlined in reform documents) and practice, at least as viewed by respondents who widely considered both agencies as ineffective and inefficient. If one accepts the findings of this study, then it would appear that the problems for both agencies were part of the broader issue of inadequate political commitment from the government as well as the impact of the economic crisis. As revealed in the findings, it would appear that some pre-requisite factors, like the issue of resources (human, material and financial) or clarification of their relationships with other literacy providing agencies/organisations, were ignored in their establishment. If, as state officials observed, other literacy providing agencies/organisations provided, at best, only lukewarm support for the activities of both the AEU and the NLC, it was probably because of this perceived inadequate clarification of the relationships between them and both government agencies.

The same rhetoric could be said to have existed with regard to the educational features associated with adult literacy programmes. As the study revealed, there was a clear gap between the intended curriculum (i.e., what was in the syllabus which, in this case, was a functional literacy approach) and the implemented curriculum (i.e., what the instructors actually taught, which was simple literacy). The lack of instructional-learning resources; inadequate levels of training and qualification among instructors; an exam system that did not appear to have been clearly worked out or based on the implemented or achieved curriculum (i.e., what learners actually learned) as well as problems associated with instructional-learning methods, processes and environments would suggest, as some literature has pointed out (Psacharapoulus, 1989), that policy issues regarding the educational features of adult literacy programmes were based on insufficient information or evidence. Given their levels of training and qualification, it was probably a daunting task to expect that a simple elementary/primary school teacher would, as literacy instructor, be involved in the teaching of extension activities along side literacy; a task that a functional orientation to literacy would have entailed. While not all the educational problems of adult literacy programmes uncovered in this study might have had some direct bearing on the quality of instruction or learning, the findings of this study suggest that they probably influenced the degree of commitment and motivation of both instructors and learners and therefore had some bearing on the quality of education provided in the programmes (Caillods & Postlethwaite, 1989).

Given this rhetoric between adult literacy policy and practice, the question arises as to "who really benefits" from adult literacy programmes within the Sierra Leone context. If, as some studies and literature have pointed out (Bock & Papagiannis, 1983), simply directing an educational programme at a particular clientele does not necessarily imply that that group is its real beneficiary, then the question that must be examined in this study relates to who controls and influences these programmes.

Based on the findings of this study, a total of about 22,173 learners (representing 27%) were reported to have successfully completed their courses between 1974 through 1992, following which they received certificates from the Ministry of Education. This would indicate that some adult literacy programmes were successful in teaching those learners who stayed in the programmes basic literacy skills. Yet analysis of the findings of this study suggested that the literacy skills taught and acquired in these programmes were viewed as either inadequate or irrelevant for the acquisition of secondary sector jobs (in the public sector), increased production and productivity or even enhancing the current occupational positions of new graduates. Data collected for this study revealed that the majority of adult learners, in particular, expressed serious apprehensions about the ability of the literacy skills taught and acquired in the various programmes to improve the socio-economic status of new literates or even contribute to economic growth and social equity. As several other studies and literature have suggested, successful educational reforms are impossible to attain without parallel transformation in social, economic, traditional and political structures of society (La Belle, 1983; Ergas, 1982; Freire & Macedo, 1987; Bock & Papagiannis, 1983). In the absence of such supportive social, economic and political institutions, this study suggested that adult literacy programmes operating in the country were unlikely to make any meaningful contribution to the acquisition of jobs; increased production and productivity; better health; high incomes or empowerment of new literates. If one accepts the analysis of the findings of this study, then this lack of supportive social, economic and political institutions suggest that in their current forms, literacy programmes appeared to be serving primarily as instruments of legitimation and co-optation on behalf of the nation's political elites and bureaucrats. In other words, under the All People's Congress (APC) party, literacy and adult education work appeared to have been co-opted by the government and used as an instrument of social legitimisation and the extension of government authority, especially in the context of the one-party system. This was particularly reflected in the weak nature of state commitment to the educational sub sector as well as the general theoretical emphasis on an economic rather than a political, social and moral orientation to literacy. For instance, throughout its tenure in office, the government of the APC party, under Presidents Stevens and Momoh, theoretically, assigned a high priority to literacy and adult education but very few government financial resources were allocated to it. As well, the general emphasis on an economic orientation suggest that literacy programmes appear to be paying very little or no regard to practices designed to potentially empower vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone society.

Based on the assessment provided in the paragraph above and the general findings of this study, the real beneficiaries of adult literacy programmes would be the government and other literacy providing agencies/organisations. While its control over, and influence in, these programmes are limited partly because of increased foreign aid and intervention and the tremendous role assigned to individual agencies/organisations, the government appears to have successfully used its limited involvement and interest in adult literacy to secure its legitimacy abroad, particularly during a period of economic decay and political repression as reflected in the one-party system. The government continues to emphasize an economic orientation to literacy work through training and re-training of illiterate adult workers in modern production and productivity raising techniques and, in the process, it has succeeded in attracting external aid for adult literacy programmes. Yet these strategies of an economic orientation to literacy (emphasised by structural adjustment) as well as increased reliance on foreign aid appear to be further encouraging the integration of the nation's economy into the capitalist world economy, thereby making the country increasingly dependent on external forces for the success of its educational programmes, including literacy, as well as its development programmes in general. It is in this sense of external control and influence that donors may also be benefitting from the activities of these programmes.

The bulk of the control and influence over literacy programmes would appear to rest with agency/organization and programme officials, who, as was clearly evidenced in the findings of this study, were generally responsible for the organization and administration of the majority of the programmes operating in the country. Both literacy instructors and adult learners wielded some restricted influence over adult literacy programmes reflected in the opportunity to "resist" the programmes in the form of mass drop out rates. Yet as the results showed, the nature and direction of these programmes were largely in the hands of agencies/organisations and this would indicate that they, and not the learners or instructors were probably the real beneficiaries (Bock & Papagiannis, 1983).

Limitations of the Study

Probably the most important limitation of this study revolves around one of the major problems associated with research that seeks to analyze educational reform policies and practices within specific societal contexts; specifically concern over the lack of generalizability of the findings. The debate continues over whether or not research of an educational phenomenon in a single country, like this one, provides adequate evidence to acclaim contribution to knowledge or even generalizability of its findings. In regard to the latter, the findings of this study may be limited in the sense that they may be only applicable to adult literacy programmes operating within the Sierra Leone context. At the same time, however, the findings may also be relevant to adult literacy programmes in other Third World states in so far as there exist a high degree of communality of settings or contexts as well as inherited and shared expectations of adult literacy policies and practices among state officials, literacy agencies/organisations, instructors and adult learners in these societies. As Spindler (1982) explains it:

> An in-depth study that gives accurate knowledge of one setting not markedly dissimilar from other relevant settings is likely to be generalizable in substantial degree to those of other settings ... it is better to have an in-depth, accurate knowledge of one setting than superficial and possibly skewed or misleading information about isolated relationships in many settings (p. 8).

The issue of generalizability of the findings was, in part, reflected in the sampling procedure utilised in the study. As noted in the research methodology and procedures presented in Chapter Three, the researcher had no control over the selection of literacy instructors and adult learners who participated in the study; both groups having being selected by participating agencies/organisations. In this sense, then, the findings of the study may be limited by the selection criteria for instructors and learners adopted by the various agencies/organisations.

But while he had no control over the selection of instructor and learners, the researcher was responsible for the selection of agencies/organisations and government officials who participated in the study. And as brought out in Chapter Three, the selection of both groups of respondents, and by implication, instructors and learners, was driven by sample bias, rather than generalizability. In other words, respondents constituted a purposive, rather than randomized sample of state officials, agencies/organisations, instructors and adult learners. Thus while it is likely that the findings adequately represented the views of the populations from which they were drawn, the generalizability of the results should be assessed in terms of reader or user generalizability (Merriam, 1988). In other words, the utility of the findings of the study would be best determined by those "who wish to apply the findings to their own situations" (Kennedy, 1979; p. 672).

All respondents who participated in this study, particularly government officials and agency/organization representatives were, in some ways, associated with agencies/organisations. This would suggest that the limitations and biases of their respective agencies/organisations could have conditioned their views. In other words, the information provided and the interpretation of the problems could have been conditioned by the respective roles of respondents within, what, for several agencies/organisations, were centralised and bureaucratic organisational structures. The fact that respondents were generally far less critical about the performance of their respective agencies/organisations would suggest that this was probably the case.

Another limitation of the study was the lack of any investigation of the ultimate impact of the acquisition of literacy skills on individuals, their communities and Sierra Leone society at large. This may be closely related to the narrow and specific quantitative definitions of "success" and "failure' adopted in the study. In order to be able to determine the beneficial impact of literacy on individuals or its contribution to development within the Sierra Leonean context, a better understanding and knowledge of the long-term effects of education would be required, especially with regard to literacy and adult education. In other words, the study did not address the specific ways through which literacy programmes had actually contributed to development as this would have, in part, involved an undertaking designed to understand the long-range impact of adult literacy programmes on a variety of development-related activities involving individuals, their communities and Sierra Leone society. The choice to focus this study on the factors associated with the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes, including the narrow definitions of "success" and "failure" was largely conditioned by time constraints as well as the resources available for the study.

The study sought to incorporate macro-level, meso-level and micro-level perspectives in the research process. Yet by focussing on the views expressed by state officials, agencies/ organisations, instructors and adult learners, the views of other stakeholders or social actors associated with adult literacy, like community elders and literacy graduates, were not incorporated in the study. This is not to imply that the views of these other groups were not considered important but rather that the four groups of respondents were probably the ones that would be integrally involved in issues of policy and practice in regard to adult literacy within the Sierra Leone context.

This study is on adult literacy activities organised in the English Language, the nation's official language as well as the language of schooling. It is not an attempt to investigate adult literacy programmes organised in the national languages (which would appear to be on the rise) nor is it a study about children's literacy or literacy acquired through the formal schooling system.

Finally, some literature has identified a variety of problems that potentially undermine the reliability of official statistics in regard to Third World literacy (Carcelles, 1992). Consequently, in view of the reliance, in this study, on official statistics as a principal data gathering method, particularly in regard to funding, recruitment, drop out and successful completion rates, the findings of this study may be limited by any inadequacy inherent in the compilation of such statistical data.

This brings to an end the discussion on the findings of the study; the rhetoric between adult literacy policy objectives and the practice of programmes within the Sierra Leone context as well as the limitations of the research. The next section presents the implications of the research as well as the recommendations arising from the study.

Implications Arising From the Study

The findings of this study have some implications for issues pertaining to policy, practice, theory and further research with regard to adult literacy within the Sierra Leone context and, perhaps, other Third World states.

Implications for Policy

The literature on educational reforms in Third World societies has stressed the importance of broad sectoral involvement in policy-making and implementation (Pscacharapoulos, 1988; Avalos, 1993; Bhola, 1984b). If educational reforms in adult literacy are to succeed in Sierra Leone society, then the evidence presented in this study suggests that the entire policy-making has to be re-examined. At present, the nation's policy makers and educational planners would appear to be displaying a paternalistic and patronizing attitude and, in the process, systematically underestimating the knowledge and concerns of especially literacy instructors and adult learners in the policy making process. Thus rather than confining it to only a handful of politicians and senior bureaucrats, policy-making regarding adult literacy must involve other stakeholders or social actors associated with literacy, in this case, agency/organization representatives, literacy instructors and adult learners. If this study is any indication, then incorporation of the views of government officials with those of agencies/organisations, instructors and adult learners is likely to greatly enrich the reform policies that would be formulated since such policies would acknowledge the differences in expectations, value orientations and interactions (i.e., contradictions, conflicts and consensus) among the various social actors and, in the process, the complexity of the factors associated with the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes. This, in turn, would potentially enhance the prospects for the successful implementation of these policies.

In addition to abandoning the non-participatory or top-down educational policy making practices in favour of a broad sectoral involvement, another policy implication arising from this study relates to the need for the nation's policy-makers and educational planners to move towards self-reliance through, for instance, the emphasis on the production and use of local resources as well as decreased emphasis on foreign aid and support. This approach is part of what has become known as ecodevelopment (Bonnet & Towle, 1981). Ecodevelopment accepts the value of national and international co-operation in the formulation and implementation of educational reform policies in Third World societies. Such policies have been designed with emphasis on self-reliant strategies and efforts based on an effective political will and commitment. In other words, they have generally advocated a need for Third World societies to devise and implement strategies of action for adult literacy based on serious educational commitment and initiative on the part of a nation's political elites and senior bureaucrats. This is not to suggest a diminishing role for external aid however. In fact, if the findings of this study are any indication, external aid would probably continue to constitute a major instrument for successful educational reform policies and practices in Third World societies for the foreseeable future. As the findings revealed, foreign assistance was viewed as the dominant factor in the limited success enjoyed in adult literacy programmes across the country. Yet in spite of this pervasive influence of foreign aid, it is important for the nation's policy makers and educators to continue to stress self-reliant strategies and efforts in literacy activities including, for instance, the allocation of increased education resources to literacy and adult education. The reasons for this are probably twofold; namely, (i) it is probably naive to expect that outsiders would for ever continue to spend more resources on literacy and adult education than the Sierra Leone government and, (ii) the emphasis on self reliant strategies and efforts is likely to ensure the continuation of successful adult literacy activities even after external funding and assistance to programmes are removed.

Still on the subject of external aid, there is need for the state, agencies/organizations and donors to re-examine the criteria for resource allocation within adult literacy activities. Analysis of the findings of this study suggested that external aid to literacy programmes might be benefitting the state and agencies/organizations over instructors and adult learners. Perceptions of the failure of the measures designed to promote recruitment efforts among instructors and adult learners in spite of increased foreign aid in the 1980s, partly supports this contention. Reforms in the criteria for resource allocation in support of instructors and adult learners, say, through reasonable financial and other incentives as well as the free supply of instructional-learning resources, is likely to enhance the prospects for success in literacy programmes across the country.

Researchers and other scholars have stressed that Third World policy makers and educators must avoid setting ambitious goals and targets for literacy in view of its serious limitations as a development instrument or a cure for social, economic and political ills of society (James, 1990; Bock & Papagiannis, 1983; Griffith, 1990). The implications of the findings of this study suggest that the nation's educational reform policies on adult literacy were probably based on an invalid model of literacy and development which, in turn, had not only raised expectations among social actors involved in adult literacy work but also encouraged the setting of ambitious goals and target estimates for recruitment. Without the courage by authorities to simultaneously formulate policies designed to transform existing social, political and economic structures to help create radical new conditions for the acquisition and uses of literacy skills in Sierra Leone society, educational reform polices with regard to adult literacy are unlikely to be successfully implemented.

If educational reforms are to be successfully implemented, the various dimensions of reform policies must be adequately addressed in a clear, coherent and consistent manner, preferably on the basis of research information rather than intuition or goodwill (Psacharapoulos, 1988, Ryan, 1985b). The evidence presented from this study suggest that some of these policy dimensions, like the linkage between adult literacy and formal schooling or postliteracy activities generally; the relationship between the Ministry of Education and other literacy agencies/ organisations as well as the potential influence of contextual factors on adult literacy activities, were not adequately addressed. The result, it would appear, was an inadequate implementation of some of the key elements contained in the nation's educational reform policies in regard to adult literacy.

Finally, if adult literacy programmes operating in Sierra Leone society are to be successful, the priorities regarding the allocation of state education resources have to be re-examined. The literature suggests that Third World educational reforms fail, in part, because policy makers often ignore some major pre-requisite factors, like resource allocation, in reform documents (Avalos, 1993). The implications of the findings of this study suggest that this is the case in Sierra Leone.

Implications for Practice

Based on the literature reviewed for this study, political commitment in support of literacy and adult education is widely considered a principal factor in the successful outcomes of adult literacy programmes in Third World societies (Bhola, 1984b; Lind, 1988; Hamadache & Martin, 1986). Consequently, for adult literacy programmes implemented within the Sierra Leone context to succeed, the nature and extent of political commitment need to be carefully re-examined. This study found that in spite of official rhetoric, state education resources allocated to literacy and adult education (i.e., financial, material and human) were inadequate. Unless the government is prepared to show a willingness and commitment to accompany its rhetoric with major resource allocations, adult literacy programmes are likely to remain largely unsuccessful and of poor or inferior quality.

As well, accepting the view that the problems of literacy programmes are only partly educational in the sense that they are bound up with economic, social, cultural and historical conditions of a society, then the findings of this study suggest that the issue of allocation of state resources; measures designed to promote recruitment as well as courage to reform larger societal structures in order to reward literacy, are among the practical political issues that require some attention by the government. Easton (1989) has suggested that strategies for better local accumulation and reinvestment of economic surpluses, such as the institution of locally and democratically managed marketing and credit structures, could create radically new conditions for the acquisition and uses of literacy because they multiply the number and importance of transactions to be managed and create new structures of accountability (p. 440). Such practical strategies could constitute the starting point in the drive to transform social structures in Sierra Leone society.

From an organisational and administrative perspective, a major re-structuring and re-organization of both the Adult Education Unit (AEU) and the National Literacy Committee (NLC), state agencies legally responsible for the administration and co-ordination of adult literacy programmes respectively, might be necessary and beneficial to the nation's adult literacy efforts. Since literacy and adult education, as evidenced in the findings of this study, appear to have been granted the least priority within the Ministry of Education, some consideration should be given to assigning the sub-sector to other government agencies besides the Ministry of Education; a practice that obtains in a few Third World societies (Noor, 1982). A number of literacy agencies/organisations working in Sierra Leone, including programme specialists, administrators and planners, have repeatedly suggested that responsibility for literacy and adult education be transferred to the office of the President as a way of granting to it the much-needed political clout that it would currently appear to lack. A similar re-structuring and re-organization may be required for the NLC to enable it to perform its role of inter-agency and inter-sectoral co-ordination and collaboration effectively as, without this, there would continue to be duplication of efforts as well as dissipation of limited resources. A revamped NLC must address a variety of issues of relevance to its co-ordinating role, in particular, the extent of autonomy it should enjoy from the Ministry of Education; a clear delineation of its role and responsibilities, including its relationship with the Ministry of Education and other literacy agencies/organisations; the issue of resources (i.e., human, material and financial) as well as the link with other agencies that may not be directly involved in adult literacy but whose role in its promotion may be critical.

But the issue of organizational re-structuring must not be viewed as confined to only government agencies. If one accepts the findings of this study, then, like the government agencies referred to above, there is in the majority of providing agencies/organisations, a non-participatory organizational structure and practice. As well, the practice of decision-making in several of these agencies, like government agencies, was viewed as top-down. Clearly then, there is need for some reforms of organizational structures to allow learners and community leaders some opportunity to share in the making of administrative decisions about programmes. Adult learners, in particular, should be able to express their demands and so strategies should be made available to help them in the process.

In the area of planning, the findings of this study suggest the need for the adoption of some sound and realistic macro and micro planning strategies by the Ministry of Education and other literacy agencies/organisations (Hamadache & Martin, 1986). Macro-level planning should aim at setting the national agenda for adult literacy. It must clearly address the broad issues pertaining to adult literacy, like the integration of literacy activities with other development sectors and formal schooling; implementation strategies (agency/organization role and support as well as measures designed to promote recruitment) as well as curriculum, instructional and learning issues (instructor training and qualification as well literacy resources). In other words, macro-planning issues should seek to incorporate those principal features of the nation's educational policies and practices with regard to adult literacy brought out in Chapter Five. Based on the findings of this study, a major macro-planning educational issue that probably needs some close examination involves the extent to which the exam system; the intended, implemented and achieved curriculum as well as the resources available to various literacy classes are intimately related.

In addition to macro-planning by the Ministry of Education, literacy agencies/ organisations must also undertake micro-planning processes with clearly defined strategies or steps which, when carefully implemented, must seek to address both administrative and educational issues specific to their respective programmes. Based, in part, on the findings of this study as well as some literacy literature, it might not be absolutely necessary to involve both learners and community elders in every step of the planning and administrative processes respectively except in only those (timing for classes or general time table as well as recruitment of instructors) where the involvement of both groups would be considered critical to the successful outcomes of the programmes (Sork, 1989).

From an educational perspective, the findings of the study suggest that some major overhaul of the programmes may be required. Such overhaul should include, for instance, measures designed to improve the quality of instruction through training and a renumeration package that could attract instructors of above average academic quality. Since adult literacy instructors are usually elementary/primary school teachers (and therefore employees of the Ministry of the Education) it should be much easier to institute measures designed to legally incorporate their services into adult instruction. As well, based on evidence which suggest that the recruitment of marginalised groups for educational activities is increased when support is available alongside the education offered, the findings of this study suggest the need for agencies/organisations and the government to support leaner recruitment, through a variety of incentives. This has become even more critical in view of what, as evidenced in this study, would appear to be a devastating impact of the nation's economic crisis on these groups. There is also the need to improve the learning environment of adult literacy classes, particularly in the rural areas. Other educational features of adult literacy programmes worthy of close scrutiny and examination include the curriculum and the exam system, particularly in relation to what is taught in classes; the issue of instructional-learning resources, instructor training and qualification as well as the language of literacy. In spite of the implications, the suggestions for the production and distribution of local materials as well as literacy teaching and learning in the four principal languages may be worthy of serious consideration by authorities.

Theoretical Implications

The debate continues as to whether research that seeks to analyze educational reform policies and practices within a specific societal context, particularly one that relies very heavily on qualitative data gathering methods, like this one, provides adequate evidence to justify a meaningful theory-based contribution to the field of literacy and adult education. With this in mind, the findings of this study must be viewed "as a catalytic element in the unfolding of theoretical knowledge" (Merriam, 1988, p. 45) in the area of adult literacy in Third World societies, or more specifically, the factors associated with the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes in these societies. In other words, the study must be viewed as a contribution towards a substantive theory-based literature on adult literacy in Third World societies in so far as the general conditions facing adult literacy programmes are widely viewed as identical to those in Sierra Leone. The generation of substantive theories have been viewed as restricted to particular research settings/contexts or problems which, in this case, was adult literacy work in the context of a Third World society.

Besides being limited, the literature on adult literacy in Third World societies has been largely viewed as descriptive or derived from intuition and experiences of experts, like Unesco, working in the field. Consequently, research of this nature, that critically analyzes and evaluates educational reform policies and practices as well as situates adult literacy activities in the context of a nation's social and historical forces, might be very helpful in refining some theoretical perspectives relating to adult literacy policy formulation and implementation in Third World societies. For instance, if one accepts the findings of this study, then, from a theoretical perspective, understanding the nature and role of the state; its social, political, economic and educational systems; the relationship of its economy with the capitalist world economy as well as its preferred development strategy may be critical to the formulation and implementation of successful educational reform policies and practices.

In analytical or theoretical terms, therefore, the findings of this study showed that state support for literacy cannot be viewed as neutral or benign. It may serve to either reinforce existing patterns of domination and subordination of marginalised groups in society or to expand the capabilities of these groups to be involved in the making of social, economic and political decisions affecting their lives. In the case of Sierra Leone, the findings of this study suggest that the former was the case. The theoretical emphasis by the Ministry of Education and agencies/ organisations on production and productivity raising skills, in spite of the structural flaws inherent in the social, economic and political system as reflected, in part, by the segmented nature of the labour market, would appear to support such a claim. As the findings revealed, adult literacy programmes are generally directed at marginalised groups engaged in informal economic sector activities or in secondary sector jobs in the rather mistaken view, especially among government officials, agency/organization representatives and literacy instructors, that it would increase worker productivity and output. Since the majority of adult learners disagreed, then one could only conclude that adult literacy work was being viewed by them as an inferior education that has very little impact on the socio-economic mobility of the poor. In analytical terms, therefore, adult literacy work would appear to have been co-opted by the state and the nation's elite and employed as an instrument of social legitimation and extension of government and elite authority.

Clearly, then, this recognition of the role and nature of the state as well as the occupational opportunity structure of the labour market would appear to take literacy work beyond mere educational concerns. As brought out in the conceptual framework developed for this study, the three analytic categories of factors associated with successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes must be viewed in relation to, rather than in isolation of, each other. Through this approach, literacy work, in theoretical terms, ceases to be an exclusive educational problem; rather it becomes a societal problem. In other words, the problems of adult literacy programmes could not be fully understood by examining their educational features alone. This "deficit" (or victim blaming) perspective downplays the influence of societal, organisational and even international factors on the outcomes of programmes. Yet, if the findings of this study are any indication, there is a decidedly social, economic, organisational and even an international character of Third World adult literacy programmes and the complex interplay of all these is critical to the generation of theoretical propositions on literacy work generally as well as the factors associated with successful and unsuccessful literacy programmes.

From a theoretical perspective, then, this study has shown that, rather than viewing them as autonomous systems, adult literacy programmes, like educational programmes generally, must be viewed within their broader societal and, in some cases, even international contexts. The contextual analysis approach taken in this study focussed not only on the educational features of programmes but on a broad array of societal, international and organizational factors that were judged to influence the formulation and implementation of educational reform policies and practices on adult literacy. In other words, in the generation of new, or contribution to existing, theoretical propositions on adult literacy, researchers must recognize that these programmes occur within specific contexts which, in several ways, influence the successful or unsuccessful outcomes of programmes.

Suggestions for Further Research

By grounding this work in the socio-economic and political experiences of Sierra Leone society as well as presenting an overview and analysis of the social and historical context of literacy work within that society, the findings of this study have shown how complex and interconnected are international, societal, organisational and educational factors in determining the successful outcomes of adult adult literacy programmes. While recognising their interrelationship, each of the factors probably deserve more thorough and detailed examination and analysis in order to help us better understand the extent of its enabling or constraining influence on the outcomes of literacy activities. A study of the decision-making processes involved in the allocation of state education resources to literacy and adult education or the general attitudes of the nation's political elites and senior bureaucrats towards adult literacy constitutes useful starting points as they would help us better understand some of the reasons for the discrepancy expressed in policy documents and the outcomes of adult literacy. Besides, such studies would also be helpful in understanding the extent of the government's commitment to the implementation of educational reforms in support of adult literacy as outlined in reform documents.

A study that focusses on untangling the complex issue of the relationship between literacy and various aspects of development, formal schooling, and access to the labour market or the economy generally within the Sierra Leone context is probably important. While this study did not address the specific impact of adult literacy programmes on the development process in the society under study, the assumption was made that the success of literacy work depended, to a large extent, on some visible evidence of the specific ways through which the acquisition of literacy had actually contributed to economic growth, social equity or improvement in the lives of new literates as described in reform documents. Data collected for this study suggest that the majority of adult learners, including women, did not believe that the literacy skills acquired in these programmes would lead to social and economic advancement of new literates or general economic growth.

Analysis of official statistics on successful completion suggested that some programmes were more successful in teaching literacy skills to adult learners than others. Some comparative studies of literacy agencies/organisations and programmes would be useful in terms of enriching our knowledge and understanding of successful adult literacy programmes within the Sierra Leone context. Two other research related issues may involve some examination of the impact of dwindling foreign aid on adult literacy programmes as well as the analysis of the impact of self-reliant strategies (pursued in answer to dwindling foreign aid), like the production and use of local literacy resources, on the outcomes of literacy programmes.

Still on the issue of completion rates, official statistics showed that about 22,173 (or 27%) adult learners were judged to have successfully completed their programmes during the period 1974 through 1992. A detailed study of the characteristics of these completers may be important in order to understand whether or not literacy programmes may be benefitting some people more than others. Several studies have suggested that literacy and adult education programmes in Third World societies have tended to only benefit rich peasants thereby reinforcing the social divisions among the poor. A study of this nature would help us understand whether or not this was the case with adult literacy programmes in Sierra Leone.

A study that focusses exclusively on gender-based and/or class-based issues in adult literacy work is probably essential. Data collected for this study revealed no gender-based or class-based differences in the views expressed by respondents belonging to each of the four groups. Nevertheless, several studies have suggested that literacy work tend to be male-dominated (usually middle or upper class males) with the result that programmes have, in general, failed to acknowledge gender differences in education.

In this study, "success" and "failure" were defined in quantitative terms (i.e., number of learners judged to have successfully completed their courses through an exam system). Yet the findings pointed to other dimensions of "success" and "failure" and these could be further explored in much greater detail. Two such dimensions may relate to perceptions of "success" and "failure" among each of the four groups of social actors who participated in the study or the idea of both concepts as negotiated processes among the different groups. A number of studies have suggested that the concepts be viewed as negotiated processes among different stakeholders associated with literacy and adult education (Fingeret, 1990).

As well, a study of the measures designed to promote recruitment efforts among instructors and adult learners is probably useful. The factors responsible for the low recruitment as well as high drop out rates among instructors and adult learners should be examined in much greater detail. While acknowledging the problem, data collected for this study revealed a certain degree of ambivalence on this issue. Such a study should focus on the enabling and constraining impact of both structural factors as well as individual-based attributes and circumstances on recruitment efforts.

Finally, a comprehensive study that seeks to analyze the extent to which the exam system; the intended, implemented and achieved curriculum; the instructional-learning environments as well as the availability of literacy resources are intimately related would further our understanding of the factors associated with the successful outcomes of adult literacy programmes in Sierra Leone.

Recommendations Arising From the Study

Based on the implications of the research for adult literacy policy and practice discussed earlier, the following specific recommendations arise from this study.

1 Formulation of educational reform policies in adult literacy should not be the exclusive responsibilities of only politicians and senior bureaucrats. Rather adult literacy policies should incorporate the views of a much broader sector of Sierra Leonean society, including literacy providing agencies/organisations, instructors, adult learners as well as other agencies, like the mass media, trade union organisations, churches and mosques, who may not be directly involved in literacy but whose support may be critical to the successful outcomes of adult literacy programmes. Such policies must, preferably, draw on research information; be based on valid theoretical models of literacy and development; endeavour to move towards self-reliant strategies; avoid ambitious objectives and target estimates and be clear, coherent and consistent in their respective dimensions. As well, the policies must address all pre-requisite factors, especially resource allocation, and be accompanied by the courage and willingness to transform other societal structures so as to reward literacy skills.

2 With regard to policy implementation, there is the need for a close re-examination of the extent of government commitment to the promotion of adult literacy. Questions of allocation of government education resources; measures designed to promote recruitment efforts; instructional-learning environments; organisational and administrative support, for example, have to be adequately addressed. As well, the courage to transform other structures of Sierra Leonean society is critical. Equally important is the role of the business and commercial sectors, especially the banks and other commercial institutions, in adult literacy activities.

3 Administratively, a major re-structuring of the Adult Education Unit, the government agency within the Ministry of Education that is legally responsible for the administration of all adult education programmes, including literacy, might be very helpful. The re-structuring process must give serious consideration to the suggestion that literacy and adult education activities be transferred to the office of the President since the measure is likely to give the educational sub-sector some political clout and the resources it is likely to need. Alternatively, the proposal for the elevation of the Unit to Division status (like the sub-sectors of formal schooling) within the Ministry of Education should be explored.

4 Like the Adult Education Unit, the National Literacy Committee, the state agency legally responsible for the promotion of co-ordination and collaboration among agencies/organisations and programmes, must be re-organised and strengthened. Some of the key issues brought out in this study, including the suggestion for greater autonomy from the Ministry of Education; relationship with agencies/organisations; the roles and responsibilities of its regional and local branches as well as the issue of resources, must be closely examined and very carefully worked out.

5 In relation to organizational re-structuring, both the government and agencies/ organisations must institute organizational reforms that would allow adult learners and community leaders some say in the making of decisions about programmes. Such participatory approach in the practice of decision-making about programmes is likely to provide far greater commitment to programmes on the part of all concerned. Adult learners, in particular, should be able to express their preferences and so strategies should be made available to them to help them in the process.

6 Additionally, the findings point to the need for the adoption of sound macro and micro planning strategies on the part of the Ministry of Education and literacy agencies/organisations respectively. Through macro planning which must involve some decentralisation and delegation of authority to regional and local units, the Ministry of Education would be able to set the national agenda for adult literacy. Such an agenda should focus on broad issues, like the integration of adult literacy activities with other development sectors and formal schooling or postliteracy activities generally; literacy ideologies and strategies; recruitment efforts; allocation of government financial and other resources; production and distribution of instructional and learning resources; instructor training as well as a national curriculum. Alongside state planning, literacy providing agencies/organisations must also be involved in micro planning processes which must be undertaken in the context of the nation's overall strategies for adult literacy as well as local or community concerns. In other words, such micro planning strategies must also focus on organizational, administrative and educational issues specific to individual programmes or courses. As brought out in the findings of this study, the involvement of community elders and adult learners in the making of administrative and planning decisions respectively must be limited to only those instances when such involvement is viewed as critical to the successful outcomes of the respective programmes.

7 With regard to the educational features of literacy programmes, there is need for the government and agencies/organisations to design stronger and realistic measures to promote recruitment efforts. Other elements deserving considerable reform and improvement include the instructional-learning environments, particularly in the rural areas; the issue of instructional-learning resources, including production and distribution; the national curriculum and exam system as well as the issue of language for adult literacy. In spite of the implications, the suggestions for national and local production and distribution of literacy materials as well as

literacy teaching and learning in the key national languages is worthy of serious consideration by authorities.

Equally significant is the issue of training and re-training of literacy instructors and administrative personnel preferably through short-term refresher courses. The availability of adequate and relevant instructional resources alone does not necessarily ensure the success of adult literacy programmes unless instructors are carefully recruited and trained to perform their duties. This issue need not focus on the setting up of a long initial training system but rather on the reinforcement of educational practices that allow for a continuous improvement of instructor capabilities. Along with instructors, some attention should also be paid to the training and re-training of administrative personnel associated with adult literacy programmes across the country.

Concluding Remarks

The literacy literature has pointed to a complex set of factors which, in their "orchestration" or "interaction", influence the successful or unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes (ICAE, 1979). With regard to Third World societies, research should focus on the reasons why educational reform policies and practices in the area of adult literacy have succeeded or failed in different societies. Such research would provide insights and understanding as well as offer possibilities for alternative approaches to educational reforms that carry much greater chances of success.

The findings of this study have shown that the combination of international, societal, organisational and administrative as well as educational factors was perceived to be critical to the successful or unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy operating within the Sierra Leone society. The evidence that could be drawn from this study is probably threefold. Firstly, those whose responsibility it is to formulate and implement educational reform policies in the area of adult literacy must be prepared to move beyond educational issues in adult literacy programmes to broad societal, international and organisational issues as well as to the wider concerns about transformation of other structures of Sierra Leone society in an effort to reward the acquisition of literacy skills. Secondly, they should develop and implement self-reliant strategies and efforts for adult literacy based on an effective political will and commitment including, for instance, the allocation of increased state education resources to literacy and adult education. This is not to suggest a diminishing role for external aid however but that such strategies and efforts are likely to ensure the continuation of successful adult literacy activities even after external funding and assistance are removed. Finally, policy makers and educators must avoid being overly optimistic and ambitious bearing in mind that there are limits to what literacy can actually accomplish as a development tool.

James (1990) cautions policy makers and educators against what he refers to as the mystification of literacy, in other words; assigning to the skill catalytic properties far beyond what it could actually accomplish as a development tool. He notes that it:

> does not well serve those participating in [literacy] campaigns and programs. If the student naively accepts the idea that this particular new skill will, by itself, create dramatic social and political possibilities, their hopes can be undermined when they discover that literacy alone rarely guarantees privilege, access, or political leverage. When practitioners naively accept this idea they sabotage their credibility with their students who in many cases, have an ability to recognize such idealism and know when to reject it (p. 15).

These comments are of immense value to policy makers and educators in Third World societies, like Sierra Leone, where the rhetoric about the capacity of literacy as a development tool deserves to be continuously re-examined. While some national success stories regarding adult literacy promotion exist (Tanzania and Cuba), many Third World societies would appear to be making only little progress and some, like Mozambique, appear to be even having their achievement reversed, thereby demonstrating, perhaps more than ever before, the need for long time commitment to genuine and continuing reforms in the area of adult literacy (Youngman, 1990). Such educational reforms must seriously address socio-economic, political, organisational, administrative and technical as well as educational issues involved in the delivery of literacy skills to adults. As well, reforms must be accompanied by transformation of other structures of society to reward the acquisition of literacy skills. Without such commitment, concerns about adult literacy in Third World societies is unlikely to move beyond rhetoric to concrete and successful action. To the extent, then, of highlighting the complex issues associated with the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes as well as the discrepancy between the rhetoric expressed in policy documents and practice in regard to adult literacy in Third World societies, this study offers some meaningful insights and suggestions.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I

Adult Education Research Centre
University of British Columbia
5760 Toronto Road
Vancouver, B.C. Canada
V6T 1L2

June 22, 1992.

Tel: (604) 822-5881
Fax: (604) 822-6679

LETTER OF CONTACT

AND CONSENT FORM

State Officials and Organizations/
Agencies Providing Adult Literacy

Attention: **Adult Literacy Research in Sierra Leone**

I am writing to invite your Ministry or Organization/Agency to participate in a study titled: **Adult Literacy and Development in Sierra Leone: Ideals and Reality.**

I am a Sierra Leonean, pursuing doctoral studies in Adult Education at the University of British Columbia in the Department of Administrative, Adult and Higher Education. I am now in the process of writing a dissertation for my degree. Professor Kjell Rubenson is my Research Supervisor as well as the Principal Researcher for my study. He does not intend to accompany me to Sierra Leone for field work although his suggestions shall be incorporated into the activity. As well, while in Sierra Leone, I shall keep him informed about progress on the data collection process on a regular basis.

The purpose of this study is to describe and analyze Sierra Leone's educational reform policies and practices between 1970 and 1992 with regard to adult literacy in order to provide some insights and understanding into the factors that are associated with the successful and unsuccessful outcomes of adult literacy programmes operating in the country. The specific objectives of the study include analyzing the nature and structure of the nation's educational reform policies and practices with regard to adult literacy; identifying the obstacles to the successful outcomes of adult literacy programmes and making recommendations for minimizing or, if possible, eliminating them and establishing the extent to which there is a discrepancy between policy objectives on adult literacy and the outcomes of these programmes.

A crucial methodological consideration for the study is emphasis on the use of multiple data gathering methods. The basic data source is semi-structured interviews involving the use of open-ended questionnaires. In the case of literacy instructors and adult learners, the interview questions have been modified in order to enable them to explain and discuss issues for which, it is hoped, their knowledge and understanding are appropriate and adequate. It is expected that participating agencies/organisations will identify the instructors and learners to participate in the interviews. Guidelines for the interviews, which are expected to last about two hours, are attached for your information and, where applicable, for the information of instructors and learners. Other data sources for the study are:

official statistics compiled by the Ministry of Education.

records and documents; e.g. policy documents, previous studies and evaluation reports as well as the nation's **Development Plans.**

observations of literacy classes during field visits to programme sites. Field notes will be recorded during visits each of which will last for about two hours.

Please be well assured that your name or/and the name of your Ministry or organization/agency, written materials you place at my disposal, the response to my questions and the observations at literacy sites will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous through the use of pseudonyms and numerical coding of data. All identifying information will be destroyed immediately following the completion of the study.

May I remind you that you are free to refuse to participate or withdraw at any time and your decision will not be held against you in any respect. I hope to be in Freetown in November and will contact you upon arrival to clarify any questions you may have as well as arrange a date for the interview should you be willing to participate in this study. Where applicable, we will also discuss, at that time, which two of your literacy sites it would be feasible for me to visit as well as the instructors and learners who will participate in the study.

If you are willing to participate in this study, your written consent, required by the University Ethics Review Committee, should be indicated by signing the consent form attached. Since I am not in the country at the moment, may I suggest that you return the completed consent forms to Mr. Peter O. Koroma of the Adult Education Partners' Co-ordinating Office, 40 Rawdon Street, Freetown. He will arrange to mail them back to me for submission to the Ethics Committee. If there are questions, I shall be glad to respond to them when I arrive in Freetown.

Thanking you in anticipation of your co-operation.

Sincerely yours,

A.M. Bockarie
Co-Investigator/Graduate Student
Department of Administrative, Adult and Higher Education
University of British Columbia

ADULT LITERACY RESEARCH IN SIERRA LEONE

CONSENT FORM

This state official or agency/organization representative has read and understood the purpose and procedures of the research project: **Adult Literacy and Development in Sierra Leone: Ideals and Reality**, and agrees to participate in the study.

The official or agency/organization understands that:

> interviews with the official or agency/organization representative will last for about two hours.
>
> the agency/organization will identify instructors and learners attached to its programmes to participate in the study. In the case of instructors and adult learners, interviews will last between one and a half and two hours.
>
> analysis of relevant documentary resources and records as well as field visits to literacy sites for observations are involved in the study. Field visits will last for about two hours.
>
> neither the name of the official or agency/ organization representative nor that of any other interviewee will be revealed to anyone other than the researchers.
>
> the official, agency/organization representative as well as any of the other interviewee has the right to deny or withdraw from participation at any time without prejudice and;
>
> by signing this form, the state official or agency/organization representative acknowledges receipt of the copy of the letter and attachments describing the research project.

Signature

Title

----
name of state official or
agency/organization
representative

Date

Guiding Questions for Interviews with State Officials and Agency/Organization Representatives for a Study titled: Adult Literacy and Development in Sierra Leone: Ideals and Reality.

Please note that the administration of the questions to each group of respondents will be modified and adjusted as appropriate.

Let us start this interview with a general introductory background of this Ministry or Organization.

1. Please describe for me the general structure of this Ministry/Organization. When and how was it established? How would you describe the relationship between your Ministry/ Organization and other Ministries/Organisations generally?

2. How is your Ministry/Organization organised? What is its administrative structure? How are decisions affecting the Ministry/Organization made? Who are the people involved in the making of those decisions? Do you have regional branches? If so, can you please describe the nature of the relationship between (a) the regional branches and the centre and (b) among the various regional branches?

Shall we now turn to the involvement of this Ministry/Organization in the provision of adult literacy in this country?

1. How long has this Ministry/Organization been actually involved in adult literacy work in this country? Please describe for me, briefly, the nature of that involvement. In which parts of this country does your Ministry/Organization run adult literacy programmes and why in those specific areas?

2. Please describe for me the target learners for your programmes. Who are the actual learners? Where do they come from? How would you describe the occupational structure of your learners?

3. **May we consider the broad goals and specific objectives of adult literacy work?** Please describe (a) the broad goals, and; (b) specific objectives of adult literacy work as defined by your Ministry/Organization?

4. **Still thinking about the broad goals and objectives of adult literacy programmes, may we now discuss the relationship between literacy and development?** How does your Ministry/Organization describe the relationship between the acquisition of literacy skills and development? In what ways, in your opinion, are your programmes, and adult literacy programmes generally, actually contributing to the development process in this country?

May we now examine your impressions about the role of the government in the promotion of adult literacy work in this country and the factors that you believe are determining the performance of that role?

1. **May we start with some general information on other government Ministries that may be involved in adult literacy activities?** Are there other government Ministries (besides Education) involved in the provision of adult literacy in this country? If so, please name the ones you consider important? Why do you consider them important?

2. **Let us now look at the role of the government in adult literacy work in this country. May we start with government funding for adult literacy?** How would you assess the nature and level of government financial support for adult literacy agencies/organisations and programmes? What would you consider as the principal factors determining the nature and level of such support? How, in your opinion, has government financial support affected adult literacy programmes in this country?

3. **May we now consider the government's role with respect to the measures designed to encourage instructor recruitment?** Please describe for me the kinds of incentives provided by the government for adult literacy teaching. What would you consider as the principal factors determining the nature and level of such support in this area? In what ways, in your opinion, has the level and nature of government support for literacy teaching affected adult literacy programmes in this country?

4. **Still thinking about the efforts made by the government to encourage participation in adult literacy programmes, may we now turn to the issue of learner recruitment.** Please describe, for me, the kinds of government incentives available to illiterate adults for participation in adult literacy classes? How would you assess the nature and level of such support? What factors, would you say, are influencing the level and nature of government support in this area? In what ways, in your opinion, has support in this area affected adult literacy programmes?

5. **Let us now turn to government support in the area of teaching-learning materials and equipment?** Please describe briefly the kinds of support available to agencies/organisations and programmes in this area? How would you assess the nature and level of such support? What factors, would you say, are influencing support in this area? In what ways, in your opinion, has government support in this area affected adult literacy programmes?

6. **May we also examine other forms of government support available to agencies/organisations and programmes?** Are there other kinds of government support (besides those already mentioned) available to agencies/organisations and programmes? If so, please describe such forms of support. How would you assess the nature and level of government support in these areas? What factors, would you say, are influencing the nature and level of such support? In what ways, have support available in these areas affected adult literacy programmes?

May we now discuss your impression about the role of other agencies and organisations (besides the government) in adult literacy work in this country?

1. Which other agencies/organisations (besides your own as well as government ministries) are involved in adult literacy work in this country? Please name the ones you consider important and why?

2. **May we now turn to your opinion about the role of these agencies/organisations, including your own, in the development and promotion of adult literacy work in this country? Let us start with the issue of funding.** How would you assess the nature and level of financial support for adult literacy activities provided by these agencies/organisations (compared to, say, the government's)? In what ways, in your opinion, has the financial support provided by these agencies and organisations affected adult literacy programmes in the country?

3. **May we now look at the role of these agencies and organisations with respect to instructor recruitment?** Please describe for me the kinds of incentives provided by agencies/organisations, including your own, for adult literacy teaching. In what ways, in your opinion, have the provision of such incentives influenced instructor recruitment efforts? How have the measures designed to encourage instructor recruitment affected adult literacy programmes in general?

4. **Still thinking about the efforts made by agencies/organisations in adult literacy, may we now turn to the issue of learner recruitment?** Please describe, for me, the kinds of incentives provided by agencies/organisations, including your own, for learner participation in adult literacy classes. In what ways, in your opinion, have the availability of such incentives affected learner recruitment efforts? And the outcomes of adult literacy programmes in general?

5. **Let us now turn to support from these agencies and organisations in the area of teaching-learning materials and equipment.** Please describe, for me, the kinds of support provided to programmes by these agencies/organisations, including your own. In what ways, in your opinion, have such support affected adult literacy programmes?

6. **Are there other forms of support (besides the ones already mentioned) available to adult literacy programmes from agencies/organisations, including your own?** If so, please describe the nature and level of such kinds of support. In what ways, in your opinion, have such support affected the outcomes of adult literacy programmes in the country?

May we now turn to issues of organization and administration of adult literacy programmes in this country?

1. **Let us start with the general planning of adult literacy programmes.** Could you describe briefly how the planning of adult literacy programmes is organised by the state and other agencies/organisations, like your own? For example, what steps are generally expected to be followed in planning? What steps are actually followed? Who are those involved in the making of planning decisions and why? In what ways, in your opinion, have planning affected the outcomes of adult literacy programmes generally?

2. **May we now turn to the way adult literacy programmes are generally administered in this country?** Please describe, for me, how the state administers adult literacy programmes. How are administrative decisions made? Who are those involved in the making of these decisions and why? How do other agencies/organisations, like your own, administer their respective programmes? How are administrative decisions made? Who are those involved in the making of these decisions and why? In what ways, in your opinion, have the administration of adult literacy programmes affected the outcomes of these programmes?

3. **Still thinking about the administration of adult literacy programmes, may we now look at the issue of collaboration and co-ordination of adult literacy agencies/ organisations and programmes in this country?** Please describe, for me, the government agency responsible for the co-ordination and collaboration of adult literacy programmes. For example, when and how was it established? What is its composition? What is its role? Are their regional branches? If so, what role do they perform? How would you assess the work of this agency? In what ways, in your opinion, have the activities of this agency affected adult literacy programmes?

4. **Let us now look at monitoring and evaluation of adult literacy programmes?** Please describe the general procedures for monitoring and evaluating adult literacy programmes followed by (a) the government and; (b) other agencies/organisations, including your own. For example, how often are programmes monitored and evaluated? Who are the people involved in monitoring and evaluating programmes? What problems are encountered and why? In what ways, in your opinion have monitoring and evaluating practices affected the outcomes of adult literacy programmes? How could monitoring and evaluation practices be improved?

5. **Still with administration and organization of adult literacy programmes, may we now turn to postliteracy work in this country?** What kinds of postliteracy activities are organised by (a) the state and; (b) agencies/organisations, including your own? How would you assess the work done by the government and other providing agencies/organisations in this area? In what ways, in your opinion, have issues pertaining to postliteracy activities affected adult literacy work in this country?

6. **Are there other organizational and administrative issues (besides the ones we have already discussed) that you consider important?** If so, please describe them. In what ways, in your opinion, have such issues influencing the outcomes of adult literacy programmes?

Shall we now turn to Curriculum and Instructional Issues and the ways, in your opinion, they have affected the outcomes of adult literacy programmes in this country?

1. **May we start with the general structure of the curriculum for adult literacy as described by the state and other agencies/organisations, like your own?** Please describe, for me, the general contents of the curriculum for adult literacy in (a) your programme and; (b) as defined by the government? For example, what are the general goals and objectives of the curriculum? How are decisions about curriculum contents arrived at? In what ways, in your opinion, have decisions about the curriculum affected the outcomes of adult literacy programmes?

2. **May we now turn to instructional and learning issues?** For example, what kinds of instructional and learning methods are widely used in adult literacy programmes, like your own, and why? What would you say are the broad goals of instruction and learning in adult literacy classes? What are the levels of training and qualification of instructors generally, like your own? What are the language(s) used for adult literacy teaching and learning and why? How are decisions about the choice of language made? How long does it usually learners to complete their courses? What happens to them after completion? In what ways, in your opinion, have instructional and learning issues affected adult literacy programmes generally, including your own?

3. **Shall we now look at the issue of learner motivation for enrollment and participation in adult literacy programmes in this country?** What, in your opinion, are the principal factors which encourage adults to enrol in literacy classes, like your own? What would you say are some of the reasons why they drop out from these classes? Why, in your opinion, do potential adult learners fail to enrol in literacy classes?

4. **What, in your opinion, are the principal factors that encourage instructors to participate in adult literacy teaching?** What, would you say, are the key reasons why they drop out from programmes? And why do you think potential instructors are generally reluctant to participate in adult literacy teaching?

Finally, looking back at some of the issues we have just discussed, shall we now look at the factors which, in your opinion, influence success and failure in adult literacy programmes in this country, including your own?

1. **May we start with the factors that, in your opinion, influence the success of these programmes?** What would you say are the main factors influencing the success of adult literacy programmes in this country, including your own?

2. **Let us now turn to the factors that you think are influencing the failure of adult literacy programmes?** What would you say are the principal factors influencing the failure of adult literacy programmes in this country, including your own?

3. **Let us conclude with your suggestions for successful adult literacy work in this country?** What, in your opinion, should be done to ensure the success of (a) your programmes and (b) adult literacy programmes in general?

Thank you very much for your co-operation.

Guiding Questions for Interviews with Adult Literacy Instructors for a Study titled: Adult Literacy and Development in Sierra Leone: Ideals and Reality.

Let us start this interview with your general impressions of the programme to which you are attached as instructor.

1 I want to start with the reasons for your involvement in this programme. How long have you worked in this programme? Why did you become involve in the programme? How did you become involved?

2 Tell me something about your work in this programme? What is it like to work here? What kind of instructor, in your opinion, works best in this programme?

3 Before you became involved in this programme, what were you told were its principal objectives? How, in your opinion, has the programme been able to accomplish these objectives? Are you satisfied that the objectives are being met?

4 What are some of the things you really like about the programmes? What are some of the things you don't like? If you could change anything about the programme, what would it be?

Still on the issue of this programme, may we now consider your general impressions of the way the programme is organised and administered.

1 Let us start with planning? What do you think about the way the programme is planned? Who are the people involved in planning? In what ways, in your opinion, can the planning process be improved?

2 Shall we now turn to the administration of the programme? What do you think of the way the programme is administered? Who are the people responsible for administering the programme? How can the administration of the programme be improved?

3 Tell me something about the relationship that this programme has with other adult literacy programmes in this country. Does the programme receive any support from other agencies/organisations or programmes? Does it provide support to other agencies/ organisations or programmes?

4 I am interested in the kinds of postliteracy activities undertaken in this programme. What can you tell me about them?

Shall we now turn to educational issues involving the programme.

1 Let us start with the curriculum? What do you think about the curriculum; the way it is prepared and the people responsible for its preparation? What do your think about its contents?

2 I am interested in your opinion about the instructional and learning materials used in this programme? Tell me something about the content of these materials. What about the availability of these materials? How are the materials prepared?

3 May we now look at the teaching and learning methods used by instructors and learners? What do you think about the learning methods? How about your teaching methods? How are decisions about them arrived at? What do you think of the your teaching methods?

4 How about the issue of instructor training and qualification? Tell me something about the instructors involved in this programme in these areas. How, in your opinion, are these issues affecting work in this programme?

5 Tell me something about the venue for this programme. What are your general impressions of the facilities available for holding classes.

6 Are there other issues about this programme that you consider important that we have not touched on?

May we now discuss adult literacy programmes in this country in general. Let us start with your general impressions of adult literacy work in this country.

1 What, in your opinion, are the main objectives of adult literacy? Are you satisfied that these objectives are being met?

2 What, in your opinion, are some of the main features of adult literacy programmes that encourage learners to register and stay in programmes? And that help them succeed?

3 What, in your opinion, are some of the main features of adult literacy programmes that discourage people from registering? And why, in your opinion, do learners drop out from programmes? What about the teachers; why do you think they drop out?

Shall we now turn to your impressions of the work done by government in adult literacy.

1 Let us start with funding for literacy. What are your general impressions about government funding for adult literacy in this country?

2 How about government support for adult literacy educators, particularly instructors like you? How do you think the government is doing in instructor recruitment as well as other areas, like incentives?

3 Tell me something about government support for adult learners? What are your impressions regarding the support available from government to adult learners? What do think about the measures designed to encourage learner recruitment?

4 Are there other issues involving the work done by the government that we have not discussed and which you consider important?

Shall we now turn to your impressions of the work done by agencies/organisations other than the government?

1 I am interested in your opinion about the work done by agencies/organizations (besides the government) in adult literacy work. What can you tell me about it.

2 What do you like about the work of these agencies/ organizations? If there is one thing you will like to change about the work done by these agencies/ organizations, what would it be?

4 How do think agencies/organizations are doing in the area of funding for adult literacy compared to, say, the government?

5 What do you think about agency/organization support to instructors, like you? In what ways, in your opinion, could it be improved?

6 What do think about agency/organization support to adult learners generally; for instance in regard to incentives for their recruitment? How could support in this area be improved?

7 Are there other issues involving the work done by agencies/organisations that you consider important but which we have not discussed?

Let us turn to issues of organization and administration of adult literacy programmes in this country.

1 We begin with the general planning of adult literacy programmes. What are your general impressions of the ways programmes are planned in this country? In what ways, in your opinion, could planning be improved?

2 What do you think about the ways programmes are administered? How could the administration of programmes be improved?

3 I am interested in your views about the co-ordination of programmes. Which agency, would you say, is legally responsible for co-ordination? What do you think about the work done in this area?

4 Tell me something about postliteracy activities. What are your general impressions of these activities? In what ways, in your opinion, could these activities be improved?

Shall we now turn to issues of the curriculum, instruction and learning in adult literacy programmes across the country.

1 Let us start with the curriculum? What do you think about the contents of the curriculum for adult literacy in this country? And the ways decisions about the curriculum are made? How about the implementation of the curriculum? How could all these be improved?

2 Shall we now turn to issues of instruction? What do you think about the training and qualification of adult literacy instructors? And the methods of teaching used in programmes? How could these methods be improved?

3 How about the materials used for instruction and learning? Would you consider them appropriate? And available? How are these materials prepared and distributed?

4 Tell me something about the learning methods used in programmes across the country? What do you think about them? How could these methods be improved?

5 How about the physical facilities available for holding literacy classes? Would you consider these facilities appropriate? How are they normally provided?

May we conclude this interview with some discussions of the key factors which, in your opinion, influence the success and failure of literacy programmes in this country.

1 Let us start with the factor that influence success. Think about some of the things you have told me in this interview. What stands out in your mind as the major factors that influence success in (a) the particular programme to which you are attached and; (b) adult literacy programmes in general?

2 What stands out in your mind as the key factors that influence failure in (a) the programme to which you are attached and; (b) adult literacy programmes in general?

3 In what ways, in your opinion, could adult literacy programmes be improved in order to make them become more successful.

Thank you very, very much.

Guiding Questions for Interviews with Adult Learners for a Study titled: Adult Literacy and Development in Sierra Leone: Ideals and Reality.

Let us start this interview with your general impressions of the programme in which you are enrolled as a learner/participant.

1 I want to start with the reasons for your enrollment this programme. How did you hear about this programme? Can you give an example of something you have done in class that was really interesting to you? What can you do now that you couldn't do before you entered the programme? What do you plan on doing when you finish the programme?

2 Prior to your registration in this programme, what were you told were its principal objectives? Are you satisfied that those objectives are being met?

3 What are some of the things you really like about this programme? What are some of the things you don't like? If you could change anything about the programme, what would it be?

4 When do you expect to complete the programme? What credentials do you take with you when you finish? What do you think of those credentials? How does the programme keep track of you when you complete?

Still on the issue of this programme, may we now consider your general impressions of the way the programme is organised and administered.

1 Let us start with planning? What do you think about the way the programme is planned? Who are the people involved in planning? In what ways, in your opinion, can the planning process be improved?

2 Shall we now turn to the administration of the programme? What do you think of the way the programme is administered? Who are the people responsible for administering the programme? How can the administration of the programme be improved?

3 Tell me something about the relationship that this programme has with other adult literacy programmes in this community. Does the programme receive any support from other agencies/organisations or programmes? Does it provide support to other agencies/organisations or programmes?

4 I am interested in the kinds of postliteracy activities undertaken in this programme. What can you tell me about them?

Shall we now turn to educational issues involving the programme.

1 Where do your teachers come from? How are they recruited? In what ways, in your opinion, is training important for your teachers?

2 What kinds of books do you use in this programme? What kinds of other materials do you use? How are those materials produced? What do you like about these materials ?

3 What about your teachers, what kinds of books do they use? What kinds of other materials do they use? How are those materials produced?

4 Who decides what is taught in class? What do you think about the language in which classes are held? Do you feel you are making progress? How does the teacher let you know that you are making progress?

5 Do learners decide what they want to learn? Would you say that you are working towards what you wanted to learn?

6 What do you think about the facilities available to the programme; like the tables, desks, chairs, etc? What do you think about the building itself?

7 Are there other issues about this programme that you consider important that we have not touched on?

May we now discuss adult literacy programmes in this country in general.

1 Let us start with your general impressions of adult literacy work in this country. What do you think about literacy work in this country? Would you say that it is important? If so, why and how is it important?

2 What, in your opinion, are some of the main features of adult literacy programmes that encourage learners to register and stay in programmes? And that help them succeed?

3 What, in your opinion, are some of the main features of adult literacy programmes that discourage people from registering? And why, in your opinion, do learners drop out from programmes? What about the teachers; why do you think they drop out?

Shall we now turn to your impressions of the work done by agencies/organisations as well as the government in adult literacy in this country.

1 Let us start with the work done by agencies/organisations. What, in general, do you think about the work done by these agencies and organisations?

2 What do you like about the work done by these agencies and organisations? If there is one thing you will like to change about their work, what would it be?

3 Let us now turn to the work done by the government in adult literacy? What, in general, do you think about the work done by the government?

4 Think about government funding for adult literacy work in this country? What can you tell me about it?

5 What about government support for teachers, like those who work in this programme? What do you think about it?

6 What about government support for learners, like you? What can you tell me about it?

7 What can you tell me about agency/organization support in these areas; I mean in the area of funding, support for teachers and learners? How would you say these agencies/organisations are doing in each of these areas, compared to, say, the government?

Let us turn to issues of organization and administration of adult literacy programmes in this country.

1 We begin with the general planning of literacy programmes. What do you think of the ways programmes are planned in this country? How, in your opinion, could this be improved?

2 What do you think about the ways programmes are administered? How could the administration of programmes be improved?

3 What can you tell me about the relationships among agencies/organisations and programmes? How, in your opinion, could this be improved?

4 What do you think about postliteracy work in this country? In what ways, in your opinion, could this be improved?

Shall we now turn to issues of the curriculum, instruction and learning in adult literacy programmes across the country.

1 Let us start with the curriculum? What do you think about the contents of the curriculum for adult literacy in this country? And the ways decisions about the curriculum are made? How about the implementation of the curriculum? How could all these be improved?

2 Shall we now turn to issues of instruction? What do you think about the training and qualification of adult literacy instructors? And the methods of teaching used in programmes? How could these methods be improved?

3 How about the materials used for instruction and learning? Would you consider them appropriate? And available? How are these materials prepared and distributed?

4 Tell me something about the learning methods used in programmes across the country? What do you think about them? How could these methods be improved?

5 How about the physical facilities available for holding literacy classes? Would you consider these facilities appropriate? How are they normally provided?

May we conclude this interview with a discussions of the key factors which, in your opinion, influence the success and failure of literacy programmes in this country.

1 Let us start with the factor that influence success. Think about some of the things you have told me in this interview. What stands out in your mind as the major factors that influence the success of (a) this particular programme in which you are enrolled and; (b) adult literacy programmes in general?

2 What stands out in your mind as the key factors that influence the failure of (a) this programme in which your are enrolled and (b) adult literacy programmes in general?

3 In what ways, in your opinion, could adult literacy programmes be improved in order to make them more successful.

Thank you very, very much.

Appendix II

Adult Education Research Centre
5760 Toronto Road
Vancouver BC
Canada V6T 1L2

January 7, 1994.

State Officials and Agency/Organization Representatives

Attention: Donor or foreign financial support for Literacy and Adult Education

I am writing in connection with the above and to request some financial information on donor or foreign support received for your programmes from about 1980/81 through 1991/92.

I am a Sierra Leonean, pursuing doctoral studies in Adult Education at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. Work on the successfully completion of my dissertation titled: **Adult Literacy and Development in Sierra Leone: Ideals and Reality** is in progress and information on donor or foreign financial support to adult literacy agencies/organisations and programmes is the only remaining data that I need to complete the work.

I have enclosed a form for completion, covering the period 1980/81 through 1991/92. It seeks to find out:

- which international development agency granted financial assistance to your agency/organization during the period 1980/81 through 1991/92
- estimates of total grants received for each academic year in Leones
- estimates of grants received that was allocated to adult literacy activities

Please be rest assured that the information you provide will be strictly confidential. The figures will be added up with those provided by other agencies/organisations and represented as total grant received by all agencies/organisations for a particular academic year. In this way, neither the name of your agency/organisation nor the specific grant information provided will be highlighted in any part of the dissertation.

I sincerely hope that you will be willing to provide me with the necessary information as it is very critical to the successful completion of my studies.

Thanking you immensely in anticipation of your co-operation.

Sincerely yours,

A.M.Bockarie