

**FACTORS DETERENT TO NON-FORMAL
EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN: SOME
PROBLEMS & SUGGESTIONS**

by

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INTRODUCTION

The developing countries consider educational programmes vital for their economic development and political independence. Development requires participation by all people—men and women, young and old, either directly through their daily work or indirectly through their economic and social groups. However, full participation of the population cannot be achieved unless people have acquired the skills and knowledge needed for such participation. The acquisition of skills and knowledge depends entirely on the educational system, which in turn is a reflection of the state of development of the country concerned. The existing formal system of education in developing countries obviously cannot cope with the demands of education for all. In order to extend educational opportunities to all adults, wherever they are placed in the system, the nations have to look for alternative means. Non-formal education apparently appears to be an answer to this growing need.

**NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND ITS ACTUAL ROLE IN
PAKISTAN**

Non-formal education is simply an organised activity with educational purposes carried on outside the highly structured framework of a formal education system. It is a deliberate process of communicating ideas and developing skills in adult and out of school youth which will help them increase agricultural production, qualify them for, or increase their performance in, positions in government, industry and commerce, attain higher health

standards, participate more intelligently in civic, economic and political groups, and achieve other personal and social goals.

Coombs and Ahmed, (1974 P.8) have clearly defined the concept of non-formal education as follows:

"..... any organised, systematic, educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal system to provide selected types of learning to particular subgroups in the population, adults as well as children. Thus defined, non-formal education includes, for example, agricultural extension and farmer training programmes, adult literacy programmes, occupational skill training given outside the formal system, youth clubs with substantial educational purposes and various community programmes of instruction in health, nutrition, family planning cooperation, and the like."

Pakistan is amongst the countries of the world which have 84.6% rates of illiteracy (Ministry of Education, Pakistan, 1979, P.26). Such a high rate of illiteracy has hampered the overall progress of the country. Unfortunately, there is little provision in the formal system of education of Pakistan for imparting knowledge and skills to adults.

As such the basic aim of non-formal education is to make education and training opportunities available to all the people of Pakistan so as to make them more productive and useful members of society.

Some prominent non-formal educational programmes in Pakistan are briefly described below:

1. The Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation is currently offering daily radio programmes, supported by mobile units in some of the provinces for information and training of farmers. The Agricultural Information Services Punjab and Agriculture Departments of other three provinces develop and

present farm broadcast programmes using radio as a medium for training of farmers. In these programmes discussions on different problems of farming are recorded and offered for broadcast.

2. A number of agriculture and rural development agencies are conducting non-formal education programmes like; (i) In-service training for agriculture extension for workers and farmers. These are limited programmes consisting of short courses and informal seminars held in selected community centres on crop production, extension, use of pesticides etc. (ii) The Farm Guide Movement which provides group training for pre-released service-men, school and college students, progressive farmers and cooperative farmers. (iii) The short training courses for local government officials. Pakistan Rural Development Academy at Peshawar carries out training through seminars, conferences, conventions and group meetings. (iv) There are short courses offered by the Tando Jam Agriculture College for Farmers, some in food preparation, insecticides, tractor driving and horticulture.
3. Provincial departments of labour, polytechnics, technical training centres, trade training centres and vocational institutes provide some special programmes for in-service apprenticeship.
4. There are some handicraft development training centres. In the provinces of Punjab and Sind, Small Industries and Handicrafts Corporations produce several handicrafts, carpet, poultry, cutlery and ceramics like such other centres. These centres provide training to workers and artisans.
5. The Family Planning Association of Pakistan and Provincial Planning Boards are actively

engaged in educating masses on planned parenthood values.

Besides these programmes, a host of other government and non-government departments and agencies organize non-formal education programmes suited to their needs and according to their areas of specializations. They include rural development programmes, YMCA training programmes, fishing training programmes, Pakistan armed services programmes, adult education and literacy programmes, programmes for rural youth, Integrated Functional Education programme by Allama Iqbal Open University etc. The National Educational Policy (1978), while recognising the need of imparting suitable skills for the rural population entrusted to Allama Iqbal Open University with the task of organising non-formal education with the job of meeting this formidable challenge in the shape of organised Radio/TV programmes, special booklets and reading material for adults and mobile operational units in the rural areas.

SPECIFIC PROGRAMMES THROUGH NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

In this regard, focus is upon the Non-Formal Education programmes that were offered to enable the adults to upgrade their existing skills or to acquire new skills in order that they may change employment, supplement their income through secondary occupations or, in the case of the unemployed, find employment. Indeed, the majority of skill oriented programmes for adults in Pakistan have focussed on agricultural extension. The other programmes have emphasised the development of modern technical skills in order to meet the needs of a rapidly developing manufacturing sector. Now it is worthwhile to consider the types of training programmes to underscore the role each has played.

1. Agricultural programmes: The majority of skills training programmes in the rural areas of Pakistan have concentrated on providing agricultural extension services. Such programmes are offered to work with individual "Model" farmers, attempt to develop cooperatives, or seek to cultivate

new areas through settlement schemes. Agricultural information is either provided by extension agents or through the use of mass media, or through a combination of both. The development and orientation of agricultural extension programme is now under serious reconsideration.

2. Informal sector: Most government and private training efforts have been oriented towards improving the managerial skills of entrepreneurs. A few programmes have sought to develop cooperatives but the majority of training efforts have been directed towards individual entrepreneurs. Industrial extension services provide training and consultant services to help businessmen develop book-keeping and accounting system, obtain loans, and deal with government regulations. Training in technical skills such as masonry or carpentry is provided as part of large scale training efforts directed to develop technical sector.

Not all informal sector operations require the full-time participation. Often entrepreneurs supplement their earnings from other sources or provide temporary employment until a better job can be found. The idea behind this training is that the rural families in Pakistan may produce and sell goods to supplement their farm earnings, while urban wage earners or the un-employed may engage in informal activities on a part-time basis as first step towards developing their own business.

3. Handicrafts: There is no clear demarcation between handicrafts and the informal sector, but the handicrafts in Pakistan may be defined as encompassing those areas in which traditional crafts or goods based on modified traditional designs are produced for sale in the local economy or for export abroad. Government of Pakistan has felt that such programmes are excellent way to introduce gradual change in traditional

societies. Women can also increase their participation in economic activities. Other advantages for launching such type of programmes are that handicrafts provide an opportunity for farmers to supplement their incomes and that training in handicrafts skills generally does not require literacy.

4. Modern skills training programmes: Skills training designed to meet needs in the industrialized sector in Pakistan is provided through vocational training institutions, employer-sponsored on-the-job training, programmes which offer apprenticeships in modern industries, correspondence courses, classes at stationary or mobile skills centres or through a combination of all these approaches. Many of the large-scale programmes are financed primarily through contributions or taxes from modern industries and provide training in production, maintenance and repair techniques in accordance with the needs of those industries. Some programmes supplement technical skills training with basic education.

FACTORS DETERANT TO NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN

Though the types of training offered within the different sectors of the economy vary greatly, many problems associated with each types of programme are shared. Most important of these are the inability to reach the participants for whom the programme is designed, the exclusion of entire groups from participation and the lack of support mechanism for implementing training programmes to motivate adults to participate in the programmes for their own development.

The following sections discuss some issues and factors related to the non-formal education:

1. **Scope of programme:** The degree to which a programme should combine technical skills training with training in other areas is

one of the main issues concerning programme development and only a realistic combination of the two can achieve the desired results.

Programmes which require literacy and previous skills training may aggravate problems of selectivity. Focusing on technical aspects of skills training does little to help individuals develop the adaptability or the management skills essential to economic success and self-employment. In addition, such programmes also neglect the need to help employees develop confidence and the ability to deal with unjust practices on the part of employers or to examine ways in which they may treat future employees.

Supporters of skills programmes, however, maintain that the narrow focus of such programmes is essential if economic productivity is to be rapidly increased. They argue that the other needs of individuals can be met through a complementary system of adult education centres which provide training in literacy and numeracy skills as well as offer opportunities for cultural development.

2. Tendency to exclude women in agricultural programmes:

There is a tendency in many agricultural programmes to widen rather than lessen income disparities between farmer; the exclusion of women from many agricultural programmes even though they may be primary agricultural producers; the experience that many cooperatives tend to protect existing social structures rather than enabling all to actively participate.

3. Another problem is the high cost of capital intensive agriculture that relies on mechanization and costly inputs such as fertilizer, and leads to labour displace-

ment; the development of cash crops that could meet the nutritional needs of the population; and the failure of many extension agents to serve as credible sources of information for farmers.

4. Besides, the non-formal programmes do not fit in well with the realities such as the place of small farmer as well as various social and economic structures. These are the factors leading to the failure of agricultural schemes.

The factors which prevents the non-formal from playing its important role in the programmes of handicrafts are that the skills training programmes have not been linked with a market for goods, the certain crafts associated with particular classes within the community, and there are problems in forming and developing co-operatives. These are but a few of the difficulties encountered by handicrafts programmes. And, though handicrafts programmes are often cited as one of the best means of improving the economic role of women, many handicrafts programmes only perpetuate existing inequalities. Too often women serve only as producers while training efforts are directed towards men who assume managerial roles within the co-operative. Yet, in programmes where women are trained not only as producers but as managers, handicrafts programmes may indeed play an important role in upgrading the status of women.

7. The planners of the skills training programmes have lack of knowledge about how adults learn. This is a major constraint in developing such programmes. Most research has dealt with adults who are products of compulsory school systems in western societies. In contrast, little research has been done on the learning characteristics of adults in developing societies who may be illiterate or who have had only a couple of years of schooling.

As a result, many adult learning programmes have simply expanded the traditions of the formal classroom to include the adult sphere.

8. The selection and training of trainers has received little attention in the literature. Too often trainers are selected on the basis of their knowledge about specific content areas rather than on their ability to communicate with their audiences or their sensitivity to cultural and social issues.

Yet, if programmes are to be concerned with all aspects of development, there is need to consider the ways in which courses for extension workers and trainers influence their attitudes towards participants and the manner in which they (planners) will conduct their own courses.

Suggestions for boosting non-formal education in Pakistan

In order to make the non-formal education programmes successful and effective, there is need to be sure that various problems involved in the use of non-formal education are resolved.

1. Incentives for inducing larger supply and demand for non-formal education

Any non-formal programme with incentives increase its demand. The target audience will take more interest in the programmes. For example, the P.T.O.C. of Allama Iqbal Open University was launched without any incentive which resulted into high dropout rate. Later on, an incentive of one increment and a credit of Intermediate level was added to the course and the enrolment gone up. Hence incentives are essential for the success of any non-formal education programme.

2. Shortage of physical facilities and instructors

Physical facilities and instructors for non-formal education programme are backbone in the system. Without these it is not possible to run any non-formal education programme effectively. All such needs should be kept in mind while planning for non-formal education. Effort should also be made to provide training the instructors.

3. Demand for secondary education

People need education in order to get employment or to get better income. The formal system cannot cope with the demand. Hence there is need of non-formal education in order to cater the need of the masses.

The reasons why traditional (formal) institutions have been unable to meet all the demand for education to the growing labour-market demand for continual vocational training. Moreover, some policy makers and many would be students, in particular adults, now insist that it should be possible to undertake studies on a part-time or recurrent basis instead of full-time attendance at a traditional institution for concentrated studies over three or four years. Likewise, an increasing societal commitment to equal education opportunity has forced many countries to look for new paths to educational achievement.

Although in many developing countries it has already become an indispensable element in the overall provision of education, non-formal education still often occupies an ambiguous position in relation to formal education, on the one hand, and informal learning on the other. However, non-formal education concern should be to satisfy

immediate and, commonly, quite fundamental learning needs, such as how to read, how to care for young children. This distinguishes it from the concept of 'out-of-school education' which denotes "all education carried on outside the formal school and higher education system, except vocational training".

With the demand of secondary education, some skills training programmes should be offered by non-formal approach.

4. Strengthening Links with Development

Non-formal education programmes must be designed in a way that they should strengthen the national development of the country. Most of the non-formal education programmes are without keeping in mind, its impact on the national development. All the programmes designed for non-formal education must meet the minimum essential learning needs of the population. Such programmes will invariably have the impact on national development. Hence efforts should be made to make non-formal education as an integral part of the educational system.

5. Relevance

In Pakistan, the vast majority of people earn their livelihood from agriculture, rural development is far more than this and should have a far wider basis than agricultural development. The basis should be the needs and aspirations of the community, only a small part of their day is spent in agricultural activities; rural development is not agricultural development but includes it.

The narrow concentration on agricultural skills for youths and men has its drawbacks. Agricultural schools/universities

have programme successful, the relevant needs of the population must be taken care of.

6. Identifying Features of Non-Formal Education

The essential features of non-formal education are normally not identified while planning for non-formal education. It should be planned in a way that it must be seen as national service and considered to be an integral part of national development.

7. Equivalence

The equivalisation of degrees and certificates is a problem. Before planning a non-formal education programme, the equivalence of degree/certificate must be negotiated with other institutions.

8. Supervision

Other important problem involved in non-formal education programme is supervision. If the programme is not supervised properly it will ultimately result into the failure of the programme. Hence, while planning for non-formal education care should be taken to ensure the supervision of the programme.

9. Financing of Non-Formal Education

Financing of non-formal education is problem of great significance. Non-formal education costs vary enormously from one programme to another. However, there are many cost-saving possibilities in comparison to those of formal education and that there is virtue not in low costs per set, but only when low costs are accompanied by effective results. The main issue concerning finance is how to keep the costs as low as possible while keeping programme effectiveness high.

The main and unconventional sources and how best to deploy whatever resources are available to non-formal education as a whole.

In addition to the above mentioned problems and issues in the use of non-formal education, there are other problems like evaluation, person-centred development, appropriateness, and integrated development to be taken care of to make the programme a success.

Conclusion

The experience of the various types of skills training programmes in Pakistan has revealed the importance of viewing development in social as well as in economic terms. The desire for increased efficiency and productivity to help satisfy basic human needs of the poor majority cannot be separated from the rights of persons to understand and shape their own roles in the entire social context.

The interplay of these two themes, economic and social quantitative and qualitative development is related to all areas of programme planning. The types of training which a programme will offer and to whom, whether or not a programme will provide narrowly defined or comprehensive skills training; work with groups or individuals; participants or experts as trainers, operate through centralized or decentralized agencies, develop training workshops or combine training with production; foster participant involvement in planning and decision making or rely on regional, national or international experts, are factors that influence the effectiveness of programmes in the social and economic realms.

All aspects of non-formal education planning must address the issues surrounding programme scope, participation and exclusion, pedagogy, and the training of trainers.

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