PLANNING OF ADULT AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

DR. G. VASUDEVAIAH
Teaching Personnel, Dept. of Adult Continuing Education & Extension
S.K.University, Anantapuramu, (A.P)

ABSTRACT

There has been a rapid proliferation of ‘non-formal’ education programmes over the past few decades, radically altering the contours of the educational field. While the school remains the dominant educational institution in general, it is now by no means the only place where individuals can gain knowledge or can pursue explicit training objectives. A whole range of other educational activities have developed outside the formal educational system and play a great variety of roles. Certain programmes, such as literacy campaigns, have emerged as a substitute for school education. Increasingly, though, non-formal education (henceforth NFE) has come to be regarded as important for its own sake, with the growing awareness that the school is no longer capable of satisfying a whole series of increasingly diversified educational needs.

Keywords: Planning, Adult, Non-formal, Programmes

INTRODUCTION

Planning is the process by which the objectives of a programme are identified and procedures for the attainment of these objectives are spelt out. Successful implementation of any programme is a function of the quality of planning carried out before the commencement of implementation. In adult and non-formal education programmes, for their desired objectives to be realized, there is need for adequate planning. Effective planning in adult and non-formal education brings about formulation of rational policies and programme objectives based on careful situational analysis, identification of existing human and material resources, forecasting of needs, and mapping out strategies for successful accomplishment.
Realisation of programme objectives in adult and non-formal education depends largely on the effectiveness of programme planning processes. Adult and non-formal education programmes are diverse and cover various activities designed to complement and supplement the formal education programmes. However, most adult and non-formal education programmes are usually specific, integrative, intensive and tailored to meet the immediate needs of the participants. Most often, participants in adult and non-formal education programmes want quick returns from their investments of money, time, efforts and material resources on adult and non-formal education programmes. When these returns are not being realized as expected, many participants become despondent or frustrated and some even back out of the programmes.

1. PROBLEM OF ACCURATE POPULATION DATA

Planning of adult and non-formal education programmes requires accurate population data giving information on the growth of the population, changes over time, structure according to age, sex, occupation and geographical distribution, level of education vis-à-vis illiteracy, etc. These data will help planners to identify who needs a particular type of education or training.

Population census is expected to be conducted every ten years but most developing countries hardly conduct population census when they are expected to do so, because, it is a very expensive exercise and funds available may not be enough to conduct the same. When some of them conduct census, the figures or results are always controversial and unreliable which render them unsuitable for effective planning. Meaningful projections are vital to educational planning.

2. PROBLEM OF STATISTICAL DATA

Statistical data are usually of two categories, namely, qualitative data and quantitative data. Qualitative data, according to Nwadiani (1993), could be philosophical concepts, equality of educational opportunities, morality of students, morale of educational personnel, interest in school, etc. They may include educational policies, objectives of education and contents or curriculum of educational system. Qualitative data serve as guiding principles for planning educational programmes and as yardsticks for measuring the efficiency of the educational system.

Quantitative data are facts and figures which are quantifiable and are used in giving meaningful interpretation and aid decision-making process, implementation and evaluation of educational programmes.

Important as statistical data are in planning adult and non-formal education programmes, their utilization is beset with a lot of problems which include:

a. Poor record keeping
Most agencies involved in adult and non-formal education programmes, including Government agencies, do not keep accurate records of resources, inputs, enrolment, staff attrition, drop-out rates of participants,
successful completers and progress made by beneficiaries over year / decades / programme wise. These date and others are very important for effective planning and any inaccuracy in or lack of them inhibit effective planning in adult and non-formal education.

b. Storage and Retrieval System

Another problem associated with statistical data is the storage system and difficulty in retrieving data when needed for a planning activity. Statistical data relating to adult and non-formal education are still being kept in paper and files and put on file racks and cabinets where they are susceptible to destruction through shuffling, water and fire hazards, rodents and insects. Retrieval of such data is usually irksome because of the manner in which they are kept. Modern facilities for record keeping and easy retrieval are not readily available and all these limit the effectiveness of utilizing such data for planning adult and non-formal education programmes.

c. High cost of data collection and processing

Gathering, collating and analyzing statistical data are very expensive. Experts in these activities are very few and those available are highly paid while the material resources required are quite expensive. Similarly, the processes of administering various data collection instruments are costly and funds are not usually provided adequately for these by Government and relevant agencies in most developing countries. All these affect effective planning in adult and non-formal education.

d. Life-span of data

The life span of statistical data is influenced by the data, trends in the agency and other related agencies. Statistics collected may become outdated within a short period of time and it planners in adult and non-formal education base their projections or decisions on outdated data, the outcome will be wrong projections/decisions. Statistical data collection, collating and analyses, should, therefore, be on-going processes in adult and non-formal education programmes.

3. PAUCITY OF EXPERTS

Successful planning of adult and non-formal education programmes will depend largely on the availability of sufficient experts or experienced planners. The situation, in which Government officials with little or no training in planning adult and non-formal education are given the responsibility for such important tasks, as is often done in developing countries, renders the outcome porous and ineffective.

Occasionally, experts are deputed by international agencies like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) to assist in planning adult and non-formal education programmes, but what is most required is for the experts to give training to their local counterparts so that they can perform their planning functions effectively after the departure of the foreign experts. Most researchers and scholars concentrate on content areas, methodology principles and practice of adult and non-formal education rather than in planning. The bulk of publications available in the field of adult and non-formal education are focused mainly on such areas.
4. INADEQUATE FUNDING

Adult and non-formal education programmes have often suffered from inadequate funding. Budgetary allocations to the programmes by Governments have always been abysmally low and the sums allocated are either diverted or misappropriated. Poor budgetary allocations and misappropriation of funds leave little or no fund for planning purpose. Planning is expensive and if no sufficient fund is available for the exercise, it is either not done at all, or it is haphazardly done. This is not in the best interest of programme implementation.

Nature of Adult and Non-formal Education

The diverse nature of adult and non-formal education programmes makes planning a Herculian task. Adult and non-formal education programmes consist of basic literacy, continuing education, distance education, health extension, agricultural extension, extra-mural studies, social welfare, community development, liberal education, environmental education, on-the-job and off-the-job training, etc. The multiplicity of all these programmes renders the possibility of one agency planning the numerous programmes difficult. On the other hand, universal definition of each of the terms has not been possible since one term may mean one thing in one country and yet another thing in another country. Planning is only feasible when there is uniformity in definitions, perception and approaches to the issues. The problems inhibiting effective planning in adult and non-formal education are not insurmountable if there is a strong will on the part of Governments and the various agencies that provide adult and non-formal education. Necessary measures should be evolved to facilitate effective planning in adult and non-formal education programmes.

REFERENCES