



Non-Formal System Can Educate The Masses

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EDUCATION gives direct and indirect incentives to the beneficiaries. The direct benefit is the intellectual development and the indirect benefit is generally thought in terms of financial capabilities developed in the pursuants after completion of a series of regular courses under formal education system.

But what about the non-formal education which is not well known to our literate people who might encourage the illiterates to participate in the programme to acquire functional knowledge through literacy for the betterment of their lives? Fundamentally non-formal education is a highly innovative and developing subject more suited than the formal education to make the common illiterate people worthy citizens in a revolutionary method.

A project of cow rearing and cow fattening, poultry raising, fish breeding etc. may be very lucrative to a beneficiary for after completion of the project course he can hope to earn money. That literacy is the gate way to the acquisition of all these skills and can add something more to develop these simple technologies is apparently not understandable to a man who is fighting everyday of his existence in a society where survival is at stake. So, indirect benefit of literacy is also lost sight of by his, our poor illiterates.

So, what the organisers do is that they apply the latest technology of motivation to bring these people to the literacy centres. The N.G.Os motivate them by coupling their educational activities with some income generating component. The government programme does not have this bait.

That literacy is an incentive in itself does not work well and all attempts from all corners are proved to be futile for a man struggling for survival and he is a dropout, again. To him the bare fact of life is money and he is to earn money immediately to eat and to feed.

Different Methods

This is not all. Non-formal education seems to be a very difficult task and everywhere trial and error methods are going on. No proven method could yet be devised and hence the nations working very seriously to remove illiteracy are found to employ different methods in different parts of the same country even. They have established separate mass education departments under which constant research works are being conducted. Constantly they are trying to develop suitable curriculum, teaching aids, monitoring and evaluation methods.

In our case also we are to exert more energy on non-formal education than formal education which is dealing with only a small fraction of our total population. But non-formal education is to aim at 80 million illiterate people at least. So in the purview of what has been said some effective measures coercive or motivational for successful implementa-

tion of mass education programme are to be ensured in societies like ours.

West and south African countries have very poor literacy rates. So, to improve the situation they import teachers from abroad to teach their children. But the result they have obtained is not be satisfactory. So they have made it a rule for all the University graduates to work compulsorily in schools for one year.

After that they are eligible for any government job according to their choice. So if we conclusively decide to remove illiteracy from our society we are to impose this sort of precondition upon the job seekers in all sectors. Among other things like diplomas, certificates, degrees, experience etc. We are to make it a condition that one is to work in a literacy centre at least for one year after completion of one's academic career. Then and then only one may be appointed at all levels by the government semi government autonomous bodies or private companies. In a nutshell, experience of working in a literacy centre should be the precondition for entry to any job or profession.

Our social and political leaders are the public teachers at all levels. Common people obey them. So they can on any social or political issue form public opinion very rapidly. They can motivate them effectively for a common cause of social uplift.

Politicians

Our leaders differ widely in their political and social theories, philosophies and practices. The difference is only about the process of removing illness from the society, attacking the same problem from different directions. Thus the aim is same, i.e. to render services to the suffering people to improve their lot. If it is the ultimate goal of all our social and political activities then we may conclude that the people for whom we are devoting so much energy, time and labour must be made free from the social end of illiteracy. So in this issue of educating the common people all leaders in position or in opposition may be at one that we must at any rate achieve the target of cent per cent literacy. But the achievement of this target may take some ages together. Now, throughout these ages the leaders may encourage people through their sayings and doings to achieve literacy through formal or nonformal process. Thus the nation may achieve political commitment for the solution of the Himalayan problem, the problem of illiteracy. Then social workers, voluntary organisations and other philanthropic workers will find a foot-hole in going ahead with their programme for serving the backward illiterate people of our society.

A vast majority of our people give thumb impressions on important documents and letters written by other. This is to be halted immediately. The practice of using

thumb impression should be done away with. Of course, an optimum time is to be allowed for preparation. This is to be well publicised. Campaign against thumb impression and getting others service in writing must be raised through the propaganda media.

All industries and other organisations which employ labourers, professionals or skilled persons generally have accommodation facilities within the compound. Arrangement must be made for catering literacy to these persons and for retaining their literacy. A mechanism is to be devised so that everybody is to show literacy skill in their day to day affairs. Self-employed persons like agriculturists and farmers, agricultural labourers, ration dealers etc. are to follow a rules that persons dealing with them are to show writing and arithmetical skills. The existing law should be amended to ensure that in court of justice no verbal witness will be accepted. A witness will have to submit his statement in his own hand.

The conception of people's high school after GRUNDTVIG in Denmark brought a revolutionary change in the social life of the Danish people in the eighteenth century both in the field of literacy and social awareness. In our country, too, people's high schools are to be established for the farmers in rural areas. These people's high schools, centres for social, cultural and recreational activities, will be run on the basis of interplay of ideas and thoughts and will become a permanent seat for introducing modern functional technology dominating our life for the production of commodities or consumer's goods as in Thailand.

If these schools teach people through literacy the simple technology of fish breeding, highyielding crop cultivations radio and TV assembling and repairing etc. people's participation will definitely ensure self employment opportunity for

N.G.Os

Many registered N.G.Os national/international in character are working in Bangladesh. Many missionaries are also working in underdeveloped areas of the country with permission from the appropriate authorities. The N.G.Os are registered by the Govt. departments. These N.G.Os and missionaries, at the time of registration, must agree to work on literacy, irrespective of whichever field they want to work and for this purpose they can not seek any subvention from the government. This will certainly ease the situation and give very good results.

In the traditional system of formal education, individual interest and individual development get preference over social interest and social development. So it has been realised that non-formal education system is in a better position to impart life-centered education to the bulk of the population and is a key to the success

of all developmental programmes of the welfare states. So illiteracy is to be identified as the number one national problem and to eradicate illiteracy from our society we are to exert constant efforts. We are to remember that literacy is not the goal of today but is a means to develop our citizens for progress. We are to establish a separate mass Education Department under Ministry of Education with a research and monitoring unit like in our neighbouring countries.

With the increase of population and with the advancement of scientific facilities to reach the far reaching areas of our life we are sure to suffer from some social problem which are not yet known to us and which developed nations are already tired. So to avoid this associated trouble of modern life in future we are to plan our non-formal education for opening another new dimension which is to deal with teaching about various manners of equanimity and recreation. The people's high schools can best serve this purpose both in the villages and in the slum areas of towns.

People in our rural areas were familiar with cottage industries for long. But the traditional industries could not cope with the mechanised products and hence they are now extinct. Now a new horizon of small-scale industries based on modern technology may be opened to the rural people too.

The reading of radio and TV circuit and assembling the same does not need much education, if follow up with reading materials contain these circuits people will be attracted and they will find way to new entrepreneurship even in the rural areas. This is what is exactly happening in Thailand or Japan. Of course their products are to be marketed properly by the businessmen both for home consumption and export abroad.

The people's high schools and the moktaps shall have to be provided with libraries. Because these are the receiving stations of life entered information through follow up materials. The necessity of libraries and abundant quantities of follow up materials need not be further explained. Reputed publishers, printers, and book sellers are to be encouraged to print and publish follow up materials in large numbers so that they may be available everywhere according to the need and interest of neo-literates.

Dropouts

A package programme is to be introduced for school dropouts. A vast majority of the primary school entrants cease to continue their studies after two or three years of schooling. The literacy they achieve is lost very soon. So to retain literacy a package programme is to be introduced in our country like Indonesia's work and study programme (Package A Kejar).

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