

Educating Out-of-school Youth

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ILLITERACY is a great problem for any country or nation. It is needless to say that a nation or a country cannot achieve all-round development if its people lack proper education. In our country, the percentage of illiterates is awful—it is about 79%, so it is the holy responsibilities of our educated people to impart practical education to this vast number of illiterates.

Steps have of late been taken to teach these illiterates from some newly established Adult Education Centres. From experience it has been gathered that those who never saw the doors of schools or left schools after receiving elementary education for some time, find it difficult or well nigh impossible to take themselves back to schools or adult education centres. They naturally suffer from inferiority complex and despair of getting any sort of education.

So, in order to motivate them for education it should be the foremost duty of a teacher to know their minds and sentiments. To make their minds congenial to receive education, they should be given due honour for their personality, age and experience. Attempts should also be made to change their attitude towards education and life and make them aware of the usefulness of education.

At first these informal learners should be shown due respect and arrangement should be made to impart education according to their fit time and convenience. Adult learners have a keen sense of self-respect; so they should be treated in such a manner as they may feel honoured. Teachers have to be very much devoted, patient and pursuant. It will be very difficult to achieve suc-

A retired principal of the Teachers' Training College, Dhaka, gives her views on how to approach the problem of educating the out-of-school youths and adult learners.

cess in this endeavour if it is taken as mere routine-work.

The adult learners should be made aware of the practical value of education. With education, they should be taught some handicrafts so that they may earn something by those things. Because earning by learning goes a long way to motivate the adult learners. So stress should be given to occupational education. This type of education should be designed to develop particular knowledge and skills associated with various economic activities and useful in making a living.

Besides, general basic education, such as a sort of literacy, numeracy an elementary understanding of science and one's environment, etc. should be taught to non-formal learners. They should also be given family improvement education, designed primarily to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes useful in improving the quality of family life on such subjects as health and nutrition, home-making and child-care home-repairs and improvements family planning and so on. Then they also should be given community improvement education designed to strengthen local and national institutions and processes through instruction in such matter as local and national government cooperatives, community projects, and the like.

These above types of education are needed by both young people and adults, male and female. As this study is mainly concerned with occupational

education for the out-of-school youth, we list below some principal sub-groups and their specific requirements for skills and knowledge which will enlighten on the suitable approach for learning activities for the adult learners.

In most rural areas of our country farmers, farm workers and those engaged in animal husbandry fishing and forestry, make up most of the active labour force and are the largest audience for non-formal occupational education. They include not only adults, but also many young people, and not only boys and men, but often girls and women.

The specific learning needs of those engaged in agriculture vary greatly according to the ecological and agricultural pattern of the particular area, the state of agricultural technology and markets, and the characteristics of the farmers. The adult learners should be taught all about this.

In our country, the main hope for increasing rural employment and broadening the distribution of income lies in the growth of nonfarm rural enterprises. While increased demand for traditional skills, i.e., tailoring and dress-making, barbering, masonry and carpentry, often can be accommodated by indigenous training processes, the newer skills associated with modern technologies e.g. modern food processing, repair and maintenance of farm machinery motor vehicles, radios and television, electric and diesel pumps

typewriters etc. should be created by new training process.

Rural Administrators and Planners: Effective rural development or "Swanirvar Bangladesh Projects" canal digging etc. calls for broader plans and strategies which require a new breed of rural development planners and administrators. For more specific purposes, such as managing rural cooperative activities, health services, water supply transport service, running "Gram Sarker" educational needs is likely to require some formal training followed by a variety of non-formal educational experience.

These types of learning will provide suitable approaches for activities for the out-of-school youth.

I had occasion to see an Adult Education Centre where the adult learners receive education and earn money by selling their own-made handicrafts. I found them very earnest, sincere and regular in attendance there.

The adult learners naturally learn very slowly. So teachers should refrain from teaching them hurriedly, because that will bring about an unfavourable result.

Teachers should bear in mind that the education should be imparted to adult learners in an atmosphere of pleasure, joy and loveliness. When they will be capable of putting their signatures instead of thumb-impres-sion, writing letters, keeping accounts, reading newspapers and books, they will realise the practical value of education and will engage themselves to learning more earnestly and seriously.

Teachers should always devise way* and means how to motivate the adult learners and how

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should be so designed as to attract him towards it and the presentation of the subject should be charming and thought-provoking.

Teacher should always be aware of the problems, thoughts and hopes and aspirations of the adult learners and design syllabuses in conformity with these things. Syllabuses should be so designed or changed as to reflect their hopes and aspiration, solution of their problems, making their lives meaningful etc.