



REVIEW ARTICLE

ADULT AND EXTENSION EDUCATION FOR RURAL PEOPLE: A LIFE LONG LEARNING MORE THAN FORMAL EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Adult and extension education, today, is the need of the society to refine the already existing informal knowledge and skill of people in rural areas in a way to increase the participation of those people's in the ongoing development scenario. It's a lifelong learning process which doesn't impose any age bar or condition to learn and is a way to broaden the global knowledge and view

INTRODUCTION

India, a country at its advance stake towards development, still lacks behind due to the backwardness in education and Knowledge level. Here, the definition of education and knowledge has slightly changed, now education not only is a means to provide a formal school education but now there arose a demand to provide skill based education, helpful to survive in outer world. In India, maximum population still lives in rural skirts and the percentage of illiteracy over here is more among the elder ones as compared to that of the young generation. So if we want to make our country independent in the field of education, the requirement is that to provide the education to adults also. Education is one of the basic rights of human beings that enable development. It is a process of increasing understanding and providing chance for human beings to continue on the track of development. Education is a way to broaden the range of knowledge which supports the development of new values and understanding that goes beyond the cultural and regional limits. It shapes the understanding level of the generation in such a way to achieve the global values. Data of census 2011 exhibits that the literacy rate in India has shown some progressive advances and stood at 72.98%, where female literacy rate accounted for 64.63% while the male literacy rate has reached 80.88%. Adult education is basically considered as a means to provide education to those unable to complete their school education

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In other words, it is a practice of educating adults. By the period of time, concept of adult education broadened and it highlights the need for institutionalization for the success of providing education to all. With the period of time, adult education is not only associated with just providing the simple education by adopting the basic techniques, but now situation has totally changed, now vocational and participatory training techniques were used to provide such apractical knowledge and skills, so that the people could make use in their daily life. But, this all doesn't means that adult education lacks basic education, it includes a large part of basic education also along with the vocational and literacy training, skill based education, community based education, etc. Extension education is a form of education system designed to provide education to the people in the far by areas. It is a system of providing education to the people at the place of work or at the place they live or to the people who are in need of it, in other words, it is a means to extend or to outspread valuable information so as to bring necessary changes in the outlook or viewpoint of rural people. According to Esminger, extension is education and its purpose is to change attitudes and practices of people with whom the work is done. The term 'Extension Education' was for the first time introduced by the Cambridge University in 1873. Extension education is such an approach which can be followed in any field and is a system of such an education and training planned to meet the needs of the people. Today, Extension education became the need of the society, especially in the democratic setup like India, where participation of the community and society is very much required to meet the scenario of development. It is a

way of bringing adequate changes in the level of education, knowledge, behavior, values, skills and attitude of the people by motivating them for taking practice based learning and education at their own place. According to Bhatnagar and Desai, 1987, extension education is a way to bring about the desirable changes in the behavior – Knowledge, skills, attitude, understanding, goal and confidence – of the people through mutual learning. Adult education could be taken as a practice of educating adults at the workplace through extension education. This is a technique of extension of education beyond the age bar, so as to make the country free from illiteracy. Government of India has taken many initiatives by launching various programs for promoting adult education and the census data of 2011 for adult literacy rate (for more than 15 yrs of age) also shown a remarkable progress

Table 1. Adult Literacy Rates (Age Group of more than 15 Years)

Category	2001(in Percentage)	2011(in Percentage)
Male	54.8	63.7
Female	26.7	40.2
Total	40.8	51.9

Source: Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India*¹

Above data for literacy rate of adults (of more than 15 years of age) shows that the total adult literacy rate of India, according to census 2011, has increased to 51.90 percent as compared to that of 40.80 percent (according to census 2001), where male accounted for 63.70 percent in 2011 as compared to 54.80 percent in 2001, while the adult literacy rate of female shown a significant improvement in at 40.20 percent in 2011 as compared to that of 26.70 percent in 2001. Thus, the above data shows that though 2011 data of census shown some improvement but there still is a need of much increase in adult literacy. In India, where maximum population still belongs to rural areas, adult and extension education should be provided with utmost care. In rural areas, where on one hand, adults are still illiterate; on the other hand, they also lack adequate and recent knowledge regarding the ongoing changes in the outer world. So there requires the need of adult education imparted at the faraway regions of the country through extension education. Adult and extension education can be referred to as the means of providing practice based training, learning for renovation, training for community mobilization or knowledge for changing and de-limiting local traditional boundaries. In India, where education level still needs a booster, Adult and extension education can be proved to be the trade mark for the continuous or lifelong learning process, at any age and in any condition, either formal or informal. It's a process of learning through our daily experiences from our everyday life. Adult with no schooling in childhood doesn't mean that he/she don't know anything. They also have lots of knowledge gained from various social and economic aspects of life which they learned from their daily life function.

Rural people generally have store of knowledge passed from one generation to other through informal learning, related to agriculture, forest resources especially natural medicines, art and crafts, language, culture, etc. So the Adult and extension education can be taken as such a process of learning which works on refining the already existing knowledge in a formal and organized way, so as to benefit the individual and the society on a whole because these types of informal learned people are seem to be more innovative and inventive, if properly motivated and trained. These types of learners always need some need based motivating satisfaction to learn because learning for adults is life-centered and self-directing. That's why, education related to population, health, family planning, nutrition, etc., proved to be the motivating learning approach because it fulfills the need of people in today's life. Thus, the adult and extension education is a best lifelong learning approach that involves the attainment of innovative ideas, skills, outlooks, practices and understanding by those people who have not attained their primary education. The need of adults for leaning is based on current and practical information, helpful in increasing their earning and daily life processes.

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*¹website: <http://censusindia.gov.in/>