



REVIEW ARTICLE

CURRENT ADULT EDUCATION FOR NEO-LITERATES-PERSPECTIVE AND CHALLENGES IN TRIBAL AREAS

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ABSTRACT

Retention of literacy skills of 3Rs is a world phenomenon. The present study was conducted to evaluate the performance of neo-literates in particular reference to the tribal areas. The main focus of the study was to analyse the current programmes lunched for development of different skills of the neo-literates in the tribal areas, in the same time the humble attempts also made to highlight current challenges in this field which are especially responsible for the unsuccessful of these programmes in the tribal areas. For above study three objectives are framed along with same number of research questions, also many secondary sources are examined to provide justification of this topic. The main findings of the study were; theoretically adults wanted to engage themselves in a purposeful activity, their main concern was learning income generating skills, also there was a significant low level of performance of neo-literates in the reading and writing skills after many adult education programmes lunched by the govt. and non-govt. organisations. There are many praise worthy programmes but the implementation strategies are not suitable in particular reference to the tribal areas etc. Here also we made some valuable suggestions after critical study of different programmes like: We may include income generating skills as a component to attract adult illiterates in literacy centres. We may also launch post literacy programs to strengthen the basic literacy skills of neo-literates and to make them effective members of the society.

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INTRODUCTION

By the beginning of the consultation it was clear that all planning must begin on the premise that it is possible to make India a fully literate and empowered nation. The adult education program must develop institutional capacities to reach out to each and every learner wholeheartedly. It must be a continuous and lifelong education with attainment of basic literacy as a non-negotiable. In this connection I mean to say that a nation that is literate is one where its citizens are empowered to ask questions, seek information, take decisions, have equal access to education, health, livelihood, and all public institutions, participate in shaping ones realities, create knowledge, participate in the labour force with improved skills, exercise agency fearlessly and as a consequence, deepen democracy. Systems are to be in place to build a nation that builds citizenship which is truly informed and literate and in

the process the content of governance, development and democracy is also vitalised. It is only when there is a credible, whole hearted and institutionalized effort on a long term basis that the learner would take the programme of adult education seriously. The first step, therefore, is to understand Adult Education Programme as a continuous and lifelong education programme. It must contain all structures and institutions from national to habitation levels (in particular reference to the tribal areas), on a permanent basis, as part of the education department. The structures and processes should be receptive to the learners' needs on the ground.

Perspectives and Challenges in Provisioning Adult Education in tribal areas

Adult Education cannot and should not any longer be considered as a short-term project for achieving a certain percentage of literacy in special reference to the tribal remote areas. It should be conceived as a comprehensive and life-long

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programme for providing a variety of learning programmes to all adults, including basic literacy, life and livelihood skill development, citizenship development and social and cultural learning programmes. In a country like India, it should also not be seen as a program to benefit merely individual learners. In addition to such individual benefit, the program should be so conceived and delivered that it promotes and sustains communities of empowered people – of women, farmers, workers and other sections of society. As the objectives of the National Literacy Mission mentioned, literacy should make the learners understand the causes of their deprivation and help them to unite to fight such deprivations. Since the category of illiterates coincides with the deprived sections of the society – women, minorities, low-castes, tribal's and the poor, literacy programs should become a vehicle for these sections of society to use knowledge, information and skills towards enhanced opportunities leading to social justice and equality.

For this, there has to be an institutional framework both for delivering the learning programme and also for capacity building, contents and material development at State, District and Block levels as well as for planning and implementation of the programmes. There has also to be a system and set up with clear cut administrative and personnel hierarchy at State, District, Block and GP / Village levels. Given the cross-cutting nature of adult education and the variety of learners in respect of their learning needs, convergence between adult education and various line departments cannot be underestimated. The Adult and Continuing Education in the village, under well trained and motivated Adult Educators and the programme under the control of the community is the base of Adult and Continuing Education in lifelong learning perspective. Such a Centre and Adult Educator would be able to mould the learning programmes as per the needs of different categories of learners. The role of Adult Educator / Facilitator in hand-holding the Adult Learners and guiding them through different levels / programmes is a vital component of the programme.

The responsibility of provisioning for Adult and Continuing Education (CE) in the Lifelong learning perspective at the national level must be backed with permanency of the programme and adequate resources. The institutional framework and mechanism at State, District, Block and Gram Panchayat/Village level must be envisioned and ensured as part of the mandate upon the Central Government. The State level must be endowed with dedicated staff and the State Govt. / SLMAs must ensure creating of the institutional framework for provisioning adult education as well as capacity building and administrative set ups. Convergence of Adult Education with all Line Departments is a key to the success of adult and CE Programmes.

Review of related literature

Review of related literature is a very important phase of research purpose. The present review aims to cover such literature which may help to have a comprehensive view of adult education programme. As per the requirements of the present study, some of the worthwhile studies on adult education have been reviewed. Attri, (2012) conducted a study on adult education. It dealt with concept and growth of literacy

and adult education in India. It also dealt with the organization and training method in adult education and some of the programmes and practices of adult education in India and its neighboring countries. The books also contain thoughts of Tagore, Gandhi, Friere regarding the adult education and lifelong learning. The study also includes the formation and support of the governmental organization in the field of adult education. Bhaskaracharyulu and Atluri, (2010) conducted a study on the empowerment of neo-literates. The book consists of some selected papers which were compiled and contributed by the distinguished scholars, academicians and administrators, the themes cover under the books are, literacy promotion programmes, education for all, vocational training programme, awareness programmes, sustainable education and value based education. Wadhwa, (2000) conducted a study on the principles and purposes of adult education. Teaching of adults has gone beyond the teaching of alphabets and ample emphasis is being given to the development of social skills and professional skills among adults. Soundarapadian, (2000) study on literacy campaign in India reveals some of the important problems in implementation of the TLC in Kamaranjan District of Tamil Nadu. They were non-availability space in homes; places were not suitable during the rainy and cold seasons. The rate of drop-outs in the backward regions was raised due to the migration of labours. The study suggests the following measures for the successful implementation of the TLC. The school building with lighting facilities may be used for the campaign in the evening. Learners may be motivated through employment oriented learning in TLC.

The teacher learning phase may be selected suitably keeping in view of migrated labourers and student volunteers fully in the campaign. Lalthankungi, (1997) conducted a study on the origin and development of adult education and also the level of literacy, numeracy awareness and functionality of the current learners, problems, role of the functionaries in Mizoram. Major findings were- the origin and development of the adult education programme in Mizoram can be traced back to 1894 when the Christian Missionaries advocated for the knowledge of 3R's through instructions in Sunday schools. Majority of the current learners in Sate Adult Education Programme, Rural Functional Literacy Programme and colleges said that their main problem was insufficient lighting arrangement in the learning place or Adult education Centres. Saldanha, (1992,b) studied on the Total Literacy Campaign in Sindhudurg District, Maharashtra, regional variations in the organizational characteristics of the programme and also the environmental and infrastructural characteristics of the different sample villages and Talukas in the District. Major findings are learner variables such as sex, age and community influenced the literacy rate negatively. Female instructors have a negative impact on the learning performance of males positioned at the level of excellence in literacy. The village literacy committee played a major role in the implementation of the literacy campaign. Sharma, (1990) conducted a study on the role of adult education as an instrument for creating mass consciousness and awareness among the weaker sections residing in rural areas and also studied on the role of adult education in shaping the socio-economic conditions and standard of living of the weaker sections in rural areas and also the strengths and weaknesses of adult education in general and

to suggest measures for improvement. Major findings were the adult education programme contributed towards bringing about change in individuals. It facilitated the beneficiaries to read, write and do small calculations while marketing and become aware of social evils. Women were not generally attracted towards learning literacy skills. They could not sustain their interest because of their domestic responsibilities and the numbers of dropouts at the adult education centre were fairly large. Choudary, (2012) conducted a study on adult learning which is related to the on-going programme of adult education would be of greater help to the district administrations and National Literacy Mission to chalk out effective strategies for promoting the literacy, post literacy and continuing education programmes. The main findings of the study is that the achievement of women learners was better in relation to men groups and the attitudes was also significantly influenced with the performance of the neo-literates in literacy skills. It is necessary to launch motivational campaigns, provide and based learning materials and organic income generating programmes. Pati, (1989) conducted a study on analyzing of reading needs and interests of the adult neo-literates in the state of Orissa. The main objective of the study was to analyze the reading interest of the adult neo-literates and to classify the different categories of adult neo-literates. One of the main findings of the study was the reading preferences of the adult neo-literates were highly influenced by the local environment. Nagappa, (1966) conducted an exploration into the reading needs and interests of adult neo-literates. He concluded that the method of presentation of new ideas had a high appeal to the neo-literates. He further concluded that reading interests can be maintained by opening, community literacy centres in various parts and supplying necessary materials.

Rationale of the study

There are many discussions on tribal neo-literates and literacy now a days but still are often confused because its role in the development of language and thoughts. An ability to read and write simple sentences is not requiring fulfilling the demand of living in a literate society. The concept of multiliteracies has evolved e.g. digital literacy, media literacy, health literacy, visual literacy, computer literacy, emotional literacy, reading literacy and writing literacy etc. In this multi sensory world, the traditional concept of literacy is only one way of communicating information and ideas. Others modes of communications like oral, visual, electronic, multimedia provide alternative to those who find reading and writing difficult. Decoding and analyzing printed text is just one skill among many that we need to communicate. Despite national and international commitments to achieve a 50% reduction in illiteracy rate by 2015, India still has the largest population of illiterate adults (270 millions) according to EFA monitoring report. Majority of them are poor. There are considerable disparities in literacy attainment across region, gender, ethnicity, caste and linguistic minorities. So here researcher wanted to know the gaps and challenges in implementation level of adult education through this study and also this is the main thrust of this topic.

Research Questions

The study focussed upon following research questions

1. Whether different plans and programmes are implemented in grassroot level in particular reference to tribal areas or not?
2. What are the problems/challenges in the path of proper implementation of programme in tribal areas?
3. How can problems overcome from that areas?

Objectives of the study

Keeping in mind the above research questions, the study addressed the following objectives

1. To analytically study different plans and programmes for adult neo-literates in our country
2. To highlight different challenges in tribal areas for proper implementation of this programme
3. To suggest some practical steps to overcome this and achieve the pre-fixed objectives

Methodology of the study

Methodology

Descriptive survey method used in the study as the investigators tried to get information about more than one variable also with better understanding of perceptions of stakeholders (Hittleman and Simon, 1997). Through this method information about conditions, situations and events that occur in the present can be obtained (UNESCO, 2005). Therefore, in the present study the investigator used this method to explore all possibilities to measure the impact and effectiveness of government implemented programmes with regarding to the tribal neo-literates and adult education, Also the problems and its eradication from the root.

Secondary data collection

The sources of secondary data are the published and unpublished reports. Data from secondary sources were gathered from books, articles, journals, published reports, and Government documents. Quantitative information with regard to current impact, issues on integrated policies and issues on tribal neo-literates adult education.

DISCUSSION

Different plans and programmes for adult neo-literates in our country

In Indian context there is systemic framework for adult and continuing education which have permanent institutions at the Village, Cluster, Block and District levels with a clear demarcation of roles and responsibilities at each level. All of them must ultimately offer full support to the adult learner and take her/him along through different stages of learning. There is a need to establish vertical linkages with line authorities that have the capacity to respond to the dynamic needs of the learners, and also have horizontal linkages to share experiences and constantly learn from one another. The contribution and participation of the learner to the provisioning of services and in the process adding inputs to the education policy itself must

be built into the system. There is a need to have a process of consultation with learners and local tribal youth who are part of the adult education endeavour, and also the members of the Gram Panchayat and the community who are reviewing the progress at all levels along with the department functionaries.

Basic Postulates

Basic literacy, post literacy and continuing education need to be seen as forming a coherent learning continuum. The Adult and Continuing Education programme is intended to establish a responsive, alternative structure for lifelong learning. It should be capable of responding to the needs of all sections of society in particular reference to the tribal of India. Some of the stages in Lifelong Education Programme would need to include: Basic Literacy; Secondary Literacy- i.e., post-basic literacy, such as post-literacy and continuing education; Life-long education and learning; equivalency; and skill development. The sheer complexity and contextual specificity of the concept of Adult, Continuing and Lifelong Education render any attempt to define it in strait-jacketed terms an extremely difficult exercise.

Institutional Framework from Gram Panchayat to National level

This permanent institutional framework should offer full support to adult learners and take them along different stages in the lifelong learning continuum. The Adult and Continuing Education Centre (ACEC) is to have capacity to offer all the range of services as Basic literacy, Continuing education, Computer technology and internet, Multi Media Access, Village Library, Skill Development, Learning Support Programme for school drop outs to re-join /pursue formal education through equivalency, Residential Camps of flexible duration interspersed with Basic Literacy or CE programmes including life and vocational skills. The ACEC should have Adult Educators (2) on permanent basis, and Resource Persons (4-6) - on a task based honorarium for assisting the ACEC in all its activities. The Adult Educators manning the ACEC should be trained to facilitate the processes, such as the establishment of Village Education Committee as a sub-committee of the Gram Panchayat; hold monthly meetings of adult learners; enable Gram Panchayats to review the functioning of ACECs; and involve community and Gram Panchayat to conduct periodic social audit of the ACEC.

Cluster Adult and Continuing Education Resource Centre (CACERC)

The CACERC could correspond with and be housed in the same place as the Cluster Resource Centre in SSA, so as to ensure its physicality and permanence. It should have permanent personnel like Social Mobiliser (1), Cluster Education Co-ordinator (1); and Cluster MIS (1) The CACERC will amalgamate all the plans of the ACEC through review meetings with all the adult educators in the cluster, as well as with Members from SHG's, Gram Panchayats, community mobilisers, and local NGO's.

Block Adult and Continuing Education Office (BACEO)

The BACEO would have two wings (i) administrative and (ii) academic and programme wing, viz., Block Adult and

Continuing Education Resource Centre (BACERC). The BACEO is the lowest rung of the administrative set up of adult education, with its vital link between the learners and the District level Adult and Continuing Education Office (DACEO). The BACEO would have Coordinator/Officer for: MIS (1); Monitoring and Supervision (1) Convergence and Partnership (1); Procurement and Distribution (1); and Model ACEC (1)

Block Adult and Continuing Education Resource Centre (BACERC)

The BACERC would have Academic Resource Persons (4) for different aspects of the ACEC specialised programmes; an RP for Social Mobilisation (1); Training Coordinator (1); and a panel of Block Resource Group of 20-25 persons with expertise on curricular issues, organisational skills and so on.

District Level: The DACEO would have two wings (i) administrative and (ii) academic and programme wing, viz., District Adult and Continuing Education Resource Centre (DACERC). In the case of Administration wing, it would have an administrative head with a reach up to the Block level below and the State level, above. The DACEO would deal with fund flow, implementation, including procurement and distribution of learning materials, EB, Convergence, Monitoring, MIS, etc. The DACEO would have District Adult Education Officer (1) Programme Officers (2); Convergence Officers (2); Training Officers (2); MIS (2) and ICT (2) The DACERC would deal with techno-pedagogy and academic support including Capacity Building, EB, Assessment, Research and Evaluation. The academic support system would be an institutional mode, much like the DIET, but specifically for the adult education system.

Panchayat Raj Institutions: The Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) at all levels shall have their respective committees such as the village education committees, block and district education committees, as well as standing committees on adult education at Block and Zilla Panchayat levels. The PRI's at each level, viz., Gram Panchayats, block or Mandal Panchayats, Zilla Panchayats would need to review the programme enable its smooth functioning and approve the new plans and proposals.

Jan Shiksha Sansthans: The brief of Jan Shiksha Sansthans is to provide vocational and life skills as part of Adult and Continuing Education programme.

Krishi Vigyan Kendras: Considering that most agricultural activities are done by women farmers and women workers, it is important that their skills are upgraded through the institutions like Agricultural Universities, Research Institutes and NGOs, under the adult education programme.

State Level (SDACE): There should be a full fledged Department of Adult and Continuing Education at the State level. It should consolidate qualitative and quantitative data on all the programs initiated by the District Adult Education Office down to the habitation level, establish flexible procedures for fund release and ensure releases against district

plans, and periodically review with all other concerned departments on issues of collaboration and convergence.

State Adult and Continuing Education Resource Centre (SACERC): The SACERC should be visualized and strengthened in such a manner that it can lend institutional umbrella to reach out to other institutional resources and draw upon expertise from other agencies and institutions and civil society for its varied intellectual, organisational and material resource requirement for literacy and adult education programmes. The personnel for the SACERC must be drawn from those with abundance of field experience.

National level: At the national level, there should be a National Authority on Adult and Continuing Education, and in order to imbibe and radiate the paradigm shift in adult education, the nodal agency should also be redesigned and re-designated as National Authority on Adult and Continuing Education from its current restricted connotation and ephemeral character, as National Literacy Mission Authority. The role at the national level would be multifarious, including making resources available for permanent structures and processes for adult and continuing education, enabling sharing of experiences among state and district functionaries, recognising best practices and showcasing them.

National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education: The need for a proper research and resource centre at the national level with linkages with Universities and other institutions of research cannot be underestimated. National Open School System: The NIOS could provide Equivalency programme in the context of neo-literate adults, and also lend the system of recognition, accreditation, assessment and certification of prior learning. Providing an equivalency dimension vis-à-vis the formal education system would help to nurture further up gradation in the skill / knowledge area of prior learning.

Convergence

National Rural Health Mission (NRHM): ASHA: Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA), under NRHM, now at 8,09,637, is a huge force of grass roots level women workers whose intervention could be harnessed for the literacy and adult education programme. ASHA volunteers could also take part in mobilization and awareness building programs. The VTs, Preraks, and Coordinators at Block and District levels could be associated with ASHAs for health awareness creation and such other tasks. The school dropouts among ASHA volunteers could be encouraged to join the Equivalency programme. There has to be an interface and convergence between Adult Education Department and the NRHM network.

MGNREGA: Under MGNREGA, millions of unskilled rural workers are being employed – 39 million during 2010-11, majority of whom belong to the socio-economically disadvantaged sections like, the SCs, STs, Minorities and other disadvantaged sections and a large number of them are women. They also constitute a large percentage of country's illiterate population. Coordination with MGNREGA is necessary for getting a village wise list of job holders, creation of material and information dissemination on entitlements. The programme

of adult education can be coupled with MNREGA for various purposes. Applying for the job-card, seeking work, operating bank accounts and reading of the Job cards, etc., have created an unprecedented demand among these workers for becoming literates. If organized properly along their needs, the processes of learning to read and write could be integrated with their daily life situations as workers in MNREGA. Work Supervisors having necessary competence and qualification can be trained for imparting functional literacy to these workers.

SABLA: The Ministry of Women and Child Development of Govt. of India launched "Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls – SABLA" initially in 200 districts on a pilot basis. The Sabla scheme aims to address the multi-dimensional needs of adolescent girls between 11 to 18 years, including their nutrition and health status, upgrading their life skills, home-based skills and vocational skills, etc. The scheme which will be implemented using the ICDS platform, through Aanganwadi Centres and its functionaries, could be converged with functional literacy, equivalency, vocational skill development and continuing education programmes for non-literate as well as literate girls in 15-18 age group either through the Anganwadi centres or Adult and Continuing Education Centres. The scope for convergence is enormous as there are 7075 ICDS projects and 14 lakh Anganwadi Centres across the country.

Similar convergence must also be built into all forms of practice with the National Rural Livelihood Mission, Panchayati Raj Institutions, particularly since there are millions of elected women members in these institutions, Right to Information and the Right to Education that envisages School Management Committees to be mainly composed of parents of children, half of them women. Properly linked literacy programs can be a great way to prepare empowered and aware members (mostly women) of the PRI's and SMCs greatly benefiting governance and school education.

Role of NGO's / Universities/Research Institutes

For Adult Education to be effectively implemented, the space for genuine long-term partnerships between government and civil society organizations, based on appreciation of their respective strengths and mutual respect, must be evolved. Critical to ensuring this would be to legitimize and institutionalize the different roles of NGOs within the institutional and other mechanisms. The adult education system envisaged could also allow flexibility for implementation by NGOs. Civil society organizations and NGO's can also be associated in capacity building of GPs, with funds from adult education department or the Panchayats. University departments/Research Institutes must be engaged in research-related activities (particularly action research and participatory research), undertaking documentation, developing suitable academic programmes for field level functionaries.

Basic Education Programme

This programme is designed to achieve the second objective of the scheme, namely, "Enable the neo-literates to continue their learning beyond basic literacy and acquire equivalency to

formal educational system". Arrangements will be made to enable young adults to continue their learning till they are able to achieve equivalence levels with Grade III, IV, V, VI, VII and VIII and beyond in the formal school system or through the Open Learning System. The Open Basic Education (OBE) programme initiated by the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and other Open Schools will be taken as the starting point. While formulating equivalency programmes, the life experience and local knowledge systems of the adult learners will be taken into consideration.

Vocational Education (Skill Development) Programme

For furtherance of the third objective of the scheme, that is, „Equip non and neoliterates with vocational skills to improve their living and earning conditions“, suitable skill development training will be imparted to those having rudimentary levels of education or no education. Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS), set up under the Scheme for Assistance to Voluntary Agencies for Adult Education and Skill Development of DSEL, will be institutionally networked with the Adult Education Centres so that they could impart skill development training, as well as literacy linked vocational training. JSS, in coordination with the District Implementing Agency, will enlist neo-literates for appropriate skill development training. Besides specific activities for which a specific budgetary provision is available under the Mission, JSSs will utilise their programme budget to impart vocational skill training. Parallel efforts will be made by the SLMA and District Implementation Agencies for developing synergies with other agencies in the public as well as private sector for enhanced opportunities of skill development training at the gram panchayat level.

Continuing Education Programme

Continuing Education Programme (CEP) is aimed at achieving the fourth objective of the Scheme that is, „Establishing a learning society by providing opportunities to neo literates and other targeted beneficiaries for lifelong learning“. The programme recognizes increased demand for learning generated by Basic and Post Literacy Programmes and the potential need of adult learners to further enhance their skills on their own terms and at their convenience. CEP, as the very name suggests, will not have a fixed time frame as in the case of the other three programmes, but will be organized on a continuous basis. The approach is to create a sustainable learning environment so that learners are encouraged to continue with their literary aspirations and take advantage of the programme facilities to satiate their learning appetite.

Challenges in tribal areas for proper implementation

We may highlight a number of key challenges that must be addressed when performance assessments are used for accountability in the federal adult education system: (1) defining the domain of knowledge, skills, and abilities in a field where there is no single definition of the domain; (2) using performance assessments for multiple purposes and different audiences; (3) having the fiscal resources required for assessment development, training, implementation, and maintenance when the federal and state monies under the

Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 are limited for such activities; (4) having sufficient time for assessment and learning opportunities given the structure of adult education programs and students' limited participation; and (5) developing the expertise needed for assessment development, implementation, and maintenance. This chapter discusses these challenges and their implications for alternatives identified by workshop presenters.

Defining a common domain of knowledge, skills, and abilities

One very critical stage in the development of performance assessments is defining the domain of knowledge, skills, and abilities that students will be expected to demonstrate. In her remarks, Mari Pearlman said that in order to have reliable and valid assessments to compare students' outcomes across classes, programs, and states, a common domain must be used as the basis for the assessment. This poses a challenge to the field of adult education because, as several speakers pointed out, there is no consensus on the content to be assessed. In many testing programs, there is a document (called a framework) that provides a detailed outline of the content and skills to be assessed. But on the national level, no such document exists for adult education, and few states have defined the universe of content for their adult basic education programs. Hence, the extent to which specific literacy and numeracy skills are taught in a program can vary greatly depending on the characteristics of the student population and available staff.

Comparability of Performance Assessment

In order for results from one version of the assessment to be comparable to results from another version, there needs to be a common domain with agreed-upon critical skills and knowledge and types of tasks that allow students to demonstrate these skills and knowledge. While these two approaches may be feasible on a limited level, such as in a program or within a state, it will be much more difficult to apply them across states or nationally.

Using performance assessments for multiple purposes

Throughout the workshop, participants enumerated the varied uses for assessments in adult basic education: for diagnostic purposes, to meet accountability requirements, to provide feedback to students and/or teachers, and for program evaluation. As Pamela Moss explained, different purposes bring different kinds of validity issues, and David Thissen, Stephen Dunbar, and Jim Impara noted that it is difficult, if not impossible to develop one assessment that adequately serves such varied purposes. However, several speakers talked about ways performance assessments might be developed to serve the purpose of the NRS (National Reporting System). As suggested by Mark Reckase, Mari Pearlman, and others, the structured portfolio has the potential of serving the dual purposes of meeting accountability requirements and providing feedback to students. But for it to do so, the menu of content and tasks must be broad enough to meet the accountability requirements for the domain and to have enough examples to provide meaningful feedback to students.



Having the required fiscal resources : Assessment Development and Staff training

Several presenters emphasized both the importance of having adequate development and training processes to support the creation of quality performance assessments, and the substantial cost of these activities. Tasks used on performance assessments are easily memorized and, unlike selected-response items, often cannot be reused. Administration costs can also be hefty, given the time, materials, and resources required to administer performance assessments.

Assessment Implementation and Maintenance

The creation of performance assessments, including specifying content domains and developing scoring rubrics as well as providing staff training, is only a portion of the cost of using these assessments. Implementing a performance assessment system and maintaining and refurbishing assessments are ongoing costs that programs must take into consideration. In addition to implementation costs, there are costs associated with updating and revisions, particularly if the assessment is to meet the desire of many program staffs to have assessments that are dynamic. These updates include new development to keep the assessment current, refining scoring rubrics (particularly in the use of structured portfolios), and updating training manuals. The costs for these activities would need to be subsidized by the states or budgeted as part of the ABE

programs' operational costs. In addition, there are costs associated with training staff to administer performance assessments and providing the necessary materials and other resources.

Having sufficient time for assessment and learning opportunities

Time is one aspect of the adult basic education service delivery system that poses significant challenges for the use of performance assessment. Time is a limited commodity for most adult education students. As mentioned in the overview and by a number of presenters, adult education students spend a limited amount of time in instruction, and they have limited time for carrying out performance assessments. Speakers queried whether this amount of time provided a sufficient "opportunity to learn." If the instructional time is not sufficient for learning, then the assessment may not be a reliable test of students' educational progress. The speakers noted that student persistence in regularly attending classes and completing a course of study is a critical factor for most adult education programs.

Developing expertise

A refrain heard throughout the workshop was the need to have trained and qualified individuals for all phases of performance assessment development, administration, and scoring. It is

observed that the technical expertise of most adult basic education program staff is not sufficient for them to undertake assessment development. Assessment development is a technical field with stringent guidelines, and several presenters suggested that states and programs work collaboratively with psychometricians in the assessment development process. One possible role for adult education staff in the development process might be to provide the applications of content that can be used in the development of assessment tasks.

Social Inequities

Saiming at providing quality education to all sections of the society, the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, other backward communities and minorities are some of the groups, which need special attention. We have a number of initiatives targeted at these groups, such as provision of free textbooks and uniforms to students of disadvantaged communities, special education development programmes for SC girls with very low literacy levels, scholarships to the children of the most deprived groups, dedicated hostels for SC boys and girls and aid to voluntary agencies working for the SCs / STs, but the wide gaps in mainstreaming of these groups still persists.

Some practical steps to overcome this and achieve the pre-fixed objectives

- Improving transition of students from adult education to postsecondary education is an institutional priority for community college and adult education programs for neo-literates.
- Faculty and staff of transition programs are resourceful, experienced, and committed to serving tribal adult students.
- Strong collaborative partnerships exist among college programs, adult education programs, business/industry, and community-based organizations.
- Institutions have innovative and flexible admissions and enrollment policies that facilitate tribal area transitions.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of courses and programs, student data systems track transitions and outcomes across programs.
- Programs inform tribal adult education students about the opportunities in and benefits of higher education.
- Programs provide adult education students specially tribals with assistance in meeting the financial demands of college.
- Personalized support, such as peer mentoring, tutoring, or case management, is provided before, during, and after transitioning.
- Programs provide effective matriculation services, including assessment that is aligned between adult education and postsecondary programs.
- Adult education for tribals and postsecondary curriculum are aligned, sequential, and progressive to provide a seamless pathway for transition students
- Instruction is contextualized so that transition students see the connection between basic skills education and academic or vocational content
- Programs include career planning as part of the curriculum.

- Curriculum and scheduling are designed to be flexible, chunked, and modularized with multiple entry and exit points.
- Sufficient language instruction is provided for English-as-a-second-language learners.
- Instruction and curriculum are designed and delivered in a way that integrates a variety of instructional methodologies.
- Institutions provide accelerated courses/programs that give students the opportunity to quickly meet their(tribal) goals.

Conclusion

While the challenges related to adult education are significant, a review of recent research suggests that there are promising practices and opportunities to improve both the adult education system and student outcomes. The impetus for change, however, is unclear. Funding for adult education programs for neo-literates and community colleges is not tied to performance, and community dialogue often focuses almost exclusively on tribal education and traditional-age college students rather than adult learners. There are gaps in the research literature that, if filled, might provide the foundation for systems change.

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