

Training of Functionaries in Saakshar Bharat Programme: An Analysis

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Abstract

Lack of adequate training base has been one of the weakest links in the past adult education programmes. The ongoing Saakshar Bharat Programme throughout the country should not suffer from this handicap. Training in the context of Saakshar Bharat Programme is conducted on a three tier basis viz., (1) Resource Persons at the district level, (2) Master trainers at the block level and (3) Volunteers at panchayat level with a duration of five days at each level spread over three to four spells. The resource persons are trained by members from State Resource Centres, NCERT, SCERT, Directorate of Adult Education, Universities and other reputed agencies. Training needs to be conducted in the best direction possible as the success of the campaign depends upon the efficiency of the functionaries. Hence, there is a greater need to meticulously plan and organise the training programmes at all levels and the following parameters will be of immense various district administrations in effectively planning and organising the training programmes.

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Definition of Training

Training means "To educate a person so as to be fitted qualified, proficient in doing some job". Also, it means getting a man to do a job correctly, effectively, consciousness. It aims to prepare to carry out a specific set of tasks in relation to his occupation. Training not only improves performance but also increases the motivation and confidence of the trainee.

There is a hair split difference between education and training. Education is primarily concerned with opening out the world to the student so that he can choose his interests and mode of living and also his career. Training on the other hand, is primarily concerned with preparing the person for certain lines of action in which he works and which also improves his performance in it.

Types of Training

Training may be classified according to the needs of the programme for different categories of the personnel. The training can be : short-term or long-term, part-time or full-time, pre-service (initial) and in-service (on-the-job), or recurrent (retraining), depending on programme objectives, backgrounds of the trainees, expected roles and availability of time and finance.

(1) **Pre-service Training (initial)** i.e., the training which the trainee receives before joining the actual job. This includes his education at a high school or secondary school, a general college or professional college. It should be of short duration, followed by frequent recurrent training sessions.

(2) **In-service Training:** This is for improving the ability of the trainee or keeping him abreast of the latest knowledge, or giving him some special training in the new job which he is required to do. This may be (a) orienting the new worker after he joins the job, or orienting an old worker with the new job he is required to do; (b) induction training; (c) job training; (d) short-range course; (e) periodical meetings and conferences, seminars and workshops, etc.

1. Formulation of Training Methodology

Adult Education is a field oriented activity dealing with human beings and its basic objective is to extend educational opportunities to illiterate adults in the field in which they are interested at their leisure time. It emphasises upon (a) providing minimum levels of learning in reading, writing and arithmetic, (b) conscientizing the illiterate poor and oppressed to bring themselves socially and economically up on par with others and (c) creating opportunities to retain, strengthen and utilise the literacy skills acquired by the learners in their day to day life. Our long years of experience in adult education indicate that it is rather different to evolve a single workable training methodology for adult education functionaries throughout the country. As a matter of fact, training methodologies are to be evolved based on the field experience and the training objectives have to be formulated out of the training needs and the training units/topics, methods, materials and the expected learning outcomes have to be delineated in terms of training objectives. The methodology of training should answer the questions like who will be trained. By whom? With what duration? And with what provisions for feedback? Bhola (1970) suggested the following steps for training design.

- Step I : Programme analysis for definition of both general and specific objectives.
- Step II : Listing activities to be conducted for achievement of defined activities.
- Step III : Defining and designing roles and allocating role responsibilities for conducting listed activities.
- Step IV : Statement in behavioral terms of competencies required of various role incumbents.
- Step V : Developing a training curriculum to build required competencies and the implementation of the curriculum in training courses, workshops, on-the-job training and correspondence training.
- Step VI : Evaluation of the effectiveness of training and review of steps I to V.

2. Objectives of Training

The training of functionaries in Saakshar Barat Programme is often designed with the following objectives:

1. To disseminate knowledge to the trainees about the need, objectives, structure and mode of operational sing the campaign;
2. To make them understand the methods of preparing the primers on the method of IPCL (Improved Pace and Content of Learning) and its method of teaching adults;
3. To provide them an understanding about the norms of literacy;
4. To equip them with simple and easy ways of recognizing, reading and writing alphabets and digits;
5. To train them about the methods of motivating adults to learn and to create conducive atmosphere for learning;
6. To provide them knowledge about the monitoring system and techniques of evaluation;
7. To provide knowledge about the need and arrangements required for vocational education (skill development);
8. To explain them their job chart / roles and functions;
9. To develop among the trainees a sense of co-operation, confidence and determination to perform their respective roles and to develop the desired characteristics; and
10. To orient the resource persons and master trainers about planning and organising lower level training programmes.

3. Features of Training

To be effective, the training programmes in adult education should have the following features:

1. Heterogeneity due to sex, age, education, field of work, experience etc., is a common feature that is often observed among adult education functionaries. Hence, training should consider the background of participants.
2. Training should be specific and tailor-made to provide knowledge to the trainees about their respective roles and functions apart from providing knowledge about other functionaries who will be associating with them in the work.
3. It should provide firsthand experience to the trainees in doing things.
4. It should be an opportunity to the trainees for mutual learning and to share ideas, views and experiences. Learning should emerge out of experience.
5. It should be participatory in nature. It should inspire and motivate the trainees to participate effectively during the training programme and in implementing the campaign. To maximize group learning, it is better to identify the skills and level of knowledge of different participants and allocate them works to take care of during training.
6. It should be treated as an experiment in community living. It should pave way to develop values, and principles which the functionaries are to imbibe and practice as a result of training.
7. It should emphasise more on group discussion for a better understanding of the situation at the field level and its analysis to solve various problems.

8. Training should be residential. Its prime motto is to develop common living, sharing and participation. It provides the trainees an opportunity to review the day's activities, to complete the assignments, to invent new types of literacy games and exercises, to practice role play etc.
9. Training should be in small groups and the training sessions should not be lengthy.

4. Selection of Training Methods

Adult education is a field requiring multiple skills on the part of functionaries like the skill of communication, planning, organisation, management, co-ordination, supervision, recording, reporting, evaluation etc. Further, to be successful the functionaries, especially the volunteers, require the good characteristics like pleasing personality, helpful nature, impartiality, patience, regularity, devotion, dedication, zeal, enthusiasm, commitment, knowledge of the subject matter, teaching ability, leadership qualities, articulation, giving recognition to others, co-operating with others in social activities, and ability to secure the co-operation of others in performing their functions. In order to develop the above skills and characteristics among the functionaries, the trainers have to utilise not one particular training method / technique but a combination of them which can yield good results. Though, there is a wide range of training methods, only a few of them like lecture, discussion, demonstration, simulation, role play, case study, field trip, workshop, brainstorming, buzz session, programmed instruction, etc., are often used in adult education. Each method has its own advantages and disadvantages and it is highly necessary to decide as to when each method or a combination of methods can be used.

For example, lecture method can be used to provide the trainees an understanding about the literacy situation in India with special reference to the state and district, to explain the participants about the concept and approach to Saakshar Barat Programme, to explain the method of conducting a survey, to explain the characteristics of adult learners and their learning behaviour, to explain the job chart of various functionaries, to explain monitoring and evaluation procedures, objectives of post-literacy campaigns etc. Each lecture should be followed by discussion for better clarification and understanding. Discussion method can be used to discuss the ways of organising environmental building activities, the methods of linking literacy with development, methods of motivating the functionaries and adult learners, problems faced by functionaries in implementing the campaign, preparation of training schedule etc.

Demonstration method can be used to explain the method of teaching lessons of the primer, method of teaching numeracy skills, vocational skills etc. Case studies can be used to explain how the countries like Russia, Vietnam, Thailand, Denmark, U.K., etc., wiped out illiteracy in a planned manner, to present the profile of a successful volunteer etc. Similarly role play can be used to explain the method of selecting a good volunteer, method of organising adult education centre, village parliament, promotion of national integration, small family norm, women's involvement in development activities and to wipe out misconceptions, superstitions and various social problems. Brainstorming technique can be used to evolve various methods of organising literacy and post-literacy centers in an effective

manner, methods to be used to create scientific temper among the masses, steps to be taken to involve various sections of the society in literacy work etc.

5. Functions of a Literacy Teacher

A Literacy Teacher who serves in the field of adult education is expected to carry out the following functions. He / she acts as the teacher / instructor of literacy for 10 people.

1. Creation of favourable environment for programme (cultural troops, meetings, door to door campaigns, personal discussions, processions, etc.)
2. Mobilisation of resources (physical resources, books / primers, pencils, slates, bulb, mats, etc., human resources – teachers, learners support, officials, etc.).
3. Enrolment of learners (15+ age group, nearby location, interested learners) (10 learners per centre).
4. Teaching of literacy skills (reading, writing and numeracy).
5. Dissemination of functional information.
6. Creation of social awareness.
7. Creating knowledge about programme aspects to the community.
8. Organisation of the centre.
9. Motivation of dropouts, absentees.
10. Initiation of discussion.
11. Leading the activities of the centre.
12. Organisation of cultural activities (songs, drama, puppetry, film show, etc.).
13. Maintenance of records (attendance register).
14. Submission of reports (initial report, quarterly reports and terminal reports).
15. Attending the training programmes.
16. Participating in the community activities.
17. Evaluation.

Characteristics of a good Literacy Teacher

Literacy Teacher is a person who serves as a person to teach the illiterates at the grassroot level. He / she joins in the Saakshar Bharat Programme voluntarily without any coercion / pressure from anybody.

A Literacy Teacher has to teach atleast 10 members who are illiterates in his nearby area and interested in learning literacy skills.

The Literacy Teacher should have the following characteristics:

- Knowledge in the subject matter.
- Communication skills, discipline, commitment.

- Clarity in expression, broad mindedness.
- Command over the language, creativity.
- Interest in teaching learners, co-operation, co-ordination.
- Leadership qualities, flexible nature.
- Friendly nature, responsible nature.
- Ability to motivate others.
- Equal outlook, respecting elders.
- Interest in social service.
- Sufficient time
- Idealistic nature
- Knowledge about different methods of teaching.
- Ability to maintain the timings in the centre.
- Proper planning.
- Knowledge about psychology of adults.
- Knowledge about the needs, interests of adults.
- Knowledge about psychological principles of teaching.
- Patriotism, dynamism.
- Skill to organise discussion.
- Organising ability.
- Managerial ability.

6. Evaluation of Training

Evaluation of training programmes should form an integral part of training. It needs to be conducted in a scientific and systematic manner but not per se as is often done. It is necessary to provide feedback to the trainers in terms of strengths and weaknesses and to improve the whole process of training. It should be participatory in nature where the participants or trainees judge the worthiness of training. It should be inbuilt or concurrent to take remedial measures if any, then and there itself. Further, evaluation should be both formative and summative. Evaluation of training programmes organised / to be organised for various functionaries in the context of Saakshar Barat Programme should touch upon the following dimensions:

1. **Inputs:** Curriculum, content, training materials, methods and resource persons.
2. **Administrative and Organizational Arrangements :** Venue, duration, contacting resource persons, financial aspects, boarding and lodging arrangements, pens, pads, procuring radio, TV, VCR, tape recorder, etc., and keeping them up for use at the venue, display materials, arrangements for inaugural and valedictory sessions, cultural activities during training, recording and documentation of the training aspects.

3. **Process:** Environment of the training organisation, resourcefulness of the trainers, understanding between trainers and trainees, general attitude and approach of the trainers, response of the trainees to various training techniques, coverage of the contents, reporting about the field visits, etc.
4. **Output:** Changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills, values, utility of training as perceived by the participants and their suggestions to the trainees in all the four dimensions.

Conclusion

To conclude, training of functionaries in Saakshar Barat Programme is the first step in introducing them with academic inputs, skills and competencies. It is not the question whether the training is over or not but whether the training has been conducted qualitatively or not in relation to the training objectives. Training of the functionaries in adult education should be innovative and interesting. The new techniques of training, the new ways of teaching literacy and numeracy through various aids, exercises and games should be coupled with the teaching of primers. Sharing for better training is the need of the hour. Further, the deficiencies in training need to be substantiated through re-training, radio talks, meetings, discussions, etc. The first level resource persons should participate in as many training programmes as possible at the lower levels to avoid training deficiencies.

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