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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### PRERAK'S TRAINING IN CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMME

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#### ABSTRACT

Education is a continuous process taking place throughout the life of an individual. It is not confined to pre-specified times and places, but happens whenever a person reflects on the current situation, resolves to address a problem, to share an idea, or to gain an understanding. As the knowledge and skills enable the people to prosper throughout a life time, people will need continually to enhance their abilities, in order to address immediate problem and to participate in a process of continuing education and professional development. Life itself is a continuous learning process. But education, both general and vocational, throughout life, enables an individual to achieve his fullest potential for development.

**Key words:** Education, Vocational, Knowledge and Skill

#### INTRODUCTION

The present study is one such that has been taken up to study the training conducted for the prerak's of different categories. The competency they have got depends on the quality of the training imparted to them by the other functionaries. It has been known in the past that most of the adult literacy programmes were not very successful because of the quality of training given at the grass root level.

##### **Concept, need and importance of continuing education**

Concept: Continuing Education (CE) by definition is the provision of opportunities for people to continue their learning. This implies that if CE is to facilitate the development of a learning society, then society must provide a rich educational environment with a wide range of diverse resources and opportunities for learning, not only through the formal system but also through the informal educational sector (UNESCO: PROAP, 1988). UNESCO: PROAP (1993) had defined continuing education as a 'broad concept which includes all the learning opportunities all people want or need outside of basic literacy education and primary education'. This definition implies the following: i) continuing education is for literate youth and adults; ii) it is responsive to needs and wants; iii) it can include experiences provided by the formal, non-formal and informal education sub-sectors; and iv) it is defined in terms of 'opportunity' to engage in lifelong learning after the conclusion of primary schooling or its equivalent.

**Need and importance:** CE is a process by which life-long needs of the individuals are achieved. There is a need to learn

continuously throughout life whether for continuous replenishment of knowledge, for intellectual satisfaction, for personal and professional progress, for gaining experience, or for the effective discharge of civic functions (Reddy, 1991). The purposes of continuing education are enumerated as follows:

- a) To consolidate and stabilise the skills gained by semi-literates and neo-literates so that they become adequately functional literates;
- b) To create scope for application of functional literacy in meeting the day-to-day needs of social intercourse;

Continuing education is needed for the following purposes (Reddy, 2006):

- a) To upgrade levels of living through a process: improving knowledge, skills, better understanding of work environment, and world of work;
- b) To produce trained manpower and to bring about full and optimum development of human resources;
- c) To cater to the felt needs of all sections of society with particular reference to the needs of less privileged and under-privileged sections;

Continuing education agencies may use a wide range of media and learning resources. Some of these could be particularly suitable for the neo-literates; others may deliberately focus on the development of higher levels of functions and skills. Some of the media as identified by R. H. Dave and his colleagues (1985).

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### Continuing education

The continuing Education scheme provides a learning continuum to the efforts of Total Literacy and Past Literacy Programmes in the country. The main thrust is on providing further learning opportunities to neo-literates by setting up of Continuing Education Centres. The Continuing Education Centre provides area- specific, need-based opportunities for basic literacy. Upgradation of literacy skills, pursuit of alternative educational programmes, vocational skills and also promote social and occupational development. The scheme also undertakes a number of important programmes such as – Equivalency Programme, Income Generating Programme, Quality of Life Improvement Programme, and Individual Interest Promotion Programme. The Continuing Education Centre is set up for a population of 2000 to 2500. For a group of 10-15 Continuing Education Centres there is a Nodal Continuing Education Centre, which monitors and oversees the activities of those cluster of Continuing Education Centres.

#### Beneficiaries of continuing education centre

- Neo-literates
- Semi- literates
- Non- literates
- School dropouts / pass outs
- Non Formal Education dropouts/ pass outs
- Community

#### Core activities of continuing education centre

- Literacy class
- Library and reading room
- Venue for group discussion
- Short term vocational training courses
- Promoting sports and adventures activities
- Venue for recreational and cultural activities
- An Information window and
- To Serve as a community centre.

#### Who is Prerak?

The in charge of the Continuing Education Centres is called prerak's, who are entirely responsible for implementing the Continuing Education Programmes. In such circumstances it is absolutely essential that the training imparted to the 'Preraks' be of top quality. They are the ones who will be responsible for running the Continuing Education Centre.

#### Criteria for selection of preraks

1. The prerak should, as far as possible, be a person drawn from the local community.
2. Desirable qualification for Nodal prerak should be a degree and for prerak of Continuing Education Centre should be a +2 pass candidates.
3. The minimum age for prerak of Nodal Continuing Education Centre/ Continuing Education Centre will be 21 years and for Assistant prerak of the centre it will be 18 years.

### Training design

The Training design is developed to train preraks. It is better to constitute a training Team to organize the training programme at gross root level. "Team work" is essential for the successful organization of the training programme. The basic purpose of the 1<sup>st</sup> phase training is to equip the preraks on preliminary knowledge and skills needed for the launching of the programmes. Further programmes are to be developed according to the needs and necessities of the target groups.

#### Training of Preraks

The prerak will depend a great deal on the kind of training they are given before and during their work. It is hoped that the training programmes for the preraks would provide them the necessary information, knowledge, skills and attitudes. Training is to be treated as an ongoing activity. The best training one gets is while performing one's job. The preraks should make use of every opportunity to improve their own knowledge and resourcefulness.

#### Steps in organizing the training programme

Organizing the Training programmes the following basic steps:

- ❖ Calculation of numbers of Nodal preraks, preraks and Assistant preraks to be trained.
- ❖ Determination of time-frame for completion of training work backwards from the scheduled date of starting the centres.
- ❖ Calculate number of training programmes to be conducted @ 30 learners per batch.
- ❖ Identify venue and organize training facilities.
- ❖ Send invitation letters to the trainees providing information regarding:

Duration

Reaching training venue

Cost of transportation

Boarding and Lodging arrangement

#### Pre service training

- ❖ The training programme in consultation with preraks plan the objectives, content, methodology of training in advance.
- ❖ Organize a Training Team and develop a "committee system" to take care of the training programme
- ❖ Fix the venue, time, Resource persons and other resources sufficiently, and arrange inaugural session, give publicity through press posters, hand outs etc.

#### In service training programme

- ❖ Involve the participants in the organization of the programme provide refreshments, food etc., according to the need.
- ❖ Get "feedback" from the trainees every day at the end of the programme and make possible changes, if necessary.

- ❖ Provide sufficient “Reading Materials” in time to the participants. Provide materials like pen, pad, not books etc.,
- ❖ If a prerak fails to come, be prepared to make alternate arrangements.
- ❖ Prepare the “Report” of the programme with the help of the trainees, and consolidate the report.

#### Post service training

- ❖ Be in touch with the trainees ensure monthly meeting with the trainees.
- ❖ Provide a supporting system if possible, to strengthen their skills.
- ❖ Make small groups and support them to visit other Continuing Education Centres for learning and sharing experiences.

#### Training objectives of preraks

National Literacy Mission in its guidelines has given, in the first stage in pre-service that training should be given for 11 days. At the end of 11-day programme each trainee should be able to

- ❖ Explain objectives, philosophy, beneficiaries and services of National Literacy Mission and Continuing Education Programme.
- ❖ List out job responsibilities of Nodal preraks, preraks, and Assistant preraks and other field functionaries.
- ❖ Explain the community, list out principals and areas of community participation
- ❖ Narrate the financial provisions and procedures for running Counting Educational Centres.
- ❖ Conduct interviews, fill up survey forms, analyse, tabulate, interpret and prepare a summary of data and call out intended beneficiaries.
- ❖ Use participatory Rural Appraisal Techniques for assessing community needs.
- ❖ Explain objectives, prerequisites and layout design for setting up Continuing Education Centres and literacy classes.
- ❖ Classify, arrange and display the literacy material.
- ❖ Conduct reading sessions.
- ❖ Identify local sports, cultural activities and areas of special interest.
- ❖ Organize lectures, sports and cultural activities.
- ❖ Identify and prepare a list of developmental activities in the area.
- ❖ Display and disseminate the information.
- ❖ Facilitate coordination of Equivalency Programmes.
- ❖ Coordinate Income Generating Programmes.
- ❖ Identify local needs from self help groups and initiate socio – economic activities.
- ❖ Fill and maintain reports and registers.
- ❖ Explain the role of prerak as a social change agent.

#### Specific objectives of the preraks training

1. To understand the effectiveness of the training in the first level of training imparted to the preraks with regard to the responsibilities assigned to them.
2. To understand the level of effectiveness of the training, its shortcomings and the need to make changes through evaluation of the training imparted to the preraks.
3. To make recommendations for improvement in the form of suggestions depending upon the outcome of the results of the evaluation of the training.

#### Conclusion

For the success of the programme, it is essential that the quality of the training imparted to be essentially good. With this view, it is essential to evaluate the training imparted to the preraks. To understand in what extent the training was useful in helping the preraks understand the knowledge of the Continuing Education Centre programmes and the responsibilities assigned to them. After evaluation, to give suggestions in order to make the necessary changes in the training in the required area and also to get a feed back after the training to understand the requirements of the training from the preraks point of view.

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