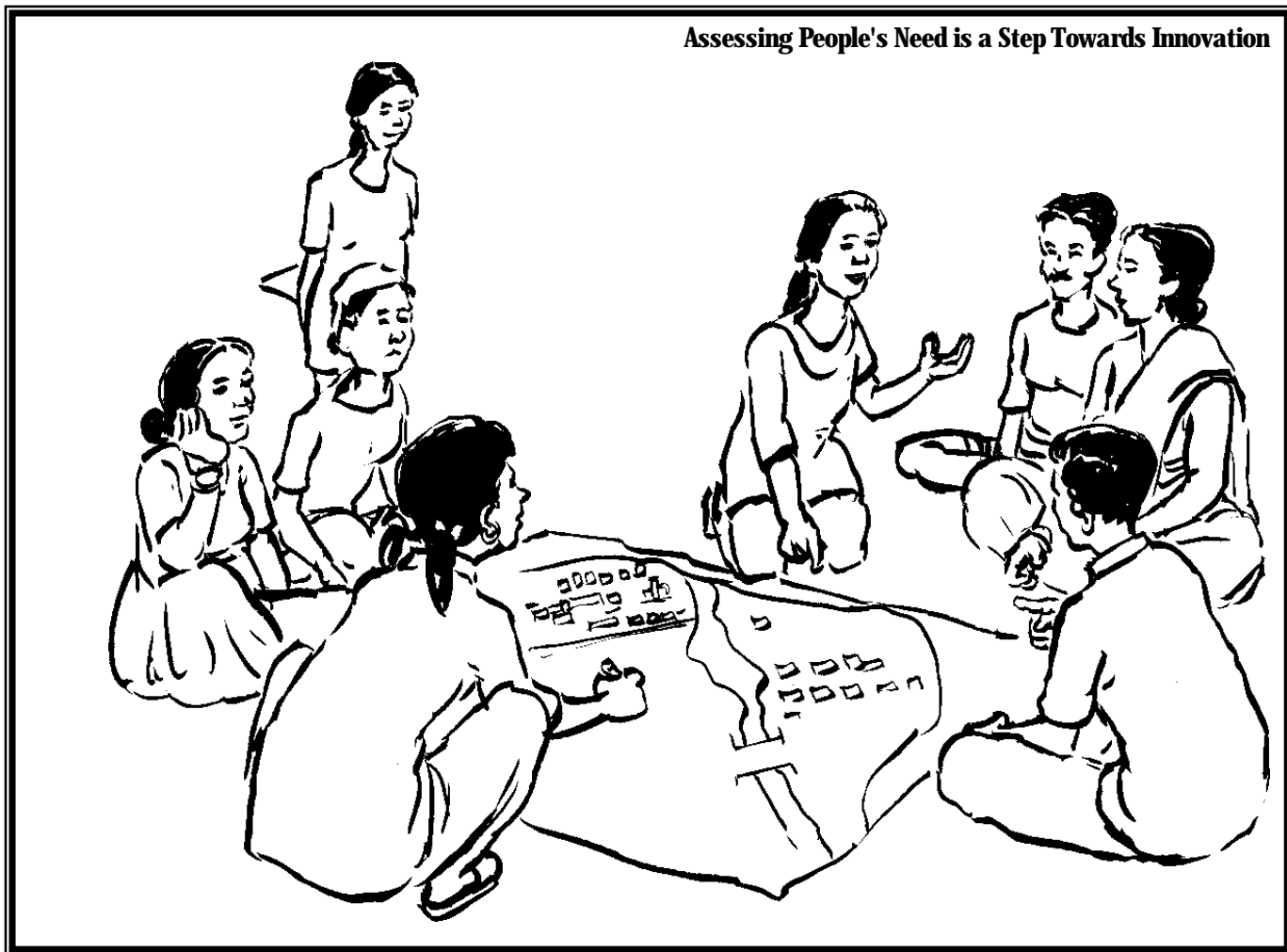


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Innovation in Literacy and Non Formal Education

Assessing People's Need is a Step Towards Innovation



Editorial

Some people think that school education is the only education system and other than that including non-formal education is the second-class programs. This is because of their limited knowledge about whole education process.

The main criteria for becoming any teaching and learning process a complete education system, it has to fulfill following conditions.

1. It has to be available to many, if possible for all children, youth and adults.
2. It has to be relevant to the life needs of the learners making responsible citizens.
3. It should produce citizen who is useful for themselves and society. It is also called effectiveness.
4. The process should be efficient to provide services to many.

If school education does not fulfill those conditions, it could not be called education system. Where as the non-formal education system could be an authentic education system, if it fulfills those conditions. In order to fulfill those conditions, the people, who are engaged in the teaching learning process, have to be very dedicated, innovative and efficient. So Non –Formal Education cannot survive without innovations. All the pioneers of NFE are great innovators. They are Paulo Freire, John Dewey, Ruby Kidds , Malcolm Knowles etc. The experience in Asia and the Pacific also shows that those countries, which have made non-formal education relevant, effective, efficient and universal, have been able to achieve the goal of education for all long before the World Conference of 1990 and 2000. They are China, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam etc. So this issue of the bulletin has attempted to highlight the innovative features of Non-Formal Education. Hope this will encourage to all educationists to plan and implement non-formal education to achieve the goal of education for all in Nepal.

Innovation in Non-Formal Education

Although Non-Formal and In-Formal Education antedate Formal Education but after the Sixteen Century education was seen as schooling alone. But the educators like *Ivan Illich* and *Paulo Freire* started to raise their voices against the schools in Latin America because they thought that the formal schools only serve the purpose of rulers and rich people subjugating the ruled and the common people in general. School education emphasized on rote learning of book. The schools did not care whether the education they teach was relevant to people's life or not. So they strongly advocated for innovation in Education to make education practical and empowering to people. This was actually the beginning of Non-Formal Education. So it could be said that Non-Formal Education was born as an innovation to education system. *John Dewey*, the pioneering American educator was also an innovator. He promoted pragmatism in education in North America. He inspired to set up land grant colleges to teach the farmers how to carry out improved farming. Later *Ruby Kidds* promoted adult education to improve work situation of working adults and *Malcolm Knowles* developed adult teaching and learning method called '*Andragogy*'. In Europe Non-Formal Education had been adult education to train workers for factories. Japan promoted social education and miscellaneous schools to provide family education and education in the workplace. They are all examples that all the so called developed countries also carried out innovation in education introducing non-formal education when they have to make education practical and useful to the working people. But they continued to expand formal education to provide education for all.

But the developing countries were not able to provide basic education to all children, youth and adult through schools, they also have to carry out innovation to provide basic education to children and youth through Non-Formal Education. There are two approaches to provide non-formal education to children, youth and adults. One was a **Program Approach** under which literacy programs are implemented to provide basic education through alternative methods. Since the alternative education also needs teachers, curriculum, textbooks and building, it was experimented in some places and based on experiment only they were expanded. So this approach was also called '*gradualist approach*'. At the same time some socialist countries of Asia like China and Vietnam launched a **Mass Literacy Campaign Approach** to provide basic education to masses mobilizing all forces of the society. In the mass literacy campaign all school teachers, students, government staff, party workers, housewives etc. practically everybody in the society were asked to play the role of either learners or teachers. It was space bound, time bound and result oriented. They were the most famous innovations in Non-Formal Education. The non-socialist countries also found that the literacy campaign could be a useful short-term solution to provide civic education, therefore South Korea, Thailand, Myanmar and Indonesia also launched literacy campaigns in 1950s and 1960s. After sometime, a group of countries like Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines and others institutionalized the Non-Formal Education creating a separate Department of Non-Formal Education, under the Ministry of Education.

In 1970s UNICEF had asked *Philip Coombs* and *Mansoor Ahmed* to study Non-Formal Education. In the course of their study, they defined non-formal education some thing like this "**Non Formal Education** is an alternative education which would be organized systematically outside the framework of the formal system to provide functional learning relevant to particular subgroups of the population, both adults and children."

The Asian countries tried to universalize basic education as back as in 1960 launching Karachi Plan. Under the Karachi Plan by 1980 all the children should receive primary education. But that did not happen. Therefore the Fifth Regional Conference of Ministers of Education and those responsible for Economic Planning (MINEDEP V) held in Bangkok in 1985 recommended to launch "**Asia-Pacific Program of Education for ALL**" (*APPEAL*) in 1987. This was reiterated by the World Conference of Education for All held at Jomtien, Thailand in 1990.

At present most of the Asian countries have been implementing the program of Non-Formal Education to provide basic education to out of school and illiterate children, youth and adults either using the term literacy and/or non formal education.

In order to systematize Non Formal Education ,UNESCO's APPEAL Program developed twelve volumes of literacy manuals called "APPEAL Training Material for Literacy Personnel (ATLP)" and eight volumes of APPEAL Training Materials for Continuing Education Personnel (ATLP-CE) to innovate basic education for out of school children, youth and adults. Both ATLP and ATLP-CE have applied systems approach in teaching emphasizing three aspects of the teaching/ learning system. They are teaching Inputs (I); Learning Process (P) and Learning Outcome (O). They are called Input (I)-Process (P)-Output (O). The innovative Non-Formal Education should have following characteristics:

Characteristics of Non-Formal Education

1. Non Formal Education Program emerges as an innovation to solve pressing problem in a given society.
2. Therefore it is goal and purpose oriented not certificate oriented.
3. It emphasizes on tackling specific problems and rather than learning abstract subject matters.
4. It may help to initiate a program or a project after an experimental phase.
5. It is flexible, learner centered, and participatory.
6. It is more practical rather than theoretical.
7. Autonomy at the program level and less chance for external control.
8. More economical because it could use existing facilities.
9. It is continuing life long process.

Experiential Learning Model (**Kolb 1984**) brought a very significant innovation in Non Formal Education. Experiential learning involves a continuous learning process grounded in an individual's experiences and transactions with his/her environment.

Recently a group of researchers has developed a new method of teaching is based on Constructivism Theory. According to the Constructivism theory there are three types of knowledge (1) Formal or Factual Knowledge (2) Procedural knowledge and (3) Self Regulative Knowledge (it is a meta-cognitive and selective skills that their own action and make change if needed). The traditional concept of knowledge is based on the theory that the students should be taught factual knowledge in schools, then the persons learn the procedural knowledge after entering into the job and finally when the person reaches to maturity then they learn self regulative knowledge. Therefore the constructivism theory says that the learning and practice could not be separated. The learning is not passive reception of information, but the learners' active and continuous process of construction and reconstruction of his or her concept of phenomena.

One of the mandates of UNESCO has been to promote innovation to make education universal on the one hand and relevant and useful on the others. The International Education Commissions of 1972 which published the Report called "Learning to Be: The World Education Today and Tomorrow" advocated to promote a Lifelong Education. Similarly the latest report of "The International Education Commission on Education for 21st Century" published in 1996" titled "Learning the Treasure Within" tried to expand the vision of education saying that there are four pillars of Education. They are:

- *Learning to live together in the diversified world*
- *Learning to know new and emerging knowledge*
- *Learning to do more complicated technological tasks and*
- *Learning to be more responsible, independent and creative*

Innovation in Literacy and NFE in Nepal

The Government of Nepal has been adopting both the approaches of literacy and non-formal education in Nepal. Under the program approach, it provides quota of literacy classes to all the districts. Under the campaign approach it has implemented mass literacy campaign in 20 districts by the year 2000. It says it will implement the literacy campaign all over the country. The National Non Formal Education Center reported that "according to a field survey conducted jointly by the National Planning Commission and the Bureau of Statistics, the over all literacy rate has reached to 53% in 1997.

National Resource Center for Non Formal Education and the Center for Education for All in Nepal are trying to promote innovation in

both basic and Non Formal Education. It is clear that the poor people do not want just simple education and literacy for education sake, they want education which empower them to make their own decision and to improve their quality of life through better knowledge about health, hygiene, family planning, environment conservation, formation of saving and credit groups and income generating vocational skills. *Therefore the NGOs of Nepal have developed a concept and program called "Community Learning Center" (CLC).* The Community Learning Center (CLC) organizes non-formal education program to help the local people to identify their problems through mutual discussion and dialogue.

Some Earlier Innovation in Literacy Program by UNESCO

UNESCO has worked for more than 20 years to help its Member States to develop a literacy-training curriculum. The Experimental World Literacy Program (EWLP) promoted from 1965-1975 by UNESCO and UNDP attempted to advance a principle of integration in literacy curriculum. The application of this principle to the selection of subject matter was meant to insure the practical relevance of the curriculum in learners' daily lives.

The curriculum development process of EWLP has following steps :

Step 1: Context study.

Step 2: Preparation of the specific objective according to the requirement of the program.

Step 3: Study of target group

Concencitization Approach of Paulo Freire

This approach seeks to raise the consciousness of learner, who begin to question and inquire into problem of "being" through "dialogue" and "self-awareness".

This method has four stages:

Stage One: Literacy workers study the area where a program is to be initiated to discover the contradictions and levels of awareness in the society. They identify the limiting factor and " generative themes " that would raise level of awareness among the "oppressed " member of the community.

Stage Two: At this point, literacy worker select some basic existing contradiction in the society and gave them thematic content through codification. The purpose of this is to generate official awareness among learners, which will lead to reflection and dialogue.

Stage Three: Here the learners to help them perceive their role in the basic contradiction codified earlier subject the codifications to "thematic investigation". This encourages further awareness in the learners.

Stage Four: The themes or codifications are converted into actual teaching/learning package and strategies.

Innovations Tried by some NGOs of Nepal

Recently some NGOs and INGOs have tried to introduce some innovations in Literacy. They are Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Regenerated Freirean Literacy Through Empowerment Community Technique (REFLECT) Approaches. Both the methods are based upon Paulo Freire's Concencitization method.

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)

PRA method has following steps

1. Under the guidance of facilitator, the learning circle discuss about the real life situation of village including land, property, economic and social situation.
2. Then they construct the social map or graphics on the ground using locally available materials and discuss problem and needs of the community using the map or graphs.
3. The maps constructed on the ground will be transferred in the paper by drawing.
4. The learning circle discusses and identifies the problems and needs of the community on different issues such as illiteracy, poverty, social burdens, agriculture etc.
5. The graphic drawn by the learners after PRA, will be used as a starting point for reading, writing and numeracy lessons. The learners actually teach each other form early work with the help of picture or syllable cards and strengthening independent writing skills. There should be plenty of opportunity for learners to practice reading, writing and calculation skills, building up on practice. The aim is to introduce the learner-centered technique..

REFLECT Method

The theoretical basis of "Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques (REFLECT)" and PRA methods are same.

REFLECT method does not use textbook, or 'Primer' to teach literacy skills except a manual for the literacy facilitators. Each literacy circle developed its own learning materials through the construction of maps; matrix, calendars and diagram that represent local reality. It tries to systematize the existing knowledge of participants and promote the detailed analysis of local issues. This approach leads to a strong ownership of the issues. This has led to local actions and a strong link between the literacy program and other development activities.

Under the REFLECT Method, the literacy facilitators encourage the participants to construct some of the following item to raise awareness among the illiterate persons.

- a) Household Maps - showing all the houses in the community to demonstrate/discuss the economic status of people in the community.
- b) Agricultural Maps - showing the location of different types of crops and changing trends over the years or the level of productivity.
- c) Natural Resource Maps - identifying access to or control of sources of wood and water to lead into discussion of environment issues.

- d) Land Tenure Maps - to represent the ownership of land, whether individual, co-operative, large landowners and for example to match land ownership to land use (and access to or control of produce)

2. Calendars

- a. Rainfall Calendars - which represent climatic patterns/ trends and can lead to discussion of responses to droughts, floods etc.
- b. Agriculture Calendars - on which the different activities; clearing, planting, weeding, fertilizing, farming harvesting, storing and selling etc. associated with each major local crops are plotted.
- c. Gender Workload Calendars-which represent the main activities of men and women plotted through the year and which can lead to very structured reflection on gender roles.
- d. Health Calendars-on, which all major local diseases are identified, and their relative occurrence through the year is represented (leading often to very focussed debate on why different illness occur more often at different times).
- e. Income and Expenditure Calendars-to explore patterns for a typical family through the year, itemized by source of income and type of expenditure.

3. Matrices/ Charts

- a. Crop Matrices-in which participants analyze each crop they grew against a set of criteria, which they decide for themselves.
- b. Health Matrices-where participants describe the curative strategies they follow for different illnesses e.g. herbs, medicine, traditional healer, hospital etc or analyze their understanding of the different causes of illness.
- c. Credit Matrices-which involve participants listing the source of credit that they have : family, friends, moneylender, credit union, bank etc and the uses they make of the credit.
- d. Matrices of Household Decisions-on which, for example, women tabulate their involvement in discussing, planning and carrying out decisions in different areas of household life.

4. Diagrams : Diagrams are presented as follows:

- a. Diagrams of Organizations- which represent all the organizations within the community and external organizations to lead the discussion.
- b. Diagram of balance of power-which explores the powerful individuals within the community and their groupings, inter-relationships etc.

Language Experience Approach (LEA)

The Language Experience Approach (LEA) is based on the idea that it is easier for learners to start reading and writing the words and sentences, which they themselves have been speaking in actual life. The process of LEA starts with encouraging the learners to mention the learners' experiences and their past knowledge in simple and clear languages.

Language : The words for the learning materials are the learners' own languages.

Experience : The ideas for the learning materials come from the learners' experience.

Approach : A method for using writing as a tool to teach someone how to read their own words and sentences.

In this approach, learners are encouraged to tell a story or an event or facts based on their experience and knowledge. The facilitator writes it down or helps the learners to write them. Learners then practice reading the text, which they have created from their own ideas and memories. This approach can be used with individuals or with groups. It is most effective to do it individually with the beginner learners. Individual attention should be paid to beginners by organizing the class into pairs or small groups to work independently. The LEA activity can also be done with a group by having the learners to decide together.

The Language Experience Approach has following steps:

1. The facilitator asks learners to tell about something they know and about their experience. Then he/she asks them a few questions and then writes one or two sentences only.
2. The facilitator will write every word that the learner says without changing the language of the learner at the beginning using their actual language even if they are incorrect. The facilitator will teach correct or standardized language patterns later. In the beginning, it is more important for each learner to be able to see his or her own spoken words written in symbols.
3. The facilitator will read the sentence(s) written and asks the learners if they are written correctly as they wanted to say, if they want to change something, then, the facilitator should rewrite them.
4. The facilitator will read the sentence(s) together with the learners several times pointing to the individual words.
5. Then the facilitator will ask the learners to try to read the sentence(s). If necessary, help the learners by reading together again.
6. Then he/she will ask the learners to copy the sentence(s), if they could write or practice them.
7. The sentence will be copied into a strip of paper and cut the strip so that each word is on a separate piece. The words will be mixed and ask the learners to arrange the words back into their proper order. First time, the learners can look at the original sentence and match the words visually. Later they will be able to develop the sentence by remembering the meaning and the sound-symbol connections of the letters.
8. This is one of the most powerful ways to help learners to practice reading the sentences they have created.
9. After that the facilitator will invite the learners in the class to read each other's sentences. He/she may divide the learners into small groups and ask them to help each other to read their sentences. They may also want to help each other to use the word strips to rewrite the sentences after they have studied them.
10. After the learners have done several language experience stories and have practiced copying their own sentences, they may be ready to try to write their own story. As they are beginners, spelling and grammar may be incorrect. They will learn these skills as they work on improving their writing.