Adult Education: Indian Context

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Abstract

With advancements taking place and initiation of modern, scientific and innovative methods in all fields, the significance of research has been comprehensively recognized. The individuals working in all areas and fields need to recognize the significance of research and put into operation, creative methods to generate the desired outcomes. In higher educational institutions, the research methods are put into operation, primarily when the individuals are working on research papers or research projects. The professors and educationists need to conduct research with diligence and resourcefulness, as it is regarded as an integral part of their job duties. In conducting research, important topics are selected on the basis of the interest areas of the individuals. The main objective of this research paper is to understand the areas of research in adult education. The main aspects that have been taken into account are, promotion of research in adult education in India, role of government and non-government organizations, role of universities, role of state resource centres, research methods, and factors in research.

Keywords: *Adult Education, Analysis, Information, Research, Techniques*

Introduction:

Research is regarded as an important aspect, which is of utmost significance, not only in the field of adult education, but in other fields as well. The significance of research is mainly recognized by the individuals in higher educational institutions. In order to conduct research in an appropriate manner, the individuals need to generate awareness in terms of various methods and techniques. They need to put into operation, the processes, which would generate the desired outcomes. Research in adult education is directly influenced by the changes that are taking place in the internal structures of the field as well as by the changes that take place within the social framework of the field. These include the social and economic role awarded to adult learning and education by the policy community. It is important to note that adult education has come to the forefront of the public policy (Rubenson, & Elfert, 2015).

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When one is working in any field or are students, who are pursuing masters and doctoral programs in adult education, they will be able to achieve the desired academic outcomes and pursue their goals and objectives in an appropriate manner, when they would conduct research. Research has number of benefits. It helps in identifying the flaws and inconsistencies and bring about improvements, the individuals are able to generate information in terms of various aspects and make use of modern and innovative methods and strategies in bringing about improvements. When one is conducting research, it is vital for the individuals to generate sufficient information in terms of methods and strategies. In adult education, when individuals are pursuing masters and doctoral programs, they need to make selection of appropriate topics, in terms of which they are working on their research projects. Hence, research is one of the major aspects through which individuals are able to achieve their personal and professional goals satisfactorily.

Adult Education in India:

Research in the field of adult education was conducted for the first time by Gadgil in 1945. He worked on the "Problem of Lapse into Illiteracy". Gadgil proved that there was a positive relationship between the decline in the lapse into illiteracy and the progressive increase of the standard, which the students may learn in schools. After the initiation of the National Adult Education Program (NAEP) in 1978, there has been an increase in the expansion of research activities. These are in terms of the number of institutions involved and the aspects studied. The National Literacy Mission (NLM) suggested that evaluation and impact studies should be undertaken through the social science institutions, voluntary organizations and universities. The role of universities in research was taken into consideration by University Grants Commission (UGC) UGC Review Committee of 1987. Since, 1988, the Government of India has been implementing the policy of encouraging voluntary agencies to undertake experimentation, innovation and research in the field of education. The policy support to Adult Education research was identified in 1980s and led to acceleration in research in 1990s (Chapter 3, Review of Literature, n.d.).

The scope of research in adult education was expanded in 1991. When the NLM identified 22 autonomous research institutions within the country for taking into consideration the evaluation studies in the implementation of adult education programs and literacy campaigns also set up the National Institute of Adult Education (NIAE) for providing academic and technical support to the literacy program and undertaking quality research. There are number of organizations that are active in research in the field of adult education. These include,

Indian Adult Education Association (IAEA), literacy house and council for social development. The UGC, and Indian Council for Social Science Research are the organizations, which are rendering a significant contribution in identifying the areas of research and funding the organizations. Furthermore, the other organizations that are contributing towards research in adult education are, Planning Commission, Department of Social Welfare and Women, National Council of Educational Research and Training, UNESCO, UNDP, ILO and Commonwealth bodies (Chapter 3, Review of Literature, n.d.).

The role of adult education in promoting active citizenship for the vulnerable and deprived sections of the society is recognised on a comprehensive scale. Research has rendered a significant contributing in finding out the rate of illiteracy among individuals, belonging to deprived, marginalized and socio-economically backward sections of the society. It has been found that in rural communities, the rate of illiteracy is high. Hence, there have been development of adult education centres to impart literacy skills to adults, who have either never been enrolled in schools before or have dropped out prematurely. Participation of the vulnerable sections of the society through adult education has been addressing to relating to specific problems and concerns, such as, illiteracy, unemployment and so forth. These are defined by current national, political, social or economic schemes (Kersh, & Toiviainen, 2017).

To understand the promotion of research in adult education, it is necessary to generate information in terms of three dimensions, i.e. social, political and economic. Social dimension focuses upon the development of social competencies and social capital. Political dimension encourages civic and political participation, running for boards and neighbourhood activities. In other words, when developments need to be brought about within the community, the individuals are required to render an operative political participation. Economic dimension is primarily concerned with bringing about improvements in the economic conditions of the individuals. Developing employability skills and access to social benefits is essential to bring about improvements in the livelihoods opportunities of the individuals. Hence, research renders an important contribution in leading to progressions in these three dimensions of individuals, communities and nation as a whole (Kersh, & Toiviainen, 2017).

It is essential to conduct research in terms of barriers to participation of individuals, particularly elderly and disabled individuals. The research conducted in terms of barriers to

participation of adults have identified certain factors. These are, lack of access to good and timely information, admission requirements, costs and level of learning support, difficulties within the social framework, problems of self-esteem and self-confidence, family responsibilities, participation in employment opportunities, lack of awareness, motivation and interest and lack of financial resources. Research has been conducted and there is a need to make improvements in research in terms of ensuring the quality of adult learning (Oliver, 2010). In adult education, what kinds of teaching-learning methods and instructional strategies are being put into practice are regarded as one of the aspects that is of utmost significance. Educators need to be aware of background, grade levels, learning abilities and age groups of learners and possess sufficient knowledge and information in terms of subjects, they are teaching. Individuals working in the field of adult education need to conduct research on continuous basis, especially in terms of methods and strategies required to train adult learners and enhance the system of education.

Role of Government and Non-Government Organizations:

The Department of Adult Education (DAE) initiated a scheme in 1981, with the objective of encouraging and disseminating worthwhile and meaningful information and high quality research mainly through individuals and institutions. During the 1980s as many as 33 research studies were instituted by DAE. The concept of research has not been undertaken in terms of aspects, such as, history, economics, philosophy of adult education and policy studies. There has been development of a research base through eight case studies of the efforts that have been successful, and which are made by government and non-government organizations. Action for welfare in Rural Environment, Andhra Pradesh, Young Men's Christian Association, Madras, Janashikshana Prachar Kendra, West Bengal, Chattisgarh Miners Shramik Sangh, Madhya Pradesh, Sarvageen Gram Vikas Mandal, Gujarat, Deshauli Gram Swaraj Sangh, Department of Adult Education, Delhi Administration and Department of Adult Continuing Education, Rajasthan University. In addition, experiment action research was carried out on adult education for women through self-learning. There were not any gender related studies (Chapter 3, Review of Literature, n.d.).

Since 1978, there has been a slow but steady increase in the number of non-government organizations (NGOs), involved in the implementation of adult education programs. Most of them receive financial assistance from the Government of India. But the scope of their activities remain limited. While majority of them have the major objective of bringing about

development. Bengal Social Service League, Centre for Human Development and Social Change and the ones, who are receiving financial assistance from international agencies, such as, Action Aid, Oxfam, and World Literacy of Canada have been involved in adult literacy to a major extent. During 1980s, Indian Adult Education Association implement the research studies in terms of two areas. One is, 'reading interests of neo-literates' and 'relationship between the period of learning and levels of literacy attainment'. In addition, detailed review of research studies were also brought about, which were undertaken in India in 1950 to 1980 (Chapter 3, Review of Literature, n.d.).

Six studies were carried out by Literacy House also come under the comprehensive area of literacy, post-literacy and motivation level of learners. The Council of Social Development also undertook a series of three studies on the functional literacy programs of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) in Haryana, West Bengal and Meghalaya. The role of NGOs, in conducting research in the field of adult education has been limited. The reasons that have been identified behind their limited participation are, commitment, particularly towards development work and lack of research, training and financial resources (Chapter 3, Review of Literature, n.d.).

Role of State Resource Centres:

In the present existence, there are 27 State Resource Centres (SRCs) in India. These are rendering an important contribution in making provision of academic and technical resource support to adult education programs. To support and enrich adult education programs, it is necessary to put into operation certain approaches. These include, preparation of teaching-learning materials, imparting training, undertaking population education activities and conducting evaluation and research studies. In accordance to the survey research, it was observed that 12 SRCs of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh have produced 191 studies in the past two decades of 1978 to 1998 (Chapter 3, Review of Literature, n.d.).

These studies covered several topics, including population education, the impact of Total Literacy Centres, training and development programs, materials and resources, needs and interests of the neo-literates, role of media, motivation, jan shikshan nilayams and so forth. Since majority of the studies were initiated due to the need or action research projects, their findings were of immense practical significance to the SRCs. The main drive of the research

that are conducted by SRCs has been on field-based issues and concerns. The research studies that have been printed by SRCs account for more than 60 percent and were distributed among the organizations and institutions (Chapter 3, Review of Literature, n.d.).

Research Methods:

Research methods are the tools and techniques for doing research. Research is a term that is made use of for any kind of investigation that is essential for the achievement of desired academic outcomes and performing one's job duties in a well-organized manner. When research is carried out in the field of adult education, then all the individuals, heads, directors, educators, researchers and students need to develop adequate skills and abilities and generate information in terms of methods and approaches that are used to carry out job duties satisfactorily. Research methods are the tools that are used for conducting different types of enquiry, just as a variety of tools are used for doing various jobs. Hence, it is essential for the individuals to generate awareness in terms of what kinds of research tools need to be made use of to conduct research. Research is a general term, which is used for an activity of finding out information in a systematic manner in terms of aspects, which the individuals are unaware (Walliman, 2011).

When one is conducting research, there are different tools and methods, which need to be made use of. The researchers need to collaborate and work in co-ordination and integration with their supervisors as well as other individuals. It is the research interest of the individuals that decide the nature of research problem. On the basis of research problem, the type of research would be chosen. Once the objectives of research project would have been established, the issue of how these objectives are to be met leads to a consideration regarding which design would be chosen. The research design provides the framework for the collection and analysis of data and indicate, which research methods would be appropriate. One can combine two or more research designs, particularly when the subject combines the study of human behaviour. The examples include, organizations, regions, economics, technologies, legislation, and development (Walliman, 2011).

Conclusion:

Research is an important concept that is comprehensively put into practice in all fields. The individuals, who are conducting research need to put into practice proper methods and strategies required to generate the desired outcomes. It helps the individuals to generate information in terms of modern and innovative methods and strategies. Research is normally

conducted through three aspects, books, technology and field visits. When the researchers are working on a research project on a particular topic, they need to make use of books, articles and reading materials to acquire theoretical information. They make use of internet to augment their understanding and also conduct field visits to collect data from the respondents. In bringing about improvements in research in adult education, non-government and government organizations, state resource centres and universities have rendered a significant contribution.

There are certain factors, which are required to conduct research in an appropriate manner. These are, generating information, categorization, data collection, research ethics, academic honesty, evaluation, correlation, reliability and validity, analysing the data and reporting the findings, conclusion and recommendations. When data is being collected in the implementation of research study, it is of two types, i.e. primary and secondary. Primary data is the one, which is collected for the first time and secondary data is the one, which has been collected by someone else before. Hence, preparing chapter plans, collecting, organizing and analysing the data and reporting the findings, conclusions and recommendations are the steps which need to be put into operation, when researchers are working on research projects. On the other hand, research is also regarded as an important aspect, when improvements need to be brought about in the teaching-learning methods, instructional strategies, and overall system of education. In such cases, the researchers need to conduct an analysis of aspects, which need to be put into practice and which would be beneficial to the learners and educators. Finally, it can be stated that research needs to be conducted on a regular basis and one should bring about modern and innovative methods in the implementation of tasks and functions.

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