

**Department of Adult Continuing Education and Extension
towards Social Responsibility of the University**

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ABSTRACT

Social responsibility is an ethical framework which suggests that organizations and individuals have obligations to act for the benefit of society at large. Social responsibility is the duty of every individual to maintain a balance between the economy and the human development. That is why University Grants Commission brought social responsibility a third dimension in its arena. The movement of Extension Education in Indian Universities thus started in eighties and since then Department of Adult Continuing Education and Extension (DACEE) was established practically in all the Indian Universities. University Grants Commission provided financial assistance and academic guidance for strengthening this department. Various approaches were identified and implemented during the due course of strengthening extension education in Indian Universities. In a changed scenario, research was made important in extension education for the study of impact of Information Communication Technology, growth of population, youth domination, peoples' awareness towards healthcare, universalisation of elementary education, and Right to Education Act. All these aspects are related with welfare of society and development of the Nation. DACEE is such Department which functions as a bridge between the University and Society. On this background, one has to think about the future strategies of this Department towards social responsibility. In this paper, therefore, the author envisaged social responsibility a part of university specific programmes, lifelong learning, skill development, outreach activities, universalisation of education, industry & NGO partnership, faculty improvement programmes, and institutional linkages.

Keywords: Social Responsibility, University, Adult Education, Extension

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Introduction

In order to serve the society and to fulfill their educational needs, the programmes of extension education need to be developed as per the needs of the society. The needs are different of different places and, therefore, University has to identify the needs of the people in the area where it works. Formalize programmes and after giving due thought try to implement them successfully.

Lifelong Learning

The importance of Lifelong Learning & Extension is repeatedly emphasized in several Educational Policy Documents and discourses. While the report of Education Commission (1964-66) observed that education does not end with schooling but is a lifelong process. They considered lifelong learning a cherished goal of the educational process which presupposes universal literacy, provision of opportunities for youth, housewives, agricultural and industrial workers, and professionals to continue their choice at the pace suited to them. It observes that the critical development issue is the continuous upgradation of skills to produce manpower resources of the kind and number required by the Society. Lifelong Learning programmes are implemented by the university professionals and voluntary organizations and continued to focus on adult literacy and continuing education due to massive number of illiterates and neo-literates.

During the 12th Plan, emphasize was laid on expanding the scope of Adult and Continuing Education as Lifelong Learning and developing it as a discipline of study and field of practice. In this direction, several Universities started P.G. Diploma in Lifelong Learning and various types of teaching programmes. However, a strong need was felt for a common programme of teaching and common curriculum. Some Universities made Life Long Education a compulsory paper in 2 years M.Ed. Programmes. Hence, it was felt that one year P.G. Diploma in Lifelong Learning be introduced at National Level and prepare suitable curriculum with the help of field and academic experts. The UGC is yet to take initiative in this regard.

Skill Development

Approach to the 12th plan of the Planning Commission has recognized skill development as an instrument of overall development of people. In this area, DACEE is working in different ways. To streamline the activities of skill development, the focused targets are fixed at Corporates, Government offices, Business houses, Industries, College youth, Students, Senior Citizens, Women working in Self-Help Groups,

Members of Panchayati Raj and so on. These groups needed thinking skills, negotiation skills and social skills. Department can evolve skill development programmes according to the needs of these groups.

Outreach Activities

It is observed that different Universities have adopted different modules of implementing outreach programmes. They are conducting field programmes with the help of agencies and colleges in a specific area. They go on changing the places and also programmes as per local demands. In this connection, area-based approach is used for better results. A University should select a specific area as per the expertise available in the department. In such areas, after identifying the needs, department should prepare an Action Plan in a phased manner. This will help enhance the skills of the society where such programmes are implemented. A single programme in phase manner for five years at one location will result in a model of rural reconstruction.

Universilization of Primary Education

The programme of Adult and Continuing Education was mainly designed to strengthen Primary Education System in India. It was assumed that the literate parents after having understood the importance of education will enroll the names of their children in schools. Government of India has already enacted the bill of Right to Education Act to make sure to have hundred per cent enrolment in Primary Education. As a step in this direction, the Government of India has also amended the Constitution of India and the enrolment has already crossed 75% as per 2011 Census. This is high time to see that the Primary Education System is strengthened not only to accommodate 6+ age group children into the schools but also to offer them quality education. This will happen when Primary Schools are supported by physical as well as intellectual resources. Physical resources can be provided by the government but for creating conducive environment it is the intellectuals group who can provide the platform. This is where DACEE comes in picture. The Development has to organize orientation programmes for School Management Committees and School Teachers.

Population / Health Education

The concept, content and methodology of health education is difficult to define. The competent health educator should have knowledge, articulation and techniques in the pedagogy, public health, public relations, journalism, social sciences and visual aids etc. The communication personnel finish health education with mere dissemination of information on health. The Population Education

activities should focus on issues identified in millennium goals such as Reducing child mortality, Improving maternal health, Combating HIV/AIDs, and Ensuring environmental sustainability etc.

Exploration

Core faculty should undertake research activities for strengthening Lifelong Learning in the University system and for bringing innovations in the activities of the Department. They should try to co-relate activities at the field level with the theoretical postulates by undertaking applied research. This will help in bringing field experiences for making modifications in the perspective planning of the University.

Awolola and Ladele (2017) focused their study on adult literary programmes for woman's participation in Agricultural Development. They found that Nigerian women do not assimilate extension education programs because of their low level of education. They argued that there was a need for an adult education toward "People Development". Rivera (2017) reported that Agricultural Extension is one of the many different providers of adult education. He argued that the division of labour has emerged in the delivery systems of adult education content especially in different specialized constituencies.

University Society Partnership

University departments going to the villages and working on their own give a different connotation to the community. In such situations, involvement of the community remains absent. Therefore, after having a number of meetings with the village Community, University should evolve a model of partnership where the participation of all stake holders is identified and contributions of each stake holder is brought into practice of the programs. Such a module will be less costly and highly beneficial.

Faculty (Quality) Improvement Programmes (FIP/QIP)

Considering the past experience and looking at the challenges ahead, department needs a strong committed and dedicated faculty to take the department forward. They are required to know the concept, philosophy and scope of Lifelong Learning and also the nature of work they have to advance. At the same time, to strengthen the discipline, they should be capable of undertaking research programmes to bring some innovations in the schemes of department. For this, they must be acquainted with theoretical aspects of Lifelong Learning Process.

As DACEE is treated at par with other University Departments, the focus of capacity building should be in research publications, participation in conferences, undertaking major/minor research projects,

guiding research students, writing of books, participation in teaching & curriculum development, conducting training programmes, establishing meaningful linkages with the society, developing & designing curriculums, formulating innovative strategies to implement them in higher education system, and translating field experiences into research studies etc.

Stint Planning

The staff working in DACEE are engaged in different functions and activities. They have to do a lot of work in different areas. Therefore, they should have their own time and budgeting in such areas as administrative work, teaching, research, extension, planning and implementation of programmes, evaluation and documentation, consultancy etc.

Networking and Partnership Building

Establishment of linkages with other institutions working in non – formal education will help strengthen DACEE. In this context, NLMA has taken the initiative and prepared action plan for collaborations with universities in research support, monitoring & evaluation, capacity building & training of SLMA, SRCs, JSSs in management, pedagogy & programme delivery, voluntary work by students, internship /fieldwork, continuing education & lifelong learning, and knowledge management systems etc.

In conclusion, each university DACEE has to strive to make an institutional commitment to the principle and practice of community development within the academic milieu and to communicate that commitment to students, employees and the public at large. Let the universities realize and discharge their social obligation to the surrounding communities and let the institutions of higher learning herald, symbolize and contribute to the euphoric sustainable development.

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