

Efficacy Of Non Formal Education System Regarding Uplifting Of Life Skills Of Illiterate Adults In Division DG Khan, Pakistan

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Abstract

Education empowers the people to be better citizens and also improves people's living standards and quality of life. Apart from being a fundamental human right, education is also a necessary condition for development and an efficient means of making knowledge-based decisions and enhancing as well as strengthening individuals, communities, institutions, and countries' developmental capacity. Non-formal Education (NFE) is a need-based education system that reaches an unorganized population of people via informal and short-term course curricula. The objective of the current study was to see the efficacy of non-formal education system regarding uplifting of life skills of illiterate adults in Division DG Khan, Punjab, Pakistan. This study was conducted through survey and cross-sectional research methods using quantitative research design. The data was collected from Adult literacy teachers who were teaching to illiterate adults from last 6 months. The data was collected by using a simple sampling technique from 400 respondents. Self-structured tool of data collection was developed by reviewing existing literature. Thus, the questionnaires were developed to elicit feedback from NFE teachers in light of the Punjab government's priorities. After conducting a response from the respondent, the data was entered and analyzed in SPSS Software. To predict the frequency and percentage of the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, descriptive analysis was applied. Also one sample T Test was used to assess the inferential response of the study. The study results showed that the special

trained teachers for adult literacy were more competent in assessing the routine life of adult illiterates and their learning of life skill as well as their social development after getting training from Adult Literacy Centers(ALCs). Additionally, results showed that most of the learners were able to get life skills in ALCs which helped them to earn respectably and live as better citizen to play their vital role in development of the country. Most of the adult illiterates were able to read, write & learnt basic math skills which helped them to live a better life with literacy skills. Life skills were added in their life to earn with better way and they were also able to make good decisions regarding their financial matters. Non Formal Education (NFE) was the only way to mainstream their life.

Keywords: Non Formal Education, Illiterate Adults, Life Skills, Adult Literacy Centers

Introduction

Background of the Study

Education not only improves people's living standards, but also empowers them to be better citizens. Apart from being a fundamental human right, education is also a necessary condition for development and an efficient means of making knowledge-based decisions and enhancing as well as strengthening individuals, communities, institutions, and countries' developmental capacity (Pedro, Subosa, Rivas, & Valverde, 2019). It complements the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #4, which states, "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all and encourage opportunities for lifelong learning for all."

Non-formal Education (NFE) is a need-based education system that reaches an unorganized population of people via informal and short-term course curricula. The most obvious and immediate answer to the difficulties of population growth and social inequality is to extend the educational system or to identify alternatives to formal education systems; NFE fits into this category (Deb, Sunny, & Majumdar, 2020). Non-formal education has been characterized as any educational venture that is purposeful, deliberate, and methodical. This is frequently done outside of the framework of traditional schooling (Adick, 2018). Where the curriculum and the instructional systems are organized in such a manner so the learner can attend the system where they can adjust themselves for their exceptional requirements in daily life. A feature of NFE is that it works without engaging students in roll, applied disciplines, proper uniforms, writing assignments, one on one student supervising scenarios and passing of quarterly or annually conducted exams to pass contents of any specified curricula, and optional versus mandatory subjects (López, 2020). The NFE has been designed to focus the learning needs of students in contrast to the system of formal education where all students are made to learn through a uniform curriculum. For example, the students of NFE may leave school as and when s/he feel not motivated for learning. The students can even withdraw from the NFE programs if they cannot get help for their specific purpose. Non-formal Education tends to put emphasis upon the cafeteria curriculum, options, and selections of courses they need rather than the recommended,

chronological curriculum that have been instituted in other educational institutions without their will and need. In NFE, the relationships between the individuals are more informal; for instance, the roles of teachers and students are less unyielding and often change than in schools. In a formal education system, student-teacher and teacher-administrator roles hierarchical and rarely change during the long-term and short-term traditional classes and courses (Huang, Spector, & Yang, 2019).

Non-formal educational institutes are monitored on daily basis under the supervision of Project Literacy Coordinator (PLC) at District level. Subordinate field staff including Literacy mobilizer (LM) on average of 50 schools per LM. They have to visit all his notified literacy centers once every month. Meanwhile, they mobilize community to enroll their children who have missed the chance to attend the formal schooling at ideal age due to multiple factors. Major factor is availability of formal school nearby (MRASHANI, 2021). District staff of literacy department conduct baseline surveys of out of school children in needy areas regularly as it is already deployed in field. After the survey, the department plans to open literacy center and search for literacy teacher in the area (Eble et al., 2021). District office then recruits qualified teachers. Single room school is made within days to catch the children and books are provided with other learning and school materials. This easy process helps the community to send their children to Government schools (literacy centers) for their primary education, which leads to mainstreaming of students to formal education system. Teachers for those literacy centers are trained time by time to teach the students with new methodologies. The purpose of these literacy centers is to mainstream students in formal schooling. Through a parallel monitoring system of the literacy department, the monitoring and assessment staff visits the literacy centers on daily basis to randomly select literacy centers through mobile applications. Mobile application has been made specially to check facilities with real time monitoring. Assessment is made on need based as class duration is eight months to promote students. It helps students to pass primary level in 3 years, which is normally 5 years in formal schooling (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017).

Problem Statement

Being the sixth populous and poorly managed country, Pakistan lacks in will and resources to provide formal education to its growing population. In addition to resource deprivation, the country faces challenges of inequality in the system, especially in the remote areas of the country where boys are given preference over girls and rich over poor (Barrientos, 2019). Unlike formal education, NFE develops skills and aptitudes of the individuals for their daily life while being outside the conventional education systems. Non-formal Education is more flexible and more learner centered as it has been outlined for raising the economic as well as social status of its graduates. Formal schools often focus on the knowledge, which may not be applicable or needed immediately while NFE that mainly focuses the development of the realistic and practical knowledge and skills (Debrah, Vidal, & Dinis, 2021). In Punjab, almost 70% of the population lives in rural areas with the government reported 51% literacy rate. Since the non-formal education focuses a wide range of learning contents with limited bounded courses of literacy skills in

Pakistan, the formal education system uses a well-linked schooling system for furthering students' education. The institutions involved in NFE are rather linked with industries and other fund raising departments to deliver the specific skills to its learners (Tannock, 2020). Adult literacy was also focus of this department to engage a bulk illiterate population of Punjab. Punjab is Pakistan's most popular province having 56% of the country's population and a number of important cities, as well as over 3.8 million illiterates. This means that millions of adults over the age of 15 are illiterate. Punjab's literacy rate was 20.07 percent in 1972 and 46.60 percent in 1998. In 2012, 2013, and 2014, the rate was 71%, 62%, and 61%, respectively. The majority of improvements have occurred in elementary schools, but considerable effort remains to be done to effect additional changes. The formal education system has failed to achieve a 100% literacy rate because to its age, uniform, curriculum, timetables, and numerous other criteria (Rehman, Jingdong, & Hussain, 2015). Non-formal education is specifically developed for out-of-school children, dropouts, overaged children, adolescents, and adults who constitute a sizable portion of the country's population who remain illiterate due to a lack of access to formal education (Dupuy, Palik, & Østby, 2022). The NFE is a need-based study that combines life and technical skills to assist individuals in leading respectable lives, discovering new income-generating strategies, contributing to societal progress, and thus being aware of their duties and rights (Lubem & Sarah, 2018).

Objectives of the Study

1. To see the efficacy of non-formal education system regarding uplifting of life skills of illiterate adults
2. To assess the knowledge, attitude and practices of illiterate adults toward non-formal education system

Methods

This study was conducted through survey and cross-sectional research methods using quantitative research design. The data was collected from Adult literacy teachers who were teaching to illiterate adults from last 6 months. In this regard, the respondents were approached in the adult literacy centers of Division DG Khan in Punjab Pakistan. The data was collected by using a simple sampling technique from 400 respondents. Self-structured tool of data collection was developed by reviewing existing literature. Where respondents can respond to fixed questions using one of three single-statement options for quantitative data. At the conclusion of the questionnaires, a blank space was offered for suggestions for additional problem resolution or enhancements to the current configuration. Additionally, teachers were granted the fundamental right to withhold basic information if they choose not to communicate it. Where teachers agreed to give their basic information, their complete information was collected via a questionnaire. Thus, the questionnaires were developed to elicit feedback from NFE teachers in light of the Punjab government's priorities. After conducting a response from the respondent, the data was entered and analyzed in SPSS Software. To predict the frequency and percentage of the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, descriptive analysis was applied. Also one sample T Test was used to assess the inferential response of the study.

Results

Table.1 Results analysis regarding need of more skills for adult teachers than conventional teachers.

| Response | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|----------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| No idea | 20 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 |
| No | 78 | 19.5 | 19.5 | 24.5 |
| Yes | 302 | 75.5 | 75.5 | 100 |
| Total | 400 | 100 | 100 | |

Table. 2 Results regarding one-sample statistics about need of more skills for adult teachers than conventional teachers.

| Question 47 | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|-------------|-----|------|----------------|-----------------|
| | 400 | 1.71 | 0.556 | 0.028 |

Table.3 Results of one-sample test regarding need of more skills for adult teachers than conventional teachers.

| Question 47 | Test Value = 0 | | | | | |
|-------------|----------------|-----|-----------------|-----------------|---|-------|
| | T | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| | 61.370 | 399 | 0.000 | 1.705 | 1.65 | 1.76 |

To the question if the trainers/teachers for adults need more skills to teach better than conventional teacher, 75.5% respondents (n = 302) responded in positive and 19.5% (n = 78) responded in negative; whereas, 20 respondents that weight merely 5% showed no response. Conventional teachers are trained to take classes for children, and they are well aware about psychology of them. But adults need more attention with much friendly environment for training. Adults behave differently in classes and training. So, the special technics are used for their trainings for what adults' trainers are prepared. A clearer view is shown in bar chat. Moreover, mean score is found as 1.71 that also shows tendency towards positive responses of the respondents. Furthermore, t – stat is 61.3 that is significant at less than 1% confidence interval that shows that there is a significant difference between mean scores of respondents of each group.

Table. 4: Result analysis of attraction to adult illiterates and unskilled adults to ALC for need-based technical education.

| Response | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|----------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| No idea | 17 | 4.30 | 4.30 | 4.30 |
| No | 63 | 15.8 | 15.8 | 20.0 |
| Yes | 320 | 80.0 | 80.0 | 100 |
| Total | 400 | 100 | 100 | |

Table.5: Result of one-sample statistics to adult illiterates and unskilled adults to ALC for need-based technical education.

| Question 49 | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|-------------|-----|------|----------------|-----------------|
| | 400 | 1.76 | 0.519 | 0.026 |

Table .6: Result of one-sample test to adult illiterates and unskilled adults to ALC for need-based technical education.

| Question 49 | Test Value = 0 | | | | | |
|-------------|----------------|-----|-----------------|-----------------|---|-------|
| | T | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| | 67.726 | 399 | 0.000 | 1.758 | 1.71 | 1.81 |

Do the need-based technical education attract illiterates and unskilled adults to ALCs? For this question, 80.0% respondents (n = 320) responded in positive and 15.8% (n = 63) responded in negative; whereas, 17 respondents that weight 4.3% showed no response. Standard curriculum is always followed in formal schooling. Government has complete control on curricula of the formal schooling. Adults training are provided with innovative ideas and need based. Most of the teachers believe that adult training must be need based to achieve the goal of financial support to the learners. Learners will get interest when they will find there required training. A clearer view is shown in bar chat. Moreover, mean score is found as 1.76 that also shows tendency towards positive responses of the respondents. Furthermore, t – stat is 67.7 that is significant at less than 1% confidence interval that shows that there is a significant difference between mean scores of respondents of each group.

Table.7 : Analysis of results about understanding the differences in learner’s social life before and after training in ALC.

| Response | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|----------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| No idea | 12 | 3.00 | 3.00 | 3.00 |

| | | | | |
|-------|-----|------|------|------|
| No | 36 | 9.00 | 9.00 | 12.0 |
| Yes | 352 | 88.0 | 88.0 | 100 |
| Total | 400 | 100 | 100 | |

Table 8: One-Sample statistics results about understanding the differences in learner’s social life before and after training in ALC

| | | | | |
|-------------|-----|------|----------------|-----------------|
| Question 37 | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
| | 400 | 1.85 | 0.434 | 0.022 |

Table 9: One-Sample test results about understanding the differences in learner’s social life before and after training in ALC

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|----------------|-----|-----------------|-----------------|---|-------|
| Question 37 | Test Value = 0 | | | | | |
| | T | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| | 85.341 | 399 | 0.000 | 1.850 | 1.81 | 1.89 |

With reference to the question “Do the adult learners understand the differences in their social life before and after training in ALC?” 88% respondents (n = 352) responded in positive and only 9% (n = 36) responded in negative; whereas, 12 respondents that weight merely 3% showed no response. Learners feels clear change in their social life after learning literacy and life skills from ALCs. This also show the importance of ALCs to change the life of people regarding social life. Moreover, mean score is found as 1.85 that also shows tendency towards positive responses of the respondents. Furthermore, t – stat is 85.34 that is significant at less than 1% confidence interval that shows that there is a significant difference between mean scores of respondents of each group.

Table 10: Result analysis of learners’ attention towards cleanliness.

| Response | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|----------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| No idea | 3 | 0.80 | 0.80 | 0.80 |
| No | 17 | 4.30 | 4.30 | 5.00 |
| Yes | 380 | 95.0 | 95.0 | 100 |
| Total | 400 | 100 | 100 | |

Table 11: One-Sample statistics result of learners' attention towards cleanliness.

| Question 38 | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|-------------|-----|------|----------------|-----------------|
| | 400 | 1.94 | 0.263 | 0.013 |

Table 12: One-Sample test result of learners' attention towards cleanliness.

| Question 38 | Test Value = 0 | | | | | |
|-------------|----------------|-----|-----------------|-----------------|---|-------|
| | t | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| | 147.507 | 399 | 0.000 | 1.943 | 1.92 | 1.97 |

Do the adult learners pay more attention to cleanliness of themselves and atmosphere – a symbol of behaving as a responsible citizen? When this question was asked, 95.0% respondents (n = 380) responded in positive and only 4.3% (n = 17) responded in negative; whereas, 3 respondents that weight merely 0.8% showed no response. A clearer view is shown in bar chat (Figure 4.38). That means almost each learner who attend the learning classes in ALCs are more conscious about cleanliness of themselves and atmosphere. This is a big number while we calculate results and great achievement of ALCs regarding change in society. Almost every citizen can be trained through this method and importance of ALC can be seen in results. Moreover, mean score is found as 1.94 that also shows tendency towards positive responses of the respondents. Furthermore, t – stat is 147.5 that is significant at less than 1% confidence interval that shows that there is a significant difference between mean scores of respondents of each group.

Table 13: Result analysis of adult learners' ability to read and write after getting literacy skills.

| Response | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|----------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| No idea | 12 | 3.00 | 3.00 | 3.00 |
| No | 27 | 6.80 | 6.80 | 9.80 |
| Yes | 361 | 90.3 | 90.3 | 100 |
| Total | 400 | 100 | 100 | |

Table 14 Result of one-sample statistics of adult learners' ability to read and write after getting literacy skills.

| Question 40 | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|-------------|-----|------|----------------|-----------------|
| | 400 | 1.87 | 0.414 | 0.021 |

Table 15: Result of one-sample test of adult learners’ ability to read and write after getting literacy skills.

| Question 40 | Test Value = 0 | | | | | |
|-------------|----------------|-----|-----------------|-----------------|---|-------|
| | T | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| | 90.386 | 399 | 0.000 | 1.873 | 1.83 | 1.91 |

When asked if the adult learners could read and write after getting literacy skills – a component of UN literacy definition, 90.3% respondents (n = 361) responded in positive and 6.8% (n = 27) responded in negative; whereas, 12 respondents that weight merely 3% showed no response. Same are the responses like previous answers that most of the learners can get reading and writing skills after attending the classes. Adult literacy centers are then very helpful to make a big community literate according to the given standards of UN. A country can achieve targets of 100% literacy rate by adopting NFE system. A clearer view is shown in bar chat. Moreover, mean score is found as 1.87 that also shows tendency towards positive responses of the respondents. Furthermore, t – stat is 90.38 that is significant at less than 1% confidence interval that shows that there is a significant difference between mean scores of respondents of each group.

Discussion

Education is a process which help to brings positive changes gradually in human behavior and life. Standard of education in not ideal which can be considered perfect education system in Pakistan. Non-formal education is designed for the people who missed their chance of proper schooling due to multiple reasons (Newman & Newman, 2017). Importance of non-formal education can’t be ignored in the country like Pakistan. This is the only way which can lead to solve basic issues in the country especially fulfil the agreements done by the Government with international organization (ul Hiq, Mahmood, Chaudhry, Farooq, & Ali, 2020). This is the only way which can lead to meet the goals of SDGs and make economic conditions better for poor people of the country. Selecting non-formal education as research topic as determinant of social development by selecting 800 literacy teachers and 400 community member of 10 Districts in survey was to find out measures of its importance in social development. So the implementation of non-formal education be assessed on the basis of social development so the flaws can be identified and bring positive changes in this system (Antoniades, Widiarto, & Antonarakis, 2020). Literacy & Non-formal basic education department is working from last eighteen years on this non-formal education setup. This is the main reason of selection of non-formal centers of literacy department as our research locale. Non-formal centers had been running through different project in Punjab by the department. Where adult literacy centers for adolescents & adults and Non-formal basic education centers for children had been opened all over the Punjab throughout this era. Literacy department has direct access to the community (Affeldt, Tolppanen, Aksela, & Eilks, 2017).

Opening of the non-formal basic education institutes on potential sites and mobilize the community for admission of their children in these centers remained specialization of this department. Mainstreaming the learner in formal school system after giving primary education to the learners is main purpose of the department. Children are tracked even after passing out from non-formal institute (Mbilu, 2019). Adult literacy centers were also initiative of literacy department for adult and adolescent where literacy and life skills both were given to the learners. Linkages with industries are being developed for adults who are being passed out from ALCs after making them literate and skillful (Bakken, Brown, & Downing, 2017). Some other department like NCHD and BECS are working on non-formal education all over the Pakistan but literacy department has its deep roots in community for educational purposes. Government has decided to hand over all NCHD and BECS institutions to the literacy department due to its successful implementation of first ever Literacy Policy of Pakistan 2017 (Ambreen & Hussain, 2020).

Non-formal education teachers which are mostly called literacy teachers has direct access to the community due to their physical existence at center level. Literacy teachers are well aware of the problem faced by out of school children and their parents which hinders them to remain separate from educational system of the country (Pihlainen, Korjonen-Kuusipuro, & Kärnä, 2021). Literacy teachers are also aware with the problem of children and adults who are newly admitted in NFBEs and ALCs. Literacy teachers are also able to compare the standards of education and curriculum of school education department and non-formal educational setup. They are in better position to suggest improvements for success of non-formal setup (Khan, 2021). Literacy teacher play a vital role in mainstreaming of students after completing primary education of learners from NFEIs. Literacy teacher remain in contact with administration of the department for reporting purpose and can present the suitable solution of any problem at center level (Hu, Gong, Lai, & Leung, 2018).

So the questionnaire was designed for literacy teacher to study the role of non-formal education as determinant of social development. Community member were also included to know their problems and to find out the main reasons which stop them to send their children and adults to the literacy centers (Deekor, 2019). Blank space was provided to respondents to collect suggestions for improvements in the system. There was a chance that some important key points may missed in questionnaire to discuss with literacy teachers, which they can discuss in type of qualitative part of the research. Literacy teachers added their comments and suggested improvements in non-formal system (Fernandez et al., 2016). Literacy teachers were also allowed not to share their personal information without their will. Questionnaires were distributed in literacy teachers through field staff of the department which were mostly Literacy Mobilizers. After filling questionnaires, all the data was sent back to the researcher. SPSS was used to analyze the data. Very informative results came out of the research which are seems not possible without this type of research. There were many outputs which changed the general concept about education (Mather et al., 2022). For example, when question was asked about girls' education from community, most of the respondents told that lack of proper sources for girls' education is main reason behind low enrolment of girls in the schools while social norms were considered before. Same was the

situation with boys where poverty was the main reason for not sending them school. Respondent were interested to involve their children in income generating activities due to poverty. They had lack of resources for sending their children to literacy centers for education. Most of the people were agreed that they will send their family member either children or adults for learning if they don't have any financial issue (Thomson, 2020).

Goals of 100% literacy rate in the country can be achieved by adopting non-formal education system at needy places. Which can also lead to social development by putting positive impact on economic condition of poor people of Punjab. Illiterate population can be trained for better living through non-formal education (Latchem, 2018). This can also help them to live a respectable life in society. They can be made good citizen by giving them life skills and to give them knowledge of their rights and duties. Illiterates can be trained to keep cleanliness in their cities and villages for better environment through non-formal education. They can live a healthy life by learning in literacy center that how they can maintain cleanliness in their homes (Pitikoe & Preece, 2016). They can also teach their siblings in their homes about good healthy practices. They can adopt good moral values if trained well in non-formal institutions. All these indicators lead to social development which can be achieved through non-formal education. This needs social acceptance and ownership of Government to take responsibility of its illiterate population (McKernan et al., 2019).

Conclusion

Non formal education was found very helpful to meet the goals of getting hundred percent literacy in adults and to uplift their life skill for better future life. As most of the adults had already missed their first chance to get the literacy and education thus they were given another chance through establishing ALCs in their areas so they can learn literacy skills and life skills to improve their routine life regarding financial & social matters. Our study shown that after getting training of six months almost all learners were able to meet the standard of a literate person and life skills added to their life was helping a lot to make them a respectable, helpful, and responsible citizen.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Government must prioritize funding to promote Adult Literacy through Non formal education system. In order to cope with many problems like illiteracy, poverty, financial insecurity, social injustice, law enforcement & the vital role of citizen in development of the country.

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