

Non-formal Education

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1. The Concept of Education

1.1. Changing Concept of Education

The Older Concept that “Education = Schooling = Teaching” is no longer valid. One’s education does not finish at the end of formal schooling. Educational institutions such as schools, universities and training centres are important, but only as one of the agencies for lifelong education. *“They no longer enjoy the monopoly of educating the people and can do no longer existence in isolation from other educational agencies in their society”* (Dave,1976). Schools can become the spring-board for implementing lifelong education.

In the context of lifelong education, the entire environment is the source of learning. Education goes on from womb to tomb. It is a lifelong process. Each individual must be equipped to seize learning opportunities throughout life, both to broaden her or his knowledge, skill and attitudes, and to adapt to a changing, complex, and independent world. If it is to succeed in its tasks, education must be organized around four fundamental types of learning which, throughout a person’s life, will a way be the pillars of knowledge: learning to know, that is acquiring the instruments of understanding; learning to do, so as to be able to act creatively on one’s environment; learning to live together, so as to participate and cooperate other people in all human activities; and learning to be, an essential progression which proceeds from the previous three. Of course, these four paths of knowledge all from a whole, because there are many points of contact, intersection and exchange among them. (*Learning: The Treasure Within UNESCO 1996*).

1.2. Lifelong Education

From the perspective of lifelong education, followings are contexts through which learning may take place:

- 1) Every day life experience; informal education (IFE),
- 2) Formal institute of learning; formal education (FE), and
- 3) Organised out-of-school programmes; non-formal education (NFE)

1.3. Informal Education (IFE)

In every society, there are many informal teaching learning situations. Communicating skills, both verbal and non-verbal, as well as etiquette, customs, family and social relations, familiarity with environment and, even religious beliefs and rites are all acquired by a child through these informal channels. So do adults continue to benefit from the informal education provided by newspapers, periodicals and books, radio and television, and social contacts relating to political and cultural activities.

1.4. Formal and Non-Formal Education

The organised teaching-learning situations fall into two categories: formal and non-formal. Teaching-learning situations are formal when provided in specialised institutions such as schools, vocational institutions, polytechnics, schools or institutions, colleges or universities, which exist solely for the purpose of teaching a clientele according to a set pattern. The pattern consists of such elements as grades or classes, prescribed syllabuses and timetables, examinations, academic awards

and so forth. When one generally refers to a system of education in a particular country, what is meant is this formal organisation of teaching-learning situations. Non-formal teaching-learning situations are those that are provided outside the formal system of education.

They may use the facilities and the personnel of the formal system. But the teaching and learning are subsidiary objectives which are achieved in the course of accomplishing of her objectives. The teaching learning which is taken place in programmes of rural, Agricultural or industrial development, falls into this category of non-formal education.

2. Non-Formal Education

2.1. Definition of Non-Formal Education

Non-formal Education is any organized educational activity outside the established formal system -whether operation separately or as an important feature of some broader activity- that is intended to serve identifiable learning clientele and learning objectives. (*Philip H. Coombs*)

Non-formal Education is an alternative education which would be organized systematically outside the framework of established formal system to provide functional learning relevant to particular subgroups of population both adults and children. (*Philip H. Coombs and Mansoor Ahmed*)

2.2. The Importance and Characteristics of NFE

NFE is a world-wide phenomenon, systematic out-of -school activities designed to meet specific learning needs which are to be found in developed and developing countries alike. The persuasiveness of non-formal education programmes (NFEPs) is attributable in large part to their nature. They often:

- (1) attempt to fulfill immediate and practical needs,
- (2) occur outside school,
- (3) adopt to individual needs,
- (4) change as learning needs change,
- (5) serve voluntary students populations,
- (6) involve part-time study, and
- (7) cost less than formal education and have flexible criteria for admission.

2.3. Relationships among Formal, Non- Formal, and Informal Education

Most of the existing NFE programmes are found to be related to FE in either of the following ways:

- (1) *Complementary Programmes*
e.g. evening classes to complement certain formal school programmes.
- (2) *Successor Programmes*
e.g. agricultural extension programmes for youth who have completed primary school.
- (3) *Second-Chance Programmes*
e.g. programmes aiming at reintegrating school dropouts into the stream of formal schooling.
- (4) *Substitute Programmes*

e.g. literacy course for rural youth who have never had any access to formal schooling.

2.4. Contents of Non-Formal Education

- (1) Positive attitudes
- (2) Functional literacy and numeracy
- (3) Scientific outlook and understanding of the process of nature
- (4) Functional knowledge and skills for raising a family and operating a household
- (5) Functional knowledge and skills for earning a living
- (6) Functional knowledge and skills for civic participation

2.5. Non-Formal Education in Myanmar Context

NFE, in the context of Myanmar refers to any organised educational activity operating outside the structure and routine of the formal school system to provide selected types of learning to sub-groups in the population, especially out-of-school youths and adults.

2.6. NFE Programmes

Programmes to be implemented are being prioritized by EFA/NFE Committee. These are:

- (1) Basic literacy programme,
- (2) Post literacy programme,
- (3) Functional literacy programme,
- (4) Income generation programme, and
- (5) Quality of life improvement (and autonomous learning society) programme.
- (6) Continuing Education

3. Ministries, Departments and Organisations Involved in NFE Programmes

For the implementation of EFA in Myanmar, the EFA Central Co-ordination Committee comprises several ministries, departments and organisations. These are:

(1) Ministries

Education, Religious Affairs, Forestry, Co-operative, Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs, Health, Home Affairs, Immigration and Population, Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Railways, Transport, Agriculture, Information and Labour

(2) Departments

All Departments under MoE, Cottage Industries, Health, Myanmar Agriculture Enterprise, Social Welfare, General Administration, Information and Public Relation, Myanmar Television and Radio Department, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary. etc.

(3) Organizations

Myanmar Red Cross Society, the Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation (MWAF), Myanmar Maternity and Child Welfare Association (MMCWA) etc.

(4) Agencies /INGOs/ NGOs

UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDP, Save the Children (Myanmar), MEC, World Vision, YMCA, YWCA, YMBA, MANA and other social organizations

4. Implementation of Non-formal Education in Myanmar

4.1. Non-formal Education (*Adult literacy*)

Efforts are made for ensuring literacy for all citizens. Emphasis has also been given to the remote and border areas where most of the ethnic groups were left for many years access to have the skills to read and write. As a result the adult literacy rate of the country in 2005 has been increased.

4.2. Non-formal Education (*Continuing education*)

Continuing education programs are being conducted to upgrade literacy skills, generate more family income and to improve quality of life of the literate people. Community Learning Centers were opened. Self-reliance village libraries were also opened throughout the country organized by the Ministry of Information aiming for rural development. These libraries are of great support for neo-literates to attain literacy and other literate persons to enrich their knowledge and information.

Myanmar ,DMER as a focal point for NFE is now organizing the following NFE programmes:-

- Basic literacy programmes
- Post-Literacy programmes
- Income Generating Programmes
- Continuing Education (CE) programmes
- Initiation of Non-formal Middle School (NFMSE)

4.3. Continuing Education Through CLC

The present NFE has adopted CE as a broad concept of education which provides any kind of further learning opportunities after formal education. Some CE programmes have been initiated through community learning centers.

Types of CE programmes,

- ❑ Basic literacy programmes
- ❑ Post Literacy Programmes (PLP)
- ❑ Income-generating Programmes (IGP)
- ❑ Quality of Life Improvement Programme(QLIP)
- ❑ Equivalency Programme (EP)

4.4. Enhancing Literacy and Continuing Education through NFE

Non-formal education provides the broadest range of opportunities for acquiring knowledge, skills, attitudes and values *systematically* throughout life. The status of NFE in a society depends in part on a program quality and whether the knowledge, skills, attitude and values acquired in a program are equivalent to those which would have been acquired in a formal education institution, both setting out to achieve the same goals. The quality of NFE program depends on the comprehensiveness of the plan.

The major actions in this strategy include:

- To continue BLP to all States/Divisions

- To develop CE program activities alongside training for organization of CLC
- To raise awareness of the prospective learners about the literacy and NFE programs
- To review and introduce Non-Formal Secondary Education (NFMSE)
- To develop learner-oriented literacy programs along with income generating and Better Life Skills
- To develop NFE database and network with support of active partners
- To develop functional literacy materials by local groups
- To develop monitoring and evaluation mechanism for all Literacy and NFE programmes

4.5. Development of NFE/Literacy Materials

4.5.1. Development of NFE/Literacy Materials during the Time of Literacy Mass Movement (1964-1988)

The Curriculum Development and Production of Adult Primers and Supplementary Readers Sub-Committee have developed a common and uniform curriculum. To avoid a tendency to relapse into illiteracy, a wide variety of post-literacy activities had been employed. Burma Central Literacy Committee (BCLC) and the government departments jointly developed educative posters, leaflets, handouts, folders, and other simple reading materials related to agriculture, health, co-operative, and general knowledge. During this period the committee developed 24 booklets and they were distributed to the EFA programmes.

4.5.2. Development of NFE/Literacy Materials during the Time of Literacy Mass Movement(1988-2000)

MERB, the focal institution of EFA/NFE, has been producing literacy materials since 1991. MERB initiated a pilot programme on the Development of a Non-formal Functional Literacy System in 6 townships with UNICEF's assistance, which aims to bring literacy, life and learning skills to the out-of-school population. After a series of seminars and workshops, MERB produced 3 basic literacy packages and other NFE functional materials in co-operation with personnel from several departments. These materials were produced based on the UNESCO APPEAL model. The same procedure was taken in 1990, when MERB, with UNDP and UNESCO'S assistance, launched a project on the Expansion of Skills-based Literacy Programme for Women and Girls. Thirty-two learning materials were produced; twelve for level A, twelve for level B and eight for level C. Over six hundred thousand copies of three basic literacy packages were reprinted and used in the literacy classes. In these booklets 50 Myanmar sound patterns and functional contents are included.

4.5.3. Development of NFE Learning Materials in cooperation with Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU)

Myanmar has been participating in workshops organized by ACCU since 1995. Follow-up national workshops were also conducted in Myanmar with continuous assistance from ACCU and developed several materials following the Asian/Pacific Joint Programme of Materials for Neo-Literates in Rural Areas (AJP). A wide variety of literacy follow-up materials in the

form of booklet, fold-out leaflet, posters, photonovella, comics, video tape, audio tape, puzzles, card game, radio vision were produced.

4.5.4. Development of NFE Materials after the Establishment of MLRC

The thirteenth Literacy Resource Centre (LRC) in the Asia/ Pacific region came into existence in Myanmar in March 2000, as a result of co-operative efforts made by MERB, ACCU, UNESCO PROAP and the Embassy of Japan in Myanmar. Myanmar produced learning materials, monitoring indicators, evaluation tools and instruments were developed in various formats with the financial assistance from ACCU. These materials are now in use in literacy centres.

4.5.5. Asian/Pacific Joint Production Programme of Materials for Neo-Literates in Rural Areas(AJP)

ACCU has been carrying out AJP since 1980. AJP prototype materials are produced through the co-operative efforts of experts of the participating countries in the region. Myanmar has adapted 10 kinds of AJP materials into local version by the joint efforts of DBE, UNDP, and UNESO in 1992-1993.

4.6. Scope and Format of NFE materials

NFE materials are covering a wide range of areas such as family, citizen, social, agriculture, handicraft, animal husbandry, health, cooperative, entrepreneurship, marketing and general knowledge targeted to neo-literate & literate youth and adult. A wide variety of NFE materials were produced in the format of posters, booklets, leaflets, folders, reading cards, game, video and VCD together with guided teaching learning process. Most of them are in Myanmar Language, some are in English and a few in languages of other national races.

The innovative format of NFE learning material is reading card. Myanmar has developed many Reading Cards for NFE and NFPE as her innovative format. The reasons behind the reading card production are as follows: –

- Easy to develop and duplicate according to ACCU production steps
- Cost-effective because the different learners can use the different reading cards
- Low cost
- Activity-oriented after knowledge expansion
- Dissemination of messages in the form of ideas easily

4.7. Utilization of NFE Materials

DMERB has been distributing its NFE materials with training guides to respective townships to organize reading circles and CLCs. The member of CLCs read, discussed and applied in the form of learning circles. Some of these NFE materials are also used in the reading circles of other related GOs, NGOs, INGOs and UN agencies. Some of NGOs and INGOs make their own materials by using these materials as references. Myanmar version of AJP materials and PLANET materials were translated, published and distributed widely for effective utilization in NFE activities.

4.8. Status of NFE in Myanmar

Since the time of Myanmar Kings similar programmes which could be labeled as NFE related activities have been practicing ranging from apprenticeship to skilled training and well organized

programmes. Monasteries and communities organized such activities. The Term Non-formal Education was first introduced in Myanmar when the project; *Research Study on the Methodology of Production-oriented Non-formal Education* was conducted by BERB (now DMERB) in collaboration with UNICEF in 1975 in Teik Kyi Township. This Term became more common when MoE organized *Education Sector Study* collaboration with UNDP in 1990.

As mentioned earlier, NFE covers variety programmes as complementary programmes, successor programmes, second-chance programmes, substitute programmes and in line with the scope and characteristics of the NFE programmes, a numerous activities and programmes are now being implemented by government ministries, NGOs and private sector. The range will be religious teaching trainings, trainings on prenatal care for mothers, birth spacing, drawing, painting, traditional dance, games and sports at the community level. Refresher courses, in-service trainings, skilled trainings, workshops and other intensive trainings provided by ministries fall into the NFE category. NGOs such as MWAFA, MMCWA, USDA and INGOs such as SC (Myanmar) World Vision, World Food Programme are also providing NFE related activities and programmes. In Myanmar International Agencies such as UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDP, UNCOD are aware of NFE programmes and organizing NFE trainings. It is not easy to identify all NFE related programmes since all these providers are organizing these programmes based on their policy guidelines and directions. The government is committed to promote NFE programmes and the EFA Central Coordinating Committee, chaired by the chairman of Myanmar Education Committee was formed in 1996 with EFA Executive Committee headed by the minister for education. Under this main committee there are six sub-committees. NFE sub-committee was chaired by the Director General of DMERB.

NFE programmes mentioned here are just the programmes organized by MoE. DMERB was designated as the focal institution of NFE with allocated budgets.

5. CLC Initiatives

5.1. The NFE Committee with MERB as a focal institution launched five CLCs in 1995 in Nyaung Don Township, Ayeyarwady Division. These two programmes are being implemented respectively. There are also some CLCs organized by Myanmar Mother and Child Welfare Association (MMCWA) and other NGOs and INGOs. A CLC can be regarded as-

- an information centre,
- a vocational training centre,
- a discussion club,
- a reading centre,
- a library,
- a cultural centre and
- an entertainment centre

5.2. Objectives

- (1) To provide learning opportunity for all by using local researches.
- (2) To provide information of various kinds to all via training and ICT
- (3) To provide NFE, CE and skills training programme, responding to needs identified by the community
- (4) To work as a centre for human resource development for all.

(5) To work as a coordinating agency between the villagers and development institutions

5.3. Venues for CLCs

CLCs organized by MOE/UNDP project take place in separate building constructed by UNDP and the community. The venues for other CLCs are school buildings, religious buildings such as *zayat*, the monasteries, etc. and other appropriate buildings organized by the community.

5.4. CLC programmes

- (1) Basic literacy courses
- (2) Post-Literacy activities,
- (3) Income Generating Programmes
- (4) Non-formal Primary Education (NFPE)
- (5) Early Childhood Care
- (6) Continuing Education (CE) (*skills training, health or agriculture talks, musical and cultural events, mobile libraries*)

5.5. Myanmar Literacy Resource Centre (MLRC)

In March 2000, the Myanmar Literacy Resource Centre (MLRC) was established at the MERB with a contribution from the Japanese Grant Assistance for Grassroots Project at the cost of over of US \$ 70,000 with the contribution of US \$ 21,000 from ACCU. Myanmar's contribution towards the MLRC project was Kyats 14.5 million. MLRC is part of the network of seventeen Literacy Resource Centres in Asia and the Pacific. One of the functions of MLRC is the training of NFE personnel at various levels by conducting training workshops.

The DMERB is the focal institution for NFE and has been working in close co-operation with Asia Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU), in Japan and the Japan UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, Bangkok. Establishment of Community Learning Centres (CLCs) in Myanmar Reading Circles normally follow right after the completion of basic literacy classes. in collaborating with related organizations especially with Myanmar Literacy Resource Centre (MLRC).

The MLRC is the technical centre for NFE. DMERB has been actively participating in the literacy and continuing education programmes through CLCs in close cooperation and coordination with related GOs, NGOs, INGOs and UN agencies. As the result, the literacy rate of Myanmar is increasing. Due to the increase of the literacy rate, continuing education has been urgently needed. Moreover, the teaching/learning materials for the neo-literate and literate- people are also needed. There still some CLCs not effectively functioning due to various reasons. A detail study should be conducted to find out the status of CLCs.

6. Recommendations

For the expansion of NFE programmes and also for the successful implementation of the projects, the following recommendations should be taken into account:-

1) **Awareness Raising and Advocacy**

Consultations at all levels: central, regional and local, is an essential step for information sharing, awareness raising and advocacy. Active participation with strong commitment of the concerned officials and the community is the key for success. This will create the involvement of officials and community members in implementing, supervising and even monitoring the project.

2) **Establishment of Networking mechanism among all stakeholders**

Currently, ETWG is taking a leading role for the establishment of networking mechanism. For more participation and cooperation, there should be more interaction among all stakeholders on common understanding based on the concept of NFE. DMERB can be focal institution. MLRC, a registered NGO can also be considered as an alternative focal institution.