

Motivational Strategies for Adult Learners: Different Approaches

Dr. P. Viswanadha Gupta^{1*}

Keywords: Motivational Strategies, Adult Learners

Lack of adequate motivation is one of the serious problems in adult education. Due to lack of motivation, the learners are not attending the centres, the volunteers are not committed to the programme and the community members are either remaining as spectators or criticsers instead of doing something positive to the programme. How to solve the problem? What strategies are needed for effectively motivating the public and learners apart from the efforts of the district administration? Is it intrinsic motivation or extrinsic motivation that can help us to resolve the issue? Are there any other methods, which have proved to be successful at the field level? The paper aims to present these issues systematically.

Adult learners are the beneficiaries of the programme and without their participation, the programme cannot become successful which results in wastage of financial, human and other material resources. Making the adults learn in the centres has become a herculean task and it may not be out of place to state that we can send people to moon and get wonderful things done but we cannot see that the adult illiterates are made literate in our country to easily. Hence, it is of utmost importance to visualize the problem more seriously and scientifically in order to evolve workable solutions.

Educational psychology which includes learning theories, motivation, memory, forgetting transfer of training, theories of instruction, attitudes, aptitudes, environment has a wider application to the field of adult education. It helps the functionaries to design the teaching-learning materials based on the psychological principles like known to known, simple to complex, easy to difficult, concrete to abstract and according to learners needs and requirements. It helps in identifying the learning difficulties of adults and enables the volunteer to select the appropriate method of teaching and thereby in improving the instruction. Providing guidance is yet another important area where in the adult learners can be helped in terms of vocational guidance, academic guidance, etc. The progress of learners can be evaluated, the intelligence of adults can be tested and the psychological tests of a wide and varied nature can be utilised in strengthening the research dimension of adult education. Motivation is one of the crucial areas and the application of laws of learning (readiness, exercise and effect), creation of learning environment, application of recognition,

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Adult, Continuing Education and Extension, Savitribai Phule Pune University, India

[*Responding Author](#)

Received: August 08, 2019; Revision Received: September 29, 2019; Accepted: September 30, 2019

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competition, praise, knowledge of results, selection of subject matter, method of teaching, psychology of adults need to be given adequate attention in dealing with adults.

The word motivation comes from the Latin word 'Moreover' which means to move. A motive is one which moves or activities. In its literal meaning motivation is the process of arousing movement in the organism. Motivation is the beginning step to presume an activity with vigour and persistence. It refers to why part of our behaviour. It is simply a process of activating the individuals to take up any activity. For example, if the teacher announces a test the students will be motivated to study. If the teachers declares that the one who gets first rank will get a prize, it will further motivate the children to work hard. Unless the child is motivated to learn he will not learn. We can take the horse to water but we cannot make it drink. Similarly, the teacher may teach but the child will learn only if he is motivated to learn. Motivation is an urge to learn and the royal road to learning. In the simplest form motivation is a combination of forces which initiates, directs and sustains behaviour towards a goal. According to W. H. Bernard, 'Motivation refers to all those phenomena which are involved in the stimulation of action towards particular objectives where previously there was little or no movement towards these objectives. The main functions of motivation are (1) It imitates action, (2) It energises behaviour and (3) It directs, regulates and sustains behaviour.

In the context of adult education, motivation means creation of a desire or interest in the adults to learn. Motivation for literacy can be defined as a process that would induce in the illiterate persons a desire to act for acquiring the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic and to strengthen these skills through post-literacy and continuing education programmes.

Types of Motivation

Motivation can be of two types: Intrinsic and Extrinsic. If the individual recognise as an activity as self-rewarding and takes it up then it is called an intrinsic motivation. The individual takes up the activity because it gives him pleasure or satisfaction. Here the urge to take up the activity springs from within the individual and not from any external force. If the motivating force is outside the activity and also outside the person then the motivation is said to be extrinsic.

Between the two types of motivation intrinsic motivation should be preferred to extrinsic motivation. It produces better learning because it is related to the interest of the individual. The learner undertakes the activity in which he has interest without waiting for any external pressure. When the learner does not show any intrinsic motivation or interest in learning we have to resort to extrinsic motivation by the use of inventiveness may be financial or non-financial (monetary or non-monetary) such as rewards, awards, competitions, praise etc. Extrinsic motivation can be created among adult learners by providing opportunities for higher learning, employment facilities, job promotion, credit facilities, tailoring machines, income generating units such as poultry, dairy, fishery units, awards, rewards, certificates etc. Motivation methods adopted in literacy campaigns include Padayatras, public meetings, door to door campaigns, wall writings, slogans, small group meetings, personal contacts, wall writings, songs, dramas, press advertisements, etc.

Further, imposing checks on granting loans and subsidies, supply or ration cards, prohibition of thumb impression, emphasis of literacy for low grade jobs, linking literacy with development department programmes are also attempted whereas possible.

FACTORS INFLUENCING MOTIVATION

Motivation is a very complex phenomenon which is influenced by multiple variables operating within and outside the learner. All these factors can be grouped under four categories.

1. Environmental factors : Proper place, freeness from noise, public movement, lighting, ventilation, etc.
2. Learner related factors : Physiological, psychological, philosophical, social, economic and cultural.
3. Material related factors : Readability, understandability, applicability, meaningfulness, relevance of the material to the needs, problems and interests of the learners.
4. Volunteer related factors : The personality of the volunteer method of teaching, commitment, etc.

Motivational Approaches

The success of the adult education programme mainly depends upon the effective learning of adults. A wide range of approaches are necessary to motivate the adult learners depending upon the nature of persons, their motives, needs and interests. These approaches may be categorized as (1) friendly approach, (2) participatory approach, (3) need based approach, (4) problem solving approach, (5) achievement approach, (6) media approach, (7) instructional approach, (8) deficiency approach, (9) curriculum approach, (10) vicarious approach. These approaches are suggested based upon the experiences of several field functionaries.

1. Friendly Approach

It is the most widely used one in general situations to improve rapport, to present the information, to exchange ideas and knowledge without affecting the ego of the others. Use of this approach in adult education situations will help to give equal respect and treatment to adults and to please them by starting conversation about their welfare, children and family. This will help the adults to come freely with their thoughts and needs. This method is especially useful in explaining the adult learners about the programme individually and as a group, to acquaint and secure their full co-operation and to get objectives data in the field surveys. Most of the personal obstacles, wrong assumptions, social stigma and programme deficiencies can be tactfully solved and the attention of adult learners can be drawn in an easier way through this approach.

2. Participatory Approach

The adult learners are the beneficiaries of the programme. They can be involved at various stages of the programme namely, planning, management, mobilisation of resources, co-ordination, monitoring and evaluation. If the programme functionaries can increase the participation of the learners by giving due recognition to their age, status, knowledge and acquaintance with others, naturally that will create a confidence in them to participate in the programme.

3. Need-based Approach

The adult education programme emphasises upon catering to the varied needs of adults. If the functionaries of the programme can meet the needs of the people or show the appropriate ways to meet their needs through other agencies naturally that will increase their confidence in the functionaries. Hence, it is essential to understand the needs of the adult learners. Their needs are often related to health, agriculture, family welfare, animal husbandry, environment, etc. When their needs are satisfied, they will participate in programme willingly and effectively.

4. Problem Solving Approach

Adults through illiterate, are members of the community and have varied problems from dawn to dusk. Their problems are often related to financial and non-financial

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matters. They are related to agriculture, filling up preforms, contacting and getting benefits from banks, co-operative societies and other financial institutions. If their problems are solved they get interested and participate in the programme.

5. **Achievement Approach**

Happiness is often related to success in day to day activities. When we achieve something by putting forth our efforts, naturally it results in a sense of personal accomplishment. Similarly, if the adult learners are informed about their stage in the learning activities from time to time, naturally it leads to their motivation to put forth better efforts for further learning.

6. **Media Approach**

Media can play a vital role in enlightening people and in drawing the attention of the adult learners. The traditional media like folk songs, puppetry, harikathas, burrakathas, etc., media like radio, TV, newspaper, educational films, etc., have a long lasting value in transmitting the messages and in creating public consciousness. Skilful selection and use of the media suitable to the adult learners needs and interests will unquestionably make major contribution to their further development and learning.

7. **Instructional Approach**

The instructor is the front line worker in the adult education programme. His rapport with the learners, selection of the place and time for teaching catering to the requirement of adult learners and laying stress upon learning rather than teaching, his personal commitment and concern to make the illiterate adults literate, his way of presenting the things in a sequential manner, his weightage to adult learners age and experience, his ability to create a favourable environment for launching the programme through public meetings, personal contacts and cultural activities has much bearing in motivating the adult learners.

8. **Deficiency Approach**

This approach lays emphasis on filling up the knowledge gap with regard to the requirement of adult learners. Adults though they are illiterate have an understanding of society, mode of dealing with the officials, neighbours, etc., and their own ways of calculating the house hold expenditure and other income and cost aspects. yet, their methods seem to be crude. Modern civilization requires tactful, accurate, timely, logical; and knowledgeable ways of doing the things and dealing with the people. The knowledge deficiencies of adults in terms of democratic living, ways of generating income, uses of literacy, agriculture, etc., should be filled in by programme functionaries, functionaries of development departments - (agriculture, health, animal husbandry, industries, etc.), local leaders and other elite members of the society.

9. **Curriculum Approach**

Curriculum refers to the organized whole of learning experiences intended to bring out the desired changes in the learners. Simply, it refers to the teaching-learning materials provided to the adult learners. The teaching-learning materials intended for the adult learners should be attractive, need based, time-bound, diversified, relevant, flexible and systematic in all aspects of organisation. The letters, the setup of the primers, usage of local language, pictures, slogans, meaningful sentences, etc., can make the adults duly motivated to learn. They can inspire, strengthen, simulate and widen the intellectual horizons of adult learners and simultaneously help them to acquire literacy skills. They must also be able to impress the adult learners to continue their learning after the acquisition of rudimentary skills.

10. **Vicarious Approach**

This approach emphasises upon the sharing of experiences by the field functionaries.

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In some areas the programme would have achieved highest success, in some areas it would have achieved moderate results and in some areas it would have been far below from its expectation. Necessary provision through in-service training programmes, publication of success stories and providing opportunities for interaction of illiterate adults with successful learners, will help the functionaries to channelise their efforts in a particular direction or to innovate new methods to motivate adult learners.

CONCLUSION

Adequate motivation of adult learners, community and programme functionaries is crucial for the success of the programme. Stress should be laid on motivating the programme functionaries as they, in turn motivate the community and adult learners. Further, the programme functionaries have to feel their responsibility to participate in the programme effectively so as to create necessary conditions for their learning. In addition, motivation is situation specific in its nature and has a wider scope in the context of adult education programme. Adult education is a field oriented experiment and requires a lot of imagination in its implementation. The motivation types and approaches dealt with should be given adequate priority. It all depends on the functionaries of adult education whose main function is to motivate adult learners for their effective learning. Hence, a broader understanding and analyses of the aspect dealt with will be of immense help to adult education functionaries to delineate appropriate strategies to motivate the adult learners and the community and thereby for the success of the programme.

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Acknowledgements

The author appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interests.

How to cite this article: Gupta. P.V. (2019). Motivational Strategies for Adult Learners: Different Approaches. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 7(3), 645-650. DIP:18.01.069/20190703, DOI:10.25215/0703.069