

Brief report of the first National Workshop on Designing a Professional Development Programme in Adult Education (IGNOU, New Delhi, December 11-14, 2007)

Background of the workshop

An Expert Committee was constituted by the Vice Chancellor to examine the possibility of adopting/adapting the Learning Package on *Participatory Adult Learning Documentation and Information Networking* (prepared by fifteen experts) with a view to develop a Certificate course for the capacity building of middle level functionaries working in various Adult/Lifelong Education Organizations, viz; State Resource Centers, *Jan shikshan Sansthans*, *Zilla Sakharata Samities*, Continuing Education Centers, NGOs and University Departments of Adult Education. The Committee at its meeting held on August 7, 2007 thoroughly discussed the package and accepted it in principle and recommended that two National Workshops be convened to review the course contents and identify the gaps and ascertain its suitability for a Post Graduate Certificate course and further suggest the possibilities of simplifying the materials for an Undergraduate Certificate course to be offered in Hindi and five regional languages.

The Vice Chancellor nominated Dr. Naidu as the convener of the Professional Development Programme in Adult Education and invited Professor S.Y. Shah to provide part time consultancy for planning the two National Workshops and further facilitate the adoption of the programme by IGNOU faculty.

Workshop Objectives and Participants

Following the recommendation of the Expert Committee, the first National Workshop was planned with the participation of all the stake holders, viz; National Literacy Mission, Non Governmental Organizations and University Departments of Adult Education, Resource Persons, expert reviewers, course writers and faculty members from IGNOU. Besides, twenty learners were selected from ten states to study at least one unit and present their comments. The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning also deputed four international experts from Bangladesh, Nepal and Germany. In all, fifty five persons attended the four days workshop held at IGNOU during December 11-14, 2007.

Following were the specific objectives of workshop:

1. Review the Learning Package (PALDIN) in the light of feed back from eight experts and twenty learners
2. Identify the gaps and suggest additions
3. Recommend suitable corrections and revisions
4. Provide an opportunity to the twenty learners to interact with the course writers, experts and clarify their doubts
5. Video Recording of eight selected lectures by the course writers
6. Elicit the views and comments of the participants on the e-literacy course developed by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning

Transactions in different sessions

The four days workshop was held in fourteen sessions. The first session was chaired by Professor D.K. Mishra, Pro Vice Chancellor and the Chief Guest was Ms. Vandana Jena, Director General of National Literacy Mission. Extending a warm welcome to the dignitaries and all the participants, Dr. Naidu recalled the keen interest of the Vice Chancellor in launching the professional development programme in Adult Education. Brief background of the workshop, its objectives and themes of different sessions were presented by Professor S.Y. Shah, Dr. K.C. Choudhury, President of Indian Adult Education Association and Ms. Lisa Krolak, Head of Documentation Unit of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning shared their experiences of participating in the development of PALDIN programme and assured full cooperation in future as well. Ms. Vandana Jena, Director General of the National Literacy Mission, not only welcomed the initiative of IGNOU in designing the much needed capacity building programme for lakhs of literacy workers but also congratulated the Vice Chancellor for his leadership. Professor D.K. Mishra, who inaugurated the workshop, stressed the need for developing the programme in Hindi and other selected regional languages for the benefit of grassroots level workers who may not be familiar with English. Recalling the interest of the Vice Chancellor in developing new need based courses, Professor Mishra assured the full support of the University to the professional development programme.

The second and third sessions were fully devoted to the presentations and discussions of the comments on the two courses by eight experts

nominated by the Vice Chancellor. With a view to ensure objectivity, only those experts were selected who were not at all connected with the programme. The experts were given the materials six weeks prior to the workshop to provide them ample time to go through. The presentation of comments by the experts was followed by further comments from other participants. The following were the main observations which can be categorized into three sections.

Section 1: Relevance of the Learning Package

1. All the themes of the learning package are very relevant
2. The bulk of the materials are of high quality
3. The materials could be adopted for designing a PG Certificate course with suitable modifications and additions
4. The materials form about 75% of the course materials required for a PG course

Section 2: Suggested Modifications

A. General

1. Rearranging the materials into smaller units and blocks
2. Uniform editing for style of presentation and language
3. Preparation of a glossary of technical terms and selected concepts
4. Preparation of a Handbook and Manual of Assignments
5. References to be given after each units

B. Specific Comments

1. Substantial revision and rewriting of the unit 5 & 6 (Understanding community & Reading materials) of course 1
2. Rewriting the unit 14 on Sociology of Adult Education keeping in view Indian context
3. Merging the Units 12 & 13 of course 1 into a single compact unit
4. Shifting the units 1 & 2 of course 2 into course 1 as a single unit

C. Suggested Additions

1. Historical Perspective on Adult Education in India
2. Psychology of Adults

3. Curriculum development including methods of teaching adults
4. Current policy, programmes and delivery agents
5. Monitoring & Evaluation

It was suggested that with the addition of units and carrying out revisions and rearrangement of materials, the entire package could be divided into three courses of four credits each along with four credits for project work and assignments, thereby designing a sixteen credit PG Certificate course. After the preparation of the entire course, it would be desirable to get it approved by the course writers prior to its printing.

The fourth session was devoted to the presentation and discussions on the e-literacy course on Adult Education developed by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. Eight persons were given access to the course so that they could study and give suggestions for its improvement and possible adoption by IGNOU. While five persons presented their experiences and views on the course in the fourth session, the other three reviewers shared their views in the last session. It was felt that the course could be of interest to several literacy workers. But, it needs to be pilot tested over a period of one year provided UNESCO enters into a MOU with the IGNOU.

The next eight sessions were fully devoted to video recording of lectures by eight course writers on the lessons written by them. These sessions provided an opportunity to the learners to listen to expert lectures, clarify their doubts and give feed back to the course writers. The video could be used for developing a multimedia package for learners at a later stage.

The thirteenth session was a panel discussion on exploring the possibilities of adopting the materials to Bangladesh and Nepal. There were three presentations by Ms. Shereen Akther and Ms. Momtaz Khatun of Bangladesh and Mr. Sharad Babu Shrestha of Nepal and it was moderated by Ms. Lisa Krolak. The international participants mentioned that the learning package would be very useful to their countries and they would like to adopt the materials with appropriate modifications to meet the requirements of their countries.

The last session was chaired by Dr. C.G. Naidu. Apart from the presentations on E-literacy course by three faculty members of IGNOU viz; Dr. Lakshmi Reddy, Dr. C.G. Naidu and Ms. Poonam Bhushan, several

participants also commented on various aspects of the learning package and welcomed the initiative of IGNOU. In general, most of the participants found the course contents very relevant for their professional development and felt that with further additions and revisions, IGNOU could launch a PG Certificate Course in Adult Education. In his concluding remark Professor Shah clarified that all the suggestions made by the experts and learners would be kept in view while revising the course contents. The work would begin as soon as the Vice Chancellor nominates a faculty member as the Course coordinator.

Wrapping up the discussions, Dr. Naidu assured that the designated Programme Coordinator would carry forward the work as per IGNOU norms so that the course could be launched in 2008.