



Extension Services for Community Development through Universities

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My hand is the extension of the thinking process – The creative process – Tadao Ando

Abstract

The universities have changed its traditionalistic style of working and have come forward to extend their educational resources and expertise the services through readily available resources to the people in all walks of life and have supported community services as one of their main functions, i.e., extension. The extension dimension deserves approval and encouragement from all intellectuals from the various sections of society, and to know that universities will be able to discharge their social obligation to community development. The community of the university campus should contribute and extend their liberal cooperation and make use of the other development department services in channelizing effectively for the sake of community development.

Keywords: *University Grants Commission, universities, Government policies, extension, research, community development, social awareness, literacy, science and technology, health, environment, NGOs, SHGs, Media, publications, sustainable development, etc.,*

I. Introduction

In recent past, the universities have changed its traditionalistic style of working and have come forward to extend their educational resources and expertise the services through readily available resources to the people in all walks of life and have supported community services as one of their main functions, i.e., extension. As a result, the function of extension has come to be treated as the third dimension of universities along with teaching and research. Earlier, the universities had largely focused on two functions- transmission of knowledge through teaching and research. The extension dimension deserves approval and encouragement from all intellectuals from the various sections of society, and to know that universities will be able to discharge their social obligation to community development. According to Kelsey and Heame (1967) found that eight crucial areas of scope of extension education in rural areas (1). Efficiency in agriculture extension (2). Efficiency in marketing, distribution and utilization (3). Conservation, development and use of natural resources (4). Management on the farm and in the home (5). Family life (6). Youth development (7). Leadership development (8). Community development and rural development. As a part of universities expected to perform an important role in the development of human resources, specifically providing

manpower in the area of Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning and need to facilitate the development of the nation as a whole. The purpose of this paper is to explain and inculcate knowledge about the key functions of extension services, advantages of the students and community and list extension programmes for community development that to be taken into consideration by the extension workers at the field level.

II. Need and Significance of Extension Services

Certainly, extension of universities as welcoming feature, but mere acceptance and implementation of extension programmes will not obnoxiously conditions of the community. Extension programmes have to be planned practically keeping in view of the needs, problems and interests of the target groups and implement them with a sense of conviction and commitment. Unenthusiastic and rare attempts will result in a huge/enormous wastage of time, money, material and talent. Further, on par with the extension work as third dimension of universities, it should be permitted the same position as that of teaching and research. Moreover, the students and teachers in the above (outreach) programmes should be given due recognition and the service should be given due weightage in the matters of final evaluation, employment, promotions, enrolment in higher studies, etc., In view of the above, the community of the university campus should contribute and extend their liberal cooperation and make use of the other development department services in channelizing effectively for the sake of community development.

III. Institutional Arrangements for Extension

Universities must be useful in a good number of ways to the society, and it may consider convenient activities to inculcate knowledge and technology. Because today's knowledge is getting outdated by tomorrow due to rapid technological advances and the people should update and overcome this situation to know more than what they know now. For overcoming this, universities may plan and bring out a monthly/quarterly magazine in a local language representing latest developments in science and technology for the benefit of the community. Either, it offers fantastic opportunity for different university departments to worthy findings of applied research conducted in potential fulfilment of post-graduation, Ph.D., etc., at present these reports which have public utility and need to be put in digital formats of the universities along with the results of applied research, the magazine may also contain articles represented with the issues like, traditional, historical, social, educational, cultural, political and economic, etc., A magazine of this type will certainly awaken the people of the society and develop a bridge between the university and community. Other than from the magazine, the universities should publish pamphlets, leaflets, display boards, on the topics of the most popular interest. The universities may set up a separate cell/unit for development of the community and appoint some of the teachers, research scholars, non-teaching staff and students manage the cell on rotation basis. Persons-in charge of the cell may formulate projects and chalk out the programmes in correlation with the advisory committee body. In this juncture, they may look after the matters of the publication of the magazines, literacy classes, reading materials, awareness on current issues, conducting meetings and training programmes for community development. Under these extension services, the Indian universities should provide services through NSS (National Service Scheme) and specialized programmes in agricultural universities, such as providing resources, expertise and education to all communities to foster development. Formal institutions

alone cannot provide educational opportunities to all people due to certain important reasons. Therefore, universities may organize Continuing Education Programmes (CEPs) for the benefit of those people who cannot make use of the available educational facilities in a formal system of education. So that, the continuing education programmes would help to improve the knowledge, skills and abilities to be required for the people. For upliftment of the downtrodden, the Government of India provides adequate opportunities and a part of priorities of education through establishment of National Adult Education Programme (1978), Mass Programme for Functional Literacy (1986), National Literacy Mission (1988), Saakshar Bharat (2009), Swachh Bharat (2014), New India Literacy Programme (2023) etc., mobilizing the available resources for the cause of community development.

Universities may also focus on imparting functional skills and generating social awareness among the rural poor and slum dwellers, irrespective of age, sex, caste, creed, religion, social status, economic background, educational level, or place of residence. Universities provide vocational skills definitely helps to improve their productivity as well as generate social awareness among deprived sections of the society. Awareness is important for higher population to know the selling the products for remunerative prices. Further, to know the people about the reasons of cooperative society, trade unions, land reforms, labour laws, environmental studies, gender studies, legal literacy, digital literacy, progressive measures of the government, generation new knowledge, fostering innovation, etc., It may not be difficulty for the university teachers to spent a few time with community to use various aspects, i.e., encompassing mentorship, transportation, workshops, extension lectures, income generation programmes, vocational training programmes, resource provision for aspiring own business, mechanization, assessment, monitoring, evaluation, etc., Later, the University Grants Commission to know the importance of extension, make use of these opportunities and render service to the non-literate and ignorant masses providing hundred percent grant-in-aid to the institutions of higher learning for establishment of Adult Education Centres in universities. Therefore, this support extends not only economic development with job creation but also to overall well-being of the community through required skill promotion. The focused areas of extension education which connects academic resources for community development, i.e., effective in agricultural production, marketing, distribution and utilization, environmental conservation, digital literacy, financial literacy, maximum usage of natural resources with acceptable level of the society or sustainable for the future generations, importance and celebration of national/international important events, effective management of farm house, family life, health care, medical care, environment care, development of youth, leadership, fundamental rights, national concerns and community development, with the support of readily available livelihood.

IV. Key functions of university extension services

1. Community Involvement: For providing direct services and building strong relationships with local people and officials. etc., the universities should focus on the above communities.

2. Dissemination of Knowledge: For benefiting the community members, the university extension services bridge the gap between academic, research and the public by translating scholarly work into practical information.

3. Skill Development/Skill Promotion: The skill development/promotion programmes often focus on upgradation of livelihood skills through orientation of training in the areas, viz., agriculture, market, vocational trades, livestock production, digital literacy, etc.,

4. Social and Health Initiatives: As a part of the extension services of the universities should conduct several awareness campaigns and render services, viz., health, hygiene, financial literacy, environment conservation, good stove, eco-friendly/environment friendly bags, balanced diet, child care, home care and prevention of issues like drug abuse, early marriages, discrimination, vaccination, etc.,

5. Environmental Management: Initiatives include promoting conservation and designing programmes for environmental protection, programmes of education for the communities and sustainable practices.

6. Cultural Protection: A few programs work to preserve and disseminate cultural heritage and promote cultural harmony with the communities for improving the national and international relations.

7. Knowledge and Empowerment: Those services are designed to empower individuals and communities by fostering sense of civic responsibility, voluntarism, knowledge on social issues, cooperation, empathy, philanthropic action, prosocial behaviour etc.,

V. Advantages

1. For Student's point of view: Provide opportunities for profession and skill development, a balanced education, and the cultivation of social responsibility. They include innovation, adaptability, research, cost effectiveness in development, setting a time-line for execution, fostering, nurturing, developing or instilling social responsibility.

2. For Community point of view: Improved living standards enhanced food security, upgradation of knowledge, skills, abilities through capacity building and access to resources that address their specific needs with sustainable practices along with information on availability of market. Particularly, participation in the development programmes, timely vaccination, literacy activities, family welfare, sanitation, etc.,

VI. Major areas of extension for community development

The important areas for community development through extension services of the universities are the following.

- ✓ Adoption of the village including school, hospital, Library to promote education, health care etc.
- ✓ Design the programmes for improving the livelihood of the student community along with village community.
- ✓ Planning suitable programmes for environmental conservation to improve production.
- ✓ Skill promotion programmes.
- ✓ Women empowerment programmes.

- ✓ Importance of digital literacy, legal literacy and development-oriented literacy, computer literacy, environmental literacy, literacy through awareness, etc.,
- ✓ Promotion of financial literacy.
- ✓ Energy conservation.
- ✓ Awareness of gender issues.
- ✓ Promotion of activities related to social liberation, communal harmony, women's emancipation, national status and well-being, etc.
- ✓ Safeguarding the Common Property Resources (CPRs).
- ✓ Cleaning of water bodies.
- ✓ Afforestation and reforestation programmes designed at suitable places.
- ✓ Prevention of drug or alcohol abuse programmes and sexually transmitted diseases, etc.,
- ✓ Prepare for handling disasters.
- ✓ Adolescent problems.
- ✓ Issues of early marriages.
- ✓ Vocational training programmes (short/long term).
- ✓ Role of Artificial Intelligence
- ✓ Capacity Building programmes.
- ✓ Strengthening the Self-Help Groups.
- ✓ Organize the Medical camps
- ✓ Role of Non- Conventional Energy Resources.
- ✓ Watershed Development Programmes.
- ✓ Non-formal Education Programmes
- ✓ Strong partnership with NGO's, other development agencies and local institutions for sustainable development.
- ✓ Utilization of various channels, website, social-media for disseminating information.
- ✓ Swachh Bharat programme.
- ✓ Issues of Climate change.
- ✓ Green economy.
- ✓ Resource efficiency.
- ✓ Awareness of breast-feeding.
- ✓ Sustainable development practices in livelihood.

VII. Conclusion

The universities can serve the society/community and make their expertise available to the nation-building activities through sustainable development practices in creating a knowledge society so on. Keeping this in view of the above, the recent Governments have been focused on the establishment of skill university/institutions and to see that maximum involvement of students, inculcation of importance social work, establishment of students/teacher's cells/units, recognition and promotion of voluntarism, habit of

savings, establishing small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), entrepreneurship development programmes, strengthening the self-help groups(SHG), digitalization, global competition, demand driven programmes in nearby future for sustainable development and upgrading their knowledge and related to the present-day context.

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