

CHAPTER V

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FINDINGS, INTERPRETATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Education has been recognised as one of the powerful instruments for community development and social change. The Asian countries have been trying to link educational programmes with the needs of rural development. The curricula at the school stage and higher education stage have been vitalized through a programme of productive work and community services. Efforts are made to harness education to development. Ministry of Education has to shoulder this responsibility through their teacher training programmes. The Government of Thailand has redefined the role of the teacher. The teacher has not merely to teach children in the school but he has also to participate into the programme of rural development. He develops educational programmes through which the student learns the technique of rural development, appreciate and participate in the different activities of rural development programmes.

5.2 RATIONALE

To achieve this, the department of teacher education has made the extension education activities programme compulsory for all the teachers colleges. This programme takes the teacher trainees and staff members outside the teachers college into the community to participate activity in such programme. This type of extension education programme is going on in Thailand since 1975 when the teachers college Act was enacted.

The administrative authority have implemented the programme out of the campus and teachers colleges have started working with the community. But it is natural that whenever a programme of this kind is started there would be number of problems in administration and implementation of the programme. These problems can be understood and solved only when they are studied scientifically. It is also essential to study the programme which have been started to evaluate their effectiveness in meeting the requirement of the community. For this, there is a great need to study the opinions of the participants so that the future programme can be successful. The present study is an attempt in this direction.

5.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The title of the problem is :

A Study of Extension Education Activities as organised by the Northern Teachers Colleges in Thailand.

5.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are :

1. To study the administrative policy for extension education activities at Ministry of Education level.
2. To study the nature of extension education activities as offered by the Northern Teachers Colleges in Thailand.
3. To study administrative structure of each teachers college for extension education activities with respect to
 - a. Organization,
 - b. Recruitment of personnel,
 - c. Budgetting,
 - d. Physical facilities.
4. To study of the problems of extension education activities in each teachers college with respect to -
 - a. Planning
 - b. Organization,

- c. Implementation,
- d. Co-ordination,
- e. Finance.

5. To study the opinions of the community and personnel of teachers colleges regarding the extension education activities.

5.5 METHODOLOGY

A brief outline of methodology that has been followed in the present study is given below :

5.5.1 Population and sample

The present study included all the eight teachers colleges in the Northern region in Thailand within the purview of survey as target population. The sample of the study was selected from the following categories of respondents :

- a. Rector, Vice-Rector, Heads of Faculties.

As the number is small, all the 8 rectors, 8 vice rectors in charge, 24 heads of faculties of all the eight teachers colleges were taken as the sample.

- b. Instructors :

Of the 235 instructors who were associated with the extension education activities of the eight teachers

colleges, 171 instructors were taken on random basis as a sample for the study.

c. Teacher trainees

The sample of the teacher trainees had been taken on random basis from about the 1200 teacher trainees of eight teachers colleges in academic year 1984. Two hundred and forty-five teacher trainees were taken as the sample for the study.

d. Community leaders and participants

One hundred and ninety-nine members who participated willingly in the extension education activities of eight teachers colleges were taken on random basis as the sample for the study.

5.5.2 Tools for data collection :

The investigator prepared six different tools for collecting the required data. They were :

1. Interview schedule for rectors,
2. Proforma for extension education activities undertaken,
3. Questionnaire cum check list and opinionnaire for vice rectors and heads of faculties,
4. Check list for the perceptions of instructors regarding different facets of extension education,

5. Check list for the perceptions of community leaders and participants regarding relevance of the programme and teachers college personnel, and
6. Check list for the perceptions of teacher trainees regarding relevance of the programme for them and for community.

5.5.3 Analysis and interpretation of data

The data collected have been classified and clustered and then analysed and presented separately for different aspects of extension education activities. While analysing and interpreting the data, an attempt has been made to present a comprehensive picture of each aspect of extension education activities in the Northern teachers colleges in Thailand.

The data collected were divided into two parts. The first part consists study regarding policy of the Government and rectors' reactions, administration and planning of extension education activities and the nature of extension education activities. The second part consists of the problems of extension education activities as felt by rectors, vice rector, heads of faculties and instructors and the perceptions of the personnel involved in extension education activities regarding the various facets of the programme.

The qualitative and quantitative data obtained with the help of different tools - interview schedules and

opinionnaires have been analysed by using frequency and percentage.

5.6 MAJOR FINDINGS

Apart from the historical study of the organization and administration of extension programmes (described at length in Chapter IV), the major findings (regarding the perceptions of various personnel involved into extension education activities) are :

1. The introduction of the extension education programme was the result of the National Policy of Teacher Education which aimed at linking the programme to rural development. As such, extension education became a required component of the programme of teacher education in Thailand.
2. The organization of extension programme is based on teachers colleges clusters with a rector as one of the colleges acting as the convener of the programme for the cluster. In each college, one of the vice rectors is incharge of the programme.
3. The introduction of the extension programme has received the support of the academics and the community. They are satisfied that such a programme has been introduced to vitalize the programme of teacher education.
4. The major responsibility for implementing this programme has been entrusted to instructors and teacher trainees. The instructors provide the theoretical knowledge about problems of rural development and practical experience to develop the skills for undertaking extension education activities. The trainees along with the instructors are the real field workers for extension education programmes. As trainees, they benefit, in the sense that they develop the skills for extension work, whereas the ultimate beneficiaries are the members of the community.

5. The extension education programme is planned in close cooperation with all the staff members of the teachers colleges. The programmes are developed on the basis of the community needs and care is taken to see that the programmes are relevant to the community needs.
6. The major activities under the extension education programmes are : (i) Providing primary services like health, nutritional and educational services to the rural community, (ii) enhancing the production skills and occupation opportunities, (iii) developing community organizations and rural leadership and (iv) planning and organizing activities leading to cultural, artistic and spiritual development.
7. The duties are assigned to instructors and teacher trainees, depending upon their interest, aptitude and abilities. The staff members and the trainees are given full opportunity to take initiative in implementing the programmes. There is a time limit fixed for completing each activity. Periodic self evaluation by all personnel is an inbuilt component of the programme. There are special motivational measures adopted to provide incentives. Some of them are, promotion, salary rise, lightening the routine work load and public appreciation of superior performance.
8. In the teachers colleges of Northern region, 275 academics (one associate professor, 19 assistant professors and 255 lecturers) are involved in extension programmes.

Problems :

9. There is a shortage of senior staff like professors who could be involved in extension activities.
10. The rectors and vice rectors felt that this programme has been an additional load in the total programme of the teachers college though they appreciated the importance of the programme in the interest of the community.
11. The shortage of persons specially qualified for implementing the extension programme was felt by the authority as well as the staff members of all teachers colleges.

12. There was a sizeable percentage of vice rectors and a major percentage of instructors who felt some sort of rigidity in the programme and its planning and administration.
13. The instructors felt that there was avoidable delay in providing necessary feedback to the instructors, which affected their motivation.
14. The vice rectors and the instructors felt that though the system of periodical evaluation was decided, it did not function properly.
15. The vice rectors showed concern regarding the indifferent attitude of the staff. The instructors also had the same feelings.
16. Getting sufficient funds for extension education activities has been found an acute problem for rectors and vice rectors. It was found that contacting different funding agencies generally took away much of their time.

Perceptions :

17. The rectors, vice rectors, heads of faculties and the instructors agreed that the extension programmes were in time with the needs of the community. Teacher trainees also had the same perceptions. However, the teacher trainees perceived the extension activities as being more relevant to the community needs than their teachers.
18. The community participants had more favourable perceptions regarding the relevance of extension education activities to their needs than those of vice rectors, instructors and teacher trainees.
19. The vice rectors and heads of faculties tend to rank promotion of fraternity feeling, becoming wise consumers and realizing the value of education as important outcomes of extension programmes while the trainees are of the opinion that extension education makes the community realize the value of education, promotes feeling of fraternⁿity and increases their participation in community life.

20. The rectors and vice rectors saw in the extension programme a means to gaining new experience and knowledge for working with the community. The extension programme improved their professional competence and they developed the missing linkage between theory and practice.
21. The vice rectors strongly felt that the extension programme created number of administrative problems and disturbed the routine work of academic courses. They also felt that the extension programmes considerably increased the work load of teaching staff but this opinion was not shared by the instructors.
22. The rectors, vice rectors and heads of faculties were highly satisfied with their role as change agents through this programme.
23. The instructors found it interesting to work with the community but the vice rectors found quite challenging.
24. Both the vice rectors and instructors saw in the extension programme an opportunity to develop innovative ways and means to make the teacher preparation programmes more meaningful.
25. The community strongly felt that the personnel of training institutions were open-minded and understood their needs. However a small minority (14 per cent) of the participant was not happy with respect to the overall organizational ability of the personnel.
26. The community participants found the personnel adequately trained for the task, but they lacked in adequate knowledge about the local conditions. A small percentage (27 per cent) of the community participants clearly saw limitations in the capability of the personnel of teachers colleges to discharge their duties.
27. A sizeable percentage of the participants felt that the teachers college personnel were received as change agents by the community. About 28 per cent however felt that the needed zeal and enthusiasm were absent in the teachers college personnel.

28. The first five activities to be attended to in extension education in order of priority as perceived by teacher trainees were (i) increasing awareness about preservation of food, (ii) increasing academic programme, (iii) increasing awareness for health and hygiene, (iv) training rural and hill tribes as teachers and (v) recreational and cultural activities.

5.7 IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The extension education programme came to fulfill the need for linking education to rural /community development. Teacher education was a theoretical, bookish programme. In absence of adequate quantum of planned practical work, the trainees developed only a theoretical understanding of the science of pedagogy. They had not imbibed the skills for practical work.

The major objective of education is to bring about change. For this, teacher has been recognized as an important agent. The need is to build a bridge between the classroom life in the school and the programmes of development in the community. The teacher has to be trained to achieve this. The programme of training in extension education is charged with developing the new type of teacher.

In the course of the analysis of findings, some respondents expressed the feeling that extension education overburdens the teacher education curriculum. This would

happen only when extension education is an additional adjunct to the programme of teacher preparation care has to be taken to see that extension education is not looked upon as an appendage to the normal programme. The extension education programme has to be integrated with the teacher preparation programme. This integration is possible, only when training is not considered as 4x2 affair, i.e. training should not be confined to the four walls of the classroom, nor should it be confined to the two covers of the textbook. The life in the classroom in a college of education is a contrived phenomena. Whereas the community ^escenario is living and dynamic. The extension education has to be linked to developing the self-renewal capacity of the community through education. In this way extension education can bring harmony between theory and practice and the programme has to be looked in this perspective.

The extension education programme has been looked upon differently by different agencies, viz., teachers college personnel, teacher trainees and community participants. The community participants have felt that the functionaries lacked in the knowledge of local conditions. This is important for the vice rectors and instructors. Knowing the relevance of the programmes to the needs of the community is not adequate. The local customs, norms of behaviour and habits

need be studied before starting the programmes directed at rural development. Such knowledge establishes a rapport between the implementors and community.

A clue of the findings is regarding the attitudes of teacher trainees and instructors to the rural development programmes. Extension education is different from the classroom instruction. In the classroom, teachers have a captive audience - in extension education, the teachers' ability to command respect of the learners plays a crucial role in the success of the programme. Teacher trainees and instructors have to develop a healthy attitude to extension activities and the community. Unless this is achieved, the success of the programme may not be vouchsafed. The attitude can be developed if the trainees and the instructors have a thorough knowledge of the local community, its history, the local geography, the strengths and weaknesses of the local community.

A well thought out programme of orientation for the trainees should be developed and only after such orientation, the trainees should be sent to the field. An additional programme should be to develop teams of extension workers consisting of trainees and community leaders. This will result into rubbing of shoulders of the community leaders and teacher trainees. This is amply borne out through informal

discussions with rectors and community leaders.

In order to make up for the inadequacy of the pre-service training, extension programme has been introduced into the teacher preparation programme in Thailand. The inadequacy referred to here is the gap between theory and practice. The practical work in the community helps to develop skills necessary for field work and human relations. The trainees work with the community helping them to devise ways and means to solve their problems through education. This extension programme should have impact on the pedagogical training which the trainees receive in the teachers colleges. In the course of interviews, the trainees indicated how their experience in the community field work equipped them with skills to tackle the pupils' problems in the classroom. The trainees said that they were in a better position to understand the personal, emotional and academic problems of their students as a result of their experience in the field. Thus extension programme has influenced the development of better teachers for the classrooms also. This is further collaborated by the Indian experience of extension services activities by the colleges of education. The teacher educators developed better skills in preparing teachers as a result of participating as

resource persons in extension activities.¹

The major implication of the extension education activities is that it should not be looked upon as one benefitting only the community, it should be looked upon as an instrument to vitalize the institutional teacher training programme. All teacher educators should be enjoined to participate in this programme along with the trainees.

The findings have indicated that the programmes of extension services have to be based on the felt needs of the community and for that, special type of training is needed to equip the instructors and trainees to work with the community. The implications of this finding are, (i) instructors should be specially trained in undertaking extension programmes, (ii) they should be trained in the technique of extension education and (iii) they should know how to undertake community survey to assess the community needs in order to plan the relevant programme.

The department of teacher education of the government should organize special training programmes for rectors, vice rectors, heads of faculties and instructors. Such a programme should include training in undertaking need survey

¹ S. Srivastava, Growth and Organization of Inservice Programme in India and its Impact on Secondary Schools, Ph.D., Edu. SPU., 1966.

of the community. This will have the theoretical as well as practical aspects. For developing the theoretical understanding regarding survey work, self learning modular material should be developed for teachers college personnel. This material could also be used for the trainees with necessary modifications. The teachers college personnel should also be provided practical experience in undertaking the need survey in the community. The training should also include an understanding of new methods and techniques suitable for extension education. Some of these methods and techniques used in India and Pakistan are small group discussions, symposium, panel discussion and such other techniques based on principles of group dynamics.

Lastly every instructor has to develop a managerial and organizational skill if he is to be an effective extension education agent. Arrangements of small group discussions within the faculty, within the different faculties of the same cluster, summer courses aiming at developing these particular skills, workshops to have necessary training in such skills are to be arranged by the cluster convener from time to time. Interactions during such programmes can help in understanding different problems in different situations which might remain unknown, uncomprehended otherwise.

A significant, though a missing dimension in the programme of extension education of teachers colleges of Northern region is the inadequate utilization of the community resources for community development. The study of the extension education activities has shown that the village scouts, the border petrol, nurses and village chiefs are involved into the programme of extension education. This is a healthy feature. However, there can be educational resources also which can be harnessed into the extension education programme. Such resources may be found amongst the retired personnel like teachers, doctors, engineers, technicians, etc., who could be involved in rural development programmes by teachers college authorities. This implies that the need survey of the community should be supplemented by a survey of the community resources useful for the extension programmes. Apart from the human resources, the exercise should include the survey of physical resources also.

Recent thinking by Asian Programme Educational Innovations for Development (APEID) points to the need of networking of facilities, resources and efforts for education for rural development. Such networking of facilities has already started in some of the clusters of universities, technical institutions, agricultural colleges and teachers colleges in some of the regions of Thailand - the North-

Eastern Region. Beginning should be made in the direction of developing such network. This is an important implication and a recommendation emerging from the analysis of findings.

5.8 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The programme extension education which started as a project in 1975 has become a part and parcel of the programmes of teachers colleges. There were local efforts at evaluating the progress of the project in the past. What is needed is a major evaluative research which would look into the programme right from inception till today. Such a programme evaluation could best be done by a team comprising of outside experts, teachers college personnel, trainees and community representatives. Such a research would result into the development of evaluative criteria for extension programme evaluation and also wealth of data which could be fed back into the system for improving the programme.

Once the criteria for the evaluation of extension programme are developed, research should be undertaken to identify factors and conditions contributing to successful extension programmes and also factors and conditions leading to programme failures.

Case studies of successful extension programmes and practices should be undertaken. Such exercises will result into the production of needed literature in the area of innovation installation and dissemination.

Extension techniques have not received much attention from educational researchers. Agricultural scientists have studied the various aspects of extension methods, and techniques. Educational researches should undertake special researches to develop new methods and techniques for extension education. This is an important area for educational researchers in developing countries.

The last but of quite crucial nature is the area of research in the field of attitude change. Given adequate resources and also manpower, the programme of rural development would not attain perceptible momentum unless the personnel involved in implementing the programmes have developed the desired attitude towards community services. The need is to undertake studies about effective methods and programmes for changing the attitudes of personnel involved into the programme of community development. The extension personnel have to be sensitive to the needs of the community and their aspirations. The community also has to develop a receptive attitude towards efforts made for community development. Mere governmental efforts and

monetary inputs may not yield adequate dividend unless the benefactors and beneficiaries realize the worth and value of cooperative efforts for not only community development but individual and self development also.

Attempts have been made in the present investigation to study the programme of extension education activities with respect to its different facets, from the view points of different dignitaries - right from the government top officials to trainees undergoing the training to community participants of the interior villages, who are the beneficiaries. The recommendations and suggestions made here are the echoes of the personnel interviewed and discussions analysed. Serious deliberations on the same might open up new vistas of knowledge, information and better techniques to meet with the challenges of the time in rural reconstruction programme through extension education activities.