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Title

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN PUNJAB: APPROACHES FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

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ABSTRACT:

The paper highlights the different approaches of literacy and adult education are useful in socio-economic development, which is a process of lifelong learning. In reality, literacy and adult education can play an important role, if, it is implemented properly with suitable resources, strategies, policies and planning with community support and need-based local conditions. Then, it becomes a pragmatic programme with long-term sustainability. The education status, experiences of life, maturity of mind and familiarity with local languages are essential to understand the local thought. Hence, literacy and adult education can encourage local area population for participatory role in development.

The paper highlights integrated traditional and modern approaches those can promote sustainability for development. As subjects, literacy and adult education have been considered perspective for the development. Hence, literacy and adult education approaches are essential in creating a base that develops new ideas for sustainable development. Though Literacy and Adult education are considered under life-long learning process but this subject has become a key for developmental activities if it relates with the effective participation of providers, implementers and recipients.

The paper explores that literacy and adult education is an important component for human development and suggests some measures, how the state government with coordination of other agencies can achieve the goal of 100 percent literacy by 2015 and sustain for future.

INTRODUCTION:

Literacy or adult education is universally recognised and essential for human resource development. Thus, the eradication of illiteracy is basic to the sustainability of human development, which is a great challenge and responsibility of a nation. Adult education has often been considered a kind of panacea for human development in elevating social problems like socio-economic and cultural changes especially in gender mobilization and employment needs. However, if one considers literacy is an enabling and accelerating factor for human development, then the literacy programmes should cover such contents that generate interests among adults to become literate. These programmes develop transformation and growth in adult education and

reflect new ideas for life-long learning of individuals.

Primarily, Literacy and adult education is government-supported and run as voluntary activity by non-government organizations. Generally, it is not dependable on the needs and expectations of communities but it runs with the strength and participation of the educators and recipients. The development and its sustainability is related to effective participation of providers, implementers and recipients with cooperation and understanding of programme personnel, financial resources, availability of material and infrastructure, target groups, geographical and environmental conditions. Collective efforts contribute effectively in sustainability of the programme.

In India, adult education is mainly remained dependent on set models that are basically not found suitable to adapt and implement in different local conditions. Hence, there is need to develop new concepts and approaches viewing to implement in different environmental conditions in long-term perspective.

CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING:

The concept of adult education for sustainable development is a varied and broad at regional and national levels. Broadly, it defines: **Access to knowledge and understanding for development through different concepts and approaches.** This access can be promoted through "formal or non-formal education", "short-time or long-time learning", "traditional or modern education", "conventional or distance learning", besides, more methods can be included. Therefore, varied methods of adult education can be considered as key for bringing changes in values and attitudes, skills, behaviour and lifestyle of individual and society. This concept of adult education can become an effective mean to understand the priorities of day-to-day life that links with general development of individual and community.

The fundamentals of literacy and adult education are reading, writing and arithmetic or knowledge of alphabets + numeric + functional skill. It is operational as **"learning to know", "learning to read" and "learning to write"** in any language. This concept makes a person educate to develop the ability of awareness, understanding and knowledge for their better lifestyle. Even the National Policy on Education (NPE, 1986) declares, "We must pledge to the

eradication of illiteracy particularly in 15-35 age group". It can become sustainable only with practical information and skills relevant to day-to-day needs of learners.

Since independence, literacy and adult education programmes have been implemented as indicators of socio-economic and political development, thus, it is important to discuss the strategies and structure devised by the policy planners and implemented in different states.

During 1950's: literacy did not receive due priority and it remained as an integral part of community development programme with the concept of development in enabling the common man to live a better life and develop civic consciousness among masses.

During 1960's: the emphasis of literacy programme shifted from civic to functional literacy as direct correlation between education and economic growth emerged.

During 1970's: the concepts of development and functional literacy have been seen in dimensions other than economic and functional. The emergence of Janta Government in 1978 brought the radical shift in the concept of literacy and development. The equal emphasis was given on literacy, functionality and social awareness and visualized adult education as "a means to bring about a fundamental change in the process of socio-economic development".

During 1980's: the concept of literacy shifted to human resource development. Emphasis was put on peoples' right to literacy as a component of development itself. Importance of literacy was reiterated by the National Policy on Education (1986), which envisaged that adult education would be a means for reducing economic, social and gender disparities. Working out the implementation strategies, the "programme of Action" recommended that "emphasis on adult education programme should be on skill development… ." Subsequently when promotion of literacy became an important National Mission, the document on National Literacy Mission (NLM) emphasized to impart functional literacy to illiterates in 15-35 age groups through a variety of means and with active involvement of all sections of society. The concept of functional literacy envisaged under NLM covered: (i) achieving self-reliance in basic numeric; (ii) participation in the process of development; (iii) acquiring skills to improve the economic status; (iv) imbibing the values of national integration, conservation of environment, women's equality and observance of Small Family Norms respectively. This expanded concept of functional literacy has been termed as developmental literacy. Thus developmental literacy defined as literacy for all round development of human beings. With the change in the concept, the operational strategies were also modified to

make it mass movement through total literacy campaign launched by National Literacy Mission (NLM) in 1989-90 with the objective, "to make 80 million persons literate in the age group 15-35 years by 1995. Subsequently changes were made in the target, which stands at 100 million to be made illiterate in the same age group by the year 1999 and total literacy to be achieved by 2005 but it could not be completed. However, it is a continuing process and the enormous efforts are being made by the Government and non-Government agencies. In context of Punjab, the state has raised the percentage of literacy rate from 58.51 percent in 1991 to 69.95 percent in 2001.

QUANTITATIVE DIMENSIONS:

Literacy programmes primarily aim at improving the quality of human capital, which is very vital for the development of any region. Over the years, the significant progress has been made.

District	1991	2001	Progress
Hoshiarpur	72.08	81.40	+9.32
Rupnagar	68.15	78.49	+10.34
Jalandhar	68.91	77.91	+9.00
Nawanshahar	64.42	76.86	+12.44
Ludhiana	67.34	76.54	+9.20
Gurdaspur	61.83	74.19	+12.36
Fatehgarh Sahib	63.34	74.10	+10.76
Kapurthala	63.31	73.56	+10.25
Patiala	57.51	69.96	+12.45
Amritsar	58.08	67.85	+9.77
Moga	49.79	63.94	+14.15
Faridkot	49.88	63.34	+13.76
Bathinda	46.41	61.51	+15.10

Firozpur	48.99	61.42	+12.43
Sangrur	45.99	60.04	+14.05
Muktsar	46.28	58.67	+12.39
Mansa	37.23	52.50	+15.27

Note: Literacy rate is the percentage of literates to population aged 7 years and above.

Although the literacy rate of Punjab has increased by 11.44 percent during last 10 years yet the reasons has to find out the disparities within the districts in the state. Hoshiarpur remains to be the most literate district in the state, which indicates 4 out of every 5 persons is literate. On the contrary, Mansa with a little over 1 half of the population is ranked at the bottom in terms of literacy rate. Rupnagar, Jalandhar, Nawanshahar and Ludhiana are the other districts those have at least three-fourth population as literate.

IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES:

In Punjab, government and non-government agencies are being implemented programmes sponsored by centre, followed by the state government. Broadly two schemes were implemented: (i) Non-formal Education for the children 6 to 14 years of age; and (ii) Adult Education for 15 to 35 years of age.

(i)   Non-formal Education Programme

Non-formal education programme is running since 1979-80 under different schemes and mainly covers 6-14 years children, those were drop-outs of the formal schools, children from habitations without schools, working children, children who assist in performing domestic chores.

The scheme of Non Formal Education (NFE) has been evaluated term-based, which was under revision with a new taxonomy as the education guarantee scheme and alternatives and innovative education. The revised scheme is a part of the overall national programme framework for Universalization of Elementary Education supported by the scheme **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan**.

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(ii)   Adult Education Programme

This programme is being implemented in coordination between Government of India and Punjab Government. Initially, two districts have been covered under this programme during 1994-95, three districts during 1995-96 and the remaining districts are covering in a phased manner. This programme has been initiated by Government of India to achieve 100 percent literacy. Now the programme is covering under the scheme **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan**, which has to be covered 100 percent literacy by 2015.

However, these programmes have many dimensions in curriculum, syllabus, teaching-learning material, methods of teaching/instruction, training and orientation of personnel and agencies of training. The total literacy campaigns are area-specific, time-bound, volunteer-based, cost-effective and outcome-oriented. They also upshot in increase in enrolment at the primary level, targets derive from the grass-root level. The success depends on the mass mobilization of volunteers that are well trained in communication skills.

Having gone through the concept and importance of non-formal and adult education, one can simply arrive at the conclusion that lot has to be done to promote literacy as an integral part of overall educational development. The different level coordination is needed between government organizations and non-government organizations. The illustration given below highlights the supportive status for coordination, which leads to developmental activities:
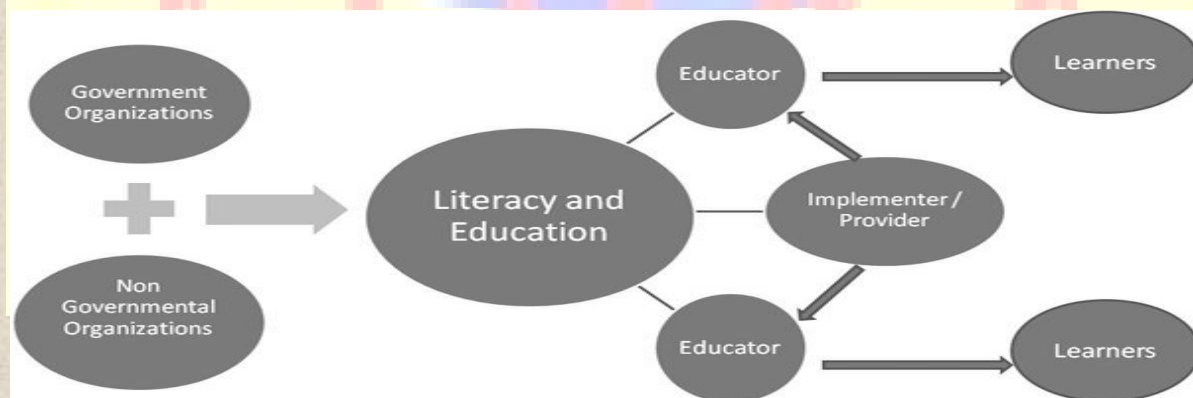
However, the role of implementers or providers of adult education programme need to be positive in investigating their efforts thoroughly and systematically to collaborate with individuals and communities. Their involvement and loyalties **need to be supportive to** promote

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community's efforts, so the sustainability of programme's development can be maintained as diagram below shows:
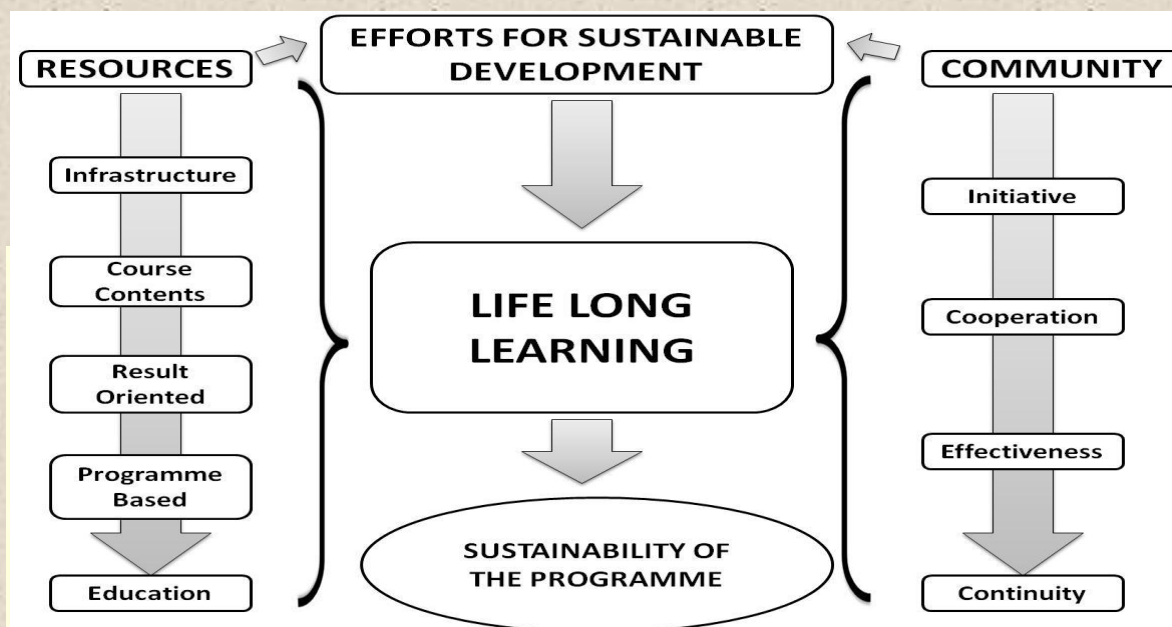
Community's involvement is pragmatic in maintaining the sustainability of adult education, but it needs:

(a)   Community orientation:--It is local-bases and uses local staff utilizing irrespective of socio-economic, cultural, environmental conditions;

(b)   Autonomous:--The programme needs to be autonomous because its sustainability is higher at local or regional levels;

(c)   Unprivileged population:--Weaker sections of the society, especially women need to be involved for long-term sustainability of the programme;

(d)   Need-based programmes:--Rationality, objectives and activities need to be focused on subject matters for better sustainability of the programme;

(e)   Approach and methodology:--Self directed community-based approach and methodology in coordination of programme providers and implementers makes to be more sustainable.

For sustainability of the programme, the following efforts are needed for resources:

1. **Financial Resources Cover:--**Grants; Donations; Investments; Endowments; Contributions; Off-time resources.

2. **Other Resources Cover:--**Manpower; Teaching-Learning Material; Building and infrastructure.

All these efforts shall be the part of government or non-government resources. These may be planned or non-planned. These may be single or multi-level. These may be short-term or long-term bases. But these resources need to be continued till the end of the programme. The grass-root level resources should be encouraged for volunteer basis through local people that succeed in reaching the population with accepted challenges to maintain physical solvency.

The programme need to accommodate certain conditions for attaining the goals of development and its sustainability, which are considered as:

1. Socio-economic characteristics of selected area and target group;

2. Potential resources that needs to be mobilized;

3. Existing inhabitations, hurdles, constraints, limitations and anticipated problems to be involved in programme implementation.

4. Design need-based, problem-oriented, subject-based matter that would be relevant and useful for programme providers and beneficiaries;

5. Develop appropriate techniques of motivating and mobilizing adult education programmes in collaboration with other concerned departments.

Adult education has been considered a common denominator of socio-economic, politico-cultural development, which links with sustainability. So it needs the operational policy-matters in context of:

1. Programme profiles, status, resources, manpower-providers and beneficiaries.

2. Strategies for motivation and mobilization of resources and manpower.

3. Linkages between adult education campaigns with other developmental programmes for long-term sustainability.

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Formal and informal agencies like Panchayats (local political bodies), cooperatives and other local bodies must involve as an active institution and should play positive role for development. These agencies provide local level strategies for attaining "Education for All". These can be retained and replicated effectively in local and regional environment. However, the local level implementing agencies have to face the following challenges that needs to be removed for adopting different local level strategies:

1. Reduce dropout rates at primary level,

2. Retain pupils at elementary school level,

3. Promote mass-level adult education programme to specify target groups,

4. Reduce the gap between the education of boys and girls,

5. Improve quality of education and achievement level,

6. Check existing level of poverty for promoting literacy, and

7. Check class and caste biased attitude and behaviour for equality of education.

For implementing these strategies, the different agencies need to follow the given task:

1. Develop strategies for motivation and mobilization of recipients and educators,

2. Identify needful learners and competent educators,

3. Prepare teaching plans and curricula according to the need of community,

4. Prepare teaching-learning materials according to the interest of recipients,

5. Develop strategies for distribution of prepared teaching learning materials,

6. Monitoring and proper utilization of distributed material,

7. Networking for monetary and communication,

8. Sporadic assessment of the programme and its evaluation at final stages,

9. Develop coordination between formal and non-formal education,

10. Availability and monitoring of financial and material resources,

11. Prepare calendar on programme based events, and

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12. Define need-based area and population to be covered.

These agencies have to consider the following issues on priority basis:

1. Organize activities relevant to basic education and awareness among adults,

2. Ensure retention and up-gradation of there learning skills,

3. Develop community awareness for adult education with day-to-day functional activities through learning by earning,

4. Impart basic education by creating community participation,

5. Motivate individual adult to become literate,

6. Sensitize educated adults to participate adult education campaigns as motivator,

7. Promote retention among learners by imparting interest-based subject matter.

8. Launch intensive publicity drives by utilizing all kinds of media and art forms;

9. Launch regular programmes on Radio and TV on adult education and publish learning material, and articles in the press to back up regular telecast and broadcast;

10. Mobilize masses for participation in the process of bringing about social change and generating education awareness among adults;

11. Makes special efforts by local political bodies (Panchayat) members to mobilize women of local areas.

Besides all these efforts, there are some identified contributory factors that reveal the various issues relating to this subject matter. These issues are necessary to be discussed here:

1. Organisational role of government, non-government agencies, and independent agencies, political parties, socio-religious organizations (Mahila mandals, youth clubs, religious organization --Church, Mosque, Temple and Gurudwara).

2. Society is itself is an agent of social change that changes beliefs and values of people and promotes socio-cultural mindset for developmental activities.

3. Educational psychology makes changes in personality, living--style, attitude and behaviour among people's mindset towards development.

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4. Basic education influence the curriculum planning, interest formation, cultivation of new interest, organisation of subject matters, evaluation, and language issues in regard to specific programme activities.

5. Economics of education consider cost benefit analysis, resource mobilization, and investment and saving, use of banking for the promotion of developmental activities.

6. Educational geography encourages planning of resources, resource conservations for the promotion of programme development.

7. Educational politics deals with local politics and its influence on kind and content of programme that boost to development activities with the initiative of political will.

8. Educational administration cover planning administration and management style, role of personality factor in management and administration in managing the programme development.

All discussed factors revealed connectivity between education programmes and sustainable development that evolves situations of growing realization of the need to maintain balance between Man-made and Natural resources in context of socio-economic, cultural and environmental development. It also develops a scope of linking various self-created and natural factors in continuing the sustainability of educational development in coordination between providers and beneficiaries. Socio-economic and environmental situations are considered an absolute imperative in multi-cultural and multi-communities at national or international levels. These situations are needed to maintain the natural or developed resources for indicating changes in course contents and priorities as per the needs of people of different regions and nations. Such situations provide wide range choice of subjects for learners of adult education courses. The course contents must not only provide knowledge and functional skill but it must also be a means for adults' empowerment and facilitating their active participation in all aspects of the individual and societal development.

Challenges for adult education in promoting sustainable development:

Adult education has many challenges in regard to sustain development, as the success or failure of any programme depends on the personnel associated with the programme. Adult education

includes the services of number of educators, supervisors and project officers for implementation of the programme for its sustainability. These personnel know the achievements, failures, weaknesses and successes of the programme and are capable to guide for the sustainability of the programme with coordination of other related departments in their respective jurisdictions. Still the programme needs the following:

1.   Individual participation, particularly of women and lower caste rural people;

2.   Community participation and commitment;

3.   Initiative in retention and continuity;

4.   Political will in favourable political environment;

5.   Need-based resources;

6.   Long-term coordination between providers and recipients;

7.   Research oriented results affect the sustainability;

8.   Adequate statistical on research-based data and follow-up;

9.   Clarity among providers, recipients and community;

10.   Programme coordination between providers and local communities.

These characteristics are necessary delegate for sustainable development. NGOs and grassroots communities can play their role as change agent in enhancing adult education for development. New information and communication technologies are must to develop for this purpose. The proper coordination between programme providing agencies, implementers and beneficiaries makes the programme success and sustainable. As chart-3 shows:

To make the programme successful, the course contents needs to add certain relevant subjects.

1.   Physical and Environmental Health;

2.   Business Arithmetic

3.   Agriculture and Allied Sciences

4.   Geography, Politics and Civics about region, state and nation.

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5.   Urban and rural area development.

6.   Social, cultural and traditional issues respectively.

Adding to this, adult education further, need to make useful for community in regard to:

1.   Awareness and development of general interest in contemporary affairs;

2.   Imparting functional literacy and numeracy, post-literacy and supplementary education through non-formal continuing life-long learning programmes;

3.   Imparting and improving professional skills through orientation and special training;

4.   Developing curriculum linkages between fieldwork and action programmes.

In support system, government and non-government organizations provide high priority to adult education through:

1.   Continuing education for women and deprived;

2.   Worker's education covering illiterates, semi-illiterates and literate workers through adult education centres;

3.   Programme for slum dwellers and migrant workers;

4.   Non- formal and continuing education for all.

These efforts involve adult education for developmental activities that can become sustainable on the following:

Though the strategies discussed above conclude that literacy and adult education has relevant potential for sustainable development, but it is important to highlight that **What and how can be done:**

1. An intense publicity derive is must

2. All kinds of media and art forms may be utilized

3. Regular programmes on Radio and TV, and articles in the press may be regularly telecast and published

4. Mass mobilization and participation for bringing about social change and generating awareness for literacy

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5. Generate village level literacy campaign committees by Panchayat

6. These committees should have permanent structure

7. Special efforts may be required to mobilize women
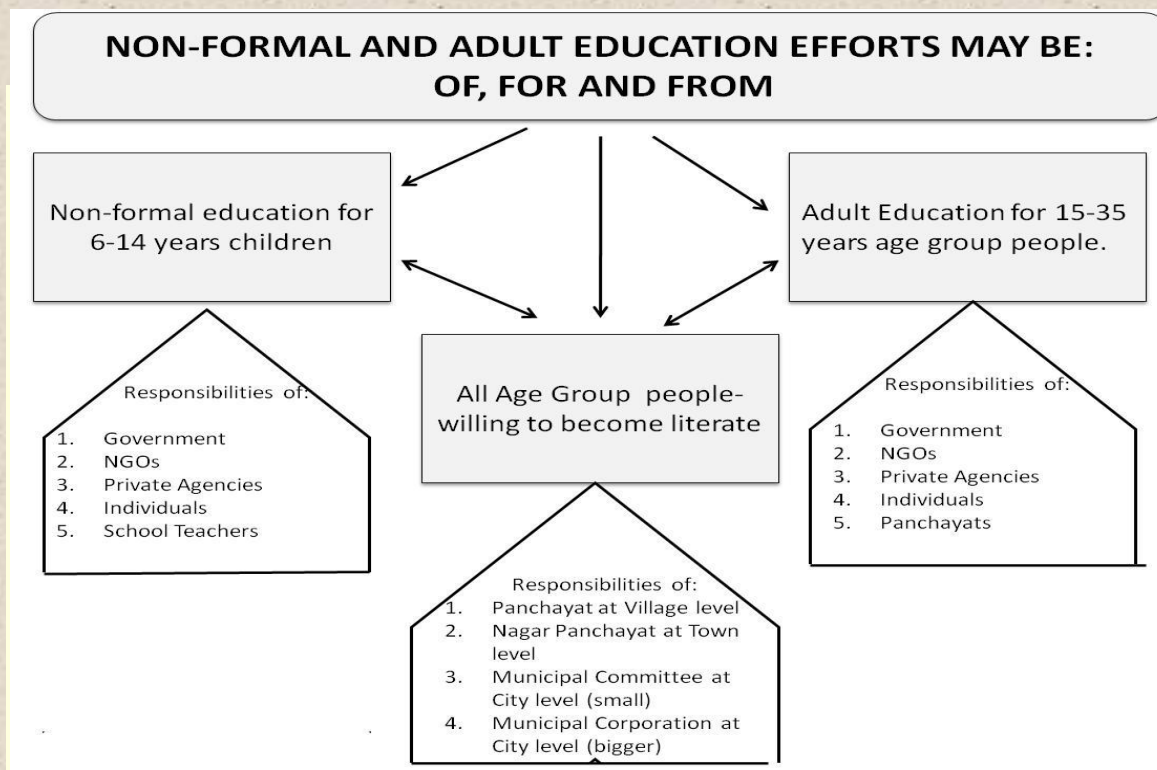
However, the proper implementation of the above said strategies, the state of Punjab can become a model like Kerala. Moreover, there is a need to consolidate resources and move forward beyond literacy and offer "Education for all".

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