



Evolution of Lifelong Learning India

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Lifelong learning can be defined as an education that is flexible & diverse. Lifelong learning encompasses education throughout adult life. The concept of Lifelong Learning found its origin in Denmark around 1971 and this concept was further broadened by UNESCO which included learning in all forms (Formal Informal) irrespective of age.

In India, Lifelong learning in modern times has become a very crucial part of adult and continuing education programmes play an important role in nation building.

When we talk about lifelong learning the Report of the Education Committee (1964-66) proposed that education goes beyond schooling and is considered a Lifelong process, further the National Policy on Education (1986) believes that the main aim of educational development is LifeLong education ensuring literacy for all even after schooling age.

The main objectives of Lifelong learning is not only to provide quality education and training to adults, to equip them with lifelong skills who are at the very bottom of education, but it also looks after increased participation of adult learners, developing the nation towards advanced knowledge-based society, and achieving sustainable economic development.

The development of Lifelong Learning in the Indian subcontinent begins as early as the vedic period where education being imparted orally, further the Upanishadic texts emphasising on skills apart from philosophical knowledge, other texts like the Dharmashastras mentioning about the development of Art, literature and other disciplines.

The heterodox schools such as Buddhism and Jainism also contributed towards the development of Lifelong learning, carried out in urban institutes like Taxila, Nalanda where disciplines like astronomy, architecture, shipbuilding, law, medicine were taught, even vocational education had it due importance in this period where monks were taught sewing, spinning and weaving.

With the advent of Islam rule in India during the medieval times, we see formation of Islamic institutions of education imparting knowledge on grammar, philosophy but also formation of factories for furniture, jewelry, weapons also were provided on apprenticeship.

And with the colonial rule, we see adult education getting further impetus during the 19thC putting emphasis on basic literacy, night schools opening up setup by Christian missionaries, socio- religious organisations etc

Formation of **CABE**(Central Advisory Board of Education) in 1944 which gave birth to Sargent Plan, put forth the notion of organisation of adult education programs to teach the illiterate children & adults.

The deliberation on **Adult Education for Community Action** in 1949, Mysore, which further got transformed by Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad came to be popularly known as **Social Education**, with the view that the adult education programme should focus more on making adults as responsible citizens able to carry out roles in the society not just getting education.

Speaking of the First five-year plan (1951-56) around 65 lakh adults were enrolled in the literacy classes started under the watch of state education departments.

The formation of Directorate of Adult Education from the NFEC (National Fundamental Education Centre) in 1956 gave further thrust to the development of adult education in India. **Kothari Commission** broadened the concept of adult education in 1964-66, where it proposed plans-

1. Education of the illiterates
2. To organise continuing education for adults to increase knowledge
3. To provide opportunities for further education

The **NPE** 1986 aimed to impart functional literacy to over 80 million adults, to provide women education, to SC's & ST's, similarly the **National Literacy Mission** 1988 focused on functional literacy, vocational skills and adult education.

In 1990s we a shift in approach from emphasis on adult education to Continuing Adult Education. UGC began to promote and encourage universities and colleges to participate in lifelong learning programmes and funded it, with its scope being wider with inclusion of post literacy, continuing education, refresher courses etc.

In 2007, UGC in the XI plan emphasised that all the different programs such as Adult education, Continuing Education, Placement services etc will be reformulated as LifeLong learning Programmes. Further the XI plan guidelines also showed the zeal towards adopting new technologies and to improve labour skills to compete with the global economy.

Developing of Lifelong learning as a discipline of study and field of practice was also put forth in the XI plan where not only mere implementation of policy and programs of the government but also working on theory and bringing out publications

Lifelong Learning through open distance learning institutions and ICT in the last two decades has gotten a tremendous boost, **Sakshat** educational portal launched by Ministry of Human Resource Development of Government of India with aim to Provide free web-based learning resources.

Information Kiosks where villages are being equipped with ICT technologies such as Gyandoot , established by the Govt of Madhya Pradesh to provide information on land records.

Programs like **Jan Shikshan Sansthan, Saakshar Bharat Mission (2009)** promoted female literacy and adult education in districts with lower literacy and to integrate skills needed for socio-economic development.

Pardhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (2016-20)

Promoting skill development by offering short term certificate courses for providing skill training and facilitating employment opportunities.

The **NEP** 2020 had Initiatives on adult education as its main component where focus was given on foundational literacy and numeracy, critical life skills, vocational development, basic and continuing education, During the Pandemic the **Padhna Likhna Abhiyan** scheme was approved focused on providing functional literacy to illiterates of age 15 years and above.

And in the recent times **ULLAS** (Understanding of Lifelong Learning for All in Society) 2022-2027, with the primary objective of educating illiterate adults aged 15 years and above, the scheme is implemented via 4 aspects- surveys conducted by teachers, civil society workers or Asha workers at bloc level, volunteering teachers, tagging of learners with volunteer teachers, Learning and Certification ULLAS aims to achieve 100% literacy a pivotal vision of Viksit Bharat

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