

INDIAN JOURNAL OF ADULT EDUCATION  
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# INDIAN JOURNAL OF ADULT EDUCATION



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Indian Journal of Adult Education (IJAE) is a peer-reviewed journal published by the Indian Adult Education Association since 1939. It is recognized by the University Grants Commission under the UGC CARE list (No. 117) of journals. It publishes twice a year in June and December, and the journal does not charge any processing fee. While submissions are invited from around the world, priority in publication will be given to the members of the Association. The journal invites original articles and book reviews on Adult Education and Lifelong Learning as per the guidelines given on the inner back cover of the journal.

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# INDIAN JOURNAL OF ADULT EDUCATION

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## CONTENTS

### Articles

- Letting No One Behind: The Importance of Five Capitals of Learning in Reflexive Modernity**  
• *Séamus Ó Tuama* 3
- Adult Literacy: Learnings from the Past and Contemporary Challenges**  
• *Anita Dighe* 22
- Mobile Application Use for Adult Literacy Facilitator Training in Nigeria: Evidence from an Empirical Investigation**  
• *Solomon O. Ojedeji* • *Omobola O. Adelore* 44
- Indian Higher Education System for Sustainable Development: An Exploratory Study in the Light of NEP 2020**  
• *Geeta Mishra* • *Rajesh* 57
- Evolution from Adult Education to Lifelong Learning in India - Key to Achieving Universal Literacy as per NEP 2020**  
• *Latifa Bashir* • *Gulshan Ara Wani* 69
- Idea of Lifelong Adult Learning: Study of Andragogy, Heutagogy and Paragogy through the Lens of Teacher Educators**  
• *Stuti Shandilya* 79
- Andragogy: a Self-directed and Participative Learning Method for Adult Learners**  
• *Seema Yadav* 97
- Reading Habit and Gender as Predictors of Adult Learners' Performance in English Language in Literacy Centers in Oyo State, Nigeria**  
• *Akinyooye, Funmilola Elizabeth* • *Popoola Damilola Iyanuoluwa* 107
- Challenges in Implementing Adult Education Programmes for Transgenders in Puducherry UT, India**  
• *Krishnaprabath* • *Anuranj K.K* • *P.B Shankar Narayan* 118

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<b>Exploring the Socio-economic and Healthcare Challenges Faced by Elderly Population in Phungyar Block, Kamjong District of Manipur: Study on Rights Awareness and Well-being</b>	
• <i>Eliso Keishing</i> • <i>V.K. Dikshit</i>	131
<b>“ARTHAM”: JSS Trains Kudumbashree Entrepreneurs in People’s Hotels</b>	
• <i>V. Ummer Koya</i> • <i>S. Karuppaiyan</i>	139
<b>Essential Life-Skills for Women and Girls in Crisis: A Perspective</b>	
• <i>A. Jayasree</i> • <i>N. Murugeswari</i>	150
<b>Journey of NIOS from Adult Education to Education for All: Pathways of NEP 2020</b>	
• <i>Rajiv Kumar Singh</i>	161
<b>Lifelong Learning Opportunities among National Union of Road Transport Workers in Ibadan Metropolis, Nigeria</b>	
• <i>Osu Uchechukwu Charles</i> • <i>Ajiye Olakunle Titus</i> • <i>Eze Augustina Oluchi</i>	177
<b>Pre-Primary to Post-Doctoral Fellow: A GRI Model for Lifelong Learning and Extension</b>	
• <i>Samuel Paul Raj. S</i> • <i>L. Raja</i>	188
<b>Book Reviews</b>	
<i>Adult Education in India</i> by Asoke Bhattacharya and Presenjit Deb, Printforce: The Netherlands, 2023.	
• <i>Kalpana Kaushik</i>	209
<i>Alternative Education: Philosophy, Curriculum and System</i> by Bindhu C.M., Shipra Publications, Delhi, 2022.	
• <i>Noushad P.P</i>	212
<b>Panel of Peer Reviewers</b>	215
<b>Form IV</b>	216

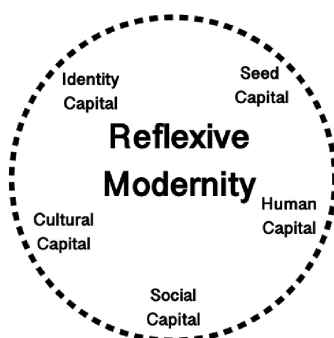


## **Letting No One Behind: The Importance of Five Capitals of Learning in Reflexive Modernity\***

• Séamus Ó Tuama<sup>1</sup>

I am very honoured to have received the invitation from my friend and colleague, Professor S.Y. Shah, to deliver the 2023 James Draper Memorial Lecture. It is a privilege to contribute to the great tradition of the James Draper Lecture series. I was looking at the names of the previous people who have given this lecture, there are some present in this room today, so I'm following a very distinguished group of people. I wish to acknowledge those people before I commence.

Today I want to talk a little bit about this idea of five capitals of learning and to place it in the context of reflexive modernity. I believe this is really important because we need to have a clear understanding, an appreciation of the context in which we're working. That's why I wanted to look at the concept of reflexivity and in that context I also want to address the idea of capitals of learning. While today a lot is made of the idea of human capital and human capital is very important, human capital on its own is not the solution, it's not the destination. That's why I wanted to also talk too about the other forms of learning capital.



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\*James Draper Memorial Lecture 2023 delivered on December 4, 2023 at International Institute of Adult & Lifelong Education, New Delhi, India, by Prof. Séamus Ó Tuama.

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You can see at the center of my model there is the term reflexive modernity, which reflects my understanding of contemporary society, being shaped by a form of modernity that is reflexive. What I'm talking about here is the idea that people today are much more proactively engaged on a project around their own self-identity, understanding who they are, understanding the kinds of things that they feel are important in terms of their identity. This is happening all over the world. It's happening in all societies, in all communities and it's especially happening with younger people. For younger people this is becoming extremely important. You can see this maybe in terms of how they deal with their own identity on social media. They're taking and posting pictures and other things in order to project their identity, but they're also building their identities around things like what they consume, what things they eat, what groups do they join, what things are they committed to. This is becoming extremely important and if we are serious about putting the learner at the center of our project then we need to realize who the learner is. This is a learner who has a different set of demands and ideas, which was less the case in previous generations. Around this concept of reflexive modernity, I want to build the idea of the five capitals of learning.

I want to start that discussion with Seed Capital, then proceeding to Identity Capital, Cultural Capital, Social Capital and onto Human Capital. I want to talk about each capital because they're important in terms of us creating an understanding of the learning journey for people. I want us to form a sense of where learners can go to, how they can build their learning capital and how we can create the conditions for them to shape a better future through learning. Because if we're serious about lifelong learning then we have to be serious about giving people an opportunity to learn right through their lives. They're going to have different needs at different points in their lives. It's important for us to understand lifelong learning in a holistic way. Very often lifelong learning is attached to education. Education is important but education is just a small component of lifelong learning, not the other way around. We all are lifelong learners, we're constantly learning. As we engage with the world we are learning all the time. We have all learned things since we came into this room here today and hopefully we will learn many more things as we go through our day. Lifelong learning has to be seen in that context. It's not just formal and informal and nonformal it's everything it is in every format. It doesn't stop at a certain age or doesn't begin at a certain age. This is part of what I want to talk about in this lecture.

### **Creating and germinating seed capital**

Let's now consider Seed Capital. Seed capital is an important starting point. All of us in the room had good opportunities in terms of our seed capital accumulation. We wouldn't have been able to get to this room unless we had those opportunities. Seed capital represents the baseline off which the learner starts, this is where we all start from. Earlier I had a conversation with one of your colleagues about a literacy programme, which they were leading here in India, where they shifted the literacy levels by a huge amount. By shifting the literacy levels you're giving people an opportunity to do other things in their learning journey. It doesn't just start and stop there. It's also about their capacity to accumulate additional capital. When I was sitting in the reception area earlier I saw quote from Mahatma Gandhi in Professor Shah's book. I can't remember it exactly, I should have brought the book with me to quote it back to you, but it was interesting because he was making the point that learning and education isn't a destination per se. He was saying that education and learning is about the full human being, it's about all the potential that they can achieve, all the things they can be, all the contributions that they can make, all the impact they can make on the people around them. In order for people to achieve those goals, to get to those places they need to be able to get some traction in the system. They need to get some initial learning that allows them to go further in their learning journey. Also, and this is the case with all kinds of capital, there has to be opportunities to invest with a reasonable chance of success. That's important. That's really important in terms of where do people go to next in their learning journey. How can they progress. Being able to read and write of brings them to a certain place, but can they do something more. Can they continue in that journey. There is no better example of the challenge of that than India as a country. I think 65% of the population of India is under 35 and something like 50% of the population is under 25. This is the primary asset that this country has, its people. In order for that asset to be realized then there has to be the opportunities for people. This is why I'm talking about seed capital as the starting point.

When I talk about germinating seed capital I mean how can these people move forward with their learning. How can they go to the next level. Parental education is an important catalyst in this germination. Parents are key influencers, they create key conditions for younger people in terms of their learning and educational. This is one of the key benefits of adult education

Logically we need to be investing in preschool, we need to be investing in primary education. The logic is that most of the resources should be invested in the younger

cohorts. There is a certain symmetry to that logic. A second kind of logic thinks about germination. The seeds will not grow unless there are certain conditions around those seeds. They will need moisture, a certain temperature, they will need certain light conditions. They need all of these things, but where does that come from? For younger learners much of this comes from their parents and carers. It comes from the condition to which the younger people are exposed. Through adult education you are not only transforming the experience of adults, you're also transforming the experience of all those people they come in contact with, all those people they interact with. They go on to interact with their families. They are in direct contact with their children, their siblings, their parents, their grandparents. They can be and are key influencers, that's a really important dimension in how we create the conditions for seed capital to become something more than just seeds.

I want to share an interesting piece of research from Australia. Dockery (2016) found that those young people whose sole parent's highest level of education was a degree were almost three times more likely to go to third level education than those who's sole parent didn't have a degree. That is just to give you an example of the extent of a parent's influence and why adult education can be key to the germination of seed capital. The principle of letting no one behind is a key call from UNESCO. In answering that call parents' education attainment, language status, factors like literacy practice in the home and literary proficiency are key determinants in creating the conditions for younger people to advance in their education and learning. Adult education has a key role to play in that space in terms of creating those kinds of conditions. Even with very small levels of educational attainment and educational advancement they straightaway change the paradigm. They can change it completely for people around them, that's really important.

The next point I want to make relating to seed capital is that education is the most important predictor of participation in adult education. What that's telling us is that those that have already gotten access to education are the ones most likely to seek participate in more education. As adult educators we probably already knew that. It tells us something about the importance of seed capital. Especially if we really want to change the world, and I think it has to be our mission. To change the world we have to make it possible for people to get education. Education is really important as a shifter, as a catalyst for change. To those people who are a bit dismissive about education, I think it's important for us to reiterate this point very clearly to them.

We have to be conscious that some people need additional supports and helps. I don't need to talk to you about that, I'm sure this is something you're dealing with on

a day-to-day basis. Patterson (2018) refers to 'the forgotten 90%' with reference to those that have not recently been involved in formal or nonformal education. Those 90% are completely outside the system and they are everywhere. If we are really serious about changing the world then we have to start thinking about how do we get to those 90%. What are their needs, what can we do to change their work, what can we do to put them in a position where they're able to contribute in a different way to the wider society. Again we can see this in contrast to those captured in Hovdhaugen and Opheim's (2018) phrase 'the partially met demand'. The partially met demand cohort, those people who are have already achieved things in the education system, are the ones who are going to make more demands on it. There's a lesson here for us in terms of the forgotten 90% . Unless we get to them they are not going to ask, they're not going to demand, they're not going to feel there's anything there for them. So how do we deal with this? We can address this with more resources and more outreach activity. This is absolutely critical in terms of impact. Because if we really want to be impactful, if we want to change the world, then this is where we have to go. We have to engage with those processes of learning and education that are closest to the learners. The closest place we can get is at community level, in non formal education systems and informal education systems, this is where we really need a lot of resources. We need resources in other places too, but this is absolutely essential if we want to shift the dial not just for today's learners, but for the next generation of young people and the next generation of adults. If we shift the dial for one generation, we've shifted the dial for all subsequent generations. In America they talk about the generation zero, generation zero are the first group of migrants to come to America. They talk about if they can change the experience for generation zero, then they change the experience for all subsequent generations. Now that's true for migrants, but it's also true of everybody else. If we really want to change things we need to start tackling those who are outside the system. We need to start creating conditions for the generation of seed capital and the germination of that seed capital, for people to move on in their learning journeys and move on with their lives.

### **Identity capital and the learner at the centre of things**

I want to talk a little bit about identity capital. Earlier when I spoke about reflexive modernity I spoke to you about the idea of everybody having a portfolio of identity. Everybody is involved in this reflection on who they are, why they are, what they want to become, what they want to consume, their tastes, fashion and so on. Identity capital is really important. It's about who we are and how we understand who we are. It's about self-esteem and dignity as a member of the community. We know, any of us were involved in an education process know, that the identity of the individual

shifts through an educational process. It happens with all of us, we become a new and a different person through an education process. We're not the same person who enters the process. That's an important aspect of what we do, we are actually engaged in a process in which people changing their identity, we're allowing them to change their identity. If we're taking a holistic approach to this we're facilitating them to shape their identity in the direction which they would like to go. This type of identity journey is greatly enhanced through adult education. We can see that education enables people amend their view of themselves. They appreciate the change and we can see how they can do different things in the world. I'll give you an example from my own place. One of the days in my university we had an interview panel for a new post. In this process we created a board and among the board members was an external person. In this case we wanted an industry person so we had somebody from a pharmaceutical company with which we work. We're having lunch and I'm sitting next to that industry person who was the director of HR. He said he wanted to share an interesting anecdote from something that happened in relation to a programme we were running at his plant. A man taking the course made an appointment with him at the request of his wife and teenage children. He wanted to tell the director of HR the positive impact the course was having on his person life, his family wanted him to share how his communication skills had improved so much and how their home life was significantly more harmonious. Making that man's home a harmonious space no wasn't the purpose of the course, but it was a very real consequence of the course. It's important for us to remember that we are engaged in all aspects of a person's life, their identity does not just change in the classroom, it changes in every aspect of their lives. I remember going to a mandatory health and safety program at my university, with a certain amount of reluctance. The instructor could see that we were not overly happy at doing this manual handling course. Well he said I want to say one thing to you now, I'm going to talk to you about manual handling lifting things today the reason why we need to talk about this is so that you don't damage your back, but remember to back you use in the university is the same back you use at home. That was an important learning point for me because he said basically you know you're learning in one context but what you learn impacts every other context. Even if that's how to lift a box, then you're always going to know how to lift a box regardless of whether it's at home or at work. It's the same in all learning contexts. We're changing people's identity, we're changing how they see to world, we're changing how they interact with the word and that's a really important part of what we do. We also give people opportunities to be a more actively engaged person in the wider community, they can do more things in wider society than they could do before their education. In terms of impacting, learning does not just impact the learner, the learners have impact on the whole world around them.

I want to try and get a little bit deeper into the idea of reflexive modernity and identity. Our identities are a means by which we can participate socially and develop our self-image. Our identity is important for us in terms of how we relate with other people, how we interact with other people. When contextualizing this in relation to reflexive modernity, this is captured very well by Honneth (2004), who talks about people placing. 'their very selves at the centre of their own life-planning and practice' (p. 469). Identity then is an ongoing process, it's constantly changing, but we are like navigators, we are like people out in the ocean and we're trying to decide where we want to go and we're trying to look at opportunities for ourselves. In today's world because of the advent of the Internet and social media and all of that, the amount of possibilities available to people is phenomenal. In a sense the range of possibilities are overwhelming for many people. This is a real challenge in terms of the amount of choices that people have. The amount of opportunities people have in terms of their identity project is at a scale that never existed before.

People who are newcomers, people who are from outside of the mainstream, they need to be able to engage in society and make decisions affecting their own lives. It is also the case where people are enrolled in skills programmes, people need to be doing things that resonate with them. They need to have a sense of self-determination and freedom. They need to be able to try to make decisions that impact their own lives. The more autonomy and the more feeling of having some kind of control over the direction of their learning journey, the better it is going to be for the person. The freer they are in the system the more they're going to engage in the learning process, more they are likely to progress. I absolutely realize that things like identity have a different meaning in different societies. I can't tell you what it means in Indian society you have to figure that one out for yourselves, but I can tell you from my own perspective what it means.

### **Cultural capital is key and often context specific**

Cultural capital acquisition is complex, I want to give you a sense of that in relation to my own experiences here in India. We're all lifelong learners, we're all always constantly involved in learning. I arrived in India on Saturday night at 8 pm and I can tell you from a cultural capital perspective I'm on a steep curve. I've never encountered a place where the level of cultural complexity is so high. You all eat, sleep and breathe it and it's no problem to you, but for somebody coming from outside it's unbelievable. Every single thing is challenging, simply because I don't understand the culture. I think I know something about it, but of course I know almost nothing and so for me to function in Indian society I have to have much

greater appreciation of the culture. I have to be able to engaged in this culture, otherwise I'm completely lost. I can't even get to here from my hotel. I was telling my colleagues about getting some hot water yesterday. I wasn't feeling terribly well nothing to do with Indian food, but to do with the food given to me somewhere else. I just felt I needed to drink some hot water, but trying to explain to the people in the hotel what I needed was quite difficult. We all eventually figured it out and we were all in the same place, but it took quite a while. You could look at that in different ways. You could look at that as an obstacle or you can look at it as an asset. If you've got the cultural capital then you've got a huge asset. If you don't have the cultural capital then it's an obstacle. You cannot navigate the system without the cultural capital.

Some months ago when I was reflecting on cultural capital and its place in this model, I found it hard to explain to people about why culture capital is important. Sometimes when you're writing something and you're creating a scenario and saying well should or shouldn't it be in there. Well arriving in India has made it all clear to me. I'm learning something about my own writing here and learning something about the stuff I wrote myself because I can absolutely see in a very clear way why cultural capital is so important. That actually is a tribute to India, because it means that you have a very deep, complex culture. That's a good thing to have, but it also means that for people to navigate in that system they need a lot of learning around culture. They need a lot of cultural capital, otherwise they're completely lost. That applies to me as an outsider coming in, it also applies to people who are from marginalized groups, ethnic minorities, different linguistic groups and so on. If they're not part of the mainstream culture then they have challenges. We have to recognize and validate cultural capital regardless of where that has been earned and that's a challenge for us because sometimes we are dismissive of other cultures. We look at other cultures seeing them as less good than our own. That's particularly the case for people who are from marginalized groups in society, from minorities, maybe from socioeconomically lower classes, we can be dismissive of their cultures. We don't see their culture as being as valid or important as our culture. We can see this in institutions. Universities are places that often demonstrate this. In universities people are often into high culture and they look down their noses at what is seen as lower level popular culture.

I was reading one of the Sunday newspapers here. I think it's the wedding time of the year.

They have a whole page of wedding photographs. It is really interesting because they were talking about the different cultural backgrounds and the different people



who were getting married. Why they have different ceremonies. They explain why they're dressed differently and why one ceremony was like this and another ceremony was like that. All of those cultures are slightly different. All of those cultures are equally valuable. It's important to acknowledge the significant culture artefacts that come through in the wedding ceremonies. Appreciating cultural diversity, how people come to do things in a certain kind of way is an interesting learning journey. It's like how we cook and eat food. Yesterday I got some amazing Indian food and then there's a question of how are you going to eat the food. I've a certain idea in my head on the way to eat food, Indian people have different concepts about how we should eat food. It's the same situation in other countries. In Indonesia they have a different way of eating food, in Vietnam a different way of eating food, in Thailand a different way of eating food. For all of those people their sense of how they eat food came through cultural processes of understanding what food means to them. It's not just around the practical aspect of how do you get the food from the plate or whatever into your mouth, but how do you engage with it. That's all cultural capital.

You're not just going to pick that up in five minutes, that's a very long journey and it's a really important. It's important in terms of being able to participate and being able to do things in society. When we're involved in education we need to be conscious of that. That this is part of the lifelong learning journey. If people don't have that cultural capital they're they struggle. We need to create opportunities for everybody to extend their cultural capital in a reflexive way, that allows them to identify their priorities, goals and ambitions.

I want to give you a cultural capital dilemma from Ireland, because I know that situation better. In my university we do some work with Irish Travellers. Irish Travellers are an indigenous, tiny ethnic minority. A really small group of people, but they are the most discriminated against. They have the poorest educational outcomes, the poorest housing, the poorest health outcomes, lowest levels of income, shortest lifespan, you pick any metric and Irish Travellers are at the bottom. It's our mission to let nobody behind, so it's important for us to engage positively with Irish Travellers.

For them to have an equitable stake in society and move on on their terms, one of the big challenges Irish Travellers have is with the Irish education system. When an Irish Traveller child goes to primary school they come into a classroom in which they're maybe the only Irish Traveller in that classroom. They are in an environment where there is rarely a positive mention of anything to do with Irish Traveller culture. They don't see any images of Irish Travellers, they don't hear any mention of Irish

Travellers, there's no content on Irish Traveller culture. So how could you interpret that from a cultural perspective. You could say these people are trying to steal my culture, they're trying to take my culture from me, they want me to be just like them.

This is an important lesson for us. We need to ensure that we are not involved in a process where we're taking people's culture from them, but instead we should be adding to their cultural capital. So we need to respect other people's cultures, we need to give them opportunities to take on more cultural capital, we should not be trying to take their culture away from them.

It's important we acknowledge the positive and mutually beneficial resources and richness that is generating in complex and diverse societies. We have to compare this to the ecosystem. If we have an ecosystem with a single species it would not be a very sustainable ecosystem. It's the same with culture, the more cultural diversity we have the richer our lives are. The more diverse the society I live in the better life I have. That comes in all kinds of ways, even including the food we eat. There are a lot of Indian restaurants in Cork, if there were no Indian people in Cork there would be no Indian restaurants there. There's a whole range of things that impact us around language, culture, music, everything, even our ways of thinking that we benefit from through interacting with other cultures. So the more diverse our society is, the richer are our experiences.

Another aspect of cultural capital is our sense of belonging and being accepted. It is important to be able to speak whatever language or languages that are predominantly spoken locally, but sometimes we forget that it's also important, for children especially, that they can speak the language of to the place that they've come from. Otherwise they will not be able to interact with their families, they won't be as able to interact with their own culture. Then you lead people into situations of alienation and liminality. Europe is a good 'bad example' of all of that. In Europe we've been obsessed, since the Enlightenment, with the idea of classifying everything. Everything has to have labels, everything has to have a box, every box has to have to shelf We are very poor at being able to navigate uncertainty. What we so often see as confusion. I can see India is in a very different place, thankfully. This is a resource that you have.

We Europeans have been a little bit obsessed about trying to keep people in their lanes. We have all kinds of problems as a consequence. We have a terrible history of trying to 'fix the world', to shape it to our European ideas.

In adult education we need to be able to create conditions for people to advance culturally. Being able to advance to where they want to go, without us feeling threatened or without them feeling we're putting our hands in their pockets and taking something from them.

Riccardi (2021) presents us with a challenge, a prompt to extend ourselves past the sort of *laissez faire* that is not serving us particularly well. She wants us to go beyond a status quo "of tolerance, coexistence and respect for differences" (p. 13). She's addressing what we might call a comfort zone, a place that so many Europeans have gone to. Your typical European is living in a nuclear family, they shut the door and let people get on with their lives, but they're not really engaging with them, they're not actively interacting with their community. When it comes to accommodating diversity, we need to be proactively ensuring that all people are included. An example of a challenge in this sphere is the diversity that's emerging especially in Europe, North America, Australia, New Zealand, and many other countries around gender identity. Gender identity is in a place that it has never before been in human history. Many societies and groups are struggling to move push beyond 'tolerance' and 'co-existence' in recognizing and respecting diverse gender identities. That's a huge challenge for us. If we're really serious about the autonomy of individuals to self-identify, for people to articulate and express how they understand who they are and to live their lives in line with their identity in accordance with the norms of what Bohman (2015) termed 'non-domination'.

The big challenges we have is that people need to have a voice, a capacity and an opportunity to be active agents in shaping their lives. If they feel their cultural values are not really appreciated or their culture is not really being accepted then they're effectively outsiders. This means there's a need for dominant cultures to accommodate to diversity. Again Europe is the best worst example of this because of its colonizing history, the level of hostility that there has been towards people whose cultures are different to European culture, or more accurately some preconceived idea of what European culture is.

I want to take you on a slight tangent here. Sometimes we imagine that culture is fixed, we imagine that culture belongs to us in a certain kind of way. I was watching a movie on a streaming service called MUBI last year. MUBI is an interesting streaming service because sometimes it does these independent movies and sometimes it will do a season of movies from certain countries and certain parts of the world. This time they were doing a series of movies, kind of like a festival of movies from North Africa. In this particular movie, *Un Homme Qui Crie* (A Screaming

Man), the basic story surrounds a family living in Chad. For reasons too complex to go into now, the father is responsible for sending his son to war and the son dies in the war. Subsequently his son's girlfriend, who is pregnant, comes to live with the family. At one point in the movie they're having a family event and somebody asks the girlfriend, who is from Mali, to sing. When she starts to sing, she does so in a particular unaccompanied style from her traditions in Mali. I got quite a surprise, because although the her language was not something I could understand, her style of singing sounded disconcertingly familiar. Her traditional mode of singing is very similar to a particular type of solo singing which is part of the Irish tradition, we call it seanós. If you're interested, you could search for it online and get a sense of how distinctive a style of singing it is.

So how would people in two ostensibly very different and unconnected places share a common and otherwise unusual form of musical tradition. It turns out that some of the first waves of people to settle in Ireland, many thousands of years ago, came via North Africa. Today people in Ireland don't necessarily appreciate this common cultural bond, yet it is very real. It also shows that cultures are not hermetically sealed from each other and that we share many common elements of our cultures. Sometimes even very important signifiers of our cultures have been borrowed from other cultures. It is incumbent on us as adult educators to allow our learners to have a more open-minded view of culture, be oriented to appreciate all cultures and to also create gateways for people from other cultural backgrounds to penetrate and thrive in locally dominant cultures.

### **Social capital not just a glue, but also an enabler**

Social capital you probably know more about because it's one of those ones that's spoken about. I like to use a nice graphic from the Red Cross/Red Crescent because it captures so very well the essence of social capital. Social capital is all the networks that we have. These networks are critically important for us in terms of opening doors and creating opportunities for us and our families. It's about knowing who to contact for all the goods and services we need to function in society. If you think about somebody from outside of any place, someone like me arriving in India. if I don't have a good contact people here, which I have thankfully, as I have no social networks, or very few, I wouldn't know who to contact or I wouldn't know who to ask about so many things. Educational and learning processes don't just create learning opportunities, they also create extensions of social networks.

When I walked into the room here this morning, my colleague Dr Shalini, started greeting and embracing people. How does she know these people? She met them

here during her studies. All of you know each other or have links to each other. If there's something down the line that you need or want to know you can contact people that are in this room today. I can give you an example of how persistent, what we term as 'weak social ties', can be. When I was a teenager and in my early 20s, me and my friends used to socialize in the pub as was the norm at the time. In our case we actually didn't go so much to our own local pub, but to a pub in another village about half-an-hour drive away. Over time we got to know the family who owned the pub very well. About five years ago I got a phone call in my in my office at the university, my secretary told me this man was trying to make contact with me. He had the same name as one of the sons in that family, so I called him back straight away. Yes it was him. He wanted me to explore something for his son at the university. He was leveraging some of his social capital, one of his weak social ties, though we had not been in contact for decades. These are the kinds of social capital that is generated between learners and with those who teach them and engage with them in other educational contexts.

Social capital is also crucial in creating societal trust. We could see that when the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic came, which countries adapted well. In countries with high levels of social capital there were relatively higher levels of trust, there were high levels of compliance with the various regimes to contain the pandemic, like all the measures in the beginning around social isolation and later with the uptake of vaccines. In Ireland the adherence to the changing policies around containing COVID-19 were high, because it's a small country with active social networks, so people trust each other. When the government and the chief medical officer said people should take the vaccine the general tendency was to say well if the government is saying it as well as the doctor's saying it, then I should do it, as I trust them. In other societies there was a huge level of hostility, like for instance in Florida in the United States where thousands upon thousands of people died needlessly, because not even the government trusted the science. People tend not to trust others if there isn't a level of reliable, robust social networks in their society.

Social capital is really important in terms of giving us opportunities to do all kinds of things in the world. In educational contexts, in learning environments, we get to meet all kinds of people. We make all kinds of connections. I want to talk a bit more about the strength of weak social ties. Weak social ties are really important aspect of what we gain through organised learning and education. They are bridges that link us to places outside of our normal circle. This is particularly important for marginalized, disadvantaged and excluded groups because it gives them links to people who are in advantageous positions. Those in advantageous positions may have knowledge and insights around opportunities in educational advancement, in

jobs and careers even in things like access to advantageous groups, societies, organisations, etc. Those gains obtained through weak social also create critical resources for those people that Jane Jacobs (1961) described as hop skip people. You don't hear that description very much anymore, but hop skip people are the kinds of people who can literally hop and skip forward, like a grasshopper, to critical nodes of knowledge and opportunity and key people. If you imagine you are trying to solve a problem, some of us have to go step-by-step, but hop skip people can see several steps ahead, key links in the chain that can be ignored or identified as important and who the key decision-makers, gate-keepers and resource-holders are. But even the hop skip people need the material for them to hop and skip. Weak social ties that emerge through organised learning and education create the conditions for them to hop and skip, so everybody around them also benefits. Those weak social ties can be especially transformative for marginalised, vulnerable and excluded groups. As adult educators we need to be mindful that they are critically important outcome of what we do. We should be really conscious of that in terms of the resources we can make available to people, opportunities to build their social networks, build bridges to significant opportunities outside their own circles. If you need reminding of why this is so important, think about the phrase 'the old school tie', which places emphasis on the networks generated at school, perhaps the most notable example being the elite English public schools. They are no less important in a local learning community than in a public school

Before we leave this topic I'd like to also mention positive and negative structural determinants of social capital. We can also be exposed to negative determinants of social and have negative perspectives reinforced. A significant catalyst in generating negative social capital is online social media. It is easy to go into an online space where we only talk to the people who agree with us. We only talk to like-minded people. We don't need to or even want to engage with people outside of our circle. We don't engage with people who have a different perspective or a different point of view. We've seen huge problems with that. Again, if we talk about Europe and North America, we can look at some of the new right, xenophobic and populist movements finding space to thrive in online silos (I'm not saying exclusively). Here like-minded people find mutual support around their ideas, where conspiracy theories can be articulated and given credence. Because all or most of the people there talking to each other believe these things. Somebody said to me recently it's like every family has a crazy uncle somewhere and the crazy uncle has some daft ideas, that the world is flat or that the moon is made of cheese. In the past when he came to some family function people would listen to him and dismiss his ideas as nonsense. But nowadays he can go to these places with all the other crazy uncles and they all can reinforce each other's nonsense.

But we can also create positive determinants of social capital. We can create ways in which people can modify their thinking. We can give people a chance to see the world in a different way, step outside of their framework. We can help people see that it's important for us to critically analyze things. We can create arenas of critique for people, to get all of us to challenge our own convictions, to question things that maybe we otherwise might accept at face value.

### **Human capital and links with the other four capitals**

Human capital may well be the most familiar to you of the five capitals we are discussing today. Human capital has a high profile in the contemporary world. It seems to be the one that's always being pushed in policy. Human capital is all the knowledge, skills, competencies that an individual has. They can be deployed in the labour market and the wider economy to facilitate the creation of income, personal wealth, economic advancement. Human capital is basically one of the things that helps someone get a job two years, the vocational skills and knowledge they draw on in the workplace. Like the other capitals, human capital is an intrinsic wealth that resides in people's skills and knowledge. Sometimes people think of human capital maybe only as high tech, but it equally refers to all spheres including the making of food, including the making of food in street markets. The human capital involved in how to make food is essential for our survival and wellbeing as a species.

At the beginning I spoke about that huge generation of younger people that are in India today. Their human capital is going to absolutely transform India, provided that they have high levels of human capital and that they have human capital that's useful and usable. But they're not going to get to that exact place in terms of their human capital unless they've had opportunities along the way, facilitated by the accumulation of all the other four capitals. The challenge today is that there's a whole range of new kinds of work and work areas. There is also a massive number of people here who are unemployed or underemployed or have no real access to resources. You only get access to tangible and intangible resources through the accumulation of those other capitals in conjunction with the accumulation of human capital.

It's important that we acknowledge what the World Bank (2020) stated about human capital, highlighting that it is often the only asset the poor have. That is a really good way of describing it. When we talk about human capital we're actually talking about wealth. We should think about it in the same way as we talk about how much money a person has or how much property a person has. Human capital is

actually a form of wealth. It's a form of wealth that people everywhere are using on an ongoing basis. That's why we describe it as capital rather than a saving. It is actually something they're investing and drawing upon every day. The World Bank also pointed out that for people to effectively accumulate human capital they are dependent on good education and good health. Looking closer at the education side of that, we understand that for people to accumulate human capital they need to have educational opportunities. Again it's vital that we see the full picture, rather than just one part of it. We've seen a selective vision and analysis in many workfare policies in Europe, where policymakers make the assumption that you can start with human capital.

I want to use an example from my home city of Cork in Ireland. Cork city is the home of Apple's European headquarters. Apple has a huge campus, with thousands of people working there, many in very high-skill—high-pay jobs. It happens that the Apple campus is right next door to the poorest neighborhood in Cork city, the neighborhood of Knocknaheeny. That neighbourhood has educational attainment levels well below the national average, likewise their health, housing and income levels trail the national averages. Suppose somebody from that neighborhood wants to get one of those high-skill—high-pay jobs in Apple how can they go about that. Suppose they are an early school leaver, somebody who leaves school maybe at 14 or 15, they have poor levels of literacy and few if any of the skills and none of the educational qualifications that would be needed for the job in Apple. You can immediately see that a short skills programme aimed at enhancing their human capital will not get them one of those jobs. At best they might get a much lower paid job with poorer terms and conditions, maybe in cleaning, security, working in the canteen or maybe in the grounds. If you're a cleaner for instance you might be employed by a contractor, be on a precarious contract, maybe on split shifts, with low levels of pay, much poorer entitlements than if you were working for Apple. You're not going to gain the high levels of expertise and skills to compete for those high-skill—high-pay jobs in Apple on a six weeks course.

However, it does not mean that the person cannot get to the kind of place where they could find a job like that. We did some research a number of years ago where we tracked the lifelong learning journeys of women in that very neighbourhood. Those women did introductory level adult education courses with my university in the 1990s. When we interviewed them, we discovered that they were all working, they had advanced in their careers, all their families were involved in education. Those courses were like dropping a pebble in a pool and their waves of influence reached people all around them. Initially they took the introductory level course,



some went on to the university's undergraduate programmes, some did masters, one went all the way to getting a PhD. That woman secured an academic role in another university and came back to us as an external examiner for one of our programmes. These journeys can be done, but it's not a simple process. It takes time. You have to have all the infrastructure in place for the person to navigate. A lot of things need to be right for them of course as well. It's not impossible but we have to be a lot more creative in terms of how we imagine that lifelong learning journey. It's not a simple thing. You can't just plug in the skills.

I want to also refer to the Eurydice Report (2015) and particularly two things that come from that report. The first is that skills from formal education become obsolete if not maintained. Again if we go back to Apple Computers and let us take somebody who graduated from my university in the year 2003, that's 20 years ago, with a computer science degree is working there today. Now ask yourself how much of the material they covered in that computer science degree are they using every day in their job at Apple Computers. Unless they kept up their learning in the meantime they would be well out of their depth by now. So much of their learning is now completely obsolete. Yet somehow we get into our heads that formal education creates this place that we get to and then we're finished our learning, but we're not done, any of us. Formal education is just part of the journey. That's why the idea of lifelong learning is essential for everybody. Everybody has to be coming back and coming back and coming back to education and constantly actively learning.

The second key point for the Eurydice Report is about informal education. We learn so many things in informal contexts. We need to be able to identify and acknowledge the human capital that people gain from places other than formal education. For instance as I came here in the car I could see that there's a lot of human capital involved in driving the car. You need to understand how to navigate the traffic, that actually is a real skill. It's a real skill that we need to acknowledge. It's actually a very important skill, if they didn't have that skill they could not navigate to here, they could not drive the car. That taxi driver has a lot of other human capital skills. The point I'm making is that we need to find ways to acknowledge, validate and recognize human capital that comes from other places not just from formal contexts. I was in Southeast Asia before I came here and I was speaking to a minister. The minister referred to 'no skill' people. There isn't a human being that has no skills. We all have skills. A lot of the skills we have we didn't learn in formal education. An example I have given a few times recently is around parenting. Sometimes people dismiss parenting as nothing of much importance. So what does a parent do day-to-day: childcare, they're involved in nutrition, they're involved in

healthcare, they're involved in education, they're involved in logistics and I could go on and on. Yet do we acknowledge any of that? Generally we don't.

There are a lot of challenges for us in terms of acknowledging and validating non formal and informal learning and recognizing that people gain a lot of skills from other places and not necessarily from the education system.

### **Some concluding remarks**

I'd like to make some final points. I would say that learners have to be at the centre. I know we all say that, but it's so important that they are at the centre. Everything we're doing should be around the learner, not about ourselves. One of the first meetings I had when I came to my current job at the university was in the community. They were talking about different initiatives for addressing unemployment. One person there was describing a course she was running in Cork city training people to be forklift drivers, these forklifts that are used in warehouses. So she had 20 men on this forklift driving course. She said well you know of course we're running this course because we have the forklifts and the instructors, but there are no jobs for forklift drivers. These people are on the course where there's no possibility of them getting a job with the end. We can only hope that they were having a little bit of fun driving forklifts around. The learners were not at the centre, the available infrastructure, the instructors and the need to be doing something was at the centre.

We have to be responsive. That means we respond to a need and we say well what's needed now. What are people asking for? What is necessary for people's lives as well as their livelihoods. Today there is so much talk about artificial intelligence. It is one of the big issues of the day. How do we respond to that? We have to offer programmes and ways to support the learner, programmes that they can participate in whether that's online, or hybrid or face-to-face, we have to consider where it's located, at the time of day it's run, even maybe what time of year is the best. We need to think of all of those things with the learner at the centre of our design, for instance we have a programme for dairy farmers around environmental mitigation, dairy cows are milked for nine or ten months of the year, then there's a two or three months window when the farmers are less busy, so we schedule our programme for that time of year. We have to respect the autonomy of our learners, this is a huge problem especially in workfare thinking, where we think we know better than the learner what they should learn and in what direction they want to take their learning journey. We don't necessarily know better, we can engage with the learner and we can have conversations with the learner about options and potential things they could do, but we shouldn't assume that we know all the answers for people.

As adult educators we also have to be highly sensitized to the notion of responsiveness. We need to be addressing the issues of our time, to the need for learners in our communities and the needs of our communities and wider society too. That has to stretch from local considerations to global ones, we need to be cognizant of the sustainable development goals, climate change, migration, security, health and wellbeing, we have to be responsive across the full spectrum of need in the here and now. We need to be responsive now, not putting things on the long finger, to maybe five or ten years down the line. Responsiveness is about now. The learning capitals I spoke about today, I hope, are a useful framework in helping us devise responsive programmes that are holistic and that can genuinely change people's lives. As adult educators we are agents of change. Our mission is to change the world. We have huge capacity to bring positive change to the world, it is a big responsibility, but it also gives us an opportunity to work in one of the most exciting and dynamic roles imaginable.

Thanks you all very much. Thanks especially to my colleague and friend Professor S.Y. Shah for offering me this invitation to deliver the 2023 James Draper Memorial Lecture.

**Note:**

The lecture drew heavily from my chapter on learning capitals, see full details Ó Tuama, S. (2022). Taking Forward Perspectives on Reflexivity in Learning: Five Capitals. In: Evans, K., Lee, W.O., Markowitsch, J., Zukas, M. (eds) *Third International Handbook of Lifelong Learning*. Springer International Handbooks of Education. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-67930-9\\_13-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-67930-9_13-1) The various sources directly mentioned in the lecture are listed in the bibliography of the chapter, with the exception of the following additional reference: Bohman, J. (2015). Domination, global harms, and the problem of silent citizenship: Toward a republican theory of global justice. *Citizenship Studies*, 19(5), 520-534. doi:10.1080/13621025.2015.1074343.



## **Adult Literacy: Learnings from the Past and Contemporary Challenges\***

• Anita Dighe<sup>1</sup>

### **Abstract**

Adult education programmes have suffered neglect at international and national levels. There has been an assumption that the formal school system would itself address the problem of illiteracy among adults. This has not happened as the growing numbers of school drop-outs, particularly among girls, has only added to the already large pool of adult non-literates, particularly the women among them. Lacking ideological commitment, even democratically elected governments have developed vested interests in keeping large sections of their adult population illiterate. There has also been an assumption that the term 'Education for All' which has influenced policy discourse in recent years, includes all children, youth, and adults, and that a separate programme specifically for adults, is unnecessary. Many national governments, especially in the developing countries, still take a negative stand towards adult education, resulting in lack of political and administrative will, while allocating a minuscule proportion of their education budget to adult education. This paper attempts to address these assumptions by making a case for formulating suitable policies, planning strategies, and designing meaningful, relevant adult education programmes on the basis of (i) reviewing past experiences in the field of adult education in India and identifying common recurring features; (ii) understanding some aspects of the theory and practice of adult education, particularly women's ways of learning; and (iii) taking note of the recent international discourse, mainly influenced by UNESCO, the United Nations, multilateral and bilateral civil society groups, that provide directions for designing suitable and meaningful adult education programmes for meeting the challenges of a fast-changing digitalized world.

**Keywords:** *Adult learning and education, gender issues, lifelong learning, literate environment, learning communities, knowledge society*

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## **Introduction**

Adult education programmes have not been given due importance from successive governments, largely due to lack of political and administrative will. While it is an established fact that poverty and illiteracy are inextricably linked, there has always been an assumption that the formal school system would address the problem of illiteracy and lack of education among adults. This could have happened had the formal system of education ensured that the school system was extremely efficient and no drop-outs were added to the pool of adult illiterates. High drop-out rates, particularly among girl students, add to the already large numbers of illiterate or semi-literate adult women. During the recent Covid-19 pandemic, while the drop-out rate was high among school children, it was particularly so for the adolescent girls who were pulled out of school due to various socio-economic reasons. There is yet another assumption that has influenced the educational policy discourse. According to this, the term 'Education for All' includes all children, youth, and adults, and that a separate programme specifically for adults is unnecessary. Again, experience has shown that 'Education for All' invariably restricts itself to the formal system of education and the education of adults, particularly that of illiterate women, gets marginalized or even ignored. This has been happening at the national and international levels. Many national governments, especially in the developing countries, still take a negative stand towards adult education, resulting in allocating minuscule proportion of their education budget to adult education. This paper attempts to address these assumptions by making a case for formulating suitable policies, planning strategies, and designing relevant adult education programmes.

## **Magnitude of the problem of illiteracy in India**

Longitudinal literacy statistics show considerable improvement as far as education of adults is concerned. At the time of Independence, the literacy rate was only 14%. This increased to 72.98%, according to the 2011 Census data. However, beside the urban/rural divide, there remains a definite correlation between gender and illiteracy that has not been resolved over the years. Thus, gender disparities in literacy have continued to exist, with male literacy rate being consistently ahead of female literacy rate. According to the 2011 Census, the male literacy rate was 80.8% while the female literacy rate was 64.6%. These statistics, however, do not reflect the problem of female illiteracy which can only be gauged if one looks at the absolute number of non-literate adult women. Thus, in 2011, the absolute number of illiterates in the 15+ age group was 25.76 crores, out of which male constituted 9.08 crores, while women constituted 16.68 crores. Beside the gender gap, there are

regional and social disparities. Literacy rates are low among the SCs, STs, and minorities, including women.

According to UNESCO (2020), 773 million adults - two-thirds of them women, lack basic skills of literacy. Due to lack of Census data for India for 2021, the problem of illiteracy among women cannot be ascertained but the extent of the problem can be gauged by the earlier Education for All Global Monitoring Report (2014), according to which 37% of the world's non-literate population, majority being women lived in India alone.

**A. Government of India's programmes to meet the challenges of adult illiteracy:** A series of programmes for promoting adult literacy were initiated by the GOI since 1951. Brief details of the programmes are as follows:

1.1 Social Education (1951-56) - These programmes gave importance to literacy, extension education, leadership training, condensed school courses for adult women;

1.2 Gram Shikshan Mohim (1959) - This was a campaign for literacy undertaken in Maharashtra on a pilot basis, to impart basic literacy skills within a period of four months.

1.3 Farmers' Functional Literacy Project (1967-68) - As a consequence of Green Revolution, a need was felt to make farmers literate and make them efficient farmers in order to increase food production in the country. This was a UNESCO funded project.

1.4 Functional Literacy for Adult Women (FLAW) (1975-76) - This was specifically designed to make adult women literate through specially designed literacy materials that dealt with their role as wives and mothers, with the purpose of making them efficient housewives and mothers.

1.5 Non-Formal Education for Youth in the 15-25 age group (1976-1977) - The term non-formal education to include education outside the fold of formal education, gained international importance in 1975. A non-formal education programme became operational to address the literacy needs of the 15-35 age group. It was implemented through the National Service Scheme (NSS) volunteers and students from colleges and universities.

1.6 National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) (1978) - This was the first nationwide literacy programme that was launched to make literate 100 million illiterate adults in the 15-35 age group within a time frame of 5 years. Besides literacy, the other components of the programme included awareness and functionality. Part-time literacy workers who were paid a small honorarium implemented the programme.

1.7 National Literacy Mission (NLM) (1989) - The NLM adopted a campaign approach and implemented the programme through the Total Literacy Campaigns (TLCs). Districts that volunteered to undertake the campaign covered the entire district and mobilized support from the district administration, the civil society groups, and volunteers. No payment was made to the volunteers. Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti, a national level NGO, provided technical and resource support to the TLCs. Success stories were reported from those districts of the country where mobilization of the government functionaries, political leaders, civil society groups and learners with BGVS support, took place on a large scale.

1.8 Saakshar Bharat (2009) - During the 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan, Saakshar Bharat was designed to modify the strategy of NLM programme. The main aim was to address the problem of illiteracy among women, Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), minorities and other disadvantaged groups in rural areas. Saakshar Bharat also had a somewhat broader view of adult education to include literacy, basic education (with equivalency to formal education), vocational skills development and continuing education as part of lifelong learning. The programme continued till March 2018.

1.9 Padhna Likhna Abhiyan (2020) - The aim of the scheme was to ensure complete eradication of illiteracy. Hence the main focus of the programme was on basic literacy and the programme was to be implemented through volunteers at the school and college levels and other volunteers of schemes such as NCC, NSS and NYKS.

1.10 New India Literacy Programme (2021-2026) - NILP was recently launched with a financial outlay of Rs. 1037.90 crores out of which Rs. 700.00 crores is Centre's share and Rs. 337.90 crores is States' share. The programme aims to cover a target of 5 crore non-literates in the age group of 15 years and above. The scheme has five components to include (i) foundational literacy and numeracy, (ii) critical life skills, (iii) vocational skills development, (iv) basic education, and (v) continuing education. The learners are to be identified through door to door surveys on a mobile application by the surveyors in the States/UTs. The scheme is largely

based on volunteerism for teaching and learning. Volunteers can also register through mobile application for this purpose. The scheme is based on technology and will be implemented predominantly through online mode. The teaching/learning material would be made available on DIKSHA platform of NCERT and could be accessed through the mobile applications.

What is apparent from above is that while attempts have been made by the GOI to address the problem of illiteracy in the country, these efforts have not been commensurate with the magnitude of the problem. On the other hand, a critical examination of these programmes in terms of policy formulation, planning and implementation strategies, reveals that there are some common recurring features which are discernible. It is important to understand some of these salient features in order to draw lessons for helping in future policy design, planning and implementation strategies of adult education programmes.

### **A.1. Common features of the adult education programmes**

While these generalizations may not be true for all the programmes, they nevertheless capture broad contours that define these programmes.

(I). These have largely been planned programmes - centrally-sponsored and centrally-designed which have often lapsed after the planned period is over. They have been ad hoc, short term, limited in scope, with fixed targets, with little or no involvement or participation of the learners in the policy making, planning, and implementation processes.

(II). They have mainly focused on a limited definition of the term literacy to include ability to read, write and to do arithmetic. Even in the functional literacy programmes for farmers and women, as well as the Non-Formal Education Programme for rural youth, the focus was on making the learners literate. The content of the literacy materials focused on making farmers, women, youth, more efficient and productive. In other words, the literacy programmes were conceptualized not to empower learners, but to maintain status quo.

(III). In the Functional Literacy for Adult Women which was introduced in 1975, the focus was on making women literate by emphasizing their reproductive and not the productive role that women play in Indian society. Such a limited definition did not meet the learning needs of women and was largely responsible for their dis-interest and eventual dropping out of the adult education programme.



(IV). While recognizing that the problem of illiteracy was grave among women, it was only in 1979 that a national programme - the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) was launched. NAEP, however, did not have any special programmatic interventions for women. Total Literacy Campaigns (TLCs) were implemented in 1989. Despite the fact that women participated in the TLCs as learners and often as literacy volunteers in large numbers, TLCs did not pay special attention to gender-based needs, especially the unique needs that women had for attending the literacy centres.

(V). Literacy materials for all the literacy programmes were either centrally developed by a group of experts or prototype materials were developed at the state levels through the State Resource Centres (SRCs) which were then transliterated to suit the local needs. The notion of 'one size fits all' has characterized the design and use of basic literacy materials.

(VI). The teaching-learning methodology followed was the top down approach of the formal system of education. This pedagogy that defines the teacher-taught relationship as hierarchical, does not encourage any dialogue or discussion or promote critical consciousness among learners.

(VII). Literacy's link with development was neither understood nor emphasized in these programmes. As a result, literacy was mainly perceived as a stand-alone programme of the Education Ministry/Department, with no links to other Development Ministries/Departments.

(VIII). Most adult literacy programmes depended on volunteers at the village level in the delivery of the programmes. In some cases, these were part-time workers, with low educational qualifications, who were sometimes paid a small stipend. While involvement of volunteers is desirable, experience has shown that volunteer-based programmes are not effective in the long run. This was certainly true of the volunteer-based Total Literacy Campaigns (TLCs). This was also true regarding the NAEP which was a one-on-one programme for school/college students who volunteered their services but with almost no accountability. In any case, the levels of literacy acquired by learners in such volunteer-based programmes are so low that as research evidence shows, unless they reach the level of standard IV by students of the formal system- adults, particularly women, relapse into illiteracy.

(IX). In most adult literacy programmes, there has somehow been a false notion that teaching adults is not a difficult task. As a result, there is inadequate or no

training of the adult education functionaries. Or else, a ‘cascading model’ of training is followed in which training is a ‘one-shot’ affair, and is conducted as a mere ritual and a formality, as a result of which the literacy functionaries are not able to sustain the interest of the learners, particularly of women resulting in high drop-out rates.

(X). There has been an assumption that adults must acquire literacy skills first before participating in other educational programmes. The post-literacy and continuing education programmes have been perceived as discrete, separate programmes that follow one another in a linear, sequential manner.

(XI). One of the reasons the literacy programmes did not succeed earlier was due to the absence of a literate environment and lack of suitable reading materials to ensure that the reading skills acquired by adults were sustained and strengthened. Creation of literate environments and the development of literate families, communities, societies, to ensure use of literacy and numeracy on a continuous basis, is a necessity.

(XII). The monitoring and evaluation system was either weak or non-existent in these programmes. In case this system was set up, the emphasis was on collection of quantitative data and the data flow was one-directional, from the bottom to the top. No attempt was made to make it bi-directional, with corrective measures being taken for programme improvement. Emphasis was laid on administering the literacy test which ascertained the reading, writing, and numeracy skills of the learners, with no attempt made to understand the changes brought about in the lives of the learners through collection of qualitative data.

(XIII). The budget allocated for the programmes has always fallen short of the 6% demarcated education budget proposed by the Kothari Commission and those who advocate allocation of adequate financial resources for running effective adult literacy and education programmes.

What is apparent from above is that the implementation of the literacy and adult education programmes over the years had highlighted lessons learnt which should have influenced policy, planning and implementation strategies.

## **B. Understanding some aspects of theory and practice of adult education, particularly women’s ways of learning**

An attempt is made below to capture some aspects of theory and practice of adult education, particularly women’s ways of learning, so that a distinction is made between educational programmes for men and women.

1. In order to develop meaningful and relevant adult learning and education programmes, it is necessary to recall principles of adult learning. Knowles (quoted in Merriam & Brockett, 1997) has enumerated some of the principles of Andragogy. Thus, adults need to know 'why' they should learn and are known to learn best when they know learning has immediate value to their lives. Feminists have highlighted several aspects that characterize women's ways of learning. Thus, women lack the self-confidence and have low self-esteem in starting or returning to an educational programme. This lack of confidence due to their socialization and personal experiences, is endemic to poor non-literate women and cuts across cultural barriers. Coupled with this is what has been described by Belenky et al. (1986) as the phenomenon of 'finding their voices.' This is a positive reinforcement and an assurance that women need to know that they are intelligent and can express an opinion. While it could be argued that the educational needs of poor men are similar to those of poor women, that argument would be valid if in everyday life, there was no gender hierarchy or if there were no differences in the way men and women were raised. Given the fact that women's experiences are different from those of men, it is necessary that the educational programmes should be so designed that they will not only educate women, but will also enable them to see and understand more clearly, ways in which the family, society, culture, religion, shape their perceptions.

2. There are several factors that contribute to and sustain women's illiteracy. These can be broadly grouped under three categories: personal, social, and institutional. Due to sexual division of labour, numerous domestic duties are imposed on women. The daily chores are so time-consuming that their sustained participation in educational programmes becomes difficult. Women are also known to have limited social interaction, as a result of which they lack confidence and feel they are useless and worthless learners. When they join an educational programme, they tend to remain silent and are reluctant to express an opinion. The starting point for an educational programme should therefore be to enable women to feel confident, give them an assurance that they are respected, are intelligent, and have a voice to express an opinion.

3. Many women, irrespective of their class background, still limit their thinking by seeing the primary role of women as that of wife and mother. As a result, they believe that men's claims on knowledge are superior to women's and that men are more powerful by virtue of their knowledge. Experience of women's groups however, has shown that as women progress from a stage of voicelessness to a stage when they develop some self-confidence and begin to ask questions, they feel confident

enough to generate their own knowledge. Hence, women have become creative as they have composed and sung songs, written stories, drawn, painted, and found varied artistic expressions to reflect the reality of their lived experience. But for this to continue, the educational programme must be facilitative and the educational process must foster critical thinking

4. Adults join an educational programme with years of their own experiences and are ready to learn those things that enable them to use learning as a form of problem-solving to cope effectively with their real-life situations. While experiential learning is an important concept in adult learning, it is not just the accumulation of experiences that matters; rather, it is the manner in which individuals make meaning of their experiences that facilitates growth and learning. This idea is the foundation of transformation theory. It was Mezirow (1991) who used the term *perspective transformation* to describe a change process whereby the frames of reference through which we view and interpret our experiences are changed or transformed. Transformative theory is important because it focuses on how experiences can lead to fundamental changes in the learners' perspective.

5. Transformational learning takes place when new meaning is imparted to earlier experiences or old meaning is reinterpreted in a new light. An important aspect of this theory is that it can serve as a process for empowering learners of particular relevance to poor women. According to Merriam and Brockett, in addition to concepts such as transformation theory, the importance of learners' experience has helped shape techniques of 'collaborative learning' - sharing of information in relationships of equality that promotes new growth in each learner. Women are known to learn best when the learning environment is conducive to collaborative learning. Women also learn best where affective forms or knowledge that comes from their lived experiences are valued.

6. Some of the most important developments in the field of adult education are linked to the introduction of 'critical' perspectives in the theory, research, and practice of adult education. The central theme of critical pedagogy is that for true learning to take place, it is necessary to ensure that the voices of the marginalized groups are fully engaged in the learning process. Influenced by Paulo Freire (1970), even curriculum development is based on the needs and problems articulated by the learners. This is in stark contrast to curriculum development and preparation of teaching/learning materials by a team of experts. Likewise, traditionally research and evaluation has involved collection of quantitative data, based on parameters determined by a team of researchers. Participatory research, on the other hand,

reverses this process for it is the marginalized groups that determine what data needs to be collected and the research questions that need to be asked. Such a decentralized approach to research and evaluation has an empowering effect on the learners. Knowledge generation has so far been the prerogative of the experts and the indigenous knowledge of communities has been devalued and not recognized. Through participatory research, process of knowledge creation is reversed and local knowledge is valued. Valuing indigenous knowledge is particularly important in creating a knowledge society.

7. In recent years, the need to empower women through literacy programmes has been gaining recognition. Experience indicates that programmes which are part of lifelong learning policies and supported financially by governments are necessary for promoting gender equality. The concept of 'empowerment,' however, has to be understood better. Feminists are of the view that while the issues that affect women's education - a negative self-image, low social status, survival needs and poverty - are essentially outside the education domain, yet education is the critical factor that can help women to break out of their predicament in which they have passively accepted their gender roles to one where they become active agents in their own transformation (Batliwala & Ramachandran, 1987). This is the manner in which 'empowerment' was conceptualized in the *Mahila Samakhya* programme, which was an outcome of the National Policy on Education (1986) that focused on Education for Women's Equality. This project worked in partnership with civil society groups, and provided a blue print on how poor, rural women got empowered at the individual and collective levels, and brought about perceptible changes in the family, community and society at large.

A number of case studies undertaken across the world (UIL, 2016) highlight the wide variety of approaches to mainstreaming gender into literacy programmes and promoting women's empowerment. In the *Mahila Samakhya* programme which was functioning in 11 states of the country and had been in operation since 1989 until it was arbitrarily closed down in 2017, education was seen as a process of learning to question, to critically analyze issues and problems faced by women and seek solutions in order to change the patriarchal relationships within the family and the society. The principal strategy identified for ensuring women's participation was by mobilizing and organizing them into 'sanghas' or collectives. It was the women's groups at the village level which determined the content of the educational programmes, depending on their needs and interests. Literacy was not imposed on women, rather they asked for a literacy programme when they felt the need to become literate. Periodic reviews that were undertaken by international and national

consultants showed that when women organized as a collective, they had been able to address issues such as access to drinking water, payment of minimum wages, ensuring access to health services and functioning of the village school, and had even been able to take action against domestic violence.

8. One of the problems organizers of literacy programmes for poor women face, is lack of motivation for literacy amongst the women from poorer sections of society. The demand invariably is for a skills training programme for the economic betterment of their lives, rather than just a literacy programme. The question that is often raised in such programmes is whether to start with literacy or with livelihoods first. In several such projects, literacy is the first area of intervention, as livelihood activities are believed to require at least a minimum of basic reading and writing skills. There are however, enough experiences to show the above assumption is wrong. Also, experience has shown that improved literacy does not necessarily bring about significant economic improvement. According to Rogers (see Papen, 2002), this problem is due to the narrow definition of literacy and livelihood programmes for these do not lead to effective command of literacy skills or to viable livelihood practices. It is therefore necessary to address the problems of poverty centrally so that there is an expanded vision of literacy and livelihoods education as part of lifelong learning framework. A study that was undertaken in four African countries (Oxenham et al., 2002) showed that the success of livelihoods-plus-literacy/numeracy programmes can be ensured if they start from or, at least incorporate training in savings, credit and business management, along with actual access to credit.

Considering the diversity of social, political and economic factors that need to be addressed, it would be difficult to suggest a generic model when planning a literacy and livelihood programme. According to Papen (2002), such programmes would need to be flexible, participatory, interactive in nature as well as grounded in the local context and developed with direct input from poor women to encourage empowerment from below.

### **C. Understanding the present international discourse for meeting the challenges of a fast-changing world**

UNESCO has played a pivotal role in shaping the discourse on adult literacy ever since its inception. From promoting just literacy skills among adults in the early years, the concept of literacy evolved over the years. In order to convey that adult education is an active process of learning, the term commonly used now is Adult Learning and Education (ALE). Literacy is now increasingly being conceptualized

as multiple, socio-cultural and political (Street, 1995). It is therefore conceived in the plural as ‘literacies’ and embedded in a range of life and livelihood situations. Thus, the concept of ‘multiple literacies’ - relating to technological, health, information, financial, media, digital and other contexts - is considered better suited to life in the twenty-first century.

In 2010, the Member States of UNESCO accepted the Belém Framework for Action that records their commitment and presents a strategic guide for the global development of adult literacy and education within the perspective of lifelong learning. It affirms that “literacy is the most significant foundation upon which to build comprehensive, inclusive and integrated lifelong and life-wide learning for all young people and adults.”

In 2015, Member States became signatories of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) formulated by the United Nations. Quality education and lifelong learning are considered essential to ensure inclusive and equitable education for all. In emphasizing that SDGs would focus on the ‘no one is left behind’ principle, what is envisaged in the implementation of SDGs is participation by governments and societies so that SDGs become a societal movement. What is therefore advocated is ‘whole of government’ and ‘whole of society’ approach in the implementation of SDGs. On November 16, 2020 the United Nations General Assembly adopted by consensus the resolution ‘Literacy for life: shaping future agendas,’ in which it once again reiterated that literacy is crucial to the ‘acquisition by every child, young person and adult for the essential knowledge, skills and competencies that will enable them to address the challenges that they may face in life and this represents an essential condition of lifelong learning’

At UNESCO’s Seventh International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VII, 2022) on ‘Adult Learning and Education for Sustainable Development - a transformative agenda’, the Member States once again emphasized the importance of lifelong learning and on making education accessible to all learners. According to the Framework for Action, education including adult learning and education, is considered a fundamental human right- a commitment which is critical in understanding and framing education as a public endeavour and a common good. From the above resolutions that were unanimously adopted by Member States of the United Nations, it is clear that the massive problem of illiteracy among the youth and adults, particularly among women would now have to be addressed centrally by the national governments, rather than deferred or postponed any further.

#### **D. Broad contours for formulating policy, planning and implementation strategies for ALE programmes in the context of lifelong learning**

In view of the present international discourse on ALE programmes in the lifelong learning framework, an attempt is made below to spell out broad contours for formulating policy, planning and implementation strategies for ALE programmes to meet the challenges of a fast changing digitalized world.

1. *Formulating a suitable policy for lifelong learning:* Presently, adult literacy and education programmes, regarded as a concern of the Ministry of Education alone, have tended to operate within fixed targets and limited funds. This piecemeal and compartmentalized approach has led to ineffective programme achievements. This has often happened because of a lack of continuity in the programmes, which in turn, has been due to the absence of a comprehensive framework that links literacy and education with all other aspects of life on a long-term basis. A comprehensive, all-encompassing lifelong learning policy would therefore have to be formulated. A stand-alone, truncated view of adult education would need to be replaced by spelling out how suitable organizational structures and links between adult education and other development ministries/departments would be established, and how inter-ministerial/interdepartmental coordination and cooperation would be brought about.

According to the Belém document (2010), lifelong learning is integral to the vision of a knowledge society for bringing about inclusive and sustainable development. In a knowledge society, adult learning would require a new paradigm using many modes of learning throughout life. Beside multiple pathways of learning, adult learning would have to be flexible, allowing adults to enter the formal system and leave at many different points. Thus, accreditation, equivalency, certification and synergies between the formal, non-formal and informal learning would become essential components of lifelong learning.

Sustainable Development Goals (2015) emphasize that all the 17 SDGs must become the responsibility not just of the concerned ministries or departments, but must become a societal concern. Hence, SDGs refer to ‘the whole of society’ and ‘whole of government’ approach in achieving the goals. In the case of adult learning and education programmes too, it should not be just the Ministry of Education or department that should run these programmes but they should become the responsibility of various development ministries, departments as well as of the entire society to ensure that such programmes run effectively. It is only if a comprehensive



lifelong learning framework is established, that is inclusive, addresses development issues, responds to the learning needs of all learners on an on-going basis, that the adult learning and education programmes can take root, become a trigger for development, get recognition and gain credibility. The Marrakech document (2022) refers to creating a culture of lifelong learning. Lifelong learning can play a key role in addressing challenges faced by humanity, from climate crisis to technology and demographic changes. Since ALE has the potential to address the problem of climate change, climate education must be mainstreamed in lifelong learning systems.

*2. Understanding the importance of adult learning and education in ensuring inclusive, equitable and sustainable development:* In the Belém document (2010), adult learning and education integrate formal, non-formal and informal learning which address the learning needs of both youth and adults. The earlier approaches regarded formal, non-formal and informal education/learning as distinct categories. Rather than viewing them, Rogers (2004) suggests that they be viewed as part of a continuum, with fine gradations between them and blurred boundaries. According to him, the key distinction between these three categories of learning would lie in the individualization of learning. While formal education would be highly de-contextualized, standardized and generalized, informal learning would be highly contextualized and non-formal education would be a hybrid that would include informal as well as formal learning. Rogers places greater value on informal learning which for him is not always unintentional (as was understood earlier) but which is a natural activity which continues at all times and is highly individualized and contextualized. It is mainly through informal learning, that a whole range of perceptions, attitudes and skills are developed.

Inclusive education would require an identification of all possible groups of youth and adults that tend to get left out of the educational fold. In India, adult education programmes are mainly targeted for the poor, marginalized groups such as rural youth, rural women, Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and the Muslim community as the problem of illiteracy is particularly grave among them. While this is necessary, in order for adult education to be inclusive, various specific groups that normally get left out of the education system also have to be identified. A clear statement that the programmes would focus on these groups would help establish the priority concerns of the adult education programmes. These would include marginalized groups and specific groups such as the migrants, nomads, displaced persons, out of school youth, under-employed/unemployed youth, physically challenged people, people with learning disabilities, older adults, transgender communities, and particularly women and girls among all of the above groups.

Even the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) focus on the ‘no one is left behind’ principle to ensure that the development programmes are inclusive in nature. Needless to say, the learning needs of each of these groups would be varied and hence pre-packaged ‘one size fits all’ type of programmes that have so far been offered, would be unsuitable. As suggested by Stromquist (2009), a variety of educational programmes that respond to specific educational needs of groups of learners, integrating adult learning and education for broader, economic, social and human development, would be required. The Marrakech document refers to ‘equal access of all learners to learning in digital environment.’ Technology is introducing important changes in the ways adults learn and are taught, as well as in the competencies and skills needed. While technology can be a driver of progress in education, it can also create new barriers that make social and collective learning more challenging, widen existing social divides and create new ones.

3. *Providing suitable physical and ICT-enabled infrastructure for the adult literacy and adult education programmes:* In India, adult education programmes have suffered mainly due to lack of proper physical infrastructure. In the case of literacy classes for women, most of the times literacy classes are either held close to where they live or else in the homes of the literacy instructor. Women of SC/ST communities also face problems of social distancing due to caste discrimination. Lack of suitable physical spaces has been one of the contributing factors for closing down literacy classes arbitrarily. Adult learners, particularly women learners, prefer face-to-face group interaction, rather than one-on-one interaction for educational purposes. What they require is physical space that is easily accessible. The local community could be involved in allocating suitable physical space. Also, considering lack of access to mobile phones and limited or no access to the internet among the rural poor, particularly among poor rural women, it would be necessary to spell out how technology can be made available through Community Learning Centres (CLCs). Technology-based CLCs can serve the information, communication and educational needs of the community. The Common Service Centers (CSCs) that are being set up under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology to provide information and communication services to all the Gram Panchayats across the country, could be energized to ensure access to technology to the marginalized groups. CSCs could play an important role in ensuring access and use of technology for encouraging adults to learn. Given the aspirations of Digital India and the fast-paced technological changes that are being brought about, it is necessary that the poor marginalized groups, particularly the poor women, are not deprived of access to and use of technology.

4. *Developing appropriate teaching-learning materials with the participation of learners:* Experience so far has indicated that in India, teaching/ learning materials have generally been developed centrally by experts, with little or no participation of those learners for whom these are intended. This process of curriculum development would have to be reversed so that learners would begin to exercise more control over the content of the materials. Adults, particularly women, learn best when learning materials are developed on the basis of their lived experiences. Sensitivity to the culture of the learners and use of local language ensure learner involvement and learner motivation. Since women understand and speak the local dialect, it is necessary to develop learning materials in the local language. While the initial literacy materials need to be developed in the local language, progression to the standard regional language needs to be made so that women can have access to the language of the respective State, which is the language of power. Nirantar, a feminist NGO has experience in this area.

5. *Mainstreaming gender issues in all the ALE programmes and empowering women:* So far, adult education programmes have paid little attention to gender issues. In order to deal with the massive problem of illiteracy among women, it is acknowledged that gender equality must receive central attention in all ALE programmes. Experience indicates that programmes which are part of lifelong learning policies and supported financially by governments are necessary for promoting gender equality. Gender equality is one of the SDGs and what is advocated is that it must become a cross-cutting issue and a key focus of national policies, budgets and institutions. Feminist groups have advocated the need to empower women so that structures of patriarchy can be questioned and a social cum cultural change can be brought about. A number of case studies undertaken across the world by the UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning (2016) highlight the wide variety of approaches for mainstreaming gender in literacy programmes and promoting women's empowerment.

6. *Developing a cadre of professional ALE functionaries in lifelong learning framework:* In order to meet the educational needs of adults in a lifelong learning context, it would be necessary to develop a cadre of professional adult educators who work full-time and receive suitable remuneration. Even UNESCO advocates the need to professionalize literacy instructors and adult educators. Since the experience so far has shown that volunteer-based programmes are not effective in the long run, it is therefore necessary to recognize and accept that there is now a need for trained and competent adult education functionaries who can provide good quality education to adults. If the government is serious about addressing the

educational needs of adults, then it must invest in developing a cadre of professional adult educators who work full-time and receive remuneration along with other benefits which accrue to government functionaries.

7. *Improving the quality of training of ALE functionaries:* Training of adult educators is a neglected aspect of most adult education programmes. Many of the training programmes are conducted as a mere ritual and a formality, as a result of which they contribute minimally to the professional growth of the personnel involved. The importance of training not just the grassroots educators but also functionaries of various development departments at all levels, has to be planned for and implemented. Training plans have to be made, institutions for providing such training are to be identified, and budget allocations need to be made on a sustained basis. Training has to be seen not as a one-shot affair but as an on-going, continuous process by offering courses that can lead to career development through certification and hence, increased motivation to learn. Professionalization of literacy instructors/educators would require the involvement of universities that could develop degree, diploma, and certificate courses. Since the training needs of functionaries at various levels would be enormous, involvement of a diverse range of stakeholders and organizations would be necessary, including local community organizations, central government institutions, universities, the private sector, international and indigenous NGOs, and capacity building organizations that have specialized knowledge.

Training programmes organized by government-run organizations/institutions normally do not pay much attention to efficacy. As a result, the quality of training programs is often poor and its usefulness questionable. Such training programs focus largely on knowledge transmission and the acquisition of skills. Rarely is an attempt made to examine personal values and the extent to which these affect the trainee's attitudes, beliefs, and values. Building on Mezirow's work, critical reflection on practice is necessary as a central element of learning for personal and professional growth. Such a reflection is particularly important when dealing with men and women who hold patriarchal values, or are intolerant of people from other communities, castes, religious or ethnic backgrounds. The advantage of involving NGOs is that they try to improve the quality of their programmes by developing models that promote adult learning and bring about sustained change in individuals and communities.

8. *Integrating ICTs in lifelong learning programmes:* Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have an important role to play in creating a knowledge-based society and in promoting lifelong learning. However, previous experiences in the use of traditional media such as radio and television for teaching

literacy to adults, particularly adult women showed that while these were innovative initiatives, the efforts were ad hoc, half-hearted, and were thwarted due to socio-economic reasons.

On the basis of a review of existing materials, Dighe, Hakeem and Shaeffer (2009) spelt out strategies for the successful use of ICTs in adult learning and education programmes that include -

- Formulating a coherent policy for integrating ICTs in ALE programmes that is broad-based, all-encompassing and within the overall framework of lifelong learning;
- Providing technology infrastructure and ensuring access. Community learning centres can ensure community access;
- Ensuring ICTs are people-driven rather than technology-driven. A parallel investment in ensuring people's readiness to use technology has to be made;
- Ensuring effective planning and programme design taking into account connectivity, affordability and capability;
- Community participation in planning and designing ICT-supported interventions so that communities support and commit to them;
- Capacity building and training of the functionaries, programme administrators and support staff on an on-going basis;
- Using ICTs to develop content that is culturally and linguistically relevant to the needs of the learners;
- Planning for sustainability at the planning stage itself;
- Ensuring multi-stakeholder partnerships, including the public and the private sector;
- Ensuring continuous monitoring and evaluation of ICT-supported programmes, with an interdisciplinary research approach to understand the complexities of using ICTs for ALE programmes.

The innovative work undertaken by civil society groups such as Digital Foundation and Nirantar can provide directions on how non-literate adults, particularly women can become digitally literate.

9. *Ensuring creation of literate environment and development of literate families, communities, societies:* Advancing a culture of reading, writing, and learning should be part of all literacy and lifelong learning strategies. Experience has shown how the literacy/adult education instructor would need to facilitate curriculum transaction by creating an environment of learning so that the adult learners are not only attracted to participate in the educational programme but continue with the

process of learning. A congenial atmosphere of give and take, of sharing experiences, of learning from one another, ensures that adults will continue to come to the educational programme. Learning strategies that evoke curiosity, questioning, analysis, synthesis, perspective building among learners help sustain learner interest. Adults need to be helped to learn holistically, rather than confining learning to a few limited areas or attempting to compartmentalize learning. It is necessary to establish cause-effect relationships, establish inter-linkages so that adult learners can begin to understand their own local reality within a wider context. Adults can be involved in eliciting information from different sources, facilitating the process of developing a variety of materials, using technology wherever possible. Audio/video materials can be very useful in generating interest and promoting adult learning.

The UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning (UIL) has been advocating the creation of literate environments and the development of literate families, communities, societies. Case studies from different countries of the world (UIL, 2017) show how a rich literate environment is essential if young people and adults are to be encouraged to engage in literacy learning as a means of sustaining and integrating their newly acquired skills into their everyday lives. From a lifelong learning perspective, literacy and numeracy need to be applied on a continuous basis in order to sustain and further develop competencies at more advanced levels.

10. *Understanding complexities of evolving an efficient monitoring and evaluation system:* Monitoring and evaluation play an important role in improving the quality of adult learning, not only from the perspective of the providers but also from that of the learners. The objectives of lifelong learning range from eradicating adult illiteracy to providing educational opportunities to adult learners throughout life. What is therefore evident is that the overall objective of adult learning should not be reduced to just literacy and ways to improve literacy levels. One of the problems in defining and measuring literacy is the lack of reliable information as the definition of literacy is still rudimentary.

The task of monitoring adult learning activities in non-formal education is not straightforward. For informal learning, concepts become even more complicated, making it difficult to identify activities and collect relevant data. Since lifelong learning includes formal, non-formal, and informal learning, involving a wide variety of providers as well as varied groups of learners, it would be necessary to put in place an effective monitoring and evaluation framework that ensures the information about such programmes and of learners, are systematically collected and analyzed.

Considering the enormity of the task involved, it might be useful to recall some of the recommendations made at a UIL meeting (2003) which include the following:

- Monitoring and evaluation of adult learning be made a central and cross-cutting theme;
- Two-way flow of monitoring and evaluation information between local, district, state, national and international levels, be ensured;
- Qualitative and quantitative data be compiled and analyzed to present a more comprehensive and realistic picture of programme achievements;
- Capacity building of adult educators be rigorously undertaken at national and sub-national levels for development of statistical, analytical and interpretive capability;
- The use of ICTs for monitoring and evaluation be vigorously implemented;
- Data be collected in disaggregated form allowing for comparisons to be made in terms of gender, socio-economic, religious groups, etc.;
- Monitoring and evaluation exercises consider the perspective of the learner;
- International monitoring and evaluation efforts already under way, be further strengthened.

11. *Providing adequate financial, material and human resources for ensuring right to education of adults in a lifelong learning society:* ALE programmes have never received the concerted attention they deserve. While the rate of literacy has gone up over the decades, the absolute number of illiterate youth and adults, has gone up enormously that India constitutes about 37% of the world's illiterates, majority of whom are women. The problem has been further exacerbated due to the challenges of a globalized, digitalized, highly technology-driven world, beset by economic, social, climate-related problems. Various UN resolutions, adopted by Member States, have provided an opportunity to national governments to address these challenges through ALE programmes in a lifelong learning framework. The Marrakech Declaration of making right to education a fundamental right for all, including the adults has provided an opportunity to address these issues head-on. So far, funds allocated for adult education have not exceeded even 1% of the education budget. All this would have to change. Public expenditure on adult education would have to be enhanced considerably. As a component of lifelong learning, ALE programmes would have to be funded through contributions of wide variety of stakeholders - corporates, multilateral and bilateral agencies, various ministries, employers, local governments, entrepreneurs, philanthropists. Likewise, involvement of the civil society groups would be essential to augment human and material resources. In other words, 'a whole of society' and 'whole of government' approach, as envisaged by the SDGs would be essential to make ALE programmes an integral part of lifelong learning society.

### Concluding remarks

The Covid-19 pandemic has jeopardized years of progress made in the educational systems around the world. Various United Nations agencies, UNESCO in particular have been augmenting financial resources through the Global Education Coalition, and increasing efforts to mitigate and curtail the impact of the current crisis on the educational systems. This will help to leverage education and skills development as an effective and efficient means for economic revival and sustainable development. Governments have been urged to 'leave no one behind' in the educational system and to provide direct and targeted support to the vulnerable populations. The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning and allied international and bi-lateral agencies have been organizing a variety of capacity building programmes for this purpose. The problems faced by India are phenomenal and while issues regarding school education need to be addressed immediately, it is likely that due to various constraints education of marginalized groups would be neglected. Needless to say, that would spell disaster for the country. The government must show its political commitment and must mobilize resources and garner support from international agencies, NGOs, civil society groups, universities, media, professionals, and particularly the private sector, to ensure that the education of the marginalized groups gets the attention it deserves and thus becomes a nation-wide movement.

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## **Mobile Application Use for Adult Literacy Facilitator Training in Nigeria: Evidence from an Empirical Investigation**

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### **Abstract**

This study examined the use of a mobile application to train facilitators of adult literacy with a view to exploring the possibility of providing cost-effective facilitator training, as against regular training programmes, which incur several additional costs. These costs could be for venue, meals, production of training manuals, honorarium, accommodation, subsistence allowance, among others. This has been a reason why facilitator training has become a neglected field in most African countries, especially Nigeria. The study adopted the pretest-post test control group, quasi-experimental design, and selected 66 adult literacy facilitators using a multi-stage sampling procedure. Two research questions were raised and analysed using frequency count, mean and standard deviation. Results revealed that it is cheaper to train the facilitators using the mobile application compared to conventional face-to-face training method and, also that the participants in the experimental group who used the Mobile Training Application (MTA) performed better than the participants in the control group who went through the conventional training method. Recommendations were made based on these findings that awareness could be created among adult literacy facilitators about this innovation of the mobile application for training. Also, the government as well as other organizations interested in the training of facilitators, such as UNESCO, could be encouraged to adopt this cost-effective method to train facilitators of adult literacy in Nigeria and other African countries.

**Keywords:** *Mobile application, cost-effective training, Nigeria, facilitator, adult literacy.*

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## **Introduction**

Literacy in its simplest form is the ability to read, write and compute simple arithmetic which is essential for personal, community, as well as national development. UNESCO (2016) considers literacy as essential for acquiring basic reading, writing and numeracy skills which further opens up an individual to an unlimited access to information as well as opportunity to learn throughout life. Through these skills people are empowered for the betterment of themselves and their society. For this reason, Damodharan and Rengarajan (1999) described literacy as an engine driving the development and improvement of any society, which implies that literacy does not only impart knowledge and skills, but is also important for human capital development which drives technological and economic growth.

Despite the key position and benefits of literacy to individuals as well as the nation, the problem of illiteracy still persists. In the world today, about 775 million adults are still not literate (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2016), with Africa recording the highest illiteracy rate of about 182 million adults unable to read and write in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2016). Yet, it has been established that the persistence of illiteracy is a major factor slowing down the pace of development in the continent. This calls for a rapid scaling up of adult literacy programmes. Researches, however, reveal that one of the major challenges confronting adult literacy delivery in Africa has to do with lack of qualified or properly trained adult literacy facilitators (Kester and Okemakinde, 2008; Onwuadi, 2012; Fasokun and Pwol, 2015). Therefore, a proper scaling up of adult literacy programmes cannot be achieved without addressing the problem of lack of qualified adult literacy facilitators.

Most adult literacy facilitators in Nigeria are volunteers who had no professional training in the theory and practice of adult learning. Most of them are either teachers in active service or retired from the formal education system, who never trained as adult educators or facilitators (Onwuadi, 2012; Ofoegbu and Agboeze, 2014). According to Prendiville (2008:10) “one of the main weaknesses of voluntary facilitators is their lack of andragogical training and lack of understanding of how to establish an atmosphere conducive for adult learning”. In other words, most facilitators of adult literacy programmes in Nigeria lack training in basic facilitation skills necessary for effective adult literacy teaching (Fasokun and Pwol, 2015). Moreover, the findings of the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education (NMEC) (2008) revealed that some adult education instructors in Nigeria possessed only post literacy certificate.

It also revealed that about 54 percent of these instructors possessed post-secondary school certificates while a significant number of them were Grade II certificate holders. This problem is further compounded due to the fact that trainings for literacy facilitators are either rarely carried out or not carried out at all in some cases. Even discussions focusing on the training of literacy facilitators today is regarded as a neglected field, it is noted by its lack of empirical investigation. For instance, there is said to be a dearth of both data and research as far as literacy facilitator training is concerned (Rogers, 2004; Maruatona, 2012; UNESCO, 2016). Training is indeed cost prohibitive (Kester and Owojuyigbe, 2014). This is due to the fact that in the course of training, other costs are usually incurred. For instance, the cost of venue, meals for trainees and resource persons, production of training materials or manuals, honorarium for resource persons, accommodation for trainees and resource persons, subsistence allowance for trainees and other logistical costs.

Under the Revitalizing Adult and Youth Literacy (RAYL) project, for example, 12 million naira was released by UNESCO to the southwest zone of the country alone for the training of 60 facilitators. This implies that N200,000 was expended on each facilitator (RAYL Final Report, 2017). Considering the number of facilitators in the non-formal sector, the attempt by UNESCO is only a drop in a bucket.

The number of facilitators trained represents a minute fraction of the whole. Yet, it is expected that trainings should be carried out quarterly, implying that the total cost of training a facilitator 4 times a year is N800,000. It is for this reason, the prohibitive cost required to organize professional facilitator training, and that the non-formal education sector rarely gets adequate funding from government, that a more cost-effective approach to training needs to be explored (Kester and Owojuyigbe, 2014).

Meanwhile, studies in Africa have found the use of mobile phones among individuals to be very important. The mobile phone unlike computer is easily accessible and affordable, making it the most appropriate for developing countries. In addition, mobile phones are cheaper compared to other ICT tools such as computers, laptops, tablets, personal digital assistants among others. More so, among mobile devices such as netbook, smartphone, e-book reader and tablet, the smartphone is the cheapest. Besides, mobile phones have some affordable features, which personal computers (PCs) cannot boast of, like, ubiquity, mobility, lifespan of battery, several applications and tools which could be improvised or adapted for educational use and above all high penetration rate in Africa (International Telecommunications Union, 2010; Goundar, 2011; Adedola et al., 2013; Adelere, 2017).

For this reason, this study experimented with a Mobile Training Application (MTA) for facilitation skills enhancement. The MTA is a software for facilitator training designed by the researcher. This application was installed on android OS mobile phones and used for facilitators' training without bringing them to a particular location. With this mobile application installed on facilitators' mobile phones, they had access to the training content on the go, anywhere and at any time. Previous studies have established the problem of lack of appropriate facilitation skills due to poor training, training as a determinant of job performance among literacy facilitators, and that training is cost prohibitive (Fasokun and Pwol, 2015; Oyelami, 2017; Kester and Owojuyigbe, 2014). However, there appears to be no empirical record of the use of ICTs, particularly mobile phone for the training of literacy facilitators, despite its great affordability. It is against this backdrop, that a Mobile Training Application (MTA) was designed and used to train facilitators of adult literacy for facilitation skills enhancement.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of this study was to develop a mobile training application and use it to train adult literacy facilitators for facilitation skills enhancement in Oyo State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study include the following:

- i. To determine the cost effectiveness of the use of the Mobile Training Application (MTA) for training compared to the conventional training.
- ii. To examine the effect of treatment (the application) on facilitation skills.
- iii. To determine the difference between the achievement of participants in experimental and control groups.

### **Research questions**

- i. How cost effective is the use of the application for training compared to conventional training?
- ii. What is the difference between the achievement of participants in experimental and control groups?

### **Research hypothesis**

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant main effect of treatment on facilitation skills.

## Methodology

### Research design

The study adopted the pretest-post-test control group, quasi-experimental research design.

### Sample and sampling techniques

The sample size for this study was 66, which was selected using a multi-stage sampling procedure. Thirty-three (33) participants were assigned to each of experimental and control groups respectively. This was done as follows:

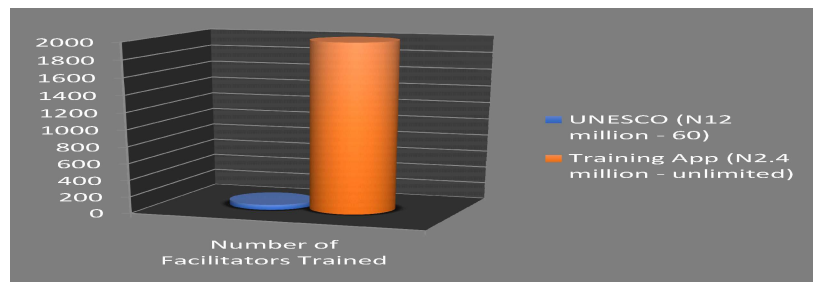
Stage 1: All the 33 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Oyo State were selected by total enumeration.

Stage 2: Sixty-six (66) adult literacy facilitators facilitating in conventional literacy centres in Oyo State, under the oversight of the State Agency Adult and Non-Formal Education (AANFE), were selected by total enumeration. This was done in order to prevent attrition and make it the least for duration of this study.

Stage 3: The 33 LGAs were divided into 7 zones using stratified sampling technique. This was done in line with AANFE's style of zoning literacy centres in Oyo State. The zones include Ibadan City (with 5 LGAs); Ibadan Less City (with 6 LGAs); Ibarapa (with 3 LGAs); Ogbomoso (with 5 LGAs); Oke-Ogun 1 (with 5 LGAs); Oke-Ogun 2 (with 5 LGAs); and Oyo (with 4 LGAs). This zoning was necessitated by the need to make monitoring and assessment of participants (which are important parts of this study) easy.

## Results

### Research Question 1: How cost effective is the use of the application for training, in comparison to conventional training?

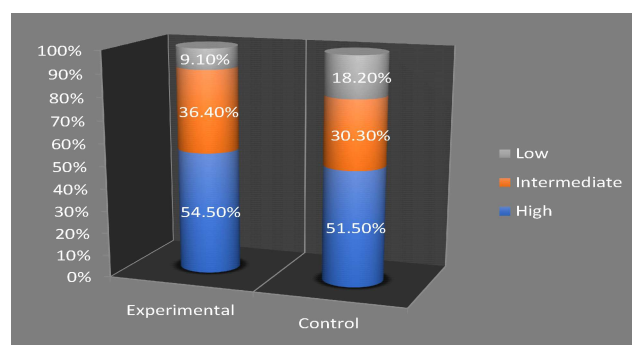


**Fig. 1: Number of facilitators trained and cost implication by UNESCO and through Mobile Training Application**

Source: (RAYL Final Report, 2017; Field Work, 2021)

The above figure shows the number of facilitators trained under UNESCO's Revitalising Adult and Youth Literacy (RAYL) project and those trained through the use of the Mobile Training Application (MTA) developed in this study, as well as the cost implications of these trainings. The figure reveals that UNESCO, under the RAYL Project spent N12 million to train 60 facilitators in South-Western Nigeria. It also reveals that with the use of the Mobile Training Application, it costed N2.4 million to train 33 facilitators (and has the capacity to train an unlimited number of facilitators).

**Research Question 2: What is the difference between the achievement of participants in experimental and control groups?**



**Fig. 2: Difference between achievement of participants in experimental and control group**

Source: Field Work (2021)

The above figure shows the various facilitation skills levels of facilitators in the experimental and control groups after the intervention. It reveals that 54.5% of the facilitators possessed high facilitation skills in the experimental group, while 51.5% of the facilitators in control group possessed high facilitation skills. It also reveals that 36.4% of the facilitators possessed intermediate facilitation skills in the experimental group, while 30.3% of the facilitators possessed intermediate facilitation skills in the control group. And lastly, 9.1% and 18.2% of the facilitators fell within the low facilitation skills level in the experimental and control groups respectively. This result indicates that facilitators in the experimental group performed better than those in the control group. This suggests that the facilitators who used the Mobile Training Application for training fared better than those who used the conventional training manual.

**Hypothesis:** There is no significant main effect of treatment on facilitation skills.

**Table 1: Summary of Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) on Facilitation Skills**

Dependent Variable: PostECS						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	1.113 <sup>a</sup>	2	.556	2.519	.089	.074
Intercept	42.866	1	42.866	194.042	.000	.755
Pre ECS	.143	1	.143	.648	.424	.010
APP	1.026	1	1.026	4.644	.035	.069
Error	13.917	63	.221			
Total	1008.000	66				
<b>Corrected Total</b>	<b>15.030</b>	<b>65</b>				

a. R Squared = .074 (Adjusted R Squared = .045)

The above table reveals that there is a significant main effect of treatment on facilitators' effective communication skills ( $F_{(163)} = 4.64$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ;  $K^2 = .07$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis  $H_0$  is rejected. It also reveals that there is a significant main effect of treatment on facilitators' active listening skills ( $F_{(163)} = 4.73$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ;  $K^2 = .07$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis  $H_0$  is rejected. Similarly, the table shows that there is no significant main effect of treatment on facilitators' participation enhancement skills ( $F_{(163)} = .04$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ;  $K^2 = .00$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis  $H_0$  is accepted. It also shows that there is no significant main effect of treatment on facilitators' lesson planning skills ( $F_{(163)} = .89$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ;  $K^2 = .01$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis  $H_0$  is accepted. Lastly, the table reveals that there is a significant main effect of treatment on facilitators' evaluation skills ( $F_{(163)} = 6.38$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ;  $K^2 = .09$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis  $H_0$  is rejected.

## Discussion on findings

Results of the study imply that it is cheaper to train using the MTA as compared to conventional face-to-face training method. For instance, the Training of Trainers (TOT) capacity building programme for literacy facilitators organized in 2014 under UNESCO's RAYL project, costed 12 million naira. This fund was meant for the south-west zone alone, and for the training of 60 facilitators (RAYL Final Report, 2017). Meanwhile, with the use of the Mobile Training Application, 33 facilitators were trained (and had the capacity to train an unlimited number of facilitators), with



2.4 million naira. This also means that with only 20% (N2.4 million) of the amount (N12 million) expended by UNESCO to train 60 facilitators in south-west zone alone, facilitators in the whole country could have been trained using the Mobile Training Application.

This is in line with the finding of Akinyele (1988), one of the earliest studies which explored the use of ICT for adult learning in Nigeria, and found ICT-enabled instructional package to be cost-effective as compared to face-to-face instructional package. Reasons for this are not farfetched, as a lot of indirect costs are incurred when holding a physical (face-to-face) training programme. For instance, costs for venue of the training; decorating the venue; accommodation for trainees; accommodation for resource persons; meals for trainees and resource persons; payment of honorarium to resource persons; payment of subsistence allowance to trainee; payment of transportation fare to trainees; payment of allowance to other organizers of the training, etc. All of these are indirect costs, but can take a huge lump of the total budget for the training. Yet, there is another direct cost which must be incurred in organizing such training programme, which is the cost for the production of the facilitators' training manual. Practically, the amount incurred on all the indirect costs mentioned above, are always greater than what is spent on the production of the training manual, which is the most important component of the training.

Meanwhile, Kester and Owojuyigbe (2014) recommended that a more cost-effective approach to adult literacy facilitators' training ought to be explored, particularly since the non-formal education sector rarely gets adequate funding from the government. This study has attempted a solution to this problem, by innovating a new and cost-effective approach to training adult literacy facilitators. Adelere and Ojedeji (2022) also believed that with a cost-effective approach to training, the government and other stakeholders could be encouraged to reconsider sponsorship for more adult literacy training programmes. Results from this study confirmed that innovative and cost-effect approach to facilitators' training is indeed possible. This has equally dismissed the fears that technology is very expensive or highly cost-intensive. Findings from this study have shown that although technology use (particularly the mobile app) for training might be expensive to initiate, but this is usually only an initial cost.

Once the application is up and running, it could be used to train unlimited people. In this way, training through the mobile application is cheaper as compared to the conventional face-to-face approach. Results also imply that there is a significant main effect of treatment on facilitators' effective communication skills. This means

that facilitators who used the mobile application for training recorded improvement in their communication skills. This is in line with the position of Youngman and Singh (2005) who maintained that training leads to improved performance in effective communication of adult literacy facilitators. Also, Adedore and Ojedeji (2022) considered training as essential for improvement in communication skills of facilitators, and crucial for effective literacy teaching. This is simply because adult literacy facilitation has evolved from what it used to be, many years ago. Literacy facilitation, therefore, in today's world requires better specialized skills and effective communication takes the lead. The best way of helping facilitators master such skills, is through specialized training programmes designed to teach specific facilitation skills.

Adedore and Ojedeji (2020) also found that a general training programme is capable of enhancing functional skills. They stated that facilitators are the ones driving the success of adult literacy programmes and the kind of training they are given is highly essential for their delivery. Results of their study signified that not only effective planning, materials and financial support but the facilitation skills are equally important to drive such programmes. Thus, it was established that the performance of literacy facilitators is strongly connected to the kind of training they receive. The finding of this study is not any different, as training did enhance the facilitation skills, particularly the effective communication skills of facilitators. In the same vein, results of this study imply that there is a significant main effect of treatment on facilitators' active listening skills. This means that facilitators who used the mobile application for training recorded improvement in their active listening skills. This finding buttresses the position of Prendiville (2008) and Rogers (2005) that active listening is more than mere listening, which makes it a skill. And, that it is through specialized trainings that such skills are acquired or enhanced. For this reason, Rogers (2005) recommended training programmes that enhance active listening skills for facilitators of adults. Thus, this study has further established that specialized training programmes are capable for enhancing active listening skills of adult literacy facilitators.

Meanwhile, Rogers (2005) stated that one of the major weaknesses is the fact that most adult literacy facilitators are volunteers from the formal education system and they lack necessary skills of facilitation. For this reason, he maintained that such skill gap could only be bridged through training and this study has shown this to be true. It is also interesting to note that the use of the mobile app as a mode of delivery of the training programme in no way hampered the outcome of the training. This is in line with the finding of Adedore and Ojedeji (2016) whose study revealed the use of 'WhatsApp' mobile application as a useful learning support tool.

Similarly, Jordan et al. (2017) found the use of mobile applications for learning to be highly stimulating and one that provides learners with better experience compared to what happens in the conventional class. In a similar manner, this study has shown that just as other forms of learning, facilitators' training could also benefit immensely from the affordability of the mobile technology. For instance, facilitators who used the mobile application for training recorded improvement in their active listening skills, and performed better than those who used the conventional training method.

Results also show that there is no significant main effect of treatment on facilitators' participation enhancement skills. This means that facilitators who used the mobile app for training recorded no significant improvement in their participation enhancement skills. This result lends credence to the fact that literacy facilitators are essentially volunteers who are trained teachers from the formal education system. For instance, it is expected that a teacher who has been teaching for years should be capable of enhancing the participation of learners in the learning environment. Thus, the result of this study revealed that the display of participation enhancement skills on the part of facilitators was not traceable to training they received through the use of the mobile training application. Yet, this has nothing to do with the mobile training application, but with the fact that facilitators are experienced teachers who are skillful at enhancing the participation of learners in the learning environment. Thus, this finding is contrary to the opinion of Rogers (2005) that participation enhancement is a skill which most literacy facilitators do not possess.

On the contrary, this result aligns with the position of Prendiville (2008) that most facilitators of adult literacy have a wealth of teaching experience which is considered as a huge advantage. Thus, one of the advantages is the fact that an average adult literacy facilitator should be able to skilfully enhance the participation of learners at the literacy centre, by virtue of being in the teaching profession for years. However, this contradicts the position of Rogers (2005) wherein he says, that to enhance the participation of children is different from what it takes to enhance the participation of adults. He is thereby suggesting that the experiences facilitators have gathered over the years as teachers in the formal education system, is not relevant for adult literacy teaching. Results from this study have shown that the experience of teachers who volunteer as facilitators cannot be disregarded, but maximised and further enhanced for improved productivity on the part of the facilitators. Therefore, training as far as participation enhancement skill is concerned is mostly for skill enhancement rather than acquisition.

Similarly, results imply that there is no significant main effect of treatment on facilitators' lesson planning skills. This means that facilitators who used the mobile

application for training recorded no significant improvement in their lesson planning skills as a result of using the application for training. This result again supports the fact that those who work as facilitators are experienced teachers who are skillful at planning their lessons. Thus, the use of the mobile training application for training had no significant effect on their lesson planning skills because they were already skillful as far as lesson planning is concerned before the intervention. Therefore, their display of this skill could not be attributed to the use of the mobile application for training. This is in line with the position of Adelore and Ojedeji (2019) that most adult literacy facilitators are qualified teachers though not for adults. Therefore, it is normal to expect that such facilitators will possess appropriate lesson planning skills. Meanwhile, lesson planning skill is similar across levels. This means that the same lesson planning skills a teacher in the formal education system possesses is equally relevant for use in the adult literacy centre. Once again, the vast experience which teachers in the formal education system possess is not disregarded.

Also, results imply that there is a significant main effect of treatments on facilitators' evaluation skills. This means that facilitators who used the mobile application for training recorded improvement in their evaluation skills. This confirms the position of Land (2005) who emphasized that the adult literacy facilitator needs to be trained, and that such training is essential for enhancement of their lesson planning skills in particular, including other facilitation skills.

Land (2005) argued that several training programmes which have been organized for literacy facilitators in the past hardly focused on lesson planning skills. He argued further that many a times training programmes are organized based on organizers' perceived needs rather than facilitators' training needs. Therefore, he concluded that training programmes that are more sensitive to facilitators' training needs hold more value for their facilitation skills, particularly lesson planning skills. Therefore, this study is in agreement with this position that there is a significant effect of training on facilitators' evaluation skills.

## **Conclusion and recommendations**

This study established that that facilitator training through the use of a mobile application is more cost-effective as compared to training through the conventional face-to-face mode. Similarly, the study revealed that training via the mobile application achieved better results as compared to training via the conventional mode. Having established that the Mobile Training Application (MTA) is more cost-effective in comparison to conventional training, the government as well as other organizations interested in the training of facilitators, such as UNESCO could be encouraged to

adopt such means to train facilitators. This could be done by adopting the standard and validated procedure provided in this study or by simply adopting the one already developed in this study. Policy makers could empower government agencies who are saddled with the responsibility of providing and monitoring adult literacy programmes such as AANFE and NMEC, through necessary policies. This could lead to championing the course of developing more mobile training applications for cost-effective facilitator trainings in the future.

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## **Indian Higher Education System for Sustainable Development: An Exploratory Study in the Light of NEP 2020**

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• Rajesh<sup>2</sup>

### **Abstract**

The National Education Policy 2020 recognises the significance of sustainable development in higher education. The focus of higher education is to achieve excellence in learning, skills and competencies. On the other hand, sustainable development involves generation and mobilisation of resources to provide quality of life to the people and resolve complex social issues. COVID-19 pandemic has not only affected the world economy but rather everyone's life, all over the world. Though every Higher Education system (HE system) strives for quality in teaching and research, differences can be noticed between endeavours for social outcome and social development. This research work aims to review the framework of HE system through systematic literature review and identify the priorities pursued by the HE system so far. It will also collect insights from senior faculty members and senior academic administrators of the HE system in Delhi through semi-structured interviews for possible change in their strategic direction. Information collected will be analysed through qualitative techniques and recommendations will be made for Indian HE system to steer their path towards sustainable development. The findings of the study will also be relevant and insightful for the regulatory authorities and higher education institutions to revisit their existing policy framework in the light of National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020). The study also draws its relevance from the fact that Indian education system including the higher education is undergoing radical changes in the wake of NEP 2020 that focusses on multi-disciplinary education and societal values.

**Keywords:** *Higher Education system, sustainable development, NEP 2020, multidisciplinary education, social development.*

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## Introduction

The global sustainability agenda is having a significant impact on higher education for sustainable development. Education is and will always remain an area of significant importance as it is a goal in itself and a means by which other aspects of sustainable development can be achieved. Goal 4 of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of United Nations (UN) promotes quality education and aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. UNESCO along with UNICEF, the World Bank, UNDP, UN Women and UNHCR organized the World Education Forum 2015 in Incheon, Republic of Korea, in May 2015. This was attended by 1,600 participants from 160 countries who adopted the Incheon Declaration for Education 2030, which sets out a new vision for education for the next fifteen years. Its declaration under section “towards 2030: a new vision for education” emphasised that our vision is to transform lives through education, recognising the important role of education as a main driver of development and in achieving the other proposed SDGs.<sup>3</sup> It is inspired by a humanistic vision of education and development based on human rights and dignity, social justice, inclusion, protection, cultural, linguistic, ethnic diversity and shared responsibility<sup>4</sup>. Higher education institutions and their various stakeholders, including students, faculty, researchers, administration, alumni, businesses, social movements, consumer organizations, governments, and professional associations are more important than ever (Jongbloed et al., 2008) and should reconsider the idea of higher education for sustainable development in the light of the SDGs, which are a collaborative tool for addressing global issues as well as a strategy for sustainable development (United Nations 2015; Saito et al., 2017; Kanie and Biermann 2017) in a coordinated and interrelated manner.

Indian Higher Education system is undergoing many strategic changes in the light of NEP 2020. NEP 2020 formulated by the Ministry of Education, Government of India underscores the significance of sustainable higher education which not only advances the knowledge of the students in the light of technological growth, but also sensitises them towards social concerns such as climate change, rise in pollution levels, depletion of natural resources and the like. The NEP 2020 also emphasises that with the changing environment and emergence of epidemics and pandemics, the workforce will be required to have new skills in meeting the requirement of energy, water & sanitation in future. The Policy also lays special impetus on not just

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<sup>3</sup><https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000233137>

<sup>4</sup>[https://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/education-2030-incheon-framework-for-action-implementation-of-sdg4-2016-en\\_2.pdf](https://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/education-2030-incheon-framework-for-action-implementation-of-sdg4-2016-en_2.pdf)



developing the cognitive skills of students, but also on harnessing the potential of every individual to the fullest. Besides building on the higher order cognitive capacities such as critical thinking and problem-solving, emphasis is placed on developing and promoting social, emotional, and ethical dispositions. The Policy also signals that higher education institutions should create an environment for holistic education which is equitable and accessible to all. It also points out that education institutions should be guided by the principles of ethics, human and constitutional values. The vision of the policy also advocates not just imparting the right skill set in the changing global environment but also instilling values and dispositions that support responsible commitment to human rights and global well-being. (MHRD, 2020: 6)

NEP 2020 acknowledges that higher education system can only add to the growth of national economy when it is backed by the requisite knowledge creation and innovation. It also mentions that generating employment opportunities for students is only one aspect of the larger agenda of creating just and equitable communities and more socially responsible citizens for having a prosperous and cohesive nation. Some of the challenges identified in NEP 2020 include a fragmented education eco-system, focus on rigid specialization and compartmentalization of disciplines, limited access to higher education in socio-economically disadvantaged areas, lack of courses in local languages, sub-standard leadership and lack of effective regulatory system (MHRD, 2020:33). NEP 2020 aspires to completely overhaul the Indian education system by creating a vision which encompasses some strategic changes in the higher education system. Some of the desired changes mentioned in the Policy include increased impetus on multi-disciplinary research, giving more access to education, amending the curriculum and the teaching pedagogy, accelerated student support for an enhanced learning experience and creating greater opportunities for exceptional public education (MHRD, 2020: 34). Besides NEP 2020, the COVID 19 pandemic re-affirmed that change is the only constant and any industry including the higher education sector can only sustain if the change is embraced and navigated effectively. There is a paradigm shift in the perspective of the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of imparting education in the Indian education eco-system, especially the higher education system in the wake of the pandemic.

The pandemic disrupted the traditional teaching model and created the necessity to critically think of alternative ways of imparting education backed by technology and digital interface. This disruption led the policy makers, higher education administrators and educators to reflect on the multi-faceted challenge of creating inclusive e-learning solutions, tackling the digital divide and creatively engaging students on digital platforms.

Online teaching is a relatively new concept in India and was not prevalent before the lockdown announced by the Government of India on March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020 in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic (Tyagi & Malik, 2020: 4038). A paradigm shift from the traditional and conventional learning to the online mechanism posed innumerable challenges to student engagement on one hand while enabling educational institutions in India to leverage the advantage of asynchronous learning through digital platforms. In a developing country like India, the infrastructural dimension for teaching also needs special attention for non-intermittent teaching. Pandemic has created the necessity to make mental well-being and health as a key priority area in HE system for its students and staff. While the pandemic confronted the Indian education sector with these challenges, it also shaped the pathway towards imparting education through hybrid mode and highlighted the need for creating a resilient Indian higher education sector that is sustainable in the long run. In the wake of the pandemic and formulation of NEP 2020, Indian higher education system is undergoing restructuring and is in the process of implementing few stringent measures to make higher education system more inclusive. This would be done by lightening the burden of students and making education more accessible to all, with a perspective of holistic development.

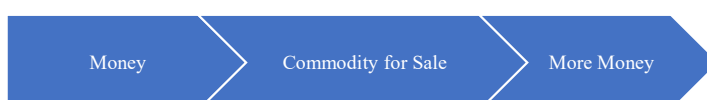
This research work aims to present the perspective of higher education administrators and senior faculty members, having an experience of more than 10 years. Their views about the challenges faced will help in suggesting the changes for strategic direction, on account of NEP 2020 to make the HE system more sustainable.

### **Objectives and significance of the study**

According to Shephard (2015:2), the goal of higher education for sustainable development is to “respond to societal expectations to address environmental, social, cultural, and economic issues that threaten the sustainability of life on Earth” through educational strategies. However, the definition given by (Franco et al., 2018: 1622), goes beyond this assertion. In order to address urgent sustainability issues arising in the pursuit of the SDGs, higher education institutions themselves, or in partnership with external stakeholders (governments, business, and civil society organizations) are driving the impact sustainability approach known as higher education for sustainable development. The significance of higher education for sustainable development is critical. In order to promote sustainable social and environmental transformations, higher education institutions are essential (Cortese 2003:18; Leal Filho 2011: 430). Additionally, according to Lozano et al., it is their social duty to assist students and the larger community in acquiring the skills

necessary for sustainable development (Lozano et al., 2015: 14). Thus, it is important to carefully consider how the SDGs are being achieved in relation to higher education.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we need to examine the purpose of higher education. As McMurtry (1998) describes the dominant market system as a value code that affirms more money revenue as good and rejects less money revenues as bad. He calls this a priori principle of value and disvalue as money-code of value. It is represented as:



Money is the beginning and end of the sequence. In contrast to money-code of value, McMurtry (2002) also proposed the life-code of value which is:



He defines life as “organic movement, sentience, and feeling, and thought” and Means of life as “whatever enables life to be preserved or to extend its vital range on these three planes of being alive” such as clean air, water nutritious food, shelter, affective interaction, environmental space, and accessible learning conditions. Maintaining these conditions reproduces life; augmenting and deepening them increases life-value.

When corporate interests permeate education discourse, educators are not well trained or responsible and students are focussed on pay packets, educational institutions are merely centres of preparation for jobs. A money-code of value shapes all aspects of colleges and universities. At present, the corporate culture, policy, and decision making in higher education based on money-code of value appears to be acceptable worldwide. But the emerging global economic, social, and environmental phenomenon suggests that this theoretical underpinning in our higher education is surely not sustainable. In fact, *higher education needs to be based on life-code value to address the issues of healthcare, global warming, protection of natural resources, availability of clean water and healthy food, good governance, justice system, living conditions and human rights, which are life-based and life-protective. Resolving these issues are life affirmative and allow society to protect and enable open access to means to life. Higher education needs to revolve on values built on human agency and enable access for all community in the world rather than for a privileged few to grow and express themselves.*

*If it is based on life-code value, it is good for an individual as well as for the public and will then not be a commodity [stress added to underscore its importance].*

The objective of this research paper is to assess the relevance of Indian higher education system. When we discuss about higher education, we generally refer to output, not on outcome and impact on sustainable development. Now in the present digitally connected world, where we are putting our efforts to achieve innovation and excellence in Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), Internet of Things (IoT), higher education cannot be left to be a privilege for a few based on money-code of value. The research paper will collect insights from HE system academic administrators and senior faculty members with more than 10 years of experience in India to suggest strategic direction for sustainable development of HE system in the light of NEP 2020. This research work would help enhance our knowledge of the current state of higher education for sustainable development goals and identify barriers that higher education institutions must overcome, in order to effectively develop practices that support the SDGs.

### **Literature review**

The review of relevant and recent literature in higher education systems for sustainable development reflects that globally there is a misalignment between the social and economic goals of higher education systems, whereby India is no exception. The review of literature presented below draws from some recent papers which present the challenges faced by higher education systems, efforts made by them to re-invent education for holistic development of students and the strategies to overcome those challenges.

According to Steiner & Posch (2006: 877) educators and researchers must move away from the idea of the teacher as the ‘source’ of information and the student as the ‘consumer’ of the information. The knowledge and skills taught in university classes need to be applied at the same time in the real world. This creates a demand driven process of mutual learning where students are self-responsible and choose which tools to use in the process of achieving sustainable development. Due to the dynamic nature of this process, students experience sustainable development instead of simply memorizing its features. Thus, the process of educating for sustainability and practical applied sustainability becomes sustainable.

Chan (2016: 19) reviewed and synthesised the social and economic benefits of completing a college degree from the perspective of both the undergraduate students

and the education providers. They investigated the public and private purposes of higher education from the perspective of both students and higher educators as well as its implications for the future of higher education institutions. They reviewed 60 peer reviewed journal articles and 25 books published in the time span of 2000 to 2016 and their findings suggest that there was a significant misalignment between the higher education institutions and students, with respect to economic and social benefits of higher education. While the undergraduate students' expectations from the college were more personal and instrumental in nature and focussed on economic benefits and developmental goals, higher education institutions' focus was more on universal goals which focus on life and society changing outcomes.

Casarejos et al (2017:10) proposed a conceptual framework for modelling the organisational environment of higher education institutions. They also suggested a set of strategic sustainability measures to drive institutions towards sustainability and provided an assessment scheme. The scheme comprises of four indices to measure the degree of commitment, parity, difficulty and institutional performance throughout the implementation process of the proposed measures. In the study, the authors proposed a set of 40 strategic sustainability actions under four dimensions namely administrative, socio-cultural, academic and operational. The administrative dimension comprised of topics like governance, transparency, monitoring and the sustainability actions comprised of engaging community members in democratic process that fosters holistic sustainable practices. The socio-cultural dimension reflected on more complex topics including gender equality, social equity, wellbeing, holistic thinking and the actions entailed creating an equitable platform for all and providing a space which embraced diversity and plurality. The academic dimension expressed topics related to curriculum, research, interdisciplinary approach and actions comprised of creating an environment for trans and multi-disciplinary research. The fourth dimension was an operational dimension and addressed topics including water, energy, bio-diversity and sustainable actions related to it included sensitisation and awareness of members towards utilisation of resources.

Tasdemir and Gazo (2020: 12) focused on the significance of having a comprehensive course curriculum that integrated modern management techniques which further creates job related skills and sustainability concepts. The authors used a 17-question survey to gauge pre and post education awareness related to sustainability concepts and modern management techniques. The findings suggested that the proposed course curriculum was effective in enhancing sustainability awareness at both overall and individual sustainability pillar levels. Their findings have implications for higher education institutions aspiring to create a trans-disciplinary course.

Sa & Serpa (2020: 13) in their paper highlighted how the Covid-19 pandemic had a deep impact on socio-cultural, economical, and digital facets around the globe. The pandemic also reshaped the education system completely with virtual classes through digital interface. The paper brought to light the challenges that the pandemic posed on the higher education sector and made the education administrators re-think education and the mode of imparting it. At the same time, the authors enumerate that this unprecedented change is also an opportune time for educators to re-think and re-define the teaching methods, build on digital technologies, improve the digital sustainable development, re-define leadership models and the channels of interaction.

Chaleta et al (2021: 8) mapped the sustainable development goals in the curricula units of 7 departments of the school of social sciences at the University of Evora, which had undergraduate students enrolled in the year 2020-2021. Total of 449 curricular units were identified, out of which 374 had students enrolled in 2020-2021. The final data pertained to 187 course units which had Sustainable Development Goals in addition to sustainable development goal 4 assigned to all the course units. The findings revealed that only half of the curriculum units were marked with a sustainable development goal and the most cited objectives were related to Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) which pertained to gender equality; Sustainable Development Goal 10 (SDG 10) which pertained to reduced inequalities; Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG 8) which pertained to decent work and economic growth and lastly sustainable development goal 16 (SDG 16) pertaining to peace, justice and strong institutions. The variation in the objectives was also marked by the differences in departments such as department of economics and management had more objectives pertaining to labour and economic growth, whereas other departments had more objectives pertaining to gender and inequalities.

Sáez de Camera et al (2021: 1) presented a case of the University of the Basque Country which was focussed on transforming into an institution which fostered sustainable development, inclusion and social commitment through an effective strategy. The paper exhibited a practical example of moving forward towards a verifiable contribution towards sustainability. The paper also depicted the contribution of the University towards 12 Sustainable Development Goals out of 17 along with three sectorial plans namely equality campus, inclusion campus and planet campus. The case of the University provides insights into the challenges faced by the higher education institutions towards sustainability goals and the ways to approach them.

Dwivedi & Joshi (2023: 4444) reflected that significant reforms to the Indian education system have been brought about by the recent implementation of NEP. An interest in understanding how these changes might impact the nation's higher

education institutions' efforts to go global, is growing. Effective internationalization efforts have also been hampered by previous obstacles to internationalization in Indian higher education, including a lack of standardized policies and frameworks, a lack of resources, regulatory complexity, varying infrastructure levels, and differences in quality between institutions. These difficulties have made it clear that NEP's approach to overcoming these barriers and advancing the internationalization goal needs to be critically examined.

The review of relevant literature highlights the significance of the said research work. In the light of the dynamic and unprecedented changes happening across the globe, there is a need to integrate Sustainable Development Goals in the curriculum and sensitise all relevant stakeholders for the same.

### **Methodology**

A qualitative approach has been applied to this study. It will follow exploratory and interpretive research design. Systematic literature review will be undertaken to trace current and future strategic direction of HE system in India. An attempt will be made to find reasons for higher education becoming solely a money-code of value. Secondary data will be collected through documentation technique, websites, reports, articles, etc., to develop further insights into the phenomenon. Semi-structured in-depth interviews will be conducted amongst 20 academic administrators and senior faculty members of the HE system in National Capital Region of Delhi, to collect data regarding the challenges faced by them and the possible change in their strategic direction. Further, NVivo 12 will be used to analyse the interview data.

### **Expected data and analysis**

The data of the interviews would be collected in person recorded with the consent of the interviewees. The duration of the interview would range from 35 to 60 minutes depending on the information shared by the respondents. The data collected would be analysed using NVivo 12 software. The transcripts will be coded by both the authors independently and themes will be analysed to understand the challenges faced, critical areas of concern and the direction to be adopted by the Universities and colleges to make HE system more sustainable, in the light of NEP 2020.

### **Expected outcome**

Many authors have conducted research to address the problems faced by students and teachers related to online teaching and learning during Covid-19

pandemic in India. However, to the best of the authors' understanding, this research work would be the first study to understand the challenges faced and suggest the change in the strategic direction in HE system, from the perspective of academic administrators and senior faculty members. The study intends to explore the reasons of the shift in HE system towards money code of value and the change in direction required to restore the life code of value. The current study replenishes the gap by contributing to the literature of sustainability development in Indian HE system. Based on qualitative research strategy and a number of methodological techniques (policy and literature review, individual interviews, observation), this research suggests that a better understanding of target areas, gaps, similarities and differences across regional higher education for sustainable development agendas is crucial to the advancement of higher education for sustainable development in policy, curriculum and practice. This will give higher education institutions and their regional stakeholders, conceptual tools to think further on higher education for sustainable development. The findings of the study can be helpful for the regulatory authorities and higher education institutions to revisit their existing policy frameworks. This can be done by designing new strategies which are sustainable, that enable the accomplishment of desired learning outcomes in order to pave the way from money code of value to life code of value.

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## **Evolution from Adult Education to Lifelong Learning in India - Key to Achieving Universal Literacy as per NEP 2020**

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### **Abstract**

Education is a crucial factor in the development of human resources that plays an essential part for advancement of society. "Education for All" has been a catchphrase around the world for decades. Adult education is a suitable means to spread literacy, increase knowledge and engage all members of society, regardless of age, region, and religion. Adult education has been transformed into lifelong learning involving people of all ages and regions, with special attention paid to members of different communities including economically disadvantaged people. This study is based on the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 that promotes adult education and lifelong learning in achieving 100% literacy goals and in providing expansion of general resources and life satisfaction for all, thereby reducing the gap between the least educated and the most educated people. It attempts to highlight certain stages of how adult education evolved in India over decades. It also suggests how NEP 2020 aims to develop skills and disseminate training programmes for new skills in society to make everyone contributing members of society and recognize the essence of lifelong learning for all.

**Keywords:** *NEP 2020, adult education, lifelong learning, universal literacy, education for all.*

### **Introduction**

The instantaneous overreliance on technology amidst the inception of digital India has introduced with it, profuse bottlenecks that ought to be triumphed over to have a square deal amongst the entire social group. To construct a participative,

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inclusive, and excelling community, literacy and skill development are two critical areas that must be addressed. The long-awaited National Education Policy (NEP) incorporates past efforts and builds on the same for achieving universal literacy in India. The five stages of the adult education programme in India - the notion of Fundamental Literacy (1882–1947), the notion of Social Education (1948–64), the notion of Functional Literacy (1965–77), the notion of Developmental Literacy (1978–2008), and the brain wave of Lifelong Learning (2009 onwards) - determine the transition from adult education to lifelong learning.

These stages also exemplify the numerous initiatives taken to reduce societal requirements of illiteracy and ensure that every person in society receives the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in all aspects of life and contribute to the society in a productive way. The census of 2011 shows that the average literacy rate has risen from a meagre 18.33% in 1951 to 74.04% since independence. However, India is still a country with the highest number of illiterate people, which is about 287 million as per the 2011 census. UNESCO on International Day of Literacy in 2022 reported that as many as 771 million illiterate people are there worldwide, out of which women make up the majority who still struggle with fundamental writing and reading abilities. Nearly 24 million students are those, who might never return to formal education due to the pandemic, and 11 million among them are anticipated to be females.

The chance to reconsider the fundamental significance of literacy, learning spaces is provided by the International Literacy Day 2022 theme, ‘Transforming Literacy Learning Spaces’, to promote resilience and guarantee all students receive an education that is of high quality, fair, and inclusive. According to the UNESCO declaration, we must ‘enrich and transform the existing learning spaces through an integrated approach and enable literacy learning in the perspective of lifelong learning’ to guarantee that nobody is left behind. These UNESCO findings are extremely aligned with NEP 2020, which deems achieving universal literacy as an aspirational goal and makes ‘equitable and inclusive access to quality education for all’ as its central theme.

## Objectives

- To scrutinize the NEP 2020’s recommendations for adult education and lifelong learning.
- To examine the decade-long evolution from adult education to lifelong learning in India.

- To recognize NEP 2020's responsibility for advancing adult education and lifelong learning initiatives in India.

### **Methodology**

The content analysis method, which is mostly qualitative, has been adopted. The data for the research work was collected using secondary sources like policy documents, newspapers, websites, research articles and books.

### **Adult education and lifelong learning**

Adult education comprises reading skills, foundational education, technical (skill) education, equivalency education and pertinent scientific knowledge, among many other things to individuals over the age of 15 who have not received formal education. Lifelong learning is the process of obtaining and enhancing knowledge, skills, and character traits throughout one's life to promote well-being. It examines the decisions adults make and the obstacles they tackle in their daily lives. From choosing to attend a formal, structured school programme to debating whether to believe an infomercial's gimmick, lifelong learning can take a variety of forms (Lamb, 2005). Every member of society has an inalienable right to basic literacy, education, and the capacity to earn a living.

A whole new world of potential for self-development, civic engagement, economic opportunity, and lifelong learning emerges because of literacy and basic education, enabling personal and professional growth. At the social and national levels, basic education and literacy are potent boosters that considerably increase the success of all other development initiatives. Global data on countries show a very high correlation between literacy rates and GDP per capita (NEP, 2020:51). Powerful and resourceful government interventions for adult education, more specifically, shall be put into place to expedite the fulfilment of the vital aim of obtaining 100% literacy, as soon as possible. These programmes will make it easier for people to get involved in their communities and integrate technology effectively.

### **The Flux from adult education to lifelong learning in India**

It is challenging to pinpoint the roots of adult education in Indian history because most of it was oral, there was a huge variation, and there were regional differences. Adult education has been a crucial component of Indian culture since the ancient manuscripts (from 2000 BC to AD 1200) that gave top priority to the virtues of

learning (Shah, 2009, 2010; Mandal, 2013b). Every nation has a different conception of adult education. In India, the idea of adult education has undergone shifts over time. The 3Rs - reading, writing, and arithmetic were often the main areas of concern in the period before independence. After people gained freedom from British rule, the focus of adult education evolved from basic literacy to lifelong learning. To fully understand how the perspective of adult education has changed in India, it is vital to pinpoint five stages:

(i) The notion of fundamental literacy (1882-1947): This was the pre-independence period when British people ruled the country. The establishment of night schools served as the foundation for the evolution of fundamental literacy. The basic literacy programme covered reading, writing, and arithmetic concepts. The programme used to have a two-year duration. A specific curriculum was devised with adult education in mind. In addition to introducing the 3Rs – reading, writing, and arithmetic, the curriculum also covered instruction on health, hygiene, and first aid along with historically significant topics. Throughout the British era, the notion of basic literacy remained the same. Numerous attempts to educate illiterate people were conducted in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries by national leaders, social reformers, etc. For instance, in 1859, the “Sangat Sabha” association was founded by Devendra Nath Tagore, a renowned scholar, and Keshub Chandra Sen, a strong advocate for mass education. In Bengal, the Brahmo Samaj made the initiative to teach uneducated females in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, social activists conducted various literacy classes for everyone in the community through their respective organizations. Libraries were also established to support literacy initiatives.

(ii) The notion of social education (1948-64): The notion of social education was ingenerated in 1948 and amalgamated with the Community Development Programme. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad emphasized at Allahabad in January 1949 that adult education shouldn't be confined to teaching people how to read and write only, but ought to provide each citizen with the skills necessary to take part in an egalitarian society. From that time, the nation refers to adult education as ‘social education’. The scope of adult education in programmes before independence was inordinately limited. It was decided to expand this idea after independence. As a result, the concept of “social education” was expanded to include citizenship education, health and well-being, recreational activities, honing of vocational abilities, societal, cultural, and financial advancement. (Dutta, 1986: 59). In 1963, a committee was set up, with Mohan Sinha Mehta serving as its chairman. The notion of social education was developed by this group. It placed more emphasis on social issues, and literacy was one of them.

(iii) The notion of functional literacy (1965-77): This phase sought to advance the concept of adult education. It was understood that merely being capable of reading and writing does not guarantee a person's or a nation's growth. So, it was envisioned to incorporate literacy instruction with the learners' line of work or output. The ultimate objective of literacy was to enhance a person's functional efficiency. To make India a self-sufficient nation, many programmes were created to convey functional literacy, and vocational training also gained popularity. During this time, several effective programmes were launched, including Functional Literacy for Adult Women, Non-Formal Education, and the Farmers Functional Literacy Programme.

(iv) The notion of developmental literacy (1978-2008): Paulo Freire's theory of conscientization prevailed in the early 1970s. It significantly impacted adult education. He believed that adult education instructors should act as facilitators for the discussion so that students can learn on their own. From this perspective, the realms of functionality amplified. The notion of developmental literacy developed during this time frame. It was recognized that literacy should go beyond simply being a process of gaining reading, writing, and arithmetic skills and should instead contribute to the human being's liberation and full development. It stressed how crucial it is to be aware of social reality. In India, the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) was launched amidst this transition period. The government's welfare centric developmental strategy, increased investment, and Freire's vision - all contributed to the NAEP's success. Interestingly, the programme's success limited the idea of adult education and lifelong learning primarily to literacy and its associated initiatives (Mandal, 2015). Literacy was emphasized as the main goal in policies, strategies, and nomenclatures of adult education institutions. Despite changing perceptions about functional literacy, civic literacy, development literacy, and other concepts, the National Policy on Education, 1986, revised in 1992 (MHRD, 1992), further reinforced an exclusive emphasis on basic literacy. In 1988, the National Literacy Mission became operational and has since carried on instilling fundamental literacy with the revived goal of providing universal access to elementary education.

(v) The brain wave of Lifelong Learning (2009 onwards): Every aspect of life is now impacted by globalization, and greater global connectivity has resulted from it. Along with numerous obstacles, it has increased the opportunities. On September 8, 2009 - International Literacy Day, the Indian government announced the commencement of the Saakshar Bharat Programme in recognition of the new challenges presented by a globalized society and the significance of functional literacy in it. Its aim was 'to drastically lower the proportion of adults who are illiterate in India and to promote an atmosphere of lifelong learning across communities'. Basic

literacy and continuing education programmes were implemented based on the human development concept.

Currently, the idea of “Sustainable Lifelong Learning” needs to be developed while keeping in mind the Sustainable Development Goals. This vision has been incorporated into the NEP 2020 framework.

The NEP 2020 proposal for adult education by NCERT includes a comprehensive and a conceptual curriculum with at least five different programme types, including foundational literacy and numeracy, basic education, critical life skills, vocational skills, and continuing education. The architecture for these programmes will be crafted with adult learners in mind. The establishment of appropriate infrastructure, such as special Adult Education Centres (AECs) and Vocational Training Centres (VTCs), facilitates access for adult learners. The criterion to be used will be the hiring of highly skilled, well-trained teachers to teach the five programmes listed above to adult and lifelong learners. To achieve the goal of 100% literacy as per NEP 2020, innovative policies must compete with top technologies and overcome obstacles with devoted community participation. It will be vital to share the infrastructure of educational institutions including schools, universities, vocational centres and skill development centres to guarantee effective and efficient use of the programme’s resources and human resources.

To guarantee the efficient execution of these programmes, proper monitoring and supervision procedures will be followed for the teachers of adult education and lifelong learning programmes. To accomplish this goal, it will be crucial for social activists and counsellors to monitor and make sure that school dropouts and unenrolled pupils are recruited. To stimulate reading habits among local residents and academic institutions, it’s necessary to provide easy access to both online reading material and physical books. In this regard, the policy suggests that all libraries in educational institutions, including public libraries be strengthened and updated. The central and state governments will be in charge of keeping track of the cost of these books and the methods used for distribution to assure the accessibility and availability to each individual of society, particularly the underprivileged sector of society. Superior and contemporary technology will be used to support adult learners to pursue the goals of Digital India and Atmanirbhar Bharat. Applications, online courses, modules, satellite TV channels, online books, ICT-equipped libraries, and the best choice of technology for adults, will be developed through public and private sectors, as well as crowdsourcing and competition. So that, quality education can be delivered through online or blended learning modes.



## **NEP 2020 - Adult education and lifelong learning programmes**

NEP 2020 is addressing the issue of lack of access to educational opportunities for people of all ages, including young children, teenagers, and adults. For instance, it is integrating young children (ages 3-6) into formal education and placing a strong emphasis on every kid achieving foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) by the age of eight. It also places extreme stress on adult education and lifelong learning, as well as early childhood care and education (ECCE). It offers numerous recommendations for guaranteeing that all children finish Class 12 and end the scourge of school dropouts. Since adult education policies and programmes are created and implemented as short-term efforts, historically adult literacy has not been seen as a top priority.

With the National Adult Education Programme (1978), the National Policy on Education 1986, and the National Literacy Mission (1988), the emphasis shifted from functional literacy to an amalgamation of learning. This not only produced foundational literacy but also a social conscience that would allow those with limited opportunities to take an active role in the development rather than being passive bystanders. Even though the country's total literacy rate rose, the number of illiterate people has not significantly decreased. The total number of illiterates in the 15+ age range is 25.76 crore, of which 9.08 crore are men and 16.68 crore are women. Indians make up 35% of the world's illiterates. In India, illiteracy is a major issue and a barrier to advancement in society. It must be seriously addressed since it prevents overall development. To curb this, the Indian government has approved a **scheme - 'New India Literacy Programme (NILP)'**, to aid the states and union territories in their efforts to promote literacy among illiterates.

### **The new India literacy programme (NILP)**

The Education Ministry approved the New India Literacy Programme (NILP) on February 16, 2022, for the next five years, and it makes note of this connection between learning and the overall advancement of natives for the 21<sup>st</sup> century in its objectives. The NEP 2020 serves as the foundation for the NILP's objectives. To focus on the population of non-literates over the age of 15, who are not adults and are logically not thought to be included under the umbrella of the term "adult education", the programme initially seeks to replace the term "Adult Education" with the term "Education for All". The NILP has been adopted to fully incorporate all components of adult education with the NEP 2020 over the five fiscal years (2022-27). The programme works in conjunction with NIOS, NCERT, and the National Informatics

Centre to use OTLAS (Online Teaching, Learning, and Assessment System) to reach a target of 5.00 crore learners over five years for the foundational literacy and numeracy component. The programme is divided into five parts: basic education, critical life skills, development of vocational skills, foundational literacy, numeracy and continuing education. The programme will be implemented through online volunteers and the unit for implementation will be the school. Surveys of beneficiaries and volunteer instructors will be carried out in schools and volunteer workshops, orientation and training sessions may be held face-to-face.

### **Suggestions**

- Creation of interest in lifelong learning via print, radio, television, and other electronic and social media. The benefits and significance of literacy can be effectively communicated through social media.

- In formal education, instruction, and curriculum are founded on “Pedagogy” to facilitate children’s learning smoothly in accordance with child psychology. Adult education, on the other hand, is grounded in “Andragogy”, which is founded on adult psychology. It is not justified to conduct the adult education programme as a component of the education department because formal education and adult education are based on different psychologies. Hence, separate plans, separate activities and separate plans of action are essential. Therefore, a separate Directorate is a must.

- As adult education advances and adult students’ educational experiences evolve, so does the demand for counselling services. It is incredibly important for adult learners to assess the advantages and disadvantages of each need to help them make the adjustments to their new roles that are required. Therefore, it is essential to enlist the aid of counsellors or social workers to support individuals in their new tasks.

- The role of social workers/counsellors in ensuring the aims of adult education is very crucial. Social workers/counsellors will raise awareness among the masses to realize the importance of adult education. They will form the youth groups and work with different organizations to realize the main aim of adult education that is, achieving 100% literacy as envisaged by NEP 2020.

“You can’t go back and change the beginning but you can start where you are and change the ending”

## Conclusion

The effective transmission of high-quality education in the community is heavily influenced by the roles of numerous platforms and policies involved in the implementation of various adult education programmes. A group of stakeholders who are well-versed, savvy and experienced as well as working towards the same goal are vital to the success of policy implementation. Adult education and lifelong learning programmes are important resources for avoiding obstacles to personal development, regardless of age, occupation, lifestyle, or skills acquired. NEP 2020, recognizes the importance of adult and lifelong learning and proposes several measures for its promotion including achieving adult literacy, providing flexible and accessible learning opportunities, integrating the VET (Vocational Education and Training) into the mainstream education system, and establishing a National Institute for Open Schooling. Thus, NEP 2020 is a helpful tool for the efficient implementation of lifelong learning and adult education programmes, which in turn will aid the overall development of the country by equipping adults with the necessary skills to engage in society.

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## **Idea of Lifelong Adult Learning: Study of Andragogy, Heutagogy and Paragogy through the Lens of Teacher Educators**

• Stuti Shandilya<sup>1</sup>

### **Abstract**

The emergence of new pedagogical innovations and the evolution of various educational theories has led to numerous personalized styles of knowledge creation, which have been adopted by different individual learners. As this is the era of technological revolution 4.0 where any content has a short span of relevance, adult learners have carved their own unique ways to learn. This paper draws attention to the teacher training institutions and their facilitators who act as a major catalyst force behind creating 'new-age teachers', who not only act as expert pedagogue of the subjects but also as promoters of lifelong learning, especially in the context of Indian adult learners. Also, it sheds light on teacher educator's perceptions on the practices of andragogy (self-directed adult learning), heutagogy (self-determined learning), peeragogy or paragogy (peer-to-peer learning). As the market demands of today's age require continuous upgradation in the professional sphere, many independent online communities have emerged that provide a platform for collaborative learning, non-linear learning, peer learning and experiential learning. It provides a platform for lifelong learning to adult learners who are now considered as 'active hyper learners'. This is considered as the outcome of prolonged efforts of learner centric educational models, in which a great amount of emphasis has been laid upon knowledge acquisition by learners on their own. Through conceptual understanding of andragogy, heutagogy and paragogy, we can hopefully create the motivation for lifelong learning among adult learners.

**Keywords:** *Personalized learning styles, lifelong learning, independent online communities, non-linear learning, peer-learning, collaborative learning, self-directed, self-determined, experiential learning.*

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## Introduction

*“I don’t divide the world into the weak and the strong, or the successes and the failures, I divide the world into the learners and non-learners.”*

*-Benjamin Barber*

Pedagogy as a concept has evolved and enriched the educational arena for quite some time. It is often called the art and science of teaching (Smith, 2012). In order to understand children’s learning landscape, pedagogical interventions are much needed like a craft. Many pedagogues, educationists, and psychologists have given their own learning models in order to facilitate the effective learning process among learners, specifically children and growing adolescents who need structured methods.

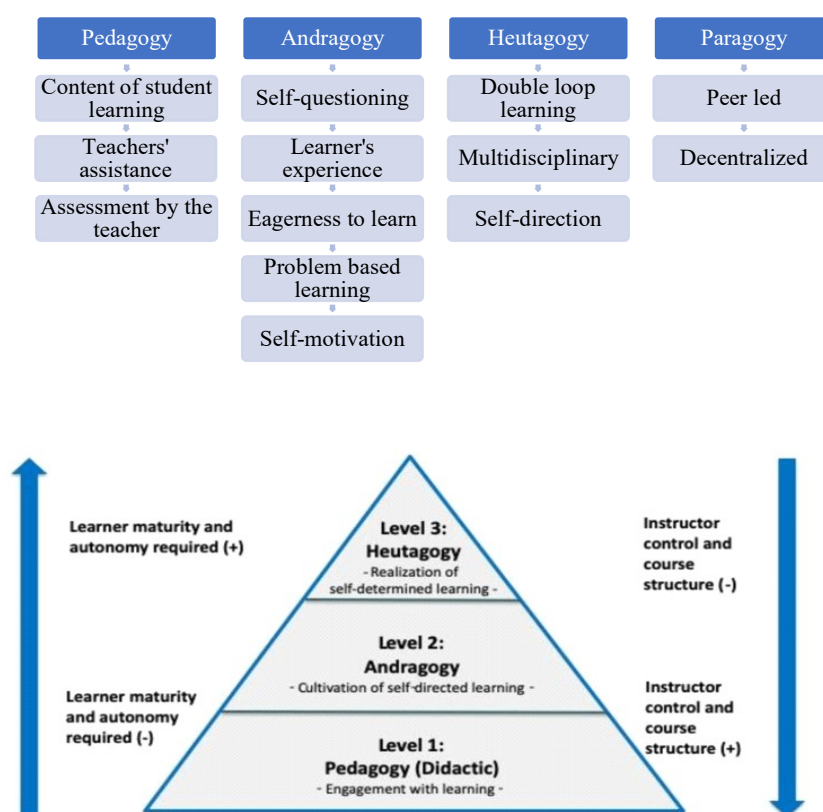
Andragogy is an extension of pedagogy, sometimes referred to as Pedagogy 2.0, given by Alexander Kapp in 1930. It deals with self-directed learning primarily for adult learning at a higher educational level. Knowles (1970) described it as a method to help adult learners in order to facilitate their learning. It is internally motivated and considered as a concrete step towards a lifelong learning approach. Collaborative learning and competency-based learning are a few among many methods to practice andragogy. It occurs mostly between the age group of 18-22 years, when a learner is experiencing a sudden shift from structured learning pedagogy to unstructured learning like andragogy.

Heutagogy, popularly known as self-determined learning, was first propagated by Hase and Kenyon in 2000 and is based on double-loop learning given by Argris and Schon in 1974. This is based on continuous professional development which always seeks new methodologies towards acquiring new professional efficiencies. The concept of H-CPD is gaining momentum, especially among higher educational faculties that constantly need upgradation. Non-linear learning and double-loop learning are among important heutagogical practices.

Paragogy, often referred to as “Peeragogy” is a set of effective peer-to-peer learning strategies which challenge an instructional design at a higher level of learning. It creates a supportive, interactive environment at the workplace which is of utmost priority for continuous professional development. In fact, it acts as a catalyst for bringing together all other “gogy” mentioned above. It is a supportive learning model for self-directed learning.

## Evolution from pedagogy to paragogy

With each passing educational paradigm, there has been a shift in educational goals, ways to learn and also the type of educational system the learners want to create for future. Earlier, the pedagogy was largely based on teacher's assistance to students learning. However, with the passing of time there was a need to create learners' own eagerness to learn which is based on self-questioning and their own experience, largely known as andragogy. Then, the extension of andragogy emerged and was later called heutagogy which comprises of multidisciplinary, double loop learning. The most recent is paragogy, which talks about peer learning and decentralised learning.



Source: The PAH continuum (Blaschke, 2012, licensed under a Creative Commons CC-BY 4.0 License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)).

This model has been utilised at different levels of the educational system. Pedagogy has mainly proved as a viable option at the school level. But, given the current scenario where technological revolution is taking place at a fast pace, it can be used for the adolescents at secondary level, and from the senior secondary level, the facilitators and educators should start promoting andragogy which is entirely focused on self-learning to create competent professionals for the future. At the higher education level, heutagogy is a great practice to promote full autonomy on the individuals for learning. This will increase the self-efficacy and make them as reflective professionals in the future. Paragogy is a much more recent practice, developed primarily for professionals who are in the industry and need continuous professional development. With the advancement in practices like paragogy - peer-to-peer learning - decentralised learning is being promoted and practised at the workplace which creates a growth mindset among the professionals and learners.

### **Review of related literature**

Blaschke (2012) describes the practices and principles of pedagogy and how it has influenced teaching and learning. Further, she also writes about the importance of heutagogy in renewing the interest of adult learning in providing an environment that supports learner-centeredness, flexible curriculum, and web 2.0 technologies. These not only help in self-determined learning but also increase the capability and competency of the learners. Pedagogical practices started first in Australia, and it did not receive much appreciation at that time. However, after more than two decades several academicians and educational practitioners talk about its efficacy in changing times.

Herie (2013) examined the changing nature of learning among the adult population. He stated that the model will represent the mainstream idea of global education which revolves around web learning and social media learning. He also talks about global education and the education of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This model can encourage learners to determine their own way and pace of learning which will further define their individual paths in knowledge creation. Technologies such as social media and e-learning aid has a huge impact on learners. The entire notion of machine learning is based on heutagogy self-determined learning model. The new practices such as self-assessment not only provide the scope to assess one's own learning but creates a constructive criticism environment.

Halupa (2016), explained that the concept of andragogy was first defined by Alexander Kapp in 1833 to highlight the importance of a learner-centred model



which is a holistic approach towards education. Different educational theories like constructivism, behaviourism and cognitivism talk about the diverse learning styles through which various learning styles can be determined. Through andragogy, we encourage self-motivation to learn rather than through external intervention. Further, this paper talks about social andragogy which is based on transformation-based learning. Paragogy, on the other hand, focusses on peer learning - one can learn through interaction and collaborative learning networks.

In his study on “Heutagogy: An Effective Self-Determined Approach for Teachers’ Continuous Professional Development (CPD)” Paul and Kumar (2020) mentioned double loop learning which talks about the reflective way of learning in which learners analyse the whole learning by themselves. Further, they dwell on non-learning learning which is much more flexible than the structural way of linear learning. Heutagogy, lifelong learning and a growth mindset are all interconnected and interdependent. Their work specifically highlighted the concept of neuroplasticity in the brain which rewires and creates more neurons in response to any new stimuli given by the surrounding environment. H-CPD i.e., Heutagogy - Continuous Professional Development, provides a new perspective for a successful growth mindset to revolutionise innovative practices.

In a study on “Evolution of Education: Pedagogy, Andragogy, Heutagogy and Cybergogy,” Mehta (2021) explained how learners, and faculty members of different age group sequence a learning curriculum outcome which is based on experiential learning that promotes a readiness to learn and focus on motivation as a primary factor of problem-based learning. Further, he talks about capability and action learning processes which can be achieved through MOOC courses and multimedia learning. Also, there is an introduction to Cybergogy which is based on technology-based learning that integrates all aspects of a learner, viz., cognitive, social, and emotional. Communication skills and new foreign competencies can be achieved through the integration of technology with Bloom’s taxonomy.

Joshi (2021) examined the different learning theories and their separate individual strengths and weaknesses. It also includes the theory of teaching and learning and how learners perceive it. All the five ‘gogy’ are discussed in detail, compared and analysed from pedagogy to paragogy, including the quite recent ones like Cybergogy. The meaning and frameworks of each learning model are unique in themselves and talk about unstructured learning, loop learning, collaborative learning, flexible learning, and learning which is based on the quest. The idea of self-questioning and self-motivation is an integral part of all these learning models which focusses on the

empowerment of the learners. Discovery learning and problem-solving learning defined the educational and social goals which can be self-directive and can be learned through diverse learning models like these.

### **Rationale of the study**

The traditional educational system is highly focused on a system approach where everything follows a sequential structure of learning. For instance, in order to learn the number system, one should be quite aware of the type of numbers. But, is it necessary to always have a sequential mental development pattern? Or, do learners always need an instructor in order to achieve a learning outcome? Does learning always happen in a vertical way i.e., from an older, with higher qualifications and experience, to a lesser or, do learners learn from interaction within their own level i.e., horizontal level learning?

All these questions raised many significant aspects which are still at infancy, especially in the Indian education system, wherein the norm to learn has been “knowledge to be given” rather than “knowledge to be acquired from your own senses, interactions, and experiences.” Hence, the need for developing a roadmap of various “gogy” which leads to the progress of the learning methods.

### **Research objectives**

1. How do teacher educators promote lifelong learning for adult learners?
2. What are their perceptions with respect to practical implications of andragogy, heutagogy and paragogy for continuous professional development?

### **Research methodology**

The research study is based on primary data and further complemented with secondary data in order to understand the research gaps. The data was collected using structured interview method. The sampling method used was purposive snowball sampling. The criteria to choose the participant was that they must be in pre-service teacher training institution and must be teaching any one pedagogical subject at the secondary school level. A sample of 80 teacher educators was selected from 8 B.Ed. institutions from Delhi NCR. There were 68 female teacher educators while only 12 male teacher educators were investigated aged between 30-55 years.

Further, the data is analyzed through content analysis and supplemented by pictorial representations, pie charts, etc.

### Data analysis and discussion

The pie-diagram presentation of the themes obtained after the content analysis on the sub-topic, *Andragogy* through structured interview questionnaires.

To what extent andragogy (self-directed adult learning) has influenced the present classroom teaching practice at pre-service level?

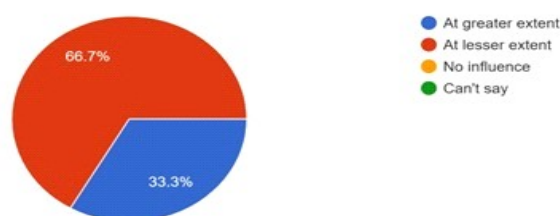


Figure 1: The above figure shows 66.7% respondents feel that andragogy has influenced the present classroom teaching practice to a great extent while 33.3% selected lesser extent influence. Surprisingly, no one agreed with the fact that it has no influence.

How significant andragogy (self-directed adult learning) is for teacher educators?



Figure 2: The above figure shows that the 100% of the sampled respondents selected andragogy as quite significant for teacher educators.

How do teacher educators perceive andragogy (self-directed adult learning)?



Figure 3: The above figure shows that 66.7% of respondents appreciate self-directed learning while 33.3% feel that it is important. Interestingly, no one thinks that it is impractical in Indian context and everyone likes to promote it.

How do emerging andragogical (self-directed adult learning) practices affect the learning experiences of the students?

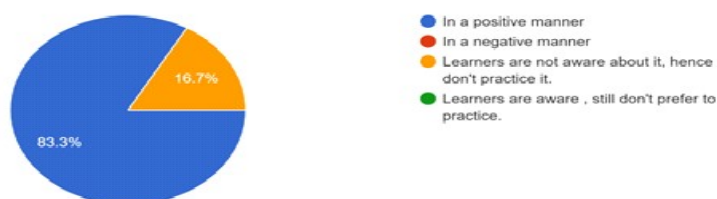


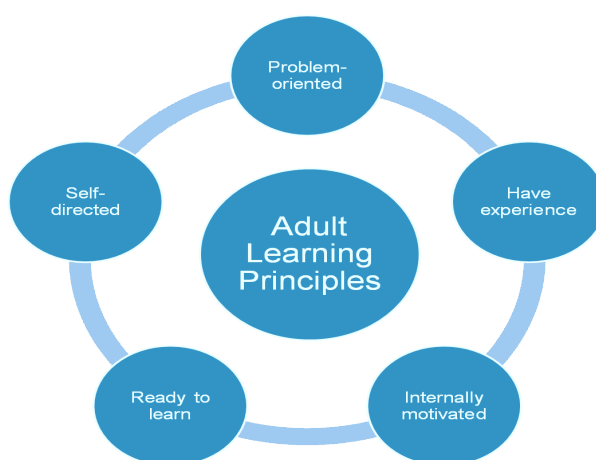
Figure 4: The above figure shows that 83.3% of the respondents think that emerging andragogical practices affect the learning experiences of the learners in a positive manner. Just about 16.7% feel that the learners are not aware about it, hence they don't practice it. Figure 5: The above figure shows that 83.3% of the respondents selected collaborative learning as a possible suggestion to implement effective instructional strategies while 16.7% of them think that the self-directed learning is a better option. No one opted for competency-based learning as an effective strategy.

## Andragogy

Through the above analysis we can understand and co-relate the findings with the assumptions and principles, listed below, which largely relate to one's own readiness and motivation to learn. Andragogy's principles of self-directed learning and its importance comes out in a detailed form during the analysis of the data.

## Assumptions

- Self-Concept
- Experience
- Readiness to learn
- Orientation to learning
- Motivation to learn



Source: <https://www.startschoolnow.org/the-basics-of-adult-learning-theory/>.

The pie-diagram presentation of the themes obtained after the content analysis on the sub-topic, *Heutagogy*, through structured interview questionnaires.

How does teachers' educators perceive the idea of heutagogy (self-determined learning )?



Figure 6: The above figure shows that all respondents agree with the fact that heutagogy as a concept is important.

In what ways, the idea of lifelong learning motivates teacher educators for Continuous professional development.

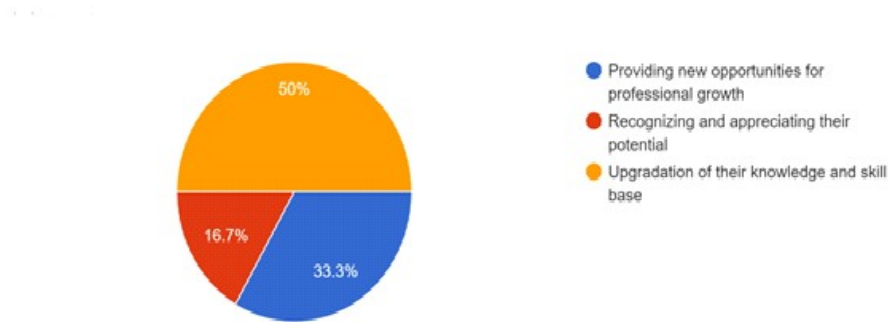


Figure 7: The above figure shows that 50% of the respondents think that the upgradation of their knowledge is essential for lifelong learning, while 33.3% feel that providing new opportunities for professional growth might help in continuous professional development. On the other hand, 16.7% of the respondents opted for recognizing and appreciating their potential as a great motivator for teachers' professional development.

How are teacher educators adapting to social media-enabled heutagogy (self-determined learning)?

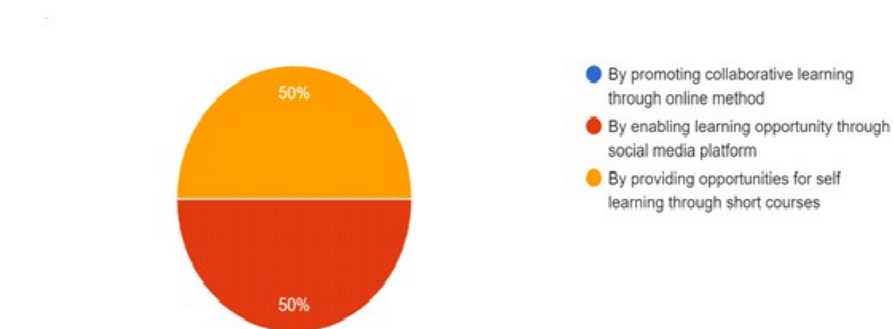


Figure 8: The above figure shows that 50% of the respondents selected learning opportunities through social media as a way to adapt media-enabled heutagogy, while the other 50% feel that providing opportunities for self-learning through short courses is a better option.

How do you promote heutagogy(self-determined learning ) in formal teaching learning situation?

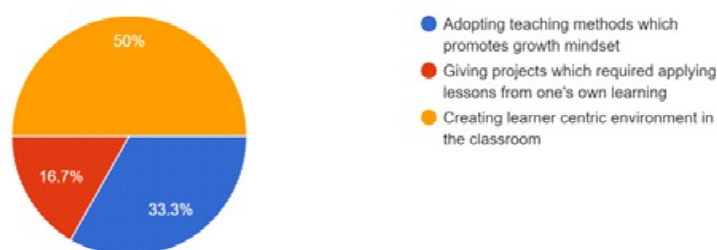


Figure 9: The above figure shows that 50% of the respondents selected creating learner centric environment in the classroom as a better way to promote heutagogy in formal teaching-learning situation, while 33.3% of respondents think that adopting teaching methods which promote growth mindset might be helpful and 16.7% feel giving projects which required applying lessons from one's own learning is important.

What are the concerned areas in implementing heutagogical practices such as self-determined learning?

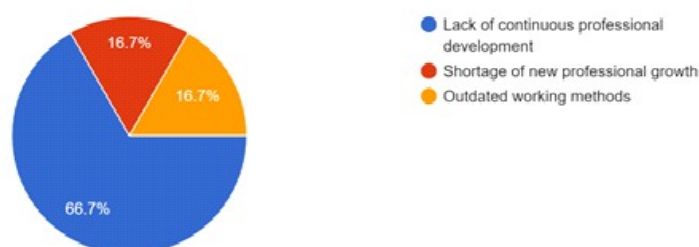


Figure10: The above figure shows that the 66.7% of the respondents think lack of continuous professional development is the major concern in implementing heutagogical practices, while 16.7% feel that the shortage of new professional growth is an obstacle. And, the rest of the 16.7% selected outdated working methods as the major concern in implementing heutagogical practices.

## Heutagogy

Through the above analysis, we can understand and co-relate the findings with the characteristics of heutagogy, listed below, which largely refer to self-determined

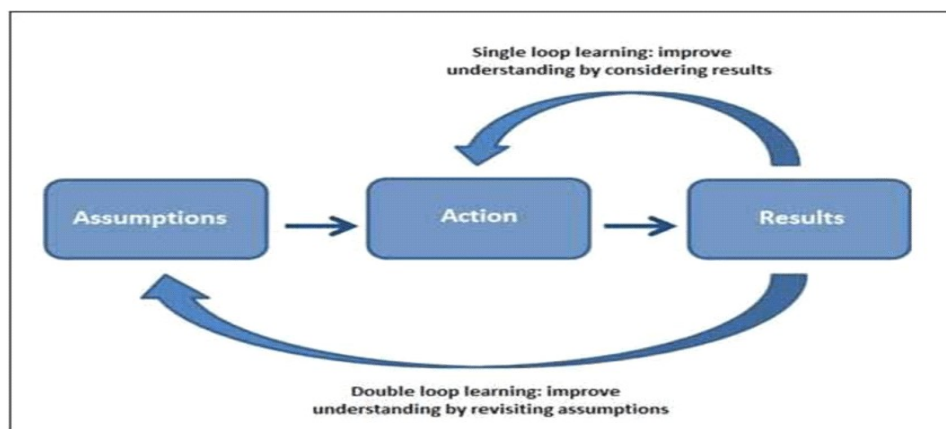
approach to continuous professional development. Also, heutagogy's principles of learner centric model, transformational learning and lesson from one's own learning, comes out in a detailed form during analysis of the data.

### Characteristics of heutagogy-based CPD (H-CPD)

- Self-determined learning
- Knowledge based future
- Beyond your own discipline
- Move into the world of learner
- Students explore and learn from self-chosen direction

### Principles of heutagogy

- Learner-centric
- Transformational learning process
- Lessons from one's own learning
- Double-loop learning



Source: [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Illustration-of-single-and-double-loop-learning\\_fig1\\_281279330](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Illustration-of-single-and-double-loop-learning_fig1_281279330).

### Outcomes generated through heutagogy-based instructional practices

- Generating capability building
- Double loop learning experiences
- Non-linear learning
- Heutagogy and growth mindset



The pie-diagram presentation of the themes obtained after the content analysis on the sub-topic, *Paragogy* through structured interview questionnaires.

How does paragogical (peer-to-peer learning) interaction effect the Continuous professional development of teacher educators ?

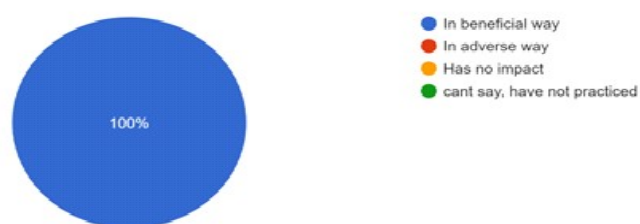


Figure 11: The above figure shows that 100% of the respondents think that the paragogical interaction affects the continuous professional development of teacher educators in a beneficial way.

What are the emerging techniques in the field of paragogy (peer-to-peer learning)?

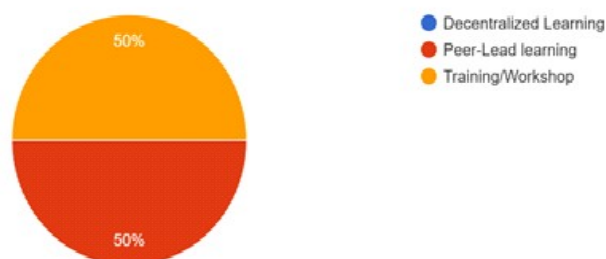


Figure 12: The above figure shows that 50% of the respondents think that peer led learning is the new the emerging technique while rest of the 50% of the respondents feel that the training/ workshops are the emerging technique. However, none of the sampled respondents selected decentralised learning as it is already widely used and cannot be categorised as an emerging technique.

In what way, decentralized learning affects the classroom environment.

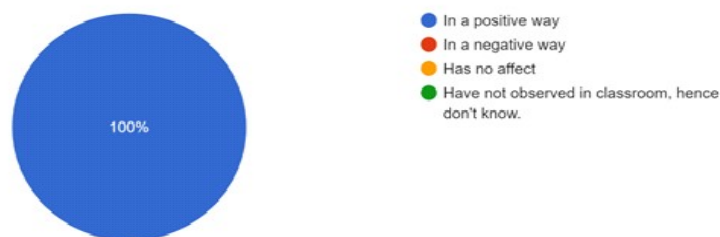


Figure 13: The above figure shows that the 100% of the respondents agree with the fact that decentralised learning affects the classroom environment in a positive manner.

What will be the new suggestions to practice paragogy(peer-to-peer learning)?

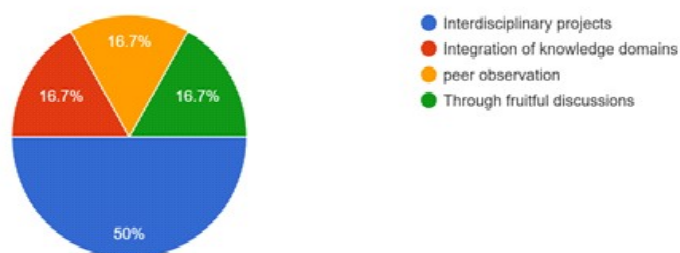


Figure 14: The above figure shows mixed results as a suggestion to practice paragogy: 50% selected interdisciplinary projects; 16.7% selected integration of knowledge domains; 16.7% selected peer observation and the remaining 16.7% selected through fruitful observations.

## Paragogy

Through the above analysis, we can understand and co-relate the findings with the characteristics of paragogy, which largely pertain to peer-to-peer learning for continuous professional development. Also, paragogy principles of interdisciplinary projects, integration of knowledge and benefits of learning from training and workshops come out in a detailed form during analysis of the data.

### **Comparison of Pedagogy, Andragogy & Heutagogy**

	<b>Pedagogy</b>	<b>Andragogy</b>	<b>Heutagogy</b>
Dependence	Learner is dependent	Adults are independent	Learners are interdependent
Learning Resources	Teacher-driven and controlled	Adult and Teacher controlled	Teacher and learner provided. Learner negotiates path
Learning Reasons	Gaining next level	Drive to increase performance	Learning potential, unplanned, non-linear
Learning Focus	Subject-centred, prescribed	Task- or problem-centred	Proactive and problem-oriented
Motivation	External motivation	Internal motivation	Self-efficacy driven
Teaching Role	Process-designer, imposer, knowledge-holder & director	Enabler, collaborator	Capability-builder

Source: The Difference Between Pedagogy, Andragogy, And Heutagogy (Heick, 5 November 2015).

### **Research findings**

#### **Appreciates the self-directed learning**

- Majority of the sampled teacher educators appreciated self-directed learning, but some of them felt that students are not ready.
- All the teacher educators felt that andragogy is quite significant but, majority of them felt that it has less influence at the present pre-service level classroom teaching scenario.
- It has been also found that the emerging andragogical practices affect the learning experiences of the students in a positive manner.

#### **Collaborative learning**

- Majority of the teacher educators felt that collaborative learning is an effective instructional strategy for adult learners while, a few of them suggested self-directed learning.
- Majority of the sampled teacher educators appreciated the self-determined learning.

**Lack of continuous professional development**

- Majority of the sampled teacher educators expressed their concern about lack of continuous professional development in heutagogical practices, while a few raised concerns regarding shortage of new professional avenues and outdated working methods.

**Social media-enabled heutagogical practices are new age learning ways**

- Through the research analysis, it has been found that the teacher educators are adapting to social media-enabled heutagogical practices through learning opportunities provided by them. Also, half of them thought that providing opportunities for self-learning through short courses is a better option.

**Upgradation of knowledge and skill**

- Half of the teacher educators thought upgradation of knowledge and skill base is an appropriate strategy for continuous professional development. But, some thought that providing new opportunities for professional growth will be a better option. A few also felt that recognizing and appreciating their potential would be the best option.

**Creating learner centric environment**

- Through research analysis, it has been found that creating learner centric environment is the most important strategy for promoting heutagogical practices in formal teaching learning situation. However, adopting new growth mindset and giving projects which required applying lessons from one's own learning is also considered important by some respondents.

**Conducting training and workshops**

- Pedagogical interaction affects the continuous professional development of teacher educators in a beneficial way along with the techniques like training/ workshops.

**Generating new ideas**

- Majority of the sampled teacher educators felt that generating new ideas help in peer-led learning while, a few think that understanding new challenges is a better option.

- All teacher educators unanimously agreed that decentralized learning affects the classroom environment in a positive way.

### **Interdisciplinary projects**

- Half of the sampled teacher educators suggested interdisciplinary projects as the best way to practice paralogy, while some also felt that via integration of knowledge domains, peer observations and fruitful discussions, we can practice paralogy in an effective way.

### **Educational implications and future directions**

#### **For students**

- Practice collaborative learning
- Recognize and appreciate their potential
- Create learner centric environment
- Adopt new growth mindset
- Integrate knowledge domains

#### **For educators**

- Promote continuous professional development
- Create new opportunities of professional growth
- Upgrade knowledge and skill
- Promote peer led learning
- Conduct regular peer observations and fruitful discussions
- Conduct regular trainings/workshops

#### **For researchers and policy makers**

- Use innovative working methods
- Generate social media-enabled heutagogical practices through learning opportunities
- Provide opportunities for self- learning through short courses
- Develop interdisciplinary projects

### **Conclusion**

In this article, the major findings related to andragogy, heutagogy and paralogy and its contribution in promoting lifelong learning among adult learners of the teacher

training institutions have been documented. It can be said that majority of the teacher educators feel andragogy, heutagogy and paragogy have a positive impact in the classroom and a greater impact on the learning styles. But, in the context of adult learners, it is observed that they are not ready for self-directed and self-determined learning. Thus, at the university level, it will still depend upon the teacher as a ‘giver’ of knowledge and student as a ‘receiver’. The effective use of strategies like peer-learning, collaborative learning, interdisciplinary projects, conducting regular professional development workshops can help develop the notion of lifelong learning among adult learners.

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## **Andragogy: a Self-directed and Participative Learning Method for Adult Learners**

• Seema Yadav<sup>1</sup>

### **Abstract**

The theory of andragogy is well known to be a widely applied one in the area of adult learning. Adult facilitators are solely responsible for selecting the pertinent education, motivating adult learners by choosing exercises that are appropriate for their level of content understanding and the desired outcomes, and taking into account the adult learners' preference to prioritize skill development. An adult literacy programme's facilitators, professionals, and policy makers are encouraged by adult education to take this into account while creating the curriculum, formulating the policies, and facilitating the learning programmes. Adult learners are self-motivated, prepared, and self-directed. They also have past experience and value a problem-solving approach. In order to give adult learners with adult education and literacy in a way that would enable them to become active learners who can respond to their environment and live better lives, adult educators need to possess the necessary abilities.

**Keywords:** *Adult education, Andragogy, adult educators, self-directed learning.*

### **Introduction**

Education can be used to measure a country's progress and quality of life; hence, it is believed that improvements in education can help in the progress of a country or state. There are two terms in education: pedagogy and andragogy. Pedagogy is the science and art of educating children, while andragogy refers to the teaching of adults. While children's education focuses on assimilation, identification, and imitation, adult education focuses on improving their lives by teaching skills and capacities to handle issues, so brain training for adults is similar (Holmes & Preston,

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2022). Students should acquire a variety of critical thinking techniques and how to anticipate and identify potential issues that they might face in the real world. The concept-based curriculum must incorporate andragogy if it is to give nursing students the critical thinking and reflection abilities they will need in the field (Lewis & Bryan, 2021). Adult learners adopt a self-directed learning strategy, shifting away from the learner-dependent, teacher-directed paradigm, emphasized in conventional educational settings (Anderson & Boutelier, 2021). Adult students like the course material because it allows for the practical application of techniques that might be applied in the classroom, like lesson planning and field trips (Anderson & Boutelier, 2021).

Adult learning principles emerge from a study of andragogy, teaching, and learning in higher education. With a focus on andragogy in higher education, this study explores the underlying assumptions pertinent to the subject of adult education. The lens of andragogy focuses on adult learner characteristics and adult learning concepts in higher education (Abeni, 2020). As a result, andragogy is an adult's preferred learning method. In andragogy vs. pedagogy, cognitive learning gains importance in higher education for adult learners. As a result, the consequences of combining learning styles and reflections on andragogy as a learning style are discussed (Abeni, 2020).

In today's world, adult learning is primarily focused on the needs of adults as they perform in their communities and professions. For more than a century, adult learning concepts and theories have served as the bedrock of adult education practice (Parker, 2013). Through the use of skills, development identification, relationship-building, and flexibility, it has been possible to determine the best ways to support professional learning through andragogy (Anderson & Boutelier, 2021). For continued efficacy and immediacy, adult teachers in training require content application that is self-directed and accompanied by efficient collaboration processes. The educational system must be modernized in order to meet new difficulties because it is a key component of successful sociocultural generation and human activity. Education for adults is becoming more and more significant (Tymchuk et al., 2022). It is crucial to comprehend the history of andragogy and adult education. It will allow for the creation of contemporary andragogy and its incorporation into the system of continuous education using fresh concepts (Tymchuk et al., 2022).

### **Andragogy for adult education: A concept of learning**

In this technology-infused world, there is a need to re-examine the adult-learning concepts of transformative learning, andragogy, and critical reflection, and offer a new paradigm and practises for the new learning landscape in communities and professions (Parker, 2013). However, a look back at the historical context indicates



that this new technology-enhanced learning environment is vastly different from its predecessor. This necessitates a re-examination of these concepts for future application (Parker, 2013). In adult learning, teaching techniques are known as andragogy. It is described as a collection of fundamental learning principles that is used to direct adult learning and places more emphasis on process models than content models. Adult learning is irrational, personal, socially constructed, self-directed, and action-reflection based (Khadka, 2020).

The popularity of andragogy first rose in the 1800s, then resurged between 1960 and 2000. The profession has undergone a revolution and been revitalised by adult learning. Andragogy gave adult education a new label in education and gave the community a new means to discuss it. Andragogy gave adult education a new label in education and gave the community a new means to discuss it (Edd, 2009). On the foundation of andragogy's core ideas, numerous learning theories have been created. To ensure that the various needs of adult learners are being satisfied, each theory integrates various teaching techniques and procedures (Lewis & Bryan, 2021).

The andragogy model is predicated on four presumptions that relate to the ideas that adult distance learners must have the capacity, necessity, desire, and responsibility to govern their learning. The self-prospective of adult learners shifts from dependence to independence or self-direction (Darden, 2014). Savicevic (1991) establishes the 21st century as a century of adult learning and works to build a scientific research foundation for andragogy, the study of adult education and learning. Some scholars claimed that andragogy is defined as a scientific discipline that examines issues related to adult education and human resource development, as well as learning in all of its manifestations and expressions, whether formal or informal, organised or self-guided, with its scope of research encompassing the majority of a person's life. According to research, adults and younger students learn in various ways. Two paradigms that appear in educational research to explain how people learn are andragogy and pedagogy. The Greek word -agogus, which means "to lead," is the source of andragogy. Andragogy, which comes from the Greek word for adult ("andra"), is the art and science of instructing and leading adults (Keppel, 2019).

Knowles and his successors distinguished between andragogy and pedagogy as adult learning and child learning, respectively. A person is considered to be an adult when they have abandoned their primary social function as a full-time student and taken on the responsibilities of being a worker, spouse, or parent. The criteria for defining an "adult" place more emphasis on a person's place in society and their environment. The science of andragogy, which is fundamental to adult education and learning and has its own disciplinary organisation (Savicevic, 1991). In this self-

reflective literature review, the practise of teaching adult learners, or andragogy, is examined in relation to concept-based nursing education in online, classroom, and clinical teaching environments. A concept-based curriculum is a kind of instruction that makes use of active learning techniques to help students enhance their critical thinking and knowledge comprehension abilities (Lewis & Bryan, 2021).

### **Making a difference between andragogy and pedagogy: Theory of learning for adults and children**

It is believed that one of the reforms in education can help a state or nation advance since education can be used to gauge the progress and quality of life of a country. Pedagogy and andragogy are two terms used in education (Holmes & Preston, 2022). While andragogy can be understood as the science and art of instructing adults, pedagogy is known as the instruction of children. Assimilation, identification, and imitation are key components of children's education, but adult education concentrates on helping students improve their lives by giving them the knowledge and skills they need to handle issues. As a result, adult brain training is analogous to that of children's brain training (Holmes & Preston, 2022). The distinction between pedagogy and andragogy can be found in the various presumptions made about the personalities of the students, such as the idea of the student, the student experience, the readiness to learn, and the orientation of learning from the student's learning motivation (Holmes & Preston, 2022).

The difference between pedagogy and andragogy resides in the assumptions made about students' personalities, such as the notion of students, student experience, readiness to learn, and orientation toward learning based on their learning motivation (Holmes & Preston, 2022). Andragogy is a teaching approach for adult learners that, in general, differs from pedagogy in terms of learning, focus, power and control, learning, learning design, and development. The andragogical models place more emphasis on process than content, and the process is concerned with how the steps and resources assist the students (Khadka, 2020). Adult education that is learner-focused is referred to as andragogy, whereas teacher-focused education is referred to as pedagogy (Prakash et al., 2019).

Andragogy is a set of assumptions for developing instruction for self-directed rather than teacher-directed learners. It can be distinguished in terms of the process, which comprises aspects of atmosphere, planning, needs diagnosis, formulation, objectives, lesson plans, learning activities, and assessments, based on these assumptions (Holmes & Preston, 2022). Education can be used to measure a country's progress and quality of life; hence, it is believed that improvements in

education can help a country or state progress. There are two terms in education: pedagogy and andragogy. Pedagogy is the science and art of educating children, while andragogy is the science and art of teaching adults (Holmes & Preston, 2022). Pedagogical learning theory is designed for children, whereas andragogy learning theory is designed for people with special needs. Atmosphere, planning, needs diagnosis, conceptualization, objectives, lesson plans, learning activities, and assessments are all parts of andragogy (Holmes & Preston, 2022). Davydora (2020) covers the key concerns with teaching lean management to adults and explains why switching from the pedagogy model to the andragogy model of instruction is justified.

The concept of adult education necessitates several things: first, more space for student participation in problem solving; second, problem-solving jointly between educators and students; third, giving students individual freedom in offering solutions based on their respective experiences; and fourth, problem solving refers to the participants' experiences (Holmes & Preston, 2022). The andragogy philosophy places a strong emphasis on learning through active, hands-on methods that keep students interested and involved. Teachers who adhere to andragogy are aware that every student learns differently and that every learning experience is unique to the individual (Lewis & Bryan, 2021).

Adult learners are capable of taking charge of their education and are wanting to do so. Their perceptions of themselves shift from dependence to independence or self-direction. They build up an experience bank from which they can draw new information and abilities. The social role development tasks boost their capacity for learning (Darden, 2014). Since adult learning differs from that of children, andragogy is the art and science of instructing adults. The distinction between pedagogy and andragogy is found in the various presumptions made about the personalities of the students, such as the idea of the student, the student experience, the readiness to learn, and the orientation towards learning from the student's learning motivation. From these presumptions, it is possible to separate the process in terms of its components, which comprise atmosphere, planning, needs diagnosis, formulation, objectives, lesson plans, learning activities, and assessments (Holmes & Preston, 2022).

### **Adult education and role of andragogy in adult education**

We are all familiar with the word "education". Even if we continue to interact actively in it, it will never be divorced from life. Because education is a basic human need and a lifelong process, it may be claimed that every human being goes through

this stage of education as part of their maturation process (Holmes & Preston, 2022). Brookfield (1998) stated that a teacher who follows andragogical principles focuses on being a learning facilitator rather than a knowledge transmitter and assessor. “People participate in a challenging, passionate, and creative activity when they teach and learn together.” Leong (2012) investigated strategies to improve adult education and arrived at the idea that adults needed to learn via doing. Along with a few instructional strategies that have been used to reinforce nursing students’ learning, reflections on the incorporation of andragogy into a concept-based curriculum are also offered. It has been demonstrated that unconventional teaching methods including simulation, case studies, discussions, and setting up a “flipped” classroom can be successful in implementing andragogy in a model of curriculum focused on concepts (Lewis & Bryan, 2021). Merriam & Bierema (2013) maintain that an adult is a person who has left the principal social role of full-time student and has taken on the primary social role of a worker, husband, or parent. Adults should be taught differently than children, according to the principle of andragogy, because their learning processes are so dissimilar.

A theory of adult education, adult learning, adult learning technology, adult education method, adult education technique, and a collection of assumptions have all been referred to as andragogy (Davenport et al., 2013). A systematic and on-going effort to help adults learn in a way that improves their ability to function as self-directed learners is known as andragogy (Mezirow, 1990). The experience of a personal agreement for interactive learning between the student and the project, represents an andragogical presumption (Birsanu, 2020).

The term “andragogy” refers to a collection of assumptions that are included into theories of adult education, adult learning, technology-assisted learning, methods of adult education, and techniques of adult education. As soon as Knowles popularised the idea of andragogy in education, the academic community accepted it. According to the philosophy of adult education known as andragogy, people will learn best when they comprehend the significance of the information or can use it to solve problems in their own real-world contexts (Knowles, 1970). Jarvis (1984) argued that andragogy is best understood as an expression of the romantic curriculum and that, although its values have a much longer history, its formulation and emergence were at a time when the structures of society were favourable to its acceptance. In essence, andragogy is a reflection of the time - a sign of the times. The majority of adult learners do not benefit from classroom-based adult learning because it is linear, and graduate students in particular who seek to develop their advanced creative capacity through cognitive, emotional, and behavioural growth, may be the group in which learning transference is best shown (Baublits, 2014).

Students must be able to demonstrate how well they applied what they learnt in order to determine learning transference. Knowledge, abilities, and attitudes must have undergone some discernible modifications (Baublits, 2014). The planning stage, learner characteristics and motivation, design and delivery techniques, learning context, immediate application, workplace environment, and the removal of barriers should all be taken into account when implementing creative capability in followership curriculum (Baublits, 2014). When Knowles introduced andragogy into the mainstream, the educational sector accepted the concept (Kroth & Michael, 2009).

### **Adult educator and andragogy: A participative method of learning for adult learners**

The adult education student team's educator plays the most important part in the educational process, and it is a fact that can be accepted. According to the Andragogy philosophy, the teacher has a responsibility to help the students comprehend why they are participating in the educational process, through a wholly experiential training that makes use of the students' prior experiences as well as those they have had while participating in the educational course. In addition to imparting knowledge, an educator should encourage self-directed learning in their students. Encouragement of the student and facilitation of the learning process are additional objectives of the educator (Giannoukos et al., 2015). The function of the educator is to direct, encourage, coordinate, and assist in tackling the topics he suggests. He also encourages the heuristic course to knowledge. The educator is continually interacting with the students, providing them with stimuli and working creatively with them. In addition, he allows for unfettered participation in problem-solving by providing time- occasionally limited time -for debate, questions, and doubting an answer (Giannoukos et al., 2015).

In order for the students to understand the course's objectives from the beginning, the instructor must create the curriculum using a role-playing game and intervene as a guide and coordinator of the teaching process. The curricula must prepare students for this diversity of workplaces in order to support a shared identity from an andragogical standpoint. In this complicated field, andragogues' abilities to professionally teach, organise learning events, consult with others, serve as moderators, and conduct research and evaluation are highly recognised (Reischmann, 2016). The potential for XR technologies to offer true, realistic learning experiences that improve skill acquisition and knowledge retention is what gives these fields of study their significance. These benefits from XR learning experiences have been put into numerical form by meta-analyses (Stanney et al., 2023).

It is crucial that the instructor takes action to establish limits and guidelines for how each person is to perform during the educational process. All participants will find it simpler to exchange ideas and information this way (Giannoukos et al., 2015). Teachers must involve all students in the learning process as they take on the role of learning facilitators. For fulfilment and information sharing, adult learners need to connect with other learners. The significance of their experience and/or knowledge must be made clear to students by teachers (Darden, 2014). An effective method of adult education that involves participation is discussed: andragogy. The task-oriented training paradigm of preretirement education is examined, and the relevance of andragogy as a preretirement education process is explained. The andragogical process is one highly successful method of ensuring that older persons are competent, capable learners (Meyer, 1976). To become actively involved in and take charge of their own on going, lifelong learning, teachers might benefit from understanding and putting self-directed learning into practise (Edd, 2009).

Learning is more enjoyable for learners when their autonomy is growing. This is one of the traits of the andragogy method to learning. According to the andragogy concept, students can choose whether or not they are in agreement with the learning process, which gives them the impression that learning is favourable and that learning objectives are met as a result of their own enthusiasm for learning (Ritonga et al., 2022). In order for an adult learning programme to succeed and properly demonstrate andragogy, it is practical for facilitators to possess 21st century competencies (Akintolu & Letseka, 2021). A number of presumptions, including the adult education method, adult learning theory, adult learning technology, and adult education technique, can all be grouped under the umbrella term andragogy (Akintolu & Letseka, 2021). A structured learning environment, encouraged assessment, and strong motivation on the part of the students and instructors themselves are requirements for andragogy education (Ritonga et al., 2022).

## **Conclusion**

Andragogy needs to get past the significant criticism that has dogged it for the past 30 years if it is to continue to be a central component of adult education. The use of andragogy should start to change (Kroth & Michael, 2009). Teachers who adhere to andragogy are aware that every student learns differently and that every learning experience is unique to the individual. In order to adapt instruction to learners' requirements and jointly develop effective learning strategies, instructors and students must work together. It acts as a reminder for educators to always take students into account, to actively engage students, and to foster environments that can inspire adult learners to study more effectively. Adult educators need to possess the necessary knowledge and abilities to impart education and adult literacy to adult

learners in a way that will enable them to become active participants in their own learning and lead more fulfilling lives.

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## **Reading Habit and Gender as Predictors of Adult Learners' Performance in English Language in Literacy Centers in Oyo State, Nigeria**

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• Popoola Damilola Iyanuoluwa<sup>2</sup>

### **Abstract**

Reading is an effort to understand the writer's message for development on a personal level and professional achievement. As a result, psychologists view it as a complex cognitive process where meanings are constructed from texts. The current study was carried out in literacy centres in Oyo State, Nigeria, to ascertain the associations between adult learners' academic accomplishment in English language, gender, and reading habits. A descriptive survey design was used in the study. The study employed a purposive sampling technique to choose 120 participants from literacy centers located in the city of Ibadan. Data were gathered using the Reading Habits Questionnaire (RHQ) and the English Language Achievement Test (ELAT). Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the responses. The empirical findings indicated that reading habit ( $\beta = -0.097$ ;  $t = -0.277$ ;  $p \ 0.783 > 0.05$ ) and gender ( $\beta = -0.526$ ;  $t = -1.577$ ;  $p \ 0.119 > 0.05$ ) have negative and insignificant relationship with adult learners' academic performance. The results also indicated reading habit and gender jointly accounted for 0.04% of the total variance in the dependent variable (adult learners' performance in the English language) among adult learners in literacy centers in Oyo State. Lastly, the findings revealed that age significantly influences adult learners' performance in the English language ( $F_{3,17} = 2.46$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ). It is implied that adult educators should design these kinds of projects and assignments with reflective thinking in mind, taking into account the importance of reading habits for academic success. In addition, facilitators could collaborate to develop schedules for library instruction to help adult learners develop a reading habit.

**Keywords:** *Oyo State, literacy centres, adult learners, reading habits, academic performance, gender.*

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## **Introduction**

Reading comprehension and its potential to enrich information are two reasons why knowledge received via reading is essential to the cognitive, behavioral, and attitudinal growth of learners (Baffoe & Okae-Anti, 2020; Hassan et al., 2021). There are several reasons why people read, including expanding their knowledge, having fun, unwinding, and so on (Whitten, Labby, and Sullivan, 2016). However, Mirza et al., 2021) pointed out that reading is more than just a means of enjoyment when it comes to living an active life. Chotitham and Wongwanich (2014) maintain that reading fosters the development of critical and judgmental thinking skills, which are necessary for problem-solving through context-taking. Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016) measured the importance of reading for success, noting that it begins in school and persists throughout a person's lifespan. However, Nigeria has a comparatively low literacy rate, particularly for adults. The National Bureau of Statistics reports that the adult literacy rate in Nigeria is roughly 59.6%, with a gender disparity that significantly favours men. This disparity poses a serious obstacle to Nigeria's attempts to meet its development objectives. One of the less literate states in Nigeria is Oyo State, where initiatives to raise adult literacy rates have been going on for a while. The state's poor literacy rate persists despite these efforts, especially among women. Establishing literacy centers, where adult learners can gain basic reading skills and improve their academic performance, is one of the measures used by the government and non-governmental groups to raise literacy levels. Many aspects that are essential for fostering adult learners' reading skills have been documented in the literature.

According to Costa and Kallick (2019), students who read a lot benefit from developing thinking, valuing, flexibility, and creativity skills. It has been found that reading habits affect students' ability to retain knowledge, construct worldviews, and write and communicate in English. Regretfully, reading habits are waning overall, most likely due to advancements in new media technology, most notably social media. Wang and Ho (2019) propose that an individual's inability to excel academically is often accompanied by a subconscious sense of contentment stemming from a deficiency of exposure to pertinent reading materials, educational chances, and resources. Poverty, conventional beliefs, and a lack of reading materials all negatively affect how readers form their habits. According to research by Ramirez et al., 2019), a severe lack of reading resources posed a significant obstacle to extended reading. Poor reading habits lead to poor academic accomplishment.

Academic success was found to be connected with reading preferences. Learners who consistently read both academic and non-academic books develop

their critical thinking skills, conceptual knowledge, and language fluency, all of which enhance their academic performance (Baba & Affendi, 2020). According to Muhammad et al., (2020), reading is a complicated act that involves a variety of cognitive, physical, intellectual, cultural, and linguistic processes. Research indicates that students who read extensively typically achieve high levels of academic success. However, adult learners' performance can be influenced by age and gender as well.

Age is thought to be one of the independent factors that could potentially have an impact on adult learners' academic performance. For students to function well, they must have the cognitive growth and maturity that come with age. Many developmental changes typically fluctuate with an individual's age. Every aspect of human functioning is likewise impacted. As a result, it is now required to investigate how much age influences adult English language learners' academic achievement.

Gender is another element taken into account in this research. Gender refers to the distinction between male and female sex and the ways in which this attribute influences people's attitudes about life and academic pursuits. There is conflicting evidence regarding how gender influences students' academic achievement. This has made it necessary to determine whether adult learners who are male and female differ significantly in terms of their academic achievement in English language.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between adult learners' academic performance in the English language and the factors of reading habit, gender, and age. The researcher believes that when the variables are considered collectively, a deeper comprehension of the relationship will be extremely beneficial in creating a theory that is more effective and in providing adult learners in Nigeria with useful counseling techniques, the ultimate goal of which is to improve their academic performance in English language.

### **Statement of the problem**

Understanding gender and reading habits impact on adult learners' English language proficiency is lacking, despite their importance being acknowledged in language learning. Though it's widely accepted that reading regularly improves language skills, there is still disagreement on how gender influences language use. To further understand their predictive value and possible ramifications for language education initiatives, research on the relationship between reading habits, gender, and adult learners' English performance is necessary. There is a knowledge vacuum about the precise effects of gender and reading habits on adult learners' English

language proficiency. Even though reading is typically seen as a good habit for language learning, it's crucial to investigate how reading affects adult learners' performance in the English language in their unique situation.

Furthermore, further research is required to fully understand how gender influences language performance predictions. Effective language education programmes must take into account the connections between gender, reading habits, and language proficiency. The factors that predict adult learners' performance in English can be used to inform curriculum design, instructional practices, and interventions that are intended to improve adult learners' language proficiency. Examining the influence of gender and reading habit on the language proficiency of adult learners has practical ramifications for language instruction.

### **Objectives of the study**

The study's broad objective is to explore reading habit and gender as predictors of adult learners' academic performance in English language in literacy centers in Oyo State, while specific objectives are to:

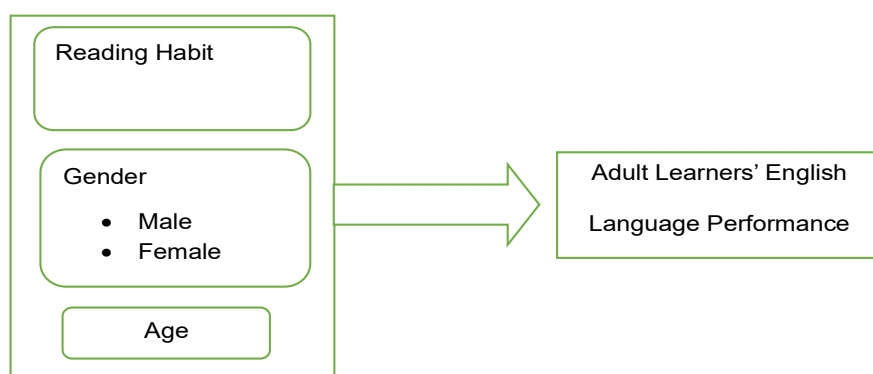
- i. examine the relative contribution of reading habit and gender on adult learners' performance in English language in literacy centers in Oyo State;
- ii. investigate the composite contribution of reading habit and gender on adult learners' performance in English language in literacy centers in Oyo State; and
- iii. evaluate the influence of age on reading habits of adult learners in English language in literacy centers in Oyo State.

### **Research questions**

The questions below are raised to guide the study.

- i. What is the relative contribution of reading habit and gender on adult learners' performance in English language in literacy centers in Oyo State?
- ii. What is the joint contribution of reading habit and gender on adult learners' performance in English language in literacy centers in Oyo State?
- iii. Does age significantly influence the reading habits of adult learners in English language in literacy centers in Oyo State?

### Conceptual framework



### Methodology

The descriptive survey research design method was used in the study. This design is appropriate and relevant to this research activity because it is commonly regarded as one in which an ensemble of people or items is investigated by collecting and analysing data from just a few individuals or objects that are thought to be representative of the group as a whole (Nworgu, 2006). However, in certain surveys, everybody in the population is researched, as opposed to sample surveys, which, just a subset of the overall population, is studied and used in this study. Furthermore, the design is applicable for this research endeavor because the investigator used the collected data to characterise the existing situations.

The population of interest for this study consisted of all adult learners enrolling into adult literacy centres in Ibadan metropolis as in 2023. However, one-hundred and twenty (120) respondents were sampled using purposive sampling technique. They were adult learners who had enrolled and stayed for more than a year in the literacy centres under investigation.

The quantitative research instruments designed by the researcher were used to obtain information from the respondents. The instruments consisted of Reading Habits Questionnaire (RHQ), and English Language Achievement Test (ELAT), respectively. These instruments were validated by the expert in the field of Educational Measurement and Evaluation. To aid ease of interpretation, the items were given in simple English and were rationally and systematically structured.

The instruments were subjected to reliability test and the Cronbach Alpha coefficient technique and Kuder and Richardson Formula 20 (KR20) which produced internal consistency reliability value of 0.86 and 0.83 for the RHQ and the ELAT, respectively. This was an indication that the instruments were dependable and reliable for this research.

The information was gathered using a quantitative instrument. The researcher administered the instrument to the respondents. Guidelines for completing the instrument were given to the respondents in order for them to understand and react accurately to the items on the instrument. Respondents were asked to check the boxes next to the responses that best represented the right choice or correction option to them. The data collected from the study's respondents was coded, scored, and examined with the SPSS statistical tool. The regression analysis techniques were employed.

## **Results**

### **Results based on remographic characteristic of the respondents.**

**Figure 1: A pie-chart showing distribution of respondents by gender.**

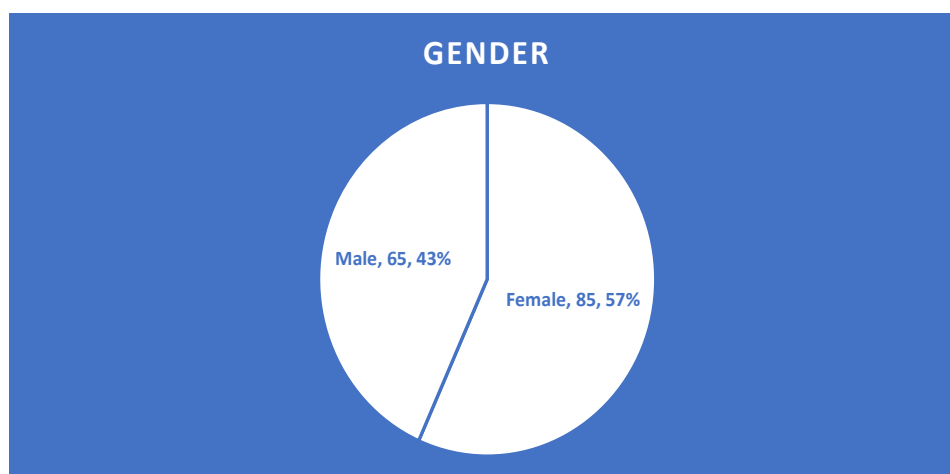


Figure 1, which is a pie chart, expressed in percentage, indicated that 85 (57%) of the sampled respondents were females, while the remaining 65 (43%) were males. This indicates that female respondents had the highest representations.

**Figure 2: Bar-Chart Showing the Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status**

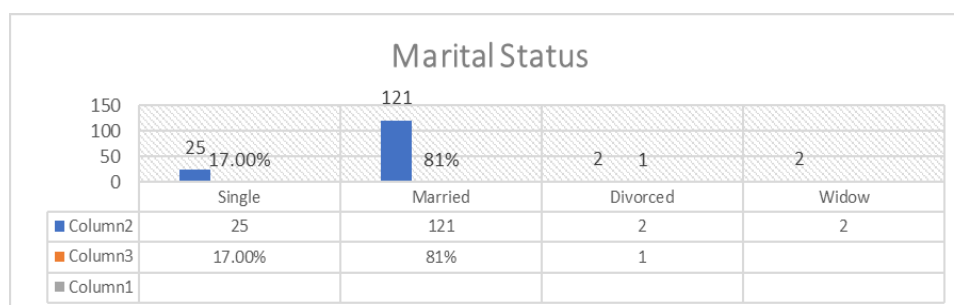


Figure 2, is a bar chart while the numbering: 0, 50, 100, 150 are the markings on the vertical axis depicting the number of people who are either married, single, divorced or widowed as their marital status. Numbers 25, 121, 2 and 2 are the actual numbers representing the four different categories of marital status mentioned above. It is expressed in both percentage and frequency for the participants. The results indicated that twenty-five (25) of the respondents, which represented 17.0% of the total participants, are single. Going by their marital status, one hundred and twenty-one (121) of them, which represented 81%, were married, while two of the participants, which accounted for 1%, were widows. It can be deduced that the majority of the participants involved in the study were married, accounting for 81% of the entire respondents used in the research.

### Results based on research questions

**Research Question I:** What is the relative contribution of reading habit and gender on adult learners performance in English language in literacy centres in Oyo State?

**Table 1: Regression analysis outcomes, as in Research Question above**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	99.830	12.336		8.092	.000
Reading Habit	-.097	.352	-.032	-.277	.783
Gender	-.0526	4.139	-.181	-1.577	.119

a. Dependent Variable: English Language Achievement Scores

Table 1 showed that reading habit ( $\hat{\alpha} = -0.097$ ;  $t = -0.277$ ;  $p = 0.783 > 0.05$ ) and gender ( $\hat{\alpha} = -0.526$ ;  $t = -1.577$ ;  $p = 0.119 > 0.05$ ). The empirical outcomes indicated that a unit decline in adults learners' reading habit brings about 0.097 reduction in their ability on performance in English Language. Hence, there is an inverse relationship between reading habits and adult learners' performance in English Language in the literacy centres under investigation. Also, adult learners' gender has negative and insignificant relationship with performance in English Language. This indicated that being male or female has nothing to do with performance in English Language especially when there is a decline in reading habit which should be regarded as an engine room through which adult learners' performance in English Language should be premised. The fact that adult males and females are exposed to the same social and academic environments could be one factor. Since they are evaluated according to the same standards, they respond to grades (academic achievement) in a comparable way. This result is consistent with Ugoji's (2008) observation that there is no discernible gender difference. The findings were supported by Silverrajoo and Hassan (2018), who acknowledged that there is a weak and negative correlation between learners' reading strategies and academic achievement. A negative correlation between reading habits and anxiety was observed by Tonka and Bakir (2020). So, they came to the conclusion that students' performance and reading habits are influenced by their reading anxiety. According to similar findings, study habits and academic stress, reading habits, and academic accomplishment were found to be significantly negatively correlated (Alnahdi & Aftab, 2020). In contrary, Abid, Aslam, Alghamdi and Kumar (2023) found that reading habits and academic achievement in English had a moderately good association, while there was a large positive relationship between reading habits and study skills.

**Research Question II:** What is the joint contribution of Reading Habit and Gender on Adult learners Performance in English language in Literacy Centres in Oyo State?

**Table 2: Regression analysis outcomes in respect of Research Question II, as above.**

Model	Sum Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	750.446	2	375.223	1.340	.268 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	20719.684	74	279.996		
Total	21470.130	76			
R = 0.187 <sup>a</sup> R <sup>2</sup> = 0.035 Adj R <sup>2</sup> = 0.009					

a. Dependent Variable: Achievement Scores

b. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Reading Habit



Table 2 showed that there is no joint contribution of independent variables (reading habit and gender) to the dependent variable (adult learners' performance in English language in Literacy Centres in Oyo State) ( $R = 0.187$ ). This led to the fact that the independent variables accounted for 0.04% of the total variance in the dependent variable (adult learners' performance in the English language) among adult learners in literacy centres in Oyo State (adjusted  $R^2 = 0.009$ ). This joint contribution is not significant ( $F_{(2,74)} = 1.34$ ;  $p\ 0.268 > 0.05$ ). According to Hoover and Tunmer (2020), reading is a complex cognitive activity that necessitates the understanding of printed symbols as thinking units and the recognition of printed symbols as meaningful units in order to appropriately interpret a written message. Effective reading can foster success in the classroom and workplace as well as improve learners' critical thinking, writing, and communication abilities as well as their intuitive knowledge—all of which are crucial for the development of human capital (Heineke & Vera, 2022).

**Research Question III:** Does age significantly influence the reading habits of adult learners in English language in Literacy Centres in Oyo State?

**Table 3: Summary of Analysis of Variance showing the influence of Research Question III, as above.**

Age	N	Mean	Std.D	F	Df	Sig.	Remark
Under 18yrs	3	30.00	5.196				
18- 26yrs	23	30.65	4.830				
27- 35yrs	8	30.25	8.277				
36- 44yrs	7	32.00	2.450				
45- 53yrs	30	28.86	4.932				
Total	77	30.49	5.486	2.464	3,71	0.041	Significant

Table 3 showed the influence of age on the reading habits of adult learners' performance in the English language in Literacy Centres in Oyo State. The table revealed that age significantly influences adult learners' performance in the English language ( $F_{3,17} = 2.46$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ). The age category influenced the most are those within the age range of 36–44 years, who have the highest mean score of 32.00, while the least influence can be traced to those within the age range of 45–53 years, with a mean score of 28.86. It was expected that the older people would outperform the younger ones, but the results show otherwise. Piaget's (1932) hypothesis, which holds that an adolescent's brain is fully developed and capable of engaging in complex and abstract thought, provides a viable explanation for this. Compared to their older counterparts, younger pupils are typically more committed to their academic goals. This may be the result of the elder ones' attention being diverted by other urgent,

non-academic concerns. Although younger adult learners focus on their academic work, it's possible that they lack the expertise necessary to successfully handle the hurdles involved in advanced academic work.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

The study concluded that reading habit, gender and age contributed to the adult learner's performance in English language at literacy centres in Oyo State, Nigeria. Based on this, the following recommendations are suggested.

- i. Adult learners should be encouraged to develop a reading culture through the implementation of programmes by literacy centres. Regular reading sessions, book groups, and having access to a wide variety of reading materials that suit students' interests and preferences can all help achieve this.
- ii. Even though there were no discernible gender disparities in language proficiency, it is nevertheless critical to establish a gender-sensitive learning environment. Gender-related differences in learning outcomes and engagement should be taken into consideration by adult educators in order to provide equal learning opportunities for male and female students.
- iii. Longitudinal studies should be carried out to provide a better understanding of the long-term impact of reading habits on language ability regardless of adult learners' gender and age. This research can shed light on how language and reading habits change over time, enabling more intelligent educational interventions.
- iv. Adult educators are essential in influencing the language proficiency and reading habits of the adults' learners. Consequently, learner-centered language instruction and the promotion of good reading habits should be the main topics of modules in teacher preparation programmes.

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## **Challenges in Implementing Adult Education Programmes for Transgenders in Puducherry UT, India**

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• P.B Shankar Narayan<sup>3</sup>

### **Abstract**

Adult education allows mature learners to expand their knowledge, learn new skills, and obtain further qualifications, which can increase their employability and competence. Adult education is also considered a tool for supporting marginalized and excluded communities. Although the Government of India conducts many adult education programmes, when it comes to the transgender community, awareness and participation is less. This study seeks to identify the problems in implementing such programmes and measures to increase participation through the perspectives of transgender community members with reference to SMILE - Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise, an umbrella scheme implemented by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India. This is a qualitative study using case studies of five transgender community members from Puducherry Union Territory, India, which includes community leaders and founders of NGOs for the transgender community in Puducherry UT, India. The study finds lack of awareness, lack of community participation, and inefficient collaboration between local government and civil society organizations as the main factors hindering the efficient implementation of the programmes.

**Keywords:** *Transgender, adult education, challenges, community development.*

### **Introduction**

UNESCO defines 'Adult Education' as education specifically targeting individuals who are regarded as adults by the society to which they belong, to improve their technical or professional qualifications, further develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, skills and competencies in a new field or refresh or update their knowledge in a particular field (UNESCO, 2022).

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Adult education is getting widespread recognition and importance since it provides a person who lost the opportunity with a 'second chance' to complete their formal education, upgrade their skills and knowledge for better career opportunities and professional growth. In short, it aims at extending educational options to those adults who have lost the chance and have crossed the age of formal education but now feel a need to learn, including literacy, basic education equivalency, skill development and continuing education. Adult education programmes are formulated and implemented by different countries, including India. The National Education Policy, 2020 identifies five crucial components of adult education, viz., a) Foundational literacy and numeracy, b) Critical life skills, c) Vocational skills development, d) Continuing education (MHRD, 2020). Thus, it is clear that the Government of India also considers adult education as essential in developing human capital, increasing productivity and attaining social progress.

There are multiple reasons behind people's motivation to join adult education programmes. Employment and professional growth are important reasons behind the motivation to attend adult education courses (Illeris, 2010). Apart from this, adult education has a social aspect also. Adult education creates a sense of self-worth and personal power among adults. Adult education is also a social education for social change (Lindeman, 2023). Adult education has a significant role in helping marginalized and excluded communities harness opportunities, enabling them to lead better lives. One of the essential aims of adult education is to overcome social exclusion, which obstructs the development of equitable and democratic societies in so many countries (Telli, 2021). Since India is a country where caste, class, gender, ethnicity and place of birth all impact the educational experience of persons (Thaneja, 2020), exclusion from the educational system is also very high.

A large proportion of marginalized communities, such as Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), girls, transgender persons, and persons with disabilities, cannot complete their formal education due to social, economic and cultural reasons. Many of them do not even have basic literacy. As per the census of 2011, the literacy rate among SCs is 66.1% (Kanwal, 2022), and that of STs is 59%, while the literacy rate of India is 73% (PIB, 2020). Regarding transgender community members, the literacy rate is the lowest at 56.1%. The primary reason behind the high dropout rate and low literacy among the transgender community is the lack of an inclusive environment in schools and universities (Thacahpalli, 2022). The data regarding the literacy rate of transgender persons shows that a large section of transgender persons cannot even complete their basic education. They are deprived of family and school environments, their education, and risk future career opportunities (Rajkumar, 2016).

As a result, the doors of career opportunities, decent employment and a life of dignity remain closed in front of them (Rajdev, 2020). This community falls under the “disadvantaged group” category defined by the Right to Education by the Government of India. This situation therefore has large-scale implications for their future development.

Opportunities for continuing education and new skills can help them lead a better life. However, at the same time, the social stigma that transgender people face shatters their interest and focus towards learning. They develop a feeling of being avoided, ignored, and disgraced. Transgender students are often denied admission to educational institutions because those institutions do not recognize their gender identities (Agarwal, 2015). As a result, they are unable to complete their education, and their career options get limited. Now that the society has started identifying the rights and needs of transgender people, there is a wide scale of recognition of their right to study. It is also identified that if better opportunities are provided, the community members will be able to progress socially and economically.

Adult education can thus help in providing new opportunities to learn for transgender communities so that they are able to use the acquired skills and knowledge for accessing better employment, becoming entrepreneurs etc. The Government of India has included a skill training component under the umbrella scheme named Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise (SMILE), under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. However, in the case of communities like transgender people, who face wide-scale social exclusion and marginalization, the current state of adult education programmes extended to them and their challenges need to be understood (MoE, 2021). It is challenging to provide equal educational opportunities to transgender students because there is a problem of inclusion with male and female students (Rajkumar, 2016). This and other factors might be reflected in adult education since the stereotypes regarding the transgender community are deeply rooted in Indian society. Although such programmes are implemented by the Government of India, the transgender community cannot access them entirely for specific reasons. There is extensive literature regarding the benefits of adult education programmes. However, no studies address the adult education programmes for the transgender community in India and their effectiveness. This study seeks to fill this literature gap. This study highlights the adult education programmes for the transgender community by the Government of India and the aspirations of the transgender community regarding adult education programmes. Apart from these, challenges and shortcomings in implementing such programmes are discussed by focusing on the perspective of transgender community regarding the skill training programmes under SMILE.

## **1. Methods**

### **Study design**

The qualitative study approach was adopted with a case study design. The participants were from an NGO in Puducherry, India who belong to transgender community and have undergone skill training programmes at least once. They had earlier discontinued formal education from an NGO in Puducherry UT, India.

### **Study setting and participants**

Puducherry (UT) is located in the southern part of India, bordering Tamil Nadu and Bay of Bengal. The participants in this study included a total of five transgender persons. Three of them were registered under SCOHD (NGO, Puducherry) and two of them are community leaders. All of the respondents belong to the age group of 18-46 years and were selected using convenient sampling technique was restricted to participants who have discontinued their formal education and were enrolled as per of the adult education programmes or some kind of skill development trainings. The community leaders were included in the study to get a broader picture regarding ground realities such as the state of adult education, shortcomings and challenges in the implementation of such programmes.

### **Data collection**

The data for this research was collected in two phases. The first phase was on March 28, 2023 in which the researcher conducted an in-depth interview of a transgender community leader. The participants for the next phase of the study were selected with the help of contacts given by the first participant. Thus, the researcher used snowball sampling technique to identify suitable participants and collect the data. In the second phase of the data collection, conducted on April 02, 2023 and April 11, 2023, in-depth interview of one community leader and three transgender community members were taken from SCOHD Foundation, Puducherry. All the interviews were conducted using an interview guide and questions were asked in English which were translated with the help of a professional translator. The data was recorded on a recording device with the consent of participants.

### **Data analysis**

‘Thematic analysis’ (TA), is an analytic method for identifying patterns of meaning

across qualitative data sets (Forbes, 2021). The recorded data was translated and transcribed. The data thus obtained is analysed thematically.

## **Ethics**

Permission was taken from the participants before collecting data and the motive behind the research was clearly stated. The major concern of the participants was regarding the confidentiality of their names. Thus, the name of each participant is kept confidential throughout the research and fictitious names have been used.

## **2. Adult education for transgenders**

In ancient India, transgender persons were accepted and treated with respect by society. However, under British rule, they were treated as habitual offenders and identified as ‘criminals’ under the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 (Singh, 2022). After Independence, this was repealed, and the Government started recognizing the rights of transgender persons. Articles 15, 17, and 46 under the Constitution of India safeguarded the educational interest of the weaker section of the community, i.e., socially and educationally backward classes, scheduled castes and tribes, and minorities (Chanana, 1993). This provision provided all the citizens of India, including transgender people, with a Constitutional safeguard to access quality education. As per the census of 2011, only 56.7% of the transgender community was literate, which showed that the community is still marginalized and discriminated against on a large scale. A significant proportion of the community members discontinued their studies and went for other work like begging and sex work. Even if they got a job, they were again subjected to violence, exploitation and discrimination.

At the same time, various efforts were made by civil society organizations and the Government to reintegrate transgender persons into the educational system. In a landmark judgement of 2014, the Supreme Court of India ruled that because of the constitutional guarantee, transgender community has the right to fundamental human rights, education and development and to fight discrimination, violence and exploitation. According to a high court ruling in 2014, they should be recognized as a ‘third party’ and receive recognition under the “disadvantaged group” category defined by the Right to Education Act 2009 (RTE). In 2016, the first school for transgender people was started in Kochi, Kerala, to help the adults who dropped out of school finish their education. According to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, they released Rs. 1 crore to the National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFC) for conducting skill development training programmes during the FY 2018-19.



Transgender Persons Act 2019 recognized the need for good educational opportunities for the transgender community. Section 14 of the Act mandates the appropriate Government to formulate schemes and programmes to support the livelihood of the transgender community through vocational training and self-employment (Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019). This Act also mandates educational institutions to follow inclusivity and enroll transgender students into mainstream education. The National Council for Transgenders was constituted in 2020 to advise the Government on policies, programmes, legislations and projects related to the transgender community (PIB, 2021). The NEP 2020 also strives for equitable and universal access to Education for All and identifies adult education as a tool to open up lifelong learning opportunities for everyone, enabling them to progress personally and professionally (MHRD, NEP, 2020).

Many schools and colleges are taking steps to ensure the inclusion of transgender students in regular education, and policy measures are also being implemented. Many higher education institutions have included even the third gender category in their official application forms and records. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment also formulated an umbrella scheme called SMILE (Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise), which focuses on rehabilitation, provisions for medical facilities, education, skill development, etc. Scholarships are being provided for transgender students from class IX to higher levels. The skill development programmes under these schemes seek to provide skill training that will give better employment and livelihood opportunities for the transgender community members. As per the data by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment Rs. 365 crores is allotted for the scheme from 2021-22 to 2025-26 (MoSJE, 2022). Along with the central government, different state governments are also implementing unique programmes and schemes for the welfare of transgender people. Although these schemes and programmes are employed by the central government and various state governments, the efficiency or ground reality needs to be analysed.

### **Adult education: Aspirations of the transgender community**

Most of the transgender community members were forced to stop their studies as a result of pressure from society and family. When they become transgender, the major problem faced is their poor livelihood condition. Most of them depend on sex work and begging. However, the fact is that the majority of them are doing it only because no other options are available. Even if they are educated, they cannot find means for their livelihood. However, they are looking forward to a new opportunity

to learn and get employed. However, the opportunities available to them are still meagre.

Respondent 01, a 32-year-old transwoman from SCOHD NGO, Puducherry, who participated in a skill development programme conducted by a local NGO, said that: *“Only limited number of institutions provide education to transgender people; others asking for a lot of money and exploit us”*.

The community members believe that learning some skills will give them a meagre income, which will significantly help improve their livelihood conditions.

Respondent 02, a 21-year transwoman from the same NGO, had much to tell about her educational aspirations: *“believe skill development or employment generation programmes will surely help us. However, we are not aware. We are going for begging and do sex work. If provided employment, we will surely go for proper work. If we get education, we can surely lead a dignified life in the society without depending on anyone.”* Adult education seeks to provide skills that will enhance employability and livelihood opportunities. However, various issues are hindering the participation of transgender people in adult education and skill development programmes like SMILE. These crises and challenges can be discussed by taking SMILE as an example.

### **Challenges in implementing skill development programmes and scholarships under SMILE**

SMILE, implemented by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, is concerned with rehabilitation, education, skill development, medical facilities, etc., for the transgender community and beggars. The scheme has two sub-schemes: Comprehensive Rehabilitation for the Welfare of Transgender Persons and Comprehensive Rehabilitation of Persons Engaged in the Act of Begging. Under the scheme, skill-development programmes for the employment of transgender people and scholarships for higher studies are provided. However, there are severe issues in the eligibility criteria and mode of implementation of the programmes and scholarships, which exclude a considerable population from the benefits. These are listed below:

#### **Lack of awareness regarding the programme**

All the programmes implemented under SMILE are through the national portal for transgender people. The applications for ID cards, registration for the skill

development programmes, applications for scholarships, etc., are made through the portal. However, the fact is that many transgender persons are not aware of the portal itself, and their computer literacy is also very low.

Respondent X, a transwoman, community leader and founder of an NGO for the transgender community in Puducherry, said, *"They are not even aware of how to use the computer, then how will they go through the website and apply for the ID cards"*.

Also, the website is in English and Hindi, and the transpersons from other languages are entirely ignored. There needs to be more community awareness about the programmes and their benefits. When asked about SMILE, most community members were unaware of the programme and its benefits.

Respondent Y, a 37-year-old transwoman and community leader based in Chennai, said "As a part of the community and a community leader working in the field, even we do not know what programmes the government has planned under SMILE".

The scheme is implemented with NGOs, state and union governments, local urban bodies, community-based organizations, and institutions per the ministry's guidelines.

However, according to Respondent Y, *"No collaboration is made from the government"*. These indicate the severe gaps in implementing welfare programmes and services for the marginalized. The top-down approach to implementing the programmes leads to the exclusion of many eligible persons from the benefits.

### **Lack of identity cards**

For a transgender person to be eligible for attending the skill development classes, an identity card issued through the National Portal for Transgenders is essential. However, still, a large proportion of the community's members do not have identity cards issued by the National Portal for Transgenders. Apart from these, out of the total 14466 applications submitted, 22% are still pending, as per the data on the National Portal for Transgenders. For the scholarship programme too, a transgender certificate is mandatory for getting benefits, and the situation is the same: a large proportion of the people did not apply for the same and are therefore excluded.

**No basic education**

A large proportion of the transgender community members left school long ago, most of them during their childhood. Even the younger members did not have the basic knowledge to continue their education since they could not continue proper studies. As per the 2011 census, the total literacy rate among transgender persons was 56.1% for a total population of around 4.8 lakhs, against the national average of 74.04% (Inclusive Education Edition: Transgender Education in India, 2023). Many could not continue their studies post-surgery, as they were not allowed re-admission or facilities like hostels (Thachappilly, 2022). They also leave formal education due to the social environment in schools and colleges. Transgender children are forced to quit their education due to harassment and bullying, impacting their chances of employment and societal integration (Raman, 2021).

Even if they want to continue studying or enroll in an adult education programme, this primary education is a crisis, and fewer interventions are made to address these issues.

“If there is no basic education available for many community members, then how can they study even if they want to..... and what is the alternative?” asked Respondent Y.

**Policies without considering the ground realities**

The eligibility criteria mentioned in the portal for skill development programmes and scholarships are formulated without considering the ground realities. To be eligible for scholarships for studies, transgender students should submit the previous year's mark sheet and the scholarships are provided based on the marks reflected in the mark sheets. However, many students did not have mark sheets and other documents since they discontinued their studies earlier or were forced to stop their education mid-way. They face many issues while updating their documents and other certificates, which hinders access to these facilities.

Respondent X also said that “the workshops would not be suitable for all transpersons since accessing them would be difficult, especially transmen since they have to go to training centres at different places after selection”.

A monthly stipend of Rs .1000 would be provided, which is not adequate according to the opinion of transgender persons.

Respondent 01 said, “We cannot sit in one place and undergo training without any proper income. We also need to take care of others, and it is beneficial to go for begging or sex work than taking Rs 1,000 per month”.

These are some of the issues with the implementation of SMILE that results in exclusion of a large section of the transgender community from its designated benefits. Social stigma is yet another factor that hinders the desired goal of adult education and skill development programmes for transgender people.

### **Social stigma and employment uncertainty**

The adult education and skill development programmes for transgender people aim at providing equal opportunities for the transgender community, opening employment opportunities, and thereby raising the standard of living. However, social stigma is still a huge challenge. Whether they can grab employment opportunities or succeed in self-made ventures is still a big question for the community. Even the well-educated members of the community are denied job opportunities only because they are transgender.

A 31-year-old hotel management graduate Sahana says, “The public is afraid of us and treats us as aliens; even if we have skills or are educated, they will not be giving us jobs or willing to buy from us. I worked in Dubai before my surgery. When I go out seeking for a job, even if I have all the certificates, employers are not ready to give a job and say that they only need a boy or a girl”.

“When I used to wear clothes like yours, a shirt and pants, I got a job at an IT company. When I became a transgender, nobody was willing to give me a job,” said Respondent 02.

They want to continue their studies and work to lead a decent life. When given the right opportunity, many community members use it. Like Sharavi, a transgender woman from Pondicherry pursuing her nursing degree at an institution in Pondicherry. They aspire for better education and a better life. These are serious concerns, as employability and decent income are the ultimate goals of all transgender education programmes.

### **Local governance**

The transgender community is unaware of many schemes and programmes. The involvement of local governments in implementing welfare services is not up to the mark, so most transgender community members are unaware of the essential details they should know. Even when implementing national-level programmes like SMILE, lack of awareness among community members is a matter of concern. The civil society organizations working among the transgender community are unsatisfied with how local self-governments coordinate with them.

Respondent X says, “Decentralization to the local level is still not there, and no information is passed to the NGOs regularly”.

Even though excellent policies are being formulated at the national level; if the ground-level bodies do not implement them correctly, nothing revolutionary can take place.

### **3. Discussion**

The census data shows that about half of the transgender community members are illiterate. The reasons majorly stemmed from societal alienation. Although the Government takes many initiatives, why are they still not able to grasp the opportunities and make progress in life? Community members’ participation is imperative for every welfare service’s success, especially for marginalized communities like transgender people. It was observed that the top- down approaches to designing and implementing policies without considering the ground-level realities are inadequate for achieving the desired goal. So, while designing these initiatives, the participation of community leaders and civil society organizations is necessary. The policies should include as many beneficiaries as possible, so that some positive change can be attained in this grave situation. However, in the case of programmes like SMILE, it is identified that a considerable proportion of the target community is excluded from the benefits.

Regarding transgender communities, the universalization of identity cards is an urgent need since most of the benefits are provided based on these documents, and a large section of the population is not even aware of it. This mission will not be possible without the active participation of community leaders, non-governmental organizations, and other outreach workers. In a country that has implemented Aadhar for the entire nation, providing an identity card for transgender people is not an undoable task. The policy initiatives should also consider the limitations of the community members, both physical and mental so that most of them can access the services.

Employment generation among the transgender community cannot be achieved only by giving education or skill development to transgender people; a lot more has to be done in society, for which radical policy decisions are required at the primary school level. As suggested by a community member, knowledge regarding transgender people should be given to children at the lowest level of education so that they will not consider transgender people as someone alien or abnormal.

Moreover, the most important thing is the decentralization of welfare activities in an efficient manner. Still, transgender community members have to wait for long to update their essential documents, and as a result, they are excluded from social security benefits. An alternative should be provided for the persons who do not have ID cards or certificates to timely benefit from the schemes and programmes of the Government.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Adult education is an effective tool for enhancing the skills and knowledge of a person, which will provide them with varied opportunities in life. For transgender people, it is a lifeline as it can provide employment, income, and a new hope for dignified life. However, implementing the programmes is challenging since most community members do not have the required documents, awareness, and primary education to use the opportunities. The denial of admissions to the students who underwent surgery also left them in a state of uncertainty. Immediate attention should be given to these fundamental issues, with proper participation and involvement of community members and other stakeholder groups. The ultimate aim of the adult education programmes could be achieved without excluding anyone, thus achieving the goal of equality and social justice.

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## **Exploring the Socio-economic and Healthcare Challenges Faced by Elderly Population in Phungyar Block, Kamjong District of Manipur: Study on Rights Awareness and Well-being**

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• V.K. Dikshit<sup>2</sup>

### **Abstract**

Ageing is a natural process that affects both the physical appearance as well as functioning of the body. However, the rights of the elderly have often been denied, including the right to express their thoughts, right to maintain relationships, and right to privacy. The paper presents findings from a study conducted in Phungyar block, Kamjong district of Manipur, highlighting the challenges faced by the elderly population in terms of unemployment, financial insecurity, health issues, and the risk of abuse. The research emphasizes the need to improve awareness of elderly rights, strengthen social support systems and provide necessary assistance to ensure the well-being and dignity of the ageing population. This study examines the importance of understanding and supporting elderly people. The research paper also mentions the government policies and programmes for the elderly in India, as well as the rights of the elderly population in the context of the European Union.

**Keywords:** *Ageing, rights, elderly people, population, Phungyar.*

### **Introduction**

Are we treating our elderly with respect, care, and love? Many a time, the rights of the elderly are denied. In 2014, 50% of the elders in India reported abuse out of which 77% lived with their families The Print<sup>3</sup> in 2022 reported that 35% of senior citizens in India suffer abuse by their sons, 21% by daughters-in-law and 2% by their domestic helps. Moreover, the elderly people in media are often portrayed as grouchy persons. In most societies, we tend to glorify youth but never realize that old age too is a blessing. According to the technical group on population projection for India and states 2011-2036, there are nearly 138 million elderly persons in India

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in 2021 (67 million males and 71 million females)<sup>4</sup>. Life expectancy has also gone up to over 70 years in the recent times. Better medical facilities, better lifestyles, and advances in medicine and medical technology impact the life expectancy. Thus, it can be said that by 2025 the world will have more elderly people than younger people and it cross the two billion mark by 2050, People do not want to get old thus, cosmetic surgery and plastic surgery is becoming a trend to look younger. However, many elderly persons are veritably satisfied with their old age. Older people continue to outperform in areas where they have developed relatively higher levels of expertise and skills than the younger adults who do not possess expertise. Attitudes towards the elderly change continuously and are also affected by societal changes. Industrialization and modernization have contributed greatly to lowering the power and prestige which the elderly people hold. The elderly persons have both benefited and suffered from these rapid changes.

Diet and exercise play an important role in ageing. It is becoming clear that many physical changes associated with ageing are caused by habits such as smoking or lack of exercise. An analogy can be drawn from the seasons of the year to the stages of life. Spring is the time of growth when new blooms appear; summer is the time of maturity and greatest productivity; autumn is the time of harvest and culmination; and winter is the time of decline and death. Each season is beautiful and unique. There is a definite progression from one season to the next. This analogy is too simple to describe human development but poetically it captures the essence of various developmental theories (Kimmel, 1990).

Till recently, families in India used to live in a joint family consisting of sons, daughters, grandchildren and their kin. Family members used to look after the health of the elderly, but nowadays old age homes are on the rise to provide institutional support for the needy and take care of the elderly persons. Elderly people are seen more at old age homes than their own homes. The traditional Indian value system gives importance and unconditional respect to elders as they are an inherent part of the family. Also, the young people often consult their elders for advice on each and every aspect of their lives. This also leads to senior citizens playing a crucial role in their families and society. In the current scenario, these values are fast eroding. The transition from traditional joint families to nuclear families has contributed not only to the separation of families but also with respect to severance of family ties. Now, many senior citizens do not have an equivalent role in their families, as was traditionally played.

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<sup>4</sup><https://ruralindiaonline.org/en/library/resource/population-projections-for-india-and-states-2011-2036//>

## Methodology

Phungyar<sup>5</sup> is mainly occupied by the 'Tangkhul Naga' community<sup>6</sup>. The study was conducted using a quantitative research design. Research data was collected mostly through questionnaires and telephonic interviews. The questionnaire was responded by 125 respondents (all above 60 years of age) across 6 villages from Phungyar block. Among the respondents, 80 were males and 45 were females.

## Research objectives

The demographic characteristics of the elderly population included family structure, education levels, employment status, health conditions, and social connections. The primary objective was to find out the awareness levels of their own rights and understand the challenges faced by them.

## Data analysis and result

Out of 125 respondents, 38 mentioned that they live in a joint family i.e., 30.4% and 87 responded that they live in a nuclear family i.e., 69.6%. This suggests a shift from traditional joint family structures to nuclear family setup. Out of 125 respondents, 22 studied till grade 5 which is 17.6%; 43 studied till grade 8 which is 34.4%; 16 studied till grade 10 which is 12.8%; 5 studied till grade 10+2 which is 4.4%; 2 studied till graduate level which is 1.6%; 9 studied till Masters level which is 7.2 % and 28 have never been to school which is 22.4%.

**Table 1: Educational qualification overview of the respondents**

Grade/Level	No. of Respondents	%
Class I – V	22	17.6
Class V – VIII	43	34.4
Class VIII – X	16	12.8
Class X – XII	5	4.4
Graduate Level	2	1.6
M.A. Level	9	7.2
Never enrolled in school	28	22.4
<b>Total</b>	125	100

<sup>5</sup>Phungyar is a small town located south of Kamjong in Kamjong district, Manipur, India. It is also the name of a sub-division in the district.

<sup>6</sup>The 'Tangkhul Naga' is an ethnic group living along Indo-Myanmar border, occupying Ukhrul district and Kamjong district in the Indian state of Manipur.

Continuing education is not favoured by the majority in the area. This implies that continuing education is not a priority for them. 7 out of 125 respondents stated that they are employed, which is 5.6%; 15 people responded that they receive pension which is 12% and 103 responded that they are unemployed which is 82.4%. The unemployment status of elderly people is high in the area thus the dependency ratio is also high. 72% of the respondents did not get any help from the government or NGOs and 13.6% of the respondents get an old age pension from the government. In times of financial need, 24% of the respondents responded that they borrow from others with interest, and 40% of the respondents responded that their sons and daughters assist them whenever they need financial help. 24.8% of the respondents responded that they get assistance from family and relatives and 2.4% of the respondents responded that they get loans from the bank and private organizations for their financial needs. The percentage of elderly people who search for a job is very low. Most of the elderly in the area are unemployed. However, above 50% of the elderly in the area are healthy.

When asked how good their health is, 9.6% stated that they are very well, 55.2% said their health is good, 11.2% stated their health is very poor, while 18.4% replied that their health is poor and 5.6% stated that they don't really know or cannot comment.

Interestingly, 82.4% of the respondents can prepare their meal, while the remaining 17.6% of the respondents cannot prepare their meal. 32% persons suffer from chronic diseases like tuberculosis, diabetes, asthma, thyroid and high blood pressure as these are common in the area. 82.4% of the respondents said that they haven't experienced any sort of abuse and 17.6% responded that they have experienced abuse because of their old age or because of their poor health. All respondents stated they have experienced some sort of abuse and it was basically verbal in nature. A sizeable portion of the respondents felt that they are losing social connection. 44.8% of them are aware of the law for elderly persons, whereas 55.2% of them were unaware.

The proportion of those who were not aware of the law is still very high. This may be because of illiteracy or lack of proper information about their rights. There are many challenges faced by the elderly population in Phungyar block, including unemployment, financial insecurity, health issues, and the risk of abuse. Efforts should be made to improve awareness around elderly rights, strengthen social support systems and provide necessary assistance to ensure the well-being and dignity of the elderly population.

## **Government policies and programmes for elderly people in India**

Developing a good comprehensive policy for elderly people is an urgent need and it is the task of the government to implement and formulate the policies. Older Persons (Maintenance, Care and Protection) Bill provides everyone the right to live, which is adequate for the health and well-being of a person and his family, including food, clothing, housing, medical aid and necessary social security. Therefore, the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, adulthood or other unfortunate events is beyond anyone's control. Article 21 of the Constitution of India also echoes that 'no person shall be bereft of his life or personal liberty except consistent with the procedure established by law'. Further, Article 39 (a) of the Constitution of India says, 'the State shall, especially, direct its policy towards securing (a) that the citizen, men, and ladies equally, have right to an adequate means of livelihood'. Article 41 of the Indian Constitution enjoins upon the State to form effective provisions for public assistance, within the bounds of its economic capacity and development, in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness, disablement, and other cases of undeserved want. Both the central and the state governments are empowered under Entry 23 of List III (Concurrent List) to make provisions for social security and social insurance.

### **Older persons (Maintenance, Care and Protection) bill, 2005**

This Bill brings stepchildren, adoptive children, children-in-law, and legal guardians of minor children under the definition of 'children'. Maintenance tribunals may direct children to pay a maximum of Rs 10,000 per month as maintenance amount to their parents. The Bill removes this upper limit on the upkeep fee. The Act provides for senior citizens to appeal for the choices of their upkeep. Further, the Bill allows children and relatives to appeal on decisions of the tribunal. In case, the children of relatives fail to comply with the maintenance orders, the tribunal may issue a warrant to levy the due amount. Failure to pay such a fine may lead to imprisonment of up to one month, or until the payment is made. The Bill provides for the regulation of providing care homes for senior citizens, and institutions providing home-care services (The Maintenance and Welfare of Older Persons and Senior Citizens (Amendment) Act 2019)<sup>7</sup>.

**The National Policy on Older Persons (NPOP)** was formed in 1999 in response to the increasing number of 60 years and above older persons and their

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<sup>7</sup><https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1843029>

vulnerabilities arising out of income insecurities, concern about health and other socio-economic as well as physical well-being. The Constitution of India mandates that the well-being of elderly people should be ensured without any discrimination. Many suggestions have been made for designing policies in programmes to ensure equality among the elderly. The National Policy statement includes the following:

- Ensuring the well-being of the elderly so that they do not become marginalized, unprotected, or ignored.
- Protection on various fronts like financial securities, health care, shelter, and welfare including protection against abuse and exploitation.
- Ensuring the elderly an equitable share in the benefits of development as well as addressing the neglect of elderly women on three counts viz. age, widowhood, and gender.
- Promoting age-integrated securities by adopting a mechanism for improving inter-generational ties to make the elderly part and parcel of families/ households.
- Considering the elderly as a resource by advocating for their inclusion within the family, community, and society and carving out specific productive roles and opportunities for them.
- Viewing the elderly as an agency that needs to be empowered, about their voice and representation in the electoral sphere.
- Recognizing the need for expansion of social and community services with universal accessibility.
- In connection with the larger budgetary requirement, to ensure the welfare of the elderly thereby advocating for the involvement of civil society, individuals of civil society, individuals, and families in this endeavor.

Concession in rail transport, road transport, and air transport is extended by the Ministry of Railways as it provides a 30% discount on all rail transportation including Rajdhani, Shatabdi, and Jan Shatabdi trains for senior citizens. 75% concession is granted for health patients too. At specific hours, certain compartments are reserved for senior citizens. Under road transportation, two seats are reserved for senior citizens in the front row, and fare concessions are given to all senior citizens by the different state governments for the state bus services. Under air travel, 50% discount is given on normal economy class fare to a male senior citizen who is of 66 years and above and to female citizens of 63 years of age. Special priority is given to a senior citizen, at the time of submission of income tax, payment of electricity bill or phone bill, and in some banks, interest rates are higher if a deposit is made by senior citizens<sup>8</sup>. All these add to the list of benefits for the elderly persons.

<sup>8</sup><https://vikaspedia.in/social-welfare/senior-citizens-welfare/concessions-and-facilities-given-to-senior-citizens>, for road transportation.

### **The European union context for rights of the elderly people**

The European Union Charter of the Fundamental Rights, Article 23 assures that there should be no discrimination in employment irrespective of race, colour and gender. The principle of equality shall prevail. It further states that appropriate measures will be taken against elderly abuse. Under Article 23, pensions and other beneficiaries should be given to the elderly population to lead a decent life and play an active part in social and cultural life. Furthermore, it states that States must provide information related to social services like care services, housing services, and leisure activities<sup>9</sup>. The Union also endorses the act of solving the mental and psychological problems of the elderly population. Article 25 states that the Union recognizes and respects the rights of the elderly to lead a life of dignity and independence and to further participate in social and cultural life. National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) also work for the protection and promotion of elderly people across Europe and advise the government on policy and legislation affecting the rights of an older person<sup>10</sup>.

### **Conclusion**

The world should be a better place, everyone deserves to live a long and healthy life. The rights of elderly people are crucial for their well-being and quality of life. There is a need to increase awareness about elderly rights, enhance social support systems, and aid and care to ensure the well-being and dignity of the elderly population. Our world is developing at a fast pace thus one needs to be equipped with knowledge, skills and information in a timely manner. Continuing education is a need and imparting the knowledge and skills that we have learned in our daily life is equally important, irrespective of our age. Ageing is a blessing, not a curse, most of us want to live a long and healthy life but not everyone gets the opportunity and privilege to live a long life<sup>11</sup>. Society should be ready to support and care for elderly people. By neglecting the life of elderly people, we are devaluing the life of human beings in turn. Caring for the elderly should not be considered voluntary but it should be a duty of all citizens. If the family cannot take care for the ailing elders because of low income issues, it should then be the responsibility of our society and the government to make necessary arrangements. Nowadays, when most people work for long hours, it has become difficult to provide necessary care for ageing parents. Thus, the government

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<sup>9</sup>coe.int: <https://www.coe.int> > european-social-charter > article-23

<sup>10</sup><https://www.quora.com/Is-aging-inevitable-If-so-why-is-it-called-a-blessing-and-not-an-ordeal>;

<sup>11</sup>Lumen. (n.d). <https://opentextbc.ca/introductiontosociology/chapter/chapter13-aging-and-the-elderly/>;  
Little, W. & McGivern. (2014).

and institutions must take an initiative to look after the elderly people. In a world that is becoming increasingly interconnected, our progress should be measured by the well-being and respect that we extend for all members of the society, including the elderly<sup>12</sup>. Let us work together to create an environment where ageing is embraced, the elderly are supported and their contributions are cherished for current and future generations.

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<sup>12</sup>Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a Framework ...MDPI <https://www.mdpi.com> › ...  
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## **“ARTHAM”: JSS Trains Kudumbashree Entrepreneurs in People’s Hotels**

• V. Ummer Koya<sup>1</sup>

• S. Karuppaiyan<sup>2</sup>

### **Abstract**

The "ARTHAM" Project, aims to uncover the transformative impact of JSS's (Jan Shikshan Sansthan) trainings on Kudumbashree Women's Food Service Enterprises in the food chain called, Janakeeya hotels. The study delves into the profound implications of the training on culinary skills, entrepreneurship, and the overall growth of women-led food service enterprises. Kudumbashree, a poverty eradication and women empowerment mission implemented by the Government of Kerala, has been instrumental in supporting women's economic independence through various initiatives. The Janakeeya Hotel sector, a prominent aspect of Kudumbashree's endeavours empower women to establish and manage small-scale eateries, providing affordable and quality food options to the community.

**Keywords:** *Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS), ARTHAM (meaning/objective), Janakeeya Hotels (Peoples Hotels), Kudumbashree (Poverty Eradication Mission of Kerala), Food Service Enterprises.*

### **Introduction**

Kudumbashree is a poverty eradication and women empowerment initiative by the Government of Kerala, India. Recognizing the importance of skill development and training in the hospitality sector, JSS partnered with Kudumbashree Janakeeya hotels to offer comprehensive training programmes. Janakeeya hotels, a part of Kudumbashree, aims to provide quality food services to common people while also creating sustainable livelihood opportunities for women. The Janakeeya hotels started in 2021 as a flagship programme of Government of Kerala throughout the state.

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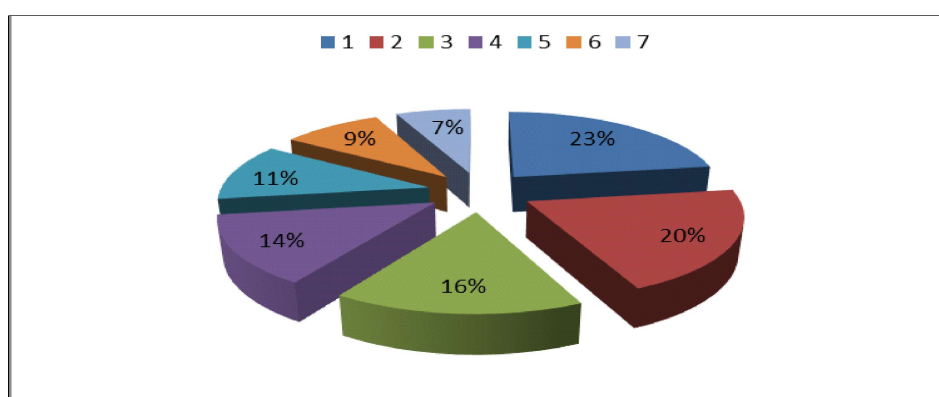
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Around 1200 hotels started in Kerala, out of which 143 are in Malappuram district.<sup>3</sup> The entrepreneurs are from self-help group (SHG) members of Kudumbashree who started the hotels without any scientific training. They approached JSS for improving the standards of Janakeeya hotels with a new face and brand. JSS prepared a detailed module to overcome the challenges of entrepreneurs and the first batch of 30 in May 2022. It then expanded to all the entrepreneurs and the training programme was completed by March 2023.<sup>4</sup>

The “ARTHAM” Project, (literally “meaning”, implying largely, “objective”) focusses on the JSS trainings provided to women involved in Janakeeya hotels in May 2022.<sup>5</sup> This was aimed at enhancing their culinary skills, business acumen, and overall professionalism. Therefore, we decided to undertake a study to analyse the various dimensions and the impact of the training. Through a detailed analysis of the project’s impact, we aim to highlight the transformative journey of these women entrepreneurs and their contributions to the culinary landscape.

After completion of the training, a research team appointed by JSS visited 135 hotels and collected a detailed data on the various types of impacts. In the data analysis conducted, it was found that a majority of the Janakeeya hotels have registered with the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). Specifically, 94 percent of the respondents have obtained FSSAI registration, indicating a high level of compliance with food safety standards.

#### Distribution of Staff at Janakeeya Hotels



Source: Based on data collected by the research team.

<sup>3</sup><https://janakeeyahotel.kudumbashree.org/hotels/page/40>

<sup>4</sup>[www.jssmalappuram.org](http://www.jssmalappuram.org)

<sup>5</sup>[www.jssmalappuram.org](http://www.jssmalappuram.org)

The data analysis reveals the distribution of the number of employees working in each Janakeeya hotel. Most of the hotels, accounting for 23 percent, have more than five staff members. This suggests that a significant portion of the hotels in the dataset have a relatively large workforce, indicating potentially larger operations or services provided.

Following that, 20 per cent of the hotels have two staff members. This indicates that nearly a fifth of the hotels have a relatively small staff size, which might reflect smaller-scale establishments or businesses with limited staffing needs.

Furthermore, the analysis shows that 16 percent of the hotels have three staff members, while 14 percent have four staff members. These percentages indicate that a considerable number of hotels fall within the range of three to four employees, which could be representative of medium-sized establishments.

Lastly, it is observed that a few hotels operate with only one staff member. This finding suggests that there is a small but notable proportion of hotels in the dataset that are likely to be smaller in scale and have limited manpower.

This analysis provides insights into the employee distribution among Janakeeya hotels. The variations in the number of staff members can indicate the size, capacity, and operational requirements of these establishments. Further analysis could explore the relationship between the number of employees and other factors such as hotel capacity, services offered, or customer satisfaction, to gain a deeper understanding of the workforce dynamics in the Janakeeya hotel sector.

### **Customers of Janakeeya Hotels**

S. No	No. of Customers	No. of Hotels	Percentage
1	50-100	12	8.90%
2	101-150	35	25.90%
3	151-200	42	31.10%
4	Above 200	46	34.10%

Source: Data directly collected by the research team from the entrepreneurs.

Based on the provided data, we have information on the number of customers visiting Janakeeya hotels per day. The analysis reveals that most of the hotels, specifically 46 out of 135 (34.10 percent), have more than 200 customers per day.

This suggests that these hotels are popular and attract a significant number of customers, indicating their potential success.

Additionally, there are 42 hotels (31.10 percent) that have a daily customer count between 151 and 200, and 35 hotels that have 101 to 150 customers per day. This indicates that a substantial portion of Janakeeya hotels attract moderate number of customers.

However, it is worth noting that 12 hotels (8.90 percent) out of the total 135 have a relatively lower customer count, ranging from 50 to 100 per day. These hotels might have room for improvement in terms of customer attraction and retention.

Based on the data, an inference can be drawn that most Janakeeya hotels are focusing on lunchtime, as the higher customer count suggests a concentration of customers during that period. To further enhance their business and attract a larger customer base, the introduction of evening snacks at these hotels could be a viable option.

By offering evening snacks, Janakeeya hotels can potentially tap into a different market segment, attracting customers who prefer lighter meals or snacks during the evening hours. This diversification of offerings may lead to an increase in the overall number of customers visiting these hotels, as it provides additional options and appeals to different dining preferences.

However, it's important to consider various factors such as market demand, customer preferences, and operational feasibility before implementing any changes to the menu or service offerings. Conducting market research and gathering feedback from customers can provide valuable insights to make informed decisions and ensure the success of introducing evening snacks at Janakeeya hotels.

#### Daily Income of Janakeeya Hotels

S. No	Income	No. of Hotels	Percentage
1	0-1000	1	0.70%
2	1001-2000	18	13.30%
3	2001-3000	24	17.80%
4	3001-4000	46	34.10%
5	Above 4000	46	34.10%

Source: Based on data collected by the research team.

Based on the provided data, it shows that 46 out of 135 hotels, which is approximately 34.10 percent, have a daily income exceeding 4000 rupees. This indicates that these hotels are relatively successful in terms of generating higher revenue. It suggests that these establishments may have factors such as a prime location, strong customer base, or effective marketing strategies that contribute to their higher income levels.

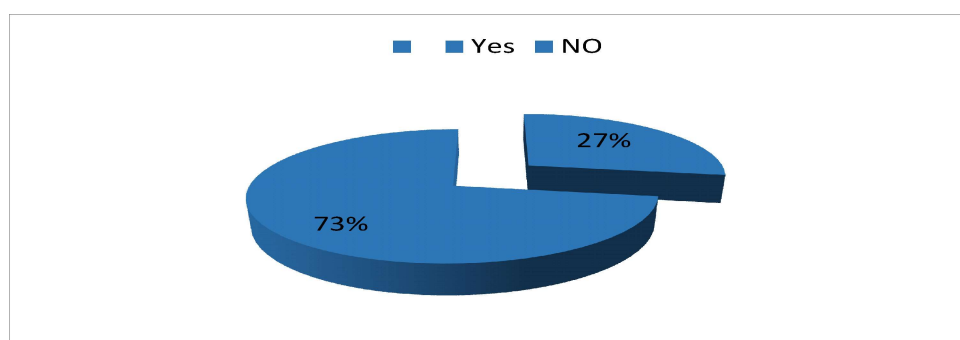
Another 46 out of 135 hotels, accounting for approximately 34.10 percent, have a daily income in the range of 3001-4000 rupees. This shows that a significant number of Janakeeya hotels are consistently generating a moderate level of income, albeit slightly lower than the previous group. These hotels may still be considered successful, but they may have different factors contributing to their revenue generation compared to the higher-income hotels.

The data also reveals that 24 out of 135 hotels, approximately 17.80 percent, have a daily income falling within the range of 2001-3000 rupees. These hotels generate a slightly lower income as compared to the previous groups. While their revenue may be lower, they still contribute to the overall success of Janakeeya hotels and cater to a specific market segment. 18 out of 135 hotels, approximately 13.30 percent, have a daily income ranging from 1001-2000 rupees. These hotels have a comparatively lower income level, but they still play a role in the Janakeeya hotel category by providing affordable options for customers with a limited budget. The meals with fish curry and sambar, pickles, paapad and thoran provided for an amount of Rs. 30/-, tea and snacks for Rs. 15/-, breakfast for an amount of Rs.25/- instead of Rs. 60/, Rs. 25 and Rs.50/- respectively in other hotels. An average 50% reduction is getting to the public from Janakeeya hotels. Only one Janakeeya hotel, which is less than 1 percent of the total, has a daily income below 1000 rupees. This hotel has the lowest income level among the establishments in this dataset.

Overall, the data analysis suggests a diverse range of income levels among Janakeeya hotels. While a significant proportion of hotels falls into the higher income brackets, there are also establishments generating moderate or lower income. The factors influencing income levels can vary, including location, customer base, pricing, and service offerings. Further analysis and consideration of additional factors such as expenses, profit margins, and specific market dynamics can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the financial performance and profitability of these Janakeeya hotels.

### Training by JSS for Kudumbashree Janakeeya Hotels: Impact

The training programme conducted by the Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) for Kudumbashree Janakeeya hotels has made a significant impact on the hospitality industry, empowering women entrepreneurs and transforming local economies. These programmes have not only equipped women with essential hospitality skills but have also instilled confidence and entrepreneurial spirit in them. As a result, the impact of this training initiative has been far-reaching, creating a positive ripple effect on individuals, communities, and the overall tourism industry.



Source: Based on data collected by the research team.

Based on the data collected during the training programme about the pre-status and directly from the hotels after completion of the training, it was found that only 27% of Janakeeya hotels within the Kudumbashree network had received trainings specifically focused on hotel management and entrepreneurship. This analysis sheds light on the current status of skill development programmes within the network and highlights the potential areas for improvement and expansion.

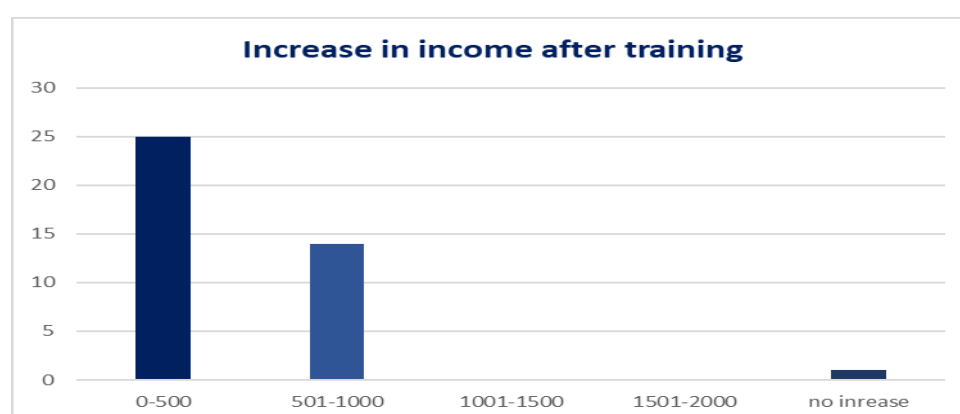
The data reveals that a significant majority of Janakeeya hotels, approximately 73%, have not yet benefitted from training programmes on hotel management and entrepreneurship. This indicates a gap in access to essential skills and knowledge needed to effectively run a hotel business. It is crucial to address this gap and increase the reach of training initiatives to empower a larger number of women entrepreneurs within the Kudumbashree network.

The study indicates that the 27% of Janakeeya hotels that received training on hotel management and entrepreneurship experienced positive outcomes in terms of women's empowerment and economic impact. These hotels demonstrated enhanced business performance, increased revenue, and improved customer satisfaction.

Moreover, the trained women entrepreneurs reported a boost in confidence, leadership skills, and a sense of ownership in their businesses. This suggests that targeted training programmes have the potential to create transformative changes in the lives of women and contribute to their socio-economic empowerment.

JSS took initiatives on the opportunity to scale up the training programmes to ensure that a higher percentage of Janakeeya hotels benefit from hotel management and entrepreneurship training. By expanding the reach of these programmes, Kudumbashree can further strengthen the network of women entrepreneurs, fostering a supportive ecosystem for sustainable tourism and economic development.

### **Unlocking Income Generation Potential through Training: Transformative Impact**



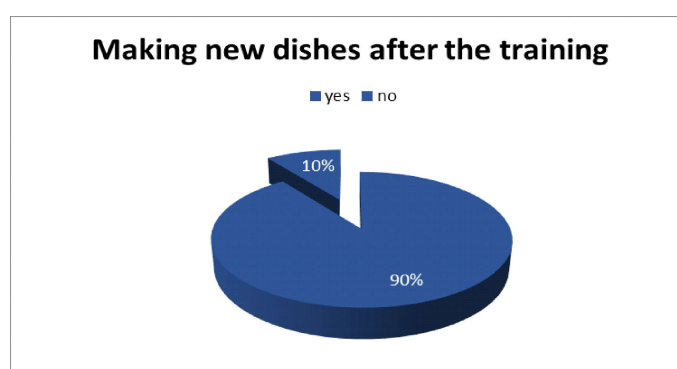
Source: Based on data collected by the research team.

The graph shows the impact of training on the increased income of Janakeeya hotels. Based on the data presented, 25 Janakeeya hotels experienced an increase in daily income within the range of 0 to 500. This suggests that the training programme had a positive effect on their business performance, leading to a moderate improvement in revenue generation. 14 Janakeeya hotels saw an increase in daily income within the range of 501 to 1000. This indicates a more significant impact of the training, resulting in higher earnings for these hotels. One Janakeeya hotel did not show any progress in terms of increased daily income. This could be due to various factors, such as external market conditions, location, or specific challenges faced by that particular hotel. The approach of the entrepreneurs to the customers has also brought positive changes. The system of waste segregation, sanitation and hygiene practices of the hotels and staff has also improved.

The distribution of income improvement ranges highlights a disparity among the Janakeeya hotels. While a majority of hotels experienced moderate income growth (0 to 500 range), a smaller number of hotels witnessed a higher increase in income (501 to 1000 range). This suggests the need to address factors that may limit income growth for certain hotels and explore strategies to ensure more equitable outcomes across the network.

The data indicates that the majority of Janakeeya hotels benefited from the training, with increased daily income observed in most cases. This demonstrates the positive impact of the training programme on the overall business viability and financial performance of these hotels. Higher income levels can contribute to the sustainability and growth of the hotels, enabling them to reinvest in their operations and provide better services to customer.

### Unleashing Creativity and Flavour through Training: Culinary Revitalization



Source: Based on data collected by the research team.

The pie chart indicates that after receiving the training, 90% of Janakeeya hotels (121 out of the total) have made efforts to introduce new dishes. This finding suggests that the training programme has had a significant impact on the culinary innovation and diversification within the hotels.

The high percentage of Janakeeya hotels (90%) that have attempted to introduce new dishes after training reflects a positive response to the programme. It indicates that the training has encouraged the hotels to embrace culinary innovation and expand their menu offerings. By doing so, they are likely aiming to attract a broader customer base and provide a unique culinary experience to their guests.



The willingness of a large number of Janakeeya hotels to try new dishes suggests a recognition of the importance of staying competitive in the hospitality industry. By offering innovative and diverse dishes, these hotels can differentiate themselves from competitors and cater to the evolving preferences of customers. This increased competitiveness can lead to improved customer satisfaction and potentially higher revenue generation.

The introduction of new dishes can enhance the overall guest experience. Guests are more likely to appreciate a varied menu that incorporates local flavours, regional specialties, or even international cuisine. By expanding their culinary offerings, Janakeeya hotels can provide guests with a wider range of options, allowing them to explore and enjoy different culinary experiences during their stay.

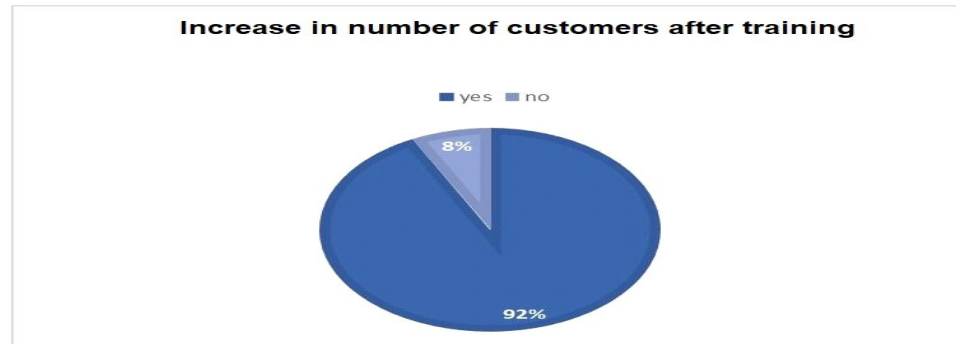
Introducing new dishes can also be a means of promoting local cuisine and cultural exchange. By incorporating traditional recipes and flavours into their menus, Janakeeya hotels can showcase the rich culinary heritage of the region. This not only adds value to the guest experience but also contributes to preserving and promoting local food traditions.

The adoption of new dishes can have a positive impact on revenue potential. By attracting customers with an enticing menu, Janakeeya hotels can increase customer footfall and potentially generate higher sales. Additionally, unique and innovative dishes may create opportunities for special promotions, collaborations with local suppliers, or participation in food festivals, further boosting revenue streams.

In sum, the pie chart indicates that a significant majority (90%) of Janakeeya hotels have embraced culinary innovation by trying new dishes after receiving training. This suggests that the training programme has successfully instilled a sense of creativity and experimentation among the hotels. By introducing new dishes, these hotels can enhance their competitiveness, guest experience, and revenue potential while promoting local cuisine and cultural exchange.

### **Training fuelling customer growth and business expansion**

The pie chart illustrates that 92% of Janakeeya hotels have reported an increase in the number of customers after receiving training. It indicates that the skills and knowledge gained through the training have effectively attracted more customers to these hotels. This highlights the relevance and effectiveness of the training in enhancing the hotels' ability to meet customer expectations and preferences.



Source: Based on data collected by the research team.

## Conclusion

The training programme of Kudumbashree entrepreneurs led by JSS for Janakeeya hotels, focused on improving various aspects of service quality, such as customer service skills, communication, and overall hospitality standards. The increase in customers suggests that the hotels have successfully implemented the acquired skills, resulting in a better customer experience. Satisfied customers are more likely to return and recommend the hotels to others, thereby contributing to increased customer numbers.

The positive impact of training on customer numbers can also be attributed to the development of a strong reputation for the hotels. Delivering excellent service, meeting customer needs, and providing memorable experiences lead to positive word-of-mouth recommendations. As a result, the hotels are likely benefiting from increased visibility and attracting new customers through organic referrals. The training programme has equipped the hotels with insights into changing customer preferences, market trends, and evolving demands. By adapting their offerings and services to align with these changing preferences, the hotels can attract a larger customer base. This ability to cater to diverse customer needs is a contributing factor, leading to an increase in customer numbers.

The observed increase in customer numbers after training indicates that Janakeeya hotels have gained a competitive advantage over their counterparts. By providing superior service, personalized experiences, and addressing customer feedback effectively, these hotels have set themselves apart in the market. This competitive advantage enables them to attract and retain more customers, contributing to their overall success.

A rise in customer numbers is often directly linked to potential revenue growth. Increased footfall and a larger customer base creates opportunities for higher sales and revenue generation. The training programme's impact on customer numbers can, therefore, translate into improved financial performance for Janakeeya hotels, supporting their long-term goals of sustainability and growth.

In conclusion, the pie chart highlights that a significant majority (92%) of Janakeeya hotels reported an increase in the number of customers after training. This finding signifies the positive impact of the training programme in improving service quality, enhancing reputation, meeting changing customer preferences, gaining a competitive advantage, and potentially driving revenue growth. The ability of the hotels to attract more customers reflects their improved ability to meet customer expectations and provide exceptional experiences.

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## Essential Life-Skills for Women and Girls in Crisis: A Perspective

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### Abstract

The essential life skill discussed here is coping with stress viewing through the perspective of the recent crisis of COVID-19. When seen through the lens of women's studies, women and girls were hit worst in the pandemic. An innovative mode of de-stressing them, primarily those in villages, is necessary for confidence building during any crisis. Digital painting with life skills is one of the ways to de-stress them and change their attitudes. Unhealthy habits lead to tension, and the skill to manage them is the success mantra conveyed here. It is therefore, recommended to include 'life skill education in a creative way' across all strata of society. The adult education programme can go a long way in this process, as it can embrace all aspects in a broader angle via both online and offline modes.

**Keywords:** *Adults, digital painting, life skills, pandemic, perspective.*

### Introduction

Unlike other disasters, COVID-19 was a stressor for umpteen adults. Many women and girls feared falling ill and a sense of insecurity or lack of protection. Any damage in mental strength will make them adults with unhealthy minds. Though attitude is ever-changing, everyone can manage stress to a great extent through various simple techniques. If 'life skill education in a creative way' is taken up through adult education, it will be a blessing for posterity.

### Recent crisis

COVID-19's spread began in 2019, which is yet to be controlled entirely by the medical field. The personal effect of this disease was more than the expectations.

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Doctors and healthcare personnel were overloaded with risky work, which gave a lot of stress to these adults and their family members. Disruption of the supply chain, celebrations, entertainment, travelling, physical distancing and loss of jobs precipitated undue stress to all strata of society worldwide. Some discussions on this emerging research field are listed to have a bird's eye view of the matter.

In their study on coronavirus, Kumar et al. (2020) found that it causes respiratory infections, including pneumonia, cold, and sneezing and is transmitted via airborne droplets. It is added that on 7 January 2020, coronavirus was isolated from the Wuhan market in China and WHO advised avoiding close contact with infected persons. By reading this, the beginning stage of the virus comes to our mind.

A report in *Annals of Internal Medicine* (2020) on research done in Singapore using questionnaires on depression, anxiety and psychological distress of adult healthcare workers from 19 February 2020 to 13 March 2020 pointed out the necessity of policy strategies to support them.<sup>3</sup> The new research of McGill University on COVID-19 on 18 December 2020 also found that the level of stress increased among healthcare workers (Wong, 2020).<sup>4</sup> Global news reported that the mental health crisis or COVID stress syndrome contributed to a boom in psychedelic consumption (Fakiha, 2021).<sup>5</sup> The information out in rapid-fire style, and the reaction of neighbours caused fear for which de-stress tips are provided on the site *destress.com* (2020) in the United States.<sup>6</sup> The government and Reserve Bank of India helped address borrower defaults at that time to de-stress people at large. As per the notes on the site *cdc.gov*, stress-coping during the pandemic outbreak will make everyone stronger.<sup>7</sup> Disruption of routines and uncertainty during the pandemic created nervousness which is normal, as per Red-Cross notifications.

Thibaut and Wijngaarden (2020) noted that during the pandemic, women showed higher levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms, and those having previous psychiatric problems or low income were reported to be in elevated distress leading to psychiatric symptoms.

Long before the pandemic, Harvard Health Publishing (2019) advocated ways to de-stress, stay positive, unplug, exercise, and meditate to help the heart.<sup>8</sup> A warm

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<sup>3</sup><https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7143149/>

<sup>4</sup><https://globalnews.ca/news/7531247/research-stress-anxiety-healthcare-workers-covid-19/>

<sup>5</sup><https://globalnews.ca/news/7610610/pandemic-mushrooms-anxiety-micro-dosing/>

<sup>6</sup>[www.destress.com/daily-life/in-the-home/how-to-deal-with-the-stress-of-the-covid-19-pandemic/](http://www.destress.com/daily-life/in-the-home/how-to-deal-with-the-stress-of-the-covid-19-pandemic/)

<sup>7</sup>[www>./"/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/stress-coping](http://www>./)

<sup>8</sup>[www.health.harvard.edu](http://www.health.harvard.edu)

bath is a method used by all adults to rejuvenate themselves. ‘A favourite hobby is like a friend in need in a crisis.’ It is seen that many adults have begun YouTube channels to spread their talents worldwide and to entertain themselves as well as others. Even older men and women enjoy their audio with songs via WhatsApp or Signal. Other adults listen to music or art to break from life stressors. ‘Positive energy brings in a positive attitude’ is the main idea conveyed here to women and girls. This will help all to de-stress and face challenging situations with peace of mind. Giving offline and online education to meditate daily is another method to cope with stress and unplug themselves from worries. Simple exercises are also encouraged to make them fit before and after the pandemic.

### Gender gaps in crisis

Globally, post-traumatic stress was observed in women who hesitated to speak out as they talked differently. Thus, disregarding gender equality will harm the mitigation process. At the virtual Davos Agenda Summit, Swedish Minister Ann Linde mentioned that COVID-19 had created a recession for women and girls. “Gender perspective is unfortunately often the first thing to be disregarded in crisis response situations,” she added, as reported by McKeever, Vickey (2021).<sup>9</sup> This threat to gender equality was noted by UN Women in policy-brief in 2020 itself (UN Women, 2020).<sup>10</sup> It was stated that globally more women worked in COVID-19-affected areas than men, but more women were outside the labour market during the pandemic spread. Thus, self-transformation is essential to de-stress in crisis. World Bank (2020) also pointed out that gender gaps will widen and women and girls can have different negative impacts than men in some areas.<sup>11</sup> The Guardian, on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the Equal Pay Act, anticipates that COVID-19 will have a devastating effect on gender equality and may set women back decades (Alexandra, 2020).<sup>12</sup> All these studies and observations show the need for training them to build confidence in life.

Women and girls faced unequal nutritional patterns, unnecessary mental and emotional problems during the pandemic, as institutional capacity and resources were limited to support them. It will have far-reaching consequences on hard-fought women’s rights that were amplified in contexts of emergencies. It is pointed out by

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<sup>9</sup>[www.cnn.com/2021/01/29/davos-covid-has-created-a-recession](https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/29/davos-covid-has-created-a-recession)

<sup>10</sup>[www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/04/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women](https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/04/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women)

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/gender/brief/gender-and-covid-19-coronavirus>

<sup>12</sup>[www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/29/covid-19-crisis-could-set-women-back-decades-experts-fear](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/29/covid-19-crisis-could-set-women-back-decades-experts-fear)

women's organizations in Central Asia and Europe that girls and women were left behind in pandemic recovery efforts and suggested gender-responsive policymaking. Activists warned the international community that there is even a rollback in the rights of women in 2020 (UN Women, 2020).<sup>13</sup> Even though the pandemic underscores the nation's reliance on women, long-standing structural inequalities widened. Unpaid work like cooking and cleaning was seen as women's duties in all countries surveyed by UN Women during the crisis.<sup>14</sup> Organizations also highlighted persistent issues on women's rights, like restrictions in access to justice, increased unpaid childcare or adult care at home, and insecurity due to loss of employment and income by women. As per the National Commission of Women data given by UN Women, domestic violence in India increased 2.5 times between February and May 2020.<sup>15</sup> Hence, the Government of India grouped domestic violence support services as "essential" and opened 700 One-Stop-Crisis centres to give shelter, medical attention and legal aid to those in need (Yoana, et al, 2023). Alia El-Yassir, the Regional Director of UN Women for Central Asia and Europe, highlighted the role of women's organizations in reacting to the necessities of all groups at that time (UN Women, 2020).<sup>16</sup> Thus, creating a platform to amplify the voices of 30 women's organizations in Palestine was a step in that direction. UN Women underlined the importance of building a resilient world with girls and women at the centre, with behaviour change and digital awareness-raising campaigns to support them. They offered virtual learning online courses with Google to assist around 4,500 women-owned businesses in South Africa (UN Women, 2020).<sup>17</sup> Behaviour change through digital painting used by the researcher in virtual medium from 2001 itself is suggested in this paper. The priorities of UN Women on co-ordination in gender perspective, mitigation of violence, sharing care-work and decision-making at home can be practised through life-skill activities. Stressors will be under control by strengthening willpower through training in life skills using creativity in digital painting.

### **De-stressing humanity in a new way**

COVID-19 affected women and girls in various ways. Several girls pulled out of school, which led to the incidence of child marriages, rape and child trafficking.

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<sup>13</sup> [www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/4/press-release-women-and-girls-are-left-behind-in-covid-19-response](https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/4/press-release-women-and-girls-are-left-behind-in-covid-19-response)

<sup>14</sup> [data.unwomen.org/resources/surveys-show-covid-19-has-gendered-effects-asia-and-pacific](https://data.unwomen.org/resources/surveys-show-covid-19-has-gendered-effects-asia-and-pacific)

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2021/7/faq-women-and-covid-19-in-india>

<sup>16</sup> [www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/4/press-release-women-and-girls-are-left-behind-in-covid-19-response](https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/4/press-release-women-and-girls-are-left-behind-in-covid-19-response)

<sup>17</sup> [www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2020/UN-Women-annual-report-2019-2020-en.pdf](https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2020/UN-Women-annual-report-2019-2020-en.pdf)

On the other hand, women faced the stress of economic distress as they were first thrown out of jobs. Non-violence got less place in the limited living space caused by the prolonged lock-down. Thus, physical abuse led to mental health issues for many women. As all the social problems faced by women and girls cannot be dealt with in a single paper, this article limits itself to the life skill to cope with the stress, that was elevated during the pandemic time.

Vranda and Rao (2011) found that in India, youngsters are open to more data and cultural alternatives than in the earlier period. This gives them diverse choices but with economic dependence on others. Thus, the writers believed that adolescents need to prepare for a global life of contest and independent working by enhancing their psycho-social abilities through life skills training. Though there are enormous methods to de-stress, an attractive style under women studies with life skills and digital painting by the researcher becomes relevant here. Our work aims to endow them with a positive approach to life, as school pedagogy alone cannot de-stress adolescent girls.

De-stressing is heard when stress overpowers all coping tools of the system. Life skills are essential for de-stressing all during any crisis. There are question banks and worksheets on the world wide web on different life skills for studies from grade 6<sup>th</sup>, but it is still in its basic level of teaching in India.<sup>18</sup> National Education Policy came forward with some changes here. But exclusive picture mode needs to be improved in this field of study. The Gurus of Indian philosophy were well versed in de-stressing mechanisms, and they were said to advise, 'If you have a problem and you can solve it, there is no need to worry. If you have a problem and you cannot solve it, worry itself cannot solve it. Then always, there is no need to worry.' Thus, they guided all adults to do yoga and meditation to de-stress humanity. Slowly, it is included in life skill pedagogy, and the underlying principle of this philosophy is the attainment of peace of mind. Pictures can convey ideas well, so the need to use this new method in de-stressing is upheld here.

### **Digital painting and life skills**

The words of Pablo Picasso, 'Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life,' speak about the power of art in building positive thinking in all people. Paintings attract the mind of learners, and digital painting is a medium of the modern century used by researcher for training young women. The backbone of a prosperous nation is healthy and confident women across all strata of society. Painting done

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<sup>18</sup>[www.teacherspayteachers.com/browse/independent-work/worksheets/specialty/life-skills/free](http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/browse/independent-work/worksheets/specialty/life-skills/free)



using a computer or laptop has been slowly developing during the last twenty years in India. Virtual medium is enchanting, owing to the novelty and can be an effective tool for training life skills to de-stress the womanhood of India. Life skills are as valuable as technology for directing everybody towards a peaceful life.

World Health Organization has defined life skills as “the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life” (UNICEF).<sup>19</sup> UNICEF has described topics of smiling to your problems, coping with stress, developing interpersonal relationships, setting goals, making responsible decisions, and basic life skills like self-awareness, effective communication, creative thinking, managing emotions and so on. When taking creative thinking as an example, creative thinkers could make things happen, as no negative feelings can prevent their goals. When creative digital painting is clubbed with positive, creative thinking, the outcome will be happy daily activities in life.

Training for girls in classes as per guidance and laying the foundation for ‘woman empowerment’ through online medium, proved effective steps, as per the data analyzed from questionnaires used for the work. The abilities to cope with stress and manage emotions are very important for physical and mental health. Thus, coping with stress is taken as the essential life skill in this paper, viewing it in the context of COVID-19.

### **Limitations of the captivating style**

The module can make a preliminary change in life skill pedagogy, as ‘pictures can even speak with the speechless.’ Adverse situations test one’s ability to cope with anxiety and stress. Training experiences in life skills before the pandemic crisis, points to some limitations. Evaluation of the outcome of the study is a long-term process, as attitudes and time are closely related. The generalizability of the life skill pedagogy of women studies area to psychological distress investigation may have limitations in the analytical process. Global challenges also need a broad canvas. These problems can be solved when this promising area advances with the involvement of progressive thinkers.

### **Proposals on social research**

Proposals seen globally with social aspects only are discussed here. Since COVID-19 is a severe pandemic of this era, all were confused about what to do,

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<sup>19</sup>[www.unicef.org/india/media/2571/file/Comprehensive-lifeskills-framework.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/india/media/2571/file/Comprehensive-lifeskills-framework.pdf)

when and how to do it. Senior scientists, doctors and medical staff gave their best to the community. At last, in 2023, humanity is surviving through vaccines against COVID-19.

Nowadays, several proposals on various aspects of COVID-19 are saturating the research arena. For example, Poudel and Bhandari (2020) recommended social research on the attitudes and knowledge of adults in the Jhapa district towards COVID-19 and to assess the attitudes of youths about COVID-19.

Jones and Parker (2014) listed the facets of effective life skills programmes and gave an overview of important concepts. They considered that the positive results of these programmes were from the interaction between the person and her context, that is, her potential for change. For them, the “most promising theoretical explanation for the efficacy of life skill programs lies in the social interactions research.” Finally, they underlined that life skill programmes could facilitate optimal human functioning.

You (2021) studied the global approach to tackling COVID-19 by governments aiming at international cooperation, which will have far-reaching societal benefits. He substantiated the view by pointing out the vaccine deal and the worldwide survey by the United Nations, in which 95% of respondents suggested cooperation to address global issues. The positive note is that the international community must move forward together ‘rather than by building walls.’ This attitude is the key to the success of humanity and needs to be underlined in life skill studies.

### **Recommendations**

Technology is advancing at a frantic pace, and developing skills continually to enrich life is essential in this globalization era. According to Dunn (2003), lifelong learning (LLL) includes all informal to non-formal learning supporting positive change in attitudes and behaviours that people acquire in their day-to-day experiences. Laal and Salamati (2012) noted that throughout the life of an individual, lifelong learning enhances the continuous building of skills and knowledge. It is not a single training programme for a specific age group, and so the module mentioned previously can be developed for lifelong learning in self-directed, informal, formal, and non-formal education courses.

In informal education, anybody can help the trainer to teach basic life skills to those in need. It is highly flexible and can be conducted at any place, in online or off line mode. Unlike traditional learning in structured classroom settings, informal

education programmes outside this framework need no standardized curricula. It aims to develop life skills in learners from classes of children to senior citizens through observations, seminars, hands-on experience and so on. Authorities of various clubs can arrange such education programmes at any time. Informal education suggested here is a self-initiated lifelong process of refining inborn skills for the personal development of a learning mindset.

In a non-formal education arrangement, through well-structured modules and well-planned learner-centered formats, learners get opportunities to acquire essential skills to lead a happy life. Experienced trainers, senior citizens or retired teachers can coordinate the work from home through online platforms without any standardized curriculum structure. Different modules can be used for training different categories in respect of job or age groups. Developing inborn talents and abilities after accepting limitations must be part of this learning system. As it is a creative model, learning will be in an entertainment style that will help to assimilate life skills quickly.

It is further recommended to develop different modules for programmes using digital painting as a medium for de-stressing girls and women based on profession and age. As India is a place of cultural diversity, rejuvenating from top to bottom with dedicated Indian scholars can help in envisioning a new normal India. Then all learners will strive to be worthy of being proud citizens of the nation, as envisaged in the pledge. Based on the experience of the researcher [first author] in virtual medium from 2001, it is also suggested that policymakers can think of a curriculum for a course on de-stressing in the online medium using the possibilities of creativity of digital painting.

### **Suggestions for adult education**

Follow-ups always have a positive effect on mental as well as physical conditions. Tailoring early interventions will always do good for vulnerable groups during a crisis. Hence, including more life skill studies from the 'first day of schooling' is the actual need of the hour. Endowing high-grade cadets is a means to slowly de-stress the entire universe.

The adult education wing can do a lot in value-based education globally. Educating more home-makers is seen as a better pedagogy in the life skill area in women's studies angle. Gradually, adult education can spread to all areas of skill development. Art and music therapy are excellent suggestions for training adults. Short-term courses in these therapies can help adults mainly in two ways. Firstly, the artistic talents

under the ashes of household chores will fly high in such an encouraging atmosphere. Secondly, the therapeutic effects of art on women and families will make the world a better place to live in. Older men and women can also be given education to de-stress them from their worries of old age. In fact, such an adult education for all vulnerable groups of society is the initial suggestion here to the policymakers of India.

The disruption of international economic activities and border restrictions made everyone think of a 'new normal' mode of living. India has to rely on its resources, and the export of medical supplies is a silver lining owing to the pandemic crisis. Turning away from the problems will make them worse. Thus, small-scale entrepreneurs using their resources is a better point of discussion in the pedagogy. For example, jobless adults with dedication can slowly turn a start-up for exporting masks into a well-established firm. The virus taught a lesson of '*gram swaraj*' to all. This idea can be spread during any crisis to make a self-reliant nation, as envisaged in '*Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan*.' Thus, making adults of rural areas, especially women, non-violent and self-reliant through life skills, the village Swaraj of Mahatma Gandhi can be achieved.

## Conclusion

The current pandemic challenged governments in their globalist concepts. All across the breadth, nations are struggling to uplift their overall health and wealth status. COVID-19 allowed re-examination of social roles and building a new normal post-pandemic society, giving a better chance for women to shape a sustainable world. In such a scenario, the model of digital painting for life-skill education to women and girls becomes even more relevant. The main suggestion on life skill study from the first day of schooling is expected to be taken up by policymakers to uphold "*lokaḥ samastah sukhino bhavantu*" and to make the world a happy planet.

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## **Journey of NIOS from Adult Education to Education for All: Pathways of NEP 2020**

• **Rajiv Kumar Singh<sup>1</sup>**

### **Abstract**

Education is an ongoing, lifelong process that transcends age boundaries, from infancy to old age. Yet, structured learning often eludes a significant portion of adults, leaving them illiterate. Adult education plays an important role in the Indian education system, fostering an environment where adults can actively contribute to society through learning. It empowers individuals while enhancing community productivity. Adult education encompasses various facets, including foundational literacy, vocational skills, basic education, continuing education, critical life skills, and more, adapting over time. Literacy forms a fundamental part of non-formal and lifelong education and National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) has played a significant role in achieving it along with adult education across India. In this journey, it has been serving as a key institution for certifying successful adults in initiatives like Saakshar Bharat and New India Literacy Programme, besides contributing to flagship programmes such as DISHA and PMGDISHA. NIOS also offers 'Open-Basic Education (adult) programmes' tailored to adult learners, extending their learning beyond literacy.

**Keywords:** *Adult education, literacy, lifelong learning, foundational literacy and numeracy, vocational skilling, continuing education, critical life skills.*

### **Introduction**

Learning is a lifelong journey, beginning even before formal schooling and continuing throughout one's life. Family, society, and surroundings serve as initial sources of learning, suggesting that learning is not bound by a specific structure and extends indefinitely. It encompasses both structured, school-based education and

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informal, experiential learning. Literacy has been defined by UNESCO<sup>2</sup> as “the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute, and use printed and written materials in various contexts.” But, it also says that it is a part of larger set of skills which includes digital skills, media skills, etc. R.M. Smith defines learning as acquiring and mastering existing knowledge, expanding one’s experiences, and systematically testing ideas relevant to problems.<sup>3</sup>

Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4)<sup>4</sup> also emphasizes inclusive, equitable, and quality education. It promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all which includes adults as well. Despite efforts, a substantial number of adults in India remain illiterate, estimated at 257.6 million people aged 15 and above, as per the 2011 Census. It is because of the inaccessibility to formal education, despite having accumulated knowledge and skills from life experiences. Adult education is thus a crucial component of the Indian education system, empowering individuals and enhancing community productivity.

### **The Concept of adult education**

The concept of adult education has evolved to encompass foundational literacy, vocational training, basic education, continuing education, critical life skills, and more. The concept also changes with time as Boyd and Apps say that it is not based on ‘disciplines such as philosophy, psychology or sociology.’<sup>5</sup>

Jarvis Peter (2012) mentions this model which was in tabular mode and says that in a learning process, transaction and client focus may be individual/group/community based. UNESCO has defined literacy as the ability to comprehend, use, and create printed as well as written materials in various contexts, emphasizing its continuous nature. In India, literacy, defined as the ability to read and write in any language for individuals aged seven and above, is a fundamental right recognized by the Indian Constitution. National Education Policy 2020 in India emphasizes that foundational literacy, education, and livelihood opportunities are basic rights for every citizen. Literacy and basic education provide individuals with personal, economic, civic, and lifelong learning opportunities, benefiting both individuals and the nation’s development.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup><https://www.unesco.org/en/literacy/need-know>

<sup>3</sup><https://thelearningcoach.com/learning/10-definitions-learning/>

<sup>4</sup><https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4>

<sup>5</sup><https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext>

<sup>6</sup>[https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/NEP\\_Final\\_English\\_0.pdf](https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf)



## **Importance of adult education**

Adult education plays a pivotal role in achieving sustainable development, addressing barriers like socio-economic factors and gender inequality. A substantial portion of India's population falls within the 15-64 age group, yet the 2011 Census reported 25.76 crore non-literate individuals in this demographic. Education is a transformative tool, particularly in rural areas, impacting society in various ways. With over two-thirds of the population in the productive age group, literacy is essential for poverty reduction, social inclusion, and sustainable development. In continuous efforts of Ministry of Education, Govt. of India, 7.64 crore learners were certified as literates between 2010-2018.<sup>7</sup> Education also contributes to personal and community growth, but still an estimated 18.12 crore adults in India lack literacy skills.

## **NIOS and adult education**

NIOS operates under the Ministry of Education (MoE), Govt. of India, as the world's largest open schooling system. It offers a wide range of academic, vocational, and life enrichment courses, aligning with the National Education Policy 2020's objectives. NIOS leverages technology to provide educational opportunities, boasting a network of over 9000 study centers across India, Nepal, and the Middle East.

NIOS is dedicated to serving diverse learners, including children, adolescents, adults, and individuals with special needs (CWSN) through a variety of tailored programmes. Some programmes are exclusive to NIOS, while others are collaborative efforts with government ministries and institutions. NIOS has made significant contributions to adult education through these specialized programmes. Some important initiatives of NIOS in the field of adult education are discussed here.

### **i. Open basic education programme**

Introduced in June 1994, the Open Basic Education (OBE) Programme stands as one of NIOS's distinctive offerings. The programme was initiated for providing primary and upper primary education through alternative means of open schooling. It was meant for those adult neo-literates who were unable to take advantage of the formal system of schooling. The OBE programme is an equivalency programme which provides education at three levels, i.e. Level A (equivalent to class III), Level

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<sup>7</sup>[www.dsels.education.gov.in](http://www.dsels.education.gov.in)

B (equivalent to class V) and Level C (equivalent to class VIII). Later in 2000, the programme was also started for children between the age group of 6 to 14 years.

NEP 2020 clearly recognizes the mammoth work being done by NIOS in the field of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) especially at elementary level.<sup>8</sup> In section 3.5, it mentions that "...Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Programmes offered by the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and State Open Schools will be expanded and strengthened for meeting the learning needs of young people in India who are not able to attend a physical school. NIOS and State Open Schools will offer the following programmes in addition to the present programmes: A, B and C levels that are equivalent to Grades 3, 5, and 8 of the formal school system." It recognises the level of education being offered by NIOS and also accepts its importance in providing opportunity to access education.

### **Target groups for OBE programme<sup>9</sup>**

The OBE Programme covers two specific target groups based on their age criteria. These two groups are:

- Children (6-14 years): The OBE (Children) Programme provides educational opportunities to school dropouts; out-of-school children; children of marginalized groups especially girls and children with special needs (CWSN).
- Adolescents and Adults (Above 14 years): Adolescents and adults of more than 14 years of age are another group which are covered under OBE Programme. This age group covers a diverse kind of clientele which includes dropouts; neo-literates; adults of marginalized groups especially women and first generation learners and qualified candidates of Basic Literacy Assessment, Padhana Likhana Abhiyan and other literacy programmes.

### **Levels of school education**

The programme is offered at three levels for primary and upper-primary stages to both age groups. These are:

- Level 'A' - Level 'A' is equivalent to standard III
- Level 'B' - Level 'B' is equivalent to standard V
- Level 'C' - Level 'C' is equivalent to standard VIII

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<sup>8</sup>[https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/NEP\\_Final\\_English\\_0.pdf](https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf)

<sup>9</sup>[https://nios.ac.in/media/documents/OBE\\_Guideline\\_revised%2001.08.2015.pdf](https://nios.ac.in/media/documents/OBE_Guideline_revised%2001.08.2015.pdf)

## **OBE curriculum and its transaction**

NIOS designs and develops its curriculum, upon which it develops Self Learning Materials. The curriculum for OBE programme in various courses is based on the National Curriculum Framework- 2005.<sup>10</sup> A combination of languages, academic and vocational courses are offered under OBE (Adult) programme. The curriculum in these courses is graded in nature and enables learners to think about issues related to life. The adults may not have any formal education but they are full of real-life experiences which have been integrated with the curriculum. Introduction of a compulsory per-vocational subject has been done with aim to make learners familiar with the world of work. The curriculum of the programme also recognizes the talent and virtues of learners. NIOS has developed exemplar learning materials for OBE (Adults) programme.<sup>11</sup>

### **Key features of OBE (Adult) curriculum**

The OBE Programme curriculum is meticulously designed for various subjects. However, these include some key characteristics which are reflected throughout courses. Some of the key features are:<sup>12</sup>

- The curriculum is based on foundationality, awareness and national values.
- Each individual comes from their specific socio-economic background, which creates their own learning experiences and according to that, they interact with peers. The curriculum acknowledges adult's learning experiences and prior learning by bringing real-life stories.
- Curriculum highlights issues and concerns i.e., societal concerns, social harmony, national integration, diversity, culture, peace and values, etc. India has a rich diversity in terms of languages, cuisines, houses, festivals and other aspects of life. The curriculum recognizes these diversities and gives its reflection in SLM.
- Acquiring knowledge is only worthy when it is applied in real-life circumstances. The curriculum first gives an opportunity for learners to learn and acquire appropriate knowledge and skills. Then, it equips them to apply knowledge and skills in real-life situations and making it a lifelong learning process.
- The government introduces various programmes for improving the quality of life. As adult learners are economically productive population, they are involved in diverse kind of livelihood-earning activities. This may be very important to make

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<sup>10</sup>[https://nios.ac.in/media/documents/OBE\\_Guideline\\_revised%2001.08.2015.pdf](https://nios.ac.in/media/documents/OBE_Guideline_revised%2001.08.2015.pdf)

<sup>11</sup>[https://nios.ac.in/media/documents/OBE\\_Guideline\\_revised%2001.08.2015.pdf](https://nios.ac.in/media/documents/OBE_Guideline_revised%2001.08.2015.pdf)

<sup>12</sup>[https://www.nios.ac.in/departmentsunits/academic/open-basic-education-\(obe\)/obesimen.aspx](https://www.nios.ac.in/departmentsunits/academic/open-basic-education-(obe)/obesimen.aspx)

them familiar with government policies and programmes, so that they can be benefitted from government programmes and policies. This has been effectively dealt in the curriculum to improve their standard of living.

- It is expected that an individual must have the basic competencies of *Reading, Writing, Listening* and *Speaking*. However, some adults could not develop one or more competencies due to their inability to access educational opportunities. The curriculum has been effectively designed to cater for these specific learning needs.

Curriculum is transacted in Self Learning Material (SLM) providing a way and equipment to learners for achieving competencies. The OBE Programme has been designed in a way that it gives flexibility to partnering institutions called Accredited Agencies to use the learning materials developed by NIOS. They may also use the learning materials developed by other institution/board or develop their own SLM covering the curriculum prescribed by NIOS. NIOS has developed exemplar SLM in some subjects.<sup>13</sup>

NIOS has also developed courses on Indian Knowledge Traditions keeping in mind India's rich knowledge traditions, which is also being offered. These courses give an opportunity to our learners to be familiar with rich tradition and knowledge of India and also help in reviving the Indian Knowledge System. These courses include Veda, Yoga, Sanskrit, Vijnana and Vocational Skills at all three levels which are available in Sanskrit, Hindi and English mediums.

An adult may develop various competencies if the mode of learning incorporates learning in their mother tongue or any other language used in day to day life. The OBE (Adult) programme also gives flexibility to learn in Hindi, English, Urdu or any other scheduled language of India. This makes learning more accessible and effective.

#### Subjects offered at different levels<sup>14</sup>

Level 'A' and 'B'	Level 'C'
One language (from a group of languages) + 2 subjects (from a group of academic subjects) + 1 vocational subject (from a group of subjects)	One language (from a group of languages) + 3 subjects (from a group of subjects) + 1 vocational subject (from a group of subjects)

<sup>13</sup>(Prospectus 2022-23, OBE-Adults, 3.1, p. 13, [https://nios.ac.in/media/documents/prospectus/OBE\\_Prospectus/OBE\\_Adult\\_Final%20for%20Printing\\_2022-23.pdf](https://nios.ac.in/media/documents/prospectus/OBE_Prospectus/OBE_Adult_Final%20for%20Printing_2022-23.pdf))

<sup>14</sup>[https://nios.ac.in/media/documents/prospectus/OBE\\_Prospectus/OBE\\_Adult\\_Final%20for%20Printing\\_2022-23.pdf](https://nios.ac.in/media/documents/prospectus/OBE_Prospectus/OBE_Adult_Final%20for%20Printing_2022-23.pdf), 1.8, p. 4

### **The Adult achievers**

The programme's success in providing educational access to adult learners is evident through the number of successful candidates in past years. However, the number of successful learners are continuously changing as it caters to the specific target group. This reflects the potential in the expansion of the programme. 56,525 adult learners were certified at different levels under OBE programme between 2012-13 and 2021-22.

### **Basic literacy programme (BLP) examination under NLMA Project<sup>15</sup>**

Basic Literacy Programme (BLP) was another huge success as NIOS played a major role in its implementation. Saakshar Bharat (SB), was a programme of the National Literacy Mission with focus on female literacy in rural areas of low female literacy districts. The programme aimed to impart foundational literacy to non-literate adults in the age group 15 years and beyond. The other objectives of the programme were imparting equivalency to formal education system, continuing education and skill development. The priority groups of Saakshar Bharat were women, Scheduled Casts, Scheduled Tribes, minorities and other groups from the disadvantaged sections in the rural areas. It had a principle target of imparting foundational literacy to 70 million adults of 15 years and beyond.

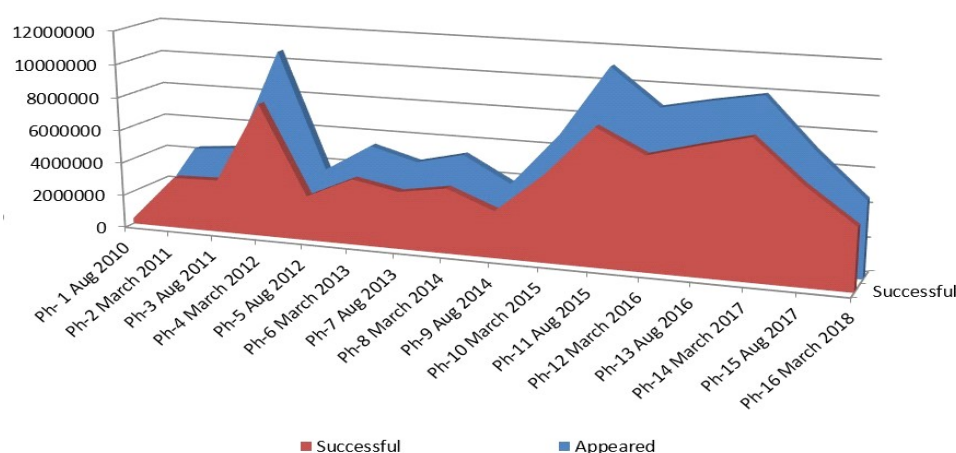
The Basic Literacy Programme (BLP) aimed to achieve the first objective of the Saakshar Bharat, that is, "Impart foundational literacy to neo-literate adults." Foundational literacy refers to achieving self-reliance in Reading, Writing and Arithmetic (Numeracy). The programme aimed to provide an opportunity to adult learners to participate in the process of development, acquiring skills to improve the economic status and general well-being. The programme was implemented in 26 states, 404 districts and 1.64 lac Gram Panchayats. The primers were developed by NLMA which were available in 13 languages. 300 teaching hours were decided for the programme and classes were conducted at suitable venues.

Learner assessment to evaluate core competencies of basic literacy including reading, writing and arithmetic was a major quality indicator of the programme. NIOS was designated as the Nodal Agency by NLMA for assessment and certification under Public & Public Partnership. The Learner Assessment tests were conducted twice a year i.e. March and August. The first assessment was conducted

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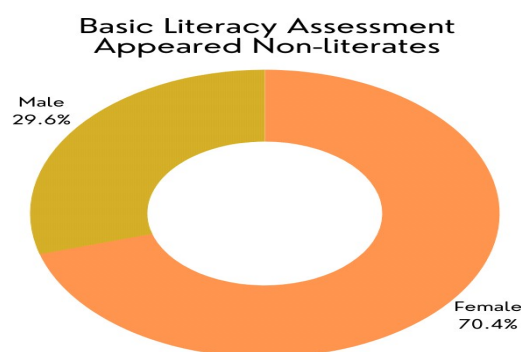
<sup>15</sup><https://schemedujammu.nic.in/pdf/SaaksharBharat.pdf>

on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2010. These assessments were conducted in total 16 phases between 2010-2018. A total number of 100 million (10,07,67,635) learners appeared in these assessments. Of these, 76.30 million (7.63 crore) candidates were declared successful and got certified. The project has been completed on 25.03.2018 by Directorate of Adult Education, MoE, Govt. of India. The phase wise success of the programme is reflected in the following diagram:



Source: Annual Report, NIOS, 2017-18, p. 85 and 2018-19, p. 50.

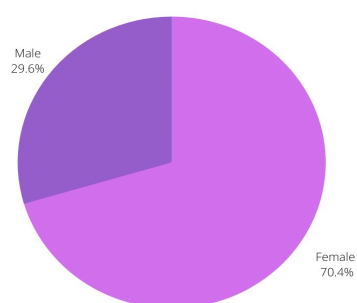
The Basic Literacy Programme is a great example of the inclusion of women in a literacy programme. The data reflects that 70.43% (7,09,67,812) adult non-literates were females out of total 10,07,67,635 appeared candidates in assessment. The success rate was also quite impressive as 75.81 % (5,37,97,297) were women.



Source: Annual Report, NIOS, 2017-18, p. 85 and 2018-19, p. 50.

The same was reflected in the numbers of successful neo-literates. As the data shows, women neo-literates shared 70.4% (5,37,97,297) of the total successful learners (7,63,90,655), while the share of men in successful learners was 29.6% (2,25,93,358).

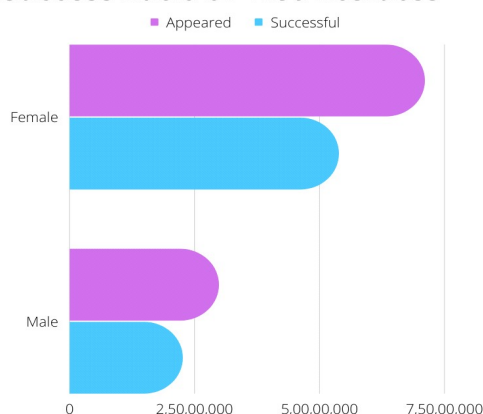
### Successful Neo-literates



Source: Annual Report, NIOS, 2017-18, p. 85 and 2018-19, p. 50.

The success ratio of neo-literates was almost same in both groups which was above 75%. Out of 7,09,67,812 appeared women non-literates, 5,37,97,297 were successful. Similarly, out of 2,97,99,823 male non-literates, 2,25,93,358 were successful.

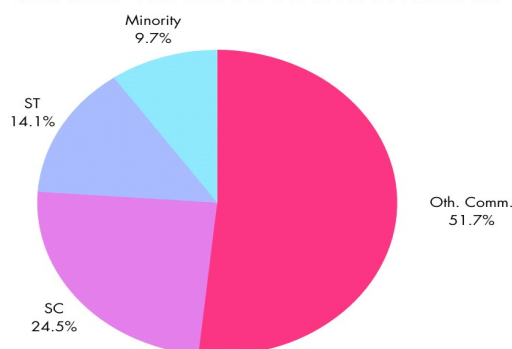
### Success Ratio of Neo-literates



Source: Annual Report, NIOS, 2017-18, p. 85 and 2018-19, p. 50.

The programme was also an example of the inclusion of different marginalized sections of the society which did not have access to education earlier. The non-literate adults came from diverse sections of the society, i.e. women, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, minorities, etc. Efforts were made to make it accessible to all sections of the society and it was successfully achieved in the number of appeared candidates, which showed the accessibility of these sections in large numbers.

CATEGORY WISE APPEARED ADULT LEARNERS



Source: Annual Report, NIOS, 2017-18, p. 85 and 2018-19, p. 50.

#### i. Basic literacy programme (BLP) under padhna likhna abhiyan

The Padhna Likhna Abhiyan (PLA), is a centrally sponsored scheme of Ministry of Education, Govt. of India for imparting foundational literacy to adult neo-literates by achieving self-reliance in Reading, Writing and Arithmetic (Numeracy). It is the first programme on literacy after NEP 2020. NLMA designated NIOS as the Nodal agency for assessment and certification. Approximately 4.8 million (48 Lakh) non-literates appeared in assessment conducted in July, 2021. The next phase of examination was conducted in March, 2022 (NIOS, 2023: 48).

#### NIOS and digital literacy

National Education Policy 2020 in para 4.23 says “While students must have a large amount of flexibility in choosing their individual curricula, certain subjects, skills, and capacities should be learned by all students to become good, successful, innovative, adaptable, and productive human beings in today’s rapidly changing world. In addition to proficiency in languages, these skills include ... digital literacy, coding, and computational thinking.”<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup>[https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/NEP\\_Final\\_English\\_0.pdf](https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf)



Today digital literacy is not a luxury; it is the need of the present age. Even before NEP 2020, Government of India had visualized the changes occurring in the technological world and its penetration in almost all sectors of life. A flagship programme 'Digital India' was started in July 1, 2015 to transform India into a digitally empowered and knowledge economy. Digital India works in three specific areas, i.e., digital infrastructure, governance and service and digital empowerment.

#### **i. DISHA Programme**

After launching the Digital India programme in July, 2015, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology started a programme to digitally empower citizens. The 'Digital Saksharata Abhiyan (DISHA) of National Digital Literacy Mission' (NDLM) was launched on December 7, 2015 with an objective to digitally literate at least one member of family. NIOS was one of the certifying agencies under the programme. The NIOS conducted evaluation and online assessment of learners through the network of Common Service Centers (CSCs) throughout India in 10 different languages. NIOS certified 26 lakhs learners digitally till December 31, 2016 (NIOS, 2018).

#### **ii. PMGDISHA Programme**

The DISHA Programme was a successful initiative and it became the base for the revamped programme as PMGDISHA. The assessment of NDLM Programme was re-launched under Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) Programme in the year 2017-18. The scheme aimed to empower the citizens in rural areas (one in every eligible household) especially including the marginalized section of the society like SCs, STs, minorities, BPL women and persons with special needs. It was launched with a target to digitally literate 6 crore people from rural areas covering all states and union territories. It covers adults between the age of 14 to 60 years (Govt. of India, 2021).

The programme is aimed to make these groups digitally literate by training to operate digital access devices like tablets, smartphones, computer etc. and enabling them to use information technology and applications especially digital payments. Enabling these competencies help to bridge the digital divide in India. A course of 20 hours duration has been designed for the programme. This can be achieved in minimum 10 days or maximum 30 days. The course is available in different official languages of India at no cost. The training of the programme is available at the nearest Common Service Centre (CSC) which is working as a Training Centre under this programme.

The Training Centre/CSC enrolls the candidate and also provides learning support and hands on experiences.

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEIT) has collaborated with various institutions for assessment and certification of the enrolled candidates. These institutions have been identified as national level certifying agencies i.e. NIOS, National Institute of Electronics & Information Technology, Indira Gandhi National Open University, Haryana Knowledge Corporation Limited, ICT Academy of Tamil Nadu and Centre for Development of Advance Computing (Govt. of India, 2021).

NIOS is playing a major role in disseminating digital literacy throughout the country. Till March 2023, a total of 1,31,62,796 candidates appeared for assessment. Out of these 1,23,86,232 learners were successfully certified by NIOS.

It is also found that the status of literacy in the state is somehow related with number of appeared candidates in PMGDISHA. The top five states with highest number of appeared candidates for PMGDISHA also showed that these states have a large number of non-literates. The literacy rate of these states is below national literacy rate (74.4%) except Maharashtra.

However, the states with least number of appeared learners are basically concentrated to north- eastern states. The states have a lower number of digitally illiterate individuals as these states have higher percentage of literacy. These states have literacy rate above national average except Arunachal Pradesh (65.38). It can be clearly outlined that the states having larger number of digitally illiterate individuals have huge number of non-literate individuals also. Therefore, literacy and digital literacy are closely connected to each other (analysis based on primary data).

### **New India Literacy Programme (NILP) and NIOS**

India has successfully completed many Literacy Programmes in previous years for adult learners such as Basic Literacy Programme under Saakshar Bharat, etc. 76.30 million (7.63 crore) adults were certified under Basic Literacy Programme. Now, the MoE, Government of India has initiated 'New India Literacy Programme' (NILP) to cover all aspects of Adult Education. The programme aims to impart foundational literacy and numeracy along with other components necessary for citizens of 21<sup>st</sup> century. These components are critical life skills, vocational skills, basic and continuing education. The scheme is being implemented through volunteerism in online mode. It has been envisaged that all material and resources

will be provided digitally through accessible digital modes easily, i.e. TV, radio, mobile apps, etc. It aims to equip adults with FLN by using ‘Online Teaching, Learning and Assessment System (OTLAS)’ in collaboration with NIC, NCERT and NIOS.<sup>17</sup>

The NILP has also shown a significant change by reframing the term “Adult Education” to “Education for All” (सभी के लिए शिक्षा). This is not just a change of term but it also narrates the broader objective of the programme to reach each and every person and bring them in the path of learning. The term ‘Adult Education’ was specifically used for the adult learners covering the old age persons. However, the programme is being offered to non-literates of 15 years and above age groups who could not get opportunity of school education due to various socio-economic reasons. These non-literates are also not covered under the Right to Education Act-2009.

#### **i. Objectives of NILP**

- Reaching 5 crore learners for foundational literacy and numeracy;
- Covering non-literates of age 15 years and above;
- Using Online Teaching, Learning and Assessment System (OTLAS) to cover learners
- Collaboration with NIC, NCERT and NIOS for wider reach of the scheme

The NILP will be implemented to cover non-literates in the age group of 15 years and above in all states and UTs. The country still has a large number of adults who are non-literate. The number of non-literates in 15 years and above age group is 25.76 crore as per Census 2011. After the successful completion of Basic Literacy Programme under Saakshar Bharat, 7.63 crore adults were certified. Therefore, it is estimated that around 18.12 crore adults are still non-literate in India. Out of these non-literate adults, 5 crore adults will be covered under NILP between 2022-27.<sup>18</sup>

#### **ii. Components of ‘Education for All’ (earlier Adult Education) under NILP**

NEP 2020 under the heading ‘Adult Education and Lifelong Learning’ recommended that the *‘opportunity to attain foundational literacy, obtain an education, and pursue a livelihood must be viewed as basic rights of every*

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<sup>17</sup>[https://dsel.education.gov.in/sites/default/files/2023-01/Draft\\_Guidelines\\_of\\_NILP.pdf](https://dsel.education.gov.in/sites/default/files/2023-01/Draft_Guidelines_of_NILP.pdf)

<sup>18</sup>[https://dsel.education.gov.in/sites/default/files/2023-01/Draft\\_Guidelines\\_of\\_NILP.pdf](https://dsel.education.gov.in/sites/default/files/2023-01/Draft_Guidelines_of_NILP.pdf)

*citizen*'. In order to achieve the above goal, the NILP has decided to develop online modules on following five components of 'Education for All' (earlier Adult Education):

- Foundational literacy and numeracy: It includes reading, writing and numeracy competencies to be developed in adult illiterate learners. It is also suggested to impart these competencies through critical life skills using online modes;
- Critical life skills: It includes financial literacy, digital literacy, health care and awareness, commercial skills, child care and education, etc;
- Vocational skills development: It includes various components to obtain local employment;
- Basic education: It includes preparatory, middle, and secondary stages for equivalence;
- Continuing education: It includes holistic adult education courses in arts, sciences, technology, culture, sports, and recreation, as well as other topics of interest, etc.<sup>19</sup>

### iii. Role of NIOS in NILP

NIOS has been assigned as the central organization of the DoSEL for undertaking Adult Education Programme. In this regard, NIOS has been mandated to develop online modules on the following five components:

- Foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN);
- Critical life skills;
- Vocational skills development;
- Basic education; and
- Continuing education.

NIOS has been mandated to develop online modules for each of the five components of Adult Education. The programme includes diverse kinds of activities for developing online modules by extensively using technology in development and transaction of learning material including TV, YouTube channels, and specially designed web portal with app and assessment techniques. Under the collaboration, NIOS is also responsible for certification of successful adults under NILP.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>[https://dsel.education.gov.in/sites/default/files/2023-01/Draft\\_Guidelines\\_of\\_NILP.pdf](https://dsel.education.gov.in/sites/default/files/2023-01/Draft_Guidelines_of_NILP.pdf)

<sup>20</sup>[https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/SARTHAQ\\_Part\\_2.pdf](https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/SARTHAQ_Part_2.pdf)

## Conclusion

Since its inception, NIOS has embarked on a transformative journey, offering a wealth of learning opportunities to a diverse range of learners. Presently, it stands as the world's largest open schooling system, a testament to NIOS's role in enhancing educational access across all segments of society. Adult learners are one of the major target groups who have been at the core of NIOS's programmes and policies. As stated earlier, learning is a lifelong process and individuals can continue their learning journey through various programmes of NIOS including literacy, academic and various vocational programmes. The technologies have also evolved with time, creating more opportunities to access and learn. NIOS has always made effort to integrate technology in access and transaction of the programme. The admission process under OBE Programme is completely online. The advocacy initiatives are continuously undertaken to popularize the programme and give access to more adult learners. However, around 18.12 crore adults are still non-literate. A huge number of new-literates are still there who may be interested in lifelong learning opportunities, in order to gain skills and continue education. There are many milestones yet to come and NIOS will continue its efforts towards strengthening learning opportunities for adults and make them lifelong learners.

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## **Lifelong Learning Opportunities among National Union of Road Transport Workers in Ibadan Metropolis, Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

The National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) is an independent trade union in Nigeria that represents the interests of workers in the road transport sector. Its main goals are to promote collective bargaining and advocate for social stability among all workers. With the ever-changing nature of work, new trends and innovations have emerged, emphasizing the importance of acquiring new skills and competencies for human survival. Although efforts have been made in various areas, there has been a lack of focus on this particular aspect, necessitating the need for this study. In this study, the behaviorist and cognitive theory were used as the guiding frameworks, and a descriptive survey research design was employed. Simple random sampling was utilized to select five major motor parks in Ibadan, namely Ojoo, Iwo Road, Sango, Challenge, and New garage. The sample size consisted of 86 respondents, who were selected using this method. Quantitative research instruments, were developed to address the six research questions. The findings indicated that the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) receives driving education from the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC); the union also provides safety education internally; the police educate the union about the importance of maintaining peace and avoiding violence, health workers provide health education to NURTW members; financial institutions enlighten the union on finance management and credit facilities; and the FRSC conducts vehicle inspections to ensure roadworthiness. Based on these findings, it is recommended that politicians refrain from exploiting NURTW members for their own political ambitions. Furthermore, there should be a well-defined and accountable leadership style within the union. Additionally, laws should be enacted to prohibit the sale of illicit drugs in and around the motor parks. Lastly, it is also recommended that the government enhances the lifelong learning opportunities within the NURTW and address the identified challenges.

**Keywords:** *Parent, parental neglect, psycho-social, well-being pupils.*

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## Introduction

Over time, various Nigerian organizations have established specific aims and objectives, including MOTOR, to guide their efforts towards achieving commendable success. These goals and objectives serve as a driving force that every member must strive to accomplish. One such organization is the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), an independent trade union in Nigeria that represents the interests of workers in the road transport sector. Its main focus is on advocating for collective welfare and social stability for all workers. The union was formed in 1978 when the Nigerian government consolidated several unions within the transportation network. It is affiliated with the Nigeria Labour Congress and has leadership positions in all states across the country. However, the union has a history marred by questionable practices such as corruption, poor administration, leadership conflicts, extortion, and nepotism. As a result of these contentious behaviors exhibited by its members, the society (patriotic individuals in particular) has developed a negative perception of the union, especially due to their involvement in thuggery. The NURTW is present for all types of vehicles, including cars, buses, trucks, motorcycles, and tricycles, on Nigeria's major highways. Their primary role is to transport people and goods across the country, to generate revenue for the union.

It is worth noting that a significant proportion of NURTW members are school dropouts or individuals who could not secure white-collar jobs. According to Titiloye (2021), in many Nigerian towns, the motor park environment is characterized by volatility, where if road transport workers want to express their anger, the unruly ones often engage in destructive behaviors. These activities not only harm union members but also innocent members of society who become victims of their aggressive behaviour. This portrayal accurately reflects the union's image over time, leading to society's fear and apprehension towards the association. Furthermore, Titiloye (2021) suggests that this group of road transport workers puts the lives of innocent civilians at risk during their incessant rioting. Additionally, the violent behaviour displayed by some members of the road transport workers is often motivated by excessive political ambition, insatiable desire for material wealth, seeking an unfair advantage over others, establishing a revered identity, and pursuing status chauvinism. Consequently, these combative factions within the road transport employees consider themselves as representatives of the larger group. They often engage in intergroup collective aggression and other violent behaviour against others within the union affecting the society as a whole, on a regular basis.

The rapidly evolving nature of the workplace, driven by technological advancements, has necessitated the acquisition of new skills, particularly in the



workplace and other socio-economic contexts where daily activities take place. Both corporate organizations and in the public sector, whether governmental or non-governmental, are actively seeking individuals with relevant skills and experiences to meet the demands of the current environment. In order to adapt to these new requirements, individuals within these workplaces must continuously acquire new skills and knowledge to remain relevant in their jobs. This is where the concept of lifelong learning becomes crucial. The National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) has gained a reputation over the years for its internal power struggles, resulting in conflicts, violence among members, leadership disputes, and even involvement of political aspirants. This persistent crisis has become a significant issue for the public, causing many individuals to distance themselves from the union. They are often labeled as non-literates or fools. However, it is essential to question whether these labels are accurate and whether there are individuals within the union who differ from this general perception. Despite the negative public opinion, it is crucial to explore how members of this organization can achieve life satisfaction by embracing various aspects of lifelong learning.

Lifelong learning refers to all learning activities or tasks undertaken throughout an individual's entire life with the aim of enhancing knowledge, skills, and competencies in specific social and employment-related contexts. It emphasizes the provision of opportunities for individuals to pursue education at different stages of their lives. In essence, lifelong learning is a continuous educational process that can be accessed when the need arises. It is a need-based approach to learning that enables individuals to adapt to emerging challenges in both personal and professional life. For NURTW members, acquiring leadership and management skills is one of the numerous skills they need to develop in order to become responsible leaders and improve the union's image among the public. Lengrand (2000) defines lifelong learning as a continuous process that involves individuals developing skills and knowledge in various areas throughout their lives, driven by the rapid changes happening in the world. It is emphasized that every individual requires ongoing learning for both personal and occupational purposes. Lifelong learning is seen as crucial due to the changing global conditions and the emergence of new technologies. Despite its importance in community life, formal schooling has often taken precedence over lifelong learning in government action plans. However, the concept of lifelong learning encompasses all aspects of human activity, acknowledging the need to adapt to evolving facts and trends in the world which are often not within the curriculum of the formal school system but under the non-formal education ambit.

Scholars and policymakers in Africa have recently emphasized the significance of establishing a strong connection between the learning process and the acquisition

of practical life skills for daily life and employment. They argue that educational systems should be expanded to provide lifelong learning opportunities. The essential question then becomes, that at what level should poverty be alleviated to enable educational opportunities for citizens, rather than focusing on levels of education. It is crucial for education systems, families, and larger societies to play a critical role in bridging the gap between individuals' lives, the world of work, and the broader communal context. Therefore, there is a great need to integrate lifelong learning and its potential opportunities into our daily routines, work environments, and family lives. The primary purpose of lifelong learning is to address deficits in various areas, such as reading, writing, or numeracy skills. Lifelong learning offers individuals options, particularly in terms of functional literacy, which equips them with the necessary competence for their socio-economic lives. When examining the mentioned lifelong learning opportunities, it becomes evident that members of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) in Nigeria can achieve job and life satisfaction by embracing lifelong learning principles. Over the years, it has been observed that NURTW members often lack basic education, leading to difficulties in securing white-collar jobs. Consequently, they resort to self-employment positions such as drivers, tricksters, loaders, and similar roles within garages. Many garages are plagued by violence and disorderliness, with NURTW members often being utilized by politicians to instigate civil unrest, disrupt election processes, or engage in activities like ballot box theft. The underlying reason for these issues can be attributed to the limited access to education among NURTW members.

Thus, this research aims to address the existing research gap regarding lifelong learning opportunities among NURTW members in the Ibadan metropolis. The study seeks to explore and provide insights into the lifelong learning opportunities provided to NURTW members, including their content, delivery platforms, purposes, and any obstacles that may affect their utilization. Specifically, the study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the available lifelong learning opportunities for the NURTW members?
2. What is the content of the lifelong learning opportunities offered to the NURTW members?
3. What are the purposes of these available lifelong learning opportunities for the NURTW members?
4. Are there any challenges that hinder the lifelong learning opportunities among the NURTW members?

## Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was employed for this study. The population of this study comprised of all members of the NURTW in motor parks located in Ibadan. This includes ticket issuers, drivers, loaders, and leaders. A purposive and random sampling technique was employed to select 100 NURTW from five major motor parks including: Ojoo Motor Park, Iwo Road Motor Park, Challenge Motor Park, New Garage Motor Park, and Sango Motor Park.

A self-structured questionnaire called “Questionnaire on Lifelong Learning Opportunities among NURTW in Ibadan” (LLOANURTW) was employed for the study. The instrument was subjected to content validation and reliability with internal consistency Cronbach Alpha value of 0.74 indicated satisfactory reliability. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency count, percentage, mean, and standard deviation.

## Results

### Demographic data analysis

**Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents by education**

<b>Educational Qualification</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
No formal education	25	29.1
Primary	56	65.1
Secondary	4	4.7
OND	1	1.2
Degree	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 shows that majority (65.1%) of the respondents only attempted primary school, oral interview further reveals that majority of them could not complete the primary basic education but rather dropped out before completion; findings also shows that 29.1% of them do not have any formal education, more so, only 4.7% and 1.2% of them attempted secondary and OND respectively.

**Table 2 Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents by age**

<b>Respondent Age Range</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
18-28 years	3	4.0
28-38 years	16	19.0
39-49 years	37	43.0
50 years and above	30	35.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 shows that majority (43.0%) were within the age range of 39-49 years, followed by those of age range 50 years and above which accounted for 35.0%, followed by the age range of 28-38 years. There were only 4.0% of the respondents' union members who were within the age of 18-28 years.

**Research question 1:** What are the available lifelong learning opportunities among the NURTW members and the platforms through which they are provided?

**Table 3: Lifelong learning opportunities for NURTW members**

Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. D
Driving education is brought to the members by FRSC	60 69.8%	18 20.9%	5 5.8%	3 3.5%	3.5698	.75989
The FRSC gives members of the union safety education	57 66.3%	23 26.7%	5 5.8%	1 1.2%	3.5814	.65915
The police educates members of the union on the need to maintain peace and avoid violence	37 43.0 %	41 47.7%	5 5.8%	3 3.5%	3.3023	.73676
Health workers gives members of the union health education for their wellbeing	51 59.3%	27 31.4%	8 9.3%	0 0.0%	3.5000	.66421
Financial institution enlightens members on finance management, loan and credit facility	68 79.1%	13 15.1%	5 5.8%	0 0.0%	3.7326	.56202
FRSC checks vehicles to know if they are worthy to be on the road	44 51.2%	41 47.7%	1 1.2%	0 0.0%	3.5000	.52580
<b>Weighted Average</b>	<b>93.1%</b>		<b>6.9%</b>		<b>3.5356</b>	<b>.65644</b>

Table 3. shows that driving education is brought to the members by FRSC ( $\bar{X} = 3.57$ ). The FRSC gives members of the union safety education ( $\bar{X} = 3.58$ ). The police educates members of the union on the need to maintain peace and avoid violence ( $\bar{X} = 3.30$ ). Health workers gives members of the union health education for their wellbeing ( $\bar{X} = 3.50$ ). Financial institution enlightens members on finance management, loan and credit facility ( $\bar{X} = 3.73$ ). FRSC checks vehicles to know if they are worthy to be on the road ( $\bar{X} = 3.50$ ). The weighted average of 93.1% agreement to the above claims further corroborates that the Union members have been exposed to lifelong/continuing education.

**Research question 2:** What are the contents of the lifelong learning opportunities available among the NURTW members?

**Table 4: Content of the lifelong learning opportunities available among the NURTW members**

Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. D
Members of the union are taught how to read, write and compute	0 0.0%	47 54.7%	39 45.3%	0 0.0%	2.5465	.50075
Members of the union are educated on how to stay safe while on the road	45 52.3%	37 43.0%	4 4.7%	0 0.0%	3.4767	.58865
Members of the union are warned against taking hard drugs and alcohol	65 75.6%	20 23.3%	1 1.2%	0 0.0%	3.7442	.46491
Members are educated on the need to do away with violence and embrace peace	64 74.4%	22 25.6%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3.7442	.43888
Members of the union are educated on how to handle political matters without distracting the peace of the community	57 66.3%	21 24.4%	8 9.3%	0 0.0%	3.5698	.66049
Union education helps you to avoid untimely death	68 79.1%	13 15.1%	5 5.8%	0 0.0%	3.7326	.56202
<b>Weighted Average</b>	<b>89.0%</b>		<b>11.0%</b>		<b>3.47</b>	<b>.52541</b>

Table 4 shows the content of the lifelong learning opportunities and platforms for NURTW members. The table shows that members of the union are taught how to read, write and compute ( $\bar{X} = 3.55$ ). Members of the union are educated on how to stay safe while on the road ( $\bar{X} = 3.48$ ). Members of the union are warned against taking hard drugs and alcohol ( $\bar{X} = 3.74$ ). Members are educated on the need to do away with violence and embrace peace ( $\bar{X} = 3.74$ ). Members of the union are educated on how to handle political matters without distracting the peace of the community ( $\bar{X} = 3.57$ ). Union education helps you to avoid untimely death ( $\bar{X} = 3.73$ ). The Weighted Average Percentage of 89.0% agreement to the above claims further confirms that the respondents were exposed to the contents as suggested by the question items.

**Research question 3:** What are the purposes of the lifelong learning opportunities among the NURTW members?

Table 5 shows the purposes of the lifelong learning opportunities and platforms for the NURTW members including the fact that driving education helps them to avoid untimely death ( $\bar{X} = 3.82$ ). Health education helps them to balance work stress and psychological wellbeing ( $\bar{X} = 3.82$ ). Obeying traffic signs helps them to reduce road accidents ( $\bar{X} = 3.83$ ). The lifelong education helps them to present themselves as responsible people to the public ( $\bar{X} = 3.83$ ). Peace education enables union members to have good relations with the public ( $\bar{X} = 3.86$ ). Peace education

enables members of NURTW to maintain peace with commuters ( $\bar{X} = 3.74$ ). The weighted average percentage score of 78.5 respondents' agreement further confirms that the above claims were some of the purposes of the lifelong learning opportunities among the NURTW members.

**Table 5: Purposes of the lifelong learning opportunities among the NURTW members**

Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. D
Education on reckless driving helps you to avoid untimely death	72 83.7%	13 15.1%	1 1.2%	0 0.0%	3.8256	.41136
Health education helps you to balance work stress and psychological wellbeing	61 70.9%	21 24.4%	4 4.7%	0 0.0%	3.6628	.56590
Obeying traffic signs helps to reduce road accidents	71 82.6%	15 17.4%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3.8256	.38169
The lifelong education helps you to present yourself as responsible people to the public	72 83.7%	14 16.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3.8372	.37134
Peace education enables members to have good relations with the public	74 86.0%	12 14.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3.8605	.34854
The training workshops enables members of NURTW to maintain peace amidst commuters	65 75.6%	20 23.3%	1 1.2%	0 0.0%	3.7442	.46491
<b>Weighted Average</b>	<b>78.5%</b>		<b>21.5%</b>		<b>3.7926</b>	<b>.42395</b>

**Research question 4:** Are there challenges hindering the lifelong learning opportunities for the NURTW members?

**Table 6: Challenges hindering the lifelong learning opportunities for the NURTW members**

Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. D
The leadership of the union believes they should be paid before such programmes are brought to them and the union members	10 11.6%	15 17.4%	34 39.5%	27 31.4%	2.0930	.97773
Inadequate sensitization of the union members on the importance of the programmes	17 19.8%	56 65.1%	11 12.8%	2 2.3%	3.0233	.65037
The time scheduled for the programme clashes with their daily activities	48 55.8%	31 36.0%	6 7.0%	1 1.2%	3.4651	.68079
There is lack of sustainability of the programmes	25 29.1%	50 58.1%	8 9.3%	3 3.5%	3.1279	.71614
Most of the leaders do not value education	35 40.7%	49 57.0%	1 1.2%	1 1.2%	3.3721	.57490
The union lacks good management skill	31 36.0%	54 62.8%	0 0.0%	1 1.2%	3.3372	.54472
<b>Weighted Average</b>	<b>81.6%</b>		<b>18.4%</b>		<b>3.0697</b>	<b>.69077</b>

Table 6 shows the challenges hindering the utilization of lifelong learning opportunities for NURTW members. Table 3.7 shows that the problems include; inadequate sensitization of the union members on the importance of the programmes (02). The time scheduled for the programme clashes with their daily activities (47),

there is lack of sustainability of the programmes (12), Most of the leaders do not have formal education (37), and the union lacks good management skill (33). The weighted average percentage score of 81.6 respondents' agreement to the above shows that the above claims were the major challenges hindering the lifelong learning opportunities for the NURTW members.

### **Implication of the findings**

The findings indicate that there are opportunities for lifelong learning accessible to members of the NURTW, facilitated by governmental institutions and well-intentioned individuals within the state. However, despite the presence of these opportunities, the desired positive outcomes of lifelong learning have not been achieved, as some union members continue to engage in acts of violence. This observation aligns with Omobowale's (2011) argument that NURTW members and leaders function as political foot soldiers, perpetuating electoral violence and intimidating the general public. It can be inferred that the availability of lifelong learning opportunities, such as safety education provided by the Federal Road Safety Corps and literacy education offered by non-governmental organizations, media outlets, and educational institutions, aim to integrate the NURTW members into the globalized world and keep them abreast of new ideas. Additionally, health education is provided by medical professionals. Despite the ready availability of these opportunities, NURTW executives and members continue to maintain their former lifestyle characterized by excessive alcohol consumption, which sometimes leads to intoxication, endangering their lives and inciting violence. These findings align with Titiloye's (2021) and Omobowale's (2011) research, which identify inter-union rivalry, antisocial behavior, drug usage, and territorial disputes among union leaders as the primary causes of violence. These leaders perceive their self-worth to be contingent upon the number of hooligans supporting their selfish interests.

The findings also reveal that the provided opportunities were intended to facilitate personal growth and development among union members. However, based on Key Informant Interviews (KII), it was discovered that despite being aware of and appreciating these lifelong learning opportunities, union members face challenges in adhering to them and deriving benefits. This finding aligns with Titiloye's (2021) assertion that 49% of violent behavior is attributed to socio-personal and psychological disorders. The discovery of inter-union rivalry further supports the findings of Titiloye (2021) and Omobowale (2011), which identify inter-union rivalry, anti-social behavior, drug use, and territorial disputes among union leaders as the root causes of violence. Conflicts also arise from disputes over revenue generation and sharing formulas among union members, power struggles, and control over profitable transport routes.

Regarding time constraints, Munro and Rainbird (2002) suggest that such constraints do not necessarily prevent individuals from pursuing educational opportunities; in fact, they can help predict engagement. However, based on the KII, it is observed that union members rarely take lifelong learning opportunities seriously. Furthermore, the violent nature of the members poses a hindrance to the sustainable involvement of lifelong learning agencies with them. As Omobowale (2011) pointed out, most union leaders lack formal education and are not taking advantage of the non-formal alternative, thus remaining non-literate. Although, there are exceptions as revealed through the KII. However, majority of them held tightly to constant rivalry and perpetual incidence of violence.

## Conclusion

The study concludes that there are indeed lifelong learning opportunities available for the NURTW members at all fronts. However due to some strings of challenges like poor management and bad leadership amidst this union, the advantage of lifelong education is not seen. Moreover, there was no sustainability of the programme as the time schedule often clashed with the members' time of work. Lastly, the members' strong belief in the use of tussle to attain power within the union often brings violence within the union and disruptions to the society at large. Thus, even though lifelong learning opportunities were available, no proper utilization of such opportunities was done among the union members.

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## **Pre-Primary to Post-Doctoral Fellow: A GRI Model for Lifelong Learning and Extension**

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*“Education is for life through life and throughout life”*

M.K Gandhi

### **Abstract**

Education is a lifelong process of events and activities that inspire learners. It acts as a catalyst in bringing about social change through socio-economic growth. It has the capacity to develop and empower people. It is a weapon in the hands of the masses to wrest their emancipation from oppressors and exploiters. To harbour an enlightened, socially conscious, skilful and competent society, it is important that education becomes accessible to all, and it is almost incumbent on the Higher Educational Institutions (HEI) to achieve this. This article aims to study the Gandhigram Rural Institute (GRI) model for Lifelong Learning and Extension (LLL & E) in tandem with understanding its concept, programmes, implementation, and evaluation processes. The study is descriptive in nature and a combination of both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used. It is constructed by multi-stage snowball sampling methods. The secondary data includes the documents and reports of the department. This article also presents the highlights of case studies to showcase the impact of the efforts made by LLL & E. The sample comprises of beneficiaries from all phases (2016-2021). It covers pre-primary to PDF, along the spectrum of teaching, research and extension. The study involved a sample size of 180 children, youth, women, and stakeholders. This study could serve as a strategy for policymakers and other HEIs. The methods, strategies, processes, experiential learning and transformative approach would provide ample opportunities for creating a new social order in the light of the New Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020).

**Keywords:** *Skills, teaching, research, extension, GRI models, higher education institutions, NEP 2020, stakeholders, experiences, beneficiaries.*

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## **Introduction**

The history of learning is as ancient as humans. Lifelong Learning (LLL) has a long and rich heritage in India. LLL is ingrained in Indian society, culture, and education (Mandal, 2019). The Gandhian Nai Talim or Buniyadi Shiksha (literally, “Basic Education”) programme, which is based on pedagogy arising from the dialectical interplay between craft skills and cognitive processes, enabling simultaneous character formation, is the best example of workplace-based lifelong learning. It was the first formal and well-articulated idea of LLL in India (Mandal, 2019).

International policy organisations, particularly UNESCO and the European Commission, began influencing Indian policies in developing the idea of LLL throughout the late 1990s and early 2000s (Iqbal, 2009). Then, in India, LLL significantly eclipsed traditional Adult Education (AE). The Tenth (2002-2007) and Eleventh (2007-2012) Five Year Plans of the Government of India provide a strong indication of this transformation. The National Knowledge Commission (2009) and the Yash Pal Committee Report on Rejuvenation of Higher Education in India (2009), are two significant governmental attempts to overhaul education, centred on human resource development, utilising the modern and primarily economic concepts of LLL (Mandal, 2019). The concept of LLL has been under the process of continuous change because of the increased duration of formal education and the insufficiency of skills attained in schooling for future careers and success (Iqbal, 2009). LLL is the process of acquiring and expanding knowledge, skills and dispositions throughout life to foster well-being. The key objective of LLL is to enable people to improve themselves and to keep up with socio-economic, political, scientific and technological changes. The dimensions of LLL are personal fulfilment for individuals, economic development of districts, regions and nations and social development of communities (Madhukar, 2004).

In the year 1956, eleven rural institutes were established by the Ministry of Education, Government of India, and the Gandhigram Rural Institute (GRI) was one among them. While most of the rural institutes were closed or merged with other institutions due to various reasons, GRI remains alive and vibrant, rendering yeoman service to students and rural and village communities. The GRI has the mandate of taking Higher Education (HE) to the doorsteps of rural areas and has been providing education for more than six decades with a focus on skill development. This Institute has a Department of Lifelong Learning and Extension (DLLE & E) which is the only department having organic linkages from Pre-Primary to Post-Doctoral Fellow (PDF) through informal, non-formal, and formal education.

Having received NLM-UNESCO Literacy Award (in 1999) for dedicated service to the community, it is in sync with the NEP 2020 to provide skill-oriented and on-the-job training with 40 percent theory and 60 percent practical, multi-exit and multi-entry options. It has rich experience in the field of ‘teaching, research, and extension’ in all programmes. This three-dimensional approach has made GRI a pioneering model in rural HE and become a highly cherished model, for earning global and nationwide appreciation. As a result, the Institute has been making an effort to construct its academic programmes in line with the needs of society and business by offering transparent, learner-centric teaching and evaluation techniques. The Institute makes a significant contribution to the research fields via scientific and action-oriented research and focuses on resolving rural problems at the micro level. GRI peoples’ participatory and decentralised governance works to maintain its rural nature, culture and fulfils the Gandhian principles, while striving for worldwide excellence in all areas of education.

### **Theoretical framework**

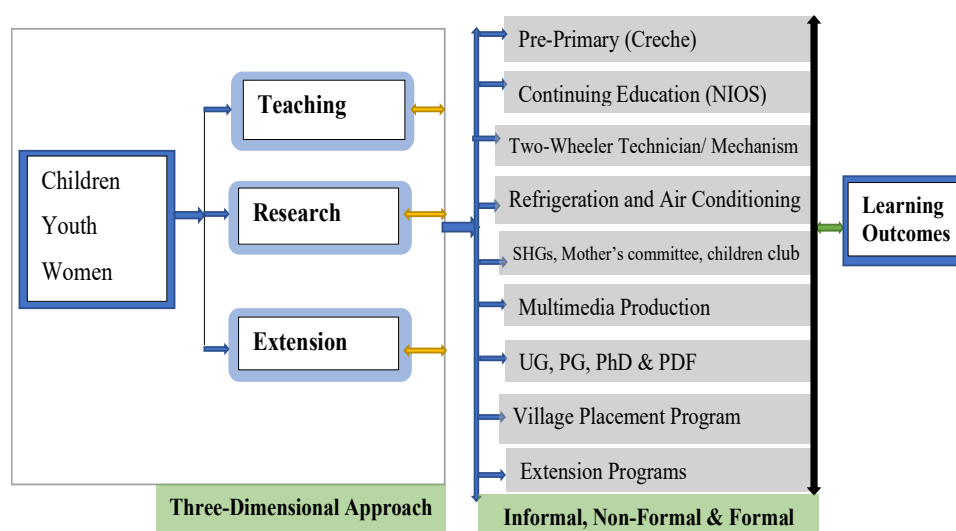
*Self-Determination and Cognitive Evaluation Theory:* People have universal and innate desires to expand their interests and advance their natural abilities to grow as individuals. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) focuses on one’s interest in learning, increasing one’s value of education, and increasing one’s self-confidence and efficacy. Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET) asserts that the facilitation of competence, relatedness, and autonomy in education results in higher subjective well-being, better academic performance, and increased motivation for pursuing a future career (Prevatt et al., 2011).

*Super’s Theory of Career Development:* Super’s Theory of Career Development proposed that career preferences and competencies change with time and experience. He developed the concept of vocational maturity, in which people pass through five developmental stages (Growth, Exploratory, Establishment, Maintenance, and Decline stages) during their lifetime (Long, 2012). Although Super framed his theory as a life-span model, with each stage corresponding to a chronological period in life, he acknowledged that people cycle through multiple careers as workers adapt to workplace trends and lifestyle choices.

*GRI Model for LLL&E:* The theoretical framework of the model consists of four sections: (i) input, (ii) three-dimensional approach, (iii) informal, non-formal, and formal educational programmes, and (iv) learning outcomes. Inputs are referred to, as personal characteristics that the children, youth and women possess before

they enter the department of LLL&E. Three-dimensional approach refers to the department's rich experience in the field of teaching, research, and extension in all programmes in rural HE. Informal, non-formal & formal educational programmes refer to those programmes that the children, youth and women experience while they are away from or at their institution. Learning outcomes refer to the change and growth in the careers of children, youth, and women after being exposed to the GRI model for LLL&E.

**Figure 1: Theoretical Framework**



### Need for the study

Education is a human right and a force for sustainable development and peace (Vyas & Mistry, 2021). It was positioned as the 4<sup>th</sup> goal in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and it aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (Urata et al., 2023). It is the key that will allow many other SDGs to be achieved (Maria & Chinemerem, 2019). Every SDGs goal requires education to empower people with the knowledge, skills and values to live in dignity, build their lives and contribute to their societies (Vyas & Mistry, 2021). Thus, education empowers people everywhere to live more healthy and sustainable lives (Maria & Chinemerem, 2019).

According to the National Education Policy 2020, (NEP 2020) “the students are the prime stakeholders in the education system”. The NEP looks at the students not

as ‘citizens of tomorrow’ but as ‘citizens of today’ who are equal stakeholders in the development of the country (MHRD, 2020). The goal of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is to create morally upright individuals who are capable of reasoned action and thinking, compassion and empathy, courage and resiliency, scientific temper and creative imagination, as well as strong ethical moorings and values. The greatest strategy for utilising and developing our nation’s many skills and resources for the benefit of the person, the community, the nation, and the globe is to provide universal access to high-quality education (MHRD, 2020). With this background, the study attempts to explore the GRI model of LLL&E as one of the pioneering models in inclusive and equitable quality education for rural people. The study also aims to explain and analyse the model, which would enable us to understand its concept, programmes, implementation, and evaluation processes.

The study tries to address the following research questions:

- Is the GRI model more appropriate in achieving the Gandhian concept of “education is for life, through life and throughout life?”
- How will this model represent the NEP 2020?
- How this organic linkage is providing an alternative model to address the sustainable SDG 4?

## Objectives

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To discuss the broader perspective of the three-dimensional approach of GRI as a pioneering model in rural HE.
2. To conduct a review of the concept, programmes, implementation, and evaluation processes of the GRI model for LLL&E.
3. To assess the outcome based on beneficiaries’ views on educational and economic empowerment.

## Method of research

The present study is descriptive in nature that used a combination of both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The universe for the research was selected from the LLL&E beneficiaries (2016-2021) Pre-Primary to PDF and covers the whole spectrum of teaching, research, and extension. As the research study mainly focused on beneficiaries (2016 to 2021), the presence of beneficiaries who passed out and got placement in (i) Teaching (pre-primary (creche); continuing education (NIOS); certificate in two-wheeler technician; diploma in refrigeration and air conditioning; diploma in two wheeler mechanism and maintenance; B.Voc. (Multimedia Production Technology); graduate and post graduate. (ii) Research -

Ph.D. (admitted, awarded and on-going), and lastly, Extension (village placement programmes; extension programmes beneficiaries) were considered while choosing the sample. Thus, the universe of the study included 19,658 beneficiaries (2016-2021) covering children, youth, women, and stakeholders from the LLL&E, GRI, Gandhigram, Tamil Nadu, India.

### Sample and sampling

The study's samples were chosen using multi-stage sampling techniques. The process was divided into three parts, starting with the selection of a department and the three-dimensional approach (teaching, research, and extension) using a random sampling procedure. In the second step, using a systematic random sampling procedure - informal, non-formal, and formal educational programmes (2016-2021) were chosen. Lastly, 180 samples were selected using snowball sampling, including children, youth, women and stakeholders.

**Table 1: Sampling Frame**

Three-Dimensional Approach	Informal, Non-Formal, and Formal Educational Programmes	Beneficiaries (2016-2021)	Total no of Respondents
Teaching	Pre-Primary (Crèche)	2020	20
	Continuing Education (NIOS)	635	20
	Two-Wheeler Technician (Yamaha)	97	20
	Diploma in Refrigeration and Air Conditioning	30	20
	Diploma in Two-Wheeler Mechanism and Maintenance	122	20
	Multimedia Production Technology	68	10
	Graduate and Post Graduate	3272	20
Research	Ph.D. Admitted, Awarded, and On-Going	52	10
Extension	Village Placement Programme (VPP)	5095	20
	87 Extension Programmes	8267	20
Total		19658	180

### Sources and tools of data collection

The researchers utilized both quantitative and qualitative research data and techniques. Quantitative data collection was done from the department documents and reports. Qualitative data was collected through case study methods to showcase the impact of the efforts made by LLL&E. Secondary data was collected from reports and documents available with the department and institute, as well as from national and international journals and websites. An interview schedule was created and used as a data collection tool. The data was collected by the researchers personally and through telephone interview methods. For reaching out to the respondents, snowball sampling technique was designed since majority of them were from different

parts of the state. Snowball sampling is a well-known, non-probability method of sample selection that is frequently used when samples are not easily available (Naderifar et al., 2017).

## Important findings

### I. Teaching

Teaching is the first dimension of the GRI Model of LLL & E's three-dimensional approach. The DLLL & E provides a learner-centred approach to teaching students which includes instructional strategies that lay the emphasis of education on students, more than teachers. It prioritises the interests of the students and recognises the importance of the student's voice in the educational process (Olugbenga, 2021).

#### 1. Pre-Primary (Crèche) (2016-21)

The Department of Lifelong Learning and Extension (DLLL & E) runs 14 Crèche service villages of 3 Blocks in the Dindigul District (Tamil Nadu). Since 1984, Central Social Welfare Board has been providing the required financial assistance (under ICDS). AFN Italy supports Melkaraipudur Crèche. The centres are mostly located in the villages predominated by the most backward communities who are landless and underprivileged.

**Table 2: Pre-Primary (Crèche) Beneficiaries (2016 - 2021)**

Sl. No	Name of the Village	Number of Children On-roll		
		Male	Female	Total
1.	Chettia Patti	79	86	165
2.	Valaya Patti	81	80	161
3.	Kondamanaicken Patti	74	67	141
4.	Vellayam Patti	86	53	139
5.	Kannimanuthu	60	72	132
6.	K.Pudur	60	75	135
7.	S.Vadipatti	79	61	140
8.	Kottur Avarampatti	73	77	150
9.	Ulagampatti	95	86	181
10.	Agaram	88	62	150
11.	Chatrapatti	91	59	150
12.	Rengappanur	79	65	144
13.	Achampatti	86	64	150
14.	Melkarai Pudur	49	33	82
<b>Total</b>		<b>1080</b>	<b>940</b>	<b>2020</b>

Source: DLLL&E, *Creche and Children's Project, Annual Report, 2016 to 2017*, p. 46); and for 2017-19, pp. 99-107; and 2020-21, pp. 17-21. (this and all reports used in tables and figures are mimeo).



The aforementioned data (Table-2) indicated that DLLL & E provided day-care facilities to children up to the age of 5 years in the preschool centre and 2020 children (males-1080, females-940) benefited from 2016 to 2021. The children were provided with milk, a noon meal, and facilities for play. Pre-school children underwent periodical health check-ups. The villages have fair access to education facilities such as preschool education centres, primary schools, middle schools, high schools, and higher secondary schools. Children of different age groups have universal access to educational facilities. All the children irrespective of age are enrolled in schools. There has been no report of dropouts both in private and public schools. The education centre run by DLLL&E has brought a discernible change in the informal literacy among the people in the 14 villages (L Raja, S Kannan, & P Kupenthiran, 2020).

## 2. Continuing education

The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), formerly known as National Open Schooling (name changed in 2002), is the education board of the Government of India. It was established in 1989 by the Ministry of Human Resource Development of the Government of India with the goal of increasing literacy and advancing flexible learning (Dhivya, 2021). The DLLL&E is home to an authorised NIOS study centre. It gives young people the chance to finish their unfinished secondary and senior secondary schooling (Ravi et al., 2022).

**Table 3: National Institute of Open Schooling Beneficiaries (2016-2021)**

Year	Secondary	Senior Secondary	Total
2016-17	120	52	172
2017-18	48	54	102
2018-19	91	31	122
2019-20	64	60	124
2020-21	90	25	115
<b>Total</b>			<b>635</b>

Source: DLLL&E, *NIOS English Medium Passed Out Data Records 2016 to 2021*, pp. 1-16 and *2016-21*, pp.5; and *Tamil Medium Passed Out Data Records 2016 to 2021*, pp. 1-5.

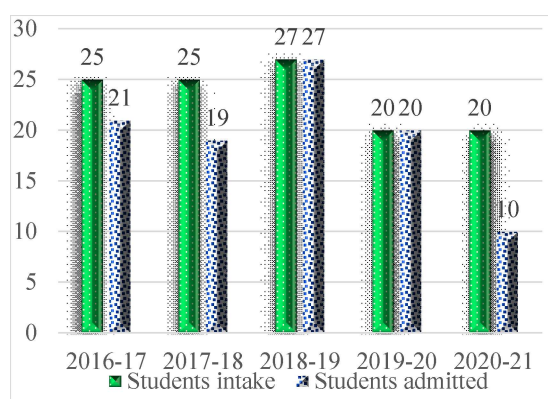
Table 3 depicts that the possibility of enrolling in NIOS is available to both sexes. 635 children and youth benefited from it. The candidates are being helped to successfully complete the course by the Gandhigram Learning Experience. The DLLL & E encourages applicants to sign up and complete their educational objectives.

The case studies demonstrate that the NIOS beneficiaries are extremely underprivileged and come from socially marginalised groups. As a result, the NIOS is assisting in bringing primary education to the homes of rural communities. At least, the secondary level must have been completed in order to qualify for the award. It pushed rural residents to finish their basic education and earn at least a secondary-level diploma (Dhivya, 2021). In addition, it is acknowledged that the success of NIOS has encouraged adjacent families to enrol their children in open schooling and reap the benefits.

### 3. Certificate in two-wheeler technician (Yamaha)

The GRI is one of the pioneering institutions promoting rural development and training human resources to oversee it. Within the institute system, the DLLL & E focuses primarily on vocational education and training for the development of skill sets. Efforts are being made to concentrate on “skills and knowledge” to increase teaching, training, and research in the area of lifelong learning. In light of this, the Institute founded a Community College (CC) with the help of UGC, New Delhi, to generate jobs and supply skilled labour for motorbike repair and maintenance in rural regions (DDU-KK, 2021). The GRI and Yamaha Motors have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish the Yamaha Training School (YTS), which is educating rural children in fundamental skills. The certificate programme is a two-semester and follows the credit system. Students are introduced to essential elements of two-wheelers and appropriate practices, like practical training and on-the-job training (DLLL & E, 2021a).

Figure 2: Certificate in Two-Wheeler Technician - 97 Beneficiaries (2016-2021)



Source: DLLL&E, *Certificate in Two-Wheeler Technician Report 2016- 2017*, p. 5; and *2017-21*, pp.3-8.

Figure-2 shows a total of 117 intake of students out of which 97 students benefited from the certificate in the Two-Wheeler Technician course. The candidates are being helped to successfully complete the course. The DLLL & E encourages applicants to sign up and complete their educational objectives. Hence, the candidates are able to get over their vulnerability.

The case studies reveal that the beneficiaries are from very poor backgrounds and socially marginalised groups. Most of the youth groups who received training mostly include students of NIOS, regular students and non-student youth. After completing one-year certificate in two-wheeler technician, youths are employed in different companies in and around the Institute which increases their economic status of life and leads to a comfortable life.

#### 4. Diploma in two-wheeler mechanism and maintenance

The Community College (CC) seeks to increase access to high-quality higher education for many rural residents who are unable to enrol in the standard courses offered by colleges and universities. With a strong focus on practical training and cutting-edge facilities, CC provides vocational skill development in the manner of conventional coursework. Two-Wheeler Mechanism and Maintenance is a one-year diploma programme offered by the CC. It mostly comprises of the core region and the domain area. In the domain area, basics of two-wheelers, major systems in two-wheelers, assemblies and auto-electrical impart professional skills and knowledge; while in the core area - professional equipment and ethics and employability skills impart requisite core skill knowledge and life skills. **Through industrial placements** for hands-on training, students improved their hands-on skills (DDU-KK, 2021).

**Table 4: Two-Wheeler Mechanism and Maintenance Beneficiaries (2016-2021)**

Academic Year	Sanctioned Students		Students Admitted		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Total
2016 - 2017	30	20	27	02	29
2017 - 2018	30	20	27	00	27
2018 - 2019	30	20	23	00	23
2019 - 2020	30	20	30	00	30
2020 - 2021	30	20	13	00	13
<b>Total</b>	150	100	120	02	<b>122</b>

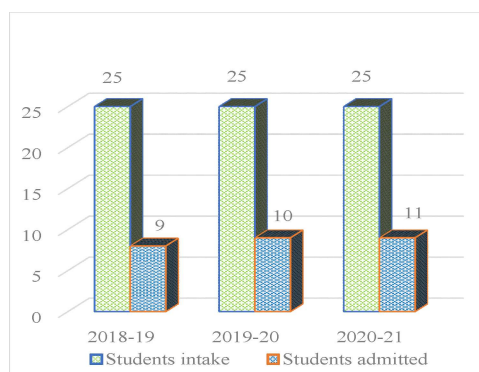
Source: DLLL&E, *Certificate in Two-Wheeler Technician Report 2016- 2017*, p.5; *Two-Wheeler Mechanism and Maintenance Activity Report 2017- 2021*, pp. 2- 5.

Table 4 depicts that more male students were admitted juxtaposed to female students in Two-Wheeler Mechanism and Maintenance and 122 students reaped benefits from 2016 to 2021.

## 5. Diploma in refrigeration and air conditioning

The DLLL&E is running a training course on Refrigeration & Air Conditioning (R&AC) service since 2018. This programme allows the students to develop employable skills that aid in finding jobs in the public and commercial sectors as well as in starting their own businesses (DLLL&E, 2021b).

Figure 3: Diploma in Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Beneficiaries (2018-2021)



Source: DLLL&E, *Success Story of Diploma in Refrigeration and Air Conditioning 2018 to 2021*, pp. 2-5; 2021, p. 2, and 11.

The diploma in R & AC is intended to develop young people who are professionally equipped to satisfy the industry's human resource demands. Since 2018, 30 students have been admitted to the diploma in R & AC and have benefited from it.

The case studies demonstrate how R & AC has permeated every aspect of society, including major corporate entities, storage companies, and private residences. Many educated jobless people nowadays are looking for appropriate skill training courses that would lead to self-employment or encourage budding entrepreneurs. The R & AC sector is very competitive in modern economy, and practically all the course participants find employment after completing their programmes.

## 6. Multimedia production technology

Bachelor of Vocational (B. Voc.) in Multimedia Production Technology is a Bachelors course of study. The DLLL & E provided this B.Voc. in Multimedia Production Technology programmes via DDU-KK, Gandhigram Rural Institute. It enables young people to find work prospects in the public and private sectors of the media. Additionally, this curriculum offers more opportunities for self-employment (DLLL & E & DDU-KK, 2021).

**Table 5: Multimedia Production Technology Beneficiaries (2018-2021)**

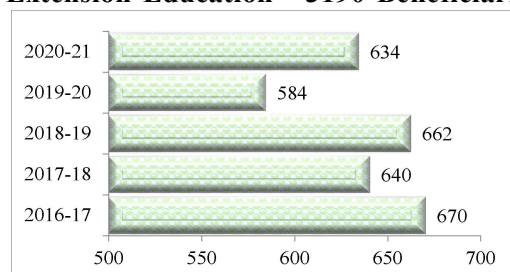
Year	Male	Female	Total
2018 – 2019	5	-	05
2019 – 2020	22	5	27
2020 – 2021	35	1	36
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>68</b>

Source: DLLL&E, *Success Story of Multimedia Production Technology 2018 to 2021*, pp. 4-6.

## 7. Graduate and post graduate (Extension Education)

Multiple societal goals are accomplished through extension education. It essentially establishes an educational environment in the teaching field so that students may become ready for the future. It makes students ready for their ongoing, highly dynamic personal and professional development. Higher education's main goal is to give graduates the information and skills they need to transfer into the workforce (Orr et al., 2020). The DLLL & E provides extension education to bachelor's or master's degree students from various departments such as M.A. in Sociology, M.A. in Development Administration, B.A. Economics, B.B.A. Rural Industries & Management, B.Com. Cooperation, B.Sc. Mathematics, B.Sc. Physics, B.Sc. Chemistry, B.Sc. Micro Biology, B.Sc. Geology, B.Sc. Computer Science and B.Sc. Home Science.

**Figure 4: Extension Education - 3190 Beneficiaries**



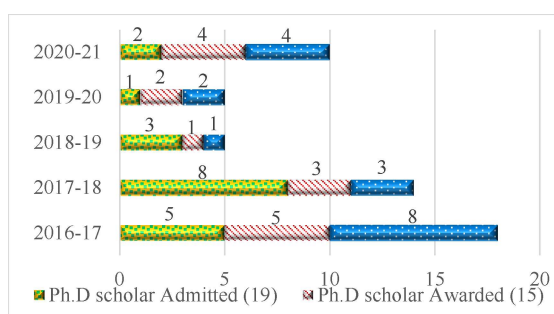
Source: DLLL&E. *Extension Model, Gandhigram Experiment, 2016-21*, p.3, and 10.

Figure 4 shows that 3190 students benefited from the extension education offered by the DLLL & E. It assists students in acquiring new abilities and information that can enhance their quality of life. Students utilise possibilities to modify their knowledge and skill profiles by studying extension education. Younger generation has talent but not the professional guidance. In this context, extension education helps them to become fully professional in society.

## II. Research

Research is the second component in the GRI Model of LLL & E's three-dimensional approach. The department offers full-time and part-time P.H.D courses. Scholars, both fresh and in service enrol for Ph.D full-time and part-time. Areas of research are interdisciplinary in nature which include rural development, women empowerment, community-based organizations, and corporate social responsibility.

**Figure 5: Status of Ph.D. (2016 - 2021)**



Source: DLLL&E, *Doctoral Research Department Record from 2016 to 2021*, p. 3.

The Ph.D. is a research degree that prepares graduates to advance the theoretical underpinnings, empirical knowledge, and strategic role of adult education not only in the context of higher education but also in national and international goals of creating a civil society and realising human potential. Figure-5 demonstrates that from 2016 to 2021, 19 Ph.D. scholars were enrolled and 15 Ph.D. scholars were awarded. The DLLL&E also conducted a research study, "Situation analysis on child Marriage in Dindigul district" sponsored by the Department of Social Defence, of TN Govt through the district child protection unit. This project was started in January 2020 and completed in the month of December 2020. This research project found the major factors which determine the causes of child marriage. The study report was submitted to the district's child protection officer, DCPU, Dindigul district on 8 January 2021. The case studies reveal that most of the research scholars who completed got 200

the job, all over India. Scholars have the chance to collaborate with professors on planned research and outreach initiatives. Researchers can collaborate with professors to co-author books, book chapters, journal articles, conference papers, and conduct presentations.

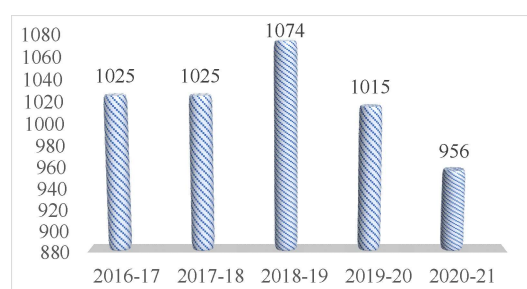
### III. Extension

Extension in the form of community service was the basic approach of GRI and is the third dimension of the GRI Model of LLL & E's three-dimensional approach. It is an integral component of the academic programmes of the Institute. It is envisioned in the ideal and enshrined in the objectives of the Institute. It remains the nucleus of teaching and research. The main aim of the extension programme is to provide adequate training to women, youth and children in GRI service villages, to propagate information communication (ICT) for the needy people of GRI service villages, to increase the enrolment ratio in all balwadis (crèche centres) and upgrade skills for the children's health and. Extension programmes undertaken by the department comprise of village placement programmes and extension programmes organized at the village level.

#### Village placement programmes (VPP)

An important component of the extension is Village Placement Programmes (VPP). It is a unique rural exposure programme of GRI. All the faculties and departments move out to villages with their staff and students for a duration of seven days, at two different times for social science (August) and science (September). VPP is of two credits in the third semester.

**Figure 6: Village Placement Programmes (VPP)**



Source: DLLL & E, *Placement Programmes Report from 2016 to 2021*, pp. 25-29; and *Activity Report 2021*, p 11.

The department coordinates and facilitates VPP for all the UG and PG students of GRI (5095 students benefited during 2016-21). It offers an opportunity for the students to understand the different facets of the rural community. It enables the students to comprehend and relate classroom learning to field realities. It inculcates socially relevant values and responsibilities among the students and it facilitates the initiation and sustenance of socially relevant programmes which benefit the rural community.

### **Extension programmes organized at village level**

The drudgery of people, food shortage, poverty, illiteracy and prevailing social evils in our society led the DLLL&E to initiate extension programmes efforts for the welfare of the rural people. From 2016 to 2021, 87 extension programmes were organised by the DLLL & E.

Extension programmes organized by DLLL&E at the village level are categorised into two: namely awareness programmes and training programmes. Almost 8267 (5672 from awareness programmes + 2595 from training programmes) rural children, youth and women benefited from the extension programmes organized by the DLLL & E from 2016 to 2021.

#### **A. Awareness programmes (5672 beneficiaries)**

*Child Rights Promotion - 30 Beneficiaries:* A two-day workshop on child rights promotion through street theatre was organized from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> of July 2017 at Life Centre, Nochidaipatti, Dindigul. Thirty children studying between 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> standard from ten villages of Dindigul district benefitted from this programme.

*Personality Development - 70 Beneficiaries:* A five day personality development training was organized by DLLL&E at S. Vadipatti, Reddiyarchatram block. Youths were trained in self-confidence, leadership quality, self-esteem and respect and maintenance of good discipline.

*Career Guidance and Counselling – 900 Beneficiaries:* The DLLL&E organized career guidance and counselling programmes for senior secondary students at various higher secondary schools.

*Life skill Education -200 Beneficiaries:* Life skill education is the most important aspect of the extension programmes of DLLL & E. Eight life skill education



programmes were organized on different topics that were useful for the children's skill development and discovering their hidden talents.

*Population Education - 1320 Beneficiaries:* The DLLL&E organized population education awareness programmes for the school students at various schools in February, 2018.

*Education Tour - 150 Beneficiaries:* The DLLL&E organized a one-day educational tour to Aliyar for rural children on 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2020. Forty children and ten adults including staff members and parents benefitted by visiting the dam and temple of consciousness.

*Youth Development Programmes - 600 Beneficiaries:* A two-day youth development programme was organized from 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2017 at Life Centre, Nochidaipatti. Around 600 youths benefited from these programmes.

*Medical Check Camp - 160 Beneficiaries:* DLLL & E has conducted free medical camps under Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) at 14 crèche centres which are functioning in 14 villages. The objective of the medical camp is early identification and intervention for children from birth to 18 years to cover 4 'D' viz. (i) defects at birth (ii) deficiencies (iii) diseases and (iv) development delays including disability. The RBSK envisages covering 30 plus selected health conditions for screening, early detection and free management. The medical camp was conducted in four phases.

*Celebration of Important National Days - 1864 Beneficiaries:* Every year the DLLL&E celebrates important days in GRI serving villages like Republic Day in January, Independence Day in August, Children's Day in November, International Literacy Day on 8<sup>th</sup> September and Teachers' Day on 5<sup>th</sup> of September.

*Children's Mela - 378 Beneficiaries:* Every year the DLLL & E organizes an annual children's mela for the stakeholders at GRI. 378 stakeholders participated in the children's mela from 2016 to 2021. Children came from different schools of GRI serving villages under a common platform and got the opportunity to express their potentialities through games, drawing, elocution, essay writing, dance and drama.

## **B. Training programmes (2595 beneficiaries)**

*Mobile Phone Servicing - 400 Beneficiaries:* The training programmes were conducted in three batches in cluster villages during 4-8 July 2018 (Vellayampatty, Ulagampatty and Chatrapatty). These programmes taught basic electronic functions.

*Computer Literacy - 120 Beneficiaries:* The DLLL & E organized a computer literacy programme for school students at Kondamanayakanpatti village in May 2021. Children from rural schools who did not have the facilities to access computers, have benefited from this programme.

*GST with Tally:* The DLLL & E organized the GST training programmes with Tally for 120 Commerce and Management students of GRI. The programmes were designed with Sree Vee Academy, Dindigul.

*Skill Training Programmes - 300 Beneficiaries:* Children studying from 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> standard are given at least four skill trainings throughout the year that are handled by resource persons who have knowledge and expertise. Almost 300 children aged 11 to 15 from different villages in the Dindigul district, participated in the programmes held four times from 2016 to 2021.

*Refresher Training for Balwadi Teacher - 100 Beneficiaries:* The DLLL & E organised training programmes for 100 GRI Balwadi teachers on 13<sup>th</sup> February, 2020. Balwadi teachers play a bridge between the community and the institute.

*Mushroom Cultivation - 28 Beneficiaries:* The DLLL & E, Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) and Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA) jointly organised a one-day mushroom cultivation training programme on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021 at KVK. The main aim of the training programme was for all children and parents to eat a good protein diet.

*Vegetable Kitchen Garden - 28 Beneficiaries:* The GRI crèche teachers and aayahs (28 Members) participated in the nutritious vegetable garden preparation training programme organized by the DLLL & E, KVK and UBA on 16<sup>th</sup> December, 2020.

*Pappad Making - 600 Beneficiaries:* Pappad making training was organized by DLLL&E in collaboration with KVK at Ulagampatti village on 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2018. Typically prepared from dry pulses, pappad can be roasted or fried. Market-available pappad comes in a variety of flavours.

*Menstrual Hygiene Practices - 200 Beneficiaries:* The DLLL & E organized an awareness programme on “Reproductive Health and Personal Hygiene” for rural women, and teenage girls at Agram on 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2018, as well as at Ulagampatti on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2018. These programmes taught them to maintain good menstrual hygiene and health practices.

*SHG Management - 150 Beneficiaries:* A two day training for women leaders of Self-Help Groups (SHG) of rural villages was organized by DLLL&E on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of September, 2016 at Krishi Vigyan Kendra. SHG's participation in a variety of social events is important for their empowerment journey.

*Stress Management - 400 Beneficiaries:* A three day stress management programme was organised from 2<sup>nd</sup> May to 4<sup>th</sup> May 2016 at GRI. During the academic year, stress management is one of the biggest problems. It is advisable to create a strategy for avoiding and reducing various school-day crises so that stress can be properly handled.

For reasons of brevity detailed accounts of such individual cases are left out. But, these cases reveal that the beneficiaries in this model enter the Institute one or other way as learners and acquire their own professional identities which bring a tremendous change in their lives. In this three-dimension model, pre-primary and the initial phase of education have been provided to students from rural areas. Then, students return to higher education institutes either to acquire new basic knowledge and skills (non-formal and informal) or to improve their level of formal education. Later, as the situation requires, the students could move on to prepare for a job shift or to obtain further higher education. In this paradigm, students finish their higher education and join or re-enter the labour market after rigorous study. As a result of this strategy, individual learners have additional opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skill profiles.

### **Organic linkages from pre-primary to PDF**

The Department of Lifelong Learning and Extension (DLLL & E) has developed the GRI model of seamless connections from pre-primary education to postgraduate degree programs (PDF) at Gandhigram Rural Institute (GRI). Under this model, children starting from pre-primary stages, such as Creche and Balwadi, are eligible to reach up to higher education levels within the GRI framework. A child who enters the pre-primary stage at a GRI-affiliated Creche, after reaching five years of age, becomes eligible for admission to Standard I in either private or public schools. However, children face barriers preventing school enrolment, such as family background, economic constraints, social issues, or environmental challenges, they can be admitted to the GRI National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) centre. Accredited by the Ministry of Education, this centre provides education that is aligned with NIOS standards.

Upon reaching 13 years of age, provided the candidates can read and write and adhere to NIOS regulations, can continue their education at the GRI NIOS centre. At the age of 15, they become eligible to enrol in the secondary level offered by NIOS. At this stage, they have flexibility to choose subjects and languages based on their interests. On completing secondary education at age of 17, they progress to the senior secondary level. Here, subjects are taught in local language to ensure they comprehend the exam content without difficulty.

Such students can join higher studies in the HEIs education institutions either in the formal or distance mode. This linkage from pre-primary to PDF has enormous flexibility and accrues complete skills that enable the students to pursue further studies or become self-employed. This model is student-centric, less cost-effective, and brings many avenues on various dimensions to fulfil the desires of the students.

## Conclusion

The DLLL & E has been rendering service from pre-primary to PDF (2016 to 2021). It was able to reach out to more than 6,000 students through online and offline modes which made a tangible impact for the GRI students of 5,100 under village placement programmes. Further, more than 640 dropout students have been enrolled under the NIOS. This Department was able to attract Rs. 1.27 crores through various projects, which was entirely spent for the benefit of rural students. As a result, the three-dimension approach of teaching, research and extension paved the way to reach out to more than 11,000 students on-campus and cover more than 10,000 children, women and the public through off-campus initiatives. All the skilled trained rural students have been fully employed, economically empowered and are sustaining their livelihood. In this way, it has tried to fulfil the Gandhian concept of education. This is how the DLLL & E becomes an excellent example to showcase outcomes for the betterment of society through education and skills programmes. The Institute, DLLL & E and its three-dimension model have become a pioneering model for Lifelong Learning and Extension in the light of NEP 2020.

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***Adult Education in India*** by Asoke Bhattacharya and Presenjit Deb, Printforce: The Netherlands, 2023. pp XVII+249.

• **Kalpana Kaushik<sup>1</sup>**

The book *-Adult Education in India*, edited by Prasenjit Deb and Asoke Bhattacharya, offers a significant analysis of the vast picture of adult education in India. With 15 insightful articles, written by eminent adult education scholars, the book provides a comprehensive overview of various aspects shaping adult education in the country. It is printed by the Printforce, the Netherlands and the titles published in this series are listed at [brill.com/adult](http://brill.com/adult)

The book begins with a historical perspective provided by Prasenjit Deb and Srabani Maitra, shedding light on the evolution of adult education in India. This Chapter lays the groundwork for understanding the trajectory and significance of adult education initiatives over time.

The subsequent chapters delve into the implementation details like strategies and programmes, and policies surrounding adult education, including an analysis of its integration into five-year plans, programmes, institutions, and funding mechanisms, meticulously explored by S. Y. Shah.

One of the highlights of the book is the explanation of “Saakshar Bharat,” presented as a paradigm shift in adult and lifelong education in India by V. Mohankumar. This chapter offers a contemporary lens through which readers can grasp the transformative potential of literacy campaigns and lifelong learning initiatives in empowering individuals and communities.

The challenges faced by marginalized communities, as examined by Dip Kapoor, underscores the importance of inclusive educational practices that honour diverse cultural contexts and promote agency among historically disadvantaged groups.

Peter Mayo’s exploration of re-conceptualizing lifelong learning for sustainable development expands the discourse by emphasizing the interconnections of education, environmental stewardship, and social equity. Mayo advocates for a holistic approach

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to lifelong learning that transcends traditional boundaries and embraces a sustainable development agenda, positioning education as a catalyst for transformative change.

Ratna Ghosh's reflection on the concept of lifelong learning and the relevance of Tagore's philosophy of education adds a philosophical dimension to the discourse. By drawing on Tagore's ideas of holistic education and lifelong learning embedded in the ethos of Santiniketan, Ghosh underscores the enduring relevance of these principles in addressing contemporary educational challenges and nurturing individuals as lifelong learners.

Alisha M.B. Heinemann's piece, "Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Adult Education: Rearranging Desires at Both Ends of the Spectrum," offers a compelling examination of how desires are reshaped through adult education, drawing on Spivak's theoretical framework. This article delves into the complex intersections of education, identity, and power, enriching our understanding of transformative learning processes.

"Subaltern Perspectives in Adult Education", Preeti Dagar's exploration, sheds light on the marginalized voices and experiences within the realm of adult learning. By centering the perspectives of subaltern groups, Dagar highlights the importance of inclusive educational practices that honor diverse lived realities and empower marginalized communities.

The "Contribution of Raja Rammohan Roy, Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, and Swami Vivekananda in the Field of Social Reformation and Education" as analysed by Apurba Kumar Chattopadhyay, provides a historical lens to understand the evolution of social reform and education in India. This piece underscores the pivotal role of key figures in shaping educational discourse and advancing social justice agendas.

By Samiksha Jha, Yashvi Sharma, and Rajesh Tandon, in their study of "Unlearning for Change: Empowering Journey of Women Domestic Workers in India" offer a poignant narrative of empowerment through unlearning and relearning processes. It highlights the transformative potential of adult education in empowering marginalized groups and fostering social change.

Thiyam Premabati Devi's exploration of "Opportunities of Lifelong Learning for Sustainable Development in India" adds a sustainability perspective to the discourse on adult education. By emphasizing the interconnectedness of education, sustainability, and development, this article advocates holistic approaches to lifelong learning that address societal challenges.



“Ambedkar, Freire, Gramsci: Teachers from Our Past, Prophets of Our Future” by Cosimo Zene offers a critical reflections on the legacies of key educational thinkers. This article highlights the enduring relevance of their ideas in shaping inclusive and emancipatory educational practices for the future.

Finally, M.C. Reddeppa Reddy’s piece on “B.R. Ambedkar: The Bulwark of Dalits’ Education and Empowerment” provides a comprehensive analysis of Ambedkar’s contributions to education and empowerment. This article underscores the importance of addressing caste-based discrimination through inclusive educational policies and practices.

A noteworthy contribution by the co-editor Asoke Bhattacharya titled “Perspectives of Popular Education” enriches the discourse with insights into the role of popular education in the Indian context. Bhattacharya’s article offers a critical examination of popular education’s impact on empowering individuals and communities, adding depth to the book’s exploration of adult education paradigms.

Collectively, these articles offer a rich tapestry of insights into the multifaceted landscape of adult education in India, by engaging with diverse perspectives, historical contexts, and transformative practices,

Throughout the book, the contributors offer critical insights into the challenges and opportunities within the realm of adult education. From addressing issues of accessibility and inclusivity, and exploring innovative pedagogical approaches, each article contributes to a rich fabric of understanding.

The strength of “Adult Education in India” lies not only in its scholarly depth but also in its relevance to practitioners, policymakers, and academics engaged in the field. By synthesizing theoretical frameworks with empirical evidence, the book serves as a valuable resource for anyone interested in understanding and advancing adult education in India.

However, while the book provides a comprehensive overview, some readers may find certain topics deserving of further exploration. Additionally, a more robust discussion on the intersectionality of factors such as gender, socio-economic status, and regional disparities could enrich the analysis.

In conclusion, “Adult Education in India” stands as a commendable contribution to the literature on adult education, offering a multifaceted exploration of its past, present, and future trajectories.

**Alternative Education: Philosophy, Curriculum and System** by Bindhu C.M.,  
Shipra Publications, Delhi, 2022. pp.viii+132

• Noushad P.P<sup>1</sup>

The book titled *Alternative Education: Philosophy, Curriculum and System*, has been written by Professor C.M. Bindhu, Professor, Department of Education, University of Calicut. The book covering twelve chapters is a unique work, in providing a comprehensive idea about the concept of alternative education, which is highly useful for educators, policymakers and common readers. It mainly deals with the concept and components of alternative education, its major thinkers, the curriculum and evaluation in alternative education, alternative systems of education, recommendations in national educational policies and selected alternative education case studies.

Chapter 1 elaborates on the concept, components and approaches of alternative education. It begins with the problem of lack of a standard definition for alternative education but highlights it in different parts of the world. The needs, scope, aims, and objectives of alternative education are analyzed along with components, factors and specific populations of alternative education. The philosophical bases of alternative education, its characteristics, the typology, its various forms and models, its global networks, and its strengths and challenges are dealt with in brief.

Chapter 2 deals with three major agencies of alternative education: governmental, non-governmental and individual and corporate agencies of education. The ideas of alternative education put forward by Mahatma Gandhi, Tagore, Vivekananda, Aurobindo, Jiddu Krishnamurthy and Gijubhai Bhadeka are discussed in detail as part of Chapter 3. The idea of de-schooling society by Ivan Illich, the concept of critical pedagogy and education for critical consciousness by Paulo Freire, Bourdieu's theory of social capital, education as cultural reproduction and habitus, folk school movement of Grundtvig, summer hill school of A. S Neil, Reimer's School is Dead, and the Rhythm of Education by Whitehead are the major thrusts in chapter 4.

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Curriculum in alternative education is the theme of Chapter 5. It elaborates on the contents of alternative education curricula. Social, emotional, and experiential learning techniques are highlighted as the strategies of alternative education. Functional literacy as an alternative education is also described in this chapter. In Chapter 6, the approaches and components of evaluation in alternative education are depicted. Observation, anecdotal records, portfolios, project-based learning, rubrics, checklist, rating scale, cumulative records, performance assessments and self-assessments are detailed as the tools of evaluation in alternative education. The challenges faced by teachers in alternative education, their issues regarding qualifications and their moral obligations are the subject matter of Chapter 7.

The role of alternative education at various levels of education including the education of out-of-school children, alternative education at higher education through work-based learning and online learning are the core concepts explained in Chapter 8. It also depicts adult education programmes as the third level of alternative education with elaborations of the National Adult Education Programme, Rural Functional Literacy Programme, National Literacy Mission and alternative educational opportunities for weaker sections including dalits and other backward communities.

Chapter 9 deals with various alternative systems of education. It highlights the importance of open and distance learning with elaborate accounts about objectives and principles of open education at the school and university levels. A lengthy chapter on recommendations by two educational policies in India, National Policy on Education, 1986 and National Educational Policy 2020, are illustrated in Chapter 10. The specific features of the Non-Formal Education Programme as recommended by NPE 1986, along with its other recommendations such as national programmes for adult education, rural functional literacy programmes, mass functional literacy programmes, continuing education and the role of technology in eradicating illiteracy are dealt with, in detail. Alternative education in NEP 2020 is well explained in six major features: the development of a curriculum framework for adult education by NCERT, ICT-enabled infrastructure for adult education, training for educators of adult education, community participation, supply of resources and ensuring the quality of education in the sector. The role of mass media such as radio, television, print media, cinema, folk arts and the internet are the focus of Chapter 11. The last chapter focusses on interesting case studies of some alternative schools namely Kanavu, Sarang and Gothrathalam in south India. Kanavu is an unconventional school established by K.J. Baby in Wayanad, Kerala. A school in the foothills of the western ghats, Sarang, was started for the upliftment of tribal communities of the area. Gothrathalam is a school established by a student of Kanavu in Thiruvananthapuram for Vedar communities.

Lucid language and interesting illustrations are the key features of the book. Though the book is a quick read, it provides essential information to readers in an area where there is dearth of good literature. The author has taken extreme care in systematically organizing the content with various citations and an elaborated list of references. The book will be a valuable read to those who are interested in the concept of alternative education.

### **Panel of Peer Reviewers**

**Professor N. K. Ambasht**, Former Chairman, National Institute of Open Schooling, NOIDA, U.P.

**Professor K. Parthasarathy**, Former Vice Chancellor, Tamil Nadu Open University, Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

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I, Suresh Khandelwal, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

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The manuscripts should be in ENGLISH. The length should be around 3000-4000 words for articles and 700–800 words for book reviews. All research articles should provide an abstract in 200-250 words, stating aims, objectives, methodology and main finding of the study with 4-6 keywords. The abstract should be written clearly avoiding long, complicated sentences and jargon. Citations should not appear in the abstract. The references in the main text should appear, for example, as (Shah, 1999) or (Shah, 1999: 109). In the Reference, for books, include surname, followed by first name/initial of the author, year of publication in brackets, title of publication in italics, place of publication and name of publisher. For articles, include surname, followed by first name/initial of the author, year of publication in brackets, complete title of article, name of the journal in italics, volume number, issue number in brackets and page number as follows:

### Book

Shah, S. Y. & Choudhary, K.C. (Eds.). (2016). *International Dimensions on Adult and Lifelong Education*. New Delhi: International Institute of Adult and Lifelong Education.

### Article

Sork, Thomas J. (2016). The Place of Ethics and the Ethics of Place in Adult and Lifelong Education. *Indian Journal of Adult Education*, 77(3), 5-18.

### Chapter in a Book

Subha Rao, I.V. (2002). A New Approach to Literacy Assessment in India. In Madhu Singh (ed.) *Institutionalising Lifelong Learning* (pp. 270-91). Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education.

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While quoting online sources, source of documents and date of retrieval should be given.

For further information on citing references, follow the guidelines provided by *the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA 7th edition) which is commonly used in education, psychology and other social sciences. For details, see - [apastyle.apa.org](http://apastyle.apa.org).

The manuscript should be word processed (MS Word) and double-spaced throughout in a 12-point serif font (e.g., Times New Roman), including quotations and references with sufficient margin on all sides on an A-4 size paper. The references should be listed in alphabetical order at the end of the article. Acknowledgment if any, should be mentioned before the references.

The cover page should contain the following information:

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The Indian Adult Education Association founded in 1939, aims at improving the quality of life through education, which it visualizes as a continuous and lifelong process. It directs its efforts towards accelerating adult education as a process, a programme, and a movement.

The Association co-ordinates activities of various agencies – governmental and voluntary, national and international – engaged in similar pursuits. It organizes conferences and seminars, and undertakes surveys and research projects. It endeavours to update and sharpen the awareness of its members by bringing to them expert views and experiences in adult education from all over the world. In pursuit of the policy, the Association has instituted the Nehru Literacy Award and Tagore Literacy Award for outstanding contribution to the promotion of Adult Education and Women's Literacy in the country, respectively. It has also instituted Dr. Zakir Husain Memorial Lecture, which is delivered every year by an educationist of eminence.

The Association has brought out many publications on themes related to adult education, including Hindi editions of several UNESCO publications. It brings out the Indian Journal of Adult Education, Proudth Shiksha and IAEA Newsletter.

The Association acts as the Indian arm of the International Council for Adult Education, International Literacy Association and the Asian-South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education. Its membership is open to all individuals and institutions who believe in the aims and objectives of the Association.

Its headquarters is located in Shafiq Memorial, IAEA House at 17-B, Indraprastha Estate, New Delhi - 110 002.