

Transition from Sectors of Adult Education to Systems of Lifelong Learning in India's context

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ABSTRACT

This paper highlights the process of transition taking place from sectors of adult education into the systems of Lifelong Learning under the influence of various international organizations especially in the context of the European policies documents. It clearly shows how the Indian educational policy has undergone a revolutionary change by adopting the different components of Adult and lifelong learning in different periods. Through adequate literature review, it provides the space for developing some research questions, and further, those questions are answered by interpreting the relevant references through national policies from the Kothari Commission (1964-66) to NEP (2020). Since Kothari Commission is one of the major documents that has talked a lot about Lifelong learning and it has also suggested the inclusion of education with the concept of "Education for All". However, we see that this concept of "Education for all" prevails till the New Education Policy (2020). The paper critically analyses the financial model of Indian Education to implement the concept of "Education for All" under the lens of the three established models (1) the Emancipatory /Social justice model (2) the Human capital model and (3) the Mixed state market model. Last but not the least, Since the paper is developed to do a comparative study, it successfully develops many such angles to make those comparisons to be done.

KEYWORDS: Adult Education, Lifelong Learning, Education for all, NEP, Adult education policies.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to do a comprehensive analysis of how Adult Education in India has been transforming into a system of lifelong learning. The philosophy of Lifelong Learning has been an emerging concept worldwide in terms of addressing the humanitarian aspect of society and the capitalist prospects. India is also under the influence of this emerging concept of Western lifelong learning to solve the crisis of an Individual and State. The International Influences through its documents, majorly UNESCO's Faure report (1972), Delors report (1996), and Memorandum on Lifelong Learning (2000), have helped India to formulate a Lifelong Learning policy discourse to some extent.

Through this paper, I will examine how adult education has been synonymous with "Literacy" (Functional, legal, informational, etc.) in India and is spreading itself in the mainstream lifelong learning systems. I will try to answer the research questions like How is this changing adult education in India's Context? What is the role of the State in this transition from Adult Education to systems of lifelong learning in India? This study will be based on macro-level analysis, with a focus on answering the questions raised above. Since the focus of the study will lead to the comparative analysis, we are required to make some conclusions that are comparable in many senses. This kind of study can help bridge the gap between developed and underdeveloped countries throughout the world. It can also provide a comprehensive Lifelong learning policy in India's context.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Lifelong learning can be traced in India from ancient times written in 'Hindu scripture'. Its genesis lies as mentioned by S Y Saha in the form of 'Learn as long as you live to gain 'Moksha' or Emancipation (Mandal S,2019 p 319). However, Adult and lifelong learning have been relevant in India during the medieval period,

when saints, teachers, scholars, artists, and artisans were given financial support to propagate knowledge among the masses. (Mandal,1993). This tradition continued in British India when adult literacy was promoted by opening night schools and higher educational institutions in the form of university education. Adult Education history started in pre-independence era in documents of Macaulay's minute, 1835, Wood's Despatch (1854), Hunter Commission/ Indian Education commission (1882). The colonial government took meagre interest in adult education till 1917. The development of adult education received a boost from the Swadeshi Movement. The government was deemed to have a clear responsibility for adult education under the Government of India Act, 1935. When the Congress Ministries took control of most provinces in 1937, the adult literacy program gained committees for mass literacy and premium were established. CABE (Central advisory board of education) in 1938, formed an adult education committee. In pre-independence era, the main focus of adult education was on basic literacy in the form of 3R's- reading, writing and arithmetic. However, literacy rates after the Independence were as low as 14% (Census of India 1951), so the emphasis was placed on making literacy the prime agenda of adult education to make the masses literate immediately. However, after Independence, we see a continuous shift from adult Education to Lifelong Learning as a paradigm shift in adult education, which takes place in the form of Social Education program (1951–1956) which emphasised on general education, reading, extension, leadership development, and social consciousness, farmer's functional literacy programs (1967), National Adult Education Programme NAEP (1978) which highlighted three main points i.e, literacy and numeracy, functional literacy, and social awareness/consciousness, National Literacy Mission (1988) whose main goal was to end illiteracy by teaching non-literates functional literacy, with a special emphasis on marginalized populations such as women, scheduled castes and tribes, and backward classes. This shift can be analyzed when we look at policy documents and international influence on lifelong learning in India's context. The idea of Lifelong Learning in India has already been talked about by the Kothari Commission to NEP (2020) as an important goal of Adult Education coming under the mainstream agenda of the education system to address the issue of the society in national development.

Some International organizations like the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the European Commission, whose policies have already made considerable efforts to bring Lifelong Learning Policies as a leading agenda of education in India. Use of the term 'Lifelong Learning' can be traced back to 1920s, used by Yeaxlee (1921) and Lindeman (1926) but was popularized by the work of UNESCO in its Faure Report,1972.The Delors' Report "Learning: The Treasure Within" (1996) of UNESCO declared lifelong learning as the paradigm for all education and presented an integrated policy framework approach and identified four pillars enabling individual development: learning to do, learning to be, learning to know, and learning to live together. These also further resulted in Guidelines on Lifelong Learning Policy in India under the XIth Planning Commission 2007; however, it could last no longer because of Socio-political and economic reasons. Lifelong Learning emphasizes the diversity of sources and forms of knowledge for an individual's entire learning trajectory, regardless of age. At any point, it enables citizens to identify the capacities, competencies and needs to enhance them.

On the one hand, the Influence of International policies on Lifelong Learning has led India to adopt the concept of "Learning for all." At the same time, the state has withered away from its responsibility to provide the required resource support for implementing these policies. However, we see in the western part of the world at the shift of Education to learning can be defined in terms of "learning in the form of art galleries, museums, and public displays has led to knowing that 'learning' is what English and Mayo (2012) and Martin (2003) describe as individualistic notions of learning – self-directed learning that assumes a freedom to choose, a freedom to act, a freedom to have one's interpretations and understanding" (Clover D.E & Bell L, 2013, p.40). However, In the western part of the world "this type of parameters is brought from the government policies, and practitioners in Adult Education are worried about the permit it gives to the governments and, by extension, institutions to renounce the responsibility to provide quality, collective, and critical education" (Clover D.E & Bell L,2013, p.40). So, it can be clearly stated that there is a clear gap between India's scenario with Europe whereas in India, the state does not play any crucial role in providing resource support; at the same time, in Europe, the State plays a pivotal role in funding to provide the

required resource support (Official Journal of European Union, 2021). We will look into this area further in detail. Learning has already become the need of the hour to solve our existential crisis in this world. Changing socioeconomic needs drive us to be lifelong learners in today's changing times according to our required social needs. Learning to survive in today's rapidly changing social needs is necessary.

This paper has discussed the historical background of the transition from the adult education sector to the systems of lifelong learning in India. We are supposed to answer the questions like (1) How is this transition taking place from the sectors of adult education to systems of Lifelong Learning in India's context? (2) Who pays and for whom, especially in India's Adult and Lifelong learning scenarios? (3) What is the state's role in promoting Lifelong learning in India regarding resources?

To answer these questions, there is a need to dig deeper through the policy documents, especially in the national context. However, India's policy documents have huge international influences on this transition. We need to keep in mind that Faure's reports (1972), Delors's reports (1996) by UNESCO, and further the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning in India (2000) have provided a concrete base to make the way forward on Lifelong learning as the leading agenda in India's Educational system.

The Kothari Commission (1964-66) had colossal importance in bringing reform in adult Education and tried to highlight the Lifelong Learning aspects of education more under the field of Adult and Lifelong Learning. Later, we see other documents like NAEP (1978), which has a very comprehensive idea highlighted in its documents in the form of Farmer's functional Literacy program. Since India's economy is agricultural at its core, it is vital to address the farmers' issue under the broader frame of adult and lifelong learning in India.

Further, NPE (1986) and XIth Plan Commission (2007) also came up with the comprehensive idea of Lifelong Learning, which stated the need to make lifelong learning the prime agenda of education in India. However, we see many discrepancies in the idea of lifelong learning being transformed from adult education sectors, i.e., from literacy to life-wide learning. There can be many factors, like the required resource support to provide the Adult and lifelong Learning content to the masses. The role of the state is to make good educational policies to provide Lifelong learning for all. So, there is a need to start understanding the educational system to its core to understand the transition of Adult Education to the systems of Lifelong Learning in India.

National Policies Interpretations:

This unit will focus on the transitions from Adult Education to lifelong learning systems at the policy level in India. We can interpret the ideas of the Kothari Commission (1964-66) as a radical transformation in India's educational systems.

Kothari Commission (1964-66): It says, "Education should not be considered as terminal, but it should be considered as a lifelong process" (Kothari Commission report, 1964, p.66). Even individuals with the most advanced education must continue to learn, as adults require comprehension of the swiftly evolving world and the increasing complexity of society. (Kothari Commission report 1964,).

The Kothari Commission clearly states the transitional dynamics of a society in which "education is a privilege of a small minority". It is hoped that this program can be accessible to the entire populace of the country. The vast resources needed for its implementation can only be obtained if education is linked to productivity. This linkage would mean that an expansion in education results in a growth in national income, subsequently facilitating significant investment in education (Kothari Commission report, 1964). This significant document elaborates on its perspective and emphasizes the profound link between education and productivity. It advocates prioritizing specific programs in educational reform, such as integrating science into education and culture, incorporating practical work experience into general education, and emphasizing the nationalization of education at the secondary school level to align with the demands of industry and agriculture. (Kothari commission report, 1964,). Thus, work experience can integrate education with work.

The Kothari Commission (1964-66): It highlighted the necessary social aim of education, i.e., to provide equal opportunity and facilitate the backward or depressed classes and individuals to use education as a level for improving their condition. “The commission mentions the aspects of ensuring progressive equal opportunities for all segments of the population is a crucial obligation of any society, vital for fostering an egalitarian and humane environment where the exploitation of marginalized groups diminishes” (Kothari commission,1964, p.181). Additionally, a significant factor contributing to educational inequality is the widespread poverty among a substantial portion of the population compared to the relative affluence of a small minority. This commission also highlights the two types of educational inequalities, especially in higher education, which are unique to India’s context and needs should expand the provision of tuition-free education to cover all the needy and deserving students who belong to the underprivileged groups like scheduled caste scheduled tribes, girls and those students whose parents have a low-income level. Thus, education can be used as a tool to harness more and more potential talent in solving the national problem under the Lifelong learning idea.

The basic idea of this policy document had been to bring an internal transition which will naturally relate to the life needs and aspiration of the nations.

“Development of Community living in schools was one of the prime ideas for each educational establishment should endeavour to cultivate a vibrant community atmosphere and offer ample and fulfilling chances for students to engage in it and contribute to its organization”. (Kothari Commission report,1964, p.17 Paragraphed by ChatGPT). Numerous opportunities for such engagement are available within the classroom, on school and college campuses, in hostels, and on sports fields. For example, rather than relying on servants and hired workers for tasks within educational institutions and their residences, it is feasible to assign much of the work to students, not solely for cost-saving purposes but to furnish valuable learning experiences. Aside from institutional initiatives, it is vital to incorporate involvement in impactful community service programs as an essential component of education at all levels, spanning from primary education to university studies. “Engaging in such activities can foster favorable attitudes towards social service and strengthen bonds between educated individuals and the broader community”. (Kothari Commission report,1964, p.17-18).

National Adult Education Programme (1978): However, literacy was at the centre throughout this document to empower the socially and economically backward people by eradicating illiteracy. It tried to make a work-oriented education that can improve the life situations of adults especially those belonging to the underprivileged section of the society. It has created an awareness to overcome their helplessness and to help them to achieve self-reliance gaining the functional capabilities in their occupation and skill of management of their interests.

Further, we will look into another policy document, National Policy on Education (1986). This document talks about the eradication of literacy through NLM (1988), especially in the age group of 15-35. Throughout the NPE document, much stress has been given to continuing education, with various activities to be continued for each adult. This policy advocates the multidimensional program of continuing education to build a learning society. A learning society is naturally a holistic development of society by promoting Lifelong learning and further leading to an edge economy. “There were a numerous activity under the umbrella of Adult and continuing education in the form of Lifelong learning can be termed as post-literacy program, neo-literacy programme.” The formation of Jana ShikshanNilayams (JSN) aimed at clusters of villages, with an approximate total population of 5000, is proposed”. (NPE 1986,P.127). These JSNs, meant to complement adult education and non-formal education initiatives, will be situated in various community structures like school buildings or Panchayat Ghars. (NPE 1986,p.126). The providers will offer facilities such as libraries, reading rooms, discussion forums, and cultural activities, may even include community television services. “Employers, trade unions, and relevant government bodies will collaborate to establish structured workers' education programs aimed at enhancing their educational levels and upgrading their skill sets. The commission suggests that all the diverse programs launched under different labels such as Adult

Education, Continuing Education, Extension Education, Population Education, Student Counselling, Placement Services, and e-learning should be restructured and enhanced as Lifelong Learning Programs to align them with the rapidly evolving global knowledge landscape. These initiative seeks to enhance productivity, increase workers' wages, and promote their overall well-being” (NEP 1986,P.127).

“All post-secondary education institutions - including universities, colleges, and polytechnics will be expected to give extension work the same importance as they do to instruction” (NPE 1986, p.127). Further, it was stressed that there would be extensive non-formal vocational and technical education initiatives, tailored to the needs and preferences of learners, which will be implemented, with a focus on ensuring equal participation of women alongside men. These efforts will build upon existing schemes like TRYSEM, Krishi VigyanKendras, and Farmers' programs. Hence in the subsequent years the idea of Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation (LPG1990) was introduced by the government of India through which the country explored the other dynamics of adult learning and accepted the concept of lifelong learning in India. It attracted the masses to learn to upgrade their skills and acquire the desired jobs as well. The National Knowledge Commission (2005-08) suggested rebuilding the entire education system to build a pro-economic market. It advocates for the three major established: (1) strengthening the quality and delivery of the education system for better domestic and innovative research. (2) Establishing ICT to enhance connectivity. It also talks about the global academic exchange for the establishment of various global exchange systems in India. Finally, The NKC suggested the following.

- (1) Expansion of Lifelong learning to promote a people-centred and inclusive knowledge society in India.
- (2) A comprehensive model for gaining quality education for all through the country's extensive lifelong learning system.
- (3) Digital media sources for sharing intellectual capitals of elite institutions in India to add to the LLL systems in India’.

However, NKC recommended the LLL educational model as the need of the hour. UGC guideline on Lifelong Learning (XIth Planning Commission, 2007: The commission suggests that all the diverse programs launched under different labels such as Adult Education, Continuing Education, Extension Education, Population Education, Student Counseling, Placement Services, and e-learning should be restructured and enhanced as Lifelong Learning Programs to align them with the rapidly evolving global knowledge landscape.(Guidelines on Lifelong learning awareness programme 2007-12,p.3). In contemporary educational policies, Lifelong Learning has emerged as a fundamental concept, often promoted as a strategy for fostering socioeconomic advancement and fostering a society reliant on knowledge. The main focus of such initiatives should be to provide an extensive Lifelong Learning provisions easily accessible to every individual in the society. “These opportunities may encompass a range of programs such as Continuing Education Courses, both university-based and community-oriented, Equivalency Programs, Quality of Life Enhancement initiatives, Individual Interest Enhancement Programs, Vocational Education and Skill Training, Induction and Sensitization Programs for public representatives, and education tailored for older adults” (Guidelines on Lifelong learning awareness programme 2007-12, p.6)

The idea of Lifelong Learning through the 11th plan is to empower an individual economically by providing them employment according to their capabilities. We should always keep in mind that this document was the product of the effort made by the delegation of the European Commission, whose immense effort persuaded the UGC to implement this document as the leading agenda in the field of Adult Education. The idea behind implementing this document was to bring the state's economic empowerment through these LLL policy documents. Since, it clearly stated that the present market economy works here as a main supporting force to strengthen the global perspectives of LLL with a more market-oriented approach based on neoliberal principles and to make India a “global knowledge hub” (Singai C B,2012 p.8). New Education Policy (2020): “The main agenda of the NEP 2020 document is the global education development reflected in Goal 4 (SDG4) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by India in 2015 - which seeks to

ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” by 2030. (NEP2020,P.3)

The ability to read, write, and perform basic operations with numbers is a necessary foundation and an indispensable prerequisite for all future schooling and lifelong learning. An emphasis has been given to the Preparation of professionals involving an education in the discipline and an education for practice.

Agricultural education with allied disciplines will be revived. “Agricultural education are offered by Institutions which on a larger level benefit the local community directly; one approach could be setting up agricultural technology Parks to encourage technology incubation, dissemination, and sustainable methodologies” (NEP2020,P.50).“ Agricultural education's framework will evolve to produce professionals capable of integrating local and traditional knowledge with emerging technologies, all while addressing pressing concerns like diminishing land productivity, climate change, and ensuring food security for our expanding population. NEP 2020 also emphasizes the increasing importance of Artificial Intelligence, 3D machining, machine learning, big data analysis, and data science to improve the job prospects of young people, aligning their skills with the evolving demands of various roles graduates will undertake (NEP2020,p.50).education’ (including engaging holistic adult education courses in arts, sciences, technology, culture, sports, and recreation, as well as other topics of interest or use to local learners, such as more advanced material on critical life skills).

The NEP document talks about Education for all, which is an important debate in India’s scenario to highlight Life Learning and make it very Inclusive.

Personal Views on the basis of Rational Arguments and Discourses :

Since, education in India comes under the concurrent list, i.e., education is a matter of federal State, and union government. However, due to the huge social divide, the concept of “Education for all” in India is a complex topic. We will have to consider the social structure of the Education system in India; for that matter, there is a need to look into the financial structure of the Education system and how the educational budget is allocated.

We have also seen that through the documents of the Kothari Commission, it is clearly stated that the social justice model is very much relevant in India’s education system since it caters to the needs of the marginalised section of society. However, the educational disparity has various dynamics and is somewhat complex, differing based on caste, gender, class, language, etc.

However, in Higher education, there are many provisions like affirmative action, i.e., providing reserved seats for marginalised students and scholarships available for marginalised students to bring the equalisation of education or, say, to bring a homogenous education culture by the state. Since the educational disparity has so many layers to talk about, there is a need to revisit the educational opportunity in India under the framework of the mixed model, where the state and individual are the stakeholders in the educational opportunity in India. In particular, the higher education system is run by (Union as well as Federal government) institutes and private Institutes that provide various educational opportunities in India. The expense of education in private institutions is fully funded by the individual or the families, which we call the human capital model. We can understand this with the words of other authors; “

“To grasp the intricacies of modern aspects of Lifelong Learning (LLL) on both global and local scales, it's crucial to comprehend how the interplay between market forces and political-economic influences has transformed education in recent years”. (Singai Chetan B,2012). It can be found that the dominant power in the global economy stems from those who control the economic and technological institutions (Jarvis, 2008). In response to the Marxist theory the power lies within each society, Jarvis says that with globalization, the formation of individual power structures has become the most pronounced one.

This shows that today, after LPG, (1990) India has also shifted its focus from formal education to other aspects of learning, which has already been suggested by various policy documents that we have mentioned to be compatible with the globalization and emerging global market.

Thus, the market here in India is orienting the learner by introducing a competitive education market, revamping the flow of the money in the market, turning students into customers (for educational services), making students into customers (for educational services), focusing the education mainly towards professional direction (Singai Chetan B, 2012). Now, we must also address the most important model of Lifelong learning in India's context, the mixed-state market model. Indian society is heterogeneous and divided into many Intersectional dimensions: caste, race, class, gender, sex, etc.

This is one of the biggest reasons that make Indian educational opportunities available in the mixed state market model. Individuals are entitled to educational opportunities according to their needs, interests, and purchasing power. This makes the Indian educational system much more flexible, but I think this model is not ideal. I argue that the state model can be more effective where there is a need to provide resource support or full funding with strong infrastructural support where every Individual can access Lifelong learning opportunities. However, we find gaps at the policy level where resource support is lacking from the Kothari Commission (1964) to NEP (2020). However, it has discussed inclusivity much, like "Lifelong Learning Opportunity for all". So, it is essential to make a comprehensive policy on resource support for lifelong learning. The state needs to adopt and implement it for the sake of the masses to make Lifelong learning a reality.

CONCLUSION: -

We can figure out the evolution of policy shifting from adult Education to Lifelong learning by Changing Education into learning. It brought the landmark changes first in the Kothari Commission (1964-660 through which the Indian Adult Education system was exposed to various other dimensions brought into the discourse, like vocationalization of education and work experience related to education. It talked about the connection between education and productivity, which will automatically generate capital for the state and can work as a good resource for supporting the lifelong learning opportunities available to the masses by the state.

Further, we see in NEP 1986 that the policy advocates adopting the multi-dimensional continuing education program to build a learning society and further lead to the Knowledge economy". At a broad level, the initiative aims to establish Jana Shikshan Nilayams (JSNs) in clusters of villages, integrating them with adult education and non-formal education programs, these JSNs will be accommodated within school buildings, Panchayat Ghars, etc., offering amenities such as libraries, reading rooms, discussion forums, and cultural activities, possibly including a communal television set' (NPE 1986, p). This is another milestone in further exposing the Lifelong learning dynamics, which naturally got enhanced after getting a neo-liberal education system in the 1990s where the agricultural economy got transformed into a service sector economy in the Indian context, and it opened the space for an Individual who can learn according to the need of the market. However, till then, UNESCO's Faure's report (1972) and Delors report (1996) exposed the Indian Adult education system to the Lifelong learning systems that further led to a comprehensive policy on Lifelong Learning by the National Knowledge Commission (2005-08) and further a comprehensive guideline by UGC on (XIth planning commission 2007).

However, these policies could only get the desired momentum by the state for a short time to implement on the ground due to socio-political reasons. There is also a complete decline in the separate funds for adult education after the XIth Planning Commission 2007. It has affected the Changing dynamics of Adult education to Lifelong learning due to the lack of sufficient resources. Still, the worst thing is that the recent New Education Policy brought in 2020 also diminished Adult Education and Lifelong Learning by just making it a voluntary program run by the masses although it specified it as "Education for all" and couldn't provide the required resource support so that lifelong learning can be made a reality. Finally, we can

conclude that Indian adult education is being transformed into a system of lifelong learning with the changing dynamics of global international socio-economic political discourse. The international influence is enormous at the policy level; however, there is a big gap in basic infrastructure and resource levels to fulfill this transition. Hopefully, the state needs to revisit the changing dynamics of lifelong learning worldwide and its place in India's context.

Transitioning from the sectors of adult, continuing education, and extension to lifelong learning involves a shift in perspective and approach. It involves embracing a broader perspective on learning and adapting practices to meet the evolving needs of learners in a rapidly changing world.

The field of adult education (AE) in India is still growing from the standpoint of lifelong learning (LLL). In reality, however, AE has only been used in adult basic literacy, functional literacy, and continuing and extension education programs. On the other hand, LLL is viewed as a philosophy for personal growth, skill acquisition, and lifetime employability. It is now an overarching concept that directs education policies toward economic growth and is no longer restricted to any one field.

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