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LIFE-LONG LEARNING: AN INCLUSIVE STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract:-There is no universal formulation of the adult goal but do arises frequently in policy documents to fight against the exclusion of individuals and groups from the society as well as prevention of conflict serving the objective of inclusive which being called as social cohesion. The inclusive focuses on 'trio' – economic, social and civil which form as layers like in Maslow's Need Hierarchy Theory for which the canon of 'live together' is a strategic niche. For addressing and gaining this goal pertaining to the mass, there arises the need of acquiring knowledge and enriching human resources for effective use of the economic resources either as an entrepreneur or as an employee for economic growth. This invariably depends on education and skills development.

Until recently a fraction of the population in the countries of the world involves educating; the learners are mostly from the upper layers of the society. The larger proportion of non-learners came to the inclusion with non-cognitive learning styles. This situation awakens the Government including the academia and planners to the massification of education by creating a non-university subsystem which is termed as Life Long Learning. This process involves cost of workplace learning. Who finances it? The aim of Life Long Learning is not only knowledge gaining but creation of competencies, development social cohesion and earning livelihood as well. The concept of Life Long Learning is a paradigm remaining a claim for development. To be said the claim of development, there is every need to serve with devotion and enthusiasm; and support with 'will' by the institutions including the Government and individuals is the utmost need of the day. The focus of this paper is, therefore, on inclusion of Life Long Learning as an inclusive policy of a pathway for development.

Keywords:Inclusion, learning long learning, learning environment and social cohesion.

INTRODUCTION

“LIFELONG LEARNING IS KEY FOR MAKING KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY”

Changes in globalization, privatization, structural adjustments and debt servicing liabilities had forced the Government to cut-back their investment in the social sector more particularly in education; most definitely in adult education. Organizations, agencies, and Governments were prepared to increase support the formalized school and elementary education sector where investments and results are more obviously visible, more easily demonstrable. Above all, it is more, amenable to the “discipline of the measuring tape.” The area adult education where prevails the shades of black and white mix and merge, where buildings, constructions, students and teachers cannot be counted and multiplied and where drop-out ratio and pass percentages count for a virtual closed-door policy. It was against this backdrop that a strong feeling was voiced for meaningful, enduring and substantial effort to induce policy and allocate higher investment priorities to the non-formal education for life long. 'Learning to live together' and 'culture for peace' is the goal of education for all with preamble of 'inclusive' and 'social cohesion.' Thus, life-long learning has become a state of condition to achieve through inclusive initiatives. The focus of this paper is, therefore, on

inclusion of Life Long Learning as an inclusive policy of a pathway for development.

ENRICHMENT OF HUMAN LIFE

The thrust of lifelong learning is on learning thought out life for development of employability and includes people of all ages learning in a variety of contexts – in educational institutions, at work, at home and through leisure activities. It focuses mainly on adults returning to organized learning rather than on the initial period of education or on incidental learning. A range of evidence to the clear economic benefits from lifelong learning is in fact visible. All these observations clearly establish that Lifelong learning is an instrumental to meet challenges for development.

Learning is a strategic activity which plays a crucial role in releasing the energy and creativity of people; and enabling them to meet the complex challenges of the modern world. Future of the world rests on people and people's potential. As such, the knowledge people is a pre-requisite factor for finding opportunities for the nature's endowed resources and thereon converting them for the purpose of their socio-economic upliftment. This enables them to live together socially that ultimately decides the holistic development of the people. People including literates learning throughout their life are referred to as life-long learning. What the people need and must be provided with, as niche, are opportunities for building up experiences to construct themselves intellectually and physically for gaining the advantage in terms of acquiring skills, developing capacities and capabilities, and improving do-how practices for enrichment of human life.

LIFE LONG LEARNING: A PARADIGM SHIFT FROM ADULT EDUCATION

The scope of adult learning limits to a promotional role of an adult only by means of education. The International Conferences on Adult Education were held in Elsinore, Denmark in 1949, in Montreal in 1960, in Tokyo in 1972 and in Paris in 1985 and passed a vital declaration stressing the fundamental importance of the 'right to learn'. The focus is like thus: “The right to read and write; the right to question and analyze; the right to imagine and create; the right to read one's own world and to write history; and the right to have access.” The changing role, broadening scope and growing importance of adult learning have skillfully but profoundly changed the very nature of adult and continuing education to life-long learning. The Government is, now, a mere 'facilitator' rather 'doer.' On the other, the emergence of partnership expansion, a wide array of organization has become more and more involved in educating people. The UNESCO's General Conference at its 19th Session convened in Nairobi, Kenya in 1976 adopted a recommendation on the development of adult education stressing the vital role of adult education as forming part of life-long learning and as a means for the promotion within society as a whole, the ideas of autonomy, responsibility and dialogue.”

The World Declaration on Education for all at the landmark of Jomtien Conference held in Thailand on March 5-9, 1990 reaffirmed the right to learn and the commitment to meet the basic learning needs of all people by expanding learning opportunities..... and working for a fully literate society. Thus, the concept of adult education has changed in its concept, precept and focus making all people would be stakeholders possessing human capital by means of upgrading, the need knowledge in the changing times.

The concept of lifelong learning stresses that learning and education are related to life as a whole - not just to work but learning throughout life as a continuum. In nutshell, it promotes the development of knowledge and competences to enable people to adapt to the knowledge-based society and actively participate in all spheres of social and economic life. Therefore, provisions of lifelong learning to different sections of Indian society may help them to continue developing personally with individual autonomy and making a more active and productive contributor to society. A country like India having varied social, educational, economical and developmental standards demands, the exploration and implementation of innovative ways to provide lifelong learning opportunities to every citizen is a must.

STATE-OF-THE-ART OF LLL

India has the biggest literary problem and accounts for about one-third of the world's adult illiterate people. The most astounding fact is that India had 300 million adult illiterates as per 1991 decennial census. In the new millennium, India is in grave danger of knowledge revolution bypassing half of its adult population, the price the country has to pay in terms of learning, technology and human resources development which all can well be imagined.

Literacy rates have no doubt virtually trebled from 18.30 percent in 1951 to 52.20 percent in 1991. For the first time, the number of literates has exceeded the number of illiterates in the country. What is appalling is the stagnancy in the number of illiterates. The number approximately 300 million in 1951 and the same number continued even today. Though endeavors are gain made in improving literacy levels which have been largely neutralized by population explosion and social disparities. Two out of every three males are literate and two out of every three females are illiterate. Thus, the strengthening bond in gaining knowledge between males and females is

two-thirds and one-third respectively; a bias which denying the principle of empowering women being advocated by the Government.

With the launching of the National Adult Education Programme in 1978, the first attempt was made to meet the challenges. A little was sustained in terms of teachers' interest and even less to encourage the total involvement of participants. The National Adult Education Programme virtually ran out of steam in less than a decade. Then, two major events that occurred are:

The National Literacy Mission in 1988 with literacy and adult education
The Unique Experiment (in Ernakulam district, Kerala)

The National Literacy Mission imparts functional literacy – (a) skills improvement to enhance the economic status and imbibe value of national integration, and (b) environment conservation, gender equity and observance of small family norm. The Mission has made over 60 million people literates. The National Literacy Mission, of late, has made the continuing education programme access to all adults in the vicinity for Life Long Learning with facilities for reading and writing, skills improvement, recreation, information dissemination and cultural pursuits that anybody in the community is free to use. The unique experiment has focused on a campaign mobilizing people in a large scale from all walks of life through the multifaceted communication and motivation strategy highlighting the vital link between 'literary' and 'living.' This, today, has burgeoned into a country-wide campaign spanning to more than 80 percent districts in the country.

INCLUSIVE LEARNING

The pursuits of economic, social and civil relate to one another in an individual's life like layers in the Abraham H. Maslow's need hierarchy theory of human needs which are the basic governing canons referred to as inclusive. It includes learning style and learning environment.

Learning Style: Is it essential to serve the adult learning to achieve the basic level of prosperity with the provision of employment? Answer is yes! And it is in compliance of the provision of facilitator. The access of Government is for subsidizing education at the workplace is necessary for many individuals not as a goal itself but as a way to qualify for occupation or profession though an entrepreneurship. This is required in continuance of the pre-adult learning which can provide the very base to meet literacy. A policy articulating adult education, adult learning and life-long learning what is by far the most fundamental trend in education and training today; which all but for employment as a means to inclusion is an inevitable measure.

Education and teaching are in supply-side and learning is on the demand-side. Learning what the client does, driven by his needs and motivations. Education to learning is part of the societal economic development. Hence need arose to look into the learning process.

The education process which is at the centre of educational triangle is the teacher and the content and the learner at the bottom. It is the teacher's job to transfer the content to the learner. Pedagogically, it is twaddle to say that one can actively transfer the content to a learner. Instead, the learning is done by no one but the motivation to learner to (i) learn and (ii) facility-resources such as books and other media, time and place for learning, learning method and professional support guiding the learning process. All these bring back to the issue of inclusion.

Until a few decades, a fraction of population who participated in further education is termed as the cognitive elite. This fraction-class of learners was mostly from either the upper layers of society or being selected on the excellent prior performance in schools-environment. On transition from elite to mass tertiary and adult education, this fraction of population expanded rapidly. The larger this proportion, the more it came to include people with non-cognitive styles. A number of individuals enrolled with a kinship for work-based learning; learning by exploring and experimenting, learning by doing. In view of this changed trend, the Government adapted to the education of mass reaching the unreached by creating a non-university subsystem and other educational pathway. In this enhanced scope for widening education in life long, the very core of learning process, the teacher-centered education remained the dominant design.

A much better idea as one can recommend at this juncture is that the Governments should kindle the propagation of educational arrangements meeting the non-cognitive learning styles implying the social inclusion. Mere widening access for individuals to the educational institutions which are not designed for them does not strive for achieving the thrust of continuing education.

Learning Environment: As long as a learner has motivation, any learning environment will do, provided that it suits his style and motivation. A professional who guides the learning process may be (i) a traditional teacher or trainer or (ii) a mentor, a colleague in which absent is self-guided learning. New ideas for creation of new knowledge and competencies that have came into focus. Knowledge is not only found at during research work but at the workplace between colleagues, between various actors in the social arena, between companies and scientists as well. In other words, knowledge is not always the result of visible and measurable expenditure on Research and Development, but

of organization change and organizational learning is the basic process as the means of mechanism of knowledge creation.

First, under empowerment of the weak, the new concept which has been in operation for decade is Self-Help Group which develops skills and human capital through training on the need based of the locality. The Self-Help Group which is in the ambit NGO, provide to it funds by commercial banks and supported the subsidy component by the Government is well structured basically and organized democratic way and is a unique among the people especially weak who, generally are not within the reach education. This approach can be utilized effectively in human capital as training can reverse the potentially negative effect of credit on income.

Second, the measure which is a revolutionary step is that the post-adult education is not being learned in the colleges but being made to learn in 'Industrial Unit' as worker during off-hours who in turn educates others. In this approach, there existed a mutual thrust between the employer and the employee which would steadfast in teacher (industrial unit) and taught (student-worker) relation in every feasible way.

Third, the University should monitor the learning process falling within its jurisdiction with its own manpower-resources. The management of industrial unit can also train and develop learner with 'job skills' who is undergoing the process of learning under its coaching class; which would benefit both the Unit and the learner.

Fourth, in this process, bring the nearby industry into the fold of adopting village(s) for which the support from the Government in the form of no education cess would fascinate the Life Long Learning. Finally, the lifelong learning is a social cause for socio-economic development; in which all the concerned functionaries and Government agencies should involve themselves with true spirit and enthusiasm; then only this lifelong learning would become a strategy to claim of development but not mere claim for development.

Lastly, for any unorganized system like lifelong learning expecting fruitful as well as meaningful results, equity with equality for developing human resource is a strategic niche in the inclusive. Towards this, every branch of an organization that must adopt a passion for making people knowledgeable. In this regard, the role of the Government is must both as facilitator and provider.

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