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## LIFELONG LEARNING: RATIONALE OF THE STUDY



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# Lifelong Learning



### ABSTRACT:

In the emerging knowledge age, how well we live will depend on how well we learn (Suresh Singh & Birahari Singh, 2014). As Walter S. (2010) claims; our planet won't survive, if it is not a learning planet, and sustainable development will be achieved by learning through life. The learning is a process of becoming aware of the frames of reference within which we think, feel, and act, becoming critical of its adequacy with conscious of where it comes, developing newer more adequate frames of reference which are more inclusive, and discriminating of experience and finally acting out of this frame of reference (Laal, 2011). Lifelong learning is about acquiring skills that enable us to survive (continue to live or exist). This may sound a bit dramatic, but it is about learning to help us through our daily lives (Lewis-Fitzgerald, C., 2005).

### KEYWORDS

learning planet, think, feel, act.

**INTRODUCTION :**

The term 'Lifelong Learning' is now so widely used in educational circle that it has become something of a 'cliché' or slogan that is taken to mean whatever the user finds expedient (Kirby et al., 2010). Candy, Crebert & O'Leary (1994) and Knapper & Cropley (2000) argue that universities and colleges have traditionally seen their roles as imparting to students the accepted wisdom of the day in terms of knowledge and skills in different fields, whereas an even more important task is to equip students with the generic ability to guide their own learning through formal education. This is especially important in an era of unprecedented rapid and fundamental change, in which comparatively few students will ever directly use the disciplinary knowledge they acquire in the university.

The role and the importance of Lifelong Learning have increased in recent times due to several socio-economic factors. In a technology driven knowledge based competitive economy; the landscape of learning is fast changing. Equipping the labour force with relevant skills, considering the tremendous expansion of information and communication technology (ICT) and the rapid globalization, the work force needs to be keep on learning and updating their skills to be globally competitive and implies the need for creating a variety of learning and training opportunities.

Lifelong Learning has become necessary because our constantly changing world presents a continuous stream of problems which must be solved if our culture is to endure. According to Toynbee (1947), a civilization survives only so long as it makes adequate response to the challenges of its time. Societies need individuals "improving oneself" and having the skills of "lifelong learning" (Baptiste, 1999; Atkin, 2000; Bagnall, 2006). As the concept of Lifelong Learning grows, it seems destined to have a salutary effect on our total educational system.

In India in general and Manipur in particular cent percent emphasis is laid on academic pursuit at both school and higher education level. Extend of unemployment among the educated youth in Manipur may be said to be turning from bad to worse. About 25% of the total population is educated unemployed. Besides, there might be many hidden educated unemployed and under-employed who have not registered in the Employment Exchanges. Number of educated unemployed registered to the Employment Exchanges in the state during the period 2005-2014 is given in Table 2.1. The basic reasons for unemployment are: defective system of education like absence of linkage between education and productivity, failure of vocationalization, lack of job market and absence of man-power planning (Suresh Singh, 2013).

**Table 2.1: Number of Educated Unemployed, Manipur: 2005-2014.**

YEAR	2005	June 2008	August 2010	June 2012	July 2013	February 2014
No. of Educated Unemployed	3,15,016	6,40,010	6,83,454	7,13,879	6,92,962	7,00,602

Source: i) Statistical Handbook of Manipur, 2005.  
 ii) [http://manipur.nic.in/exchange/exc\\_statistics.html](http://manipur.nic.in/exchange/exc_statistics.html).  
 iii) Office record of Directorate of Employment, Manipur.

On the other hand, literacy rate in Manipur has seen an upward trend. Manipur's literacy rate according to Provisional Census Report, 2011 is 79.85%. The state's literacy rate is higher than the national average of 74.04%, with the male literacy rate being 86.49% and female literacy rate being

73.17%. The status of literacy in Manipur before independence of India was extremely pitiable. Table 2.2 shows a clear evidence for it. Much improvement has been achieved after independence. Gradual development in literacy rate can be observed from the table below. During 1921-1931, literacy rate drop down a little, reason unknown to the author. The literacy rate of Manipur of 0.9% in 1901 was below the general literacy rate of India which was 5.35%. Up to 1951, Manipur could not overtake the general trend. Literacy rate of India was 16.67% while that of Manipur was 11.4% in 1951. From 1961 onwards till date, Manipur has been running better in terms of literacy rate from the general literacy rate of India.

**Table 2.2: Literacy Rate of Manipur (1901-2011)**

YEAR	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
1901	1.9%	0.0%	0.9%
1911	4.0%	0.1%	2.1%
1921	7.7%	0.1%	3.8%
1931	6.4%	0.3%	3.3%
1941	9.8%	0.6%	5.1%
1951	20.8%	2.4%	11.4%
1961	45.1%	15.9%	30.4%
1971	46.0%	19.5%	32.9%
1981	53.3%	29.1%	41.4%
1991	71.6%	47.6%	59.9%
2001	80.3%	60.5%	70.5%
2011	86.49%	73.17%	79.85%

Source: a) Economic Survey of Manipur 2005-06  
b) Provisional Census Report 2011

The literacy rate of the state is found to be progressive. Manipur has nine (9) administrative districts- four (4) valley districts and five (5) hill districts. Table 2.3 shows the literacy rate of Manipur and its nine (9) districts according to 2001 and 2011 Census Reports. There has been an increase of about 10% in the literacy rate of the State in the last decade.

**Table 2.3: Literacy Rate of Manipur- 2001& 2011**

District	PERSONS		MALE		FEMALE	
	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011
Churachandpur	70.60%	84.29%	77.70%	88.34%	63.10%	80.13%
Bishnupur	67.60%	76.35%	79.60%	85.52%	55.70%	67.29%
Thoubal	66.40%	76.66%	80.40%	85.90%	52.50%	67.57%
Imphal East	75.50%	82.81%	85.50%	89.86%	65.40%	75.92%
Imphal West	80.20%	86.70%	89.20%	92.93%	71.30%	80.71%
Ukhrul	73.10%	81.87%	80.10%	86.05%	65.40%	77.47%
Chandel	56.20%	70.85%	64.30%	77.93%	48.00%	63.26%
Senapati	59.80%	75.00%	67.90%	80.85%	51.20%	68.80%
Tamenglong	59.30%	70.40%	68.70%	76.74%	49.00%	63.76%
<b>MANIPUR</b>	<b>70.50%</b>	<b>79.85%</b>	<b>80.30%</b>	<b>86.49%</b>	<b>60.50%</b>	<b>73.17%</b>

Source: a) Economic Survey of Manipur 2005-06  
b) Statistical Abstract Manipur, 2008  
c) Provisional Census Report 2011

Overview of the literacy rate and educated unemployed rate suggests that the linkage of present education and employability is almost absent. The scenario of the state is more or less similar in almost every developing state like Manipur and nation like India. And, as such, the need for the up-gradation and acquisition of skills, knowledge and competence for 'employability' of the products of the formal educational system becomes imperative and as such lifelong learning comes into account.

With the beginning of the 11th Five Year Plan, the University Grants Commission (UGC) (2007) has accorded maximum priority to Lifelong Learning with a view to meeting the demands of emerging knowledge society and facilitates the process of developing a learning society. The universities have a moral responsibility of taking up the task of updating the information that they had provided earlier.

Educational institutions must offer facilities that meet the needs of learners at various levels of competence throughout their lives. Individuals must acquire a new mindset; Learners are no longer passive receivers of knowledge, but need to be active researchers, constructors, and communicators of knowledge. Knowledge is no longer handed down from above. Learners must be able to use lifelong learning facilities to upgrade their knowledge, skills and competence in a discipline as required. They can also contribute to the facilities by sharing knowledge and supporting other learners.

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