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ADULT EDUCATION AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN THE LIGHT OF NEP 2020

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Abstract:

National Education Policy 2020 launched by the Government of India opens up new avenues and areas for discussion in the academia. In a densely populated nation like India, New Education Policy 2020 serves the purpose of educating the adults and introducing new certificate and degree courses as per the demand of the time. Of course, institutes of higher education should form new syllabi and introduce new courses for the adults that can make them self-reliant. Andragogy and skill development programmes go together. In fact, Pradhan Mantri Koushalya Vikas Yojana is intended for catering certificate courses to the unemployed youth that can get a job or they can be self-employed. In the era where the formal school education becomes non affordable for the marginal classes, NEP provides them to get minimum qualification and enter the employment market successfully. The present paper attempts to examine Adult Education and Skill Development in the light of NEP 2020.

Key words: *Adult Education, Andragogy, Skill Development Programme, NEP.*

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Introduction:

India is a densely populated nation wherein the rate of literacy is accelerating with a greater pace with each passing day, but the formative generations could not have an equal opportunity towards education. As a result, numerous adults of the nation are unable to get better job opportunities and sources of income. In order to educate the adults in formal and informal ways to make them self-sufficient and skilled, the Government of India has been toiling for increasing the rate of literacy among adults. Time and again, the Government of India has been implementing variant policies in education including Adult Education. Adults who are illiterate or semi-literate and unskilled do not get jobs. Therefore, New Education Policy 2020 become a source of aspiration for such people.

Adult Education refers to the process of learning in which adults are engaged in organised and continuous self-educating activities to acquire new forms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, or values. It is a form of learning in which adults engage in beyond traditional schooling. This envelops basic literacy to personal fulfilment as a lifelong learner. Adult Education showcases a specific viewpoint about learning and teaching based on the supposition that adults can learn in accordance to their needs. Adult learning can be formal as the adult learner studies a set curriculum and carries credentials. It can be informal as the educational institutes teach non credential that may be provided in the workplace and through the activities of civil organizations and groups. Further, informal education for adults refers to the process of learning that is continuous, for instance, community learning classes that are related to work or skills required for a specific work. Similarly, informal adult education

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intends to help readjust the adults to develop their working skills to fit in the future of work and suggests ways to improve its effectiveness.

Illustration:

Andragogy which "refers to methods and principles used in adult education. The word Andragogy is derived from the Greek ἀνδρ- (*andr-*), meaning "man", and ἀγωγός (*agogos*), meaning "leader of". Therefore, Andragogy literally means "leading men". It is one of theories used in adult education and in distance and lifelong learning. Every Indian must attain a livelihood in order to have a better source of income which is possible through obtaining some education and/or skill. The skill based education, thus provides a source for the adults to get some job opportunities. New Education Policy of India declared in 2020, caters a platform for the adults to acquire skill based education. Through lifelong-learning opportunities for adults enable them to progress personally and professionally. Adult Education works as a powerful tool that multiplies the success of all other developmental efforts of the government. Therefore per capita income and the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) are directly related to the literacy rate and skills that the citizens of a nation acquire.

Being a non-literate has several disadvantages that includes the inability to carry out basic financial transactions, the ability to compare the quality and quantity of goods purchased against the price paid by an individual, to fill out forms to apply for jobs, loans, services, and government subsidies. Illiteracy also makes a person paralysed in comprehending public circulars and articles in media. Further, it makes the person unable to use means of communication to conduct business, for instance, drafting and sending emails; receiving and decoding the same. Similarly, it becomes a major hurdle in making use of the internet and other technology to improve one's life and profession. In addition to this, it becomes a barrier in understanding directions in safety directives on the streets, and on medicines. Gradually, it is evident that illiterate parents cannot help children with their education. They rely upon the teachers and tutors of their wards. They fail to understand their basic rights and responsibilities as citizens. These inabilities can be overcome through adoption of innovative measures for Adult Education through NEP.

Studies in India and across the world showcase that community involvement and mobilization of information are key success factors for adult literacy programmes. With the help of the charter stated in NEP 2020 successful literacy programmes can be implemented that can not only result in the growth of literacy among adults, but also result in increased demand for education for all children towards positive social and financial change. The National Education Policy focuses upon skill based education by developing a nexus with Pradhan Mantri Koushalya Vikas Yojana. Need based certificate courses should be evolved to reduce unemployment and attract the illiterates and semi-literates to acquire such courses. Certainly, such certificate courses will open new avenues for them to make a livelihood.

Furthermore, New Education Policy 2020 provides a horizontal mobility among students by appearing for any discipline across streams. For instance, a student of Arts can opt any subject from Commerce and Science. Along with a degree in a specific stream, a student can attain a certificate course in a specific subject or skill that can provide him/her an additional prospect for getting employment. Similarly, new courses can be evolved that can cater employment opportunities for students. For example, a new course is introduced recently in Kolhapur,

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entitled Bed Assistance that caters the students, job opportunities to work in hospitals to look after bed ridden patients. Similarly, a new course can be evolved on Packing, Packaging and Transporting where the students after their certificate course can work as specialists in packing, packaging and transporting the goods of the people who move from a home to the other.

Regular education in schools these days is becoming costlier and not affordable for the masses. Ultimately, school dropouts increase steadily every year. These school dropouts can be brought in the main stream of education through Adult Education. With the help of NEP 2020, these dropouts can be brought under the umbrella of higher education through the institutes in higher education. Therefore, the institutes in higher education can evolve certificate courses and can generate employment avenues for the young generation. Colleges can support the state and central governments in reducing unemployment.

Colleges can develop curriculum and train their instructors or educators who will deliver the curriculum framework to mature learners. Also, a recommendation from University and government authorities is essential for running such new certificate courses. In addition to this, the instructors will be trained by the National, State, and district level resource support institutions to organize and lead learning activities. Such certificate courses can be introduced at a wider level. The institutes in higher education take the lead in considering the needs of the community in their vicinities. For instance, certificate courses are introduced by various colleges like Slum Management, Solid Waste Management, Maritime Tourism, Historical Tourism, Warehouse Management, and Organic Gardening and so on. These courses also exhibit the mission and vision of the colleges to create job opportunities for the youth and produce skilled human resource. In certain colleges, MOUs are signed with NGOs to work successfully on these academic endeavours. These MOUs can also work on the exchange programmes-teacher exchange and student exchange- that will help in mobilizing knowledge.

Such courses will bridge the gap between higher education institutes and the general public. Marginal classes can be connected with the help of these courses. As these courses cater income opportunities to the unemployed youth, they can become a greater source of propaganda and publicity for the colleges. In addition to these, it is observed that the traditional courses like B. A., B. Com. and B. Sc. are failing to provide a livelihood to the graduates. Therefore, such graduates or the regular students in such traditional courses can also enrol themselves to the skill based courses that certainly pave a path for their earning. Psychologically, such courses will help to reduce addiction, depression and number of suicides among the young generation.

Andragogy is based on a humanistic conception of self-directed and autonomous learners where teachers are defined as facilitators of learning. In such situations the adult learners are free to learn as they are not forced by the facilitators. Omoregie reflects on adult learning theory or Andragogy as, “Adult learning theory is often identified as a principle or an assumption, there are a variety of different approaches and theories that are also evolving in view of evolving higher education instruction, workplace training, new technology and online learning.” (Omoregie 2021) Adult learning is problem-centered rather than content-oriented. Adult learners are interested in learning subjects as they have immediate relevance to their work that is directly connected to their personal lives. Thus, adult learning has to be far more interdisciplinary–wherein the aim is to develop a skill-

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than traditional learning seeing as practical relevance of the said education would only be fulfilled under an interdisciplinary lens.

Further, in order to understand better the concept of Adult Learning Theory, one needs to trace Malcolm Knowles' Theory as "self-directed" learning. According to him, the goals of this theory include helping learners to develop the capacity for self-direction, supporting transformational learning and promoting "emancipatory learning and social action". (Knowles 1989) Further, in the Twenty-first century where the entire world is techno savvy, every individual is with a cell phone who is turning towards online transactions. Similarly, COVID 19 pandemic pushed human beings across the world behind the doors. It also made people self-sufficient, to a certain extent, in terms of technology and online transactions. In order to spend a quality time, people joined several online courses. Many semi-literate people in India completed their certificate courses online.

Conclusion:

Andragogy is one of the major tools to eradicate poverty from India as it can provide job opportunities to several adults. This practice will accelerate the rate of literacy. Similarly, it can increase the GDP of the nation. It can certainly bring the unemployed youth of the country in the main stream. NEP 2020 will definitely provide freedom for students to acquire knowledge without restraint. Any student aspirant can register or opt for any discipline across the streams and universities. Whilst making courses more accessible, NEP 2020 will also make them more interdisciplinary and hence more practical in their studious relevance. This freedom in education will make the future generations happy and satisfied while getting educated.

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