

Adult Education & Lifelong Learning: A Conspicuous Reflection of the New Education Policy 2020 In Making a Drastic Change Towards Society

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ABSTRACT

The unveiling of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 by the Indian Government heralds a transformative era in the country's educational landscape. Embracing the profound notion that education transcends age barriers, this policy marks a pivotal shift towards inclusivity and accessibility. Through its visionary approach, NEP 2020 not only recognizes the lifelong nature of learning but also champions the integration of adult and elderly education into the core fabric of the educational framework. By advocating for open and flexible learning modalities, community engagement, and robust skill development initiatives, the policy envisions a future where every individual, regardless of age, has equitable access to quality education. NEP 2020 serves as a beacon of hope, fostering a society where learning knows no bounds and where every learner, young or old, can realize their fullest potential. It investigates how the policy redefines educational paradigms, integrating real-world solutions for adults and moving away from traditional limitations. Through thorough analysis of policy impacts, practical implementations, and potential societal outcomes, this research provides

valuable insights into creating a responsive and inclusive educational system. Ultimately, the study envisions an education system that transcends conventional boundaries, addressing the evolving needs of lifelong learners in a constantly changing world.

Keywords: NEP 2020, Inclusivity and Accessibility, Lifelong Nature of Learning, Adult and Elderly Education, Responsive and Inclusive, Educational System

INTRODUCTION

According to the Former President of India, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, "Education is the most important element for the growth and prosperity of a nation. India is in the process of transforming itself into a developed nation by 2020."

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, announced on July 29, 2020, heralds a transformative shift in India's educational landscape. Rooted in Indian ethos, the NEP aims to propel India towards becoming a global knowledge superpower by providing high-quality education to all, thereby fostering an equitable and vibrant knowledge society. The coverage is anchored on 5 guiding pillars: Access,

Equity, Quality, Affordability, and Accountability. Education forms the bedrock of societal advancement, extending its influence far beyond classrooms and traditional curricula. NEP 2020 marks a pivotal moment in India's education system, emphasizing the importance of a comprehensive, lifelong learning approach. This paradigm shift acknowledges that education is an ongoing journey, evolving with individuals and society. This paper explores the interplay between lifelong learning, adult education, and NEP 2020, examining how these elements collectively shape a dynamic and responsive educational system. In the context of the twenty-first century, where rapid technological advancements and societal changes redefine work and learning, NEP 2020 emerges as a catalyst, steering India towards a knowledge-centric society. Lifelong learning is essential, recognizing that knowledge acquisition is a continuous process adapting to the evolving needs of individuals and the community. Simultaneously, adult education is crucial, empowering individuals beyond traditional school ages, fostering inclusivity, and meeting diverse learning needs. However, achieving these visionary goals presents multidimensional challenges. Implementing lifelong learning and adult education within the NEP 2020 framework requires careful consideration of existing educational paradigms, cultural norms, and infrastructural factors. This research aims to unravel these complexities, offering insights into the obstacles hindering effective implementation and proposing practical solutions to bridge the gap between policy ideals and real-world outcomes. As we delve into this assessment, it is vital to contextualize the historical evolution of adult education in India. Reviewing past policies and their impact sets the stage for understanding the current educational landscape shaped by NEP 2020. This study provides a comprehensive perspective on the intricate relationship between lifelong learning, adult education, and the ambitious

goals of NEP 2020. Subsequent sections will explore the theoretical foundations of lifelong learning, the specific provisions of NEP 2020 related to continuous education, and the challenges impeding the seamless integration of adult education into the broader educational framework. Through rigorous analysis and empirical findings, this research aims to contribute meaningful insights into the discourse on reshaping education in India, benefiting all citizens regardless of age or stage in life.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS RESEARCH

The primary aim as well as the objective of this research is to explore the significance of adult education and lifelong learning in India, particularly in light of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 as 'Adult Education' serves as a comprehensive form of education, providing literacy that unlocks global knowledge, teaches individuals to harmonize with their environment, and optimally utilize their physical conditions. As defined in the Dictionary of Education, adult education is any initiative by which individuals, whether alone or in groups, seek to enhance their knowledge, skills, or attitudes.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this descriptive research, the secondary data is collected from the sources like books and online resources. Finally, after analyzing and reviewing, it reaches to its conclusion where it conveys that education is fundamental to the advancement of individuals, societies, and nations. Progressive countries worldwide attribute their development to robust educational systems and also in democratic nations, education holds significant importance, with concerted efforts to educate people of all ages, from infants to adults as it is perfectly to be said that for a democracy to thrive, its citizens must understand the value of their vote and the taxes they pay; otherwise, there is a risk of misuse by those who lack proper education and training whereas it is seen

that since gaining independence, India has faced the critical challenge of nurturing its democracy. Again, true political, social, and economic reforms are unattainable without preparing the populace, and adult education emerges as a crucial tool in this endeavour as Many adults, though uneducated, work hard to earn a living, lacking the resources and time for regular studies and In India, a significant number of such individuals cannot even sign their names and are occupied with various jobs to sustain themselves. Addressing the educational needs of these adults has become a major challenge, education is seen as essential for ensuring human dignity, recognized as a basic human right, and is crucial for unlocking numerous economic, social, and political opportunities.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

The historical evolution of adult education in Bharat reflects a dynamic interplay of social, political, and economic factors, highlighting the country's continuous efforts to meet the diverse educational needs of its population. Traditionally, adult education in Bharat dates back to ancient times, characterized by informal systems of knowledge transmission. However, it was during the colonial era that formal adult education began to gain traction, as British colonial rulers recognized the importance of providing basic education to the broader populace. This marked the beginning of structured adult education initiatives aimed at addressing the educational gaps in society. During the colonial period, adult education initiatives primarily aimed to meet the administrative needs of the British Raj. The focus was on developing a clerical workforce skilled in supporting the colonial administration's tasks. Institutions such as the Calcutta School Society, established in 1818, were instrumental in advancing adult education, concentrating on basic literacy and vocational training. These initiatives were largely designed to create a literate populace capable of fulfilling the

administrative functions required by the British colonial governance.

In 1910, Baroda pioneered the establishment of Parent libraries, soon followed by libraries for adults and mobile libraries. By 1911, Punjab had made strides in adult education with 223 affiliated night schools where adults were taught reading, writing, and arithmetic. Initially, night-school education in 1901-02 was limited to Madras, Bombay, and Bengal. The Government of India Act of 1919 enfranchised many Indians and provided financial support for education, leading to the organization of night schools and classes in regions like the United Provinces, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Bengal, and Madras. Provincial administration was transferred to Indian ministers who launched widespread anti-illiteracy campaigns. During 1939-40, literacy efforts surged with slogans like "Each one teach one" and "Educate and Educate" in Punjab. Significant progress was made in Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Orissa, Bombay, and Bihar. Uttar Pradesh, in particular, saw the establishment of new centers and libraries in prominent villages, the organization of numerous night schools, and the annual celebration of Literacy Week. Despite these efforts, many literacy initiatives eventually lost momentum. The 1930 establishment of the Department of Adult Education marked a notable achievement, as it continued to perform effectively in subsequent years. Adult education is seen as complementary to free primary education, necessitating a balanced focus on both. Although ambitious 20-year plans were proposed to foster adult education, economic constraints hindered the implementation of the Sargent Plan.

BOOSTERISM OF ADULT EDUCATION IN INDIA

Despite these efforts, the development of adult education in Bharat has encountered numerous challenges. Socio-economic disparities, gender inequalities, and regional imbalances have hindered equitable access to educational opportunities. Consequently,

evolving strategies have shifted from focusing solely on literacy to adopting a more comprehensive approach that addresses the unique needs of various demographic groups. However, the success of these strategies depends on tackling the underlying causes of educational disparities and fostering a culture that values lifelong learning. Reflecting on the historical trajectory of adult education in Bharat provides valuable insights for modern educational reforms. This evolution highlights the necessity for policies that extend beyond basic skill transmission, embracing education as a powerful driver of personal, social, and economic change. As the nation continues to navigate the complexities of the twenty-first century, the lessons from the past serve as a vital resource, informing contemporary efforts to embed lifelong learning within national educational policies. This is especially relevant in the context of the transformative goals outlined in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Mr. S. N. Mukerji broadly defines adult education as all forms of instruction, formal or informal, provided to adults. In India, this encompasses two key areas: adult literacy for those who never attended school and continuation education for literate adults.

Dr. V. K. P. V. Rao emphasizes that while adults may be illiterate, they possess developed minds and established interests, indicating that adult education does not start from scratch. In 1949, Maulana Azad conveyed to the Central Advisory Board of Education that the goal of education extends beyond literacy to encompass all forms of learning that cultivate responsible citizens in a democratic society. Adult education aims to develop a well-rounded individual, providing literacy to access global knowledge and teaching harmonization with one's environment. The Dictionary of Education aptly describes adult education as any process where individuals or groups enhance their knowledge, skills, or attitudes. Mr. Humayun Kabir highlights that social education fosters citizenship awareness and

social consciousness. Adult education, therefore, should be prioritized alongside free primary education to ensure comprehensive educational outreach.

Since India's independence in 1947, notable strides have been made in education. On May 20, 1948, the Union Education Minister introduced a twelve-point plan aimed at adult literacy. A subsequent 1949 conference in Delhi with provincial education ministers set an ambitious goal: to educate 52 percent of illiterate individuals aged 12 to 50 within three years, a target that ultimately proved unattainable due to various challenges. During this period, adult education was rebranded as social education, broadening its scope to empower adult women and enhance their lives comprehensively. This shift reflected a more holistic approach, emphasizing not just literacy but also the overall development of individuals to foster good citizenship. In 1949, Maulana Azad articulated this vision at a UNESCO Seminar on Rural Education, defining social education as the development of a well-rounded human being capable of adapting to their environment and conditions. The national education policy subsequently included a robust continuing education program for adults aged 15 to 35. This initiative aimed to establish continuing education centers in rural areas, promote worker education by employers, and leverage media such as radio, Doordarshan, and films to support educational outreach. The National Literacy Mission aligned with national goals, including poverty alleviation, national integration, environmental conservation, family planning, gender equality, universal primary education, and basic healthcare. It also aimed to invigorate cultural creativity and encourage active participation in developmental processes. Despite these efforts, early literacy campaigns were limited in scope and impact, often sporadic and uncoordinated. Government departments, voluntary agencies, educational institutions, and individuals frequently operated in isolation rather than

in collaboration. The analysis of these historical recommendations highlights their significant influence on the current education system, underscoring the vital role of adult education in contemporary educational frameworks. This historical perspective helps to appreciate the importance of adult education today.

NEP 2020's holistic approach to adult education prioritizes the empowerment of learners by offering diverse learning opportunities and robust support mechanisms. Acknowledging the unique needs and preferences of adult learners, the policy endeavours to create an inclusive and equitable educational eco-system that caters to the diverse learning requirements of India's adult population. Thus, NEP 2020 encourages to boost up the following attentions to promote 'Adult Education':

(I) Certification and Accreditation:

Implementing a robust system of certification and accreditation for adult education programs ensures quality standards are met, providing adult learners with recognition for their efforts and enhancing their employability and skill set.

(II) Financial Incentives: The NEP 2020 advocates for providing financial incentives such as scholarships, grants, and cash rewards to adult learners participating in education programs. These incentives alleviate financial barriers and motivate individuals to pursue further education.

(III) Appreciation and Acknowledgement:

Recognizing the significant contributions of adult learners to society fosters a culture of respect and appreciation. By raising awareness of the importance of adult education and acknowledging their contributions, more adults are encouraged to engage in lifelong learning.

(IV) Career Advancement Opportunities:

Creating pathways for adult learners to transition from formal education to occupational training and facilitating professional progression enhances their job prospects and financial stability. Offering opportunities for career advancement

motivates individuals to enrol in adult education programs.

(V) Inclusive and Fair Education System:

The NEP 2020 emphasizes the importance of adult education in creating a more inclusive and fair education system. By providing recognition, financial incentives, and avenues for professional growth, the policy aims to meet the diverse needs of students in India and encourage greater participation in education.

(VI) New India Literacy Programme (2022-2027):

The government's approval of the New India Literacy Programme for the fiscal years 2022-2027 demonstrates a commitment to addressing all aspects of adult education in alignment with the NEP 2020. This comprehensive program aims to enhance literacy rates and promote lifelong learning among adults across the country.

The Government of India has launched a new Centrally Sponsored Scheme named "ULLAS (Understanding of Lifelong Learning for All in Society)" for the fiscal years 2022-2027. This initiative aims to encompass all elements of Education for All, formerly referred to as Adult Education, aligning with the National Education Policy 2020 and the Budget Announcements for FY 2021-22. The scheme's primary goal is to enhance resource accessibility through online modules that address a wide range of adult education topics. ULLAS aims to impart Foundational Literacy and Numeracy, along with other essential 21st-century skills such as financial literacy, digital literacy, commercial skills, healthcare awareness, childcare and education, and family welfare. It also focuses on Vocational Skills Development for local employment opportunities, Basic Education across preparatory, middle, and secondary stages, and Continuing Education that includes diverse adult education courses in arts, sciences, technology, culture, sports, and recreation. The scheme promotes volunteerism and leverages digital platforms like TV, radio, and mobile apps for disseminating materials and resources. It targets non-literate individuals aged 15 and

above across all states and UTs, aiming to reach 5 crore learners by 2027, with a goal of educating 1 crore learners each year. Implementation will involve the "Online Teaching, Learning and Assessment System (OTLAS)" in partnership with NIC, NCERT, and NIOS. Learners can register online with essential details for accessing the learning and assessment resources. The ULLAS program has a total budget of Rs. 1037.90 crore, funded by Rs. 700 crore from the Central government and Rs. 337.90 crore from state governments.

(VII) Recognition of Previous Learning (RPL): NEP 2020 emphasizes establishing a structured system to assess and validate adult learners' prior experiences and knowledge. This recognition aims to honour the skills and insights gained through work and life experiences, enabling learners to progress in their educational and career paths.

(VIII) Flexible Learning Options: The policy advocates for providing adult learners with diverse learning pathways that accommodate their familial and occupational commitments. Leveraging technology-based, blended, and self-paced learning methods, NEP 2020 facilitates adaptable learning schedules tailored to individual needs.

(IX) Choice-Based Credit System (CBCS): NEP 2020 proposes the implementation of a CBCS, granting adult learners the autonomy to select courses aligned with their interests and professional aspirations. This system fosters personalized learning trajectories, enabling learners to acquire relevant skills and knowledge conducive to their career objectives.

(X) Student Support Services: Recognizing the challenges adult learners face, NEP 2020 underscores the importance of comprehensive support services. These services encompass financial assistance, counseling, childcare provisions, and other resources aimed at helping adult learners balance their educational pursuits with familial and professional responsibilities.

(XI) Participatory Learning Approaches:

NEP 2020 advocates for participatory learning methodologies that empower adult learners to actively engage in the educational process. By fostering collaborative interactions among learners and educators, this approach cultivates critical thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork skills tailored to real-world contexts.

Thus, in this way, NEP 2020's holistic approach to adult education prioritizes the empowerment of learners by offering diverse learning opportunities and robust support mechanisms. Acknowledging the unique needs and preferences of adult learners, the policy endeavours to create an inclusive and equitable educational ecosystem that caters to the diverse learning requirements of India's adult population.

CONSPICUOUSNESS OF NEP 2020 TO PROSELYTIZE ADULT EDUCATION AND LIFE-LONG LEARNING

India still faces the challenge of providing literacy to 350 million people and equipping many more with employable skills suited to the modern global landscape. Achieving full literacy is essential for attaining the status of a developed nation. Mass illiteracy hampers economic and social progress, reduces productivity, hinders population control, and affects national integration, security, and public health and sanitation. A significant shift occurred when adult education was redefined as social education, focusing on empowering adult women and enhancing their lives comprehensively. This broadened approach made social education more inclusive and effective. Recognizing the transformative power of literacy, the 'National Literacy Mission' was launched in 1988, emphasizing voluntary participation and addressing issues like alcoholism. To further community involvement and improve educational outcomes, the 'National Education Policy 2020' introduced a structured framework for adult education, aiming to make a significant impact on the nation's development. The

Central government has recently sanctioned the 'New India Literacy Programme' for the financial years 2022-27, aimed at comprehensively addressing 'Adult Education' in alignment with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Under this initiative, 'Adult Education' will now be referred to as 'Education for All', reflecting a more inclusive approach to encompass all non-literates aged 15 and above. The program comes as a response to the significant number of non-literates in the country, with an estimated 18.12 crore adults currently lacking literacy skills. The objective of the New India Literacy Programme is multifaceted, aiming to impart foundational literacy and numeracy along with critical life skills such as financial literacy, digital literacy, healthcare awareness, childcare, vocational skills, and continuing education. Implementation of the scheme will largely occur online, with the participation of three crore students and around 50 lakh teachers from various educational institutions, alongside volunteers from Anganwadi workers, ASHA workers, PRIs, and NYSK, NSS, and NCC workers. The total outlay of the program is estimated at Rs 1,037.90 crore, with both central and state contributions. Aligned with the Nation's Education Policy NEP 2020, the program aims to provide opportunities for foundational literacy, education, and livelihood, emphasizing the significance of volunteerism, community involvement, and mobilization, along with proper planning, financial support, and capacity building. A dedicated adult education curriculum framework by NCERT is envisioned to further enhance the effectiveness of the program. The curriculum framework for grownup training will embody the subsequent 5 varieties of programmes, every designed with sincerely described outcomes:

(I) Foundational Literacy and Numeracy:

This program aims to equip learners with essential reading, writing, and mathematical skills to lay the groundwork for further learning and development.

(II) Critical Life Skills: Including components such as financial literacy, digital literacy, commercial skills, healthcare awareness, childcare and education, and family welfare, this program focuses on empowering individuals with practical skills necessary for navigating modern life effectively.

(III) Vocational Skills Development: With a focus on local employment opportunities, this program seeks to provide learners with the necessary skills and training to secure meaningful employment and contribute to the local economy.

(IV) Basic Education: This program encompasses preparatory, middle, and secondary stage equivalency education, ensuring that learners have access to a comprehensive educational pathway that meets their needs and aspirations.

(V) Continuing Education: Offering a diverse range of courses in arts, sciences, technology, culture, sports, recreation, and other topics of interest or utility to local learners, this program encourages lifelong learning and personal development beyond foundational education.

The curriculum framework acknowledges the need for tailored teaching methods and materials suited to the unique learning requirements of adults, distinct from those designed for children.

To ensure the success of this initiative, it is imperative to establish easily accessible infrastructure accessible to all individuals. Utilizing schools as after-school centers and public libraries for adult education courses will be pivotal. This approach not only optimizes existing resources but also fosters community synergy by sharing facilities across various educational domains. Ensuring suitable infrastructure guarantees that all adults interested in education and lifelong learning have access to resources. Leveraging schools and school complexes during non-school hours, weekends, and public library spaces for adult education courses, equipped with ICT facilities where possible, will enhance community engagement and enrichment. Sharing

infrastructure across school, higher, adult, and vocational education, along with other community activities, ensures efficient utilization of physical and human resources, fostering synergy among various educational sectors. Consequently, Adult Education Centres (AECs) could be integrated within public institutions like Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and vocational training centers to further bolster accessibility and collaboration.

Experienced instructors and educators will be entrusted with delivering the curriculum framework to mature learners, ensuring alignment with their cognitive processes and learning needs. Volunteers are encouraged to participate at district, state, and national levels, and qualified community members can undergo brief training to contribute to the program's success. These instructors will receive training from National, State, and district-level resource support institutions to effectively organize and facilitate learning activities at Adult Education Centres, as well as collaborate with volunteer instructors. Qualified individuals from the community, including those affiliated with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), will be incentivized to undergo short training courses and volunteer as adult literacy instructors or one-on-one tutors, with recognition for their invaluable service to the nation. States will also collaborate with NGOs and community organizations to enhance literacy and adult education efforts, fostering a collaborative approach towards national development.

Encouraging participation in adult education poses a significant challenge, necessitating the active involvement of social workers who traverse communities to persuade individuals to embrace adult learning opportunities. This initiative also extends its reach to school dropouts, offering them a chance to resume their education. Local organizations and NGOs will collaborate to organize events and initiatives aimed at maximizing enrolment. Every effort will be made to engage community members in adult education, with social workers and

counsellors playing a crucial role in identifying and encouraging non-enrolled students and dropouts to join educational programs. During their community visits, these professionals will gather data from interested parties and facilitate their connection with local Adult Education Centres (AECs). Moreover, opportunities for adult education will be extensively publicized through various channels, including advertisements, announcements, and events organized by NGOs and local organizations, ensuring widespread awareness and participation.

INTENSIFICATION AND MONITORIZATION OF ADULT EDUCATION

Enhancing the availability and accessibility of books is paramount to fostering a culture of reading within our communities and educational institutions. As per this Policy, it is proposed to bolster and update all communities and educational institutions, including schools, colleges, universities, and public libraries, to guarantee a sufficient supply of books tailored to the diverse needs and interests of all students. This inclusive approach ensures that individuals with disabilities and other differently-abled persons are also catered to, ensuring equitable access to educational resources. By modernizing these institutions and ensuring a wide range of reading materials, the Policy aims to promote a lifelong love for learning and reading among individuals from all walks of life.

Close monitoring of adult education programs is essential for their success, with NGOs and volunteers playing pivotal roles in their effectiveness. Governments will collaborate closely with Adult Education Centers (AEC) and community organizations to ensure widespread education and contribute to the realization of a literate India. The inclusion of adult education in the National Education Policy 2020 signifies a significant step towards transforming society into one where individuals are eager to pursue education for

themselves and uplift their families. Those interested can enroll in such initiatives outlined by the policy and reap the benefits, while volunteers in education can actively engage with local organizations to support the educational system. Thus, effective implementation, combined with active participation from all stakeholders, will be instrumental in realizing the vision of a literate and empowered society:

(I) Enhancing Adult Education Program

Quality: The NEP 2020 proposes to boost the quality of adult education programs through targeted training and professional development for adult educators. Additionally, it advocates for the establishment of a framework for accrediting and ensuring quality control in adult education programs.

(II) Customizing Adult Education for

Relevance: Recognizing the diverse needs and interests of adult learners, the NEP 2020 emphasizes tailoring courses and programs to suit their requirements. This involves offering vocational training and skill-based courses geared towards enhancing employability and addressing the specific needs of adult learners.

(III) Expanding Accessibility and

Availability: The NEP 2020 aims to widen the accessibility and availability of adult education programs, particularly targeting marginalized populations. Strategies include building more adult education facilities in rural and underserved areas and providing incentives for participation in these programs.

(IV) Promoting Community Engagement:

Encouraging the involvement of local communities in the planning and implementation of adult education initiatives is a key aspect of the NEP 2020. This approach acknowledges the importance of community support in fostering adult education and proposes the establishment of community groups dedicated to promoting and supporting adult learning opportunities.

THE BALLYHOO OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

NEP 2020 prioritizes skill development and vocational training in adult education, aiming to enhance employability and contribute to economic growth by empowering individuals with relevant competencies:

(I) Promotion of Skill-Based Courses: The NEP 2020 advocates for the promotion of skill-based courses tailored for adult learners. These courses aim to equip individuals with new skills relevant to regional job markets, thereby enhancing their employability.

(II) Offering Vocational Training

Programs: NEP 2020 emphasizes the provision of vocational training programs designed to cultivate a diverse range of skills essential for various trades and professions. These programs cater to the needs of adult learners, recognizing the vital role of vocational training in their educational journey.

(III) Establishing Transition Channels:

The policy suggests establishing pathways for adult learners to transition from occupational training to formal education. Recognizing that many adult learners may have lacked access to formal education earlier, these channels facilitate their continuation in educational pursuits.

(IV) Industry Collaboration:

NEP 2020 advocates for collaborations between industries and adult education institutions to develop relevant training programs. By aligning with industry needs, these programs equip individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary for specific job sectors, fostering employment opportunities.

(V) Support Services:

The policy emphasizes the importance of support services to address barriers hindering adult learners' participation in skill development and vocational training programs. These services include financial aid, daycare facilities, and other resources to assist

individuals in balancing work, family, and education responsibilities.

MANTLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN FOSTERING ADULT EDUCATION

Utilizing technology will be paramount in fortifying and executing the aforementioned initiatives. Government and philanthropic endeavours, as well as crowd-sourcing and competitions, will be harnessed to develop high-quality technology-based options for adult learning, including apps, online courses/modules, satellite-based TV channels, online books, and ICT-equipped libraries and Adult Education Centres. In line with the National Education Policy 2020, many instances of quality adult education can be conducted in online or blended modes. The entire nation must demonstrate a sincere commitment to eradicating illiteracy, particularly among individuals aged 15-35. This commitment necessitates the active involvement of teachers, youth, students, voluntary organizations, employers, and other stakeholders on a large scale. Concrete efforts will be directed towards enhancing educational aspects with the support of research institutes. Beyond literacy, the development of functional knowledge and skills, along with fostering an understanding of socio-economic realities and the potential for positive change, will be integral components of adult education initiatives. A comprehensive programme of adult and continuing education will encompass various methods and media, incorporating the following types of programs:

(I) Digital Infrastructure Development:

NEP 2020 emphasizes the creation of a robust digital infrastructure tailored to adult education needs, facilitating online learning and personalized learning experiences. This involves establishing digital platforms and tools for accessing materials, communication, and progress tracking.

(II) Digital Content Creation: The policy supports the development of diverse digital resources such as e-books, movies, podcasts, etc., catering to adult learners.

These resources supplement traditional instruction, fostering self-paced learning and enhancing overall educational experience.

(III) Training and Support: Recognizing the importance of digital literacy, NEP 2020 advocates for comprehensive training programs for both adult educators and learners. Educators are empowered with digital skills to effectively integrate technology into teaching, while learners receive technical assistance to overcome any barriers to accessing digital learning tools.

(IV) Blended Learning Approach: NEP 2020 encourages the integration of traditional classroom methods with online learning, promoting a blended learning environment. This approach expands educational reach, offering learners greater flexibility and personalized learning opportunities.

(V) Technology-driven Assessment: The policy underscores the need for digital assessment tools to enhance the accuracy and efficiency of evaluation processes in adult education. By leveraging technology, assessments can be conducted more promptly and precisely, providing learners with timely feedback on their progress.

The strategies mentioned above will be further reinforced and implemented with the assistance of technology. Government and philanthropic initiatives, along with crowd-sourcing and competitions, will be instrumental in developing high-quality technology-based adult learning options, including apps, online courses/modules, satellite-based TV channels, online books, and ICT-equipped libraries and Adult Education Centres. Consequently, effective adult education delivery may often transition to online or hybrid formats, as outlined in the National Education Policy 2020. To eradicate illiteracy entirely, especially among individuals aged 15 to 35, the entire nation must commit wholeheartedly. This commitment is crucial for ensuring the success of literacy programs, which will require extensive

participation from various stakeholders, including educators, youth, students, non-profit organizations, and corporations. Collaborative efforts with research institutions will be made to enhance educational components significantly. In addition to literacy instruction, adult education will focus on developing practical knowledge and skills, as well as fostering an understanding of socioeconomic realities and the potential for societal change. Through the utilization of diverse tools and media, a comprehensive program of continuing and adult education will be actively implemented.

Thus, NEP 2020, again prioritizes the enhancement of technology-based learning in adult education, recognizing its potential to enrich program quality and accessibility. Through targeted strategies, the policy aims to elevate the flexibility, reach, and efficacy of learning options for adult learners across India.

SUGGESTIVE STRATEGIES

Embedded in our ancient texts is the profound wisdom: "Sa vidya ya vimuktaye", emphasizing that education liberates from ignorance and oppression. In the contemporary era, literacy, the cornerstone of education, is essential as it serves as the primary conduit for learning. Thus, the significance of literacy and adult education cannot be overstated. Today's developmental challenge revolves around continuously enhancing skills and cultivating the manpower requisite for societal needs, a task intricately linked to adult education aligning with national objectives. These objectives encompass poverty alleviation, national unity, environmental conservation, fostering cultural creativity, advocating for small family ideals, and promoting gender equality. Existing adult education programs will undergo rigorous review and reinforcement to meet these objectives effectively. As elucidated by Mr. Humayun Kabir, social education nurtures citizenship consciousness and fosters social cohesion. Often, adults must prioritize other

responsibilities over education, inadvertently neglecting skill enhancement. In such circumstances, adult education emerges as a vital avenue for personal and societal advancement, with age posing no barrier to learning - a principle underscored by the NEP 2020 policy. The universal recognition of education's importance underscores the timeless relevance of embarking on the educational journey, regardless of one's stage in life. Even if opportunities to complete basic education were previously elusive, the availability of resources coupled with an innate thirst for knowledge illuminates the path forward, guided by dedicated educators. NEP 2020 introduces a structured adult education program aimed at enhancing literacy and proficiency in key areas relevant to individuals' professions. Here's a breakdown of how adult education can positively impact an individual's life:

(I) Empowerment in Financial

Transactions: Adult education equips individuals with the necessary literacy skills to independently carry out financial transactions, fostering financial independence and confidence.

(II) Access to Opportunities: With improved literacy and proficiency, individuals can effectively fill out forms and applications for opportunities aligned with their interests and aspirations, thus widening their avenues for personal and professional growth.

(III) Contribution to Education: Adult education empowers individuals to impart knowledge and skills to children, thereby playing an active role in shaping future generations and fostering community development.

(IV) Personal Growth and Development:

By acquiring the right education through adult education programs, individuals can enhance their quality of life, broaden their perspectives, and pursue personal growth and development effectively.

(V) Adherence to Safety Measures: Adult education ensures individuals understand and can follow instructions and safety measures, particularly in times of

emergencies, promoting personal safety and well-being.

(VI) Cultivation of Literacy

Appreciation: Through adult education, individuals develop a deeper appreciation for literacy and its significance, consequently promoting literacy initiatives and advocating for its importance in society. As per of the recent news published on this May 2024 in the Times of India, at Chandigarh, Punjab University has offered the additional weightage at the time of admission for the candidates who have made their significant contributions to adult education including those who operate adult education centres or run NGOs or volunteer with those organization in addition with government programmes, mainly this particular idea is aligning with the New Education Policy 2020, as supported by the Department of Education and Literacy, Government of India. The V.C. of P.U. formed the admission facilitation committee by approving the NEP 2020 on 8th May 2024 so that they want to encourage more young individuals to provide themselves in the field of Adult Education to increase literacy rates by campaigning lifelong learning. In this connection there is an eligibility rules for the additional weightage where candidates must provide a certificate from a recognised institution or NGO involved in educating illiterate adults as of them, the students who run their adult education centres can pursue weightage which is determined by the number of adults they help to become literate like a credit of 0.35% will be designated for educating 10 adults, 0.65% for 20 adults and 1% for 30 adults. In a similar way, the student volunteers also run mass functional literacy campaign on the basis of the number of illiterate individuals they help like in this, a credit of 0.35% will be earned whereas 0.65% for five adults and 1% for ten adults. This necessary initiative by P.U. aims to encourage the young individuals in this country to promote lifelong learning by increasing literacy rates gradually.

In summary, the theoretical inquiry into lifelong learning, adult education, and practical solutions within the context of NEP 2020 reveals a complex web of interconnected concepts and potential avenues for transformative change. The integration of lifelong learning theories with the principles espoused in NEP 2020 underscores the significance of fostering a culture of continuous learning across diverse age groups. The historical progression of adult education in Bharat serves as a backdrop, offering valuable insights that inform contemporary endeavours. Despite the acknowledged challenges, ranging from societal perceptions to logistical hurdles, the theoretical exploration of real-world solutions presents strategic interventions rooted in established educational theories. These theoretical foundations provide a sturdy basis for further research and practical applications, indicating a promising trajectory towards a more inclusive and dynamic educational landscape.

CONCLUSION

Recognizing the enduring importance of lifelong learning, the New Education Policy (NEP) stands as a beacon of inclusivity, championing access to education for all. By embracing the diverse needs of societal groups, including those who have been previously marginalized or lacked educational opportunities, the NEP heralds a new era of empowerment. Through collaborative efforts between government entities and educational institutions, innovative regulations, tailored curriculum, and robust training initiatives will be forged, ensuring that no individual is left behind in their quest for knowledge and skill enhancement. Moreover, the integration of technology and infrastructure investments underscores a commitment to modernizing educational delivery mechanisms for adult learners. While the NEP refrains from imposing a rigid timeline for implementation, the proactive measures

undertaken by several state governments and educational bodies signal a resolute stride toward realizing its vision. Ultimately, the NEP's steadfast dedication to adult education paves the way for a more inclusive and prosperous society, where the transformative power of education transcends barriers and fosters collective growth and advancement. Adult education is crucial for bolstering the foundation of democracy and nurturing the traits of ideal citizenship. It provides individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills to actively and responsibly participate in democratic processes. By enhancing literacy and understanding of civic duties, adult education ensures that citizens recognize the importance of their votes and their roles within the community. This education empowers individuals to contribute thoughtfully and effectively to societal development, thereby supporting political stability and fostering social harmony. Ultimately, adult education is a key driver for personal growth and the collective well-being of a democratic society. It is perfectly to be concluded with the enormous speech by Mahatma Gandhi- "Literacy is neither the beginning nor the end of Education, it is only one of the means of Education."

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