



## **LIFE LONG LEARNING: THE EDUCATION FOR FUTURE**

**Shanti Pise**

“The currency of the future economy would be knowledge”

----Peter Drucker

Education plays the most important role and occupies the pivotal position since the pace and sustainability of all the modern developmental activities is chiefly governed by the knowledge power in the specialized area. Quality education is the concern of the knowledge society, particularly in the context of sustained growth and development of education systems in the present era of globalization. There is no denying the fact that education plays a dominant role in the development of any country. However the rapid development in science and technology and the challenges of globalization are posing challenges to the education system. India can emerge as the strongest knowledge power in the world, if we have a sound system of education which can act as a powerful tool to engineer and steer progress in the desired direction. As said by our prime minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, Our society has been experiencing a “revolution of rising expectations” Because of interdependence and integration of world economy in recent years, the Indian education system has a new role and a challenge to provide to the nation and the world at large, skilled human power at all levels, having breadth of knowledge and confidence to effectively confront the social and economic realities (UGC 2003). Quality education presupposes quality teaching, which in turn contributes a lot in helping us to realize the goal of excellence in education.

It is aptly said that “Life is all about learning.”

Bhagwad Gita in a subtle way gives prominence to self-directed, self-generated, self-initiated learning. It specifies that one should rise oneself with own effort; one should realize ones goals

and aims through one's own efforts. The meaning of education has to be self – directed and self-generated. The sense of fulfillment by self-efforts was the core of ancient education. universities, for instance for teachers, social services providers, and other professionals. "Lifelong Learning" has become a central theme in education and community development. Both international and national agencies, governments and educational institutions have adopted the idea of lifelong learning as their major theme for address and attention over the next ten years. They realize that it is only by getting people committed to the idea of education both life-wide and lifelong that the goals of economic advancement, social emancipation and personal growth will be attained. According to the European commission, the scale of current economic and social change, the rapid transition to a knowledge-based society and demographic pressures resulting from an ageing population in Europe are all challenges which demand a new approach to education and training, within the framework of lifelong learning.

The **learning to be** by UNESCO-1972 mentions that man is an unfinished being and can only fulfill himself through constant learning. If this is so then education takes place at all ages of life. Education must transcend its limits of instruction, program and method. The concept of Life Long Education by Delors (report UNESCO 1996) bases its faith in the Learning throughout life and continuing education. It is the basic need of learning society. It observes that in 21<sup>st</sup> century learning throughout life will be essential for evolving requirement of labour market, for masters of the changing time frames and gaining rhythm of individual existence. In this era of globalization, Life Long Learning is the most relevant core component in advancement of science and technology.

The world conference on Education for all held in March 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand adopted a Declaration calling upon all member states and international agencies to take effective steps for achieving Education for all by 2010. The Ultimate goal affirmed by the World Declaration on Education for all is to meet the basic learning needs of all children, youth and adults. "Literacy and Non formal education is a measure of their importance for achieving education for all."

## **DEFINITION**

**Lifelong learning** is the "ongoing, voluntary, and self-motivated" pursuit of knowledge for either personal or professional reasons. Therefore, it not only enhances social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development, but also competitiveness and employability

### **Wikipedia.**

Lifelong learning is defined as 'all learning activity undertaken throughout Life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence, within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective.'

Berlaymont building brussels

Lifelong Learning is defined as learning through all aspectsof life, so that each citizen has the opportunity to acquire thenecessary knowledge for personal development, social and professional enhancement, to become an active participantin society and economy.

The term recognizes that learning is not confined to childhood or the classroom but takes place throughout life and in a range of situations. During the last fifty years, constant scientific and technological innovation and change has had a profound effect on learning needs and styles. Learning can no longer be divided into a place and time to acquire knowledge (school) and a place and time to apply the knowledge acquired (the workplace). Instead, learning can be seen as something that takes place on an on-going basis from our daily interactions with others and with the world around us.

### **TYPES OF LIFE LONG LEARNING**

- Home schooling involves learning to learn or the development of informal learning patterns.
- Adult education or the acquisition of formal qualifications or work and leisure skills later in life.
- Continuing education which often describes extension or not-for-credit courses offered by higher education institutions.
- Knowledge work which includes professional development and on-the-job training.
- Personal learning environments or self-directed learning using a range of sources and tools including online applications.

E-learning is available at most colleges and universities or to individuals learning independently. There are even online courses being offered for free by many institutions.

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF LIFE LONG LEARNING**

Lifelong learning is therefore about:

1. Acquiring and updating all kinds of abilities, interests, knowledge and qualifications from the pre-school years to postretirement.
2. It promotes the development of knowledge and competences that will enable each citizen to adapt to the knowledge-based society and actively participate in all spheres of social and economic life, taking more control of his or her future.
3. Valuing all forms of learning, including: formal learning, such as a degree course followed at university; non-formal learning, such as vocational skills acquired at the workplace; and informal learning, such as inter-generational learning
4. Each have individual learning pathways, suitable to their needs and interests at all stages of their lives. The content of learning, the way learning is accessed, and where it takes place may vary depending on the learner and their learning requirements.
5. Lifelong learning is also about providing second chances to update basic skills and to offer learning opportunities at more advanced levels.

All this means that formal systems of provision need to become much more open and flexible, so that such opportunities can truly be tailored to the needs of the learner, or indeed the potential learner.

### **LIFELONG LEARNING STRATEGIES: THE BUILDING BLOCKS**

Lifelong Learning identified six essential elements for coherent and comprehensive lifelong learning strategies:

- **Partnership working**, not only between decision-making levels (e.g. national, regional and local) but also between public authorities and education service providers (schools, universities, etc.), the business sector and the social partners, local associations, vocational guidance services, research centres, etc.
- **Insight into the demand for learning** in the knowledge-based society - which will entail redefining basic skills, to include for instance the new information and communication technologies. Analyses should take into account foreseeable labour market trends.

- **Adequate resourcing**, involving a substantial increase in public and private investment in learning. This does not only imply substantially increasing public budgets, but also ensuring the effective allocation of existing resources and encouraging new forms of investment. Investment in human capital is important at all points in the economic cycle; skills gaps and shortages can certainly co-exist with unemployment.
- **Facilitating access to learning opportunities** by making them more visible, introducing new provision and removing obstacles to access, for example through the creation of more local learning centres. Special efforts are necessary in this context for different groups such as ethnic minorities, people with disabilities or people living in rural areas.
- **Creating a learning culture** by giving learning a higher profile, both in terms of image and by providing incentives for the people most reticent to opt for learning.
- **Striving for excellence** through the introduction of quality control and indicators to measure progress. In concrete terms, provision must be made for standards, guidelines and mechanisms whereby achievements can be recognized and rewarded.

#### **PRIORITIES FOR ACTION**

On the basis of the feedback relating to the six key messages the Communication identifies six priorities for action: (1) valuing learning, (2) providing information, guidance and counseling, (3) investing time and money in learning, (4) bringing together learners and learning opportunities, (5) ensuring basic skills and (6) introducing innovative pedagogy.

Below are five hypotheses on the connection between life and learning.

1) **Lifelong learning and universality.** Despite cultural differences it seems obvious that human beings all over the world live a life in which and for which learning represents a meaningful if not indispensable activity. The target group for educationalists would be the entirety of humanity. This creates an enormous space where content and pedagogy can be developed, discussed and promoted.

2) **Lifelong learning**—a “safe label”. It is difficult to find arguments against lifelong learning. Those who are not yet convinced about its relevance and importance could be considered ignorant since they still think that learning is merely a kind of preparatory activity for “(young) people-in-the-making”. On the contrary, life is something that can and should be designed appropriately. Lifelong Learning will help to optimize your life!

3) **Lifelong learning—the panacea to all problems.** Lifelong Learning can easily be offered as an appropriate remedy for practically every thinkable crisis people are faced with on both the macro and the micro level, be it poverty, war, or sickness

4) **Life as a problem in itself.** Modernity is characterized by increasing complexity, on the one hand, and decreasing confidence in traditional knowledge and values, on the other.

5) **Lifelong learning and lifelong education.** Learning is more process-oriented than product-oriented. More learning needs more time.

#### **WHO IS A LIFELONG LEARNER?**

The infant is equipped with sensory capacities which enable him or her to explore and learn about his or her social and physical surroundings (Durkin, 1995, p.57). Reasoning, problem-solving and wisdom, which rely heavily on accumulated expert knowledge, remain stable or may actually increase into advanced age (Baltes and Smith, 1990, p. 199, as cited in Bandura).

#### **1. The learner as an active and creative explorer of the world**

The learner does not simply respond mechanically to environmental stimuli/events. He/she is an active explorer and creator.

#### **2. The learner as a reflexive agent**

Learning facilitates a process which enables the learner to reflect on his/her life and environment.

#### **3. The learner as a self-actualizing agent**

Motivation is intrinsic when a person studies because it is enjoyable and important in itself. Motivation is extrinsic when learning depends on rewards external to the action itself. Self-actualization, curiosity, and exploration are lifelong drivers of human action.

**4. The learner as an integrator of learning**

The challenge for the lifelong learner is the so-called integration of thinking, feeling and action.

**5. Lifelong learning as optimizing individual differences in learning**

These common patterns or rhythms should not and cannot disguise the other central fact about lifespan development, namely that there are individual differences in timing and pathways.

Lifelong learning helps the individual learner to reduce the burden of hereditary “handicaps”.

**LIFELONG LEARNING: A PROBLEM, A PROJECT OR A PROSPECT?**

Lifelong learning should appeal to the totality of a person—heart, body and brain—and more importantly to our existential values and emotions. Lifelong learning can also deal with the uncertainty and contradictions of life. Life offers potential as well as risk. Life can be both competitive and co-operative. A major question in lifelong learning in this respect is what types of early and youth developmental tasks and of educational interventions can foster the individual learner’s capacity to tackle unpredictability, uncertainty, irrationality, and contradictions of life experiences. Intergenerational learning, which is a part of lifelong education, has potential applications in the broad areas of peace education, experiential history teaching and learning, and conflict resolution. Lastly, lifelong learning is not value-free. Lifelong learning should aim to promote the art of human maturity—a prerequisite to becoming a good citizen, actively involved in local, national and international issues and problems. On a final note, it is good to remember what the early writers dreamed of as they examined the importance of lifelong learning: If learning involves all of one’s life, in the sense of both time span and diversity, and all of society, including its social and economic as well as its educational resources, then we must go even further than the necessary overhaul of ‘educational systems’ until we reach the stage of a learning society”

**Bibliography**

- Bandura, Albert (1997). Self-efficacy: The Exercise of Control. New York, USA: W.H. Freeman.
- Beck, Ulrich (1990). The Risk Society.
- Bee, Helen (1998). Lifespan Development. New York: Addison-Wesley.
- Bruner, Jerome (1962). On Knowing: Essays for the Left Hand.

*National Seminar on Innovations In Education For Knowledge Society*

in (ed.) L. Dubbeldam, International Yearbook of Education, Vol. XLIV  
p.53-78. UNESCO, International Bureau of Education.

\_\_\_\_\_and Cramer, M.(1999). Intergenerational Dialogue and Mutual  
Learning Between German Pupils and Jewish Seniors, Education  
and Ageing, Vol. 14, No. 3, Triangle Journals Ltd, Oxford.

Ranson, Stewart (1998). Inside the Learning Society. London: Casell.

Stone. L. Joseph and Joseph Church (1973). Childhood and Adolescence:  
A Psychology of the Growing Person. New York: Random House.

