



**LIFELONG LEARNING IS A WAY TO EMPOWERING COMMUNITY  
MEMBERS**

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**Abstract**

*The adult today has need of an understanding of the rapidly changing world and the growing complexities of the society. Lifelong learning has been an integral part of Indian culture. The entire education system is designed to facilitate lifelong and 'life wide' learning and the creation of formal, non-formal and informal learning opportunities for people of all age. Regardless of ideological or political persuasion regarding globalization and lifelong learning, there is consensus that it is vital that citizens learn to function in this new and dynamic world. Ensuring that citizens and employees are equipped with the skills and competences needed to live and work in the 21st century is a matter of great urgency. The present research paper is an outcome of original empirical research study on 'A Need Assessment Study on Lifelong Learning for Community Members', conducted by author at Savitribai Phule University, Pune.*

**Keyword:** *Lifelong learning education, Community empowerment, Skill development, Capacity building,*



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**INTRODUCTION:**

Literacy is the essential tool for learning, communication and acquiring and sharing of information. The importance of formal education, colleges, universities etc. in this context needs no special emphasis, this alone is not sufficient for the overall development of one's personality. One of the best and most comprehensive understandings of lifelong learning has been offered by Peter Sheehan (2001) in his foreword to the Kluwer International Handbook of Lifelong Learning. It is crucial to demystify the discourse around globalization and

lifelong learning and focus on issues of social justice and equity (Hoogvelt, 1997; Marginson, 1999).

Houle & Edmund Des Bruner (1958), identifies adult education agencies developed primarily for the education of adults, such as university and agricultural extension and corresponding schools. Agencies and institutions founded for non-educational purpose that have undertaken adult education in order to strengthen their major programmes and to do their job better that results into their overall empowerment.

### **LIFELONG LEARNING EDUCATION:**

Post-literacy education should be related to everyday life situations, considering their needs and interest, which would guarantee them the retention of literacy skills and the development of other types of abilities. The organisation that provides life long education should have concern clarity of values, purposes and commitment as well as more obvious matters of management, staffing, resources and appropriate methods (Padmanabhan, 1989). Determination of adult education needs through surveys and from other statistical sources available in the locality. According to Lalitha Lenin (2000), the special characteristic of the continuing education make these services as the backbone of continuing education with the academic libraries. This is playing a major role in knowing the upcoming areas for acquisition of new knowledge, skills and methods that can be included in the curriculum of lifelong learning.

It should have aims to improve people's earnings and living, to promote education and provide people knowledge and services in health care including knowledge for environmental conservation for the public organisation, they mainly aimed to extend and conserve culture, customs and tradition, etc.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:**

Researchers have gone through the detailed review of available literature and previous research articles in regard to the topic under enquiry. There is absolute scarcity of the research in this topic, whereas education has studied with perspectives and found important variable in all paradigm but according to our review there is lack of study focused on different dimensions of lifelong learning as need of progressive era.

Education for a more highly skilled workforce as an economic justification for lifelong learning, instrumental to achieving an extrinsic goal and a declared policy of international bodies (Aspin et al., 2001).

It called for a new philosophy and re-conceptualization of education as a lifelong process, thus requiring constant reorganization or reconstruction of experience and knowledge. Inside the twenty-first century, this call is even more urgent.

Paucity of endogenous data on the subject under enquiry and to add new scientific dimension in lifelong learning literature are also been part of undertaking this study. It will add in the knowledge base of lifelong learning literature and may help our community members, Organizations and academician or even lay man to understand the importance of continuing education throughout life.

#### **METHOD AND MATERIAL:**

##### ***Participants:***

The sample of 55 respondents (25 social work field practitioner, 25 beneficiaries of different educational schemes, and 05 academicians from extension education field) were selected for the present study from rural and urban area of Pune district. They were selected on non-probability sampling framework and purposive sampling technique is been used for the same. The respondents were aged between 21 to 58 years and have working experience (field practitioner and academicians) ranges from 05 to 30 years.

##### ***Procedure:***

The participants selected for the study are contacted individually. After explaining the purpose of the study they are requested to give consent for the same. After their consent the questionnaire has given them to fill up, they have also given enough time for returning it. Personal queries of the respondents after finishing questionnaire have also entertained to make them clear. Also additional information was obtained by interviews, secondary data, focus group discussions etc. of the stake holders with the help of social worker's working at different level especially in NGOs.

##### ***Measures:***

The questionnaire consisting series of demographic questions about participants personal characteristics and items possibly reveal their understandings, experiences, expectations about the need of lifelong learning and continuing education. The flows of questions, patterns and more importantly language have pre-tested before giving it to the respondents. The data are analysed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (16.0 version). The simple frequency tables and cross-tabulation were made for analysis. Deductive method of qualitative analysis is also used to reveal the qualitative aspects of lifelong learning and continuing education considering the importance of them.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION:**

### ***Characteristics of participants:***

The socio-demographic characteristics of the participants reveal that some of them are already covered in the method part of this paper. Majority of the respondents (45.45%) aged was in between 36 to 45 years and (60.00%) of them were female mostly educated up to higher secondary level (38.18%).

### ***Employ ability and skills of the participants:***

While responding to the statement about current status of employment 67.27% respondents were employed who have given preference to the need , mastery and importance to gain computer skill in the job (70.90%). whereas (38.18%) respondents opines English communication, (25.45%) respondent's rated for report writing skill (58.18%) identified marketing skill, and (23.63%) respondents shared that production / manufacturing skills are important to them for the better job and performance in their current employment. Whereas, (07.27%) respondents unable to define the skill that would help them to do better job.

### ***Necessity and Mode of learning for enrichment:***

To responding about the statement towards learning mode mostly (67.27%) preferred distance mode learning but surprisingly 87.27% respondents have not attended web conference class yet. 34.54% respondents preferred summer and winter period for attending the lifelong learning classes. According to 43.63% respondents, evening time will be the best time to attend the lifelong learning classes. To attend such classes 69.09% respondents show readiness to travel up to 05 km and express the necessity of crutch facility 61.81% to attend lifelong learning education program.

### ***Component to be included in lifelong learning:***

The participants also suggested the components that need to be included in lifelong learning program.92.72% respondents informed that the computer education should be imparted through lifelong learning whereas 63.63% respondent suggested the communication & personality development ,41.81% respondent asked for courses or module on handicraft making. Whereas, 30.90% demanded courses on fashion designing, 74.54% respondents asked for courses on food processing , 61.81% respondents were interested to courses related to local self governance. At the same time 72.72% respondents emphasis that theses courses should be given included in the lifelong learning education program conducted by different state and central universities.

### ***Gaps you observed in present systems:***

When the respondents were informed that there are centre already exists for enrichment of community members they pointed out the following few gaps the exist system. 67.27% respondent feels that it is insufficient centers for the lifelong learning program. 78.18% respondent found the lack of practically field level trained staff in it. 70.90% respondent comment that the present curriculum is improper and does not suit the needs of community members. The 83.63% respondent informed the lack of awareness about the lifelong learning among the community members. Whereas, 34.54% respondent express other few problems too than above listed gaps in the community lifelong learning program.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Adult learners, particularly those with low skills, are more likely to participate in adult education and training when they believe their investment of time and money will benefit them in the labour market. This can mean improved job prospects for unemployed adults, or career advancement for adults who are already working. Yet adult learning providers face challenges in aligning their programming with labour market needs. Even when educational programs respond directly to identified skill shortages, it can be difficult to predict whether there will be enough interest among adult learners in the community to deliver the program. The variety of non-formal education programmes like literacy and continuing education, vocational training, career guidance, health education social awareness, sports and cultural activities, relevant knowledge to the target groups, positive changes in their attitude need to be develop yet. In addition to that necessary skills for income generation and better life style are also need to be developed among certain target groups and it could be a major part of lifelong learning program.

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