



Effective Communication Skills for Life Long Learning

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE



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Received on : 19/10/2023

Revised on : -----

Accepted on : 26/10/2023

Plagiarism : 08% on 19/10/2023



Plagiarism Checker X - Report

Originality Assessment

Overall Similarity: **8%**

Date: Oct 19, 2023

Statistics: 245 words Plagiarized / 3004 Total words

Remarks: Low similarity detected, check with your supervisor if changes are required.



ABSTRACT

The lifelong learning and education are related to life as a whole—not just to work. Learning throughout life is a continuum that should run from cradle to grave. Lifelong learning promotes the development of knowledge and competences that enables each citizen to adapt to the knowledge-based society and actively participate in all spheres of social and economic life. Therefore, provisions of lifelong learning to different sections of Indian society can help them to perpetuate their development on personal level, having greater individual autonomy and making a more active and productive contributor to society. Developing country like India having varied social, educational, economical and developmental standards demands the exploration and implementation of innovative ways to provide lifelong learning opportunities to every citizen. The area of adult education where prevails the shades of black and white mix and merge, where buildings, constructions, students and teachers cannot be counted and multiplied and where drop-out ratio and pass percentages count for a virtual closed-door policy. It was against this backdrop that a strong feeling was voiced for meaningful, enduring and substantial effort to induce policy and allocate higher investment priorities to the non-formal education for life long. 'Learning to live together' and 'culture for peace' is the goal of education for all with preamble of 'inclusive' and 'social cohesion'. Thus, lifelong learning has become a state of condition to achieve through inclusive initiatives. The focus of this paper is, therefore, on lifelong learning as a pathway of building knowledge society.

KEY WORDS

Continuum, Quality of life, Exploration, Constructions, UNESCO, Opportunities.

INTRODUCTION

In a knowledge society, in which we now are, knowledge is the most important resource, advancing at a never before seen pace, one has to continue the learning process to keep one's state-of-the-art to be competitive, all through one's own life. Life long learning is a process of accomplishing personal, social and professional development throughout the life span of individuals in order to enhance the quality of life of both individuals and their collectives. It includes formal, non-formal and informal patterns of learning throughout the life cycle of an individual for the conscious and continuous improvement of the quality of life of his own and that of the society as a whole. Lifelong learning and education are related to life as a whole – not just to work. Learning throughout life is a continuum that should run from cradle to grave. Lifelong learning promotes the development of knowledge and competences that enables each citizen to adapt to the knowledge-based society and actively participate in all spheres of social and economic life. Therefore, provisions of lifelong learning to different sections of Indian society can help them to perpetuate their development on personal level, having greater individual autonomy and making a more active and productive contributor to society. Developing country like India having varied social, educational, economical and developmental standards demands the exploration and implementation of innovative ways to provide lifelong learning opportunities to every citizen. The area of adult education where prevails the shades of black and white mix and merge, where buildings, constructions, students and teachers cannot be counted and multiplied and where drop-out ratio and pass percentages count for a virtual closed-door policy. Report of UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty – First century (Delors, 1996) reiterates that the learning to be, learning to know, learning to do, and learning to live together as the four pillars, the foundations, of education which can tap all the hidden talents of every person in any society. It emphasizes that such a lifelong learning will be one of the keys to meet the challenges of the twenty first century. It was against this backdrop that a strong feeling was voiced for meaningful, enduring and substantial effort to induce policy and allocate higher investment priorities to the non-formal education for life long. Thus, life-long learning has become a state of condition to achieve through inclusive initiatives. The focus of this paper is, therefore, on Life Long Learning as a pathway of building knowledge society.

Why Communication Skills Development is a Lifelong Learning Journey

Communication is a skill set, not just a single skill that you either have or don't have. It takes practice and commitment and can be applied in a variety of scenarios. You could be a brilliant presenter but choke when you're put on the spot in an interview. Maybe you're a genius at pitching and selling but you can't run an effective meeting. Or perhaps you're confident and capable in one-on-one situations but speaking to a group sends you into a panic.

The types of scenarios vary widely in which good communication is needed; from business negotiations to team meetings, presentations to the board to presentations to customers, managing up, managing down, online, offline, face to face, over the phone, in writing, even virtually. And that's before we even look at the different outcomes you want to achieve with your communication: inspire, console, motivate, encourage, reassure, the list goes on.

It stands to reason that such a complex skill set used across such a broad spectrum of situations should require regular practice, dedication, reflection, analysis and further refinement. That's why we offer a variety of training programs – to support your ongoing communication skills development.

Right to Education

The scope of adult learning is a pervasive and encompasses all human activities at all age levels of people.

The International Conferences on Adult Education were held in Elsinore, Denmark in 1949, in Montreal in 1960, in Tokyo in 1972 and in Paris in 1985 and passed vital declarations stressing the fundamental importance of the 'right to learn'. The focus is like thus: "The right to read and write; the right to question and analyze; the right to imagine and create; the right to read one's own world and to write history; and the right to have access." The changing role, broadening scope and growing importance of adult learning have skillfully but profoundly changed the very nature of adult and continuing education to life-long learning. The Government is, now, a mere 'facilitator' rather 'doer.' On the other, the emergence of partnership expansion, a wide array of organization has become more and more involved in educating people.

The World Declaration on Education for all at the landmark of Jomtien Conference held in Thailand on March 5-9, 1990 reaffirmed the right to learn and the commitment to meet the basic learning needs of all people by expanding learning opportunities..... and working for a fully literate society. Thus, the concept of adult education has changed in its concept, precept and focus making all people would be stakeholders possessing human capital by means of upgrading, the need based knowledge in the changing times.

Learning and People's Creativity: A Thread Bear Link

Learning is a cognitive activity which plays a crucial role in releasing the energy and creativity of people; and enables them to meet the complex challenges of the modern world. Future of the world rests on people's potential. As such, the knowledge people are a pre-requisite factor for finding opportunities for the nature's endowed resources and thereon converting them for the purpose of their socio-economic upliftment. This enables people to live together socially and that ultimately decides the holistic development of them. It focuses mainly on adults returning to organized learning rather than on the initial period of education or on incidental learning. A range of evidence to the clear economic benefits from lifelong learning is, infact, visible. All these observations clearly establish that Lifelong learning is an instrumental to meet challenges for development. What the people need and must be provided with, as niche, are opportunities for building up experiences to construct themselves intellectually and physically for gaining the competitive leverages in terms of acquiring skills, developing capacities and capabilities, and improving do-how practices for enrichment of human life. Smith and Spurling's (1999) reference to it as associated with consistent learning by people throughout their lifespan and covering all of life from the "cradle to the grave." In that conceptualization learning can begin at any age. Longworth and Davies (1996) defined lifelong learning as "the development of human potential through a continually supportive process which stimulated and empowers individuals to acquire all the knowledge, values, skills and understanding they will require throughout their lifetimes and to apply them with confidence, creativity and enjoyment in all role, circumstances and environments".

Empowering People through Education

Education is regarded both as means and as an end itself of realizing other desirable ends. It provides enormous impetus to the development of the poorer countries of the world, by providing opportunities for individuals, especially women, to achieve their potential and contribute meaningfully to their communities. Education not only imparts technical information – reading, writing, mathematics, sciences – but it provides opportunities for self – discovery and personal enrichment. This knowledge and increased understanding of their place in the world and their community empower individuals to more effectively realize their desires and achieve their potentials. Through education, individuals are better able to enjoy healthy life-styles, achieve the desired number and spacing of children, undertake to type of work that they wish to undertake and, in sum, better manage their lives. When aggregated these individual choices, decisions and improvements have powerful effects on individual development vis-à-vis national development.

India has the biggest literacy problem and accounts for about one-third of the world's adult illiterates. The most astounding fact is that India had 25.96 % adult illiterates as per 2011 census. In the new millennium, India is in grave danger of knowledge revolution by-passing half of its adult population, the price the country has to pay in terms of learning, technology and human resources development which all can well be imagined.

Literacy rates have, undoubtedly, and virtually trebled from 18.30 in 1951 to 74.04 in 2011. With regard to literacy rate between men women during 2001-11 period, it is recorded that literacy level among the men is 31.98 per cent while the same among women is 49.10 per cent significantly registering 17 per cent more than men literacy. This might be possible because of introduction of Saakshara Bharat Programme in the year 2009. Even though endeavors are made in improving literacy levels which have been largely neutralized by population explosion and social disparities. Two out of every three male are literate and two out of every three female are illiterate. Thus, the strengthening bond in gaining knowledge between males and female is two-thirds and one-third respectively; a bias which denying the principle of empowering women being advocated by the Government. The literacy rates during 1951- 2011 are shown in the following table:

Literacy rates in India: 1951 - 2011

Census Year	Persons	Males	Females	Male-Female gap in literacy rate
1951	18.33	27.16	8.86	18.30
1961	28.03	40.04	15.35	25.05
1971	34.45	45.96	21.97	23.98
1981	43.57	56.38	29.76	26.62
1991	52.21	64.13	39.29	24.84
2001	64.83	75.26	53.67	21.59
2011	74.04	82.14	65.46	16.68

(Source: Population Register)

Notes

1. Literacy rates for 1951, 1961 and 1971 Census relate to population aged five years and above. The rates for the year 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011 Census relate to the population aged seven years and above.
2. The 1981 Literacy rates exclude Assam where the 1981 Census could not be conducted. The 1991 Census Literacy rates exclude Jammu and Kashmir.

With the launching of the National Adult Education Programme in 1978, the first attempt was made to meet the challenges of adult education. A little was sustained in terms of teachers' interest and even less to encourage the total involvement of participants. The National Literacy Mission refers literacy as acquiring the skills of reading, writing and enhancing arithmetic ability to apply them to one's day-to-day life. Thus, the goal of the National Literacy Mission goes beyond the simple achievement of self-reliance in literacy and numeracy of functional literacy.

The achievement of functional literacy implies:

- Self-reliance in 3 R's.
- Becoming aware of the causes of deprivation and moving towards amelioration of their condition by participating in the process of development.
- Acquiring skills to improve their economics status and general well-being.
- Imbibing values of national integration, conservation of environment, women's equality, observance of small family norms, etc.

The acquisition of functional literacy results in empowerment and a definite improvement in the quality of life. It helps to ensure the participation of the masses in sharing the benefits of the information era. The Mission has made over 60 million people literates and, of late, has made the continuing education programme access to all adults in the vicinity for Life Long Learning with facilities for reading and writing, skills improvement,

recreation, information dissemination and cultural pursuits that anybody in the community is free to use. The unique experiment has focused on a campaign mobilizing people in a large scale from all walks of life through the multifaceted communication and motivation strategy highlighting the vital link between 'literary' and 'living.'

Learning Process

A policy articulating adult education, adult learning and life-long learning what is by far the most fundamental trend in education and training today; which all but for employment as a means to inclusion is an inevitable measure. Learning what the client does, driven by his needs and motivations. Education to learning is part of the societal economic development. Hence, need arose to look into the learning process a panacea for many problems in the society.

The education process which is at the centre of educational triangle is the teacher the thought content and the learner at the bottom. It is the teacher's job to transfer the content to the learner. The process of learning is done by no one but the learner to (i) learn and (ii) facility-resources such as books and other media, time and place for learning, learning method and professional support guiding the learning process.

A number of individuals enrolled with a kinship for work-based learning; learning by exploring and experimenting, learning by doing. In view of this changed trend, the Government adapted to the education of mass reaching the unreached by creating a non-university subsystem and other educational pathway. In this enhanced scope for widening education in life long, the very core of learning process, the teacher-centered education remained the dominant design. The Government should kindle the propagation of educational arrangements meeting the non-cognitive learning styles implying the social inclusion. Mere widening access for individuals to the educational institutions which are not designed for them does not strive for achieving the thrust of learning as a process of continuum.

Conducive Environment Induces Learning Attitudes

As long as a learner has motivation, any learning environment will do, provided that it suits his/her style and motivation. A professional who guides the learning process may be (i) a traditional teacher or trainer or (ii) a mentor, a colleague in which absent is self-guided learning. New ideas for creation of new knowledge and competencies that have come into focus. Knowledge is not only found at research work but at the workplace between colleagues, between various actors in the social arena, between companies and scientists as well. In other words, knowledge is the result of organizational change and Organizational learning is the basic process as the means of mechanism of knowledge creation, articulation and dissemination for societal prosperity.

Online and Virtual Communication Training

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CONCLUSION

The empowering people through education are a continuous process of learning. That makes the individuals to be the productive individual and in turn adds his/her hidden knowledge facilitates the knowledge society. The following are the suggestive measures for improving the process of continuous learning are as follows:

- The new concept of Self-Help Group which is in operation develops human skills through training on the need based of the locality. The Self-Help Groups support by commercial banks with provision of credit and support the subsidy component by the Government is well structured basically and organized on democratic way. This approach can be utilized for the purpose of educating people.
- The post-adult education is being made to learn in 'Industrial Unit' as worker during off-hours who inturn educates others. In this arena exist a mutual thrust between the employer and the employee which would commit in teacher (industrial unit) and taught (student-worker) relation making every feasible.
- The management of industrial unit can also train and develop learner with 'job skills' who is undergoing the process of learning under its coaching class; which would benefit both the Unit and the learner.
- Bring the nearby industry into the fold of adopting village(s) for which the support from the Government in the form of no education cess would fascinate the Life Long Learning.
- Learning is a social cause for socio-economic development; in which all the concerned functionaries and Government agencies including Universities should involve themselves with true spirit and enthusiasm.
- Government intervention beyond the basic skills and knowledge should be targeted to learners from low-income or socially excluded groups and others facing high barriers to learning

For any unorganized system like lifelong learning expecting meaningful results, equity with equality for developing human resource is a strategic niche. Towards this, every branch of an organization that must adopt a passion for making people knowledgeable who inturn would build a knowledgeable society in long-run. The role of Government should not only be facilitator but provider of means for achieving the end-result of knowledge.

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