



LIFE-LONG LEARNING FOR WOMEN–ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

Human resources play a prominent role in accelerating the pace of socio – economic development of the nation. A nation with a large population may not be a rich country but its prosperity depends on the level of awareness knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes possessed by its population. India's strength lies in the human resource base and there is a need to transfer these human beings as human resources with continuous upgradation of skills and abilities. Women constitute 50 per cent of the population and contributing to the national development. Providing equal opportunities for learning devoid of gender becomes a powerful tool of changing the status of women in the society. It is well known fact that women with stern developments have launched their talent in varied areas and have made an incredible identity for themselves in the society; their status today has undergone a drastic change from what it was in the past. This is one side of the coin which educated and urban women enjoy and yet other side of the coin mainly in the rural areas still the women suffer from submission, dependency and their work is unrecognized and uncounted. In this present globalized, technological and competitive society, the emerging new age women should have the ability to equip themselves with education there by seeking her own identity, confidence and self-respect. In order to attain and sustain this status there is a need to continuous up gradation of skills and abilities for which lifelong learning is the effective means. In this paper the status of women need of lifelong learning obstacles that hinder the women to adopt lifelong learning, need of the involvement of universities in promoting lifelong learning among women were discussed.

KEYWORDS : Life-long Learning- Concept- need-Obstacles

INTRODUCTION

Human resources play a prominent role in accelerating the pace of socio –economic development of the nation. A nation with a large population may not be a rich country but its prosperity depends on the level of awareness knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes possessed by its population. India's strength lies in the human resource base and there is a need to transfer these human beings as human resources with continuous upgradation of skills and abilities. Women constitute 50 per cent of the population and contributing to the national development. Providing equal opportunities for learning devoid of gender becomes a powerful tool of changing the status of women in the society. It is well known fact that women with stern developments have launched their talent in varied areas and have made an incredible identity for themselves in the society; their status today has undergone a drastic change from what it was in the past. This is one side of the coin which educated and urban women enjoy and yet other side of the coin mainly in the rural areas still the women suffer from submission, dependency and their work is unrecognized and uncounted. In this present globalised, technological and competitive society, the emerging new age women should have the ability to equip themselves with education there by seeking her own identity, confidence and self respect. In order to attain and sustain this status there is a need to continuous up gradation of skills and abilities for which lifelong learning is the effective means.

Status of Women

As per 2011 census India's population comprising of 48.5 per cent females and 51.5 per cent male. Out of 150.18 million households in the rural areas only 11.1 per cent are female headed. In the urban sector 10.9 per cent households are female headed. 57.4 per cent women in the rural areas and 50.9 per cent women in urban areas suffered from anemia (2005-06 censuses). The maternal mortality rate is 212 during 2007.09. The work force participation rate of females in rural sector was 26.1 per cent (2009-10) while that for males was 54.7 per cent. In urban sector, it was 13.8 per cent for female and 54.3 per cent for male.

The data highlighted above indicates that there is a need to address intra and extra household gender inequalities by giving equal amenities and chances to women to learn on par with men. Recognizing that women were also the key persons in development, learning may be viewed as a process and they should be motivated to adopt Life-Long Learning to participate actively in all spheres of social and economic life impacting their own future.

Concept of Life Long Learning

Evolved from the term "Life –Long Learners", created by Leslie Watkins and used by Professor Clint Taylor(1993), the term recognizes that learning is not confined to childhood or the class room but takes place throughout life and in a range of situations.

Constant scientific and technological innovation and change has had profound effects on how learning is understood. Learning can no longer be divided into a place and time to acquire knowledge and a place and time to apply the knowledge acquired instead, learning can be seen as something takes place on an ongoing basis from our daily interactions with others and with the world around us.

Need of Life Long Learning for Women

The Global trend (including India) is for girl/women to be less included and less involved in all stages of the development process and to benefit less from positive results of development. They have historically experienced and continue to experience gender discrimination. The progress and development of any nation cannot be measured only through the scientific and technological advances but also through the quality of life of the people. The growth of a nation lies with the competence of the population among which half of them were women. Their role is not only limited to management of house but also to handle the responsibility of their own and society development. Hence, the women should expand their awareness, embrace self –fulfillment and to create multidimensional life. To achieve this, life-long learning is the key and gives them a chance to acquire the knowledge

and skills they need to lead a healthy, productive citizens and active participants in the community contributing to long term development. Among women Life long learning promotes the qualities such as;

To keep pace with development of new knowledge

Life-Long Learning enables the women to gather information and widen their knowledge in all spheres of life. It increase their understanding of why and what's of happening in the surroundings and fully develop their wisdom.

Ability to increased use of technology

Society is in a state of constant flex. Life-Long Learning enables the women to keep up with changes in the technology. Using of ICT, e-learning and the media helps the women to widen access, developing alternative learning approaches to integrate women who have stopped developing their potential in the midway. It can be done by promoting Life-Long Learning among women.

Widening their participation in public affairs

Life-Long Learning increases their capacity to participate in different kinds of groups associations which leads an atmosphere of leadership and networking. It articulates and facilitates the raising of women's concerns and priorities in Grama Sabhas, PRLs and local bodies.

Inculcate a sense of worth

Life-Long Learning paves the way that women are worthy of appreciation because to place themselves in high ranking and play their role as an active contributors of development along with roles as a wife, mother and many other relations which are sensitive.

Develops work motivation

Life-Long Learning is an essential tool it can lend a guidance and choice to the women and gives opportunity to find and pursue the path and order to empower themselves. It gives them ability to gain access to new ideas and leads to the development of the working organization.

Enhancing Capacity to solve problems

Life-Long Learning gives the women the strength to think, how to handle a situation or the problem and to decide what kind of decision might be useful and worthy for the family or for the community.

Paves the way from Learners to Earners

Earlier the income of women is considered as supplementary in addition to her husband's earning. Now it is considered on par with the earning of men. Participation of women in the Life-Long Learning programmes like vocational training enable them to get employed in any organization or get self employed, therefore it leads to income generation and gives the confidence to the cope up with the problems, fears and to balance the dual responsibilities of their families and work place.

Obstacles to Promote Life-Long Learning for Women

- Lack of motivation, socio-cultural beliefs, faiths and family responsibilities are coming across the way to permit women to learn in spite of the provision of all motivational factors.
- Aging is accepted as one of the barrier and de motivating factor to ensure life- long learning as it is presumed that working ability of an individual used to decrease beyond the age of 60 onwards and they were of the feeling that therefore, retirement from active services is needed making a person to live in free life style.
- In a rigid and non permissive society divided into classes and groups and where achievement or success in life is

being measured of always in terms of productivity and financial out comes Life-Long Learning may not flourish appropriately.

- Proper guidance and counseling for women without which selection of right track for Life-Long Learning remains a difficult problem.
- Lack of trained educators and providers for pursuing learning in right and optimally suitable direction on the basis of individual needs and abilities.

Role of Universities in Promoting Life-Long Learning

Universities are resource base with a wide variety of departments functioning as teaching units and also as knowledge generating units through research at various levels. Given the ongoing process of globalization, demographic shifts and rapid pace of technological advancement, the universities have an increased role to provide life-long learning opportunities to move from elite to a mass system ensuring that education and learning are available to a diverse population. Therefore the universities should adopt Life Long Learning as a crucial part of its education strategy.

- To heighten learner's awareness on different spheres of life.
- To facilitate learners transitions between personal, academic and professional contexts and ways.
- To encourage learners self efficiency and particularly motivation to transfer their skills to real work context.

Keeping this important role in view, Universities should design the programmes of three main strands i.e., Programme for women with little or no education offering to promote personal interest, programmes for women to continue or to pursue higher education, vocational education to offer a second chance who could not follow the traditional pathways, Programme for working women intended to improve their performance at work place.

- As providers of Life Long Learning, Innovation in learning and teaching approaches is a priority and the universities should therefore consider designing programmes to respond to this demand.
- Training a professional teaching force to teach the women learners with different needs and levels of education.
- Developing curricula and teaching learning materials for learners with different needs.
- Enriching Life Long Learning by conducting a series of research projects on Life Long Learning strategies, methodologies etc.,
- Providing consultancy to other agencies or providers of Life Long Learning to women to monitor and evaluate the performance of Life Long learners.
- Developing partnerships with other educational institutions, employers, employees organizations (trade union) as well as with stake holders at local, regional, national and international levels to provide attractive and relevant programmes if provision is to be responsive, flexible and innovative.
- Universities should act as role models by offering Life Long Learning opportunities for their own employees, whether academic, administrative or technical staff.

Status of Life Long Learning in Universities

In India few universities have the centre for Life Long Learning which is to be strengthened to function well. All universities should establish a separate department and should start a discipline of Life Long Learning to take entire responsibility of the implementation of lifelong learning programmes. All departments or disciplines should be involved in designing and organizing the lifelong learning programmes related to latest developments in their disciplines depending upon the needs of the learners. The Life Long Learning programmes

will be effectively organized by the universities by developing a clear policy, programmes for different groups of women with skillful design and financial support, partnership with different organizations and performance i.e., Life Long Learning programmes promoting social security, inclusion and employment.

CONCLUSION

Universities committed to lifelong learning must be evaluated in terms of their capacity to design adequate lifelong learning programmes, Institutional and financial support they provide to socially vulnerable persons in life and work situations. Capacity to adapt their own internal structures and procedures to the requirements of the different groups of learners and changing labour market conditions.

To make the efforts of providers of LLL successful, the women should recognize the importance of lifelong learning and adapt lifelong learning for their own development.

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