Significance of New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 for Adult Education and Lifelong Learning Program

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: *Adult Education Program is an imperative platform to spread literacy, raising awareness, functional amenabilities and sensitize each member of the community irrespective of age, region and religion. National Adult Education Program (NAEP) was initiated on 2nd October, 1978 to spread literacy among community belonging to the age groups 15-35 years. However, with emergence of various implementing challenges and demands of the community, Adult Education was transfigured to Lifelong learning to engulf people of all age groups and all regions with special emphasis on socially and economically deprived sections of the community.*

Design/ Methodology/ Approach: *Present review highlights the role of New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in proliferating adult education and lifelong learning programs in the current digital world. The emergence of Digital India and Atma Nirbhar Bharat makes it indispensable for each member of the community to be well aware of the basic skills that are imperative to be an independent and useful member of the society. To address the unforeseen challenges observed in India's education landscape after COVID-19 pandemic scenario, it become inevitable to sensitize each member of the community with updated knowledge and skills.*

Findings/Result: *As explained by Maclver who was a member of American Sociological Society, has explained the concept of society as a web of social relations. Current scenario has made it imperative to realize the significance of Adult education and lifelong learning. The author suggested that Adult Education and Lifelong Learning is a web of Skill Development Program. In current digital India and Atma Nirbhar Bharat, where technology advancements has emerged on a significant height, Adult Education and Life Long Learning plays a vital role in making the society economically independent.*

Originality/New knowledge: *The novelty in current review and NEP 2020 lies in transition from National Education Policy 1986 aiming at spreading functional literacy among community to NEP 2020 aiming at enhancing skill development and dissemination of skill development programs among community to make them economically independent and a useful member in the society.*

Paper type: *Review Article*

Keywords: New Education Policy, Adult Education, Lifelong learning, Digital India, Community, Literacy.

1. INTRODUCTION :

The sudden overdependence on technology with emergence of Digital India has brought with it various bottle necks that need to be overcome to have equity among all members of the society [1]. Literacy and skill development are two stringent veritable to be worked upon for building a participant, inclusive and vibrant community [1, 2]. Saakshar Bharat Mission (SBM) launched on 8th September, 2009 (International Literacy Day) by Government of India especially for the districts having low female literacy rates of ≈ 50 % or below. Lifelong learning policy in India has slow evolution due to lack of its articulate picture in terms of nomenclature and disciplinary status and its correlation with Adult and Continuing Education Program. The five phases namely; Concept of Basic Literacy (1882-1947), Concept of Social Education (1948-64), Concept of Functional Literacy (1965-77), Concept of Developmental Literacy (1978-2008) and Concept of Lifelong Learning (2009 onwards) determine the

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various evolution phases of Adult Education Program. Concept of Basic Literacy was in the pre-independence era with focussed curriculum on 3 R's of reading, writing and arithmetic skills. The stories demonstrating historical significance, health, hygiene, first aid practices and basic etiquettes were also the part of this curriculum. The second phase Concept of Social Education was an integrated program with Community Development Program and emphasized on social education inculcating significant social aspects of the society. Further evolution towards revitalizing education paradigm was made with initiation of the Concept of functional literacy. Functional literacy integrates literacy with the occupation of the learner and beginning of implementing this project started with Farmers Training and Functional Literacy Project (FTFLP). This was done to integrate a clientele in proliferation of agriculture research and development (R&D) by sensitizing farmers about the various agrochemical products, identify labels of fertilizers, amenability to read popular useful agriculture articles and magazines. All these consolidations will spur assets to their agriculture production and hence their unequivocal contribution in ensuring food security of India. National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) was conceived in India during the fifth phase of Concept of Developmental Literacy aiming to contribute towards liberation and overall development of each community member. The policy support to Adult Education research was identified in 1980s and acceleration of research in adult education evolved in 1991s. National Policy on Education 1986 mentions that adult education would assure the parities in social, gender and economic parameters. The Program of Action (1992) states that the accentuation in adult education program should be on skill development, awareness generation among the learners of national objectives, liberation from oppression and other development activities. This implies that not only social development, but it also aimed to create awareness among people about various policies, law, rights and duties of the government and people for successive implementation of the strategy of redistributive justice. From 2009 onwards, to achieve the aim of dwindling the non-literate groups, communities were spurred to develop lifelong learning paradigm approach to foster a niche environment for striding towards ameliorate education system. The New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has been drafted to integrate lucrative output in the education system in current digital India [3-5]. Especially various impediments arising due to online banking and transactions frauds and deplorable activities makes it indispensable to spread awareness, literacy and basic skills to each member of a society [5-7].

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE PAPER :

(i) To understand the role of NEP 2020 in promoting Adult literacy and lifelong learning programs in India.
(ii) Analyzing various platforms imperative to foster growth and development of Adult Education and Lifelong learning programs.
(iii) Various policies and impact of implementation strategies for success of these programs.

3. METHODOLOGY OF DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS :

The data collection and key features related to Adult education and lifelong learning approaches and policies were taken from the reported literature in the research papers and policy reviews. The theories and approaches utilized and reviewed by the authors and researchers was clubbed in a tabular form and analyzed step by step. Impact of versatile parameters inculcating social, economic, political, digital framework, literacy training paradigms, gender parity and many others are taken into account while analyzing their role in NEP 2020 for adult learners.

4. RELATED WORK :

4.1 Role Of Nep 2020 In Adult Education And Lifelong Learning

The National Literacy Mission launched in 1988 inculcated voluntary support and participation that resulted in significant amendment in national literacy from 1991-2011. It further elucidated the need of the concept of lifelong learning in dynamic world with seizure challenges to work upon [1, 2]. NEP 2020 proposes a complete articulate paradigm curriculum of adult education by NCERT with at least 5 types of programs namely; foundational literacy and numeracy, basic education, critical life skills, vocational skills development and continuing education. The framework for these programs will be envisioned on the basis of adult learners. Appropriate infrastructure like special Adult Education centres (AECs) and Vocational Training centres (VTCs) with an incentivizing and easy access to the adult

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learners will be spurred. Recruitment of well trained, skilled and high qualified teachers for imparting the above mentioned 5 program skills to the adult and lifelong learners will be the paradigm approach to be followed. Innovative polices competitive with seizure technologies and quagmire challenges with diligent participation of community in achieving the aim of 100 % literacy to be followed by NEP 2020 [8, 9]. The sharing of infrastructure of educational institutes like schools, colleges, vocational centres and other skill development centres will be imperative to ensure well utilization of human resource, existing resources and amend the efficacy of the program [3, 5]. Proper shackling, monitoring and supervising team for the instructors of Adult education and lifelong learning programs will be followed to ensure successful implementation of these programs. Especially the role of social activists and social councillors to track and ensure the tapping of school dropouts and non-enrolled students will be an imperative source to achieve this aim. Easy access and availability of online and offline books to the community is imperative to inculcate the habit of reading among community members and educational institutions. In this context, the policy recommends strengthening and modernizing of all educational institutes libraries including the public libraries. It will be the responsibility of the central and state government to monitor the affordable cost price of these books and their distribution strategies to ensure it access and availability to the people belonging to each section of the society, especially the disadvantaged section of the society. Quality and updated technology will be utilized for adult learners to undertake the objective of Digital India and Atma Nirbhar Bharat. It will include updating and strengthening existing libraries and creating animated online courses, modules, learning apps, e-books, satellite based TV channels, ICT equipped libraries and other adult and lifelong learning centres. Both governments, philanthropic and other crowd sourcing initiatives will form a consortium to undertake this process.

4.2. Platforms Required For Adult Education And Lifelong Learning Program
The rising life expectancy, reducing early retirement and prolonged employment age, revolution in digital technology in the past ten years has elicited the significance of lifelong learning for adult members of the community [10, 11]. Various impediments and perspectives have been reported for better learning at advanced education levels to keep one updated with seizure technologies [12]. A particular issue that need to be contemplated to ensure quality education is to shackle the teaching methodologies and infrastructure of educational institutes and universities [12]. Especially the proletariat class need to be updated with current skill education to be a useful member in the society [13]. Therefore, current government policies are targeted towards innovative approaches of lifelong learning towards adult learners to retain them in employment sector and utilizing their skills wisely [10]. Hieronymus et al. [14] have reported the influence of four factors incentivizing adult education program namely; requirement to seek democracy deliberately, significance of vital communities, efficacy of groups and enabling mature adults [14]. It aims in inculcating the responsible behaviour in terms of group leader and group participator in any community group or program working towards a better society [14-16]. The classifications of state and local organizations role in proliferating adult education programs lies in establishment of strong adult education leadership in the state departments of education, consultancy services, dissemination, research and financial access by state organizations and restricted to specific community for local organizations, respectively [14-16]. Midtsundstad et al. [10] has reviewed the impact of formal adult learning programs on employment sector and labour market participation and have found strong correlation of the basic skills imparted to them with their output efficacy. Bratsberg et al. [17] has reported an imperative contribution of vocational upper-secondary education in averting unemployment risks with amended opportunities of re-employment for adult learners. Picchio et al. [18] has also emphasized the role of various training centres and other training firms for increasing employment opportunities for the community. The organizations undertaking the job of research in Adult Education are Indian Council for Social Science Research, University Grants Commission (UGC), Department of Social Welfare and Women, NITI Ayog, Commonwealth bodies, National Council of Educational Research and Training, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and International Labour Organization (ILO). The aim of these research organizations is to generate evidence based data in determining the illiteracy rates in various regions and different economic sections of the society and their various causes and impact. In addition, a strong need to bridge the gap between research and practice is imperative and be implemented to ensure appropriate

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spur and success of adult literacy program among community [19-21]. Hieronymus et al. [14] has elucidated the age criteria for grasping, learning and acquiring significant skills by the community and emphasized the role of perceiving and learning by the adult learners. Dickson et al. [22] has articulated the role of arts and creativity in making learning innovative and interesting for adult learners, which will help them to learn faster and integrate incentives for better learning. This concept is also followed by NEP 2020 for both pre-school education and lifelong learning programs as it allows incentive steps to prevent school dropouts in due course of time [22, 23].

4.3. Special Needs and Approaches For Adult Learners

Interactive learning environments have certain approaches and protocols to be followed by to efficiently sensitize adult learners. Case studies conducted in this paradigm emphasize an imperative requisite of personal, social and educational amendments in adult education and lifelong programs [24, 25]. There are various approaches followed in Adult Education and Lifelong learning programs [26-30]. These approaches are imperative to empower amenable skills in adults to be more marketable for employment opportunities [26-28]. In addition, self-control, patience and psychological factors play a vital role in imparting self-directed learning to adult learners [29, 30]. Creativity and utilization of music in imparting education in such programs integrate significant inputs in this domain [31-33]. This is because it not only makes learning easy, entertaining and interesting but also helps in solving various mental problems of adult learners [34-40]. Shubenkova et al. [36] has made categorical differentiation of adult learners on the basis of age groups, generations and its special education needs (as depicted in table 1) and various approaches followed in this domain (table 2). The aim of Saakshar Bharat/Adult Education Policy is to spread literacy among society by targeting non-literate and neo-literate of 15 years and above [41]. Lifelong learning forms a consortium of both formal and non-formal education inculcating training and skill development [42]. Therefore, needs of adult education program and learners are dependent on the levels of learning contributing to sustainable development and poverty alleviation [43]. The competencies to acquire skills and amend their existing skills enable them to increase income of the community as better skills and higher education levels are a proxy for more skills and generate higher incomes [44-46]. Various concepts of Adult learning inculcating real-life learning, self-directed learning, learning-how-to-learn, andragogy and other learning strategies are vital approaches for conducting an interactive adult education program [47-50]. Table 3 lists the details and significance of these concepts for adult learners.

Table 1: Different categories of Adult and Lifelong Learners

Category number	Category Age group	Category Type
1	18-25	To be provided with suitable and sufficient education opportunities. To provide suitable employment opportunities and trainings for skills enhancement.
2	25-45	Enhancing professional skills to make them markedly independent
3	Above 45	Mutual teaching with interaction from 1st and 2nd categories

Table 2: Various approaches followed for Adult Literacy and Lifelong program are:

S. No.	Teaching Method	Approach adopted	Remarks
1.	Knowledge	Brainstorming sessions in groups, Focussed group discussions, Lectures, seminars and demonstrations	Aim is to collect creative ideas in groups to impart quality and skilled education
2.	Understanding	Home reading tasks, Focusing specific topics, discussions in small knowledge circles	Aim is to understand specific situations and relevant knowledge among specific topics

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3.	Skills	Paradigm study contract	Aim is to provide pre-determined and contract skills depending on professional background and applied skill
4.	Value	Sensitizing sessions in groups, Small knowledge circle discussions	Evaluation and priorities added to skills impartment sources
5.	Attitude	Analyzing certain situations with their responses	Group members are encouraged to share their ideas and thoughts on a common problem discussed in groups.

Table 3: Different Concepts of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning

Concept	Detail	Significance
Real life learning	Learning from daily experiences, dilemmas and opportunities	This informal teaching experience makes them self-reliant to handle practical situations wisely.
Self-directed learning	Initiative is taken from the learner as per his/ her learning needs without seeking anyone's help. Learners identify the resources and parameters imperative for his learning strategy.	It allows a learner to explore all the platforms available for learning paradigm and gives freedom of speech, expression and innovation.
Learning-how-to-learn	To help learners to acquire knowledge and skills in paradigm manner as per requisite of profession and training process. Planning, Conducting and Evaluating are three imperative systematic paradigms followed in this formal education approach.	Teaching-learning exchange and practicing training skills in appropriate formal education program helps learners to achieve the goal and specific target set by them or their mentor.
Andragogy	Understanding the art and science of training adult learners. Self-concept, experience, learning readiness and knowledge adaptation are the key parameters identifying andragogy of a learner.	Andragogy is significant parameters to identify the type of program to be implemented for a specific learner.
Learning strategies	Learning styles and learning strategies decide the learning situation and ability of an adult learner	Learning techniques are selected depending on amenability of a learner.

5. COMPARISON OF NEP 2020 WITH EXISTING POLICIES IN THE CONTEXT OF ADULT EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING :

NEP 2020 aims in promoting lifelong learning and adult education to avert obsoleteness in individuals in terms of modern skills, updated knowledge, maturity and satisfaction in their lifestyles [5, 50-52]. Educability, opportunity and motivation are three imperative paradigms for successful functioning of adult education program [52-55]. Vocational training to help individuals to develop ample skills with productive value and economic opportunities acts as suitable incentives to promote self-reliance among adults [56-59]. Therefore NEP 2020 has integrated this paradigm platform which was not emphasized in existing NEP 1986. Strawn et al. [60] has elaborated the various policies promoting the proliferation of Adult Education Program. He has emphasized the role of post-secondary education, training and workforce development institutions to support community in employment sector to support their families [61-63]. For instance, after digital India and COVID pandemic, utilization of mobile smart phones has become an imperative skill for each member of a society in one form or the other [63]. Therefore, digital coding, imparting online and tech-savvy skills are significant assets for a lifelong

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learning program [64-66]. Different Pedagogic practices emphasizing on adult learners strength and enhancing their skills, instead of working on their deficits will prove to be an incentive approach for lifelong learners [67, 68]. Amaral et al. [69] has reported a critical comparative analysis of 54 lifelong learning policies that have been implemented in around 9 European countries. The impacts, effects and responses of adult learners and their correlation with objectives and orientations of these programs have been discussed in detail. Lifelong learning policies in the recent scenario aim at structuring, preparing, correcting and improving transitions towards labour market from education, especially for early school leavers helping them to earn employment with appropriate and sufficient training [69-72]. Economic growth and social inclusions are two imperative parameters tapped upon in current lifelong learning policies [73-75]. Individuals not in education, employment nor training referred as NEETs are targeted in NEP 2020 with employment centred polices with an objective of individual guidance, activation and life course de-standardisation [76-78]. It aimed with an articulate of amending employability opportunities for the community, irrespective of his/ her educational background, lifestyle and amenability [79, 80]. However, as per the feedbacks and responses received from the targeted groups, policies should be drafted based on research data and evidence based approaches from both state level and national level situations. This is because it's imperative to understand the role, impact and functioning paradigm of each state in amending quality education and skills impartment strategies to the community [81-86]. The role of gender parity and equal participation of women in adult education program is another imperative approach to foster proliferation of adult education projects [87-90]. This is because social impact on adult literacy project has been reported by the researchers to affect implementation mechanism of lifelong learning projects [90-93].

5.1 Various policies and impact of implementation strategies for success of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning Programs

Adult Education Program is not a new concept. Various policies have been introduced and amended by the government from time to time in the name of Social Education, National Adult Education Program, National Adult Education Program for Education, Total Literacy Campaign (Adult Literacy Program) and National Literacy Mission [94, 95]. These programs implemented functional literacy among adults because at that time around 44 crores population of India was illiterate in the age group 15-35 years. For instance, the key concept initiated in 1947 was "Basic Education" based on traditional approach and night schools. In the year span of 1949 to 1966, it transformed to "Civic Literacy" emphasizing on Social Education. In the next 10 years from 1966 to 1977 "Functional Literacy" concept was initiated emphasizing on versatile functional literacy programs, Shramik Vidyapiths and Farmers Education. Total Literacy Campaigns started from 1978 onwards were based on the concept of "Development Literacy" following social change approach. National Adult Education Program (NAEP) was formulated by the government in 1978 and in 1980s University Grants Commission (UGC) bestowed significant funding grants to 93 Universities to promote an expansion in University Adult Education in India. Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP) launched in May 1986 as a sub-program of Adult Education Program funded by central governments and implemented by Union Territories (UTs) and states. RFLP was based on the principle of "Each one Teach One" and involved various National Service Scheme (NSS) workers and student volunteers of colleges and Universities to make this program successful. National Literacy Mission (NLM) launched on May, 1988 aiming in imparting functional literacy to around 80 million illiterate community lying in 15-35 age groups by 1995. NLM achieved 80 % success rate in 1995 which was an impressive value as compared to 36 % success rate in 1981. However slow success in the past programs and polices lies in planning measures at state level and not appropriate absorption and implementation interests and strategies at district and village levels [96, 97]. Therefore, presently the focus of Adult Education Program has been shifted towards literacy program focusing Skill Development Program. It will not only incentivize successive participation form villages and districts to adopt and implement these programs, but will also involve state, districts and village representatives to participate significantly in these programs. This is because skill development programs are an imperative source of livelihood and income for the community, which will further help in overall development of community, village, district, state and nation as a whole [98, 99].

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Table 4: Various programs recommended for facilitating adult education and lifelong learning programs

Year	Programs	Details	Ref.
1990	Ram Murti Review Committee	National Literacy Mission (NLM) and Mahila Samakhya should be well utilized for integrating momentum into adult education program	[51]
1996	European Year of Lifelong Learning	Identified four pillars of an individual development namely; learning to be, learning to know, learning to do and learning to live together.	[52, 53]
2002	The Hyderabad Statement on Adult and Lifelong Learning	Lifelong education requires horizontal integration and vertical articulation with dynamic approach and using alternative patterns.	[52-55]
2002	Four dimensions of lifelong learning approach namely; target groups, knowledge, contents and systems	Target groups inculcate children, youths, workers and aging. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) determines various aspects of lifelong learning that leads to an enriching life of self-fulfilment.	[56, 57]

6. SUGGESTIONS FOR LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMS :

For attaining sustainable economic structure, six programs for implementing lifelong learning programs were constituted by Turkish Republic European Union Ministry in 2011 as demonstrated in table 5 [56]. The major thematic areas required to be understood before initiating adult education program are learning characteristics, attitude, market, regulatory forces, social and economic policies, organizational climate and participating populations [100-102].

Table 5: Six programs for lifelong learning projects

S. No.	Program	Aim of the program	Details
1.	Erasmus	To foster collaboration between higher education institutions	To improve employment opportunities for university graduates by developing the system of higher Education institutions in line with the requirements of the business world.
2.	Comenius	To imbibe cultural and moral values among people	Target audience are primary and secondary institutes and other educational faculties.
3.	Grundtvig	To compete changing structure of knowledge	Focuses on imparting informal education to adults
4.	Leonardo Da Vinci	To amend and support occupational education policies of countries	Occupational education and Its related practices are the basis of this programme.
5.	Jean Monnet	To incentivize research and intellectual activities in European Integration studies	Supports the institutions working under this objective
6.	Common Subject	To support the recognition and quality of the education system of the countries	Supporting countries working to attain and contributing for this objective

Several studies have reported the concept of digital literacy as an imperative tool to extent lifelong learning program in current digital world [103-105]. Therefore, skill expertise in basic computer and

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orientation courses in computers are required for each individual to extent the scope of lifelong learning [106-109].

7. CONCLUSIONS :

Role of various platforms and policies imperative for implementation of various adult education programs strongly govern the effective spread of quality education among community. The successful implementation of policies depends on consortium of well trained, qualified and skilled stakeholders working towards a common domain. Adult education and lifelong learning programs are a significant source to obviate any impediments hampering development of an individual irrespective of age, profession, lifestyle and skills imparted. Therefore, NEP 2020 will serve as a valuable source for effective implementation of Adult education and lifelong learning program.

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