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Importance of Lifelong Learning

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Introduction:

Learning is a continuous process. Teaching is an integral part of learning. In the beginning of the human life hunting was the main topic of learning because it was related to the hunger. After that farming cultivation was the main part of learning. It was the common practice of education.

After a long time, in our country, the Vedic period started. It was called the Gurukul education system. In this system, formal, non-formal and open teaching learning forms of education existed. Gurukul used to give the education of Vedas, Puranas, religion and art of warfare. But it was depending upon the traditional system. It was not open to all. It was restricted to the down-trodden people. So majority part of the population was far away from the education system. Folk system of education existed in the Gurukul through preaching and discourses made by saints and sages on Vedas and Puranas, religious books, Katha-bhajans, folk dances and public meetings and competitions during the period of common festivals. This type of education was quite different than today's education system.

In this period the discussions were going on Ramayana and Mahabharat. The saints and sages were preaching to the people in temples and improving the quality of their social lives. This system was not only the part of preaching but it was the part of lifelong education through character building programme. This Lifelong education was related to the religious rituals & moral values. Today also this method is available through formal and non-formal systems in the form of distance education. Lifelong education system is important for individual as well as social also. Lifelong education is the best weapon to face the challenges of 21st century. Lifelong education has been accepted to provide the education to all in well manner. So, the role of lifelong education is important for social and cultural development. Education is also a part of Lifelong education.

Lifelong education starts from the cradle and it ends in the grave. It is a continuous process. Education starts from the family at first. Family is the first stage of education, it uses to teach in family, in work places and community. As a impact of lifelong education, they use to create a learning society.

Schools and colleges also use to provide the facilities of learning in their own ways. Lifelong education works in both ways e.g. formal and non-formal. Lifelong education is the need of time. It is essential for learners because it maintains regular contact and devising new methods of learning and continuous expansion of knowledge.

In the world level, all the educationists accepted the importance of lifelong education. International Education Commission had recommended Lifelong Education in its report entitled, “Development of education” (1972) as ‘the aim that developed and developing nations should accord priority.’ After two decades i.e. in 1996 UNESCO in its report of ‘International Education Commission for 21st century’ reiterated that “Lifelong education should be made available to one and all.”

In our country, educational facilities are not adequate, particularly for adults and working population and old persons, our school system is not affordable for each and every person. The school system is not capable to provide the life skills through the school education. So, lifelong education tries to provide the knowledge continuously. Lifelong education is the mixture of formal, non-formal and distance education. It provides the facility of continuous education, for his all-round development required for his career. One can complete the education at home, school, community workplace, media through the lifelong education. One can learn continuously to lead the better life. In the globalisation, industrial development in indispensable. Without industrial development, we can't achieve the target of our development. So lifelong education is a part and parcel of the society. It is not only useful but essential for the industry workers, engineers, doctors, lawyers and technicians also. In each and every sector, updating knowledge and skill is essential. Lifelong education provides the latest knowledge and essential skills.

Then the method of lifelong education is important to impart the knowledge. But this is depending upon the financial position of each country. There are so many methods available for the learning. The specific society needs the specific method. There are some prominent methods of lifelong education are as follows.

1. Self-directed education method:

Under this method, person decides the rules & regulations of teaching and learning. Teaching means methods of imparting education. While learning means receiving knowledge ‘self-directed method of lifelong education’ is very important. In this system, community or person prepares own plan. They themselves, identify the needs of learning and devise ways to fulfil their needs. It

increases the personal and social capacities.

The advantage of this skill and ability makes this method of learning interesting result oriented, useful and meaningful.

2. Mutual learning:

Books, pictures and audio-visual aids are important in this learning method. These can be used in self-directed teaching as well as during mutual learning process. Community education and group education is the base of mutual education. Lifelong education is specially related to the mutual education. Two or more than two persons can interact as teacher and student in mutual education system. They are equally partners in the exchange of knowledge. No one is subordinate or superior. Every one is equal. This is the self-directed and automatic education system. This is continuing along with livelihood and active, therefore it is affordable and easily available.

Mutual learning is a combination of formal and non-formal. It has no limitations of age, time, space, subject etc. Learner can learn anywhere and anytime while travelling, working, eating or at any social, cultural function, etc., depending upon the interest of a group and methods desire. These non-formal methods could be used in formal situation also. This is important for study groups, meetings, seminars, etc. So mutual education is the best way to educate the society. It has the important contribution for educating the society. But its significance and quality differ in different societies. One has identify the needs, develop communication skills, desire to learn and the same time respect different view points and ideas & must have a feeling to extend help to others in learning; this gives him all the benefits of lifelong education.

Anyone can get the benefit of formal education through this field. He can learn the basic education in literacy, post literacy and community education. He can complete graduation, post-graduation through Open University.

3. Learning society:

Literacy, post literacy, continuing education and this is to establish a learning society. What is the meaning of learning society. This means the establishment of a society where each and every person can learn individually to improve his knowledge and skills. Everyone can accept and appreciate his responsibility through his work.

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