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MLL-001
LIFELONG LEARNING: AN OVERVIEW

"शिक्षा मानव को बन्धनों से मुक्त करती है और आज के युग में तो यह लोकतंत्र की भावना का आधार भी है। जन्म तथा अन्य कारणों से उत्पन्न जाति एवं वर्गगत विषमताओं को दूर करते हुए मनुष्य को इन सबसे ऊपर उठाती है।"

—इन्दिरा गांधी

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" Education is a liberating force, and in our age it is also a democratising force, cutting across the barriers of caste and class, smoothing out inequalities imposed by birth and other circumstances."

– Indira Gandhi

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MLL-001
LIFELONG LEARNING: AN OVERVIEW

BLOCK 1

LIFELONG LEARNING: WHAT, WHEN, WHERE AND HOW? 07

BLOCK 2

LIFELONG LEARNING: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS 101

BLOCK 3

LIFELONG LEARNING: THEORY AND PRACTICE 185

BLOCK 4

LIFELONG LEARNING: ISSUES AND CONCERNS 315

EXPERT COMMITTEE

Prof. M. C. Reddeppa Reddy (Chairperson)
Former Director, Department of Adult Education
Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati

Prof. C. B. Sharma
Director, School of Education
IGNOU, New Delhi

Dr. R. K. Bhatt
Former Director, Directorate of Adult Education
New Delhi

Prof. D. Usha Rani
Former Director, Center for Extension Studies
Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati

Prof. D. Venkateshwarlu Former
Director, School of Education IGNOU, New Delhi

Dr. Niradhar Dey
Associate Professor, School of Education
IGNOU, New Delhi

Dr. Ajith Kumar, C.
Assistant Professor, School of Education
IGNOU, New Delhi

Prof. N. K. Ambasht
Former Chairman, National Institute of Open Schooling, New Delhi

Prof. Balaram Paswan
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Former Head, Dept. of Adult, Continuing Education & Extension
Jamia Millia Isalmia, New Delhi

Prof. Srikrishnadeva Rao
Vice-Chancellor, NALSAR University
Hyderabad

Dr. M. V. Lakshmi Reddy
Associate Professor, School of Education
IGNOU, New Delhi

Dr. Elizabeth Kuruvilla
Assistant Professor, School of Education IGNOU, New Delhi

Dr. Anjuli Suhane
Assistant Professor, School of Education
IGNOU, New Delhi

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Mrs. Poonam Bhushan, Dr. Eisha Kannadi, Dr. B. L. Meena, Dr. Neel Kamal Sharan

Course Coordinator (Course MLL-001) **:** Dr. M. V. Lakshmi Reddy

Course MLL-001 is adapted from Course BESE-142 Coordinated by Dr. M. V. Lakshmi Reddy

COURSE PREPARATION TEAM

Block-1 Preparation Team

Unit-1: Dr. M. V. Lakshmi Reddy, Associate Professor, School of Education, IGNOU, New Delhi
Unit-2: Dr. Niradhar Dey, Assistant Professor, School of Education, IGNOU, New Delhi
Unit-3: Dr. Elizabeth Kuruvilla, Assistant Professor, School of Education, IGNOU, New Delhi
Unit-4: Dr. M. V. Lakshmi Reddy, Associate Professor, School of Education, IGNOU, New Delhi
Content, Format and Language Editing: Dr. M. V. Lakshmi Reddy, Associate Professor, School of Education, IGNOU, New Delhi

Block-2 Preparation Team

Unit-5: Prof. Prasenjit Deb, Head, Department of Lifelong Learning & Extension, University of Kalyani,
&6 Kalyani, West Bengal
Unit-7: Prof. Santosh Panda, Director, STRIDE, IGNOU, New Delhi
Content, Format and Language Editing: Dr. M. V. Lakshmi Reddy, Associate Professor, School of Education, IGNOU, New Delhi

Block-3 Preparation Team

Unit-8: Dr. M. V. Lakshmi Reddy, Associate Professor, School of Education, IGNOU, New Delhi
Unit-9: Prof. Prasenjit Deb. Head, Department of Lifelong Learning & Extension, University of Kalyani, Kalyani, West Bengal
Unit-10: Dr. M. V. Lakshmi Reddy, Associate Professor, School of Education, IGNOU, New Delhi
Unit-11: Prof. Rajesh, University of Delhi, Delhi
Unit-12: Dr. Anita Priyadarshini, Associate Professor, STRIDE, IGNOU, New Delhi
Content, Format and Language Editing: Dr. M. V. Lakshmi Reddy, Associate Professor, School of Education, IGNOU, New Delhi

Block-4 Preparation Team
Unit-13: Prof. Prasenjit Deb. Head, Department of Lifelong Learning & Extension, University of Kalyani,
&14 Kalyani, West Bengal
Unit-15: Dr. M. V. Lakshmi Reddy, Associate Professor, School of Education, IGNOU, New Delhi
Content, Format and Language Editing: Dr. M. V. Lakshmi Reddy, Associate Professor, School of Education, IGNOU, New Delhi

MATERIAL PRODUCTION

Mrs. Seema Bhatia
Assistant Registrar,
MPDD, IGNOU

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MLL-001: LIFELONG LEARNING: AN OVERVIEW 06 CREDITS

Introduction to the Course

We welcome you to course "MLL-001: Lifelong Learning: An Overview". When you come across or hear the term 'lifelong learning' many questions might arise in your mind such as: What is lifelong learning? Does it encompass formal, non-formal and informal leaning? How does lifelong learning integrate all these types of learning? Who are the participants of lifelong learning? Where and how does it take place? Is there any learning theory that can effectively explain lifelong learning? What are the policies, institutions, curricula and practices of lifelong learning? At the same time, you might have also formed some vague answers to these questions and even developed some ideas or perceptions of your own about the same, but not necessarily the correct ones. It is in this context, this course will help you not only in seeking the right answers to all the above sort of questions, amongst many others, but also in perfecting and broadening your understanding of lifelong learning in holistic perspective.

Divided into four Blocks this course altogether contains fifteen Units. The course attempts to provide a comprehensive view of the concept of lifelong learning, touching upon its historical developments, aspects, theory, policies, curricular strategies, practices, and also basic issues and concerns related to planning and implementation of lifelong learning at national and international levels.

Block-1, titled **Lifelong Learning: What, When, Where and How?**, deals with concept, nature, scope, participants, contexts, places and societies of lifelong learning. It also highlights lifelong learning as an emerging discipline and as a practice including its institutions and global practices.

Block-2, **Lifelong Learning: Historical Developments,** highlights historical developments with emphasis on lifelong learning in India, presents international perspective of lifelong learning, and discusses professionalization of lifelong learning and interventions at global level for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), among other things.

Block-3, **Lifelong Learning: Theory and Practice,** attempts to present a bird's eye view of theory of lifelong learning, different facets of lifelong learning, types of lifelong learning, curricula and strategies needed for creating learning environments, contexts and tools for practice of lifelong learning including Recognition, Validation and Accreditation (RVA) of prior learning, as well as assessment and evaluation in lifelong learning.

Block-4 deals with **Lifelong Learning: Issues and Concerns**. It lays special emphasis on policy making and implementation of lifelong learning along with structural reforms, institutional organisation and operations, National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs), National Skills Qualifications Frameworks (NSQFs) and their integration at national, international, regional and global levels. It also presents UNESCO Guidelines on RVA of prior learning and the qualifications frameworks. Further, it highlights the basic issues, concerns and future perspectives of lifelong learning.

After working through the course, you will be able to:

- Acquire comprehensive picture of lifelong learning;
- Explain the concept, nature and scope of lifelong learning;
- Discuss the historical development of lifelong learning at national, regional and global levels;
- Describe 'lifelong learning' as a discipline and as a practice;
- Analyse the strategies, curricula and practices of lifelong learning; and
- Critically examine the basic issues and concerns of lifelong learning.

In order to enable you to realize the above learning outcomes, this course is structured into different Blocks and Units as given below.

Block 1: Lifelong Learning: What, When, Where and How?

Unit 1: Concept and Scope of Lifelong Learning

Unit 2: Lifelong Learners

Unit 3: Places and Societies of Lifelong Learning

Unit 4: Lifelong Learning as a Discipline and as a Practice

Block 2: Lifelong Learning: Historical Developments

Unit 5: Lifelong Learning in India

Unit 6: Lifelong Learning: International Perspective

Unit 7: Lifelong Learning: Interventions at Global Level

Block 3: Lifelong Learning: Theory and Practice

Unit-8: Lifelong Learning Theory

Unit 9: Facets of Lifelong Learning

Unit 10: Curriculum for Lifelong Learning

Unit 11: Lifelong Learning: Contexts and Tools for Practice

Unit 12: Assessment and Evaluation in Lifelong Learning

Block 4: Lifelong Learning: Issues and Concerns

Unit 13: Lifelong Learning: Policy Making and Implementation

Unit 14: Skills Qualifications Frameworks and Emerging Trend in Lifelong Learning

Unit 15: Issues and Concerns in Lifelong Learning

You will find that the format of presentation of all units in Block-1 and that of other units in the three other Blocks of this course are alike**.** It would thus help you have an easy and comfortable access to the contents of this course.

Hope you will not only enjoy working through each of these Blocks but also appreciate the fact that lifelong learning is an essential and inevitable practice for sustainable development of individuals, communities, societies, nations and the world as a whole.

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MLL-001 LIFELONG LEARNING: AN OVERVIEW

Block

1

LIFELONG LEARNING: WHAT, WHEN, WHERE AND HOW?

UNIT 1
Concept and Scope of Lifelong Learning 09

UNIT 2
Lifelong Learners 32

UNIT 3
Places and Societies of Lifelong Learning 50

UNIT 4
Lifelong Learning as a Discipline and as a Practice 71

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BLOCK 1: LIFELONG LEARNING: WHAT, WHEN, WHERE AND HOW?

Introduction to Block 1

This Block discusses the basic concept of lifelong learning and important concepts related to it, as well as its major aspects. There are four units in this Block focusing on various themes related to what, when, where and how of lifelong learning.

Unit-1, Concept and Scope of Lifelong Learning, explains the concept of lifelong learning and its relationship with other relevant terms such as 'Literacy', 'Functional Literacy', 'Education', 'Adult Education', 'Extension', 'Continuing Education', and 'Lifelong Education', among others. It highlights the scope of lifelong learning.

Unit-2, Lifelong Learners, attempts to contextualize the categories of lifelong learners. It discusses different categories of participants of lifelong learning such as teachers and students in all systems of education, adults and adult educators in all contexts, all individuals, communities and societies in all places of living and working, and also all those self-oriented and self-directed to lifelong learning.

Unit 3, Places and Societies of Lifelong Learning, is devoted for discussion on places, communities, societies and settings of lifelong learning. It focuses on the social and geographical settings where learning activities or opportunities are more predominant and purposeful as life-wide processes. Further, it highlights different types of learning places and societies such as information societies, knowledge societies and industrial societies.

Unit 4, Lifelong Learning as a Discipline and as a Practice, addresses the specific issues such as: whether lifelong learning is a discipline and a practice on par with many other disciplines like psychology, sociology, education and so on? In order to explain lifelong learning as a discipline and as a practice, it attempts to answer certain basic questions such as: What is an academic discipline? When does a particular field of study assume the status of a discipline? What are the attributes of an academic discipline? Does lifelong learning possess these attributes / characteristics to qualify itself as an academic discipline? In addition, it describes the status of practice of lifelong learning at global level and also in India.

After working through this Block, you will be able to:

- Explain the concept and the scope of lifelong learning;
- Contextualize the participants of lifelong learning as different categories of lifelong learners and teachers, among others;
- Discuss different types of learning places and societies;
- Differentiate information societies, knowledge societies and industrial societies; and
- Describe lifelong learning as a discipline and as a practice.

UNIT-1: CONCEPT AND SCOPE OF LIFELONG LEARNING

Structure

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Learning Objectives

1.3 Lifelong Learning: Concept and Significance

- 1.3.1 Concept and Features of Lifelong Learning
- 1.3.2 Significance of Lifelong Learning

1.4 Relationship between and among Relevant Terms

- 1.4.1 Literacy and Functional Literacy
- 1.4.2 Literacy and Education
- 1.4.3 Adult Education and Extension
- 1.4.4 Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning
- 1.4.5 Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Education

1.5 Scope of Lifelong Learning

- 1.5.1 Sustainable Development Goals and Lifelong Learning
- 1.5.2 Integration of Lifelong and Life-wide Dimensions of Learning
- 1.5.3 Wholesome Integration of all Learning/Educational Systems, Settings and Frameworks

1.6 Let Us Sum Up

1.7 Answers to 'Check Your Progress' Questions

1.8 References and Suggested Readings

1.9 Unit-End Exercises

1.10 Unit-End Activity

1.1 INTRODUCTION

As we know, historically, man has been learning essentially for survival, growth and development. Ancient societies all over the world have emphasized the need to learn from 'cradle to grave', or from 'birth to death', or from 'womb to tomb'. Right from birth a person starts learning and continues to learn although the life. Irrespective of schooling, learning has been an integral part of an individual's life. Learning has been the driving force of all societies and formed the basis of human civilization and evolution. Entire length and breadth of human life forms the gamut of human leaning – lifelong and life-wide learning. Nevertheless, nature, pace and quality of learning of individuals, communities and societies vary depending upon their backgrounds, stages, phases, and aspects of life.

The idea of lifelong learning, though not new, has been an essential and inseparable part of living and working of the individuals, communities and societies of all times to meet their competitive demands and challenges of survival, growth and development in the ever-changing world order. Its growing importance and evolution can be attributed to the inevitable learning that continues as a consequence of growing needs, demands, changes and challenges in social, economic, cultural, political, environmental, technological and other aspects of life. Of course, the use of the term 'Lifelong Learning' in literature is very recent and can be traced back to 1920s; as used by Yeaxlee in 1921 and Lindeman in 1926. In India, it became popular by the work of Indian Education Commission (1964-66) and the subsequent developments thereof. UNESCO through report of Fauré et al (1972) and other reports that followed has given impetus to lifelong learning at global level.

This unit being the first one of this course, our attempt here is to explain you the concept of lifelong learning, and its relationship with other relevant terms such as 'Literacy', 'Functional Literacy', 'Education', 'Adult Education', 'Extension', 'Continuing Education', and 'Lifelong Education', among others. Further, we attempt to highlight the scope of lifelong learning.

1.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, we expect you to be able to:

- Explain the concept of lifelong learning;
- Delineate the relationship between 'lifelong learning' and certain related terms;
- Distinguish the terms such as literacy, functional literacy, education, adult education, extension, continuing education, lifelong learning and lifelong education from each other; and
- Discuss the scope of lifelong learning.

1.3 LIFELONG LEARNING: CONCEPT AND SIGNIFICANCE

As you are aware, learning is a lifelong process and an integral part of our life. In other words, learning is essential in life, hence the dictum 'learn or perish'. And, all societies irrespective of their geographical, religious, linguistic and cultural diversities have always emphasized the importance of learning throughout life for their own survival, growth and development. All contexts and environments where we live – be they natural or man-made, planned or unplanned, organized or incidental – provide opportunities for learning either directly or indirectly. Further, in the fast-changing world where learning contexts and environments are more and the time of doubling of knowledge is ever decreasing, it is also essential for every individual to be self-motivated and self-directed to learn for their own progress and of the society as a whole.

1.3.1 Concept and Features of Lifelong Learning

What does lifelong learning mean? In simple terms, lifelong learning is the process of gaining knowledge, skills, abilities and values throughout life,

often to improve one's living and working competencies. It is voluntary, self-motivated and ongoing process, for either personal or professional reasons, aimed at promoting self-sustainability, competitiveness and employability. It involves both provision and use of formal, non-formal and informal learning opportunities throughout people's lives in order to foster their knowledge, skills, abilities and values needed for personal fulfilment, employment, social inclusion, and continuous development of all.

While the lifelong learning existed throughout recorded human history, the term "lifelong learning" was first used in literature in 1920s. Since the 1970s UNESCO has played a crucial role in framing and promoting the discourse on lifelong learning. The report of Fauré, et. al. (1972) entitled "*Learning To Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow*" is its first ever official document which recognised that education is no longer the privilege of an elite or a matter for only one age group and it should be both universal and lifelong. The report of Delors, et al (1996) entitled "Learning: The treasure within" viewed learning throughout life as the "heartbeat of society". It rests lifelong learning on four pillars – learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together. In essence, lifelong learning is rooted in the integration of learning and living, covering learning activities of people of all ages (children, young people, adults and the elderly, girls and boys, women and men) in all life-wide contexts (family, school, community, workplace and so on) and through a variety of modalities (formal, non-formal and informal) which together meet a wide range of learning needs and demands. Education systems which promote lifelong learning adopt a holistic and sector-wide approach involving all sub-sectors and levels to ensure the provision of learning opportunities for all individuals. Such learning is considered to be possible through such an education rested on four pillars.

– Learning to know – mastering learning tools rather than acquisition of structured knowledge.

– Learning to do – equipping people for the types of work needed now and in the future, including innovation and adaptation of learning to future work environments.

– Learning to be – education contributing to a person's complete development: mind and body, intelligence, sensitivity, aesthetic appreciation and spirituality.

– Learning to live together – peacefully resolving conflict, discovering other people and their cultures, fostering community capability, individual competence and capacity, economic resilience, and social inclusion.

Basic elements of lifelong learning

Lifelong learning refers to all general education, vocational education and training, non-formal education and informal learning undertaken throughout life, resulting in an improvement in knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective. It includes the provision of counselling and guidance services (EU Commission, 2011). The breadth of this definition also draws attention to the full range of formal, non-formal and informal learning activity.

A statement resulting from a collaboration of the European Lifelong Learning Initiative and the American Council on Education provides a workable expression of lifelong learning in an inclusive sense that accommodates its heterogeneity for broader acceptance: "Lifelong learning is the development of human potential through a continuously supportive process which stimulates 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 roles, circumstances, and environments." (Longworth and Davies, 1996, p.22). This definition includes several basic elements of the lifelong learning ideal: (1) a belief in the idea of lifetime human potential and the possibility of its realization; (2) efforts to facilitate achievement of the skills, knowledge, and aptitudes necessary for a successful life; (3) recognition that learning takes place in many modes and places, including formal educational institutions and non-formal experiences such as employment, military service, and civic participation and informal self-initiated activity; and (4) the need to provide integrated supportive systems adapted to individual differences that encourage and facilitate individuals to achieve mastery and self-direction. Society should make these systems available to learners with flexibility and diversity (State University, 2020).

Jarvis (2006, p.134) offered a more detailed definition of it as: "The combination of processes throughout a life time whereby the whole person — body (genetic, physical and biological) and mind (knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs and senses) — experiences social situations, the perceived content of which is then transformed cognitively, emotively or practically (or through any combination) and integrated into the individual person's biography resulting in a continually changing (or more experienced) person."

According to Knapper & Cropley (1991:17), lifelong learning has a different meaning in different countries. In the United States, it has frequently been regarded as simply a new term for adult education (as in the 1976 Lifelong Learning Act, for example) and has been linked with "alternative" educational activities such as educational brokering. In Europe, the concept has more frequently been associated with the linking of learning and work, especially through provision of paid educational leave, recurrent education or with open learning". (https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/26726/02chapter2.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y).

Key systemic features

In 1996, OECD Education Ministers adopted "Lifelong learning for all" as a policy framework. Five *key systemic features* are identified here. *First*, all learning should be recognised, not just formal courses. Systems for transferring credit are improving but gaps remain, especially in recognising informal learning. Good systems for informing and guiding learners, especially adults, remain elusive. *Second*, lifelong learning requires good foundation skills among both the young and adults: particularly those with poor initial education. Motivation must be at the centre. This requires fundamental changes in curriculum and pedagogy, emphasising willingness to learn as much as content mastery. *Third*, equitable access to learning requires a lifecycle perspective. Under-served groups such as pre-school children and adults must be a priority. Equally important is the quality of opportunities – diverse learning methods,

courses and settings to cater for multiple learning needs. *Fourth*, countries must evaluate resources according to lifecycle needs and deploy them effectively. Additional public resources may be needed, and new incentives to attract private resources. *Finally*, the scope of lifelong learning goes beyond a single ministry. Policy co-ordination must involve many partners (https://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplay documentpdf/?cote=DEELSA/ED/CERI/CD(2000)12/PART1/REV2&docLanguage=En#:~:text=The%20lifelong%20learning%20framework%20emphasises,community%20and%20society%20at%20large).

The Education Council adopted in 2001 the objectives in terms of quality, accessibility and openness of education and training systems, which Europe should achieve by 2010 (European Commission, 2001). These objectives were followed-up in 2002 by a detailed work programme and the adoption of a resolution committing EU Member States to develop national lifelong learning strategies. This resolution stresses that lifelong learning must cover learning from the pre-school to post-retirement age, including the entire spectrum of formal, non-formal and informal learning. It must be understood as all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective; in this context should be the individual as the subject of learning, highlighting the importance of an authentic equality of opportunities, and quality in learning. The position of education and training within the Lisbon Strategy has been further enhanced by the majority of the EU Member States that give great importance to education and training, lifelong learning and skills development in their Lisbon National Reform Programmes 2005-2008 (Badescu and Saisana, 2008, p.5).

While globally it is viewed as a key organizing principle for education and training systems, in India there has been a rich and long tradition of learning throughout life. In fact, the philosophy of Lifelong Learning is embedded in the Indian society, culture and education. Its importance is reiterated in several educational policy documents and discourses. Now, in India, it is used as an umbrella term to cover basic literacy, post-literacy, continuing education and extension programmes of different governmental and non-governmental organizations, universities, refresher courses of professional bodies, short-term courses of private institutions and business houses. Although a wide range of lifelong learning programmes are offered by different agencies in the country, the bulk of the programmes continue to focus on adult literacy and continuing education mainly due to the massive number of non-literates and neo-literates in the country. It is only in 2007 that the Government of India put forward the idea of expanding the scope of the Continuing Education Program by developing it as Lifelong Education and Awareness Program (LEAP). This may be partly influenced by the global discourse on Lifelong Learning and partly due to the socio-economic changes taking place in the country (Shah, See https://www.academia. edu/5670098/THE_POLICY_AND_PROGRAMMES_OF_LIFELONG_LEARNING_IN_ INDIA).

As early as 1960s, Indian Education Commission (1964-66) observed that education does not end with schooling but it is a long process. The adult today is in need of understanding the rapidly changing world and the growing

complexion of society. Even those who have the most sophisticated education must continue to learn or else, the alternative is, face obsolescence. National Educational Policies 1968 and 1986 have laid due emphasis on lifelong learning. The discourse and practice of Lifelong Learning in India continued to be dominated by adult literacy practices during 1980s and 1990s. The National Literacy Mission (1988) and its variant Saakshar Bharat Mission (2009) projected eradication of illiteracy as an important national mission and clearly spelt out the different aspects of the policy and the programme. National Education Policy 2020 laid special emphasis by including adult education and lifelong learning as part of its other key focus areas in the context of realisation of sustainable development goal 4 of SDGs 2030.

1.3.2 Significance of Lifelong Learning

The importance of lifelong learning has been increasing for some important reasons such as increasing life expectancy, increasing "old-age dependencies" ratio, people's desire for increasing the life quality, and trying to keep themselves in good physical and mental condition (Haydar, 2012).

Equal access to learning opportunities is an indispensable condition for realising the right to education for all. Lifelong learning for all has the potential to offset initial and recurring social inequalities and to place the empowerment of learners at the centre. From a holistic life-course perspective, learning and education are not only for children but also for young people, adults and the elderly. UNESCO's second *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education* – GRALE II (UIL, 2013) underlies the necessity to devote time and money to youth and adult education, both formal and non-formal, in order to contribute to the development and sustainability of thriving economies and societies. UNESCO, in its 2014-2021 Medium-Term Strategy embodies its commitment to a humanistic, rights-based and holistic view of education and lifelong learning.

The relevance of lifelong learning is being strengthened in today's increasingly interconnected and fast-changing world. The exponential growth in and changing nature of information in the digital age, the difficulty of foreseeing the skills-sets required for knowledge-based economies, the demographic shifts and increased mobility, the growing concern for unsustainable patterns of consumption and production are all underlying the relevance of lifelong learning as the conceptual framework and organising principle of all forms of education in the 21st century (UIL, 2010).

"Learning to live" and "Learning to learn" are essential for every individual to be a lifelong learner and calls for at least two important types of skills, or essential skills sets – '*life skills'* and '*learning skills*'. "Life skills" are loosely grouped into three broad categories: cognitive skills for analyzing and using information; personal skills for developing personal agency and managing oneself; and inter-personal skills for communicating and interacting effectively with others (Poonampreet Kaur, See chrome-extension://ohfgljdgelakfkefopgklcohadegdpjf/ http://oaji.net/articles/2017/1201-1529144964.pdf). And the "Learning skills" encompass various tasks involved in learning, including time management, note-taking, reading effectively, study skills, and writing tests. But in the current world, for

the lifelong learning to be more effective and relevant, everyone has to acquire 21st century skills.

Pardede (2020) classifies 21st century skills into three categories: learning and innovation skills, literacy skills, and life skills. *Learning and innovation skills* refer to the mental processes required to adapt and improve upon a modern work environment, involving what are popularly called 4Cs (critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity). *Literacy skills*, sometimes called IMT (information literacy, media literacy, and technology literacy) skills, concern with how individuals can discern facts, publishing outlets, and the technology behind them. *Life skills* focus on the intangible elements of every individual's everyday life that include both personal and professional qualities.

Therefore, the society of the future will be a 'learning society'; the culture of future society will be 'scientific humanism'. Lifelong learning will be the master concept for educational policies in the years to come for both developed and developing countries. In addition to formal and non-formal educational institutions, business, industrial and agricultural firms, among other things, will have extensive educational functions to promote lifelong learning. Hence, lifelong learning is a concept and an idea which has lot of significance and remains rather meaningless unless and until it is actually planned and effectively implemented through appropriate educational policies at national and international levels.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write the answer in the space given below the question.

b) Check your answer with the one given under "Answers to 'Check Your Progress' Questions" of this Unit.

1. Explain the concept of lifelong learning.

……

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1.4 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AND AMONG RELEVANT TERMS

In this section, we make an attempt to draw clear distinction between some relevant terms that are fundamental to lifelong learning.

1.4.1 Literacy and Functional Literacy

In this sub-section we attempt to distinguish between 'literacy' and 'functional literacy'

Literacy: In a narrow sense, literacy can be considered as the ability of an individual to read and write with understanding short simple statements on his/

her everyday life and to perform basic mathematical calculations. In practice, literacy is much more than just the capacity to read, write and compute or calculate.

Literacy, in its broadest sense, is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society **(**UNESCO, 2004 and 2017). What then is functional literacy?

Functional Literacy: Literacy is usually defined as the ability to read, write, and do math. By analysing this statement, we can easily understand the concept of functional literacy. For example, what do we mean by reading? People may be able to read the words in a document, but can they grasp its arguments or analogies? How about writing? People may be able to write or type sentences, but can they express complete, cogent thoughts? Then there is mathematics. People may be able to count numbers, but do they know how to analyze graphs, interpret statistics, plan budgets, and so on? These are skills needed to make decisions and function well in daily life. Clearly, mere ability to read or write words and numbers is not enough to assess literacy. People need to be able to understand and use those words and numbers for practical purposes, such as deliberating ideas and solving problems in different aspects and contexts of life. This is what is called functional literacy. Functional literacy thus refers to the practical skill-set needed to read, write, and do math for real-life purposes, so that people can function effectively in their community.

Functional literacy has also been defined in various ways by different people and institutions. We do not want to go into all those nor analyse them here. Nevertheless, it is important to refer to the final report of the World Conference of Education Ministers on the Eradication of Illiteracy organised by UNESCO in Tehran in 1965 (UNESCO, 1976), which contains the following statement that can be considered as its official definition of functional literacy:

> *The very process of learning to read and write should be made an opportunity for acquiring information that can be used for improving standards; reading and writing should lead not only to elementary general knowledge but to training for work, increased productivity, a greater participation in civil life and a better understanding of the surrounding world and should ultimately open the way to basic human culture.*

It must, however, be noted that it is not easy to compare functionality of literacy across different cultures because of the differences in the process and methodology of its acquisition and in its measurement and comparison across cultures. Hence, Resnick and Resnick (1977) has rightly noticed that the concepts of literacy and criteria for its achievement have varied significantly over time, place and populace.

From the recent literature on literacy, we can list many other types of literacy (literacy diversity) such as computer literacy, legal literacy, visual literacy, information literacy, communication literacy, technology literacy, media literacy, scientific literacy, social literacy, civic literacy, multi-cultural literacy,

religious literacy, financial literacy, global literacy, health literacy, and so on used in different contexts. These, in fact, are all various types of functional literacy too that have greater relevance in the context of lifelong learning. You will learn more about them if you start discussing them, or reading some material related to some of these concepts.

1.4.2 Literacy and Education

Paulo Freire gave new shift to conception of literacy and education during *1950s*-1970s. As José Rivero observes, Paulo Freire has contributed to the creation of a renewed and broader vision of literacy by highlighting the political dimension and viewing literacy learning as an integral component in a process by which illiterate individuals become conscious of their personal situation and learn to create or use the means to improve it. For Freire, learning how to read and write and do mathematical calculations is part of the process that enables people to gain access to political, economic, and cultural rights, and to influence or modify the manner in which power in society is distributed. The transformational learning theory and praxis introduced by Paulo Freire in the 1950s are still relevant today. Freire not only contributed to the construction of a new education system in Latin American countries such as Chile, Cuba, and Nicaragua, but also in Africa and in other countries of the world. Taking an activist approach to pedagogy, he developed a concept of literacy as an integral component of Adult Education, and he worked hard to convert that concept into public policy (Rossel, 2011). Freire thus considered literacy in its broadest perspective – as a means for liberation – like that of education.

1.4.3 Adult Education and Extension

In this sub-section, we will attempt to distinguish between 'adult education' and 'extension'.

Adult Education: As early as 1952, UNESCO had stated in its "International Directory of Adult Education" that, in essence, adult education is so closely related to the social, political, economic, geographic and cultural conditions of each country that no uniform or precise definition can be arrived at. However, the General Conference of UNESCO (1976) comprehensively defines adult education as the "entire body of organised educational processes, whatever content, level and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their attitudes or behaviour in the two-fold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development". We can very clearly notice the following essential elements in this definition:

i) It includes all organised educational processes;

ii) It encompasses all content, levels and methods;

iii) It includes formal or non-formal education for adults;

iv) It prolongs or replaces initial education in schools, colleges and universities, and apprenticeships;

v) It develops abilities, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours; and

vi) It develops adults in two-fold manner – full personal development and participation in development process.

The above definition offered by UNESCO which is the result of collective thinking of international adult educationists is widely accepted all over the world.

Nevertheless, in the developing countries where illiteracy is a major problem, it is not surprising that, in practice adult education is most often referred to as 'adult literacy'. In fact, adult education is literacy plus many other things including the development of functionality and awareness in relation to various aspects of life. Further, different countries have called adult education by different names such as liberal education, basic education, remedial education, vocational education, avocational education, literacy education, continuing education, lifelong education, and so on. In fact, the scope of adult education is very wide and includes all the above. What then is extension, and how is it different from education or adult education?

Extension: Extension is an act or instance of extending, lengthening, stretching out, or enlarging the scope of something (https://www.dictionary.com/browse/extension). *It refers to extension of education or any service, work, activity or process.* Extension thus includes any one, two or all of the following three components:

- *Extension Education:* The role extension education is generally performed by higher learning institutions, viz. Research Institutes, Universities and Apex-level Training and Extension Organizations.
- *Extension Services:* Extension service is location-specific, input-intensive, service-oriented, and field level professional activity with two objectives of: a) transferring new technologies or innovations and advising the people on improved methods, and b) communicating development constraints to research institutes / development organizations / policy makers as feedback for participatory-technology development. Thus, extension service serves as a link between researchers, development workers and people. Extension service also works hand-in-hand with other development departments, and input agencies to multiply their efforts and effects.
- *Extension Work:* Extension work is at the lowest in hierarchy, but extremely broad-based in usage. Extension work is to assist people through both education and service. Through extension work, people are stimulated to adopt changes that result in more efficient production and marketing, conservation of natural resources, improved livelihood security, health, and more satisfying family and community life.

You need to be therefore clear that extension means and involves extension of education, service, work, activity or process related to any aspect in any sector of development. Extension became diversified due to its increasing relevance and contribution to different sectors of development and service. Extension is

an important means for inducing people to help themselves in using their own and local resources to the maximum and government aid to the minimum for their development. Extension stimulates desirable developments within the framework of the national, economic and social policies involving different sectors of development.

1.4.4 Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning

Is continuing education not lifelong learning and vice-versa? Here, let us look at the difference between these two concepts.

Continuing Education: Venables (1976, p.19) defines continuing education as inclusive of all learning opportunities which can be taken up after full-time, compulsory schooling has ceased. They can be full-time or part-time and will include both vocational and non-vocational study. Whereas, according to Legge (1982, p.8), continuing education certainly presupposes that some education has gone before, presumably initial education, which has first to be completed. It seems to have reference to some kind of retraining as well, when needed, for example, in a new job. The German Education Council defines it as 'the continuation or resumption of organised learning after the completion of an initial educational phase of varying length' (Jarvis, 1990).

Mandatory Continuing Education is the practice by which members of a profession are compelled to attend 'continuing professional education' in order to retain the license to practice. Usually the profession stipulates the extent of their obligation, e.g. at least one 'refresher course' every five years. In America, a large number of professions are introducing mandatory continuing education, and in some states it is required to register to practice in that state. *Open Continuing Education* is the term used in the Federal Republic of Germany to mean the continuation or resumption of *organised* learning after the completion of any kind of primary or secondary education. This definition is very close to that of 'continuing education' in the United Kingdom although in practice in Germany this term appears to be closer to 'initial adult education'.

From the above definitions it is clear that continuing education starts after certain level(s) of schooling and includes those learning opportunities that are taken up after full-time schooling has ended, or those learning opportunities that are taken up after the completion of initial education or training.

Lifelong Learning: It is a broad, generic term and holistic concept that is difficult to define with specificity. Its generic nature becomes very clear due to the fact that learning is pervasive in the form of initial education, continuing education, adult education, and recurrent education (training or education alternating with work) in formal and informal contexts. It has grown to a global concept, with differing manifestations that vary with local, national, political and economic priorities, and with cultural and social value systems.

However, lifelong learning and lifelong education overlap mutually or are often used in interchangeable or integrative manner, though there exists difference between the two. What then is the difference between lifelong learning and lifelong education?

1.4.5 Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Education

Lifelong education is a broader concept that subsumes in it all types of learning and education. It is, in fact, an all-embracing term and has assumed currency in the 1980s. There is subtle difference and intricate relationship between lifelong learning and lifelong education.

Lifelong learning refers to all general education, vocational education and training, non-formal education and informal learning undertaken throughout life, resulting in an improvement in knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective. It includes the provision of counselling and guidance services (The Council of the European Union, 2011). It means, lifelong learning is pervasive in and possible through all types of education, training and life experiences received all through the life of an individual. *It is thus more of learner-centred in its nature, which may be incidental or accidental, unsystematic or self-motivated and systematic.*

Lifelong Education, on the other hand, is a comprehensive and visionary concept which includes formal, non-formal and informal education extended throughout the lifespan of an individual to attain the fullest possible development in personal, social, vocational and professional life. Lifelong education views education in its totality of opportunities that various agencies, including home, school, community, workplace, mass media and all other institutions, situations/ environments and structures can and need to provide to individuals for acquiring and enhancing their knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and so on. *Lifelong education is a strategy that enables people to learn* at different times, from different agencies in different ways, for different purposes at various stages of their lives and careers. *It is concerned with providing learning opportunities throughout life and pays special attention to all forms and types of education, in response to or keeping in view the constantly changing conditions of modern life.* It paves the way for systematic acquisition, renewal and upgrading of knowledge, skills and attitudes, along with due recognition, validation and accreditation of all types of learning, as required by ever changing conditions.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write the answer in the space given below the question.

b) Check your answer with the one given under "Answers to 'Check Your Progress' Questions" of this Unit.

2. How do you distinguish lifelong learning from lifelong education?

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1.5 SCOPE OF LIFELONG LEARNING

Learning cannot be seen as just an intellectual process, but one that

encompasses all aspects of an individual's life, including their role at home and in the community, performance in the workplace, personal development, and physical well-being. In post-industrial society, lifelong learning continued to inspire creativity, initiative and responsiveness in people thereby enabling them to show adaptability to all changing contexts through enhancing skills to manage any uncertainty, to communicate across and within cultures, sub-cultures, families and communities, and to negotiate all conflicts. The emphasis in lifelong learning is on promotion of skill of 'learning to learn' and the ability to keep learning for the lifetime of individuals.

Quality education and promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all are key global education goals in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. We are now clear that lifelong learning is rooted in the integration of learning, working and living, covering learning activities for people of all ages in all life-wide contexts and through a variety of modalities which together meet a wide range of learning needs and demands. And, education systems which promote lifelong learning adopt a holistic and sector-wide approach involving all sub-sectors and levels to ensure the provision of learning opportunities for all individuals. This requires comprehensive integration of learning across all systems of education, all sectors, all levels and all modes, among other things. Let us discuss these things in sub-sections 1.5.1 to 1.5.3.

1.5.1 Sustainable Development Goals and Lifelong Learning

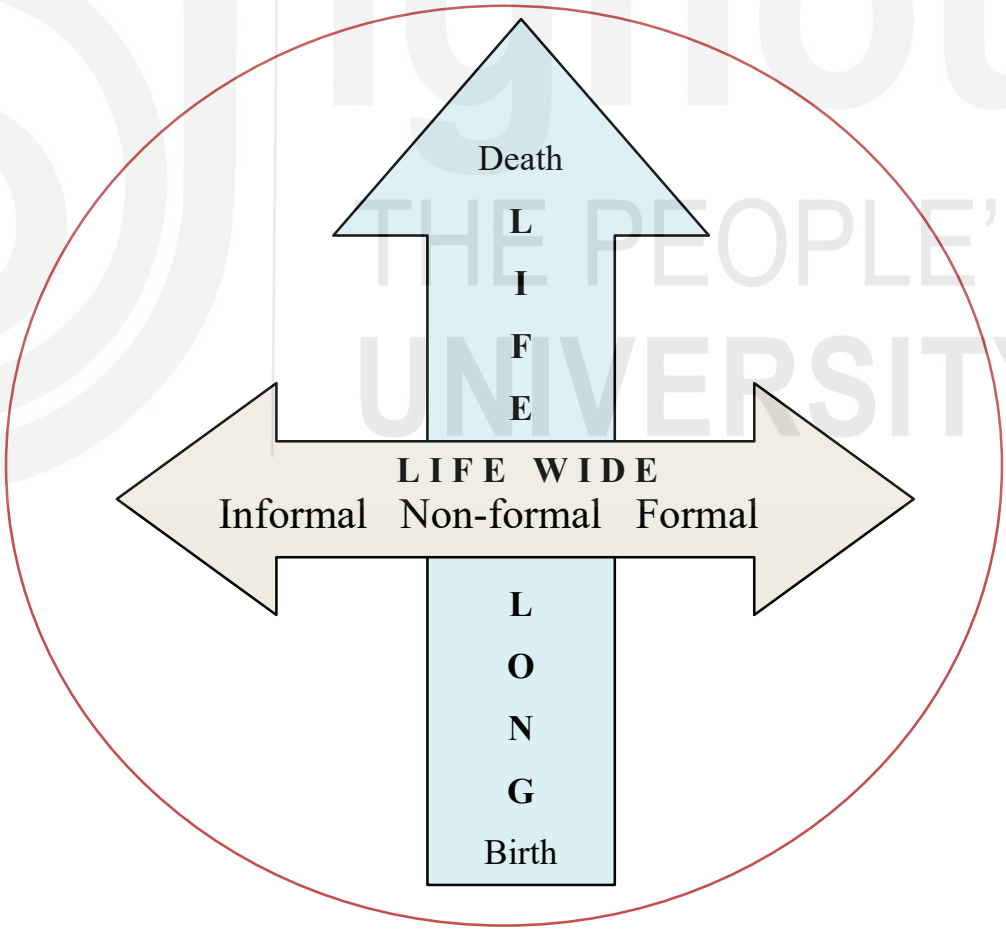
Education and lifelong learning are not only at the heart of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 – which enjoins Member States (of United Nations Organisation) to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' – they are also crucial to the achievement of the other SDGs and to making the connections between them. The potential of lifelong learning in realizing this agenda is substantial. However, it is not enough simply to promote educational opportunities for adults. We need to adopt an inclusive, integrated approach to lifelong learning policy and planning that is sector-wide, cross-sectoral and multi-level. We must develop partnerships and cooperation that cross the boundaries between formal, non-formal and informal learning, that involve the private sector and civil society as well as different levels and departments of government, in order to realize fully the potential of lifelong learning in areas such as health, environmental sustainability and justice. The current and emerging challenges faced by the world are immense. They include climate change, mass migration and population displacement, technological transformation, poverty and inequality, and the threat to democracy represented by the growth of populism in politics. It is important, therefore, that we continue to articulate a holistic vision of lifelong learning and seek to integrate it into the daily life and work of citizens, ensuring their learning demands are expressed, heard and met. There are signs that parts of the global policy community are waking up to the potential benefits of investment in learning throughout life (Atchoarena, 2018). Any educational policy cannot afford to ignore the importance of integrating lifelong and life-wide dimensions of learning to ensure sustainable development of individuals.

1.5.2 Integration of Lifelong and Life-wide Dimensions of Learning

Lifelong learning is viewed as a comprehensive process of vital importance to all individuals. It has two essential dimensions: lifelong dimension and life-wide dimension.

The lifelong dimension is relatively non-problematic, as it simply comprises what an individual learns throughout life. It is an internal part of socialisation – primary, secondary and so on. It represents our own-worlds, where we get the sense of feeling at home with our internal sense of reality being in harmony with external reality at any given moment in time. Fundamentally, there is a shared culture between those with whom interaction occurs in the immediate life-world (Jarvis, 2007, p.138). In such a situation, our life-world can continue with harmony even without having to learn anything new; and continuity is the order of the day. But an important feature of global world is rapid social change caused by forces from the sub-structure of society and from governments introducing new policies, laws and procedures that force us to learn. It is therefore widely accepted that as and when knowledge and skills become obsolete, some individuals continuously update their competencies in a process of continuous learning, some may partly update and some others may continue in a situation of non-learning at their own cost or peril.

Figure 1.1: Two dimensions of learning process



On the other hand, the life-wide dimension is more complex, as it embraces an extensive range of continuing changes and associated discontinuities that often create a sense of disjuncture between people's internalized perception of reality and their present experience of it. Such a sense of disjuncture is not

just something one individual experiences, but that everybody experiences so that it is considered as a change happening due to forces not just outside the life-world but also from immediate pressures resulting in interaction between close associates sometimes demanding renegotiation of meanings, practices and so on (Jarvis, 2007, p.139). The scope of life-wide dimension of learning is unlimited and encompasses all changes that form the order of the present and of the future. Thus, as a result of globalization and rapid social change, individuals have to keep on learning to feel at home in the changing world. This learning, besides formal learning, occurs as a part of everyday life in the form of incidental learning, learning in communities of practice, learning in the workplace, learning for social and personal identity, self-motivated/self-directed learning and learning for being an effective member of an ageing society. You will learn more about Communities of Practice (CoPs) in sub-section 3.4.2 of Unit-3 of Block-1 of this course.

1.5.3 Wholesome Integration: Integration of all Learning/ Educational Systems, Settings and Qualifications Frameworks

Lifelong learning systems and settings encompass all types of learning, training and education institutions – formal, non-formal and informal – involved in providing general education, vocational education, technical education, arts and crafts, etc and also call for effective integration of their learning frameworks. In other words, lifelong learning demands comprehensive integration of all types of learning, all types of education and all types of institutions including open and distance learning institutions and all types of qualifications (general and skills-specific) frameworks.

i) Integration of formal, non-formal and informal institutions/settings

According to the International Standard Classification for Education (UNESCO, 1997; See http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-1997-en_0.pdf) formal education refers to the system of schools, colleges, universities and other formal educational institutions that normally constitutes a continuous 'ladder' of fulltime education for children and young people, generally beginning at age five to seven and continuing up to 20 or 25 years old. Any organized and sustained educational activities that do not correspond exactly to the above definition of formal education are considered to be non-formal. Non-formal education may therefore take place both within and outside educational institutions, and cater to persons of all ages. Depending on country- contexts, it may cover educational programmes to impart adult literacy, basic education for out-of-school children, life-skills, work skills, and general culture. Non-formal education programmes do not necessarily follow the 'ladder' system, and may have differing duration. Informal learning consists of all incidental activities (at any place or time in daily life), or intended or unintended learning activities that cannot be classified as formal or non-formal learning. They are characterised by a relatively low level of organisation and may take place at the individual level (for example, self-directed learning) or at the group level (for example, at the workplace or within the family). Just to have an idea of these categories of institutions, you can have a glance at Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Formal, non-formal and informal learning/educational institutions

Formal institutions	Non-formal institutions	Informal institutions
• Pre-schools • Primary / Elementary schools • High schools / Secondary schools • Senior secondary schools • Colleges (General and professional) • Vocational education institutions • Technical education institutions • Universities (of all types including Open Universities) • Universities of the Third Age (U3As) • Councils, Standard Setting bodies and other regulatory bodies • Other types of institutions	• Childcare Centres (crèches) • Professional associations • Apprenticeship firms • On-the-job training centres • Labour market firms • Coaching Centres • Voluntary Organizations • Learning Circles • Alternate Education Centres • Adult and Continuing Education Centres • Other types of institutions	• Museums • Clubs • Art galleries • Playgrounds • Community Libraries • Home-based institutions / centres • Elder care centres • Old age homes • Business firms • Communities of practice • Community centres • Service providers • Other types of institutions

ii) Integration of General Education, Vocational Education, Arts and Crafts, etc

You are aware that formal, non-formal and informal educational institutions include whole gamut of learning institutions catering to general, professional, vocational, technical, arts and crafts, among other types of education and training. For effective movement of different categories of learners along their stream and across the streams of learning/education, there is need for integration of those systems into common qualifications frameworks.

Wholesome integration of all educational/learning systems is essentially possible through the following ways.

a) Structural Reforms: Structural reform is seen as one of the long-term goals of reforms designed to boost an economy's competitiveness, growth potential and adjustment capacity. It involves the changes in aspects, policy and practice of lifelong learning to fulfill the individual and societal needs as well as the requirements of the nation. Its objectives include the creation of a new relationship between lifelong learning, education and the economy. This calls for sustained reform of all sectors of the education system for integration into it of all learning occurring in all other sectors of economy.

b) Recognition, validation and accreditation of prior learning and qualifications: The internationalisation of educational and training systems, labour markets, and the increased mobility of people and jobs have implications on the ways that skills are recognised, validated and accredited nationally and on cross-border recognition of qualifications of various types of workers such as the following.

- *White-Collar Workers:* These are generally or popularly known as suit-and-tie workers who work at a desk and, stereotypically, eschew physical labour. A college degree or a higher qualification or appropriate level of training is typically demanded / required for a white-collar position. These people are usually tasked with academic, administrative, managerial, and/ or clerical functions. Examples of white-collar jobs are: Accountants. Attorneys, Judges, Teachers in schools, colleges, universities, and so on.

- *Blue-Collar Workers:* Blue-collar workers stereotypically refer to workers who engage in hard manual labour, typically working in the fields such as agriculture, manufacturing, construction, mining, maintenance and the like. They use their hands and physical abilities to perform their duties. Examples of blue-collar employees include construction worker, machine operator, millwright, assembler, truck driver, plumber, electrician, home health aides and the like.

- *Gold-Collar Workers:* A gold-collar worker is a highly skilled multi-disciplinarian or knowledge worker who combines intellectual labour, which is typically white-collar, with the manual labour of blue-collar positions. Gold-collar jobs involve positions that have recently become essential enough to business operations that they warranted their own new classification.

c) Integration of all Systems and Qualifications Frameworks: Qualifications systems include all aspects of a country's activity that result in the recognition of learning. These systems include the means of developing and operationalising national or regional policy on qualifications, institutional arrangements, quality assurance processes, assessment and awarding processes, skills recognition and other mechanisms that link education and training to the labour market and civil society. Qualification systems may be more or less integrated and coherent. One feature of a qualification system may be an explicit framework of qualifications.

A qualifications framework is an instrument for the development and classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for levels of learning achieved. This set of criteria may be implicit in the qualifications descriptors themselves or made explicit in the form of a set of level descriptors. The scope of frameworks may be comprehensive covering all learning achievement and pathways or may be confined to a particular sector, for example initial education, collegiate or university education, adult education and training or an occupational area. Some frameworks may have more design elements and a tighter structure than others; some may have a legal basis whereas others represent a consensus of views of social partners. All qualifications frameworks, however, establish a basis for improving the quality, accessibility, linkages and public or labour market recognition of qualifications within a country and internationally.

Thus personal, social, structural, functional, economic, national and global contexts and systems, their operations and interlinks, among others, that require sustained integration of our day-to-day experiences into our continuous learning in the world of work although the life shaping the future of individuals, communities, societies, nations and the world form the gamut or scope of lifelong learning. Such integration needs to be wholesome integration of all types of learning, all educational systems and the relevant qualifications frameworks.

The global education development agenda as reflected in the Goal 4 (SDG4) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, also adopted by India in 2015, seeks to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030. Such a lofty goal will require the entire education system to be reconfigured to support and foster learning, so that all of the critical targets and goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can also be achieved. The National Education Policy 2020 is the first education policy of the 21st century and the third of independent India. Aimed at building upon India's traditions and value systems, the policy proposes the revision and revamping of all aspects of the education structure, including the bodies of its regulation and governance, so as to create a new system that is aligned with the aspired goals of 21st century education, including SDG4. It lays particular emphasis on the development of the creative potential of each individual. It is based on the principle that education must develop not only cognitive capacities – both the 'foundational capacities' of literacy and numeracy and 'higher-order' cognitive capacities, such as critical thinking and problem solving – but also social, ethical, and emotional capacities and dispositions. Educational outcomes and the transparent disclosure of all financial, academic, and operational matters will be given due importance and will be suitably incorporated in the assessment of schools. This is expected to give an impetus to India's progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) of ensuring free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education for all children. Higher Education Institutions will have the option to run Open Distance Learning (ODL) and online programmes, provided they are accredited to do so, in order to enhance their offerings, improve access, increase GER, and provide opportunities for lifelong learning (SDG 4). All ODL programmes and their components leading to any diploma or degree will be of standards and quality equivalent to the highest quality programmes run by the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) on their campuses. Top institutions accredited for ODL will be encouraged and supported to develop high-quality online courses. Such quality online courses will be suitably integrated into curricula of HEIs, and blended mode will be preferred (NEP, 2020). Open and distance learning including online learning is going to play a significant role in promotion of lifelong learning, which is possible through proper policy-orientation towards establishing lifelong education system.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write the answer in the space given below the question.

b) Check your answer with the one given under "Answers to 'Check Your Progress' Questions" of this Unit.

3. Explain the scope of lifelong learning.

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1.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have discussed the concept of lifelong learning, its relationship with other relevant terms or concepts such as 'Literacy', 'Functional Literacy, 'Education', 'Adult Education', 'Extension', 'Continuing Education', and 'Lifelong Education', among others. We have also discussed the scope of lifelong learning which is at the heart of sustainable development agenda 2030. Lifelong learning encompasses the lifelong and life-wide aspects and processes, and involves integration of diverse learning systems/contexts and opportunities for promotion of learning among individuals, groups, communities and societies as a whole. As lifelong learning and lifelong education are closely inter-related influencing each other, we hope that you might have understood the essential requirement of integration of all forms, systems and contexts of learning and education and their qualifications frameworks in holistic manner.

1.7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS' QUESTIONS

1) Learning is the driving force and integral part of individual's living and working. Lifelong learning is the continuum of learning – formal, non-formal and informal – and is spread throughout the lifespan of an individual. A statement resulting from a collaboration of the European Lifelong Learning Initiative and the American Council on Education provides a workable expression of lifelong learning in an inclusive sense that accommodates its heterogeneity for broader acceptance: "Lifelong learning is the development of human potential through a continuously supportive process which stimulates 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 roles, circumstances, and environments."

2) In very simple and precise terms lifelong learning is more of learner-centred in its nature, which may be incidental or accidental, unsystematic or systematic, and others directed or self-motivated. On the other hand, lifelong education is a strategy that enables people to learn at different times, from different agencies in different ways, for different purposes at various stages of their lives and careers. It is concerned with providing learning opportunities throughout life and pays special attention to all forms and types of education, in response to or keeping in view the constantly changing conditions of modern life. It paves the way for systematic acquisition, renewal and upgrading of knowledge, skills and attitudes,

along with due recognition, validation and accreditation as required by ever changing conditions.

3) The scope of lifelong learning is as wide as life itself. Lifelong learning is at the heart of sustainable development agenda 2030. It encompasses both planned and unplanned, or intentional and unintentional learning taking place as a result of exposure to learning environments of various types and kinds in all aspects, at all places and in all contexts of life, within and outside educational institutions. Its scope can be summed up as follows.

   - It is both lifelong and life-wide learning and includes formal, non-formal and informal learning.
   - It is more than education and training and integrates general education, vocational education, technical education, arts and crafts, and so on into it.
   - It encompasses all types of learning, training and education systems, institutions and qualifications frameworks and their integration in fulfilment of lifetime needs and aspirations of all individuals and societies.

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1.9 UNIT-END EXERCISES

In your own interest, you may prepare the answers to the following questions which may be useful as a part of your preparation for your term-end examinations.

1) What is lifelong learning? Explain its relationship with literacy, functional literacy, adult education, continuing education and lifelong education.

2) How do you distinguish literacy and functional literacy?

3) Explain the scope of lifelong learning with suitable examples.

1.10 UNIT-END ACTIVITY

If you like to further enhance your interest, you may attempt to perform the following activity.

List various contexts that have essentially contributed to your learning in your lifespan till date. Categorise them into informal, non-formal and formal learning contexts. Critically analyse these contexts with a view to understand how these contexts have contributed to integrated learning in your life.

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UNIT -2: LIFELONG LEARNERS

Structure

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Learning Objectives

2.3 Participants of Lifelong Learning

- 2.3.1 Teachers and Students in all Systems of Education as Lifelong Learners
- 2.3.2 Adults and Adult Educators as Lifelong Learners
- 2.3.3 Individuals, Communities and Societies as Lifelong Learners
- 2.3.4 Self-oriented Lifelong Learners

2.4 Let Us Sum Up

2.5 Answers to 'Check Your Progress' Questions

2.6 References and Suggested Readings

2.7 Unit-End Exercises

2.8 Unit-End Activities

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In Unit-1, you have studied the concept and scope of lifelong learning. You have also got acquainted with the concepts and the terms such as literacy, education, adult education, extension education, continuing education and lifelong education as well as inter-relationships among these concepts. Further, you have studied lifelong and life-wide dimensions of learning that extend beyond education and training.

Unit-2 herein attempts to contextualize lifelong learners and explain their categories. The unit particularly discusses different categories of participants of lifelong learning such as teachers and students in all systems of education, adults and adult educators in all contexts, all individuals, communities and societies in all places of living and working, and all those self-oriented to lifelong learning.

2.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- categorise the lifelong learners or the participants of lifelong learning;
- discuss teachers and students in all systems of education as participants of lifelong learning;
- contextualise adults and adult educators as participants of lifelong learning;
- appreciate all individuals, communities and societies in all places as participants of lifelong learning; and
- recognise all persons who are self-oriented to learning in their life as participants of lifelong learning.

2.3 PARTICIPANTS OF LIFELONG LEARNING

You are already aware that lifelong learning is a comprehensive and multifarious concept. It includes all sections of society, professionals of different fields, those working in all types of jobs in different areas of work, those who are self-employed/self-established and those who are self-oriented, self-motivated and voluntary learners. It not only recognizes the past and the present learning but also attempts to provide for the learning needs and skill enhancement of all categories of lifelong learners by facilitating acquisition of knowledge and skills by them for furthering their personal, social, economic, professional and other pursuits. Thus, lifelong learning enhances social inclusion, active citizenship, personal development, self-sustainability, competitiveness and employability of all people, who are the participants in lifelong learning.

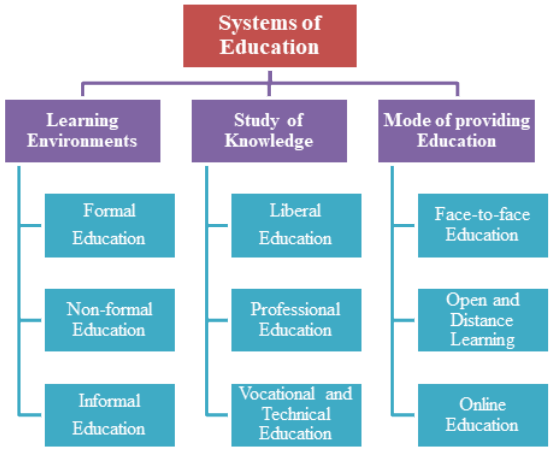
In view of the above, the participants of the lifelong learning can be categorized into four broad categories of lifelong learners, such as: i) teachers and students in all systems of education; ii) adults and adult educators in all contexts; iii) individuals, communities and societies in all places; and iv) all those self-oriented learners involved in lifelong learning. Let us attempt to understand each of these categories of participants of lifelong learning.

2.3.1 Teachers and Students in all Systems of Education as Lifelong Learners

Teachers and students of all systems of education form one important category of participants of lifelong learning. Let us look at this category of lifelong learners from the following viewpoints.

1. Viewpoint of different learning environments (formal, non-formal and informal education)
2. Viewpoint of the study of knowledge (liberal, professional, vocational and technical education)
3. Viewpoint of mode of education (face-to-face, open and distance learning and online modes of education)

Figure 2.1: Systems of Education



Source: IGNOU. (2020). *BESC – 131: Education: Concept, Nature and Perspectives.* New Delhi: IGNOU

Figure 2.1 depicts a holistic perspective of system of education in a country from the points of view of learning environment, study of knowledge and mode of providing education.

i) Viewpoint of Learning Environment

Learning environments can be formal, non-formal and informal, depending upon the system of education.

In ***formal system of education***, learning takes place generally in the formal schools, colleges and universities. It has its own goals and objectives. Students take admission into a formal education institution, and pursue their study as per the schedule, curriculum and syllabus prescribed for the students of particular class-level. Teachers are appointed to take the classes regularly in a formal learning environment. The various aspects of formal system of education, in brief, are as follows:

- It has specific aims and purposes.
- There is a particular structure or pattern of education, which is based on particular education policy. We can say, for example, as per National Policy on Education 1968 modified in 1992 in India, elementary education is of 8 years of duration, secondary education is of two years duration, senior secondary education is of two years duration and college education is of three years duration.
- Every level of formal education has a definite curriculum and prescribed courses of study providing for level-specific knowledge, attitudes, abilities, and skills. Completion of lower level is essential for moving into the next level of education.
- Teacher plays crucial role in curriculum transaction that includes classroom teaching, practical experiences, participation in co-scholastic activities, field-based experiences, etc.
- School, collegiate and university education are regulated by appropriate Boards or Universities. They lay down norms for operation of the relevant system including curriculum, teaching-learning, conduct of examinations, assessment, evaluation and certification.
- The learning objectives are clearly specified and assessment and evaluation of achievement of learning outcomes at each level is managed by the relevant Boards or the Universities.

The formal education system thus provides for continuing education and lifelong learning for its clientele – the teachers and students – who can afford to pursue education only in its formal learning environments. It includes teacher training or teacher education system/programmes as well.

Non-formal education system is also called as the alternative system of education. This is in true spirit of fulfilling or bridging the lapses in realization of the objectives of continuing education and lifelong learning. It comes to the rescue of all those who could not enter into the formal system of education or having entered into the formal system could not continue with it at any point of

time. Through this system one can pursue education even after entering the job fields. This type of education provides for learning environments outside the traditional in-class systems of learning. This system provides for more flexible learning environments – through face-to-face distance education, open and distance learning, online and blended modes, among others. Important features of non-formal education are summed-up as follows:

- Like formal education, non-formal education also has specific goals and objectives.
- Non-formal education programmes have flexible criteria related to admission, duration, courses, examination, assessment and certification.
- Non-formal education curricula are formulated keeping in view of the learning needs of the learners, and are mostly customized to address the learning needs of diversified learner-clientele – illiterates, out-of-school children, out-of-college youth, working adults, the persons employed in different professions and self-motivated unemployed learners.
- Non-formal education provides for more learner-centred, diversified, need-based and relevant curriculum transacted through different modes. Teaching-learning process is generally learner-oriented and flexible in nature.
- Non-formal system of education also operates under the control of the appropriate regulatory system or bodies, as may be required. Specification of learning objectives, conduct of examinations and assessment of learning outcomes, and certification are done in systematic manner.
- Non-formal education system provides those learning opportunities to lifelong learners which are otherwise not available through formal system of learning. Non-formal learning environments thus serve as bridges that fill the missing spaces of learning in the formal system.

Informal education includes all the lifelong learning experiences of the individuals gained from the family, community, society, peers, friends and other groups from different cultures, languages, regions and backgrounds as a part of living, working, or travelling and other contexts or environments. It is also called as incidental learning/education, the scope of which is larger than that of formal or non-formal learning. The features of informal education are as follows (Elaine, 2018, https://drsaraheaton.wordpress.com/2012/02/28/characteristics-informal-learning/):

- Informal education is based upon life-skills and self-learning experiences of the learners.
- It follows the principle that education happens at any stage of life, and at any place, context or environment, and from any person or groups of persons.
- Informal learning takes place outside any formal or non-formal curriculum for education.

- It happens incidentally when the people visit different places and come in contact with varying environments at home, in society, or community, or with peers and other groups, playmates, and in clubs, social ceremonies, etc.
- Informal learning is never organised but it teaches the individual about living, life and behaving in different situations.
- Informal learners are highly motivated to learn from different situations, places, people and never miss the opportunities of learning.
- Informal learning is often spontaneous, contextual, immediate and incidental.
- The whole world is the classroom as per the concept of informal education as informal learning is life-long and life-wide.
- The concept of teacher in informal learning includes the persons, the places, the environments, the experiences and the situations.
- Informal education is very much essential for the lifelong learners as they are the self-motivated and self-oriented learners.

All the above systems of education including all teachers and students thus form the whole gamut of clientele and stakeholders of lifelong learning – the participants of lifelong learning. Their participation in lifelong learning helps them cope with all the above systems of education at different times and stages of their lives. No single system of education can ever satisfy all the requirements of the lifelong learners.

Activity 1

Cite few examples of informal education.

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ii) Viewpoint of Study of Knowledge

From the viewpoint of study of knowledge, the system of education can be classified as liberal, professional, vocational and technical education. All the three systems of education – formal, non-formal and informal – have their respective knowledge bases and practices.

Liberal education in India can be understood as general education that the learners take in the schools and colleges as per the prescribed structure of the national system of education, popularly called 10+2+3 pattern, i.e. 10 years of school education, followed by 2 years of senior secondary education and 3 years of college/higher education. Liberal education facilitates acquisition of a Bachelor or Master degree in Arts, Science or Commerce streams covering wide

range of disciplines such as History, Political Science, Education, Economics, Physics, Chemistry, Commerce, and so on.

Accordingly, ***professional education*** is another system of education that acquaints the learners about skills and competencies required for pursuing or practicing a particular profession. For example, to become a teacher in a formal school, one should have a professional qualification in teacher education like a Certificate in Primary Education (CPE), Diploma in Elementary Education (D.El.Ed.), Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.), etc. Likewise, professional education is imparted in other areas and disciplines such as medicine, engineering, management, law, etc. Professional education prepares a person to serve the nation with due competence and confidence and, at the same time, it also makes the person self-sufficient for his/her own livelihood.

Vocational and technical education is also another system of education. It prepares suitable categories of personnel for practicing different vocations such as welders, electricians, fabricators, fashion designers, event managers, and so on. This is possible by pursuing a short-term certificate or a diploma course related to specific vocational or technical subjects. One can opt for a vocational branch for such studies after the completion of 10th class under the extant structure of education. Of course, the vocational and technical education as per the National Education Policy 2020 gets integrated under new structure of school education system, i.e. 5+3+3+4 pattern, which has subsumed in it the extant +2 stage and thus done away with intermediate stage of education.

The above systems of education are based upon acquiring knowledge and skills related to particular discipline, profession or vocation. Therefore, both teachers and students are the lifelong learners so far as study of knowledge in different areas is concerned.

Activity 2

Cite few examples of liberal, professional and vocational education.

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iii) Viewpoint of Mode of Education

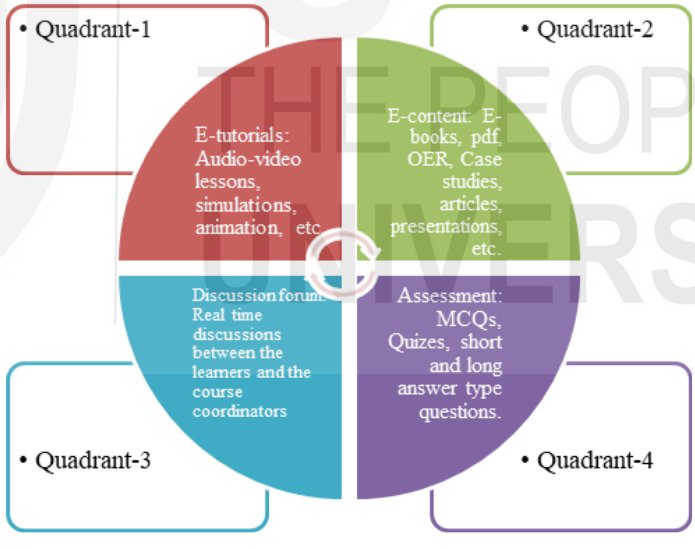
We have already discussed lifelong learning or education from the viewpoint of learning environments, i.e. formal, non-formal and informal. From the viewpoint of mode of providing education, it can be traditional face-to-face learning mode, open and distance learning mode and online mode. Online mode is the recent development catering to millions of learners across the world by using Internet. It has equal application or utility in formal, non-formal and informal learning environments.

By *face-to-face* mode of education (i.e. conventional system), we mean direct classroom teaching-learning interactions as per the formal time-schedule. Of course, all other possible media are also used now in the process of teaching the students in the classroom situation.

Open and distance learning is the alternative delivery mode which caters to millions of learners pursuing their education at their door steps. It facilitates self-pacing and self-spacing in their learning endeavours. It largely benefits the learners who cannot attend everyday-class for pursuing their education due to various reasons. ODL system uses different principles and process to address the learning needs of the learners. ODL can also be used for the professional development and skill enhancement of the learners. A detailed package of study materials for self-learning and effective learner support services together form the crux of the ODL mode. Multiple media are used for providing education in ODL system.

Online mode is delivered and administered using the internet. Learners can enroll in the online education system from any part of the world and pursue any programme of their choice and interest. In India, presently SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active-learning for Young Aspiring Minds) platform is used for educating huge number of learners through online media. It uses a four-quadrant model of learning package that includes e-content, audio/video lessons, synchronous and asynchronous discussion forum as well as assessment.

Figure 2.2: Four-quadrants of Online Education as per SWAYAM



Source: Govt. of India (2021). SWAYAM. (See https://swayam.gov.in/about)

Activity 3

Analyse the four-quadrant approach of SWAYAM-based online education.

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The learning environments, study of knowledge and modes of learning are integral parts of all educational systems. Lifelong learners can select the appropriate system or mode of learning depending upon their needs, as well as accessibility, availability, affordability and competencies required for pursuing the relevant programmes – general, professional, vocational and technical. While lifelong learning happens through any or all the systems of education, recognition, accreditation or validation and certification of prior learning from any of these systems is essential for smooth facilitation of further learning across the streams, modes and systems. It calls for a well-planned system of education driven by a strong policy along with sound, integrated curricular frameworks providing for holistic education of all the lifelong learners.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write the answer in the space given below the question.

b) Check your answer with the one given under "Answers to 'Check Your Progress' Questions" of this Unit.

1. What are the features of non-formal education system?

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2. What do you understand by professional education?

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3. What is online learning?

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2.3.2 Adults and Adult Educators as Lifelong Learners

All adults and adult educators in all contexts inevitably form the participants of lifelong learning. When we talk about adult as participants of lifelong learning or as lifelong learners, we understand that the adults learn for different purposes and in different contexts of life. The purposes and contexts mainly pertain to:

- Managing livelihood;

- Making oneself self-sufficient;
- Coping up with the changing scenarios of different walks of life; and
- Keeping oneself professionally competent and especially fit for job-market.

While education is a lifelong process, training is an essential requirement that happens continually for successful performance of various tasks in different fields of life, work and leisure. Adulthood being the longest phase of life, major part of learning takes place during adulthood. Adults play significant roles in different spheres – personal, familial, social, economic, political and national – of their productive life. Hence, adults demand for education and training is more with special reference to their vocations, avocations, socially useful and leisure time activities than other age groups. Depending upon the dynamic needs and contexts of life, adult learners and adult educators become more engaged in lifelong learning. They often play the role of informal learners or adult educators catering to lifelong learning needs of different sections of the society including all other age-groups.

Further the concept of adult educators as lifelong learners become very much important as they involve themselves in educating the adults in different contexts. They try to understand the needs, attitudes, aspirations, and dynamics of community life to deal with various aspects of education and training aimed at serving different purposes. According to the theory of andragogy, 'the educator is obliged to make the trainees understand the reason why they have entered the educational process. Through a completely experiential training it utilizes the trainees' experiences that have pre-existed or have taken place during the educational course by interacting in the team' (Giannoukos, et. al., 2015).

Teaching and training of adults in different contexts and backgrounds require huge experience and training on the part of adult educators. Strategies, methods, techniques used in adgragogy are different, in comparison with pedagogy. By being and/or becoming active lifelong learners only the adult educators will be successful in achieving their goals of personal, social and professional developments, among other things.

Adults and adult educators are thus the inevitable participants of lifelong learning in many contexts – historical, economic, socio-political and demographic. Historical background of the country, its independence, and its educational development at different stages form important contexts of lifelong learning of its adults and adult educators. Further, economic development of the individual, family, society and the country is another important aspect for participating in lifelong learning. Demographic context is also equally important factor for lifelong learning as it helps in understanding the physical situation of people in different places– easily accessible or hard to reach places – in a country. Gender disparity in education is yet another aspect under the demographic context of lifelong learners. Further, the socio-political context such as different social sections, their beliefs and stereotypes, as well as political will of different governments at different times towards educating their citizens also determine the need of lifelong learning or participation in different lifelong learning contexts (UNESCO, 2016). Thus, individual adults, their groups and all adult educators historically belonged to diverse types of participants of lifelong learning ranging

from literacy learners to literacy teachers/instructors, to neo-literates to post-literacy and continuing education functionaries to adult educators and adult educationists at large.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write the answer in the space given below the question.

b) Check your answer with the one given under "Answers to 'Check Your Progress' Questions" of this Unit.

4. How are adult educators the participants of lifelong learning?

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5. What are the broad contexts of lifelong learning for the adults and adult educators?

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2.3.3 Individuals, Communities and Societies as Lifelong Learners

In this sub-section we will discuss how individuals, communities and societies at different places form different categories of lifelong learners.

i) Individuals as a category of lifelong learners

All individuals are the lifelong learners in different contexts and different purposes. People living in different socio-demographic situations require lifelong learning at different stages of their life. People living in rural areas mostly depend upon agriculture, farming, cottage industry, self-employed, and self-managed vocation or profession, etc. They all require lifelong learning to acquaint themselves with relevant knowledge and different skills. By acquiring new skills and competencies they all will be able to enhance their productive capacities in the sectors where they work.

Further people living in different semi-urban and urban areas also need lifelong learning facilities or opportunities as they are mostly engaged in different worlds of work including government, public and private sectors. They need to update themselves so as to meet the changing demands of different walks of life. For example, a teacher as an individual needs to continue updating his/her content knowledge and pedagogical skills as per the changing demands – short-term or long-term – of the relevant programmes and policies. This is possible

only through lifelong learning. You might have observed that presently Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are getting popular across the world. Teachers earlier engaged in the traditional teaching-learning approaches are now getting oriented towards developing MOOCs for their students, who are otherwise engaged in face-to-face system of learning. This can be facilitated through a short-term training programme to the concerned teachers, which is integral part of their lifelong learning. Similarly, the individuals engaged in different small- and large-scale industries in the semi-urban or urban areas too require continuous training to acquire the skills and competencies to cope up with the changing situations for doing more productive work. Lifelong learning, thus, is a driving force for all the individuals in their diverse living and working contexts to maintain a quality life.

To start with, it is the right of all the individuals in most of the democratic countries to be educated or become learned. In India, every child in the age group of 6 to 14 has a fundamental right to free and compulsory elementary education, which is popularly known as Right to Education, as per RTE Act, 2009. Children here implies all individuals (citizens) of the country irrespective of their ages, gender, caste, creed, etc. If it is not possible in the formal system of education, it may be done in all possible non-formal or alternative settings. This eventually forms the basis for their further learning or continuing education.

In addition, even the dropout students as well as left out students at any stage of education become the lifelong learners when they go for their remedial education or continuing education by way of studying at the formal or non-formal system of education for developing their knowledge, attitudes and life skills and other competencies. So all individuals at different places, be at home, working in different unorganized sectors, factories, or engaged in domestic work, in farming and other agricultural activities, and self-help groups, among others, fall under the category of lifelong learners.

ii) Communities as specific groups of lifelong learners

You might have observed that the communities are engaged in different ways to do some productive activities and to help each other through establishing a type of self-help group as per the importance of their local context. For performing the activities they are engaged in, they require certain knowledge, and skills. Lifelong learning works here as an important means to acquire the required skills and competencies to cope up with the fellow community members for working with and helping each other.

Establishment and continuation of a Community of Practice (CoP) demands regular interaction among the members for the cause of mutual benefits and it is possible only through lifelong learning. According to Etienne Wenger (2016), 'communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do or learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.' Further, three characteristics of community of practice (CoP) as stated are: 'domain', 'practice' and 'community'. *Domain* focuses on 'share a concern', *practice* focuses on 'learn how to do it better' and *community* focuses on 'interact regularly'. Domain, practice and community in a CoP may be characterized as follows:

Domain: Community members have a shared domain of interest, competence and commitment that distinguishes them from others. This shared domain creates common ground, inspires members to participate, guides their learning, and gives meaning to their actions.

Practice: Community members are actual practitioners in this domain of interest, and build a shared repertoire of resources and ideas that they take back to their practice. While the domain provides the general area of interest for the community, the practice is the specific focus around which the community develops, shares and maintains its core of collective knowledge.

Community: Members pursue this interest through joint activities, discussions, problem-solving opportunities, information sharing and relationship building. The notion of a community creates the social fabric for enabling collective learning. A strong community fosters interaction and encourages a willingness to share ideas.

Community of Practice (CoP) equally works in collaborative efforts by using the various social media. They share their success stories and experiences that they gain in doing new things and in creating new avenues at the work place. Presently, you might have been observing many such groups actively working in various social media platforms, like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc. It is possible because of engagement of the community members in various lifelong learning activities of their choice, interest, ability and/or commitment for particular CoP.

Sometimes, community members get engaged in statutorily mandated groups, teams or committees. If we take the example of the provisions of Right to Education (RTE Act, 2009), you will find that one of the important recommendations of the RTE Act, 2009 is to establish a School Management Committee (SMC) and their work will be to develop a School Development Plan (SDP) for specified duration. Participation in such committees is also part of the community's lifelong learning. Development of SDP is possible through proper training of the SMC members. This has been observed that the SMC members are provided specific training in this regard which may form part of their lifelong learning.

In the emerging scenario, you might have observed that online education is going to be more popular means especially for the professional development of the job holders and those who are self-engaged or self-employed in different vocations. These form altogether different category or community of lifelong learners. Thus, the participants of lifelong learning belong to different groups or categories of any society, community, sections, age, gender, etc. and/or may transcend geographical boundaries as well.

iii) Societies as lifelong learners

Societies where we live and do all our activities are also examples of lifelong learners. A society is not a static concept, but it is an ever dynamic and flexible concept. Developments or changes always occur in our society, may be in our culture, traditions, customs, or norms of engagement in different works, and interpersonal communications that result in lifelong learning. Here, you will study different types of societies that function as lifelong learners for their

development as a whole.

a) ***Knowledge societies*****:** 'Knowledge society is often referred to as lifelong learning society. But projects and plans by individuals and groups and institutions to develop lifelong learning are more credibly regarded as a response to the requirement of the state in knowledge society rather than to an independent requirement of the knowledge society itself.' (Shah, 2017). 'A knowledge society generates, shares and makes available to all members of the society knowledge that may be used to improve the human condition' (Knowledge Society, 2020).

A knowledge society practices certain innovative ideas, develops and shares the resources as knowledge for the larger development of the society. A knowledge society takes the leadership of many innovative practices introduced in the society in many areas such as in education, health, life skills and professions.

b) ***Learning societies:*** **'**A community that promotes a culture of learning by developing effective local partnerships between all sectors of the community, and supports and motivates individuals and organisations to learn is called as a learning society'. (UNESCO, 2021). The definition of learning society illustrates that the larger society consists of many communities and sub-communities and small societies. Every community has its own knowledge base, beliefs and practices. It is the learning society that disseminates knowledge and skills to the community at large for the benefit of all the individuals through the practices of lifelong learning. For example, a school, a society and a community are so closely associated with each other to reinforce their functioning for mutual success.

c) ***Information societies:*** Knowledge societies and information societies are interdependent. A knowledge society differs from an information society in that the former serves to transform information into resources that allow society to take effective action while the latter only creates and disseminates the raw data or preliminary information. Fact is that knowledge generation never happens overnight. Information society disseminates raw data from one section to other section of the society. The work of knowledge generation starts from the raw data received from any societal practice. In the process, the raw data gets analysed and synthesised to give it a shape of information. When the information is used in a knowledge generation process by adopting suitable methods and media, it becomes an accepted principle, process or concept. Thus, while the preliminary work is done by the information society to gather the raw data from its practices as a part of its basic lifelong learning efforts, the knowledge societies help in transforming the raw data into information and knowledge resources that are useful for the entire society at large.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write the answer in the space given below the question.

b) Check your answer with the one given under "Answers to 'Check Your Progress' Questions" of this Unit.

6. Explain the concept of community as a category of lifelong learners.

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7. How are all individuals the lifelong learners?

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2.3.4 Self-oriented Lifelong Learners

Lifelong learning is the ongoing, voluntary, and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge for either personal or professional reasons. It enhances not only social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development but also self-sustainability, competitiveness and employability (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lifelong_learning). To explain the concept, the terms used, 'voluntary' and 'self-motivated pursuit', can be understood as group of learners who are self-oriented towards pursuing lifelong learning for many reasons.

Persons who are engaged in world of work, may be in different fields/areas such as agriculture, craftsmanship, dairy farming, mobile technology, tourism, etc. which require updated skills for coping themselves in the changing scenarios of working-class clienteles. Persons engaged in these areas/professions get self-oriented to learn and acquire more skills through lifelong learning. They do it by pursuing a short-term certificate course or by workshop-based training programmes, or as a part of performance of specific tasks. Many a time, you might have observed many unskilled workers engaging themselves in skill-oriented jobs and acquiring the required skills on their own effort, practice, consultation, self-study, etc. They do it all out of self-motivation, self-orientation and commitment to the task.

Lifelong learning thus makes learning continuous, continual, endless and free from any boundary as per their needs, demands, abilities, and interests. The self-motivated and self-oriented persons are the true participants of lifelong learning. We may come across many unskilled and semi-skilled persons who have become fully skilled persons through self-learning and at the same time, they also provide skill training to many others.

Activity 4

Cite few examples related to your own self-orientation to lifelong learning.

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2.4 LET US SUM UP

Lifelong learners are spread across all sections of the society irrespective of their age, gender, vocation, qualification, etc. Every individual has certain potentiality to learn, to work and to create certain new things. Lifelong learning provides all individuals appropriate opportunities to enhance their learning through self-orientation and self-study to become self-sufficient in required skills.

If we classify the groups or categories of lifelong learners the list may become very lengthy as it caters to all individuals, be they students, teachers, parents, members of various communities, societies, and so on. But they all are self-oriented persons, educators, educationists, adults and adult educators, retired persons, senior citizens, etc. So we can say that they are all the participants of lifelong learning and are the stakeholders of all opportunities of their learning.

In this unit, you studied about different categories of lifelong learners who are the participants of lifelong learning. They are: teachers and students of all systems of education, adults and adult educators in all contexts, all individuals, communities and societies in all places and all those self-oriented to lifelong learning.

2.5 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS' QUESTIONS

1. Features of non-formal education (NFE) include the following:

   - NFE has certain goals and objectives; so also NFE programmes. It offers diverse learning experiences of interest to the learners.
   - NFE does not mean that it is completely free from formalities. As an example, in distance education system, there are minimum and maximum time durations for each of the programmes. Like that, NFE is more flexible in many respects.
   - Curriculum and courses of study are formulated keeping in view of the learning needs of the learners. NFE curricula are more flexible and customized to cater to the needs of diversified learners who are self-motivated to pursue their further education.
   - Teaching-learning and evaluation practices are generally learner-oriented and flexible in nature.

- NFE system too operates under the control of the appropriate regulatory system or bodies of national system of education, and subjects itself to internal quality control mechanisms in planning, developing and implementing its programmes.
- Specification of learning objectives, conduct of examinations and assessment of learning outcomes, and certification are also done in systematic manner.

2. Professional education implies that it involves specialized training in specialised areas such as education, medicine, engineering, management, agriculture, law, technology, etc. which are mostly competencies-based and skills-based.

3. Online learning is a mode of learning in which the learners learn in a synchronous or asynchronous or in combined learning environment provided through internet. It is a complete package of learning and assessment that includes e-texts, audio-video lessons, live discussions and assessment strategies, which has emerged as a popular practice forming an alternate system of education across the world.

4. Adult educators teach and train adults for promoting their general and professional education and also facilitate the non-literate adults to acquire literacy skills and basic education. Without themselves attempting to acquire or update their knowledge and skills, it is difficult for adult educators to manage the teaching-learning environments for adults. Therefore, adult educators are expected to engage themselves in lifelong learning.

5. Different contexts of lifelong learning for adults and adult educators form inseparable and integral parts of their lifelong and life-wide aspects of their living, working and leisure. The range of these contexts in general cover their background including historical, economic, socio-political, cultural and demographic spheres of their life, among many other things.

6. Community is a group concept. Growth of community is always continuous and dynamic. For the development of any community, its members themselves are usually engaged either individually or collectively, in various lifelong learning programmes and systems, thus learning as individuals or as groups.

7. All individuals are the lifelong learners as they continuously or continually engage themselves in learning activities related to acquisition of vocational, non-vocational, professional and many life skills and competencies. Their engagement in learning happens at all ages and all through different stages of their life.

2.6 REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS

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2.7 UNIT-END EXERCISES

In your own interest, you may prepare the answers to the following questions which may be useful as a part of your preparation for your term-end examinations.

1. Describe the categories of lifelong learners in view of different systems of education to which they belong.

2. Discuss adults and adult educators as participants of lifelong learning.
3. Critically examine the significance of communities and societies at all places as categories of lifelong learners.
4. Explain how self-motivated and self-oriented learners form the crucial category or participants of lifelong learning.
5. Explain how face-to-face, open and distance learning and online modes of learning form the essential modes for lifelong learning.
6. Critically analyse how four quadrants of SWAYAM as an online education portal help different categories of lifelong learners.

2.8 UNIT-END ACTIVITIES

If you like to further enhance your interest, you may attempt to perform the following activity.

1. Go through the website of UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (https://uil.unesco.org/lifelong-learning) and prepare a short note on the Lifelong Learning Policy Analysis as an area of lifelong learning.
2. Visit any institution or centre for lifelong learning of your convenience and prepare a case study about the nature of programmes offered by the centre or institution to its participants as lifelong learners.
3. You as a student of Bachelor Degree Programme pursuing this particular course BESE-142 Lifelong Learning, critically analyse the participants of lifelong learning and accordingly give your suggestions as to how the participants of different categories of lifelong learners get benefits of lifelong learning.

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UNIT-3: PLACES AND SOCIETIES OF LIFELONG LEARNING

Structure

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Learning Objectives

3.3 Learning Places

- 3.3.1 Concept of Learning Places
- 3.3.2 Nature and Dimensions of Learning Place
- 3.3.3 Learning Cities
- 3.3.4 Learning Regions

3.4 Learning Communities

- 3.4.1 Interpretation of Learning Communities
- 3.4.2 Communities of Practice (CoPs)

3.5 Learning Societies

- 3.5.1 Industrial Societies
- 3.5.2 Information Societies
- 3.5.3 Knowledge Societies

3.6 Let Us Sum Up

3.7 Answers to 'Check Your Progress' Questions

3.8 References and Suggested Readings

3.9 Unit-End Exercises

3.10 Unit-End Activity

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Though, as a social practice, lifelong learning, is as old as human culture and civilization, it has become increasingly popular in the literature, in the 21st century only. Having read about the concept and scope of lifelong learning in Unit-1, you might have well understood that lifelong learning goes beyond the confines of institutionalized education. From Unit-2, you might have understood the panoramic picture of wide-variety of participants of lifelong learning which includes teachers and students in all systems of education (formal, non-formal and informal) and adults and adult educators of all types in all contexts of life. In other words, the diverse categories of lifelong learners include all individuals learning individually, or in groups or as members of particular communities, and societies in different contexts and places of their living and working.

Further, you are aware that learning can take place at any place and at any time, provided there is a situation, an activity or opportunity existing for learning.

In other words, 'lifelong learning' encompasses all the situations, contexts, opportunities and possibilities that any learning environment offers. However, it is important to say that learning is individual-centric and the learning potential varies from individual to individual or from learner to learner. For example, compared to illiterates, literates possess more potential to learn and they get relatively more opportunities for learning, in particular, from explicit written experiences of others, existing in the form of abundant literature. In this context, it is apt to agree with Paulo Freire that the potential of literacy lies not only in reading the word but also reading the world (Freire and Macedo, 1987). Such literacy emphasizes a pedagogy intended to allow participants to understand their society fully. It is linked to the role that democratic citizenship and education together plays in supporting people's participation in lifelong and life-wide aspects.

This Unit presents a discourse about the places and societies of lifelong learning. When lifelong learning is treated as life-wide process as well, it recognizes that learning takes place in many different settings. The settings may include a small community or a vast society, depending upon the place which may be a small place, a city, a region or the entire globe. In other words, in this Unit, we will focus on the social and geographical settings where learning activities or opportunities are more predominant and purposeful. These settings will enhance your understanding of the types of learning places and societies such as information societies, knowledge societies and industrial societies.

3.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, you should be able to:

- explain how and when all places are considered as learning places;
- describe how communities/societies become learning communities/ societies;
- examine how all places and societies lead to lifelong learning among individuals;
- develop an understanding about the relationship between learning individuals, learning places and learning societies;
- distinguish information societies, knowledge societies and industrial societies; and
- elaborate as to how learning societies help in enhancing lifelong learning and productivity among adults.

3.3 LEARNING PLACES

Can you think of places which have not provided opportunities for learning or those which do not provide any opportunity for learning at all? Try to make a list of a few such places and then reflect upon the same as to whether these places really do not provide any learning opportunities at all for any individual or for a particular community. Also think of places where there are always opportunities for learning.

As stated in Indian Education Commission (1964-66), education cannot be confined to schooling but is a lifelong process, reiterates the fact that the adults continue to learn for their effective participation in social and political life. This widens the context of education from schools and colleges to different places and societies. You know that learning can happen at any time and at any place, subject to being there an opportunity (or activity) for learning. But, education implies both teaching and learning with assessment, whereas learning is not dependent upon teaching or assessment, as it can occur independent of all these. In this section, we will focus on the concept, nature and types of learning places so that you will have clarity about diverse learning places.

3.3.1 Concept of Learning Places

A learning place or space refers to a physical or virtual setting forming a part of learning environment. It may be an indoor (home) or outdoor location, actual, or virtual space. In other words, the learning places may also be planned or unplanned, organized or unorganized, natural or contrived. It is a place or space at which learning takes place in the individuals, irrespective of whether there is a teaching happening or not. It means, any individual getting exposed to a learning place is expected to get opportunities for learning. Remember, even while sitting in isolation, but seriously involved in reflecting on existing knowledge, specific problems and experiences one's active mind itself will act as an effective learning place or space, as it is facilitating intra-personal interaction. For example, a philosopher's thinking activity while sitting on an easy-chair is a learning activity. It means, learning place can thus be purely physical (actual), social (contextual), psychological (mental), or virtual (contrived).

Let us discuss the term 'place' perceived in the form of 'situated learning'. As per Lave (1988), the idea of learning changes from psychological limits of human mind to the living conditions of human and cultural interaction in situated learning. Thus, learning is considered as a re-occurring process in which the individuals act and interact within their social contexts. When we perceived learning as a process that occurs in social context, all places are largely pedagogical. Here, the term 'place' implies communities, regions, cities, and societies. For example, individuals learn basic mathematical skills in real contexts such as street markets, grocery shops, etc., irrespective of one's literacy or numeracy skills. The nature of interaction in the social contexts shapes their understanding of concepts. Therefore, every place which provides for individual's interaction within its given space or environment can be considered as a learning place. Moreover, a place also teaches us how to fit ourselves into the spaces we occupy and also how to allow spaces for others to fit themselves as well.

Let us try to understand how an understanding of a place as a whole, or one's space in a particular place forms an effective learning place leading to understanding oneself as a part of that place in a right perspective. To begin with, every individual should know the role (mini place or space) of himself/herself in a given place (home, community, society or world) which is considered as a learning place. Then, the concept of place is like a concentric-ring model (Fig.3.1) consisting of one's home at the centre, and then the community, the larger society and finally the world as a whole.

Figure 3.1: Concentric Rings of Learning Places/Spaces

Not only learning experiences but also identity relations among people and all activities happen within the whole gamut of social practices and changes thereof. One's identities and possibilities are also shaped within a particular place having particular attributes. For instance, read the following case in Box 3.1.

Box 3.1

Daya Bai, originally known as Mercy Mathew, left her original hometown from Pala in Kerala and came finally to Madhya Pradesh to work among the tribal population. In order to get acceptance from the forest dwellers and villagers in Madhya Pradesh, she identified herself with the tribal people. She dressed like a tribal woman and followed their food habits as well. She had been associated with Narmada Bachao Andolan and the Chengara agitations. In order to eradicate poverty she started the Swayam Sahayatha Group in the late 1990s. She also taught organic farming to the villagers of Barul (Maharashtra).

The above case reflects that as occupants of particular places Daya Bai shaped her own identity and possibility. According to Daya Bai, learning and development is place-specific. Her knowledge about the tribal system helped her work in close relationship between nature and humanity. Here, we can understand that place played significant role in shaping or producing identity of Daya Bai. For her, tribal area is a place for having experiential learning. From her place-specific learning experiences, she moulded her identity in cognizance and harmony with the tribal people. You know that we all learn a lot from the place(s) where we inhabited at different times. We learn the social practices, and norms from the community we resided with, whether for shorter or longer duration or permanently. Thus, place also refers to the shared location, environment, and experience as important elements, which help us in learning about how we organize, manage, and govern ourselves, our community, and the natural environment in the larger global context.

Similarly, you can think of virtual place where all the participants come together to discuss various issues in a shared platform (a virtual or digital place) and try to resolve the issues. In the light of the above discussion, let us try to understand

the nature of learning place from the point of view of its dimensions-cum-features.

3.3.2 Nature and Dimensions of Learning Place

From diverse literature, it can be observed that there are six major dimensions of place which deserve special mention in this context. These are the following:

i) Place is land-based

ii) Place is local or spatial

iii) Place is relationship-based

iv) Place is experiential

v) Place is multidimensional

vi) Place is technology-centered or technology-based or virtual

i) Place is land-based: The sense of place is attached to the land. When we look at indigenous cultures, land is the major aspect of group identity. Though India is a land of diversities, there exists a sense of unity because people inhabit in the same land of geographical identity.

ii) Place is local or spatial: Locality is central in understanding a place. Learning becomes localized when the curriculum is shaped according to the lived contexts of learners. Adults, historically, interacted with the places where they lived and developed an identity of their own.

iii) Place is relationship-based: There is an emotional bond between place and person. When we look at indigenous cultures, there we can see the affinity of indigenous people and the place they occupy. For the tribal people, the tribal area is the place where they develop a strong bond. Place creates a familiarity with the persons and entity of the world.

iv) Place is experiential: It is the experiences that a person had, which gives meaning to the place. From the above case (See Box 3.1) you might have understood how place provided experiential learning to Daya Bai in developing organic farming practices among the villagers of Barul. Learning indigenous knowledge is experiential in nature, which is based on the context and sense of place.

v) Place is multidimensional: More than a geographical area, place includes both physical and emotional characteristics. We know that in a place there will be interaction between the inhabitants and the location. For example, in an online library system, there are different types of users ranging from individuals to organizations. While considering online library system as a place, there is multi-dimensional users' mental space and the multi-dimensional resource space. This library is a place for individuals to gain knowledge, as lifelong learners.

vi) Place is technology-centered or technology-based or virtual: When latest technologies make the participants meet on a particular tech-platform with set norms for their conduct as a social group, it becomes a virtual place for learning during their interactions.

The above six major dimensions are relevant when we consider all places as learning places 'from cradle to grave'. During COVID-19 pandemic situation, we all witnessed that a vast amount of time was spent on online platforms which became new and emerging places for lifelong learning. Such online platforms advocate a holistic view of lifelong learning. The Lifelong Learning Platforms proclaim that education and training are not meant just for employability but also serve as a place for personal development. Online platforms create a space for dialogue between civil society and public authorities as well as to exchange and promote innovative practices. The idea behind such practices is to increase access to quality education for all by ensuring equity, equality and active citizenship.

Having understood the nature and dimensions of a learning place, let us now attempt to know about learning cities and learning regions, which are evolving as new operational and pragmatic approaches in the context of lifelong learning.

3.3.3 Learning Cities

You might have read in newspapers about a Panchayat in Kerala being declared as the first e-literate Panchayat in India, as a result of introducing e-literacy fully in Pallichal panchayat. Pallichal is a village in Thiruvananthapurm district in the state of Kerala (https://en. wikipedia.org/wiki/Pallichal). How does a particular place (village, city or region) become popular than other places? What makes Pallichal different from other regions? Why do other regions fail to achieve the same position as Pallichal Panchayat? These are some of the questions that draw our attention while reading such news in various media. This is where the learning cities, regions and societies assume great relevance. Before delving on the reasons for how a place becomes a learning city, let us discuss the evolution of this concept.

The term 'learning city' is a new and evolving notion, which emerged in the later years of the twentieth century. There is no standard definition of a 'learning city'. The term is mainly used in policy arenas and among community of practitioners while dealing with execution of things in a better way. It is used in different senses depending upon the context. However, the word 'learning' is related to education, and it has more to do with governance and politics as well.

According to Commission of the European Union, 2001, a learning city '*goes beyond its statutory duty to provide education and training ... and instead creates a vibrant, participative, culturally aware and economically buoyant human environment through the provision, justification and active promotion of learning opportunities to enhance the potential of all of its citizens'.*

A Learning City is defined by UNESCO (2015) in the following way (see Box 3.2).

Box 3.2: A learning city

UNESCO defines a learning city as a city that:

- mobilizes its resources effectively in every sector to promote inclusive learning from basic to higher education;
- revitalizes learning in families and communities;

- facilitates learning for and in the workplace
- extends the use of modern learning technologies;
- enhances quality and excellence in learning; and
- fosters a culture of learning throughout life.

In doing so, the city enhances individual empowerment and social inclusion, economic development, cultural prosperity, and sustainable development.

Source: https://uil.unesco.org/lifelong-learning/learning-cities

From the above, we can understand that, basically there are two clear-cut meanings to the concept of learning city. *Firstly*, the term implies wide accessibility to education and training that leads to civic success. Learning, however, is broader than education. It is the process whereby individuals transform their experiences into knowledge, skills, attitudes, emotions, senses, etc. Historically and culturally, learning has been a lifelong process. Learning city is concerned with enhancing the quality of education, training and opportunities of learning to individuals in the city as a whole. For this, formal education is not enough. Educational endeavours encompass non-formal and informal learning and more to foster a culture of lifelong learning. It is true that civic learning environment includes museums, libraries, and arts and cultural facilities. Moreover, workplace learning is also recognized as an important place of education and training relevant to living and working. *Secondly*, learning city connotes the capacity of a city itself to learn in similar way as an individual person or other organism can learn, and adapt its behavior. For example, the organizational behaviour influences the behavior of individuals as well as the management. Besides schools and universities, learning is extended to hospitals, banks and even to events such as Akshaya e-centres, festivals, etc. When we think in terms of geographical and political sense, learning is extended from the cities to a small village in a remotest area.

3.3.4 Learning Regions

You are aware that in the age of globalization and knowledge-based capitalism, regions are becoming the central point for constructing knowledge and learning. There are three approaches related to the origin of the term 'Learning Regions'. According to the first approach, 'Learning Regions' was introduced in the mid-1990s by the economic geographers. This term was used to stress the role played by collective learning in various networks and clusters at regional level with the intention to enhance the innovativeness and competitiveness of firms and regions. In the second approach, the idea of learning region was related to learning economy. Innovation is seen as an interactive learning process in a learning economy. In such economy, knowledge is the basic resource and learning is an important process. According to the third approach, learning regions are considered as regionally based development coalitions.

The term learning region is used as a way of thinking about the management of a region with an evident identity, boundaries, and some form of government. As the name implies, learning regions serve as repositories of knowledge and create an environment for the flow of knowledge, ideas, and learning. These learning

regions become the sources of innovation, economic growth and technological organization on a global scale. Read the following case in Box 3.3.

Box 3.3

Silicon Valley is a region in the southern part of the *San Francisco Bay Area* in *Northern California* that serves as a global center for *high technology* and *innovation. The word "silicon" in the name originally referred to the large number of innovators and manufacturers in the region specializing in silicon-based MOS transistors* and *integrated circuit* chips.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silicon_Valley

From the above case, you might have realized that social networks across firms are critical for learning and innovation in a region. It is not simply providing information but of the shared practices by these social networks that gives meaning to the shared information and also applying it in real fields. In the case of *Silicon Valley*, the shared practices are not confined to a single workplace, but it is extended widely to the technical community in a region. We can appreciate that technological learning leads to immediate social interaction with other regions. The main function of learning city is to address the learning needs of a locality through partnerships. It enables changes in the economic development of a particular region.

You will now learn about how different communities too form learning communities.

3.4 LEARNING COMMUNITIES

We know that lifelong learning is individual-centred in nature while a community is a location-specific integrated functional system. A community can be defined as a mutigenerational group of human beings who are engaged in work or play and whose identities are shaped by the roles they play and the relationships they have in group activity. A community is multigenerational in the sense that it consists of individuals having different ages. It has a shared culture of daily life constructed on routines, behavioural norms, and rules.

Learning communities are broader in context, which draw upon elements of different systems to facilitate or promote lifelong learning among its members. For example, even within a community in a specific locality, there may be an overlap of different types of communities engaged in a variety of learning. However, there will always be a common cultural core of continuous reflection and change for further learning within and across all sections of a community. This forms source of inspiration for becoming a learning community, which will facilitate, encourage or promote lifelong learning among its individual members or their groups, who perform different tasks, or whose practices are different and whose knowledge-base is different. Thus, all of them form smaller learning communities, even within a local area-based community, let alone different communities in different geographical areas. However, it is the "culture of learning communities" which helps in facilitating organizational efforts that can aggregate different forms of smaller learning communities into a larger structure – a learning community, in a broad overarching sense.

Sometimes we may say that we are community learners in the sense that we are learning from others in the locality all the time. It is true that when we view learning in a social perspective, learning happens in a social context. The social context may be a small place like a village, a mohalla in a city, or a wider community in a very large geographical area or a big region. In this section, when we refer to social context 'community' is at the centre where learning is the goal. Therefore, we will focus our discussion on the concept of community in general and Communities of Practice in particular.

3.4.1 Interpretation of Learning Communities

Learning communities are interpreted in various ways. *Firstly,* it may be seen as an extension of pragmatic education. Pragmatically, we focus on actions of human beings. The advocates of pragmatism [Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914), William James (1842–1910) and John Dewey (1859–1952)] emphasize on 'learning by doing'. Learning community is thus pragmatic in nature when we consider the role of adults and institutions as promoters of interactive learning which is essential for a learning community. In this context, the action taken by any community to bring the downtrodden into the mainstream through employment and further education connotes the pragmatic view. From the above case, you can understand how Daya Bai worked for the upliftment of tribal people in Madhya Pradesh. *Secondly*, learning communities may be an additive to civil society where learning is focused on citizenship and participative training. In this context, a citizen is expected to participate in a society in such a manner to make his/her own contribution towards public good. Their voices should be heard on a regular basis instead of during election time. More than casting a vote, citizens are supposed to participate in the decision-making process encouraged by public agencies. *Thirdly*, learning communities can be viewed as part of community development where the powerless are empowered to address their daily and educational needs. *Fourthly,* the term learning community is used mainly with a sense of geographical locality. During the pandemic situation of COVID-19, learning community across the globe (cutting across geographical boundaries) came together as a virtual community for disseminating and sharing knowledge, information and ideas about containing it in an effective manner.

Currently, different social media platforms present innumerable, diverse communities which are all examples of CoPs – the virtual learning communities.

3.4.2 Communities of Practice (CoPs)

A community reality is based on various theoretical, developmental, cultural, and global viewpoints. Theoretically, while describing Communities of Practice (CoP), it is perceived as the joining of two concepts, i.e. practice and community. Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002, p.4) translate CoP as "groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise". The concept of *social practice* refers to doing, something meaningfully within a historical and social context such as working for the upliftment of the downtrodden, observing religious rites, and so on.

The argument behind the concept CoP is that basically the members learn through their engagement in social practice. This involvement is in the form of participation in informal communities as the members pursue social practices over time. It implies an active participation in the practices of social communities and thereby constructing their own identities acceptable to these communities. Participation in CoP is essential for sense-making and identity-formation. Through their participation members create meaning out of the diversified information and knowledge they are exposed to. They also share similar work practices and knowledge built across firm networks of practice. Such networks (CoPs) lead to fast sharing of information related to their works.

Learning takes place through informal interaction among individuals in work place. Developmentally, when individuals connect with others expansion in learning happens. Learning is considered as a social activity where one is engaged in dialogic learning. It is impossible to link development occurring in an isolated state. Here, the emphasis is upon 'constructive engagement with otherness' as proposed by Daloz (2000). Constructive engagement is a contributor to social responsibility that leads to empathic connection. Due to such engagement, individuals move from dependence to independence and then to interdependence.

Culturally, we are moving from dominant culture to a multicultural perspective. In multicultural perspective, we have to emphasize the wholeness understood through community, connection, and responsibility. Learning becomes purposeful when there is a community goal that reiterates interdependence, interconnectedness and harmony. Learning to live together, one of the pillars of education, described in the report entitled "Learning: the Treasure Within" of the International Commission of Education, is the basis of community life. Globally, the world community is shrinking and is guided by principles such as interdependence, recycling, partnership, flexibility and diversity. *Interdependence* is used in the sense that success of the whole community is related to individual success. *Recycling* means, waste from one community may become useful to another community. Efficient recycling programmes generate opportunities for the community to increase their finance that can be utilized in the same community in the form of public parks, public library, etc. *Partnership* enhances the degree of openness, understanding and engagement among different people. *Flexibility* means an understanding of various perspectives and approaches that lead to change to find stability. *Diversity* calls for different approaches while dealing with a problem. Diverse communities provide opportunity to people belonging to varied races, cultures and creeds to mingle together and increase their self-identities. All these principles get strengthened or assume greater significance when CoPs at different levels work effectively.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write the answer in the space given below the question.

b) Check your answer with the one given under "Answers to 'Check Your Progress' Questions" of this Unit.

1) What are different interpretations of Learning Community?

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3.5 LEARNING SOCIETIES

The concept 'learning society' was first developed by Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and UNESCO as an educational philosophy that recognizes the role played by education in the development of a nation. Education is not confined to a particular age, either of an individual or of a society. The word 'learning society' consists of two words, i.e. 'learning' and 'society'. Learning is the process whereby individuals transform their knowledge into skills, attitudes, emotions, beliefs, values, etc., which is lifelong and life-wide in its application. The basis of lifelong learning is the existence of a learning society, which is capable of facilitating lifelong learning among its members. Learning societies enable individuals to learn throughout their life and also permit individuals to reciprocate to the large society in the form of wisdom which can be termed as 'koinosophic' or 'wise society'. The interrelationship between lifelong learning and learning society is such that both of them support each other on everlasting basis.

Due to the changing nature of society, where there are varied cultures and the primacy is on use of technologies, the learning of its members has to be revisited. You know that the societies in the 21st century are compelled to learn ICT skills, and in an unprecedented manner in the context of COVID-19 pandemic. However, there exists a gap between and among different sections of the society in terms of the skills possessed and required by them so as to be or to become the effective participants of lifelong learning. One way of reducing this gap is through promotion of lifelong learning skills among all sections of the society. Workforce must either gear-up to the changing environment or be prepared to work in an unpredictable environment. This shows that adult trainers and trainees in all contexts need to involve in more learning situations and this can be achieved only through lifelong learning. Through lifelong learning, all adults of learning societies will acquire the skills and capacities that enable them not only to survive in the present learning society but also to contribute to its sustainable growth and development.

As a corollary of the influence of lifelong learning upon learning societies, the statement given by UNESCO (2005) is worth to mention here. 'With regard to lifelong education, it is now a matter of common knowledge that this is the concept which explains the real meaning of modern education and which should inspire and sum up all efforts directed towards reform. Education is no longer confined to a particular age, that is, only a part of life; co-existent throughout its length, it represents an attitude and a dimension of life. It is an attitude enabling us to keep in touch with realities and not simply a preparation for work and responsibilities'. Thus learning societies enable its members to

learn throughout their life-span.

Three major factors that necessitate individuals to continue with their learning are: i) emergence of information society, ii) advancement of science and technology, and iii) internationalization of economy. These are treated as contributing factors to the development of the learning society. A learning society is a combination of diverse learning environments such as formal, informal and non-formal environments. As we know, formal learning environment consists of schools, colleges, universities etc. Non-formal learning includes various structured learning situations which do not either have the level of curriculum, syllabus, accreditation and certification as associated with ‹formal learning'. Informal learning typically happens naturally and can associate with self-learning by using variety of materials and reources such as printed material, audios and videos, online and offline computer-based sources / materials, among other things.

With the introduction of ICT, learning society has transformed the learning processes of the participants in the lifelong learning in the following ways:

- Transformed formal, non-formal and informal learning by reducing the practical distinctions among them;
- Paced-up development of lifelong learning systems by providing technical capabilities;
- Synergised the potential and the competencies through enhanced collaborations, – network, problem-solving, etc. which is essential for a learning society;
- Ensured equal access to all in the learning society;
- Contributed to e-learning content in varied sources; and
- Caused development of vast e-learning tools to support e-learning activities needed for lifelong learning.

The learning society thus consists of diverse clientele promoting and/or pursuing different learning environments. Hence, the learning resources are required to meet the following features:

- The learning resources should be structured at multiple-levels catering to the needs of various groups or sections of learning societies;
- These resources should cater to the diversified individual learning needs (personal development to joyful learning) of all the participants;
- These resources should be supplied by various learning providers; and
- These resources should be delivered in different formats and forms.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write the answer in the space given below the question.

b) Check your answer with the one given under "Answers to 'Check Your Progress' Questions" of this Unit.

2) Explain how Information and Communication Technologies could transform the learning process of individuals.

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These learning environments and resources also vary depending upon different types of learning societies. Learning societies include industrial societies, information societies and knowledge societies. We are now living in an information society. There are ample opportunities for all of us to acquire knowledge, skills, and abilities through different learning systems. We are experiencing the transformations occuring in our society as a result of introduction of artificial intelligence and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Are we entering into a new stage of industrial society? The changes are quite evident in different learning societies such as industrial societies, information societies, and knowledge societies. Let us elaborate each of these learning societies in detail.

3.5.1 Industrial Societies

Industrial society is considered as an evolution of human society. Every society consists of people having common culture and common purpose and also shows interdependence of different sections of societies. Societies can be generally classified along a spectrum of their level of industrialization — from preindustrial to industrial to postindustrial societies. Figure 3.2 shows the classification of society:

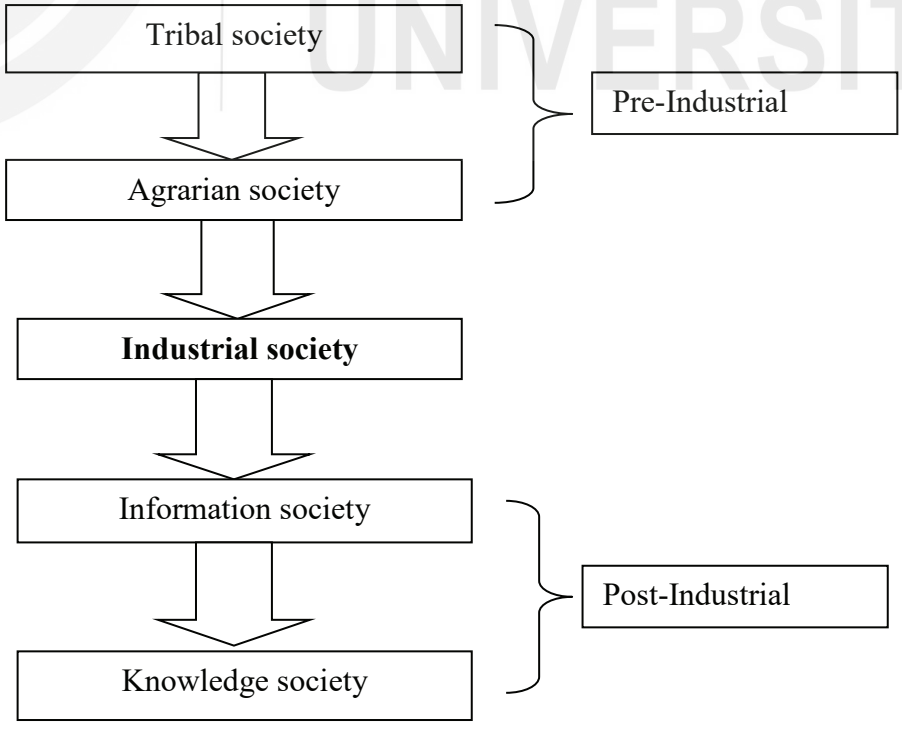

Figure: 3.2: Classification of Society from pre-industrial to post-industrial

As all of us know, the earliest society is tribal society. Tribal societies are small in scale and are restricted in the spatial and temporal range of their social, legal and political relations. The people in tribal society are primarily hunt-gatherers and pastoral groups. When people started the practice of cultivation (crop-growing) they were compelled to change their nomadic nature and forced to establish permanent settlements. Thus, the tribal society emerged or transformed into an agrarian society. With agrarian society began the domestication of plants and animals. These hunt-gatherers, pastoral groups and agrarians denote the people in the pre-industrial society. By mid 19th century a major change happened in industrial society, i.e. the intrusion of science and technology. It transformed the kinds of industries and the ways of production.

Industrial revolution brought in major changes in societal structure, thus transforming the society into an industrial society. Some of these changes which we can clearly notice are as follows.

- Use of external energy resources to increase production and minimize human labour;
- Establishment of large industries and corporations;
- Mass production of goods;
- Change in economy;
- Divided and grouped by occupational subcultures; and
- Emergence of capitalism and entrepreneurship

Introduction of science and technology paced-up economic growth. Later, a culture of innovation took place, in the sense of how to use science and technology in more productive ways. Societies have increasingly realized the importance of information technologies; and their application in society led to the emergence of 'information society'. Information society is seen as the successor of industrial society. The characteristic of new information society are seen in post-industrial societies. Of late, digital technology has become the backbone of information society. It focuses on the production of information and services.

3.5.2 Information Societies

The credit for introducing the term 'information society' goes to Fritz Machlup. He was the first economist who treated knowledge as an economic resource. You know that 'information society' consist of two words - Information and Society. *Information* is the key word in the present society. We all use information in our daily lives. Information is a collection of comprehensible data that can be used and communicated. The essence of this data is that there is a meaning for raw facts (Feather & Sturges, 2003, p.303). *Society* means a group of people who share customs and laws. With this clarity of the two words, information and society, let us look at some of the definitions of 'information society'.

- *'An information society is a society where the creation, distribution, use, integration and manipulation of information is a significant activity'* (Soll Jacob, 2009).

- *'A society that organizes itself around knowledge in the interest of social control, and the management of innovation and change...'* (Daniel Bell, 1973).
- *'A new type of society, where the possession of information (and not material wealth) is the driving force behind its transformation and development [...] (and where) human intellectual creativity flourishes'* (Yoneji Masuda, 1980).
- *'A society where information is used as an economic resource, the community harnesses/exploits it, and behind it all an industry develops which produces the necessary information ...'* (Nick Moore, 1977).

Nevertheless, there is no universally accepted definition of the term 'information societies'. It depends upon the ways societies function fundamentally. It is based on the preconceptions of the area where changes in life happen. Some may focus on activities, others on society, knowledge, and resources. Currently, 'Information Society' is used to describe socio-economic systems that exhibit high employment in information related occupations and wide diffusion of information technologies.

We can thus notice that there are five analytical criteria – technological, economic, occupational, spatial, and cultural – used to explain information societies. When we perceive through technological criterion, we can see that the birth of information society is signaled by the introduction of new technologies such as cable and satellite television, computer technology, word processors, online information services and associated facilities. From economic criterion point of view, it is undisputed that the major part of economic activity in information society is done through information activity rather than subsistence agriculture or industrial manufacture. While we take occupational criterion, the dominance of occupations is found in information work. Fact is that where information assumed prominence there has been rise of service sector followed by the decline of manual labour leading to the increase of white-collar jobs. Such substantial increase in information works announced the coming of an information society. While viewing through spatial criterion, one will emphasize the information networks that connect different locations within a community, a town, a city, a region or between them or across the entire world. We can see a 'wired society' functioning to provide information to each home, workplace, educational institutions and even to mobiles and laptops. Viewing from cultural criterion, each one of us experiences an increase in information in the social circle. This criterion focuses on contemporary culture dominated by social media and exchange of messages and information. In our daily lives, information penetrates through television, video technologies, cable and satellite channels, computerized information services and even on figure touch screens. Moreover, the ICT facilities laid the foundation for virtual life.

Characteristics of Information Society: The above discussion enables us to identify the following as some of the important characteristics of information society:

i) There is no geographic border for the flow of information, which is global in nature;

ii) Information society fosters openness, clarity, honesty and precision about all information;

iii) In an information society, only competent, knowledgeable, and informed individuals can function effectively and also flourish faster;

iv) A new environment based on rules and regulations is formed in an information society;

v) Due to the free flow of information, there is equal opportunity for all citizens in an information society; and

vi) In an information society, individuals enjoy the right of access to information.

The transition from information society to knowledge society brought in change from dependence on energy to a growing dependence on knowledge. Knowledge is important not only for economic growth but also for empowering all sectors of society. Let us discuss in detail the concept and features of knowledge society in the following sub-section.

3.5.3 Knowledge Societies

Towards the end of 1990s, the notion of 'knowledge society' had emerged. Sometimes we may use information society and knowledge society as synonyms. But in reality there are subtle differences between the two. In the case of an information society, the emphasis in is on the use of technology. It also places emphasis on the process of collecting, processing, and communicating the required information, whereas in knowledge society, the focus is on economic agents responsible for execution of work. Knowledge society goes beyond the economic dimension to include a social dimension also. Knowledge society is a society which is economically and culturally characterized by a degree of dependency on their ability to create scientific and technological knowledge. In knowledge society, knowledge is created by using the data-processing technologies of the information society for economic competition among nations. A remarkable feature of knowledge society is knowledge development and it's sharing that resulted in lifelong learning. It emphasizes the social, cultural, economic, political, and institutional transformation and a more pluralistic and developmental perspective. It tries to embrace all kinds of people, more so the ones who are excluded from the range of digital connection. Every individual in this society gets empowered with knowledge and thereby focus on the concept of inclusion.

The notion of knowledge society as emphasized by UNESCO (2005) recognizes the social tensions between different sections of the society when they attempt to access and use digital information. Some describe knowledge society as a society that develops new ideas, technologies, methods, and products that are crucial for prosperity. Knowledge society enables full participation of all in societal development. Its target is capacity-building of all people belonging to all strata of society. The goal is to support sustainable development, gender equality, protection of rights of weaker nations and weaker sections of societies by more equitable distribution of resources.

Why do we need a knowledge society? Knowledge society is the order of the day, and forms integral component of social functioning at different levels and scales as given below:

1. Public sector, as a knowledge society, can play a major role in orienting the society to focus on information and knowledge and it can be sustained by digital technologies;
2. Framing public policies is possible by knowledge societies only as they provide opportunities for innovation and evolve from technological progress to attain better social and digital inclusion;
3. Knowledge society leads to transformation of society through intensive use of digital technology that result in transparency, responsiveness, accountability and efficiency;
4. Involvement of government and non-governmental stakeholders is essential in building a knowledge society and in adapting them in different contexts – local, national and global.

In view of the above, we can identify the pre-requisites and features of a knowledge society as follows.

Pre-requisites of Knowledge Society: Following are the pre-requisites of a knowledge society.

a) Need to have mechanism that enables people to access the information;

b) Availability of relevant information in the language and scripts understandable to the members of the society;

c) Right to information, Right to knowledge, Freedom of information collectively emphasizes the focus of knowledge society.

Features of Knowledge Society: A knowledge society:

a) uses knowledge as a main resource to overcome the barriers of digital, cognitive and language disunity of information society;

b) provides for appropriate mechanisms in place for creating new knowledge access;

c) ensures wider participation of all who are interested in equal access to knowledge;

d) knowledge is considered as a main factor not only for economic development but also for personal independence;

e) encourages development of critical and cognitive skills;

f) opens the way for humanization of global processes by breaking the barriers of all kinds within a society;

g) promotes predominance of informal communities;

h) facilitates prevalence of a global economy within the knowledge society;

i) uses ICT and network structure that is available for exchange of information; and

j) exhibits foresightedness in following a developmental direction, i.e. commitment to good quality and safety of life of its members.

From all the above, we can categorically say that the knowledge society occupies significant place in promoting lifelong learning.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write the answer in the space given below the question.

b) Check your answer with the one given under "Answers to 'Check Your Progress' Questions" of this Unit.

3) Differentiate between information society and knowledge society.

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3.6 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, we have focussed our discussion on how places and societies help individuals in their lifelong learning. Learning communities or societies are broader in context, which draw upon elements of different systems to facilitate or promote the individuals' abilities for lifelong learning. We have discussed how learning societies such as industrial society, information society and knowledge society emerged and acted as agents of lifelong learning. You might have developed clear understanding of learning societies, regions and cities and how a region or a city transforms into a learning centre. To sum up, learning society is a comprehensive concept that subsumes in it industrial society, information society and knowledge society. If a learning society is to be very effective, there should not be any barrier based on language and it should foster universal access to information, knowledge and narrow down the digital divide especially in rural and remote areas.

3.7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS' QUESTIONS

1. Learning communities are differently interpreted as follows.

- Learning community is an extension of pragmatic education.
- Learning community is often used, mainly, with a sense of geographical locality.
- Learning communities are considered an additive to civil society where learning is focused on citizenship and participative training.

- Learning communities are viewed as part of community development where the powerless are empowered to address their daily and educational needs.

2. Learning process of individuals underwent significant transformation with the introduction of ICT.

   - It transformed formal, non-formal and informal learning by reducing the practical distinctions among them.
   - It paced-up development of lifelong learning systems by adding or providing technical capabilities.
   - It synergised the potential and the competencies through enhanced collaborations, − networks, problem-solving, etc. which is essential in a learning society.
   - It ensured equal access to all in the learning society.
   - It contributed to e-learning content from varied sources.
   - It caused development of vast e-learning tools to support e-learning activities needed for lifelong learning.

3. Information society and knowledge society are distinguished as follows.

   In an information society the emphasis is on the use of technology and the process of collecting, processing, and communicating the required information. On the other hand, in knowledge society, the focus is on economic agents responsible for execution of work. Knowledge society goes beyond the economic dimension to include a social dimension of inclusion to transform society into a more inclusive society also.

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3.9 UNIT-END EXERCISES

In your own interest, you may prepare the answers to the following questions which may be useful as a part of your preparation for your term-end examinations.

1) 'All places are learning places'. Comment on this statement.

2) Discuss the relevance of learning societies, cities and regions for nurturing lifelong learning.

3) Compare and contrast the features of industrial society, information society and knowledge society.

3.10 UNIT-END ACTIVITY

If you like to further enhance your interest, you may attempt to perform the following activity.

Identify the places and societies popular for promoting lifelong learning in your native district or State. How do you plan for expanding their role in furthering lifelong learning beyond their geographical boundaries?

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UNIT-4: LIFELONG LEARNING AS A DISCIPLINE AND AS A PRACTICE

Structure

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Learning Objectives

4.3 Evolution of Lifelong Learning: A Global Movement

4.4 Status of Lifelong Learning as an Academic Discipline

- 4.4.1 Characteristics/Attributes of an Academic Discipline
- 4.4.2 Disciplines and Structure of Higher Education
- 4.4.3 Path for Establishing a Field of Study as a Distinctive Discipline
- 4.4.4 Reconstructing the Diversity of Discipline and Practice

4.5 Approaches to Lifelong Learning as a Global Practice

- 4.5.1 Distinguishing Features of Lifelong Learning Approach
- 4.5.2 World Bank Approach to Lifelong Learning
- 4.5.3 OECD Approach to Lifelong Learning

4.6 Lifelong Learning in Practice

- 4.6.1 Implementation of Lifelong Learning in European Union
- 4.6.2 Lifelong Learning in the U.S.A.
- 4.6.3 Lifelong Learning Programmes in India

4.7 Let Us Sum Up

4.8 Answers to 'Check Your Progress' Questions

4.9 References and Suggested Readings

4.10 Unit-End Exercises

4.11 Unit-End Activity

4.1 INTRODUCTION

By now, you might have understood that lifelong education and lifelong learning are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. However, lifelong learning is rather more compulsive in its nature and is essential for sustainable development of the individuals, the societies and the nations, irrespective of the level of educational development they ever attain. Lifelong learning essentially integrates learning with education, living and working. Lifelong learning is thus a key for success of individuals in labour markets and societies shaped by megatrends such as increase in life expectancy, rapid technological changes, globalisation, migration, environmental changes, digitalisation as well as unimaginable and

unprecedented pandemic like the COVID-19 that transformed the world of learning.

In the process of its emergence over the years, lifelong learning has grown into an accepted global concept with its diverse manifestations related to local, national and international priorities impinging upon political, economic, cultural and social value systems of practical significance. Lifelong learners include different categories of learners – individuals (students and teachers in all systems), communities and societies, lifelong learning places include (Learning villages, cities and regions) all societies (industrial societies, information societies and knowledge societies) that are emerging into lifelong learning societies.

While government support remains valuable to ensure that the major structural changes do not lead to deep fissures in the social fabric, creating a culture of lifelong learning is essential to enable individuals to be the agency to manage change as an accepted practice. It is possible only through meaningful approaches. However, when we think of practice of lifelong learning, it is quite genuine to get a doubt as to whether lifelong learning is a discipline and a practice like many other disciplines such as psychology, sociology, history, education and so on. In order to understand lifelong learning as a practice we need to consider certain questions such as: What is an academic discipline? When does a particular field of study assume the status of a discipline? What are the attributes of an academic discipline? Does lifelong learning possess these attributes/characteristics to qualify itself as an academic discipline? What is the status of practice of lifelong learning at global level and in India? In this Unit (i.e. Unit-4) we shall attempt to find answers to these questions, amongst others.

4.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, you shall be able to:

- Explain evolution of the concept of lifelong learning;
- Identify the characteristics/attributes of an academic discipline;
- Analyse the characteristics of lifelong learning from a discipline point of view;
- Appreciate lifelong learning as an academic discipline; and
- Discuss the approaches to lifelong leaning as a global practice.

4.3 EVOLUTION OF LIFELONG LEARNING: A GLOBAL MOVEMENT

Prior to discussing lifelong learning as an academic discipline and as a practice, let us have a brief overview of evolution of the lifelong learning movement at global level.

In the 1970s, lifelong learning crystallized as a concept due to the initiatives from three international bodies. The Council of Europe advocated ***permanent education***, a plan to reshape European education for the whole life span. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) called

for ***recurrent education,*** an alternation of full-time work with full-time study similar to sabbatical leaves. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) report titled *Learning to Be: the world of education today and tomorrow*, drew most attention and had the remarkable influence. Commonly known as the Faure Report (1972), a utopian document that used the term *lifelong education* instead of lifelong learning, foresaw lifelong education as a transformative and emancipatory force, not only in schools, but also in society at large. One commentator, Charles Hummel, called the UNESCO concept a Copernican revolution in education (White Hat Jr, See https://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/2181/Lifelong-Learning.html).

U.S. educational and political leaders took note of these ideas. They adopted the term *lifelong learning* (rather than lifelong education) and applied it to adult education, leaving initial and secondary education to the existing system. The American discussion tended to be more pragmatic than visionary, addressing specific categories of educational needs rather than proposing systems. The Mondale Lifelong Learning Act of 1976 included in its scope a laundry list of nearly twenty areas, ranging from adult basic education to education for older and retired persons, a charge that proved too diffuse to address with public policy. However, European and American policy interest in lifelong learning waned after the early 1980s, although interest continued among educational institutions and non-governmental organizations.

Nevertheless, both in Europe and the United States, interest in lifelong learning revived in the early 1990s. A fresh round of studies and reports popularized the idea of lifelong learning, and it became part of national policy discussion, particularly when global competition and economic restructuring toward knowledge-based industries became more prevalent. In a full-employment economy, corporations perceived a benefit from investment in human capital, while a new workforce of *knowledge technologists* expected their employers to maintain their employability by investing in their education. The focus on learning thus shifted from personal growth to human resource development. Meanwhile, education and training approaches became central to a transition away from unemployment and welfare dependency. Thus, *over the years, lifelong learning has taken its roots not only as a globally accepted concept but also as a global practice*.

4.4 STATUS OF LIFELONG LEARNING AS AN ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE

Prior to focusing our attention on understanding whether lifelong learning is an academic discipline or not, let us first understand what an academic discipline, in general, is, and what its characteristics or attributes are, in particular.

4.4.1 Characteristics/Attributes of an Academic Discipline

Our purpose here is not to go into the etymological details of the word 'discipline' which has many meanings. From the academic point of view, a discipline is a branch of knowledge, teaching, typically studied in higher education. Oxford English Dictionary defines 'discipline' as "a branch of learning or scholarly instruction." According to Collins Dictionary, a discipline is a particular area of study, especially a subject of study in a college or a university.

From the above definitions, we can understand that an academic discipline is a sub-division of knowledge that is taught and researched at the college or university level. Disciplines are defined and recognized partly by the academic journals in which relevant research is published, and partly by the learned societies and academic departments or faculties within colleges and universities to which they belong. Academic disciplines are conventionally divided into the *humanities*, including language, art and cultural studies; the *sciences* disciplines such as physics, chemistry and biology (botany and zoology); the *social sciences* disciplines such as history, sociology, political science, etc; and so on. As we all know, the individuals who are associated with particular academic discipline are commonly called as experts or specialists in that field.

With the above understanding of the concept of a discipline, let us try to crystallise some important attributes of it. According to Krishnan (2009, See https://www.insidehighered.com /blogs/technology-and-learning/6-attributes-academic-discipline), following are the attributes or characteristics of an academic discipline.

1) Discipline has a particular object of research though the object of research may be shared with another discipline.
2) Discipline has a body of accumulated specialist knowledge referring to the object of research, which is specific to that discipline and not generally shared with another discipline.
3) Discipline has theories and concepts that can organize the accumulated specialist knowledge and the research requirements effectively.
4) Discipline uses specific terminologies or a specific technical language adjusted to their research object.
5) Discipline has specific research methods developed according to its specific needs.
6) Discipline has some institutional manifestation in the form of respective academic departments teaching the subjects at universities or colleges, and professional associations connected to it.

Let us now relate these characteristics or attributes of a discipline to 'lifelong learning' so as to understand its status as an academic discipline. Here, it is essential to understand how academic disciplines are organized in higher education, then the place of lifelong learning in higher education structure.

4.4.2 Disciplines and the Structure of Higher Education

Influence in the academic profession is derived from disciplinary foundations. A hierarchical structure of authority is not possible in colleges and universities given the autonomy and expert status of faculty with respect to disciplinary activities. Consequently, the structure of higher education is an associational one based on influence and persuasion. Interaction between the professor and the institution is in many ways shaped by the professor's disciplinary affiliation. This condition results from faculty members having their primary allegiance to a discipline, and not to an institution. Disciplines have conscious goals,

which are often synonymous with the goals of the departments and schools and each of them comprises an institutional operating unit (https://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/ 1723/Academic-Disciplines.html).

We know that the colleges and universities are typically organized around clusters of like disciplines that have some cognitive rationale for being grouped together. The seat of power for decisions on faculty promotion, tenure, and, to some extent, support for research and academic work, lies in the academic department. Thus, discipline as an important basis for determining university structure becomes clear. In institutions placing lesser emphasis on research and in institutions more oriented toward teaching, the faculty may adopt more of a local or institutional orientation than a cosmopolitan or disciplinary orientation. In these institutions faculty performance and recognition may be based on 'institutional' as opposed to 'disciplinary' structures. Therefore, the strength of discipline influence on organizational structure in research institutions, liberal arts colleges, and community colleges, for example, can be expected to vary (Ibid).

Any field of study defined as 'academic discipline' provides the framework for a student's programme of a college or a university. Training in particular discipline results in a system of orderly behavior recognized as characteristic of the discipline. Such behaviors are manifested in scholars' approaches to understanding and investigating new knowledge, ways of working, and perspectives of the world around them. Janice Beyer and Thomas Lodahl (1976) have described disciplinary fields as providing the structure of knowledge in which faculty members are trained and socialized; carry out tasks of teaching, research, and administration; and produce research and educational output. Disciplinary worlds are considered separate and distinct cultures that exert varying influence on scholarly behaviors as well as on the structure of higher education (https://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1723/Academic-Disciplines.html). As a student of Master's Degree programme of IGNOU, a national university, and pursuing this course, do you still have any doubt about the status of 'lifelong learning' as an academic discipline? You should not have, and dispel them now if you have any. Further, you can find Master's in Lifelong Learning programmes on offer by a few Central and State Universities in India, as well as by Universities abroad. Moreover, there is adequate literature in the form of course materials, books, journals, encyclopedias, etc dealing with lifelong learning. ***'Lifelong learning' thus possesses all the distinctive attributes of an academic discipline.***

It is further important for you to note that there exist Departments of Adult Education, Departments of Continuing Education, Departments of Lifelong Learning and Extension and so on in the colleges and universities. These Departments offer courses in their respective fields of study / disciplines like 'adult education', 'continuing education', 'lifelong learning' 'extension' and so on. Further, if there are faculty involved in teaching and research in these fields of study, the same are deemed to have assumed the status of respective academic disciplines. However, it is equally important to note that such a status does accrue to any academic discipline only after it becomes an established practice – teaching and research – over the years.

4.4.3 Path for Establishing a Field of Study as a Distinctive Discipline

Zukas and Malcolm (2005) rightly point out: "First adult education, and now lifelong learning, has expended a lot of energy in establishing and defending itself as a distinctive field of study and practice. As far as adult education is concerned, historically, this attempt has focused on the demarcation of adult education, its difference from other areas of education in terms of students, purposes and practices. This understandable assertion of identity has strongly supported the establishment of distinctive academic and policy apparatus such as organisations, institutes, journals, inspectorates, and so on. However, exploration of the significance of disciplinary diversity to adult education has been somewhat neglected in favour of pursuit of the perceived common good …" As per policy developments in the context of higher education (HE) and learning and skills sector (LSS) then in the UK, *adult education was a distinctive field of pedagogic practice* across post-compulsory education and training.

At global level, the locations and changing allegiances of adult education and lifelong learning in relation to disciplines have far-reaching implications for their establishment as fields of practice and research. Contemporary policy and educational discourse in higher education rely on the artificial dichotomies between disciplinary and pedagogic identity, and between research and teaching as forms of knowledge production and knowledge dissemination. However, in order to strengthen the interconnections among research, disciplinary knowledge and pedagogic knowledge much more can be done by demonstrating their correlation and the identities of experts in adult education and lifelong learning.

4.4.4 Reconstructing the Diversity of Discipline and Practice

From the above discussion, the separation between adult education / lifelong learning as a discipline (what is taught) and as a pedagogy (how it is taught or facilitated/promoted) and between research as knowledge production and teaching as knowledge dissemination is very clear now. Thus, over the decades, academic identities of experts in adult education or lifelong learning seem to have been involved in a series of 'choices' regarding research identity as well as between disciplinary and pedagogic identity. It can therefore be asserted that adult education or lifelong learning is a special function of an academic discipline, having a wide range of interrelationship with many other disciplines.

By considering the relationships between disciplinary and pedagogic identity, the experts or specialists in the field of adult education / lifelong learning need to articulate clearly the ways in which they engage in disciplinary knowledge production and dissemination through their teaching and research. In other words, it is to be emphatically demonstrated that teaching (pedagogic practice) cannot be separated (generalised) from knowledge production (research) for establishing the status of an academic discipline such as adult education or lifelong learning. Through your study of this course (i.e. MLL-001), you might have noticed that there is sizeable literature in the form of books, journals, reports, encyclopedias, etc in the field of lifelong learning. Further, in the past few decades, adult education / lifelong learning have found their due place in higher education in India and abroad in the form of Departments of Adult, Continuing Education and Extension (DACEEs) which have been currently

renamed as the Departments of Lifelong Learning and Extension (DLLEs) in many universities. These Departments accordingly have been offering courses/ programmes of study in adult education / lifelong learning, mostly at post-graduate and research degree levels. As a result, there is no doubt to categorically state that 'adult education' then and 'lifelong learning' at present have acquired the status of academic disciplines and fields of practice across the globe.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write the answer in the space given below the question.

b) Check your answer with the one given under "Answers to 'Check Your Progress' Questions" of this Unit.

1. What are the attributes of an academic discipline?

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2. Do you think 'adult education' and 'lifelong learning' are academic disciplines? Give reasons for your answer.

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4.5 APPROACHES TO LIFELONG LEARNING AS A GLOBAL PRACTICE

As we know, lifelong learning contributes to the development of skills, abilities and talents of individuals throughout life. Lifelong learning is a comprehensive approach which includes and integrates the components of living, learning and working. Lifelong learning has become an inseparable integral aspect of individuals› lives dependent upon many factors – biological, social and environmental – and changing local, national and global market situations including evolving technologies.

At the G8 economic summit held in Cologne in 1999, the Heads of states of the eight major democracies who took part in it issued a joint charter of aims and ambitions for lifelong learning. They emphasised that the economies and societies are increasingly becoming knowledge based. Education and skills have become indispensable to achieving economic success, civic responsibility and social cohesion.

Mainstream economic analysis has highlighted increased levels of primary and secondary education as a key driver of long-term economic growth. At the

individual level, the knowledge and skills workers acquire through education and training make them more productive. For business, educated and highly skilled workers foster productivity gains and technological change through either innovation or imitation of processes developed elsewhere. At the *societal level*, education expansion helps build social and institutional capital, which has a strong impact on the investment climate and growth; it also helps in building social trust, developing participatory societies, strengthening the rule of law and supporting good governance (UNESCO, 2016; See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lifelong_ learning#In_practice).

Lifelong education has gone through considerable transformation since 1970s, but much confusion continues to permeate discussion on its meaning, policy orientations and added value compared to alternative approaches. Although the initial proposals were meant for all countries, subsequent development of the concept has occurred mainly in the context of the OECD countries, and questions might well be raised about its relevance for the developing countries (https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007%2F978-94-007-2360-3_29). Thus, the approaches to lifelong learning changed over the years. Before discussing different approaches, let us first understand the distinguishing features of an approach to lifelong learning.

4.5.1 Distinguishing Features of Lifelong Learning Approach

The lifelong learning framework emphasises that learning occurs during the whole course of a person's life. Formal education contributes to learning as do the non-formal and informal settings of home, the workplace, the community and society at large. The key features of lifelong learning approach (https://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplay documentpdf/?cote=DEELSA/ED/CERI/CD(2000)12/PART1/REV2&docLanguage=En) are as follows:

i) ***Overall systemic view of learning:*** The lifelong learning framework examines the demand for learning, and availability or provision of learning opportunities, as part of a connected system covering the whole lifecycle. It emphasises that all learning – formal, non-formal and informal – should be recognized and integrated into the system. It advocates equitable access to learning in a lifecycle perspective with priority on under-served groups such as pre-school children and adults, and with quality opportunities – diverse learning methods, courses and settings to cater to multiple learning needs.

ii) ***The centrality of the learner:*** The learner and the initiatives to cater to the diversity of learner needs form the core of lifelong learning strategies and approaches. It represents a shift of attention from the supply side of learning to the demand side.

iii) ***Motivation to learn:*** It emphasises the motivation to learn, and draws attention to self-paced and self-directed learning. This requires fundamental changes in curriculum and pedagogy.

iv) ***Balanced view of multiple objectives of education policy:*** Different objectives relate to economic, social and cultural outcomes; to personal development; to citizenship and so on. It recognises that at the individual level the priorities among these objectives may change over the course

of an individual's lifetime, and that each objective has to be taken into consideration in policy development.

v) ***Beyond a single ministry:*** Lifelong learning policy co-ordination involves many partners. The scope of operations is very vast. No competing approach is truly systemic and all are sector-specific. It calls for greater harmony across the sectors.

Now, let us attempt to understand the approaches of World Bank and OECD countries to lifelong learning.

4.5.2 World Bank Approach to Lifelong Learning

World Bank (2018, See https://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/10.1596/978-1-4648-1328-3_ch4) argues that investments in early childhood — including in nutrition, health, protection, and education — lay strong foundations for the future acquisition of higher-order cognitive and socio-behavioral skills. Those individuals who acquire such skills in early childhood remain more resilient to uncertainty later in life. Tertiary education proves another opportunity for individuals to acquire the higher-order general cognitive skills — such as complex problem-solving, critical thinking, and advanced communication — so important to the changing nature of work, but remains insufficient. As for the current stock of workers, who cannot go back to school or to university, re-skilling and up-skilling those who are not in schools or in formal jobs remains a critical part of the response to technology-induced labor market disruption.

Fact is that, a significant part of the readjustment in the supply of skills is happening outside of compulsory education and formal jobs. Early childhood learning, tertiary education, and adult learning sought outside the workplace are increasingly important in meeting the skills that will be sought by future labor markets. World Bank approach to lifelong learning encompassing these aspects is very broad-based and comprehensive, which is explained as follows.

a) Influence of Skills (Demand and Supply) on Global Practice

Automation is reshaping work and the skills demanded for work. The demand for advanced cognitive skills (Krueger and Kumar, 2004) and socio-behavioral skills (Cunningham and Villaseñor, 2016; Deming, 2017) is increasing, whereas the demand for narrow job-specific skills is waning (Hanushek et al., 2017). Meanwhile, the skills associated with "adaptability" (i.e. combination of cognitive and socio-behavioural skills) are increasingly in demand.

Adoption of technology, more generally, makes some jobs obsolete. The demand for skills linked to home appliance repair, for example, is shrinking quickly because technology is driving down the price of appliances and improving reliability. At the same time, innovation is creating new types of jobs. In fact, a large share of children entering primary school in 2018 will work in occupations that do not yet exist. Even in low- and middle-income countries, many people are employed in jobs that did not exist three decades ago. India has nearly 4 million app developers; Uganda has over 400,000 internationally certified organic farmers; and China has 100,000 data labelers (World Bank, 2018).

Evidence from developed countries points to job polarization — the expansion of high- and low-skill jobs coupled with the decline of middle-skill jobs. The demand for workers who can undertake non-routine cognitive tasks, such as high-skilled research, is increasing. So is the relative demand for workers able to handle non-routine tasks that cannot be automated easily, such as food preparation. Conversely, the demand for workers for procedural routine tasks, which are often performed in middle-skill jobs such as data entry, is declining because of automation.

On the other hand, in many developing countries, the demand for high-skill workers is increasing (See Figure 4.1). The share of workers in high-skill occupations increased by 8 percentage points or more in Bolivia, Ethiopia, and South Africa from 2000 to 2014. But the change in demand for low- and middle-skill jobs is more heterogeneous across countries. In Jordan, the share of employment in middle-skill jobs increased by 7.5 percentage points between 2000 and 2016. In Bangladesh, this share fell by almost 20 percentage points during the same period.

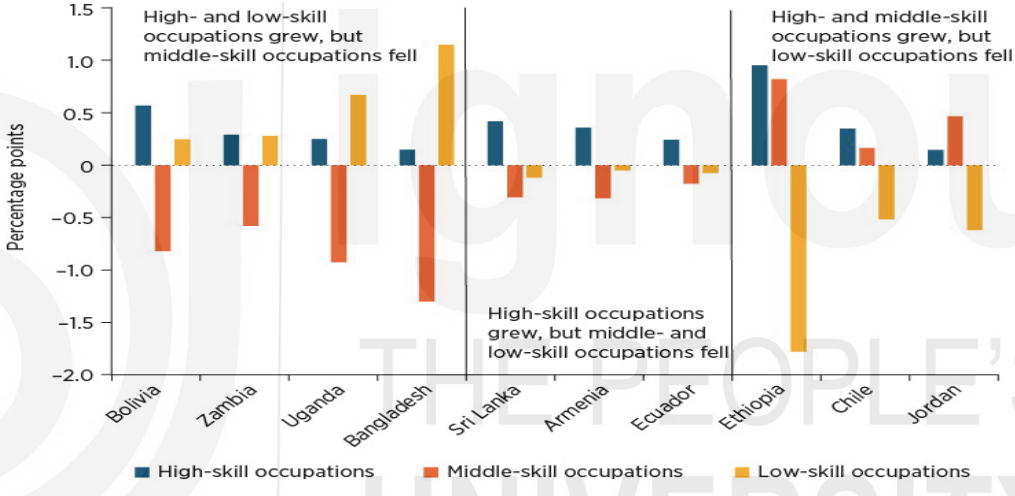

Figure 4.1: Share of workers in high, middle and low-skill occupations

Source: World Bank, 2018; See https://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/10.1596/978-1-4648-1328-3_ch4.

This change in the demand for workers for low- and middle-skill jobs in developing countries is not surprising. What happens at this end of the skills spectrum is likely to be driven by the competing forces of automation and globalization. Depending on the relative speed of these forces, some developing countries are seeing an increase in middle-skill jobs; others are seeing a decline.

Creating a skilled-workforce for the future of work rests on the growing demand for advanced cognitive skills, socio-behavioral skills, and adaptability. Evidence across low- to high-income countries suggests that in recent decades jobs are being defined by more cognitive, analytical tasks. In all regions of the world, these skills are consistently ranked among those most valued by employers. The demand for socio-behavioral skills is also increasing in developing countries.

Nevertheless, technological change makes it harder to anticipate which job-specific skills will thrive and which will become obsolete in the near future. In the past, shifts in skill requirements prompted by technological progress took centuries to manifest themselves (Figure 4.2). In the digital era, advances in

technology call for new skills seemingly overnight.

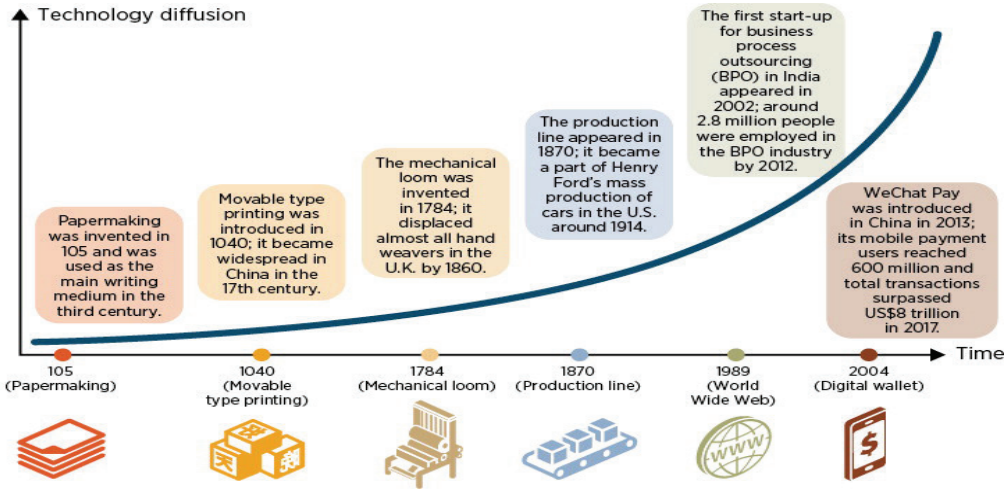

Figure 4.2: Technology diffusion over time

Source: World Bank, 2018; See https://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/10.1596/978-1-4648-1328-3_ch4.

The ability to adapt quickly to changes is increasingly valued by the labor market. The most sought-after trait is adaptability — the ability to respond to unexpected circumstances and to unlearn and relearn quickly. This trait requires a combination of certain cognitive skills (critical thinking, problem-solving) and socio-behavioral skills (curiosity, creativity). A study of technical and vocational students in Nigeria showed that the socio-behavioral skill of self-efficacy was positively and significantly predictive of career adaptability (Ebenehi, Rashid, and Bakar, 2016).

Strong skill foundations are important for developing advanced cognitive skills, socio-behavioral skills, and skills predictive of adaptability. For most children, these skill foundations are formed through primary and secondary education. Yet, according to the World Development Report 2018, the acquisition of foundational skills that one would expect to happen in schools is not occurring in many low- and middle-income countries. Important skills readjustments are happening increasingly outside of compulsory education and formal jobs. Skills development for the changing nature of work is a matter of lifelong learning. This kind of learning is especially germane to skills readjustment amid demographic change — be it the aging populations of East Asia and Eastern Europe or the large youth populations of Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

b) Learning in Early Childhood: Strong Foundation for Learning in Future

The most effective way to acquire the skills demanded by the changing nature of work is to start early. Early investments in nutrition, health, social protection, and education lay strong foundations for the future acquisition of cognitive and socio-behavioral skills. The architecture of the brain forms from the ***prenatal period to age 5***, and so this is an important stage for developing cognitive and socio-behavioral skills. During this period, the brain's ability to learn from experience is at its highest level (Figure 4.3). Experiences and learning during this period directly affect achievement in adulthood. If this window is missed, building skills later becomes harder.

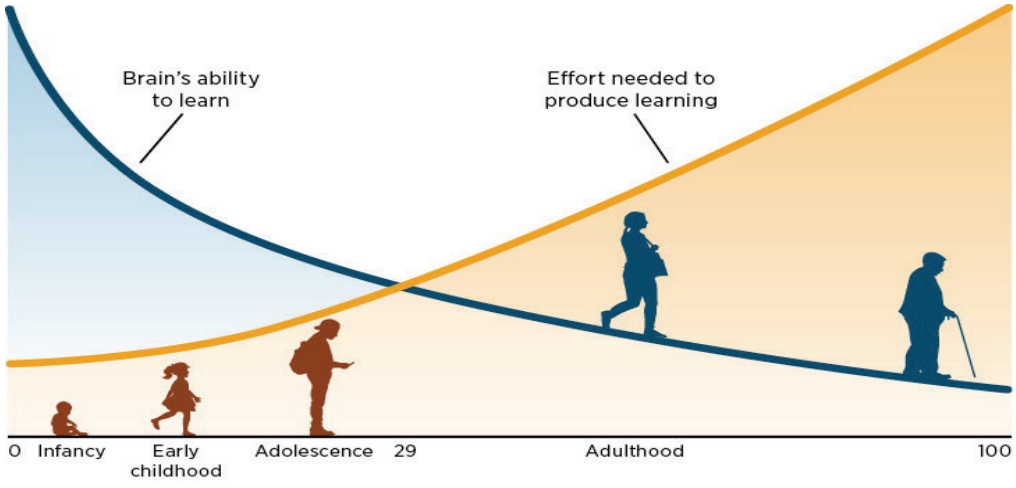

Figure 4.3: Architecture of human brain and brain's ability to learn from experience

Source: World Bank, 2018; See https://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/10.1596/978-1-4648-1328-3_ch4.

Quality early childhood development programs enable children to learn. Investments in nutrition, health, and stimulation in the first thousand days of life build stronger brains. The engagement of parents and caregivers during this phase also matters for the development of children's language skills, motor and self-regulation skills, as well as social behavior. From the age of 3, socialization and more formal early learning become important to prepare children to succeed in primary school. A quality preschool strengthens children's executive functions (such as working memory, flexible thinking, self-control), launching them on higher learning trajectories. Early childhood investments efficiently produce skills that are relevant to a child's future. However, poor-quality early childhood development programs are associated with disappointing results in children's language development, cognitive skills, and sociability (World Bank, 2018).

Early childhood investments efficiently produce skills that are relevant to a child's future and also increase equity. For children exposed to poverty and other adverse conditions, quality early childhood programs increase adult competence, reduce violent behavior and social inhibition, and foster growth in the subsequent generation. However, children from poor families are the least likely to attend early childhood development programs (UNESCO, 2015, p.59; mentioned in World Bank, 2018).

Effective pathways to early childhood development are available. In some places, community-based playgroups have produced consistently positive low-cost results. In Indonesia, a playgroup program positively affected children's language, socio-behavioral, and cognitive skills. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds benefited more in both the short and long term (Brinkman et al, 2017). In Tonga, organizing playgroups for children up to age 5 significantly improved their early-grade reading skills. Research has also uncovered several concrete ways to increase take-up of early childhood development investments. Cash transfers that support early childhood development for the poorest children have succeeded in various contexts. Such programs have reduced stunting, fostered language development, and improved socio-behavioral skills among

children. Integrated approaches that combine health, nutrition, and stimulation investments have also been highly effective (World Bank, 2018).

c) Tertiary Education Returns and Demand for Lifelong Learning

The global average private return to tertiary education is 16 percent (Psacharopoulos and Patrinos, 2018). But such a return is not high for everyone. It depends on a range of factors that include the quality of the provider, the composition of the student population, and the availability of jobs (Saavedra, 2009). The return also varies dramatically depending on the specialization (Ferreyra, et al, 2017).

The changing nature of work makes tertiary education more attractive in three ways. *First*, technology and integration have increased the demand for higher-order general cognitive skills — such as complex problem-solving, critical thinking, and advanced communication — that are transferable across jobs but cannot be acquired through schooling alone. The rising demand for these skills has enhanced the wage premiums of tertiary graduates, while reducing the demand for less educated workers. *Second*, tertiary education increases the demand for lifelong learning. Workers are expected to have multiple careers, not just multiple jobs over their lifetime. Tertiary education — with its wide array of course-offerings and flexible delivery models such as online learning and open universities — meets this growing demand. *Third*, tertiary education — especially universities — becomes more attractive in the changing world of work by serving as a platform for innovation.

Nevertheless, the relevance of tertiary education systems for the future of work depends on how well they deliver on these three fronts. Increasingly, skills acquisition is a continuum, not a finite, unchangeable path. Flexibility is increased by ensuring that when students open the door to one pathway, the doors to other pathways do not close irrevocably. The relative returns to general and vocational education are changing in unpredictable ways, and most economies continue to demand both. Technological progress tends to lower the demand for certain occupation-specific skills, making certain vocational degrees obsolete. It also leads to a higher depreciation of narrow job-specific skills compared with general skills. Yet vocational training continues to be pursued by many students. Vocational training meets the immediate demand for technical skills, enables faster education-to-work transitions for some, and alleviates pressure on the university system.

Three factors make flexibility between the general and technical tracks imperative for the changing nature of work. First, the combination of general and technical skills is becoming highly valued. Second, even technical jobs seem to be requiring more and more intensive higher-order general skills, implying that this type of skills acquisition should be accessible before and during one's working life. Third, people trained in narrow vocational skills would benefit from opportunities to gain new skills. Research evidence indicates that employers ranked socio-behavioral skills on par or above technical qualifications and credentials, and considered a lack of socio-behavioral skills as at least as problematic as a lack of technical skills (World Bank, 2018).

d) Adult Learning outside the Workplace

Worldwide, more than 2.1 billion working-age adults (ages 15–64) have low reading proficiency. In Sub-Saharan Africa, nearly 61 percent of workers are not proficient in reading; in Latin America and the Caribbean this share is 44 percent. In India, only 24 percent of 18- to 37-year-olds who drop out of school before completing the primary level can read (Kaffenberger and Pritchett, 2017).

A low-quality education also may lead to poor literacy skills (Figure 4.5). In Bolivia, Ghana, and Kenya more than 40 percent of 19- to 20-year-olds with an upper secondary education score below the basic literacy level, compared with only 3 percent in Vietnam (World Bank, 2018). Further, as the nature of work changes, some workers are caught in the crosshairs of ongoing disruptions in the skills required. Adult learning then becomes an important channel for readjusting skills to fit in the future of work, but it would benefit from a serious design rethink. Adult learning programs come in many different forms. Three main types that are particularly relevant to preparing adults for the changing labor markets include: programs on adult literacy; skills training for wage employment; and entrepreneurship programs.

Given the future of work, functional literacy is a survival skill. The economic and social cost of adult illiteracy to developing countries is estimated at more than US$5 billion a year (Cree, Kay, and Steward, 2012). But many adult learning programs fail to generate a meaningful impact. Adult literacy programs often improve word recognition but fail to improve actual reading comprehension. Even with basic literacy skills, many people leave school too early to thrive in work or life. Reasons may be economic or cultural constraints, the low quality of basic education, or both. In 2014, the dropout rate from a lower secondary general education was, on average, 27.5 percent in low-income countries and 13.3 percent and 4.8 percent in middle- and high-income countries, respectively (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, mentioned in World Bank, 2018). It is difficult for early school leavers to find jobs or pursue further education later in life without formal certification and training in skills. Similar constraints are also faced by many adults who stayed in school but received a poor-quality basic education.

Globally, some 260 million people aged 15–24 are out of school and out of work. A pool of unemployed adults is a political risk as well as an economic concern. At times, it leads to a wave of emigration, social unrest, or political upheaval. Adult learning programs update the skills and retool and improve the adaptability of older workers. Even among successful adult learning programs, the costs are high.

Adult learning is frequently just one expensive component of a comprehensive package, making it difficult to understand a program's cost-effectiveness. The two main reasons for low effectiveness are: a suboptimal design and an incorrect diagnosis. *Adult brains learn differently* — and that is not always factored into program design. There are certain factors which are not factored into the design of adult learning programs. For an example, adults face significant stress, which compromises their mental capacity. For adults, emotions are constantly mediated by the demands of family, child care, and work. These demands compete with

the cognitive capacity required for learning. Because the brain's ability to learn decreases with age, adult learning programs face a built-in challenge: acquiring knowledge when the brain is less efficient at learning. Advances in neuroscience suggest how to tackle this factor. *An adult brain's ability to learn is significantly dependent on how much it is used.* Adult learning programs have a better chance of success if lessons are integrated into everyday life. Further, adult learners have high opportunity costs in terms of lost income and lost time with their children, but programs often have inflexible and intensive schedules. Three promising routes to more effective adult learning programs are: better diagnosis and evaluation, better design, and better delivery. Sometimes, an implementing agency may be an influencing factor. The success of adult learning programs may also depend on addressing multiple constraints at the same time. Combining training with cash or capital in some cases is a direct way to boost effectiveness. Combining skills training with skills certificates, referral letters, and better information about job opportunities also may enhance effectiveness, especially for women and the disadvantaged. For example, skills training programs are more successful when the private sector is involved in developing the curriculum or training methods or in providing on-the-job training via internships or apprenticeships (World Bank, 2018).

From the above discussion, we can clearly notice that the approach of World Bank is not only broad-based but also foundational in nature focusing on the relevance of psycho-social and economic factors, policies and programmes, among other things, to lifelong learning.

4.5.3 OECD Approach to Lifelong Learning

Early 1970s witnessed significant spurt in recognition of lifelong learning or lifelong education. In its early development the concept was equated with giving adults access to formal courses at educational institutions. However, in choosing the goal of "lifelong learning for all in 1996", Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Education Ministers signaled a major departure by adopting a more comprehensive view. This goal covers *all purposeful learning activities*, from the cradle to the grave, that aims to improve knowledge and competencies for all individuals who wish to participate in learning activities. International organisations such as UNESCO and the European Commission have also adopted the more comprehensive approach. Let us now look at the OECD approach to lifelong learning.

OECD Approach - A systemic strategy: OECD adopted a systemic strategy approach to lifelong learning, which is highlighted below.

i) People at each stage of life need not only to be given specific opportunities to learn new things, but also to be equipped and motivated to undertake further learning, where necessary organised and directed by themselves. Curricula, pedagogical practices and the organisation of learning need to be examined from this perspective.

ii) Each learning setting needs to be linked to others, to enable individuals to make transitions and progress through various learning stages. Provision therefore needs to be structured in a way that creates appropriate linkages and pathways.

iii) Resources for education cannot be looked at only in the context of separate sectors of formal provision. The lifelong learning approach raises questions about whether the distribution of education and training resources is optimal in promoting an individual's engagement in learning over the lifetime, and addresses resources for informal as well as formal learning.

iv) No single ministry has a monopoly of interest in lifelong learning. The approach requires a high level of co-ordination for developing and implementing policy. Thus, the 1990s "cradle-to-grave" vision of lifelong learning is substantially broader than the notions of adult education or recurrent education that previously shaped the debate on education policy.

A new OECD report (OECD Skills Outlook 2021: Learning for Life; See https://tuac.org/news/oecd-skills-outlook-2021-rings-alarm-bells-on-adult-learning-uptake/) lays greater emphasis on skills and rings alarm bells on adult learning uptake. Not only is participation in lifelong learning insufficient due to a varying set of reasons, but the current pandemic made it even more difficult to pursue any type of training. Countries must step up their efforts to enable people to continue learning throughout their lives to navigate a rapidly changing world of work shaped by globalisation and the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. It says that public policies should play a key role in facilitating effective and inclusive lifelong learning, but much remains to be done.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write the answer in the space given below the question.

b) Check your answer with the one given under "Answers to 'Check Your Progress' Questions" of this Unit.

3. Name four important factors influencing World Bank approach to global practice of lifelong learning.

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4.6 LIFELONG LEARNING IN PRACTICE

As we are aware, subsequent to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, lifelong learning has become the overarching concept and vision for education. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 calls on countries to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'. While promoting lifelong learning to achieve a sustainable future constitutes a goal in itself, it is also a requirement for realising many of the other SDGs.

An established fact is that, as we receive more schooling, opportunities improve and access to well-paying jobs increase. Education is thus the great equalizer, as the American educational reformer, Horace Mann wrote in

1848. Our earnings rise and earnings differentials fall. In this way, education contributes to equality. Throughout the 20th century, education raised earnings and equalized opportunities. Nevertheless, in the 21st century, educational expansion is contributing to income inequality. Higher levels of education throughout the world are contributing to earnings inequality. Demand for skills is outpacing supply, thus maintaining the earnings advantage of the highly educated. Technology, automation and artificial intelligence all raise the demand for schooling. But technology also makes certain skills obsolete, while putting a premium on other skills and raises the overall demand for skills. This is leading to a race between education and technology, and, today, the ability of workers to compete is handicapped by the poor performance of education systems in most countries. At the same time, there is demand: The returns to schooling are high in most developing countries, and growing skill premiums are evident in much of the world (Harry A. Patrinos; See https://blogs.worldbank.org/education/lifelong-learning).

Further, as we can notice clearly, our societies are rapidly changing because of environmental, scientific and technological transformations. There is growing impact of globalization on all dimensions of life, including culture and education. Emergence of new players in the world economy has intensified competition, many countries are turning production towards high value-added and knowledge-intensive products and services which require high-level skilled labor force.

Today's depressed economic environment and challenged workforce have dramatically increased the needs and demands of learners to retool their capabilities, acquire new competences and align knowledge to the emerging new economy to avoid being laid off. At the same time, leaders within traditional education institutions, colleges and universities, are aggressively seeking new sources of revenues to counteract current budgeting shortfalls. The early 21st century began the age of education globalization with local education institutions continuing their expansion efforts both within and outside the national area, in an attempt to meet growing market demand. To face this competition many universities and vocational schools moved aggressively into the adult learning market. Today, it is even easier to serve adult learners utilizing new technologies facilitated by the introduction of the Internet, online, blended and e-learning. Continuing education and distance learning organizations lead the way by adopting technologies and flexible operations to support the varied needs of adult learners including lifelong learning (Chiţiba, 2012).

New processes for education delivery and learner support mechanisms advanced to meet the dynamic needs of the adult learner marketplace. They have thus recognized their innate ability to meet the diverse needs of today's economically challenged learner and market dynamics.

Successful implementation of lifelong learning strategies of all educational institutions at all levels therefore requires not only adoption by enthusiastic innovators but also appropriate institutional structures in order to support the sustainability and mainstreaming of lifelong learning initiatives. In the following sub-sections, we will focus on the practice of lifelong learning in European Union, in the USA and in India.

4.6.1 Implementation of Lifelong Learning in European Union

The Lifelong Learning Program for European Union is stipulated in Article 15, paragraph 5 of the Decision No. 1720/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 November 2006. The Lifelong Learning Program acts as a catalyst for structural change through support to policy development, cooperation and mobility in European Union. It improves policy-making by providing quality tools, analysis and research as well as by exchanging information on best practices (Chiţiba, 2012).

Lifelong Learning Programmes in European Union

Lifelong learning programmes in the European Union were constituted with the aim of transforming the European Union into an advanced information society that has social coherence and a sustainable economic structure. The European Union's approach to lifelong learning consists of six programmes (Turkish Republic European Union Ministry, 2011, mentioned in Aylin Kaplan, 2016). These are as follows.

1. ***Comenius Programme:*** The target audience of this programme is pre-school, primary and secondary educational institutions as well as education faculties. The basic aim of this programme is to develop the knowledge and understanding of students and educational staff towards European culture, language diversity and values. Furthermore, it aims to develop their basic skills of individual development.

2. ***Erasmus Programme***: This programme fosters collaboration between higher education institutions in Europe. It also contributes to the increase in collaboration between higher education institutions and other business environments to improve employment opportunities for university graduates by developing the system of higher education institutions in line with the requirements of the business world.

3. ***Leonardo Da Vinci Programme:*** It supports and improves the occupational education policies of countries that are either members or candidates of the European Union. It also contributes to the improvement of collaboration between countries and increases the quality of occupational education.

4. ***Grundtvig Programme***: It focuses on informal education and adults, apart from the occupation education. It aims at satisfying the needs resulting from the changing structure of knowledge and provides opportunities for adult individuals to develop their knowledge and qualifications during their lives.

5. ***Programme with Common Subject:*** This programme was generally constituted to support the quality and recognition of the education systems of countries that are members or candidates of the European Union in domains including activities of two or more sub-programmes.

6. ***Jean Monnet Programme:*** This programme was constituted to encourage instruction, research and intellectual activities in European integration studies and supports the presence of institutions that focus on the topic of

European integration. The lifelong learning programmes of the European Union are shaped based on topics such as occupational education, collaboration, supporting educational institutions and foundations, training qualified manpower, opportunities for employment and coherence to the European Union.

4.6.2 Lifelong Learning in the U.S.A.

The US system of education has three levels of formal education — elementary, secondary, and postsecondary. Secondary (or high school) graduates who elect to continue their education have a range of postsecondary options (Tate, Klein-collins, and Steinberg, 2011):

- technical or vocational institutions which may offer certificates or degrees.
- two-year community or junior colleges which offer both the first two years of a standard four-year college curriculum as well as terminal or transferable two-year associate's degrees and/or terminal career and technical certificates and degrees.
- four-year colleges or universities.

Today, the economy of the United States is requiring a more highly skilled and educated workforce. However, the need for greater levels of educational participation by adults already in the workforce comes at a time when states and the nation are severely challenged by budget deficits and are looking for ways to trim education costs, not enhance them. Hence, promising practices in lifelong learning are replicated and brought to scale to meet ambitious degree completion goals in the challenging times. Focus is on enrolling more people in education programs, and credential learning that may have already occurred outside of the formal educational structure. More creative use of public funding for education, innovative design and delivery of programs to make them more adult-friendly, in terms of scheduling and structure and to keep students engaged and committed to degree completion assumed greater importance in order to promote lifelong learning.

More and more jobs today are requiring some postsecondary education, particularly those jobs with potential for advancement to higher-level, higher-paying positions. This new reality has inspired colleges and universities to design programs that help adults of all skill levels access postsecondary learning, whether the goal be a four-year degree, a one-year certificate, better wages, or long-term employability. In some cases, this has meant designing learning programs along a progression, such as bridge programs, and career ladder/pathways programs.

The credit hour: The vast majority of postsecondary institutions offer degrees based upon the credit hour. Students who successfully complete college-level courses are awarded credit hours, and the typical 15 or 16-week college course is worth three to four credit hours. Students typically need to accumulate around 60 credit hours for an associate's degree (two-year degree), and they need to accumulate twice that number for a bachelor's degree. Individual institutions determine the exact number of credits required for a degree and in what subjects they need to be earned. The number of credits that a given course is "worth" has

traditionally been based not on learning outcomes but on the faculty's workload as well as the amount of time a student spends in the classroom (Shedd, 2003, mentioned in Tate, Klein-collins, and Steinberg, 2011).

US educational institutions are using innovative principles and practices to meet current challenges and support lifelong learning. The innovative practices address six challenges: *aspiration, access, transitions, academic and career pathways, affordability* and *success.*

Aspiration: In recent years more adults are interested in going back to school to improve their skills and gain more knowledge. This has been a particular focus of public officials who are interested in improving the skills of the workplace so that a region, a state or the country as a whole can position itself better in the global marketplace.

Access: To improve access to lifelong learners, especially learners who work, Colleges and universities began to offer evening and weekend courses, as well as distance learning, onsite training held at the workplace, accelerated programs, modularized courses, open-entry/open-exit courses, and online or blended learning programs with open source curriculum.

Transitions: More and more, college students are attending more than one college in their quest to earn degrees. The most recent study of student mobility found that almost 65 percent of students attended more than one institution, and 26 percent attended more than two (Adelman, 2006, mentioned in Tate, Klein-collins, and Steinberg, 2011). With this degree of student mobility, the challenge then becomes how those students finally earn a degree when many of their college credits are from different institutions. Typically each institution has its own distinct policies regarding which transfer credits, and how many can count toward a degree. Innovative solutions to this problem include statewide articulation and transfer policies, awarding credit for prior learning, degree completion institutions, credit transfer support services, and competency-based programs.

Awarding credit for other learning (Prior learning assessment): Removing barriers to credit transfer is a great benefit to lifelong learners, but even more is needed for students who have acquired learning from non-credit programs, corporate or military training, workplace-based learning, volunteer activities, and other college-level learning that can and does take place outside of a credit-based course. Prior learning assessments (PLA) measure what a student has learned outside of the college classroom. Institutions can determine what the student knows through a variety of different assessment methods, and then evaluate whether that learning is college level and how many college credits are equivalent to that learning. PLA includes methods such as: Individualized student portfolios, Evaluation of corporate and military training for college credit, Program evaluations of non-credit instruction (that award credit for those who achieve recognized proficiencies or equate that learning with specific for-credit courses at an institution), Customized exams, also called "challenge exams", and Standardized exams such as Advanced Placement Examination Program (AP exams), and College Level Examination Program Exams (CLEP

exams) (Tate, Klein-collins, and Steinberg, 2011). The challenge for students, however, is that PLA is not universally available, such credits are often accepted in limited ways, and the PLA credits are not often accepted in or for transfer.

Affordability: The cost of postsecondary education in the US is a significant barrier for many adults who would like to earn a degree or certificate. The out-of-pocket costs often exceed available grant aid, causing many students to take on debt in order to go to school.

Success: There has been a strong emphasis on strategies to improve student success, including initiatives that help more adults stay engaged in learning, finish degree programs, and reduce the time they need to earn a postsecondary degree or credential, through different innovations discussed above.

Colleges, universities and other educational providers have recognized the growing need to serve adult learners better, and this new attention has resulted in a great number of innovations to improve adult interest in learning and degree completion, expand access to learning opportunities, provide educational pathways to better careers and higher levels of learning, recognize learning no matter the source, make opportunities affordable, and help more students finish what they started. In the context of lifelong learning, all the innovations discussed above are helpful to improve the educational attainment of all US citizens.

4.6.3 Lifelong Learning Programmes in India

The importance of Lifelong Learning / Lifelong Education has been repeatedly stressed in several educational policy documents and discourses in India. Report of the Education Commission (1964-66) observed that education does not end with schooling but is a lifelong process. National Policy on Education in India – 1986 (modified in 1992) considered lifelong education as the cherished goal of the educational process which presupposes universal literacy, provision of opportunities for youth, housewives, agricultural and industrial workers and professionals to continue the education of their choice at the pace suited to them. It observes that the critical development issue is the continuous up-gradation of skills so as to produce manpower resources of the kind and the number required by the society. Although these policies were translated into practice and a number of Lifelong Learning programs were implemented by governmental, non-governmental organizations and universities in the country during the last three decades, the bulk of the programs continued to focus on adult literacy and continuing education mainly due to the massive number of non-literates (300.14.million) and neo-literates (110 millions) as estimated by the National Literacy Mission (NLM-Literacy Facts At A Glance, 2007). With the formulation of the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012), the Government of India put forward the idea of expanding the scope of the Continuing Education Program by developing it as Lifelong Education and Awareness Program (LEAP). This may be partly influenced by the global discourse on Lifelong Learning and partly due to the socio-economic changes taking place within and outside the country (UGC, See https://www.ugc.ac.in/oldpdf/xiplanpdf/lifelong.pdf).

A) UGC Support to Lifelong Learning Programmes: A Glance

It was mainly after the launching of the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) by the Government of India in 1978 that the UGC began to encourage the universities and colleges to participate in Lifelong Learning programmes and started funding it. Although the programme made a beginning with adult literacy its scope was gradually widened over the next three decades to include, post-literacy, Continuing Education, Population Education, refresher courses and a variety of extension and field outreach activities. Simultaneously, the UGC encouraged and funded the universities to institutionalize the programme by setting up separate Departments with core faculty to undertake teaching and research. With the beginning of the Eleventh Five Year Plan the UGC accorded maximum priority to Lifelong Learning with a view to meeting the demands of emerging knowledge society and facilitate the process of developing a learning society. The UGC continued to implement the scheme under its Non-formal Education Bureau (UGC, See https://www.ugc.ac.in/oldpdf/xiplanpdf/ lifelong.pdf).

While universities have played their role to enhance student employability skills through the formal system, the possibilities of strengthening the non-formal stream of education for catering to the needs of unreached cannot be ignored. There has been a rapid growth of Open Distance Learning through the Open Universities and Open Schools in India. Universities have integrated formal and non-formal education by opening their doors to adult learners for Lifelong Learning programmes and by making the University an adult learner-friendly institution (Ibid).

At present, there are 86 Departments/Centres of LL in the country. While most of the universities have already established separate Departments of LL for institutionalizing extension and for meeting the current demands of Lifelong Learning in their respective areas of operation, the remaining universities need to give top priority to this field. Further, these Departments have to play a major role in development of the human resources specially providing professional manpower in the area of Lifelong Learning, and the Advisory Committees overseeing the work of these Departments need to play a more pro-active role. The Departments of Lifelong Learning will, therefore, have to play a more dynamic role and move from the periphery to the centre stage of the university system (Ibid).

B) Approach Followed: Focus on Lifelong Learning

The approach during the XI Plan continued the ongoing programmes initiated during the earlier Five Year Plans, consolidated them and expanded them to cover new universities and select colleges. All the different programmes initiated earlier under various terminologies, viz. Adult Education, Continuing Education, Extension, Population Education, Student Counseling, Placement Services and e-learning were reformulated and developed as 'Lifelong Learning' Programmes so as to bring them in tune with fast expanding global knowledge scenario. Since Lifelong Learning has become a fundamental goal of recent educational policies, often advocated as a way to achieve socio-economic development and a tool for promoting knowledge-based society, the UGC extended support to this area during the XI Plan (UGC, See https://www.ugc.ac.in/oldpdf/xiplanpdf/ lifelong.pdf).

University Specific Programmes: Each university has its unique character, ethos and local needs. Over the years the faculty of the Departments of Lifelong Learning (DLL) may have developed certain expertise which if encouraged may lead to specialization. Hence, the approach during the XI Plan encouraged different universities to develop university specific programmes keeping in view the expertise of the faculty and local needs. It is expected that this approach may encourage universities to specialise in their chosen area and in course of time emerge as centers of excellence in the chosen field (Ibid).

Developing Lifelong Learning as a Discipline of Study & Field of Practice: During the XI Plan emphasis was on expanding the scope of Adult Education as Lifelong Learning and improving its quality and developing it as a Discipline of Study and field of practice. Since the knowledge base of Lifelong Learning in India continues to be weak, systematic efforts were expected to be made to generate new knowledge through rigorous researches and scholarly publications. In this regard, the University Departments of Lifelong Learning (DLLs) were expected to collaborate with Government Departments and NGOs, offer or implement programmes and strive to link theory to practice and vice-versa and focus on generating knowledge and bringing out publications which are essential functions of Universities (Ibid).

Expansion of the Programme: During the XI Plan, concerted attempts were made to expand the programme beyond the existing 86 universities by covering at least 50% of the universities in the country. The proposals for establishing new Departments of Lifelong Learning were therefore sought from the interested universities (Ibid).

Strengthening the Departments: Lifelong Learning / Lifelong Education has been considered as an important indicator of a learning society and recognized as an important programme by the Government of India. In the promotion of Lifelong Learning, universities and colleges have an important role to play. During the XI Plan efforts were made to strengthen all the existing university DLLs to have a minimum core faculty of four members (Ibid).

Introduction of Programmes in the colleges: Apart from the universities, select colleges were also encouraged to implement LL Programme. The first priority was to introduce the programme in the hundred districts with low literacy among the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes identified by the National Literacy Mission of the Government of India. Broadly, the colleges are expected to undertake the following activities (Ibid):

1. Involve students in the spread of Literacy.
2. Impart soft skills including Computer Literacy and English speaking skills to students.
3. Organise Lifelong Learning Programmes in consultation with the *Jan Shikshan Sansthans* or the University Departments of LL.

Two lecturers – one male and one female in the college was designated as Programme Coordinators and given some honorarium. The UGC made provision for recurring and non-recurring grants to the selected colleges. The interested colleges were encouraged to submit proposals in the proforma to the

UGC directly.

Creation of Centres of Excellence: With a view to encourage excellence and specialization, it was also proposed to designate some of the Departments of LL as Centres of Excellence and given liberal grants during the Eleventh Plan to take up special programmes in the area of specialization (Ibid).

National Professorship and Fellowships: During the XI Plan, National Professorships and Fellowships in Lifelong Learning were proposed to be instituted with a view to encourage eminent scholars to pursue their research and publications and expand the knowledge base which are *sine qua non* for developing the discipline of Lifelong Learning (Ibid).

In spite of all the above efforts, and even contrary to the above, 12th Five Year Plan (2012-2017) revealed that education system faced serious challenges in many fronts. To cite a few, expansion of education and its reach remained unsatisfactory. India's Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of 16% was much below the world average of 27%, as well as that of other emerging countries such as China (26%) and Brazil (36%) in 2010. There was drastic fall in standards and excellence in education. There was 40% and 35% faculty shortage in State and Central Universities, respectively. The performance of 62% of Universities was average and 90% of Colleges were below average in 2010, on the basis of their NAAC accreditation. India's relative citation impact on research and other publications were half the world average. Further, issues of equity continued to persist. Disparity in the GER of higher education across the States, rural-urban areas, communities and gender continued.

Consequent efforts have led to formulation of National Education Policy 2020, which lays emphasis on lifelong learning with special focus on recognition of prior learning, National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) in sync with National Higher Education Qualifications Framework (NHEQF) and achievement of the SDG-4 of Sustainable Development Agenda 2030. Country is now seized of implementing the policy in its true spirit. It can be hoped that the lifelong learning will take strong ground in India in the near future.

In this section, we have provided you clear idea of the practice of lifelong learning with broad reference to the practice in European Union, the USA and India. This is all intended to give you an understanding that the practice of lifelong learning varies from country to country, but all falling within the broad global approaches discussed in the preceding section.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write the answer in the space given below the question.

b) Check your answer with the one given under "Answers to 'Check Your Progress' Questions" of this Unit.

4. What are the categories of lifelong learning programmes followed in European Union?

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5. What are the levels of formal education in the US system of education? Specify the post-secondary options available to the secondary (or high school) graduates to continue their education.

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4.7 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit we have presented to you the clear picture of the status of lifelong learning as an irreversible global movement, as an established academic discipline and as a global practice. Further, we have highlighted how lifelong learning gets influenced by the demand and supply shifts in the global markets with special reference to the range of skills required at different levels and in varying sectors. We have also discussed how learning in early childhood lays strong foundation for learning in future, what is the extent of demand for and returns of tertiary education and how adult learning occurs outside the workplaces as well in the context of lifelong learning. We have also provided a brief overview of the practices of lifelong learning in European Union, the USA and India. We hope you have developed the comprehensive understanding of lifelong learning as an academic discipline and as a practice at global level.

4.8 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS' QUESTIONS

1. Following are the attributes of an academic discipline.

   a) Discipline has a particular object of research though the object of research may be shared with another discipline.

   b) Discipline is a body of accumulated specialist knowledge referring to their object of research, which is specific to that discipline and not generally shared with another discipline.

   c) Discipline has theories and concepts that can organize the accumulated specialist knowledge and the research requirements effectively.

   d) Discipline uses specific terminologies or a specific technical language adjusted to their research object.

   e) Discipline has specific research methods developed according to its specific needs.

   f) Discipline has some institutional manifestations in the form of subjects taught at universities or colleges, respective academic departments and professional associations connected to it.

2. Yes, both adult education and lifelong learning are academic disciplines in their respective rights. Both these disciplines possess the characteristics or attributes of an academic discipline.

3. Four important factors influencing global practice of lifelong learning are: i) Influence of skills demand and supply on global practice, ii) Learning in early childhood which has strong foundation for learning in future, iii) Tertiary education returns and demand for lifelong learning, and iv) Adult learning outside the workplace.

4. The European Union's approach to lifelong learning consists of six programmes. These are: i) Comenius Programme; ii) Erasmus Programme; iii) Leonardo Da Vinci Programme; iv) Grundtvig Programme; v) Programme with Common Subject; and vi) Jean Monnet Programme.

5. The US system of education has three levels of formal education — elementary, secondary, and postsecondary. Secondary (or high school) graduates who elect to continue their education have a range of post-secondary options such as the following:

   - technical or vocational institutions which may offer certificates or degrees.
   - two-year community or junior colleges which offer the first two years of a standard four-year college curriculum as well as terminal or transferable two-year associate's degrees and/or terminal career and technical certificates and degrees.
   - four-year colleges or universities.

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4.10 UNIT-END EXERCISES

In your own interest, you may prepare the answers to the following questions which may be useful as a part of your preparation for your term-end examinations.

1) Describe the evolution of the lifelong learning movement
2) What are the distinctive attributes of an academic discipline?
3) Discuss the status of lifelong learning as an academic discipline
4) Explain how lifelong learning is implemented in European Union
5) Discuss the practice of lifelong learning in the U.S.A.
6) How are lifelong learning programmes implemented in India?
7) Discuss important aspects of lifelong learning as a global practice
8) Explain the influence of skills demand and supply on global practice of lifelong learning
9) Explain how learning in early childhood lays strong foundation for learning in future
10) What do you think are the returns and demand of tertiary education for lifelong learning?
11) Explain the significance of adult learning outside the workplace vis-à-vis lifelong learning.

4.11 UNIT-END ACTIVITY

If you like to further enhance your interest, you may attempt to perform the following activity.

Critically analyse the interrelationship among living, working and learning as crucial determinants of inevitable practice of lifelong learning by contemporary societies.

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