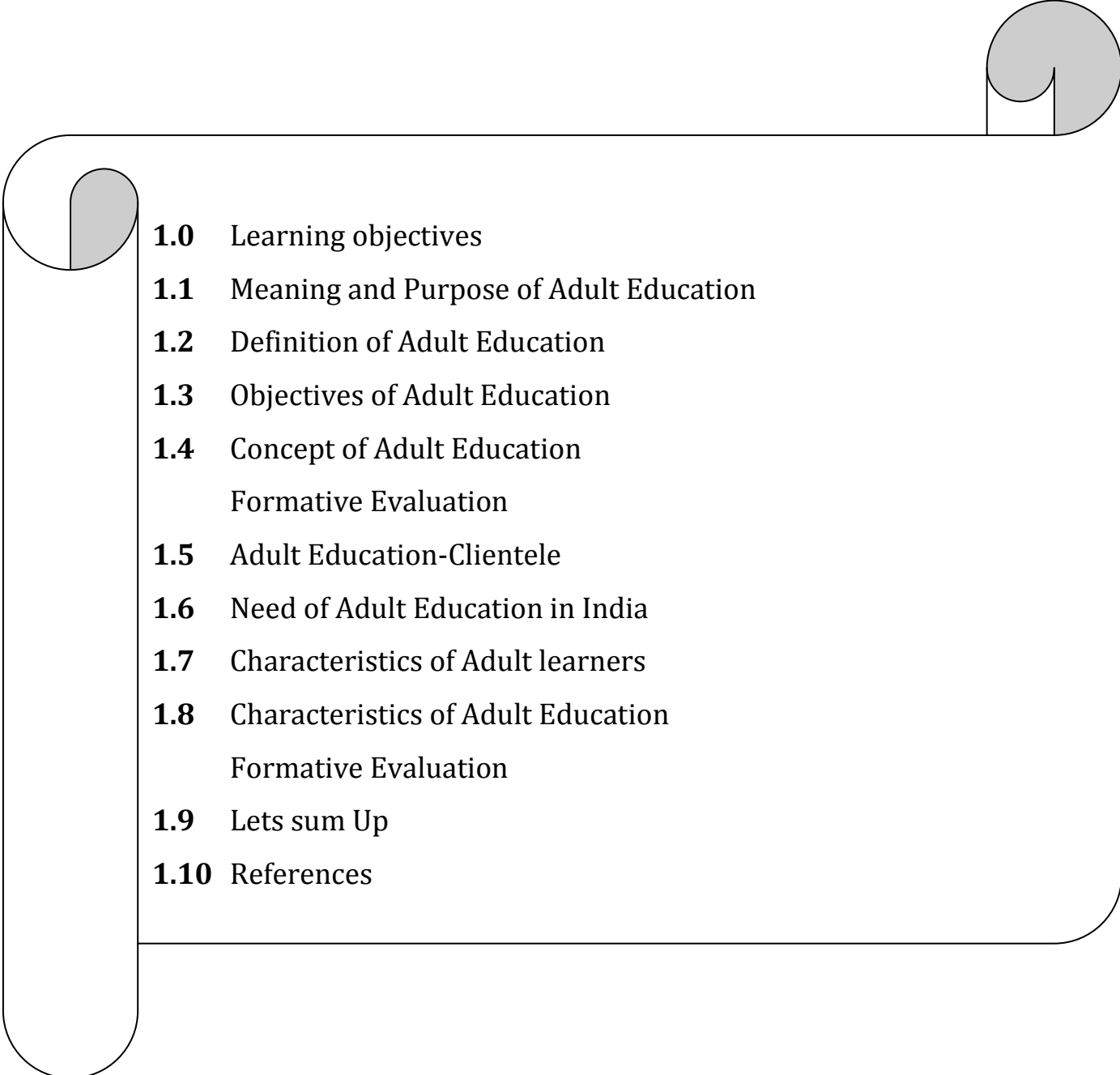


MODULE - 1 SESSION-I ADULT EDUCATION - AN INTRODUCTION

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1.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learning Objectives

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

- Define the term Adult Education.
- Describe the meaning, purpose and concept of Adult Education.
- State the objectives of Adult Education.
- Explain the need for Adult education
- Identify the characteristics of an adult learner and Adult Education.

INTRODUCTION

The education of adults is a multifaceted complex process, which **encompasses (Include)** many subject and interest areas. It is broad and varied as those it serves. It encompasses Adult Basic Education (teaching basic learning and survival skills to the undereducated); continuing education efforts for personal and professional growth, and enrichment activities for the highly educated. It is designed for personal skill development, for enhanced career opportunities, or for enjoyment. It can involve a very short duration of time or several years of effort. Finally, it serves diverse of students and includes a varied population of adult teachers.

***Hello friends, have you ever heard about the Adult Education?
If yes, then write in your note book about Adult Education. Check your answer after reading the following paragraphs.***

1.1 MEANING AND PURPOSE OF ADULT EDUCATION

Adult education is a process where **adults who are no longer in school, or do not attend school on a regular or, full time basis, or school dropouts undertake sequential (Chronological) and organized educational activities** on various subjects, such as health and family welfare, agriculture and animal husbandry, etc. This is intended to bringing about **changes in knowledge, attitude, and skill** for the purpose of indentifying and solving personal or community problems. Adult education **embraces (Hold)** all forms of educative experiences needed by men and women according to their varying interests and requirements at their differing levels of comprehensions and ability, and in their changing roles and responsibility throughout life.

Adult education plays an indirect but significant role in the educational as well as economic development of a nation. It can be remarked that without adult education and adult literacy, it is not possible to have range and speed of economic and social development that makes it worthwhile in terms of values and welfare. Because it is not possible to impart all types of education to various categories of learners. Non-classroom education of adult learners has immense importance, particularly for a developing society, and a society with low levels of literacy, high illiteracy, and low development.

Friends, after understanding the meaning and purpose of Adult Education, let us now look at some definitions cited by some authors and organizations.

1.2 DEFINITION OF ADULT EDUCATION

- According to **Lindeman (1961)** adult education, more accurately defined, begins where vocational education leaves off. Adult education offers some, who were not privileged, a last chance to learn. Some feel a need for training in basic skills of learning so they enrol for learning, reading, writing and arithmetic. If we examine this definition we will find the following essential elements that characterize it.
 - ✓ It is post-vocational education.
 - ✓ It is education for the deprived classes.
 - ✓ It is training in basic skills of learning i.e. literacy.
- The **Exeter Conference 1969** defines it as the process whereby persons who no longer attend school on a regular basis (unless full-time programmes are especially designed for adults) undertake sequential and organized activities within a conscious intention of bringing about changes in information, knowledge, understanding, skills, appreciation and attitudes, for the purpose of identifying and solving personal or community problems (Liveright and Haygood, 1969). In this definition, we can observe that there are two elements that characterize it, viz.
 - ✓ Part-time or full-time process
 - ✓ Sequential and organized activities
- According to **Reddy (2000)** “adult education is part time or full-time education for men and women of all ages either organized by themselves or provided by schools, learning centres, or other agencies which enable them to improve their general or professional knowledge, skills and abilities by either continuing their education or resuming their initial or incomplete education of previous year.

Have you ever thought about the Purpose/Aim of Adult Education?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF ADULT EDUCATION

The goals of adult education are: to increase the quality of life of an individual and enable him/her to realize his/her potential for self realization; to raise the standard of living of the families, communities, societies and nations; to promote peace and communal harmony in the multi-cultural global village; and to enhance the pace of development and welfare of the individual nations and the international community as a whole. There are three major objectives of adult education as explained below.

- **Imparting literacy of diverse types**

This includes basic literacy, scientific literacy, economic literacy, technological literacy, legal literacy, computer literacy, and so on. You will learn more about types of literacy at higher levels of your educational pursuits.

- **Generating awareness on various matter/subjects**

This includes awareness about one's self, community, society and the nation; about social, economic, political, cultural, environmental, developmental, health, hygiene, etc; about peace, welfare, and harmonious growth and development of the individual, family, community, nation and the world, amongst other things.

- **Promoting functionality**

This includes application of individuals, collective, community, corporate, national and international knowledge, skills, attitudes, practices, resources, etc. for addressing the felt needs, for solving the problems, for promoting larger public participation in various activities and for bringing out social, economic, cultural, political transformation for raising general level or standard of living of the individual, community, nation and the world.

Let us see what the concept of Adult Education means

1.4 CONCEPT OF ADULT EDUCATION IN INDIA

Concept of Adult:

Adult education is concerned with the education of adults. The nations of who is an adult vary from "those past school age" through "grownups" to "mature individuals" Precise identification of an adult tend to fall into the categories of age, psychological and social role.

Concept of Adult Education:

Adult education is a relationship between an education agent and learners in which the agent selects, arranges, and continuously directs a sequence of progressive tasks that provide systematic experiences to achieve learning from those whose participation in such activities is **subsidiary (Supplementary)** and supplemented to a primary

productive role in society. Thus, only those systematically planned experiences intended to result in learning, and only that learning which occurs in a purposefully constructed instructional setting under the continuous direction of an external educational agent, fall within the scope of Adult education.

Most people make the mistake of looking at the concept of Adult Education from a narrow perspective. To them it is nothing but a literacy program that is undertaken to eradicate illiteracy among adults in a country. Adult Education, as a discipline has come a long way. It is no longer restricted to literacy alone. In a wider connotation, Adult Education refers to any form of learning process that engages mature men and women beyond the confines of a traditional learning environment. Also termed as continuing education, it includes everything from learning the three basic R's (reading, writing, and arithmetic), to learning for personal accomplishment and goes to the extent of enabling a person to attain a higher degree. In order to have a better understanding of adult education, it becomes necessary for us to trace its beginning and know how it has evolved through the years. **Malcolm Knowles**, who is also called the **father of Adult Education**, pioneered the field of adult learning in the U.S in the 20th century. Adult education theory evolves by the different concepts as follows:

- **Fundamental education:** Fundamental education is that kind of minimum and general education which aims to help children and adults who do not have the advantages of formal education, to understand the problems of their immediate environment and their rights and duties as citizens and individuals, and to participate more effectively in the economic and social progress of their community. It is “fundamental” in the sense that it gives the minimum knowledge and skills which are an essential condition for attaining an adequate standard of living.
- **Out – of- school education:** The formula “out-of-school education” is another of the expressions that UNESCO testifies to in establishing a definition for adult education. At first, the formula of out-of-school education was affected by the supposition that adult education is adult education-or “for adults”- instead of for participants in educational processes. Adult education now has some qualities which surpassed that out-of-school education.
- **Lifelong education:** Lifelong education is a process aimed at effective learning throughout life that comprises all ages, all levels of teaching, all forms of education and all educational policies. It approaches all dimensions of human life, all branches of knowledge, and all practical skills. It tries to favour that they participate in the formation of it, and in the spirit of social progress, responding to the demands of development and the needs of society, forming in continual interdisciplinary fashion and accordance with the economic, cultural and social development of the community.
- **Dave (1976)** regards lifelong learning education as ‘ a process of accomplishing personal, social and professional development throughout life span of individuals in order to enhance the quality of life of both individuals and their collectives. It includes formal, non-formal and informal patterns of learning throughout the life cycle of an individual for the conscious and continuous enhancement of the quality of life of his own and that of his society.

- **Continuing education:** According to Legge, (1982), “Continuing education seems to have reference to some kind of retraining when needed, for example, in a new job. It certainly presupposes that some education has gone before, presumably initial education, which has first to be completed”. According to this definition it is clear that continuing education starts after certain level of schooling while lifelong education is broader as it subsumes continuing education. Continuing education includes those learning opportunities that are taken up after the completion of initial education.

Friends, we have already discussed the objectives, definitions and characteristics of Adult Education, but, have you thought who could be the clientele of Adult Education?

1.5 ADULT EDUCATION CLIENTELE

There are certain target groups which do not fit into the formal education system due to different circumstances like poverty, disability, illiteracy etc. Therefore, they become the clientele of Adult Education. Clientele are as below:

Unemployed Youth:

Unemployment is a major problem in many countries, especially India. The rate of unemployment is almost same in both rural and urban areas. Urban areas have more number of educated unemployed, and in the rural areas, laborers and agriculturists are unemployed for almost 6 months a year. India has 240 universities managing over 5000 colleges of various courses thus bringing out millions of graduates every year. Almost 50 to 60% of the graduates are still searching for jobs after their graduation, due to lack of employability opportunities, poor communication skills, less subject knowledge and entrepreneurship quality. (Wisdom News, 2012) Therefore, helped such students could be helped by Adult Education to improve their employability skills.

Out of School Children:

The 86th Constitutional Amendment Act 2002 makes education a Fundamental Right for children in the age group of 6-14 years stating that “the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine”. It is argued that in developing countries with inadequate educational infrastructure, poverty, inequality, social norms, credit-land-labor market imperfections, high fertility and unpredictable employment scenario, children drop out of schools at an early age. Certain schools are too far, timings of formal schools are rigid, and all these factors interplay to persuade children to leave school. There has been an impressive reduction in the number of out-of-school children in the past few years. In 2001, there were 58.021 million out-of-school children. This number reduced to 13.42 million in 2005. The problems regarding education of these out-of-school children vary across the nation due to different causes, factors and diverse obstacles to overcome. Adult Education can thus help to overcome their problems.

People with Disability:

A recent study by the World Bank (2007), for example, noted that children with disability are five times more likely to be out of school than children belonging to scheduled castes or scheduled tribes (SC or ST). Based on NSS data, the World Bank (2007: 64) report categorically states that, "it is very clear that both educational attainment of all PWD and current attendance of CWD are very poor and far below national averages". Data suggests that people with disabilities have much lower educational attainment rates, with 52 percent illiteracy against 35 percent average for the general population. Adult Education caters to them according to their priorities and needs.

Women and Girls:

In many developing and underdeveloped countries, education of women and girls poses a serious problem. At the primary level more drop-outs are girls because of **superstition (A belief in supernatural influences)** and the belief that girls need no education as boys is a discriminatory attitude. Both factors all add to the seriousness of the problem. In India it is believed that the place of a woman is at home and even if they work outside in fields, in factories or in offices, their work is lowly paid. Though the attitude is changing of late, it has not eradicated the problem of literacy, which is greater among girls and women when compared to boys and men. So this is another area which falls within the scope of Adult Education. Only Adult Education system can meet these challenges.

Retired Citizen:

Education empowers an individual to think rationally and logically. Literacy has been found to be the most important determinant of various demographic decisions of individuals. Among elderly persons there is a huge gap between male and female literacy as well as in rural and urban parts of the country. In 2007-08 only 50% of elderly men and 20% women aged 60 years or more literate through formal schooling. In rural areas the proportion was further lower at 42% among men and 12% among elderly women. However, there is no denying of the fact that literacy levels among elderly males and females have improved over time in both rural and urban areas.

Friends, have you ever thought that, then why we do need Adult Education when we have formal system of education?

1.6 NEED OF ADULT EDUCATION IN INDIA

- Adult Education brings a new hope for the illiterate masses who failed to get education during their school years. Though a well-defined programme of Adult Education, the illiterate adults can hope to take part in the day to day activities of their country.

(E.g. National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) is the first nationwide attempt at eradication of illiteracy made through the National Adult Education Programme launched on October 2, 1978. It was a massive programme which aimed at educating 100 million non-literate adults in the age group of 15-35 years within a time frame of five years)

- Adult Education is needed to widen intellectual horizon of partially illiterate adults.

(The aim of adult education to see that every person in the country knows at least the three R's, reading, writing and arithmetic. Such knowledge is absolutely necessary for every person living in a democratic country)

Adult Education is needed:-

- To make adult life happy.
- To satisfy the recreational needs of rural adults.
- To supplementary to the compulsory primary education.
- To provides continuing education

(Education does not end with schooling; it is a lifelong process)

After defining of Adult Education , let's see the characteristics of adult learners?

1.7 CHARACTERISTICS OF ADULT LEARNERS

- **Adults generally desire to take more control over their learning than youth**

Adults tend to be self-directed in their lives, although responsibilities with jobs, families, and other organizations can remove a degree of their freedom to act. Adulthood brings an increasing sense of the need to take responsibility for our lives and adults strongly resent it when others take away their rights to choose. This fact is clearly seen in educational efforts among adults.

- **Adults draw upon their experiences as a resource in their learning efforts more than youth**

The adult's experience is a key resource in any learning effort. Adults have a greater reservoir of life experiences simply because they have lived longer and seen and done more. This is a critical distinction between adults and traditional learners. Consciously or unconsciously, adults tend to link any new learning to their prior learning, a body of knowledge that is rooted in their life experiences. They evaluate the validity of new ideas and concepts in light of how the idea or concept "fits" their experience.

- **Adults tend to be more motivated in learning situations than youth**

Higher motivation is linked to the fact that most adult learning is voluntary. Adults are making personal choices to attend schooling, even when such schooling is tied to professional development or job skills. Whenever an individual is able to choose to learn, she/he is much more motivated to learn.

- **Adults are more pragmatic in learning than youth**

Adults are particularly motivated to know and learn information that seems immediately applicable to their situation and needs. They tend to be frustrated with "theory" that needs to be stored away for future use or learning for the sake of learning.

- **In contrast to youth, the learner role is secondary for adults**

For most adults, the "student" role is a minor and a secondary role. This is in sharp contrast to traditional age learners for whom the learner role is both their primary social role and the main basis for their self-identity. Adults fulfill multiple roles and these multiple roles inevitably create **conflicting (Contradictory)** and competing demands on the adult learner. Multiple roles will cause most adults to have far less time and energy to read, study, or learn.

- **Adults must fit their learning into life's "Margins"**

Adult roles take energy and time to fulfill. Everyone faces the reality limits on their energy and time. An important principle to understand is that learning takes time and energy. If an adult is going to undertake a learning activity, she/he must realistically evaluate her/his life and actually see that there is room for the added demands of learning. Adult learners must learn to carve out some margin in their lives to allow learning to occur, a process of priority setting.

- **Many adults lack confidence in their learning**

Many adults have had somewhat negative learning experiences in their traditional schooling. For a variety of reasons, they feel inadequate when it comes to learning through formal educational programs. Still other adults, who may have done well in their earlier schooling, lack confidence for further schooling efforts due to what they perceive as rusty study skills, poor reading skills, test anxiety, or other such learning barriers.

- **Adults are more resistant to change than youth**

Learning often involves changes in our attitudes or actions. Adults tend to be somewhat **resistant (Unwilling)** to changes because life itself teaches change that is not always for the better and that many outcomes of change are often unpredictable. Youth tend to be more idealistic and are often open to change just for the sake of change.

- **Adults are more diverse than youth**

Adults vary from each other as learners in terms of age and experiences much more than traditional age learners. Such differences can be used as a powerful resource for adult learning. Through collaboration in small groups, adults can benefit from their variety of experiences. Dialogue with other adults enables adult learners to perceive more nuances of application, and possible problems with new concepts, then could ever be gained from private reflection.

- **Adults must compensate for aging in learning**

Aging brings with it a number of physical complications that can impact on adult learning efforts. The percentage of such complications increases with age. As we will see later, such complications are not really due to intelligence. Although the speed of learning tends to decrease with age, depth of learning tends to increase. In other words, adults tend to learn less rapidly with age, but what they learn is learned at a deeper and more integrative level. As adults age, vision and hearing can also create barriers in

educational programs. As adult educators, we must pay much more attention to sound and lighting when dealing with adult learners.

Let us move further to understand the characteristics of Adult Education

1.8 CHARACTERISTICS OF ADULT EDUCATION

Adult education is very **dynamic (Self-motivated)** in its nature. Its role, purpose and functions will change with changing situations and conditions of adults. Accordingly its nature and character also undergo changes. Broadly, the nature and characteristic features of adult education are as follows:

- Adult education is community-based and assumes great significance in particular contexts, and it need not be equally relevant to other communities in similar contexts.
- The nature, objectives and types of adult education required for adult would vary from culture to culture.
- Adult education takes into account the dominant needs and prevalent problems of communities and aims at addressing them in effective ways.
- It involves adult at different levels and stages of planning, implementation and evaluation of adult education activities meant for their progress, development and welfare.
- In many respects adult education incorporates element of flexibility so that the adults would feel at home and comfortable to acquire education that has relevance to their living, working and development.
- Adult education is very dynamic and primarily aimed at bringing in social, economic, political and cultural transformation of the adult, their society and nation.
- It helps to enhance the level of adults' awareness and prompts them to action for change. It helps in emancipating or **liberating (Beneficial)** adults from their current problems and situations.
- It is basically conceived and offered taking into account the experiences of adults.
- It promotes rational and informed decision with a view to promote the welfare and development – social, economic, political and cultural- of individuals, groups, society and nation.
- It is a systematically organized process, using diverse methods and techniques of teaching and learning with an in-built element or component of flexibility for promotion of more learner-centered educational activities.
- It is very effective in building the network of adults, their groups, activities and associations in the particular context and situation in which the adults live, earn and learn.

- It aims at enhancing the adults to use all their networks – personal, social, professional, political, etc. – for raising their quality of life and standard of living.
- Adult education is an effective tool for empowerment of adults.

1.9 LETS SUM UP

- ✓ Adult education is a multidisciplinary process oriented to favour lifelong education for all, as well as efficient learning throughout life.
- ✓ It aims to provide the knowledge that improves professional qualifications and to achieve civic, social, moral and cultural attitudes and skills for performing responsibilities and for progress in all spheres of life.
- ✓ It attempts to prepare individuals so that they may perform multiple functions participating in the life of their community.
- ✓ The various kinds of clientele deriving benefits of Adult Education would clearly indicate its scope which is children outside school, the unemployed youth, people with disabilities and women and girls and elderly citizens.
- ✓ Adult Education brings a new hope for the illiterate masses who failed to get education during their school years. Though a well-defined programme of Adult Education, the illiterate adults can hope to take part in the day to day activities of their country.

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ADDITIONAL LINKS

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