

## Lifelong Learning and Library: A Must Know Facts for Learners

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### Abstract

*Transformation involves in every aspect of life. A successful nation needs citizens with strong desire of learning. Every individual in a society contributes to the community development. Given learning opportunities by avoiding obstacles through education brings skills of learning for their life. It is obvious that library being a repository of information directly contributes to the lifelong learning process. The digitalization is one of the challenges faced by librarians in recent times. In terms of service library adopted various new technologies to serve the community and make them learners rather a passive information reader. Librarians not only serve as information providers they should act as guiding force or teacher to teach the reader how to become lifelong learners. They should also stress on the need of the lifelong learning for community growth and welfare. Lifelong learning is obtaining the constant changing information in their day today life and applying that knowledge using their information literacy skills. The aim of librarians must be motivating the readers and equip them with necessary skills to be a lifelong learner.*

### 1. Introduction

The library is an integral part of every learner irrespective of their age, gender, religion etc. In the era of technology, the library services have undergone tremendous changes in terms of information dissemination. The library acts as a responsible institution adjusting to new developments and update the information in various forms from present to past.

The lifelong learning is an essential skill to be developed in every learner and to achieve this learner must be committed to learn the rapidly changing information, developments etc. This not only creates an environment of learning but also bring the abilities to teach other and contribute for knowledgeable community.

Lifelong learning includes all forms of learning be it, formal, non-formal and informal to develop their knowledge, skills, and abilities individually and socially [1], [2]. As further stated, it also associated with attitudes and behavior that everyone acquires in their day-to-day experiences [3]. Lifelong learning is

a continuous process with development of abilities throughout their life. This brings social involvement, community participation, active participation, teaching skills and personal development.

In education, lifelong learning has been associated with curriculum and way of teaching. The curriculum has major impact and undergone changes from time to time to make learner learn by correlation not by memorization. The teacher must adopt teaching styles which promote skill of lifelong learning in students. It must be emphasized to students that learning is never completed in the classroom, once they are in society will face numerous challenges and lifelong learning is must to solve such situations by acquiring proper knowledge. The Cedefop glossary [4] defines core concepts of various forms of learning as follows:

- **Formal learning** consists of learning that occurs within an organized and structured context (formal education, in-company training), and that is designed as learning. It may lead to formal recognition (diploma, certificate).
- **Non-formal learning** consists of learning embedded in planned activities that are not explicitly designated as learning, but which contain an important learning element such as vocational skills acquired at the workplace.
- **Informal learning** is defined as learning resulting from daily life activities related to family, work or leisure. It is often referred to as experiential learning and can be understood also as accidental learning.

Lifelong learning is a key for updating knowledge and skills, in that, people can learn if they are continuously in need of learning [5]. The information available in every sector is changing constantly and rapidly. Lifelong learning provides skills of evaluating and using the information efficiently with their knowledge of information literacy [6].

Information literacy consists of development of skills for finding, utilizing, and evaluating the information [7]. Individuals with this skill are aware of the information required and the source of the solution to any problem, accessing that source, and using and evaluating that information effectively [8]. However, individuals must be confident and willing to use these skills. This is connected to information literacy self-efficacy.

Considering that self-efficacy is a person’s judgment, perception, or belief about what extent they can do something efficiently [9,10].

So to be good lifelong learner following factors should assemble in a person I.e.

- Education
- Motivation to learn
- Information literacy
- Self-efficacy

The citizens of the country play a major role in growth of economy. Modern society needs people with strong education background with skills of lifelong learning to make nation progressive.

The special attention should be given in INDIA about libraries being able to embrace the concept of lifelong learning. This is done by expanding and strengthening of our library system in terms of providing learning opportunities for all sections of the society. The question we ask is that, is it been happening and is our libraries successfully embraced the concept of lifelong learning.

This review emphasizes certain aspects of lifelong learning and role of library in making readers lifelong learners and contribute in wider social progress.

Every person in their life seeks information from information center i.e. library. IFLA and UNESCO in their “Public Library Manifesto” identified 12 key missions for public libraries, which highlight the importance of public libraries role in maintaining and expanding access to information, literacy, education, culture and learning opportunities [11].

These key missions are:

1. Creating and strengthening reading habits in children from an early age
2. Supporting both individual and self-conducted education as well as formal education at all levels
3. Providing opportunities for personal creative development
4. Stimulating the imagination and creativity of children and young people
5. Promoting awareness of cultural heritage, appreciation of the arts, scientific achievements and innovations
6. Providing access to cultural expressions of all performing arts
7. Fostering inter-cultural dialogue and favoring cultural diversity
8. Supporting the oral tradition
9. Ensuring access for citizens to all sorts of community information
10. Providing adequate information services to local enterprises, associations and interest groups
11. Facilitating the development of information and computer literacy skills

12. Supporting and participating in literacy activities and programs for all age groups, and initiating such activities if necessary.

## 2. Education

In this modern society, education is an important factor in every one life in order to sustain their lives in a dignified way. Furthermore, it is widely known that education is a leading concept which facilitates the development of all aspects of society and paves the way to achieve this.

Education is defined as “the process of changing behavior” in its most general and simple terms and there are many other definitions of education in academic literature.

Latagan and Jedlikowska defined education as all social processes that are effective in an individual’s acquisition of society’s standards, beliefs and living styles and all processes in which individuals develop talent, attitude and other behavioral patterns that are valuable for society [12].

In this digitalized world every day new changes and new innovations are brought into the public domain which makes every individual to evolve over period of time. To be able to do the same, education plays a key role from childhood to adult life. The readers of the libraries should not only go through the resources but with the assistance of librarians they should develop skill of lifelong learning to keep up the changes around them. The skill acquired will be important when they face challenges and problems. Using information literacy, lifelong learning skill one will be able to find the solutions to their problems and challenges.

## 3. Lifelong learning

The term "lifelong learning" was used as early as the late twenties. In Europe the concept has more frequently been associated with the linking of learning and work.

Lifelong learning may be broadly defined as learning that is pursued throughout life: learning that is flexible, diverse and available at different times and in different places. Lifelong learning crosses sectors, promoting learning beyond traditional schooling and throughout.

This definition is based on Delors’s [13] four ‘pillars’ of education for the future (see Table 1).

Table 1. Delors’s Four “Pillars” of Education for the Future

|    |                         |   |
|----|-------------------------|---|
| 1. | <b>Learning to KNOW</b> | Mastering learning tools rather than acquisition of structured knowledge. |
| 2. | <b>Learning to DO</b>   | Equipping people for the types of work needed now                         |

|    |                                  |  |
|----|----------------------------------|--|
|    |                                  | and in the future including innovation and adaptation of learning to future work environments.   |
| 3. | <b>Learning to LIVE TOGETHER</b> | Peacefully resolving conflict, discovering other people and their cultures, fostering community capability, individual competence and capacity, economic resilience, and social inclusion. |
| 4. | <b>Learning to BE</b>            | Education contributing to a person's complete development: mind and body, intelligence, sensitivity, aesthetic appreciation and spirituality.  |

Lifelong learning can instill creativity, initiative and responsiveness in people thereby enabling them to show adaptability in post-industrial society through enhancing skills to:

- Manage uncertainty,
- Communicate across and within cultures, families and communities etc
- Negotiate conflicts.

The emphasis should be on learning to learn and the ability to keep learning for a lifetime. The European Commission 2001 [14] found that lifelong learning has “Four broad and mutually supporting objectives: personal fulfilment, active citizenship, social inclusion and employability/adaptability”. Knapper & Cropley [15] differentiates between lifelong education and lifelong learning. According to them, "lifelong education can be thought of as a set of organizational and procedural guidelines for educational practice aimed at fostering learning throughout life".

Longworth & Davies [16] defined lifelong learning as “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 environment." They also emphasized that each individual has a learning potential. Given learning opportunities, discarding learning barriers and providing access to education will encourage and motivate learning throughout life.

#### 4. Characteristics of the lifelong learner

Knapper et al. [15] sum up a lifelong learner as

- Must be aware of its importance and need.
- Be motivated to pursue dreams
- Aware of relationship between learning and real-life ability to acquire skills

It's also important that,

- They must have vision.
- Ready to accept changes.
- Ready to face and overcome challenges.
- Be a problem solver.
- Be information literate.

#### 5. Reasons for developing lifelong learners

Now a day there is a shift in emphasis from pure knowledge acquisition to practical knowledge utilization. Factual-based is giving way for knowledge-based education. The new curriculum requires learners to be able to design and solve problems, to access and assess information critically and effectively, to analyze and question, and to organize and critically evaluate.

It is impossible that learners learn everything with respect to prescribed course and curriculum. Everyday new information is added and with invent of technology available on real time to learners. This new information will be necessary for their future career growth and may have huge contribution in expanding the knowledge environment. This is where lifelong learning skills makes inroads into learning and with skills person can acquire knowledge and contribute for the nation growth.

#### 6. Benefits of lifelong learning

Lifelong learning is about providing second chances to update basic skills and also offering learning opportunities at more advanced levels [17, 18], the top ten benefits of Lifelong learning are as follows:

1. Lifelong learning leads to an enriching life of self-fulfillment.
2. Lifelong learning helps us make new friends and establish valuable relationships.
3. Lifelong learning keeps us involved as active contributors to society.
4. Lifelong learning helps us find meaning in our lives.
5. Lifelong learning helps us adapt to change.
6. Lifelong learning makes the world a better place.
7. Lifelong learning increases our wisdom.
8. Lifelong learning creates a curious, hungry mind.
9. Lifelong learning opens the mind.

10. Lifelong learning helps in full development of natural abilities.

Masclé, D. [19], enumerates five great benefits for LLL as follows:

1. Prospect of a fatter paycheck. Job promotions go to smart people who keep up with the latest information and technology.
2. Enhanced self-esteem when reaching for new horizons, accepting tough challenges and arriving at a whole new level.
3. Freedom given to adult learners. Adult classmates share ideas and teach each other.
4. Shift of schooling to a 24/7 model and long-distance or online methods.
5. Making scholarship a habit.

## 7. Libraries in lifelong learning process

The libraries apart from being the repository of information resources they provide free places and access to documents not only for educational, social and but also for general knowledge purposes.

The recent challenges faced by librarians are;

- Undergoing training to acquire skills of new technology
- Adopting newer technologies in library.
- Serving to learner preferences.
- Handling new information surge

Apart from these challenges is the task of bringing lifelong learning skills in readers who uses most of the time in library to gain knowledge. The variations in the curriculum and its implementation has led to education inequalities among learners. This created an environment where to meet the demands of changing society, the learners need to update knowledge and skills. The lifelong learning as component of curriculum motivates everyone to learn in their life stages getting necessary and supplementary knowledge, skills and competencies. There is a growing consensus that public libraries should revise their traditional role by extending their educational, instructional and consultation services and activities, providing opportunities for personal and social skills development, in order to become key-organizations contributing to the support of both lifelong learning and social cohesion [20].

The changing pattern of library profession and evolution of technologies impacted significantly on the library performance. The challenges faced by education institutions also directly affects libraries and they need to respond with their approaches and management skills. The concept of lifelong learning has to be imparted to students in their early life to become successful citizen of the country.

It's the responsibility of faculty, management and librarians to make this dream come true. The faculties need to encourage, motivate and be a role model to become lifelong learners. The administrators need to give full support to involved members to shape the students. Lastly the librarians should share the responsibility by playing key role in providing skills for lifelong learning i.e. information searching, analyzing, processing and applying etc.

In the knowledge economy, memorization of facts and procedures is not enough for success. Educated workers need a conceptual understanding of complex concepts, and the ability to work with them creatively to generate new ideas, new theories, new products, and new knowledge. They need to be able critically to evaluate what they read, be able to express themselves clearly both verbally and in writing, and understand scientific and mathematical thinking. They need to learn integrated and usable knowledge, rather than the sets of compartmentalized and de-contextualized facts. They need to be able to take responsibility for their own continuing, life-long learning [20].

According to Somi and De Jager [21], the library engages the users in activities intended to make them critical thinkers, problem solvers, independent information seekers and lifelong learners.

In their studies, Demirel and Gorghiu, Gorghiu, Doğan and Gerçeker stated that the lifelong learning approach is a recognition of the world and oneself, creating new things, learning habits and behavioral mannerisms [22], [23].

Ersoy and Yılmaz described the lifelong learning approach as “a road with no ending” and indicated that it has an important role in the development of individuals and therefore society as a whole [24].

Lifelong learning provides;

- Lifelong learning contains all life processes from birth to death.
- Lifelong learning is based on the personal and occupational needs, interests and learning requirement of individuals.
- Lifelong learning contributes to the development of skills and talents of individuals.
- Lifelong learning is an approach which includes comprehensive components.
- Lifelong learning has become a compulsory aspect of individuals' lives as a result of changing world conditions and developing technology.
- Lifelong learning provides equal opportunities to individuals and removes restrictions such as learning, age, socio-economic status and educational level.

Hürsen examined lifelong learning from the perspective of six competencies [25] (see Table 2).

Table 2. Six Competencies

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | <b>Self-management competencies</b>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ability to make own decisions for occupational development;</li> <li>➤ Realize the inadequate aspects in the process of individual development;</li> <li>➤ Make self-evaluation in the learning process;</li> <li>➤ Make collaborative research;</li> <li>➤ Motivate oneself for occupational development and new learning;</li> <li>➤ Take individual responsibilities in team work;</li> <li>➤ Actively participate in activities;</li> <li>➤ Find creative solutions for problems which might occur in occupational life;</li> <li>➤ Adjust to new ideas;</li> <li>➤ Manage projects which aim to achieve occupational development;</li> <li>➤ Study continuously to learn a new subject.</li> </ul> |
| 2 | <b>Learning to learn competencies</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to identify available opportunities for occupational development and know necessary learning activities;</li> <li>• Ask questions in the learning process without hesitation;</li> <li>• Select the important components and documents when learning a new subject;</li> <li>• Realize the problems which might occur in the learning process;</li> <li>• Use language effectively in the learning process;</li> <li>• Develop empathy.</li> </ul>  |
| 3 | <b>Initiative and entrepreneurship competencies</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Ability to make decisions about any subject;</li> <li>❖ Adjust to information change in occupational life;</li> <li>❖ Convert ideas for occupational development into action;</li> <li>❖ Plan the activities which can meet the information needs in occupational life;</li> <li>❖ Direct oneself to reach determined targets and select the appropriate learning environment;</li> <li>❖ Use knowledge for the determined targets; produce creative solution suggestions for problems.</li> </ul>  |
| 4 | <b>Information acquisition competency</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ability to communicate in an effective way in the process of acquiring information;</li> <li>▪ Express ideas about any subject without hesitation;</li> <li>▪ Provide information transfer via e-mail;</li> <li>▪ Use the methods of accessing information on the internet;</li> </ul>  |

|   |                                    |   |
|---|------------------------------------|---|
|   |                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use mobile devices to access new information;</li> <li>▪ Use social networks in the process of acquiring information.</li> </ul>   |
| 5 | <b>Digital competencies</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ability to use a computer for storing information;</li> <li>○ Use the internet and other communication tools.</li> </ul>   |
| 6 | <b>Making decisions competency</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Ability to evaluate to what degree he or she has reached their determined targets;</li> <li>✓ Resolve all problems that prevent occupational career development;</li> <li>✓ Reevaluate the possible risks in the process of occupational development;</li> <li>✓ Make evaluations about time when learning a new subject.</li> </ul> |

According to Knapper and Cropley, individuals who have lifelong learning skills; [26]

- Plan for their own learning.
- Evaluate for their own learning.
- Are active.
- Are open to learn in both formal and informal environments.
- Integrate the knowledge to different subject fields in appropriate situations.
- Use different learning strategies for problems or different situations.

Librarians in supporting lifelong learning should focus on following points:

- Provide comfort environment for reading.
- Be supportive to readers.
- Be a problem solver.
- Be a good communicator.

Librarians can teach followings skills to readers to be a lifelong learner:

- How to access the information?
- How to organize the information?
- How to retrieve the information when needed?
- How to apply the information?
- How to carry out cross-referencing to access information and cite bibliographies for proper referencing.

Summary of few lifelong learning benefits are outlined in Table 3.

Table 3. Few lifelong learning benefits

|  |
|--|
| • <b>Ability to cope with fast changing world</b>          |
| • <b>Provides confidence</b>                               |
| • <b>Provides self fulfilment</b>                          |
| • <b>Provides sustainable life</b>                         |
| • <b>Better opportunities in job</b>                       |
| • <b>Develops interpersonal skills</b>                     |
| • <b>Actively contribute to society</b>                    |
| • <b>Improves health and well being</b>                    |
| • <b>Empowers individuals</b>                              |
| • <b>Improves communication</b>                            |
| • <b>Improves self-economy and overall country economy</b> |
| • <b>Provides skill to teach others</b>                    |

## 7. Conclusion

The education is prime requirement of every person to lead a respectful life. The global changing information developments challenges each of us to develop skills of lifelong learning. The librarians should play a vital role in terms of,

- Providing skills of new technologies,
- Adding more services,
- Providing information literacy programs,
- Motivating readers,
- Conducting activities to develop skills,
- Bringing key organizations together to serve better,
- Conducting community literacy programs,
- Developing the information literacy competencies among readers,
- Providing skills of analyzing and use of information (Context based),
- Make them problem solver and decision maker,
- Contributing innovations in research,
- Be a part of curriculum committee in education institute.

Over all bring maturity in people to be a good citizen. This directly contributes to societal and community development leading to economic growth of country. Finally, lifelong learner needed for understanding the concepts and ability to work with new knowledge, ideas and contributing to knowledge pool.

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