

Role of Adult Education in Viksit Bharat @2047: An Analytical Study

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Abstract

The vision of Viksit Bharat @2047 symbolises aspirations of India to become a developed, innovative, and globally competitive nation by the centenary of its independence. To achieve this ambitious objective, it requires not only economic growth and technological advancement but also educational empowerment of every citizen. Adult education occupies a significant place in this transformation as millions of adults in India continue to encounter barriers arising from illiteracy, digital exclusion, inadequate vocational skills, and limited awareness of their constitutional rights and civic responsibilities. Adult education extends beyond the traditional understanding of literacy by developing a deeper understanding of lifelong learning, skill development, financial literacy, digital competence, health awareness and social empowerment. It allows individuals to improve their livelihoods, effectively participate in democratic governance, adopt technological innovations, and contribute to sustainable development. The paper studies the depth of initiatives undertaken by the Government of India, which include National Education Policy 2020 and the New India Literacy Programme, to strengthen adult learning systems. Adding further, it identifies the pivotal challenges that affect adult education, like inadequate infrastructure, socio-economic disparities, gender inequalities, digital divides, and limited public awareness. The study concludes by stating that adult education is not just a welfare programme but a strategic investment in nation-building. Adult education can be strengthened through innovative policies, participation of communities, digital advancements and public-private partnerships by 2047.

Keywords: Adult Education, Human Capital, Digital Literacy, Inclusive Development, Skill Development, National Education Policy 2020, Sustainable Development, Social Empowerment.

Introduction

India @2047, is the country's goal to develop into a fully modern nation marks out one of the most aspiring development projects since independence. We see in the idea of Viksit Bharat @2047 as a picture of a India which is an economic power, socially inclusive is at the forefront of technology is a global leader. While economic reform, industrial growth, tech innovation and development of infrastructure are key to this vision, what is also required for the achievement of these is the input of a large and skilled population. In the picture of national rebirth, education comes out as the base element.

Traditionally educational policies have been in focus for inclusion of school going children and higher education institutions. In India we witness great number of adults either did not have access to formal education at all or left school early due to poverty , gender based discrimination, geographical isolation, social exclusion, or economic responsibilities. Also, in many cases, multiple adults still have huge difficulty in getting access to employment, digital services, financial institutions, health care facilities, and government welfare schemes. In turn, this affects not only the individuals' well being but also national productivity and overall growth.

Education for adults is a transition link that empowers these citizens to overcome educational disadvantage and to be actively involved in the developmental process of the country. Modern adult learning goes beyond the acquisition of

basic literacy and numeracy. It covers vocational education, digital literacy, financial awareness, entrepreneurial skills, environmental education, health awareness, constitutional values, and opportunities for lifelong learning that boosts overall quality of life.

The role of adult education has grown more important than ever in the twenty-first century with the development of knowledge in the economy and new technologies. Citizens' relationships with the state and with the market have been revolutionised with digital governance, online banking, telemedicine, e-commerce, artificial intelligence, and digital public infrastructure. Those who don't have the required digital skills are cut out of these opportunities.

India's aspiration to become a developed nation by the year 2047 marks one of the most ambitious developmental goals in its post-independence history. The concept of Viksit Bharat @2047 envisions an India which includes economic prosperity, social inclusivity, technological advancements, environmental sustainability, and global influence.

Therefore, the success of Viksit Bharat @2047 depends not only on educating future generations but equally on empowering and educating the present adult population

Concept of Adult Education

Adult education refers to organised educational processes through which adults acquire knowledge, improve professional competencies, develop life skills, and enhance their personal and social capabilities throughout their lives. Other than formal education which generally follows curriculum within schools and universities, adult education is flexible and responsive to the needs of a person. It recognises and incorporates the fact that learning is a lifelong process and education should continue beyond adolescence or school.

The scope of adult education has evolved considerably over time. Initially, the education was confined to literary campaigns, contemporary adult education includes multiple dimensions, such as continuing education, digital training, digital literacy, financial inclusion, entrepreneurship, health, education, legal awareness, civic participation, and vocational training. These altogether contribute towards the development and productivity of a nation.

International organisations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization have considerably emphasised on lifelong learning as the foundation of sustainable development, social cohesion and democratic participation. Likewise, the educational policies of India increasingly recognise adult education as a crucial component of national development.

Viksit Bharat @2047: Vision and Objectives

The vision of Viksit Bharat @2047 is to transform our nation into developed country by the completion of centenary of Independence. This vision includes and encompasses in itself economic prosperity, technological leadership, social justice, environmental sustainability, efficient governance, innovation-driven growth, and enhanced quality of life for all citizens. Rather than measurement of development solely through gross domestic product, Viksit Bharat has adopted a multi dimensional policy, the prioritises, inclusive growth, human development, and sustainable progress.

A developed nation like India requires advanced infrastructure, at the same time, a skilled, healthy, knowledgeable, and literate population capable to contribute effectively to the development of nation. Therefore, human capital comprises the foundation upon which

economic competitiveness, innovation, democratic governance, and social harmony depend.

Adult education aligns directly with these objectives by strengthening workforce skills, promoting entrepreneurship, reducing unemployment, increasing digital participation, enhancing financial inclusion, improving health awareness, encouraging environmental responsibility, and fostering constitutional values. Consequently, investment in adult education is simultaneously an investment in economic growth, social cohesion, and national resilience.

Adult Education as a Foundation for Human Capital Development

Widely regarded as one of the most valuable assets, human capital refers to knowledge, skills, health, and competency possessed by a person that enhances their productivity and contribute to economic and social progress of a nation. Nations with high levels of development have consistently invested heavily in the education and development of skills of their citizens. For example, India seeks to become a developed nation by 2047 and thus is strengthening human capital. Adult education place a pivotal role by enabling people who have previously excluded from formal education to acquire knowledge and competency throughout their life.

Additionally, problem-solving, abilities, communication skills and critical thinking are cultivated by adult education. Such qualities enable citizens to participate in innovation driven economy grow. As India is aspiring to become a global manufacturing house and an important leader in Digital technology, there is heavy investment in adult education and this significantly strengthen the countries based for human resource.

Adult Education and Economic Empowerment

Economic empowerment exists at the soul of the Viksit Bharat @2047 vision. Financially independent nations who are capable of producing sustainable livelihoods and contribution to economic growth altogether contribute to a developed nation. Adult education facilitates this goal by providing access to vocational training, entrepreneurial skills, financial literacy, and opportunities for continuous skill enhancement.

Numerous adults in India have practical experience but lack formal certification. Training in various diverse fields including digital services, handicrafts, tourism, healthcare, and small scale manufacturing enhances employability of individuals and fosters entrepreneurship opportunities.

India's economic development and transformation has paved way for entrepreneurship as an important driver.

Adult education provides aspiring entrepreneurs with knowledge of business planning, financial management, marketing, taxation and digital commerce. This understanding enhances the survival and growth of micro, small, and medium enterprises, which collectively contribute significantly to employment generation and Gross Domestic Product.

Financial literacy is another essential component of adult education. Understand banking services, insurance, pensions, investments, digital payments, and credit management are essential for an individual to know about for better equipment to make informed financial decisions. Financially literate citizens are more likely to utilise formal financial institutions, access government welfare schemes through direct benefit transfers, and protect themselves from fraud. As a result, adult education is promoting financial inclusion while supporting inclusive economic development.

Adult Education and Digital Literacy

Witnessing in India, an unmatched digital transformation through initiatives such as Digital India, online public services, digital banking, electronic governance, telemedicine, online education, and digital commerce is a boom for the nation. While these technological advancements create enormous opportunities, they are widened if inequalities persist as citizens lack the necessary digital skills. Henceforth, digital literacy has become one of the most crucial dimensions of adult education for the perspective of Viksit Bharat.

The extend of digital literacy is beyond the operational ability of smartphones or computers. It covers accessing online information, using digital payment platforms, participating in virtual learning, shielding personal data, identifying misinformation, and engaging responsibly in digital spaces. Adults engaged with these competencies are able to benefit from government services, employment opportunities, financial inclusion, and educational resources accessible through digital platforms.

In rural India, digital literacy strengthens farmers to get access to real-time weather forecasts, market prices, agricultural advisories, crop insurance information, and modern farming techniques. Utilisation of social media and e-commerce platforms is used by small entrepreneurs to expand their businesses beyond local markets. Women, senior citizens, and marginalised communities are being benefitted extensively from digital education by gaining accessibility to online banking, telemedicine, digital identity services, and welfare programmes by government.

Furthermore, digital literacy contributes to building a technologically competent workforce which is capable of participating in sectors constantly emerging like artificial intelligence, data analytics, robotics, fintech, and digital entrepreneurship. Consequently, adult education becomes a vital instrument to ensure that technological progress translates into inclusive national development.

Adult Education and Women's Empowerment

Women's empowerment represents one of the most pivotal prerequisites for achieving inclusive and sustainable development. Despite considerable progress in female education over recent decades, there is continuation by many adult women to experience educational disadvantages due to poverty, early marriage, domestic responsibilities, and social discrimination. Adult education provides these women with opportunities to overcome historical barriers, orthodox environment and participate fully in economic, political, and social life.

Education improvises women's self-confidence, decision-making abilities, financial independence, and awareness of their legal rights. Literate women are better able to access healthcare services, understand nutritional requirements, participate in local governance, and support the education of their children as compared to illiterate. Multiple studies have shown that educating women incorporates intergenerational benefits by improving family health, educational attainment, and household income.

Supporting women entrepreneurs by providing training in financial management, digital marketing, bookkeeping, and enterprise development help them to establish a sustainable livelihood. Members of self-help groups benefit

significantly from financial literacy and vocational education, enabling them to contribute to rural development meaningfully.

In addition, educated women actively engage in democratic institutions like Panchayati Raj Institutions, urban local bodies, community organisations, and civil society initiatives. Their increased participation strengthens and succeeds inclusive governance and promotes establishment of gender-sensitive policymaking. Thus, empowering women through adult education contributes directly to the broader objectives of social justice envisioned under Viksit Bharat @2047.

Adult Education and Democratic Participation

A vibrant democracy consists of informed, aware, and responsible citizens. Adult education strengthens democratic governance as there is enhancement of citizens' understanding of constitutional values, fundamental rights, fundamental duties, electoral processes, and public institutions. Citizens acquiring civic knowledge are more likely to engage responsibly in elections, public consultations, local governance, and community development initiatives as compared to vice versa.

Furthermore, civic education allows citizens to have access to governmental welfare schemes, demand of accountability from public institutions, and participation in policy implementation. Community awareness programmes related to sanitation, environmental conservation, disaster preparedness, public health, and legal literacy also strengthen participatory governance.

A developed India requires not merely economic prosperity but also active citizenship characterised by ethical responsibility, informed participation, and social cooperation. Adult education nurtures these democratic values and thus, reinforces the institutional foundations of Viksit Bharat @2047.

Adult Education and Social Inclusion

India's magnificent cultural diversity is supported by substantial socio-economic disparities. Marginalised communities, including Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, minorities, migrant workers, persons with disabilities, and economically weaker sections, often experience limited access to educational opportunities. An instrument of social justice by reducing educational inequalities and promoting inclusive development is subsequently served by adult education.

Educational programmes specifically designed for disadvantaged groups improve literacy, vocational skills, legal awareness, and access to public services as benefits to common people. These interventions allow marginalised people to participate more effectively in economic activities and democratic institutions. Adult education also combats social exclusion by enabling fostering tolerance, intercultural understanding and gender equality.

This means, community-based adult education programmes empowers social cohesion by uplifting collective problem-solving, local leadership, and participatory development. Citizens who learn together often collaborate more effectively in addressing issues related to sanitation, environmental conservation, public health, disaster management, and local governance.

Furthermore, adult education contributes considerably to building an equitable society where every citizen has the opportunity to realise their full potential regardless of socio-economic background. Such inclusion forms the cornerstone of the Viksit Bharat @2047 vision.

Government Initiatives and Policy Framework for Adult Education

Recognising the importance of adult education in national development, Indian Government has introduced various programmes to promote literacy, lifelong learning, skill development, and digital empowerment. Such initiatives aim to safeguard adults who were deprived of formal education are provided with opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills necessary for personal growth and national progress

One of the earliest and most major initiatives was the National Literacy Mission (NLM), launched in 1988 with the objective of eradicating adult illiteracy among individuals in the age group of 15–35 years. The mission embraced a participatory approach by involving local communities, voluntary organisations, educational institutions, and state governments. It successfully increased literacy rates in several districts and generated public awareness regarding the importance of adult education.

Building upon the achievements of the National Literacy Mission, the Government introduced the Saakshar Bharat Programme in 2009 with special emphasis on upgrading female literacy in rural areas. The programme aims to reduce gender disparities by empowering women through functional literacy, vocational skills, and continuing education. Apart from improving literacy, the programme urged women's participation in community development and local governance.

An important policy milestone was the introduction and implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which redefined adult education within the broader framework of lifelong learning perspective. The policy includes the concepts that education should not be confined to childhood but should continue throughout an individual's life. NEP 2020 identifies five key components of adult education: foundational literacy and numeracy, critical life skills, vocational skills development, basic education, and continuing education. It recommends extensive use of digital technologies, libraries, community learning centres, volunteer participation, and flexible learning methods to expand educational opportunities for adults.

In alignment with the objectives of NEP 2020, the Government of India launched the New India Literacy Programme (NILP) for the time period 2022–2027. The programme aims towards adults aged fifteen years and above who have missed formal schooling. It elevates foundational literacy, numeracy, financial literacy, digital literacy, legal awareness, environmental education, and continuing education through both offline and online modes. The programme also urges volunteerism, recognising that community participation is a necessity for achieving universal literacy.

Government initiatives promoting digital inclusion, such as Digital India, Skill India Mission, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), Jan Dhan Yojana, and Digital Financial Inclusion Programmes, complement adult education by equipping citizens with skills required in a swiftly evolving economy. These initiatives jointly strengthen India's human capital and contribute significantly towards achieving the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047

Challenges in Promoting Adult Education

Apart from significant policy initiatives, adult education in India continues to face multiple challenges that create obstacles in its effectiveness and outreach. One of the initial challenges is the persistence of socio-economic inequalities. Numerous adults belonging to economically weaker sections prioritise earning livelihoods over educational activities because of financial struggles. Daily wage earners often find it difficult to attend regular learning programmes due to time limitations and employment responsibilities.

Gender inequality remains another major hindrance. In various parts of the country, women continue to shoulder disproportionate household responsibilities, opportunities to participate in educational programmes are limited. Child marriage, cultural norms, and mobility restrictions also reduce female participation further.

The digital divide also poses a serious challenge. Although India has made remarkable progress in digital infrastructure, disparities in internet connectivity, smartphone ownership, electricity availability, and digital skills persist between urban and rural regions. Adults lacking access to digital devices or internet services are unable to benefit fully from online educational resources.

Inadequate infrastructure, shortage of trained instructors, limited funding, and insufficient community learning centres further affect programme quality. Adult education often receives lower policy priority as compared to school and higher education, which results in limited institutional support and resource allocation.

Another significant challenge is social attitudes towards adult learning. Many adults perceive education as an activity meant exclusively for children and young students. Feelings of embarrassment, lack of motivation, and fear of failure discourage participation, particularly among elderly learners making it worse for adult education to pave its way. Overcoming these psychological barriers requires sustained awareness campaigns and supportive community environments.

Also, linguistic diversity, geographical remoteness, migration, and varying educational needs across different regions make it difficult to implement uniform adult education programmes. Tailoring educational content to local languages, occupations, and socio-cultural contexts remains an important policy challenge

Recommendations for Strengthening Adult Education

Achieving the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047 necessitates, comprehensive reforms aimed towards enhancing the accessibility, quality and relevance of adult education. There is increased public investment in developing adult learning infrastructure, including community, learning centres, digital libraries and robust technology enabled classrooms. These facilities should be equitably, distributed and learner should be made accessible with these equipments to ensure inclusive educational opportunities for all.

Digital technologies should be integrated extensively into adult education. Mobile applications, online learning platforms, television programmes, radio broadcasts, and community internet centres can significantly expand educational opportunities for adults who cannot attend regular classroom sessions. Inclusivity can be insured by checking the availability of educational content in regional languages.

Vocational education should be aligned with local employment opportunities and emerging economic sectors. Collaboration between educational institutions, industries, non-governmental organisations, and local governments can improve the relevance of training programmes while enhancing employment outcomes.

Women's education should be devoted a special interest by providing them with flexible learning, schedules, facilities of child, care, safe, learning, environments, and support. Empowerment of women through education generates various effects that not only benefits families, but also communities and future generations.

Also major contributions towards expansion of adult education facilities, particularly in rural and economically disadvantage areas can be initiated through corporate social responsibilities.

Continuous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should also be established to assess programme effectiveness, learner outcomes, and implementation challenges. Government should refine adult education strategies and maximise their development impact by implementation of evidence based policy making.

Conclusion

The vision of Viksit Bharat @2047 represents India's commitment to achieving comprehensive national development characterised by economic prosperity, social justice, technological innovation, environmental sustainability, and democratic participation. As infrastructure development, technological progress and industrial expansion remain important components of this vision. The long-term success fundamentally depends upon the capabilities of Indian citizens. Therefore, one of the most powerful instruments for transformation of India's demographic potential into a productive and inclusive human resources is adult education.

Adult education extends far beyond the objective of eliminating illiteracy. It encompasses lifelong learning, vocational training, digital literacy, financial inclusion, health awareness, environmental consciousness, constitutional values, and civic responsibility. The multiple dimensions collectively enhance individual capabilities while strengthening national competitiveness and social cohesion. Literate adults contribute effectively innovations and economic growth rapidly, and they participate responsibly and make informed decisions regarding health, finance, and environmental issues.

Government initiatives such as the National Literacy Mission, Saakshar Bharat, the National Education Policy 2020, the New India Literacy Programme, Digital India, and Skill India demonstrate India's commitment to expanding educational opportunities beyond formal schooling. Nevertheless, challenges related to socio-economic disparities, gender inequality, digital exclusion, inadequate infrastructure, and limited public awareness continue to impede the universalisation of adult education.

Addressing these challenges requires sustained political commitment, increased public investment, technological innovation, community participation, and effective collaboration among governments, educational institutions, civil society organisations, and the private sector. Adult education should be recognised not as a remedial welfare measure but as a strategic national investment capable of accelerating economic development, strengthening democracy, reducing inequalities, and promoting sustainable development.

In conclusion, the road towards a developed nation by 2047 is not solely dependent upon educating future generations, it must equally include and empower the existing adult population, including women with knowledge, values, skills, and learning opportunities that last lifetime. An educated adult population is indispensable for building an inclusive, resilient, innovative, and globally competitive India. Therefore, adult education will remain one of the strongest pillars supporting the realisation of the Viksit Bharat @2047 vision.

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