

Role of universities in life long learning for elderly people

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Need for lifelong education programmes for elderly:

Lifelong education is a key to individual and social development in the 21st century. India has set before itself the goal of "Education for AH" by 2010. Education is envisaged as an instrument of social transformation and is expected to play an important role in social development. In this context, education should be viewed as a lifelong process. It begins in early childhood and continues throughout life Chakraborti (2004).

Lifelong education and learning has generated considerable interest amongst educationists across nations. The report to the International Commission on the Development of Education (1972) has recommended lifelong education as a master concept for educational policies in the years to come for both developed and developing countries. In 1996, UNESCO report of International Commission on Education for 21st century reiterated that the concept of learning throughout life emerges as one of the keys to the 21st century.

Many institutions and development agencies are engaged in providing lifelong education to people of various age groups, say children, youth, adults and elder lies. The approaches adopted to impart the lifelong education by these institutions vary in nature. Also the target groups as well as programmes are different from organizations to organizations. Some impart lifelong education through formal approaches and some make efforts to reach out the communities in order

provide education to needed population. They are all analogous in their concerns to reach the unreached.

As lifelong education suggests learning opportunities throughout life, there is a great significance of lifelong learning for elderly in the present context. There are many responsible factors for this and they are as follows :

Increased life expectancy:

Advancements in the medical science have resulted in the increased life expectancy of an average person, thus now more and more people live longer into old age. Thus, providing scope for people to avail post retirement, leisure time actively and fruitfully.

Changing family systems:

Due to the revolutionary changes in the societies related to technology, social educational, the family composition in India are shifting from joint to nuclear system, where in only the parents and unmarried children stay together. This creates a strong need for the elderly population of the country to either live independently or stay at old homes. Family bonds are becoming weak, thus there is a great necessity to have improved quality of life. Lifelong education has a scope to impart learning opportunities to older people.

Economic changes:

There are drastic economic changes as a result of