

Andragogy in the Context of Islamic Outlook

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Abstract

The term "Andragogy" was more publicized by Malcolm Shepherd Knowles (1913-1997) which is viewed as equivalent to connote the process of Adult Learning. In fact, learning as such is a continuous process but much owing to various socio-economic factors or reasons it stands chances of getting disrupted and under such given conditions it is highly improbable to easily revive the same. However by the turn of recent centuries there have been serious efforts leveled to compensate for the loss which is noteworthy. Andragogy covers all aspects of learning process. Stretching back to the Greek roots it is self evident that one has to look upon the Adult learning as man-leading and should be viewed not as a contrast but revival of the early stage viz. Pedagogy or Child Learning. This term Andragogy was first used in 1833 by Alexander Kapp by making certain assumptions and also freely developing flexible principles thereof leaving enough scope and freedom for improvisation.

More than a dozen centuries have folded since the existence of Islam. It has, right from its advent, endured to take on an exclusive and trustworthy view for either developing new theories or evolving additional aspects from the extant shades. Holy Quran is a divine book that covers all aspects of life which humanity is curious to know. This paper attempts to bring forth Islamic philosophical outlook with special reference to Adult Learning as a necessity for guiding the present and forthcoming generations.

Keywords: Adult Learning; Pedagogy; Assumptions; Principles

Abbreviations: NLM: The National Literacy Mission; IIALE: International Institute of Adult and Lifelong Education; NVEQF: National Vocational Education Qualification; TCS: Tata Consultancy Services.

Historical Significance of Andragogy

The very concept of Andragogy, in fact is being used from time immemorial but not all paid much attention to it.

Therefore, its significance and the etymological sense remained consigned to posterity. The need of Adult education was realized with the cultural progress of the society but sufficient efforts were not directed. Adult education not only takes place through formal educational methodology used commonly by teachers but also to a great extent by pursuing the art of self-reflection. One needs to be guided by life experiences from all phases, comprising mainly of sufferings which further more require an impartial analysis. Therefore getting tutored by learned and from the dictates of Nature, one can expect fruitful results. Needless to remark here that Andragogy consists of doing and learning through practice.

Andragogy also referred to as Adult Education was first coined by a German High School Teacher Alexander Kapp (1833) in his book 'Platon's Erziehungslehre', means Plato's Educational Ideas. According to Kapp, educating the character is of utmost importance in human life and can be followed by vocational education which is necessary to earn bread and butter. After the contribution of Kapp the term did not draw much attention and it remained undeveloped for many years and almost went into oblivion. However, it is interesting to find that the concept was used without any name [1].

Adult Education as 'a practice in which adults engage in a systematic and sustained self-educating activities in order to gain new forms of knowledge, skills, attitudes or values. After first World-War it was Rosenstock-Hussey who in 1925 again publicized the term owing to which the lost glory was recovered with fullest enthusiasm for the Germans in particular. It was suggested that rectifying the past mistakes would bridge up the gulf between past and present. As a result it can pave the way for future. According to him, 'Theory becomes the practical deed in Andragogy'. So now Adult education becomes a necessity for living and learning to live a better life [2].

The concept was further propagated in USA by Linderman in 1926 from Germany. He made it clear that unless a pragmatic approach through dialectical method is taken, all the idealistic methods proposed in theory cannot be translated into practice. Therefore much impetus was laid down on a free exchange of thoughts which could lead to healthy discussion and constructive suggestions to Adult Learning Process. With the turn of century, somehow the expected response became lukewarm although Anderson and Kindeman's joint effort in 1927 was genuinely praiseworthy. However, it was Simpson (1964) who in Great Britain popularized the term by proposing all its necessary shades as of utmost importance and need of the hour. This was further carried

by many but to refer a few it would be Shepherd Knowles in 1968 for clarifying the difference between Andragogy and Pedagogy on large scale. The other names worth mentioning are Dusan Savicenic, Furter, Ingalls, Henschke, Eskridge etc. In chronological order [3].

Present Scenario in India

Twenty first century has witnessed from the beginning itself the growing popularity of Andragogy as well as Pedagogy. The Indian scene is no different. Infact the movement gained considerable pace in the second half of twentieth century mainly because of the political freedom that the Nation gained. Therefore, the Educators and Social Scientists had the liberty to replace the British ideas partially. British framing of the policies had definitely been in the interest of the total society but one of the major problems that India has been facing is uncontrolled population growth. The graph indicates an upwardly rising curve. In addition there are many socio-economic problems like Religion, Caste, Regionalism, Language and so on. The unequal distributions of the funds available and utility of natural resources have been posing major hurdles.

In addition to this a large section of the population is being deviated from Education. As a matter of fact the school drop- outs percentage is alarming for all. It is in this context that Andragogy is a fundamental requisition in the interest of the Nation and the future. The country is very large and disproportionately growing. Hardly 20% of the mass has enough resources to manage to live with dignity. One of the handicaps for the rest is lack of even primary education. Therefore, the concept of Andragogy is most welcome and revered. This could be a fact for many other countries too. The social inequality had been always a stumbling block in the way of progress.

In India, the Government has made considerable efforts in the area of Adult Education, including incorporating ambitious targets in the Five Year Plans. But the actual progress falls short of the perceived results. The greatest lacuna in this regard is witnessed in implementation of the policies made by the Government. There are various organizations, Government as well as privately owned working for Adult Education in India.

1. NLM: The National Literacy Mission, launched in 1988, by the Government of India for the Adult Education. It was awarded the UNESCO Noma Literacy Prize in 1999. To further bolster 'Adult Education and Skill Development', the Government has introduced two new schemes namely Saakshar Bharat and Scheme for

Support to Voluntary Agencies for Adult Education Programme, which envisages 70 million adults literacy.

2. **The Indian Adult Education Association:** It was established in 1939, probably the oldest organization dedicated to Andragogy in India. The Association works by organizing conferences and training programmes for Adult Educators in the country, as well as functionaries in the Government, enrolls high-profile Government officials, educators and social workers. The Association also set up an institute called The International Institute of Adult and Lifelong Education (IIALE) in 2002.
3. **Public - Private Partnership:** The PPP model is emerging as an important channel in development, especially through the National Vocational Education Qualification Framework (NVEQF). There are partnerships of Public sector with Private sector, for eg: Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), which has supported the campaign for literacy with its Computer based Functional Literacy Programme.
4. **ILP:** Indian Literacy Project formed in 1990 in USA, has supported nearly 100 projects since its inception, benefitting thousands of children, youth and adults.
5. **Night Schools:** They provide an opportunity for youth and adults to still pursue their education post work hours. Masoom is an NGO that works with night schools in Mumbai [4].

Islamic Context

Many a time under the pretext of rational analysis most of the existing religions are ridiculed for their principles. Usually it is said that these religions have been supporting merely the theoretically idealized principles which easily fizzle out when put to the test of validity. Islam had also to face such criticism at the hands of either persons with atheistic attitude or politically motivated for reasons best known to them. Quran needless to say is a sacred text of Islam considered by Muslims to contain revelations of God to Prophet Muhammad (saw). It is also believed by the Muslims to be the infallible word of God dictated to Prophet Muhammad (saw) through the medium of angel Gabriel. It has 114 chapters and is accepted as the foundation of Islamic Law, Religion, Culture and Politics. With half a dozen beliefs, generally known as Iman, they represent the pillars of Islam and a guide to daily life. One has to get acquainted and devotedly follow these principles in day to day life. There are pious and worthy traditions to inspire every individual who would genuinely stand as a follower of these traditions – Sunnah – so that a meaningful life can be lead.

Islam and Andragogy

The essence of Muslim education is the divine revelation in the Quran. Prophet Muhammad (saw) started teaching the word of Allah to the adults. He emphasized on the concepts of life-long learning i.e. Adult learning and making it easily available to all. As soon as Mosque became the place of worship, it also became the first school in Islam. In the early days, of the spread of Islam, the main purpose of Education was to spread religion by enabling people to read the Quran. The Quran urges its believers to cultivate learning and reasoning through constant exhortation to know, to see, observe, ponder and deduce. Prophet Muhammad (saw) is considered the first teacher in Islam.

Study circles of learners were set up within the mosque known as 'Halqaqas' for imparting the knowledge of the Book. Mosques were also used as political centers as well as courts of justice.

With the progress of Islamic civilization, there was a sudden demand for large number of literate Arabs to act as clerks, teachers and writers. Fifth century Islam saw the rise of a new institution for Adult Education known as Al- Madarasa. Students received free tuition and also free lodging and food. The curriculum consisted of religious studies, jurisprudence and Arabic studies. The development of cultural centres, attracted scientists and writers and served to spread knowledge and culture. Hospitals for teaching medicine were built in many places in the Islamic Empire such as Baghdad, Aleppo, Hainat and Damascus, where people could receive medical attention.

The development of Muslim education continued to be important in the Arab world. Scholars were invited with full stipends to study and further the cause of knowledge. Education became fully institutionalized and public education was given in the mosque centre and Kuttabs. The educators of Islam asserted that successful learning depends on the readiness of the learners, on their interest and on their motivation to learn. Islam promotes Andragogy, in fact it suggests developing the concept of Pedagogy through Andragogy first. Gaining knowledge from 'Cradle to Grave' forms the basis of a learner in Islam [5].

Conclusion

Adult learning was originally aimed at extension and subsequently making provisions for learning to those adults who have lost opportunity in childhood. Presently, it seems more than the formal education providing

training to technical courses is of more importance. Therefore, skill development would be a better choice or vocational development a necessity. In India care has been taken to introduce such courses which would not only give basic literacy but also an opportunity to be self-reliant and make an earning. After Independence, the First Five Year Plan, which was launched in 1951, indicated the Government's concern for Adult Education. Generally in every country in modern times, the problem had been about the execution of the plans. In fact Night Schools have been organized in the slum areas in town and metropolitan cities. Despite rigorous campaigns and Government funding rural areas continue with the same problems, irrespective of the caste and creed. Many programmers have been launched to make the adults realize their aim in life and to bring in awareness in total so that upcoming generations do not suffer only for the want of primary education. The Conclusion is-

1. The spread of Islam began with Andragogy.
2. Islam promotes Andragogy.
3. Imparting the knowledge is important, but it should be followed by rigorous implementation and practice of that knowledge.
4. The learning of technical skills and the skills essential for earning a living fall secondary to skills and attitude required for living a life and character building, which are primary.
5. Almost every religion focuses on making a man learn the primary essentialities for living a life, that will make him more human and transform the world into a better dwelling place.

6. We as citizens of this world concentrate more on the learning of the child so as to have a learned future, but at the same time we need to concentrate on the learning aspect of the Adult/Man so as to have a learned and peaceful present.

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