

## **A STUDY ON IDENTIFICATION OF LONG-STANDING LEARNING NEEDS OF RURAL WOMEN**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Lifelong learning is the continuous building of skills and knowledge throughout the life of an individual. This paper discuss about the lifelong learning needs of rural women. The data was collected from the rural women of Ankodia village of the Patna district. The major objective of the study was to identify the lifelong learning needs of this village. Questionnaire was used as tool for the collection of the data. The major findings of the study revealed that women from Ankodia village want to learn to operate new technology to upgrade themselves. They were ready to attend the related courses, if lifelong learning centre be started in their village. Little more than half (53%) of the respondents reported that to remain updated about recent development in relation to household responsibilities and own makeover were the motivational factors for learning. The finding revealed that they want to learn not only for performing their household activities but also for their own self- development the need for lifelong learning centre was realized by women residing in rural areas.

**Key Words:** Lifelong learning, Rural Women, Needs of Women.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Learning should never end in fact it should be a lifelong activity for a very simple reason that it engages the mind in healthy pursuits, like learning new skills, being part of a team, or perhaps an interaction with a tutor or an expert who could guide an individual in the right direction. Women, especially, need to find a way forward, to empower themselves if they wish to change, and develop their own lives and those around them.

Instead of submerging themselves in unnecessary addictive patterns and sometimes self-defeating attitudes, when faced with life's problems, lifelong learning can steer them away from such self-deprecating behavior. It can put a woman or any person on a constructive path and can be

one of the sources of emancipation and empowerment. Freedom from ignorance and other vices are the prime advantages of lifelong learning.

Lifelong learning is the continuous building of skills and knowledge throughout the life of an individual. It occurs through experiences encountered in the course of lifetime. These experiences could be formal or informal. Lifelong learning also known as LLL, is the “lifelong, voluntary and self-motivated” pursuit of knowledge for either personal or professional reasons. As such, it not only enhances social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development, but also competitiveness and employability. (Dewan K, 2012)

According to Harper Collins Dictionary: Lifelong learning is the provision or use of both formal and informal learning opportunities throughout people’s lives in order to foster the continuous development and improvement of the knowledge and skills needed for employment and personal fulfillment. It shares mixed connotations with other educational concepts, like Adult Education. (Dewan K, 2012)

“Lifelong Learning” is, officially, learning that happens after formal education is complete. It is a process whereby additional know-how is gained and improvisation of skills continues to periodically occur through time. This kind of training is formally available in continuing education departments or extension schools, in universities around the world; it is also present and known in the form of adult education, knowledge work, homeschooling.

Learning does not only mean gaining scholarly information, but it could also mean empowering oneself by learning any constructive ability, which is of help to an individual. Women, especially, benefit, in developing nations, because ongoing studies—could be in the form of continuing research, or any learning process—gives them a chance to enhance the talents they already have and encourages personal growth.

There are encumbrances in any developing nation, which women face, but it is truly continual training, which has thrown open the doors of empowerment to them. Irrespective of age, women should come forward and acquire new skills and experiences, at any stage of their lives. It is definitely in the hands of women, to decide whether they want to stay where they are, or if they want to walk on the right path—moving toward emancipation and empowerment.

The different ways in which lifelong learning is currently accessible to women in India and to women of the world, is through:

- On-campus Learning
- Online Learning
- Courses

- Books
- Newspapers, Journals and other Reading Material
- Skills passed from one generation to another (Show and Tell)
- Specific learning programs on Radio and Television

### **Status of Rural women in India**

India is a country of villages as the majority of its population lives in villages and far- flung remote areas. The interesting aspect is that every region of the country though connected with the cities now; however, still possesses its own peculiar traditional ethos. Also, most of the rural communities are still devoid of modern facilities like education, electricity, proper drinking water, health care, ample transportation, etc. But the lack of education in many of the rural belts of India is proving fatal and acting as the breeding ground for social vices, evils and paving the way for anti-social/national activities.

Women emerged as a distinct interest group in the 19th century primarily because of the bourgeoisie democratic revolutions of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century that excluded women from their concept of equality. This distinction was based on gender. Since then women as a commune had waged of struggle for recognition of their rights as a human being. Women's execute multilateral role in the society i.e. as a mother, wife, daughter and service provider to the society. In spite of the fact that the women's contribution to the country's development is equal to that of man, still, they experience a number of limitations that restrain them from comprehending their potential for expansion. It was against this background that the government's all over the world felt the need to prioritize the interests of women and their participation at every stage of the development process. UN stated that 'Gender Equality and Women Empowerment' as one of the Millennium Development Goals to be attained by the year 2015. The term Women's empowerment implies the ability of the women to take all the important decisions independently related to her throughout her lifespan that will ensure her success in all aspects of life. A woman is a person who accepts the challenging role to meet her personal needs and become economically independent. In fact, often women in India are deprived of their fundamental right to dignity also leave alone the question of gender equality.

Women in India consistently lag behind the men in terms of access to education, health care, jobs etc. Apart, from the economic and social inequality, women in India are victims of heinous crimes such as, dowry deaths, rape, molestation and immoral trafficking. As per the latest statistics;

- The female child sex ratio (0-6 years) is 914 per 1000 males

- Rural female literacy rate only 58% while rural male 78%
- A woman employment in urban areas is only 13.9% while in rural areas is 29.9%. With the rise in poverty, many women are forced to work in very low end and low paid jobs.
- Employment of women in organized sector is less than 8%.

Education is considered one of the medium to bring about positive changes in the development of society and women, in particular, their awareness and understanding level has to be updated for life skills hence, and life skill education was a way eminent place in the development agenda of the courses.

On one side when administration, social societies, and education consider it most important agenda for development. It is necessary on the other side to find out the need of women for their lifelong learning

### **Research Questions**

- Is there need for lifelong learning in rural women?
- Which type of lifelong learning courses are attended by rural women?
- From where the rural women had attended the courses of lifelong learning?
- What are the motivational factors affected to the rural women for lifelong learning?
- If rural women are aware of about any centre operating in Patna providing lifelong learning opportunities to women?
- What are the suggestions obtained by the rural women regarding lifelong learning?
- What are the preferred modes of learning for rural women?
- Do rural women have the willingness to join lifelong learning courses?

To find out the answers to questions it was necessary to carry out the study on identification of lifelong learning needs of rural women of Fatuha village of Patna district

### **Statement of the Problems**

A study on the identification of lifelong learning needs of rural women residing in villages of Patna district.

### **Justification of the study**

Most people associate learning with formal education at school, college, university etc. from an early age that we should 'get a good education'. it is true that a formal education and the qualifications are important. Education may maximize our potential to find better, more satisfying jobs, earn more and, perhaps, become more successful in our chosen career. However, 'schooling'

is only one type of learning. There are many other opportunities to develop the skills you need throughout life.

Women can play a great role in the development of any country and have suffered the most. They have to cope up with day-to-day basic needs such as fetching water, collecting fodder and fuel, grinding food grains and raising their children and sick, apart from attending to livestock and agriculture chores. Most of the rural women have been suffering from various problems like lack of sanitation, lack of family support. They are deprived of basic education and restricted to their houses. Their role in supporting the family, women in many regions have no status in the society. They are treated as idle, their rutting work stretching throughout the day. They are not expected to participate in decision making and even to express their opinion concerning themselves.

The important role of women in the welfare of the family is being realised gradually. The development programmes for women are receiving greater attention, but still, women are not attending any kind of programmes, because of lack of family support and deprived of basic education restricted to their house, therefore, in this study we want to focus on rural women and to identify their need of lifelong learning.

### **Justification of the Sample of the Study**

Keeping in mind the above discussion, it was determined to study the identification of lifelong learning needs of the rural women. Women are generally not perceived to have any meaningful income generation capacity, and hence, they are mainly selected to do some household duties and cheap labour. Without the power to work and earn a good income, they do not have right to express their opinion Even do not have the ability to oppose their wishes of their men. So it is very much important to concentrate on the rural women, and to study their learning needs and ways through which they gain knowledge and skill acquired and also get their suggestion for satisfying their further need.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To study the profile of women living in Fatuha village of Patna district
2. To study the sources of learning adopted by selected women of Fatuha village of Patna district to gain information.
3. To find out the motivational factors for lifelong learning of selected women of Fatuha village of Patna district
4. To find out informal ways for lifelong learning of selected women of Fatuha village of

Patna district

5. To study need of lifelong learning education of women of Fatuha village of Patna district
6. To obtain the suggestion regarding the lifelong learning center from selected women of Fatuha village of Patna district

## METHODOLOGY

### Selection of the Sample and Tool for Data Collection

For the present study researcher selected rural women both working and non-working from Fatuha village of Patna district. The questionnaire was prepared for data collection. The women who were willing to fill up the questionnaire were selected as sample of the study. Thus purposive sampling was used to draw the sample. The women were contacted personally and they were oriented about the purpose of the study. On a whole 30 rural women, from Fatuha village of Patna district were selected as sample. Researcher personally visited their homes and got the questionnaires filled up. The total sample size for the study was 30.

## MAJOR FINDINGS

**Table 1:** Percentage distribution of the respondents according their age. (N=30)

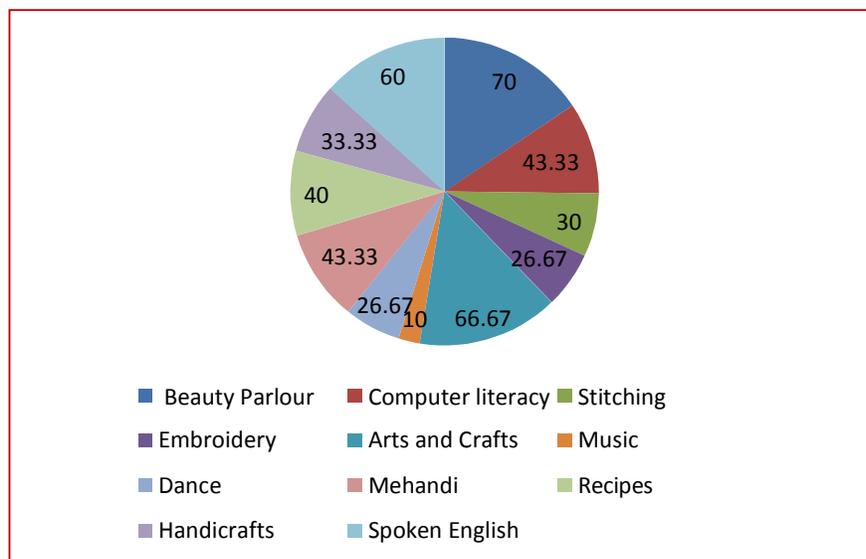
| Age                  | Percentage |
|----------------------|------------|
| Young (25-31)        | 46.66      |
| Young middle (32-45) | 53.33      |

- More than half (53%) of the respondents were from middle age group while, forty six percent of the respondents were from younger age group.
- The high majority (82%) of the respondent were married and sixteen percent of the respondents were unmarried.
- The high majority (80%) of the respondents' had education till secondary level whereas twenty percent of the respondents were graduates.

**Table 2:** Percentage distribution of the respondents according their occupational status (N=30)

| Occupational Status | Percentage |
|---------------------|------------|
| Hose Wife           | 70         |
| Service             | 20         |
| Business            | 10         |

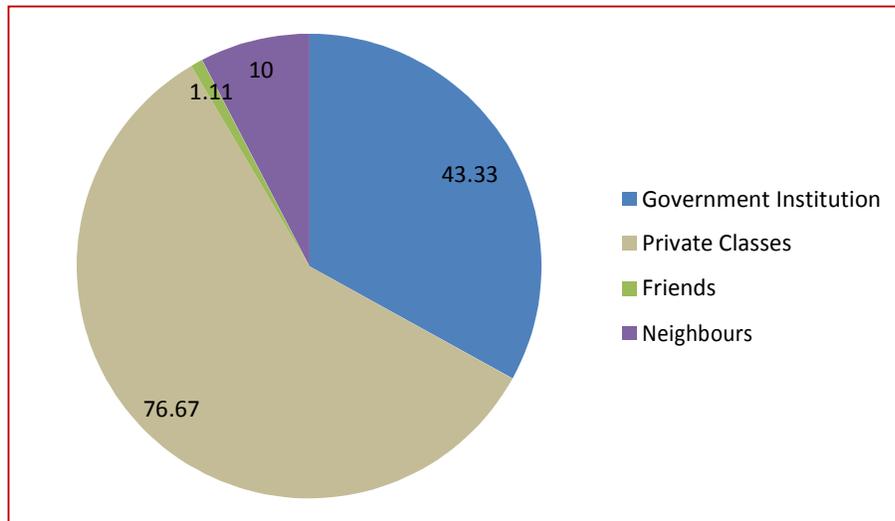
- The majority (70%) of the respondent was housewife and twenty percent were doing service whereas ten percent of the respondent had their own small scale business.
- Sixty-six percent of the respondents belong to joint family and thirty three percent of the respondents belong to nuclear family.
- The majority (70%) of the respondent had undergone course related to beauty parlor and more than sixty six percent of the respondents did the course on arts and crafts.



Sixty percent of the respondents attended spoken English course .Very few (26.67%) did the course related to embroidery and dance. (refer figure 1)

**Fig. 1: Percentage Distribution of the Women according to the courses attended by them (N=30)**

- High majority (77%) of the respondents preferred private classes as a source of learning and gaining information, whereas forty three percent of the respondents preferred government institution as a source of learning and information. (refer figure 2)



**Fig.2: Percentage distribution of the women according to the sources adopted for learning (N=30)**

**Table 3: Percentage distribution of the respondents according the informal ways used for learning (N=30)**

| Ways of Learning          | Percentage |
|---------------------------|------------|
| Mobile                    | 83.33      |
| Internet                  | 76.67      |
| Family members            | 70.00      |
| Newspaper                 | 60.00      |
| TV Programmes             | 56.67      |
| Lifelong Learning Centres | 40.00      |
| Books                     | 36.67      |
| Radio                     | 23.33      |
| Magazines                 | 6.67       |

Table 3 shows that a very majority (83%) of the respondents used mobile as source for learning, seventy six percent and seventy percent of the respondents used internet and took help from family members for informal way of learning respectively whereas only twenty three percent of the respondents preferred to learn through radio as a informal way of learning. Majority of them also learned through reading Newspapers and little less than majority viewed TV Programmes to update themselves.

**Table 4: Percentage Distribution of Respondents According to the Motivational Factors of Learning. (N=30)**

| Motivational Factors                        | Percentage |
|---|------------|
| a. To learn new technology                  | 76.67      |
| b. To remain mentally and physically active | 73.33      |
| c. For child rearing                        | 70.00      |
| d. To keep oneself busy                     | 70.00      |
| e. Maintain relationship                    | 56.67      |
| f. Info about recent development            | 53.33      |
| g. For Household Responsibilities           | 53.33      |
| h. For own makeover                         | 53.33      |
| i. To learn new recipes                     | 50.00      |

Above table shows that the motivational factor behind learning amongst women from rural area was to learn new technology as per seventy six percent of the respondents. Nearly seventy percent of the respondents reported that to remain mentally and physically active, keeping oneself busy and to learn about child rearing practices were the motivational factors for learning. More than half (53%) of the respondents reported that to remain updated about recent development, learn about performing household responsibilities effectively and for their own makeover ,were the motivational factors for learning.

A very high majority (87%) of the respondents suggested for lifelong learning center as were learning through informal ways and mainly with the support of mass media. The lifelong learning center can plan and organize the need based programme specifically required by women in rural setting. The mass media like newspapers, radio and television are largely information driven with urban population in focus. Rural folks have very few areas from which they can learn as their needs and requirements of life learning skills. Hence, while interacting with these rural women from Ankodia village the need for lifelong learning center was strongly emerged and recommended.

Eighty seven percent of the respondents suggested that they need lifelong learning center in their village. A very high majority (97%) of the respondents suggested that they were ready to learn the courses related to operation of mobiles and uses of home based technology in future at lifelong learning center besides other lifelong learning skills.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

The findings of the study reveal that rural women showed interest to learn about the new technology. They are using this technology such as mobile and internet at maximum level to upgrade themselves. The finding also reveals that they want to learn not only for performing their household activities but their own self-development also. Therefore, the need for lifelong learning centre is also derived.

The government and even corporate bodies should provide more opportunities for women, such that training programs are provided free of cost or at a discounted rate. In fact, women themselves should come forward, and form collective associations, which could collaborate with specific funding organizations and government bodies so that learning varied skills, acquiring knowledge could be made easily available to everyone in the vicinity, be it in cities, suburbs or villages. One of the best ways to transfer knowledge is by setting up more community radio stations across the country because they are low-cost, and radio has a grassroots reach in India.

The similar study should be conducted in other villages of Patna district to the lifelong learning needs of other rural women as well as in urban area also similar study can be conducted. A comparative study of lifelong learning needs of rural and urban women can also be conducted.

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