PRIA

INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY

Initiative in Education & Lifelong Learning

Certificate Programme

International Dimensions of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning

Unit 2

Philosophical Approaches in Adult Education

Units of Certificate in International Dimensions of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning

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Introduction

It is only recently that adult education emerged as a field of formal academic study. The first graduate programme in adult education was offered in 1930 in North America, at Teachers College, Columbia University (Peters & Jarvis, 1991; Schugurensky, 2008). The journey of defining adult education as a new and distinctive field of academic study and research thus began in the United States. Although American scholars had been involved in adult education practices for over a century, it was nonetheless a struggle for them to define and articulate what they were involved in to other academics.

In 1955, a group of U.S. academics came together to sort out the essence of the new field and communicate their findings to others. The work that began at that meeting came to fruition nine years later with the publication of Adult Education: Outlines of an Emerging Field of University Study (Jensen, Liveright, & Hallenbeck, 1964), a book that came to be known as the “black book” of adult education. Considered a seminal work, it described the results of three tasks: 1) to identify the scope of adult education as a field of graduate study; 2) to capture the current thinking of scholars and a good many practitioners about the conceptual foundations of the field; 3) to describe as completely as possible the intricacies of adult education practice (Peters & Jarvis, 1991)

From these three tasks, the conceptual foundation and the development, operation, and evaluation of programmes were given prominence. Thus, the authors of the “black book” were the first to attempt to outline a theory of adult education practice. Their book may well have served as a guide and helped to legitimise new programmes because, during and after the 1960s, adult education as an area of academic study grew exponentially in North America. Since then, its knowledge base has gained legitimacy and it has been accepted by academia both as a field of practice as well as a field of study and research.

Learning Objectives

After reading this module, you should be familiar with:

1 The main philosophical approaches to adult education

2 Key theories and thinkers in the field of adult education

3 The contemporary issues in adult education at the global level.

2.1 The Concept of Andragogy

Part and parcel of the struggle to define adult education as a distinctive academic field of study was the evolution of the term “andragogy.” It was coined in 1833 by Alexander Kapp, a German grammar school teacher, to describe the educational theory of Plato (and to differentiate the art and science of teaching children (pedagogy) from the art and science of teaching adults (Draper, 1998). Etymologically, pedagogy comes from the Greek root *pais*, meaning child; hence, it made sense to replace *pais* with *aner*, meaning adult male, to create a term specific to the teaching of adults. At the time it was conceived, the new term was used as a synonym for adult education. The underlying humanistic view behind it was that the educational experiences of adults should be designed to take into account the dignity and autonomy of human beings, as opposed to the authoritarian style that was the current norm in child schooling.

The assumptions of andragogy, as distinct from pedagogy were: a) people have a natural inclination toward learning, which will flourish if nurturing and encouraging environments are provided; b) the role of the teacher is more that of a facilitator and the teacher becomes a recipient learner; and c) not only the content and result of learning are to be valued but also the learning journey itself.

Eugen Rosenstock, a German social scientist and teacher in the Academy of Labour in Frankfurt, has been credited with the reintroduction of the term in 1924 (Draper, 1998)). Through his efforts the term andragogy gained visibility, and led to its acceptance and international expansion in some areas, though in other areas, it met with resistance. In Europe, andragogy achieved general acceptance in Poland, Germany (where it originated), the Netherlands, ex-Czechoslovakia, and ex-Yugoslavia. In English-speaking countries, it has generally been resisted; “adult education” is the preferred term. According to Draper (1998), UNESCO does not recommend using and seldom uses andragogy. In Canada, however, it gained acceptance in Quebec, where it is used in a broad sense to encompass all dimensions of the phenomenon of adult education, without being reduced to a single methodology or approach (Draper, 1998).

According to a study by Touchette (1982), 17 universities out of 95 surveyed (or 18%) taught andragogy. These were located in Italy, Sweden, Poland, Yugoslavia, Quebec, the Dominican Republic, Tanzania, India, Venezuela, Peru, Costa Rica, Germany, and the Netherlands.

In North America, the term was introduced by Eduard C. Lindeman, who was referred to as the "father of adult education in the USA" (Draper, 1998, p. 7); he had been strongly influenced by the works of Grundtvig, John Dewey, and R. W. Emerson (Smith, 1997). In 1926, Lindeman published "Andragogik, "The Method of Teaching Adults" in the Workers' Education Journal, as well as a book entitled The Meaning of Adult Education. At that time, the term's philosophical ground in Canada and the United States, promoted the attainment of freedom through understanding of the relationship of education to one's life. Educators sought the democratisation of knowledge and believed in a problem-solving and learner-centred approach to education. They valued the experience of learners and placed great emphasis on the experiential and the experimental contribution of the teacher, who was seen as a facilitator of change and growth (Draper, 1998).

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The Method of the Elenchus

Much before the rise of the modern adult education scheme, Socrates had formulated a scheme for education among adults in Ancient Greece. Known as the Socratic Method, or the "Method of the Elenchus", it involves people engaging in conversations to stimulate thought. It is believed that Socrates himself had these Socratic Dialogues, as has been recorded in the works of his pupil, Plato.

Socratic dialogues, used *negative* method of thesis elimination by doing away with all postulates that would lead to contradictions. It was a *dialectical* method implying the people in the conversation would be of different opinions. Hegelian dialectics, that influenced Marxist thought, is said to have been derived from Socratic principles.

But, ironically, all the people who were recorded to be present in this dialogue with Socrates were all men and belonged to the upper classes of society. Thus, though it never promoted adult education as accessible to everyone in society, nonetheless, it has had a tremendous influence on modern approaches.

According to Draper, although Lindeman's publications introduced the term andragogy to North America, it was not until Malcolm Knowles published "The Modern Practice of Adult Education: Andragogy versus Pedagogy" in 1970, that serious attention was paid to the term and considerable discussion was sparked in North America.

2.2 The Liberal (or Instrumental) View of Adult Education

2.2.1 The Theory of Self-directed Learning

The most important theoretical development in the area of adult education following the publishing of the "black book" was the theory of andragogy, which subsequently transformed into the theory of self-directed learning. It was the first true theory of adult learning.

The theory of andragogy was developed by Malcolm Shepherd Knowles (1913-1997), who many consider to be the central figure in U.S. adult education, in the second half of the 20th century. Knowles, the executive director of the U.S. Adult Education Association in the 1950s, wrote the first major accounts of informal adult education, as well as the history of adult education, in the United States. However, it is his theory of andragogy that is considered his most important contribution.

Knowles struggled with the question of what is the essential "ingredient" of the discipline that sets it apart from all other disciplines - he found his answer in the methodology and the process of teaching adults. Knowles contended that adults learn differently from children because they are at different points along the life span. As a result, adults need programmes designed specifically for them, and teaching methods for adults must accommodate this fundamental aspect. Knowles also emphasised that, unlike children, adults expect to take responsibility for decisions involved in the learning process; hence, they are self-directed.

Andragogy involves the following assumptions about the design of learning ad that adults:

- Need to understand why they need to learn something
- Need to learn experientially
- Approach learning as problem solving process
- Learn best when the topic is of immediate value to their lives

In practical terms, this means that instruction for adults must focus more on the process and less on the content being taught. Strategies such as case studies, role playing, simulations, and self-evaluation are the most useful, and instructors must adopt a role of facilitator or learning resource, rather than lecturer or grader.

The principles of the self-directed learning theory may be summarized as:

- Adults need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction.
- Experience (including mistakes) provides the basis for learning activities.
- Adults are most interested in learning those subjects that have immediate relevance to their job or personal life.
- Adult learning is problem-centered rather than content-oriented (Knowles, 1984)

In 1970, Knowles titled a chapter in his book 'The Modern Practice of Adult Education: Andragogy versus Pedagogy' suggestively as "Andragogy: An Emerging Technology for Adult Learning — Farewell to Pedagogy." In this chapter, he asserted that andragogy differed from traditional pedagogy in four distinct ways:

- The adult's self-concept moves from one of being a dependent personality towards one of being a self-directing human being.
- An adult accumulates a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning.
- An adult's time perspective changes from one of a postponed application of the knowledge to one of immediate application of it.
- The adult's orientation towards learning changes from subject-centredness to problem-centeredness.

However, ten years later, Knowles modified these thoughts. He had come to believe that andragogy was not essentially different from pedagogy, but maintained his assumptions of the theory of self-directed learning and its validity.

2.2.2 Critique of the "Andragogical Consensus"

Malcolm Knowles's theory is not without criticism. Critics assert that, though liberal humanists found the notion of "individual autonomy," within Knowles's theory, they also discovered that it decontextualises theorised learning - in other words, the learning does not take into account the context in which it occurs. According to the theory of andragogy, no matter where learning is taking place — a factory, an office, or a military setting, the learner is equally in control of the learning process - a view that Welton (1995) called a "confused ideology" (p. 129).

Indeed, the criticism surrounding Knowles's theory stems from the fact that the concepts of autodidaxy, self-management, personal autonomy, and learner-controlled instruction were coagulated into a theory that was subsequently used to legitimise a very narrow view of adult education as a professional practice.

Adult educators who subsequently embraced the theory without criticism used it to give the emergent discipline an air of "expert culture." Their tendency was to transform the field into the study of the principles of effective teaching practice and a sort of educational service" for the betterment of training and vocational education in such settings as industry and the military. Welton (1995) deemed this narrow view of the emerging academic field as "andragogical consensus" (p. 128).

Yonge (1985) argued that the claim of andragogy as essentially being different from pedagogy could not be justified in terms of teaching and learning. He also maintained that the term should not be used as a synonym for adult education, since adult education is much broader than andragogy. According to Draper (1998), however, these distinctions between andragogy and pedagogy were essentially theoretical and presented a false dichotomy. In retrospect, the debate seems naïve and ignores the evolution of pedagogy, which is no longer the authoritarian form of schooling it once was, even in the context of the learning/teaching process of children.

Yet another critique is based on the fact that andragogy stems from the Greek root *aner*, meaning adult male, rather than the Greek word *teleios*, meaning adult of either sex. Hence, the term is considered sexist by some authors (see Mohring, 1989 in Draper, 1998).

However, the most powerful critique brought to the andragogical consensus, is the fact that it was arbitrarily constructed to exclude social movements and virtually any learning about social change. Thus, its critics consider the theory as a guiding philosophy for the adjustment and perhaps reconciliation of the individual to the existing status quo.

2.3 Critical Perspectives of Adult Education

2.3.1 The Conscientisation Theory

A radically different approach from the andragogical consensus is Paulo Freire's conceptualisation of adult education. Freire (1921-1997), was a legendary figure in the field of adult education and one of its most influential thinkers in the late 20th century, especially in the areas of non-formal and informal adult education.

Freire established the tradition of popular education, first, in his native Brazil and, then, in all of Latin America. His most important contribution to the field of adult education was his book 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed'. After it was published in 1972, Freire became an icon of social change through education, especially adult literacy education.

In his body of work, Freire emphasised the dialogical character of informal education, rather than formal education based on curricula. He argued that dialogue involves respect and should not involve one person acting over another but rather people working with each other. He believed that dialogue was not just about deepening understanding but was part of making a difference in the world and as such was an important process that could enhance community participation and build social capital.

Freire dedicated his work to the oppressed, to those people who live in poverty and do not have a voice but can be emancipated through education. He developed the concept of banking education, which he understood as the accumulation of knowledge as a form of capital and the education process as an investment of the teacher in the learner.

Another of Freire's important theoretical contributions was the notion of praxis — the positive feedback interplay between theory and practice. However, his most significant contribution was the theory of conscientisation.

This theory states that through education, an oppressed individual can develop a critical consciousness, as opposed to a naïve one, thereby becoming aware of his oppression and the injustice that stems from it. Conscientisation is thus the power to transform reality and escape an oppressive situation.

Freire insisted that educational activity should be grounded in the lived experience of the participants. He also understood the nexus between literacy, adult education, and development and warned about the dangers of development that is not rooted in critical thinking (Freire, 1998).

2.3.2 Adult Education and Development

Julius Kambarage Nyerere (1922-1999), yet another outstanding adult educator and a former president of Tanzania, also perceived this nexus between literacy, adult education, and development with great clarity (Mishra, 2000). Nyerere demonstrated that the post-colonial theory provided a relevant framework for understanding the politics of adult education and development. His philosophy of education for liberation and development resonated with that of Paulo Freire.

Nyerere was one of Africa's greatest political leaders and a respected post-colonial thinker. He was known affectionately throughout Africa and the world as *Mwalimu,* which means teacher in Swahili (Mulenga, 2001). As an adult educator and as the contributor of an original and radical theory of social change known as *Ujamaa*, as well as the president of a country that implemented an award-winning national literacy campaign, Nyerere was invited to be the first honorary president of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) (Hall, 1995). Moreover, as well as being the first president of Tanzania, he actively contributed to its creation in 1961, as a fusion between Tanganika and Zanzibar, following liberation from British colonial rule (Mulenga, 2001).

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Shrimati Nathibai Damodar Thackersey Women's University (SNDT)

The University, founded by Dhondo Keshav Karve in 1896, is the first University for women in India. It began as an ashram for poor women and widows in Hingne, Pune. He introduced schooling in the ashram, as he felt that education was necessary to make the women independent and economically self-sufficient.

Inspired by a booklet on the Japan Women's University given by a friend, Karve finally expanded this school to a university for women. It was named after Sir Vithaldas Thackersay's mother, when he made a generous contribution of Rs. 15 lakh.

Today, the university has an enrollment of 70,000 students, with two campuses in Mumbai (Churchgate and Santa Cruz) and one in Pune.

Nyerere saw education as a means to bring about human liberation and equality and to advance collectively toward a good society. The main role of education, in his view, was to make people understand that change is possible and to inspire within them a desire for change. At the time of independence, about 80% of Tanzania's population was illiterate, primary education was available to less than 50% of its children, and only about 5% of those who completed primary education entered secondary school (Mulenga, 2001). The demographics of Tanzania led to the development of Kiswahili as the national and then official language; subsequently, it was adopted as the language of instruction in schools.

Nyerere's contribution to the theory of adult education stems from his social philosophy called *Ujama*a, meaning "family-hood" in Kiswahili. Through it, he contended that human equality must be adopted as the value base for a good society and that neither freedom nor social justice can exist without it. The denial of equality was, in his view, the core of colonialism and racial discrimination. As a result, he saw the solution to colonialism as the redistribution of political and economic control based on the principles of social, economic, and political equality.

The state's role was to implement this redistribution and maintain effective control over the means of production, in order to ensure fair access to and distribution of equal rights and to prevent the exploitation of the less fortunate. As a political leader, Nyerere contributed to the practical application of these ideals; in 1967, Tanzania nationalised the major means of production (Mulenga, 2001).

What is particularly original in Nyerere's philosophy, is that it was rooted in the African traditional way of life based on family or communal well-being. His philosophy drew on the belief that socialism was a frame of mind or an attitude toward equality and human co-operation, rather than a recipe of communist philosophers. He stressed that, in order to regain critical consciousness, Africans must see intrinsic merit in their traditional value system. Born from this system of traditional communism was the notion of co-operation, based on mutual respect, responsibility, reciprocation, and the pursuit of common good. He argued that capitalism undermined the African traditional way of life because it led to economic competition based on greed and to the desire for more power for the purpose of dominating others. He based his philosophy of *Ujamaa* on the following ethical principles:

- The fundamental equality of all human beings
- The right to an equal part in government, at local, regional and national levels
- The right to freedom of expression, movement, religion, association
- The right to receive protection of life and property from the state
- The right to receive just return for work
- Collective ownership of all the natural resources (Mulenga, 2001)

Nyerere's critique of the colonial education system and formal schooling led to his philosophy of Education for Self-Reliance (ESR), in which education was viewed as a dynamic and holistic process that takes place in the family, at work, in church, and during many activities outside the formal school system. The role of ESR was to provide a set of values, attitudes, and beliefs to justify and maintain the goals of building a socialist (and ideological) society.

In effect, ESR provided the framework and guidelines for transforming a colonial capitalist society, into an African socialist society. True development, Nyerere argued, was based on democracy, freedom, as well as social and cultural prosperity for all.

Nyerere's critics argued that his vision of the traditional African way of life was somehow idealistic and, because this way of life necessarily changes with the times, it could not continuously provide the same philosophical basis for state policies. Critics considered his high hopes for African liberation and development as unrealistic.

2.3.3 The Transformative Learning Theory

Another important theoretical development in the field was the transformative learning theory of Jack Mezirow. Mezirow has worked to develop a synergy between the developments in the theory of adult education rooted in psychology and those rooted in popular education.

Mezirow locates himself in the social reform tradition within U.S. adult education and feels at home in the American pragmatic intellectual tradition, thereby distancing himself somewhat from the European tradition of critical theory. He is fascinated with the cognitive dimensions of the process whereby adults transform their perspective on the world, self, and others. He maintains that the capacity to reflect critically on taken-for-granted assumptions is the cardinal dimension of adulthood. He argues that this psychological truth provides the grounding for the central task of the adult educator, namely, to foster critical reflection. His theory has captured the interest of many adult education scholars and practitioners, and some have claimed that by the mid-1990s this theory had replaced andragogy as the main theory of adult learning.

Critical reflection of assumptions of is at the heart of both post-modern critique and transformation theory. Mezirow believes that post-modernism and his theory are in agreement that the discourses of science, truth, and progress cannot be taken for granted and that all theories and frames of reference should be viewed skeptically, including transformation theory and post-modernism.

Both celebrate diversity and seek social justice. Mezirow's goals are to avoid closure of certainty, to seek openness to new experiences with new and multiple meanings, and to accept the possibility of uncertainty and unpredictability, while recognising difference and otherness. Mezirow's critique of the notion of emancipation is that it becomes a search for certainty and control through definitive knowledge, which totalises explanation and thus eliminates difference; at the same it recognizes the tension between the goals of emancipation and democracy and the ubiquity of arbitrary power and oppression. His theory seeks to create multicultural learning environments, free of sexist, racist, and imperialistic discourses. In his view, to become critically reflective of assumptions, post-modern and transformative thinkers must challenge the social consequences of any concept of reason, progress, autonomy, education, common humanity, or emancipation.

Mezirow's concept of situated learning departs from the post-modern canon that emphasises cultural relativity. In Mezirow's view, the who, when, where, why, and how of learning may only be understood as situated in a specific cultural context. His transformation theory suggests a generic learning process that is interpreted and selectively encouraged or discouraged by contemporary cultures. It also suggests that human beings have much in common, including their connectedness, their desire to understand, and their spiritual incompleteness. According to Mezirow (1999), cultures enable or inhibit the realisation of common human interests, ways of communicating, and learning capabilities.

Although Mezirow's theory is influential, it has received its share of criticism from proponents of both andragogical and popular education. The former do not recognise the 'situatedness' of learning; the latter contend that the difference between critical reflection and transformative learning has not been elaborated sufficiently and further that the role of ideology in critical reflection has not been highlighted properly. According to popular education critics, the dynamics of capitalism and the ideological processes of hegemony building that are put in motion to ensure the reproduction of the system are not taken into consideration by Mezirow.

Moreover, mainstream transformative learning theory and practice in North America seldom pay attention to people who have been excluded, silenced, marginalised, and oppressed most of their lives (Schugurensky D. , 2001)

2.3.4 The Tradition of Popular Adult Education

There is no clear and simple definition of popular adult education. However, it may be described as a learning process based on the concept that education can serve the interests of the poor and that the poor themselves can define the content and context of their education programmes. One particular characteristic differentiates popular adult education from other forms of education: its declared and conscious purpose of social change for a more just society and/or liberation from oppressive situations. Hence, popular adult education is never politically neutral and is always highly polarized.

In his book 'The Politics of Education: Culture, Power and Liberation', Paulo Freire (1984) analysed the connection between popular education and the power structure it challenges. As Freire asserted in his entire body of work, developing critical capacity for participation in democratic deliberation is crucial for people who have been excluded, silenced, and marginalised. This capacity is more likely to develop when people have a space and an opportunity for making their voices heard, for questioning authority, and for forging unity while recognising and celebrating diversity. Engaging in collective action has the potential to awaken people's belief in their own potential to transform larger social realities (Schugurensky D. , 2001). Social movements are exactly such spaces of collective action and constitute environments for learning - learning that stems from a complex of ideological and practical debates over values, goals, strategies, and tactics. As such, a social movement constitutes a forum for honest intellectual debate and has the potential to change an individual's views. Michael Welton (1995) saw social movements as privileged sites of transformative learning or emancipatory praxis.

Popular adult education understood in this broad context has a long tradition. It originated in the workers' movements of the 19th and 20th century and continued with the civil rights and national independence movements of the 20th and the early 21st century. The Citizenship Schools that operated during the desegregation movement in the United States, the mobilisation movement in Tanzania, and the literacy campaigns in northern Brazil, during Freire's most active years as an adult educator, are all examples of popular education because their ultimate goal was social transformation and liberation. Theoretically, popular education is grounded in Mezirow's transformative learning theory and Freire's conscientisation theory, although Foley (1998) argued that a theory of popular education was emerging nonetheless. Clearly, it is a domain that may lead to exciting theoretical developments in the near future.

A particularly good example of a popular education movement is the feminist movement, which began to be recognised as such by the mid-1980s (Manicom & Walters, 1997). Its overall goal was the recognition and valorisation of women's knowledge, in order to help women achieve representation within democratic processes and development agendas and be "heard" when publicly articulating their concerns. In other words, its broad objective was to empower women to gain more control over their lives and transform oppressive relations, particularly those organised by gender. Manicom and Walters (1997) defined feminist popular education as "the characteristic form of educational work with and for grassroots women which has been developing in local contexts around the world over the past decades" (p. 70).

Because the consequences of global economic restructuring for women — mainly, the feminisation of poverty and of cheap labour are global in their scope and as a result feminist popular education movements that originated in various contexts around the world, now form a global network. Manicom and Walters (1997) called this trend the globalisation of activist feminism.

THINK TANK

What do you think have been the major issues raised by adult education movements in your country/ community/ region? Has this empowered the people? How?

Internationalisation is not only a trend within the feminist movement but also a general trend among popular education movements.

2.3.5 The Feminist Philosophical Approach

The radical tradition of adult education, dating back at least to the 19th century (as noted in the previous module), has long argued not simply for knowledge that is "the best that it has thought and said" (the basis of liberal tradition) but also for knowledge that is useful for bringing about social and political change. The latter, deemed by the radical tradition as "really useful knowledge," has been understood as political knowledge that could be used to challenge the relations of oppression and inequality. This, of course, implies the development of critical thinking, the recognition of human agency, political growth, and the confidence to challenge what is taken for granted or considered inevitable - that is, to exercise power (Thompson, 2000). The feminist critique of adult education is the only philosophical approach concerned with how the power within all of us shapes the relationships we make with each other. Feminists argue that we should strive not only for democracy but firstly for the elimination of patriarchal, colonial, ethnocentric, and racist ways of thinking within each of us (Miles, et al., 2000).

In developing a feminist way of knowing (epistemology), feminists began by focusing on gender inequality and in the critique of what they deem as being male centered and capitalist (areocentric) domination of philosophy and thinking. However, much of their work now focuses on learning about the consequences of the concentration and domination of knowledge by one gender (male) on various forms of social stratification, such as those based on race, class, sexual orientation, and able-bodiedness.

In her book 'The Science Question in Feminism, (1986), Sandra Harding developed a classification system that consisted of three basic approaches:

1) Feminist Empiricism
2) Feminist Standpoint Theory
3) Feminist Post-Modernism

According to Harding, feminist empiricists accept positivist principles of value-neutral inquiry and criticise actual scientific practice for failing to live up to these ideals. Feminist standpoint theorists maintain that knowledge must be "socially situated" and "perspectival" and that some perspectives, such as the perspective of feminists, are privileged. Feminist post-modernists, however, question whether any particular perspective could be privileged over any other, leading feminist epistemologists in the context of the theory of relativism[1]. As feminist epistemology has evolved, Harding's classification has become less useful.

Another feminist critique concerns the impetus toward development. Feminists argue that society does not exercise enough critical reflection on the technological and industrial model of development it embraces. They point to the "dark side" of modernisation and development.

There are myriad directions of analysis and research within feminist thought and those mentioned below are related in some way to the praxis of adult education:

- Feminist analyses of society and education
- Women's practices in community development, community transformation and the way women network globally
- The construction of gender in various settings (in the family, at work, as citizens)
- The impact of war on women and on their education
- The impact of globalising forces on women
- The relationship between gender and race and ethnicity

In the praxis of adult education, the work of several feminist scholars stands out. The four scholars mentioned below exemplify some of their important contributions.

[1] *Relativism implies that there is no ultimate truth and that it is relative to the cultural context from which one perceives it.*

1. Shirley Walters has written extensively on the understanding, practice, and experience of transformative education from a feminist perspective. In 1997, she edited 'Globalisation, Adult Education and Training: Impacts and Issues', a volume of 25 articles, most of which originated in papers presented at an international conference on adult education held in Cape Town, South Africa, in 1995. The book is a mixture of theoretical discussions about the globalising economy, civil society, adult education, and learning, as well as practical descriptions, from a dozen international sites, of adult education and training programs, policies, and classes. The dominant argument in the book is that, rather than fulfilling industry needs for skilled workers, the primary purpose of adult education and training should be to support the development of democratic civil societies and serve workers in their quest for autonomy and workplace control, and act as a site of resistance to exploitation and oppression. The authors were adult educators, academics, activists, and policy makers based in 11 different countries—Australia, Britain, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Kenya, Malaysia, Northern Ireland, South Africa, Sweden, and the United States (Dexter, 1999). Walters is also well known as the founding director of the Centre for Adult and Continuing Education (CACE) at the University of Western Cape, South Africa - a vibrant and well-recognised institute, both nationally and internationally.

2. Peggy Antrobus, a Caribbean feminist activist, has contributed to the examination of the international women's movement and the analysis of its gender and political justice and the contexts in which it emerged. In her recent book 'The Global Women's Movement', Antrobus (2005) raised several questions, including

   - At what stage are women now, in the struggle against gender inequality, particularly those in the Third World
   - which issues do they face in different parts of the world (from poverty to sexual and reproductive health to the environment)
   - what challenges confront the women's movement

- what strategies are needed to help women move closer to their goals of gender equality

Antrobus has also examined the issues of feminist leadership and development alternatives for women. She was a founding member of the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research (CAFR) and of the Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN).

3. Australian scholar Sue Shore has explored theory-practice relations in vocational education and training contexts and community settings; she has also examined ideas about “inclusive curriculum practice” and ‘decision making’ in community education programmes. She uses “whiteness” as a theoretical tool to understand the nature of racialised discourse in theory building and policy making. She has also contributed to the field of literacy. In 2001, she participated in the editing of and wrote a chapter for ‘Doing Literacy, Doing Literacy Research: Researching Practice in Adult Literacy Settings’ (Adult Literacy and Numeracy Australian Research Consortium, 2001).

4. Jane Thompson, a U.K.-based scholar has written about adult learning, critical intelligence and social change, community education, lifelong learning, radical learning for social change, and the politics and practice of widening participation in higher education. She was the editor of ‘Words in Edgeways: Radical Learning for Social Change’ and later edited, with Marjorie Mayo, ‘Adult Learning, Critical Intelligence and Social Change’. More recently, she published ‘Bread and Roses’ (2002), an analysis of the intersection of art, culture, and lifelong learning, and wrote a discussion paper called ‘Re-rooting Lifelong Learning’, in which she discussed the relationship between lifelong learning, active citizenship, and neighbourhood renewal.

   Thompson’s books and essays have inspired and validated the work of radical practitioners of adult and community education not only in the United Kingdom, but also in Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States.

2.4 Issues in Contemporary Adult Education

Today, many issues form the subject of adult education theory and research (praxis). The most salient issues at the international level include:

- Adult education and livelihood Mobilisation
- Active citizenship and democracy
- Co-operation and international aid
- Poverty reduction
- Skills and vocational training
- Work in the voluntary sector
- Indigenous (aboriginal) learning
- Community development
- Refugees/minorities
- Lifelong learning
- Popular participation and participatory research
- Women's learning
- Health and nutrition
- Sustainable development
- The environment
- The phenomenon of the HIV/AIDS pandemic
- Human rights and peace

All of these issues are straightforward and need no further explanation, with the exception of mobilisation and popular participation, which is explained below.

Mobilisation

This historical theme emerged from the South. The term is applied by political sociologists to describe regimes that have attempted or are attempting a social transformation, especially after a structural break with the past.

For example, mobilisation has been used to represent the energetic and radical transformation of Russia after the October Revolution in 1917. It has also been used in the case of ex-colonial countries that have liberated themselves. After gaining their independence, many of these countries started a campaign of social reconstruction to alleviate the destructive effects of colonialism — mainly poverty, illiteracy, and discrimination. Adult education has been a crucial component of their mobilisation efforts (Bown, 2000).

Popular Participation

The notion of popular participation originated in the works of Paulo Freire and is based on ideas such as the validity of popular culture and the linking of reflection to action. It induces the idea of the voluntary character of learning. In Africa, it is used in conjunction with basic literacy, functional literacy, and community development campaigns (Bown, 2000).

THINK TANK

Think of the different ways in which you as an adult educator can integrate the concept of self-directed learning in the practice of adult education, within your specific programme.

Summary

Most adult education movements have come about as an attempt to question the conventional forms of education and have asserted pedagogy as a medium for perpetuating existing power structures and relations. From this impetus for change arose diverse approaches to adult education. Some of the prominent ones, such as Conscientisation Theory, Transformative Learning theory etc., have been discussed in this Unit.

One has realised that approaches to education are different for children and adults. Pedagogy contributes to the primary socialisation for children, while adult education is for better understanding one's surroundings to transform individuals taking part in the process.

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