

## ANDRAGOGY: CONCEPT, ESSENCE AND PRACTICE

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### **Abstract**

In India adult education has been one of the chief concerns of the Government. Within the field of adult education, there has emerged a process of professionalization, and it has taken the form of a new discipline, 'andragogy'. This article describes all the necessary details about it. It discusses its etymology, meaning, varieties, sub disciplines and the cycle or the model utilized by its Fractions. The theoretical background is useful for considering its significance in third world where there are large masses of adult illiterates.

**Key Words : Andragogy**

### **Introduction**

The professionals working in the educational field are as well versed with the science, 'pedagogy' which stands for education of children. They also know that it denotes the art and science of leading and educating children. But when it came to the practice and study of helping adults to learn, the thoughtful minds of educationists wondered if the principles and practices of pedagogy, belonging as they do to child and youth education, would be entirely appropriate to the education of adults. The churning of thoughts led to a balanced conclusion—some knowledge derived from pedagogy is equally applicable to adults, but there is not the reasons that are described later are obvious. These circumstances created a need to coin a separate term to denote the practice and study of helping adults to learn. That term is 'Androgogy'.

This article considers the concept ‘Andragogy’ which has virtually emerged into a discipline, its essence, practice and phases. The purpose is to provide ‘a feel’ of the concept.

### **Why a separate Term?**

The adult who wants to educate him or herself can never be considered to be a mega model of a learning child. Although their goals viz. learning and education are similar, their personality aspects are different due to growth, development and experiences that come with age factor. Adults are essentially distinct from children with respect to the following:

- a) They have already passed through the stages of childhood developments.
- b) They have experienced and followed a further series of physical and psychological developments in adult life.
- c) They have a larger and richer body experiences.
- d) They have certain social status, responsibilities to themselves and to others, and functions different from those of children. Their self-images are different.
- e) They have different and unique motives and learning needs. Their attitudes to learning and readiness to learn are different.
- f) The time-scale for adults to learn is different from that of children.

Therefore, it was felt that the theory and the principles of adult learning need to be different in degree and kind. In adult education, it is necessary to organize the learning experiences that are appropriate to adult life and adult situation. Since the pedagogical theories and principles do not seem to contribute entirely to the cause of adult education, the need for a distinct science, discipline for building up theories and principles was felt. Hence the concept ‘Andragogy’ was developed.

The term 'Andragogy' has many controversies which are called the Andragogy-pedagogy debate (Knowles, M.S.1970). It is therefore, proper to have a good grasp of the concept.

### **Etymology and Meaning**

The term 'Pedagogy' is coined from the Greek word 'paidagogia'. It is a compound word consisting of the noun 'pais', genitive case of 'paidos' (child), and the verb, 'agein' (to lead or educate). Therefore, 'Pedagogy' denotes the art and science of educating children.

The term 'Andragogy' is a neologism formed by analogy with pedagogy. It stems from the Greek word, 'aner' genitive case of 'andros' (man) and 'agein' (to lead or educate). It therefore, means to lead or educate adults.

The term was probably coined by the German High school teacher, Kapp. In 1833, he had published a book on educational views of the Greek philosopher, Plato. The term was first used by E.Rosenstock in 1924 in Berlin and then in Switzerland in 1951.

Titmus, C.J.et.al.(1971) define the term as, "The art and science of helping adults to learn, and as the study of adult education theory, processes and technology to that end".

These considerations might lead to a pertinent question—can the two concepts, adult education and andragogy be used co-terminously? Van Gent B.(1991) has the following remark to make:

Often, however, the term 'Andragogy' is applied to indicate either a comprehensive field of activities of which adult education only forms a part, or in sharp contrast, a specific approach to adult education. Thus, 'Andragogy' is a broader concept than adult education. It comprises of a number of activities for adults. It provides a point of view, a philosophy of adult education. There can yet be another query—are andragogy and pedagogy antithetical models?

They may seem to be so because one is for adults and the other one for children. Yet, they cannot be considered to be so because in many circumstances the andragogical model can be applied to children and vice versa. Nevertheless, There are differences between the two as pointed out by Knowles, M.S. (1970)

Pedagogy is a content model which is associated with traditional learning, based on the teacher's direction, transmission techniques, and prescribed subject matter. Andragogy is a new approach in which the teacher is primarily a facilitator of the learning process.

### **Varieties of Andragogy:**

There are two varieties of Andragogy, viz. Andragogy as a comprehensive concept, and Andragogy as a specific approach. These two varieties are in tune with the remark by Van Gent B. (1991). The first variety was found in the Netherland, and the examples of the second application were apparent in Germany, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

#### **a) Andragogy as a Comprehensive Concept:**

In 1970, a royal decree authorized the admission of Andragogy to the roster of every university in the Netherlands. Its explanatory memorandum indicated the comprehensiveness of the concept. Van Gent B. (1991) states:

In the explanatory memorandum, the connection was drawn between Andragogy and the fields of social work, personal management, community organization, and adult education. Such a comprehensive concept soon had its miserable days. It was perhaps difficult to maintain unison among the component areas of the concept. To an increasing extent, professional working in social work and adult education went their separate ways. Each sought shelter in safer areas that were less threatened by financial cuts. Adult education moved in the direction of formal primary, secondary and higher education or vocational

Training, where the quest for diplomas and certificates is predominant. (Van Gent B. 1991, p.276)

The final outcome, as Van Gent B. (1991) points out was that a new royal decree, issued in 1985 and effective 1988, deprived Andragogy of its status as an autonomous discipline in the Netherlands.

### **b) Andragogy as a Specific Approach**

Knowles, M.S. (1970) influenced this variety of Andragogy through his book, 'The Modern Practice of Adult Education: Andragogy versus Pedagogy'. For him, Andragogy was first premised on a set of four assumptions about adult learning which were in his view very different from the assumptions about child learning on which pedagogy is based. As a person matures—

- a) His self-concept moves from a dependent human being towards a self-directing personality.
- b) His growing reservoir of experience becomes an increasing resource for learning.
- c) his readiness to learn becomes more oriented to the developmental tasks of his social roles, and
- d) his orientation toward learning shifts from subject-centeredness to problem-centeredness (Knowles, M.S.1970, p.39)

These assumptions on the nature of adults are useful for ascertaining the preferred educational goals, and the best didactic methods. Those specific assumptions, goals and the methods can be combined in a systematic manner for developing the normative and prescriptive theory. Such a prescriptive theory serves as a guideline for practitioners. This guideline is essentially humanistic in its nature.

### **Andragogical Subdisciplines**

In the countries where the theory, the principles and practice of Andragogy are

acceptable, and where the needful is being done, have experienced diversities in its practices. These diversities have led to a number of sub disciplines. The concept of lifelong education has provided Andragogy with perspectives on goals, methods and means that are essential for total personality development. With the advent of welfare state, these efforts have been further boosted up. Basic Andragogy deals with the structure of fundamental concepts, principles, and definitions concerning adult education. It usually forms a part of introductory training course for adult educators. Comparative Andragogy studies macro social variables, across and between countries, which contribute to regional and national differences in adult education processes. In addition to these sub disciplines, there are some Andragogical sub disciplines which relate adult education activities to specific situations, e.g. industrial andragogy, military andragogy, penological andragogy, family andragogy, and gerontological andragogy.

### **Andragogical Definition of an Adult**

It is interesting to note the Andragogical views on what constitutes an adult. There seems to be little agreement about it in adult education literature. In order to attempt a definition of an adult, some authors bring on other disciplines. Some hold that one becomes an adult at a certain age usually 18 or 21, according to country. Others use the psychological criteria and define adult as one who is emotionally, socially and intellectually mature. Some authors link maturity to social and economic status. Such a consideration complicates the problem. Personal maturity is not an absolute state, reached once and for all. It is more of a lifelong process. Therefore, all these approaches are inadequate for andragogy.

Ogrizovic, M.(1966) defines an adult as follows:

It makes more sense, for the purpose of andragogy, to define adulthood in terms of a person's relation to the educational process, since it also permits a clear definition in relation to pedagogy. Pedagogy is concerned with those for whom education is the primary or central activity or social role (children and adolescents); andragogy is concerned with the education of those who have completed or interrupted their initial education, in order to take part in other major activities or take on other social roles.(p.26).

### **The Andragogical Cycle**

It is obvious that the rigid centralized planning of the formal educational system, the uniformity of timetables and school curricula will not be appropriate to adults. Therefore, a basic scheme was devised for the adult educational process; it has been called the Andragogical Cycle.

The cycle consists of five different stages: the identification and analysis of educational needs, the identification and selection of programme contents required to achieve the proposed educational goals, the planning of methods, rhythm, and pace, the implementation of the programme, and the evaluation of the programme process and outcomes.

#### **a) Identification of Educational Needs**

Even in formal, second chance education where the standards and the course contents are fixed to meet external requirements, there can be differences between the demands of the course and the learner's educational needs. This problem needs to be resolved. Therefore the andragogue has to discover the real educational needs of the learners. For this, the andragogical approach is both inductive and deductive. It analyses the situation of the learner both as an individual and as a member of society, with its development goals and ideology

at local and national level. Goals and objectives are then set to meet individual and social needs.

### **b) Curriculum Planning**

Education can only be effective if its starting point is related to the previous experiences and education level of the learner. Therefore, the andragogue who has a good knowledge of the participants has to develop proper curriculum. The formal education of participants is only one indication of their actual knowledge. Their informal education should also be considered for planning the curriculum. Since continuing interactions between andragogues and participants might reveal new educational needs to be flexible and open to change throughout the process.

### **c) Planning Programme Formats**

The contents of learning are established during the second stage of the andragogical cycle. The third stage establishes the forms of learning experiences that are required for achieving the predetermined aims and objectives. The situation of the participants and the circumstances in which the programme will be carried out to determine the programme formats. Moreover, the frequency of learning experiences and the extent of their continuity are considered because those factors affect the intensity of education. There are other factors such as the varieties of social roles the participants play, their public life, their work places, and their families which might complicate the planning process. Therefore, due attention is paid to them. Very often, a mixture of individual work and group work is required. The methods and the techniques should be suitable of the participants learning styles and habits.

#### **d) Programme Implementation**

The first three stages constitute the preparatory phase of the andragogical cycle. If the needs and situation of participants are properly identified, there will be much independent learning with the help of proper educational resources. In independent study, the participant is required to shoulder major responsibility for his or her learning. The group work becomes the chief responsibility of the andragogue.

The most typical forms of providing learning experiences to adult learners are single lectures, lecture series, sandwich courses, discussion groups, study circles, group and individual consultations, and tutorials. Besides face-to-face of education, distance learning modes especially correspondence education becoming popular. Some countries delimit multimedia education due to its high cost.

#### **e) Evaluation**

Evaluation does not take place exclusively at the end of the cycle but in part. It goes on simultaneously with implementation of the programme. This type of evaluation helps both the andragogues and the participants. It provides feedback to the andragogues which helps them to improve the teaching organization, contents and the conduct of future programme. For the participants it provides data on learning performance which may help them to determine further educational needs and approaches, and of course decisions about the award of certificates or diplomas. Education does bring about changes in participants personality, attitudes and values. But the present evaluation methods fail to meet all the needs of andragogy.

Lately, Knowles, M.S. (1990) has proposed the Andragogical model which involves seven elements:

- a) Establishing a climate conducive to learning,
- b) Creating a mechanism for mutual planning,

- c) Diagnosing the needs for learning,
  - d) Formulating programme objectives,
  - e) Designing a pattern of learning experiences,
  - f) Conducting these experiences with suitable techniques and materials,
- and
- g)Evaluating the learning outcomes and diagnosing learning needs.(Knowles,

M.S.1990,p.276)

According to Van Gent B. (1991), “These andragogical cycles are, of course, not characteristic for andragogy only. They can be seen as more or less directive and nondirective variations on the basic scheme of rational planning: diagnosis, goal setting, implementation, strategy plotting, and evaluation.”

A single andragogue may carry out all the stages, fulfilling different functions as the catalyst, programmer, course planner, teacher, and the evaluator. This is the situation in small institutions. In large institutions different specialists may carry out different functions. Generally, needs analysis, programming and planning are carried out by the full timers, and the implementation and the evaluation of the programme are undertaken by part-time educators.

### **Epilogue**

Andragogy is developing slowly and steadily. It has surely grown past stage when its development was mainly determined by the search for its own specific characteristics and the need to emphasize its differences with pedagogy. Its rise can also be considered in the context of a process of professionalization within the field of adult education. A profession can be distinguished from other occupations by several features. The most fundamental feature of the process of professionalization is the creation of a body of scientific and ethical knowledge fit to serve as the material for research and study. Andragogy is yet to evolve its own research methods. There are numerous difficulties in doing so, e.g. adults

are free agents, they are less easily manipulated, they have less time to give to researchers than school children, and there are difficulties in evaluating the affective learning outcomes to which adult education is largely directed.

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