
UNIT 3 EMERGING NEW LEARNER IN GLOBALIZING ERA

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3.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- Define who new learner is in the ever changing society;
- Explain the learner models in the 21st century;
- Study the implication of new learners in the context of ODL?;
- Identify the Traits of the New Learners; and
- Relate the Instructional implications.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

A new learner is emerging concept in the globalizing era, life long learning is essential feature of the globalizing era. Here in this unit we are going to explain 'New learner' in the changing process of society, change denotes to a paradigm shift, here we shall also discuss what is Paradigm shift? The paradigm shift has been defined as change; Paradigm shift denotes change; change is inevitable and the only factor in all walks of life. Paradigm shift is universal in all spheres of human life, not exceptional to teaching learning process. In any social transformation, change occurs, the change with special reference to education in the 21st century is very important. Here, in this unit, we will discuss, with the educational influence, how vocations changes in to occupations and further occupations in to professions. Every change would take place in the society with a change in the culture and live styles of people: it demands new occupations and professionalism, with new skills; new culture and attitudes will emerge. In the whole process, here we are going

discuss, how ODL facilitate education to 'new learner with continuing life long education' and the traits expected by the new learners and what are the major implications of the instructional implication of the open and distance education are discussed in this unit. We will also discuss, what could be the profile of a 21st century learner in this changing world? Over time the learner has been the explorer of new knowledge, with the rapid changing society and its knowledge base and skilled has been its multiplier effect. . In the 21st century, challenges and demands of learning are increasingly expanding and frequently changing. It is in this context that we postulate, in this Unit, four models of the 21st century learner and analyze their approaches to learning and finally expected traits of the new learners. It provides a practical example of new styles of learning and considers the implications of these emerging learner models for development in higher education in general and ODL in particular. Otherwise, it can be attributed to new learning by 'new learner' in the changing process of society and its demands.

3.2 WHO ARE OLD AND TRADITIONAL LEARNERS?

One can be categorized 'old learner' is one, who strongly believe that education for social, economic change and it is a cultural process and transformation. He/she least bother for the market and technology otherwise he/she may not be aware of the market and techno-managerial issues and implications of education. In the historical process the olds learners associated with religion and culture and maintain retain the socio-cultural process. The final product of education is maintenance of culture and social order. The society was mostly divided in to functional division basis and status was retained through education. Education for all, educational equity, flexible practices access to wide source of knowledge is not gained movement in the traditional learner and learning style. Even, if we observe equity principle in education, no where appears in any religion, equality of opportunity is the democratic principle which was not followed in the traditional societies. The 'new learners' are democratic, secular, socialist, republic governors' under legal constitutional status, longing for equity, accessible to people and places, flexible in their approaches, he or she longing to acquire knowledge seamlessly, and more adaptable to changing times and space.

3.3 EMERGENCE OF NEW LEARNERS: THE CONCEPT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

Post- colonial states are modern states. Those are the countries liberated from the colonial rule broadly called as developing societies /nations; they are namely Asia, Africa and Latin America. They are liberal, sovereign, socialist, secular, liberal, democratic states. Longing for equality to its citizens is the basic principles of modern democracy. Universal educational access to its citizens and educational for all is the agenda of modern democratic state and its policy. The same latter and spirit expressed by Prof. Ram Reddy, when he was convincing the open and distance education. In his words "Democracy in politics and Elitism in education do not go together". He meant that democracy will assert with education to all. In the modern globalizing era education has become borderless and seamless and life long learning, continuing and life long and self-learning is the order of the day.

Emergence of open and distance education paved way for life long education and it can be attributed to emergence of 'new learners'. Distance education as discussed earlier, is a new career avenue for the teachers and the learners in the globalizing era. New Learner needs to be understood in terms of ever changing society, every change denotes to a shift in the existing beliefs, practices, it is otherwise called paradigm shift, paradigm denotes the change; change is the only constant factor in all spheres of public life where education is not exceptional. New learner is gaining movement in the liberalization, privatization and globalizing era, particularly in the knowledge societies. The capacity building among the people is very important in the changing society. The capacity building is mostly the capacity sharing activity. As such it is said that today's trainee is tomorrow's trainer. Each one teaches one is old saying, the new saying is multiplying effect of training, i.e., One, one + eleven (it is the synergy). It is appropriate to quote here that " In this age of knowledge is the intellectual capital-trained man power-rather than financial and physical capital, which will give the society strength and prosperity when knowledge educated people become important strategic resource for development." for 20th century. (Venkateswaran. S. 2000). Hence, it is always emphasized that capacity building is a capacity sharing activity in the globalizing era of education.

The rapid expansion of knowledge is paving the way to continuing education and self directed learning. All the societies are rapidly changing. Changing society's demands change in occupational, cultural, skills developing patterns and perception in their mindset, in this process, traditional vocations would give way to new occupations, new occupations would give to professionalism, for example, the traditional people used to clean house, roads and airports with traditional broom, where as, the modern technological era; the broom has been replaced by the vacuum cleaners. The attitude of the operator of the broom and vacuum cleaner, demand totally different mindset and behavioral patterns. The educated behaves more gently and sophisticatedly, which is demanded behavioral and attitudinal changes while dealing with their clientele. Above, the process creates 'a sense of dignity of labour' and gives respect of all occupations and professions, this, we would witness in the developed societies, it is a transformation from vocation to occupation and further to professionalism. Technology enabled a paradigm shift in traditional vocations and gives a way to new systems of occupations, the traditional crafts has replaced by modern gadgets, which demands education and culture, attitudes /mannerism. These processes cannot be stopped. It is a necessary, but for some people it appears to be evil, agree to disagree, one can call the process is a necessary evil in the paradigm shift. Traditionally education served as a social and cultural force but the modern education, especially in the technological era, it is serving as a productive force and also techno-managerial skills dominates all spheres of public life. It is due to silicon revolution that had taken and reshaped all the spheres of life in modern societies. Today in the era of blended learning atmospheres, particularly in the developing societies, we find bullocks and air crafts are going together.

When we refer to content and purpose of education, the teaching learning process has also undergone sea changes. According to Peter Ducker, 'the present society is a knowledge society', where educated people, traditionally they were called "elites" (chosen few), in the modern times they are called 'knowledge workers', they contribute their knowledge and skills to the knowledge societies. Most of the educated people are

playing the role of 'knowledge workers in the knowledge society'. Here, education is being played as an effective instrument of socio economic change. People are willing pay their live saving for two sectors, they are namely 'health and education'. Education is becoming an important investment for the all sections of the society. *"It is the productivity of the problem that counts and that in turn depends on their ability to gain knowledge, create knowledge and transform knowledge in to wealth "(IDEA- Kulandaiswamy 2000).*

As discussed earlier, the role of the teacher has also under a change. The teachers are compared as 'knowledge workers' (Peter.-F-Ducker-1990) in the knowledge society. The changing social order demands a change in teaching and learning and teacher's orientation towards learning the modern teacher is more facilitator than preacher. He aid, advice, guide and counsel in a proper and a desirable direction to facilitate further and life long learning. Further the teacher as a facilitator, allow the learners to undertake innovations, experimentations and explore the creativity of the learners. Most of the centres of excellence institutions are undertaking the same formula in their teaching & learning process. It is always less concept and more experiments and generalizations with experiments.

In the areas of open and distance learning, there is an enough scope to expose mass based/non-conventional/vocational programmes for masses and that would be serious agenda for distance education for 21 century. The role of a teacher is a topic of relevance of the present time. It is in the context of globalization process, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) advancement has paved the way to liberate knowledge from the few elites. The era is the age of access to knowledge, but the demand of the time is to integrate the knowledge with human intellect for human empowerment. In the present day, the demand is not the tones of knowledge but an ounce of integrity. Integrity is the direction and also a view and way of life. Hence the teacher irrespective of his point of view should be open to his point of view and frank in his value framework in order to be clear in his/her framework without confusing others. It is also appropriate to quote *"the modern teacher ought to possess the traits of a cultural teacher to transmit and protect the values of the society. Similarly, to survive in the market, he ought to be competent enough to show a direction to the market with the educational process and also his learners. And finally, he cannot afford to neglect techno-managerial skills which is otherwise called 'as a corporate teacher' "(Satyanarayana.R-2202)*

The present learning environment is one of intricate social activity, rapid communication, action, mobility and change with a huge potential for new knowledge. It should not be a surprise that the nature of learners and therefore learning may still be evolving, changing and expanding quite often. Our 21st century environment is one of rapid communication, action, mobility and change.

Check Your Progress 1

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answers.

b) Check your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Define new learners and old learner. (Answer in about 100 words.)

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2) Comment on the knowledge workers in the knowledge society.

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3.4 LEARNER MODELS

Four dominant learner models have emerged in the 21st century learning context and these are explained below: the models categorized under four models, they are namely:

- 3.4.1 Collaborator
- 3.4.2 Free Agent
- 3.4.3 Wise Analyzer
- 3.4.4 Creative Synthesizer

3.4.1 Collaborator

A collaborator is one for who, networks of knowledge, skills and ideas are the sources of learning. This type of learner:

- seeks out and maintains links and networks
- negotiates and exchanges ideas
- uses new technology to support collaborative work
- contributes and adds value to cooperative learning processes
- also exploits and derives value from them
- Is a team player, able to reach 'win-win' agreements?

What sort of learning environment does the Collaborator require? This learner needs access to knowledge and ideas, especially those of practitioners. This learner needs partnerships and networks from which to profit. This learner needs support for development of people skills and a sense of personal value within collaborative ventures with others.

3.4.2 Free Agent

A free-agent uses flexible, continuous, open-ended and life-long styles and systems of learning to the optimal level. This learner makes full use of continuous, open-ended and life-long styles and systems of learning. This is a learner who is:

- flexible, able to keep pace with change, to take advantage of it
- able too to cope with changing requirements of an unstable job market and of employers who are more concerned with personal transferable skills than with those relating to particular occupations - this learner is not bound to an occupation
- conversant with new technology and therefore not constrained by place and the accessibility of instructors
- independent, self-reliant, using new combined courses of study, rather than those which are profession-related
- able to take advantage of modularity, credit transfer, and arrangements for accumulated learning.

This Free-Agent learner requires opportunity to engage in practical work, to integrate performance and learning. This learner needs opportunity to plan flexibly, to seek out a wide range of sources and use these creatively and effectively.

3.4.3 Wise Analyzer

A wise-analyzer able to gather, scrutinize and use evidence of effective activity and apply conclusions to new problems. The Wise Analyzer is:

- reflective and critical
- skilled at the processes of research, testing of validity and the application of findings
- close to the world of work and opportunities for action research
- able to argue judgments securely
- able to apply and adapt arguments to new contexts and to use them in the management of change.

This learner requires opportunity to analyse and manage processes and to apply analysis to new situations. This learner seeks to pursue initiatives through circular processes of identification, analysis, result, impact and evaluation.

3.4.4 Creative Synthesizer

A creative synthesizer is one who is able to connect across themes and disciplines, cross-fertilize ideas, integrate disparate concepts and create new vision and practice. For this learner knowledge does not rest on particular ways of seeing the world. This learner:

- has new ways of seeing things
- puts aside ideas that learning is linear and confirms to us that everything is inter-related and complex
- Is able to create, investigate and to seize opportunities for development and change.
- Having social, market and techno-managerial orientations to the education in the context of changing society and its demands.

The Creative Synthesizer requires complex and stimulating learning environments, with access to disparate disciplines. This learner needs

opportunities to negotiate across boundaries, together with the framework for creating radical visions and seeing them become real.

Note that there could be more learner models but the rationale behind presenting the models here is to show that as we move from teaching to learning-centred provision, the learner is more central to the higher education process.

As much as the learner is important, his/her learning context is equally important for effective teaching/learning process. Let us touch upon this now.

Check Your Progress 2

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answer.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

Who are self-directed learners? Explain its features.

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3.5 IMPACT OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

Consequent on the phenomenal growth in information and communications technologies (ICT), information packaging and information dissemination have assumed new dimensions, which in turn have made quite an impact on the way we learn, i.e., the way we access as well as assimilate information. Rodgers et al (2006) reveal that by the time the new generation students reach the age of 21, they would have spent 10,000 hours playing video games, sent 200,000 emails, watched 20,000 hours of television, spent 10,000 hours on mobile phone and 5,000 hours in reading. Note the vast difference in the number of hours spent on new media and reading! They further claim that the trend will continue: children in the age group of 6 and below would spend per day 2.01 hours playing outside and 1.58 hours using computers but they would spend 40 minutes reading or being read to. This has implications for ODL. .

When in doubt academically, where would most of us generally look for answers? It is safe to assume that we would turn mostly to live teachers for answers. However, the 21st century learners, in all probability, would seek the help from elsewhere - the Internet! Instead of considering it an over-dependence on technology or tool, it is time we recognized its capabilities to empower learners to do new things. Today's learners are digitally literate, mobile and regard ICTs not as tools but as extension of their life.

A 21st century learner tends use a combination of sound and image and, to a lesser extent, text to convey a message. In fact, they tolerate text – the

primary medium for traditional academics – and perhaps a live teacher, only when a better option is not immediately available! The hypertext minds of 21st century learners crave interactivity, are good at reading visual images (though weak with reading skills), have strong visual/spatial skills, tend towards parallel processing and inductive discovery, look for fast response times (which some may claim leads to short attention spans.)

3.6 WHAT IS THE IMPLICATION OF THIS FOR ODL?

There seems to be a symbiotic relationship between the growth of information and the development of new technologies. Put differently, the amount of information seems growing almost as quickly as new technologies develop and the vice-versa. We now process more information in 24-hours than the average person 500 years ago would process in a lifetime. By the time, today's kindergarteners complete 12 years of schooling, information will have grown at least seven times, while technological power will have grown itself nearly nine times. In other words, knowledge doubles in almost every year.

With this rate of mind-boggling growth in information/knowledge, is it logical to continue to perpetrate the customary educational practice of memorization of content? Even granting that rote-learning is acceptable (to be fair, it is generally not acceptable even in the 20th century learning environment) with the ever-increasing knowledge base, it is humanly impossible to memorize all the content. Consequent on which, it is imperative for us to refashion syllabi and curricula in such a way as to create situations and allow students to make connections, think through issues and solve problems. Of necessity, therefore, "We must move beyond the old university model where the primary challenge of learning was to absorb a vast array of specific information" (Rodgers, M et al, 2006).

Learning is no longer a one-time affair: it's a lifelong process, a process of coping with changes. The content for learning cannot, therefore, be seen as finite – unlike in the present context. As a consequence, learning the content of a particular lesson/course becomes increasingly less important than constructing it by relating the content to other appropriate content resources. If learning by constructing has become the preferred process, the construct of a syllabus/curriculum must facilitate it. The constructivist approach to framing the syllabus/curriculum thus gains importance among the 21st century learners.

In the main, a 21st century learner lives in a digital world and is alive to the multi-media environment. Little wonder, therefore, they expect a learning environment populated with multi-media content. However, in a majority of the cases, classrooms remain divorced from this environment and the teacher continues to be a dispenser of facts and theories that may be often considered dated, resulting in academic fatigue among learners and teachers alike. ODL contexts are no better. The operations of a traditional ODL institution are seen as an extension of those of the classroom educational set and therefore the teaching/learning contexts as such replicate them at a distance. To be alive to the emerging situation, ODL must evolve and learn to communicate in the language and style of the 21st century learners.

3.7 TRAITS OF THE NEW LEARNERS

When we refer to contest and purpose of education, the teaching learning process has also undergone sea changes. As we have discussed Peter Ducker ideas of 'knowledge society', where educated people, traditionally they were called "elites" (chosen few), in the modern times they are called 'knowledge workers', they contribute their knowledge and skills to the knowledge societies. Most of the educated people are playing the role of 'knowledge workers in the knowledge society'. Here education is being played as an effective instrument of socio economic change. People are willing to pay their life savings for two sectors, they are namely 'health and education'. Education is becoming an important investment for all sections of the society. It is being invested in to face the situation and equally in open and distance educational situations. The tradition of learning society encouraged new learners, they are mostly self-learners, manipulate technology for learning purposes. They are life long learners. The new learner can be broadly identified with the following characteristics:

- 1) S/he is a continuous learner or life long learner.
- 2) Possess flexible/balanced mindset, accessible their knowledge's seamlessly/borderless and longing for social equity in the existing order;
- 3) Belief and faith on open distance learning that it would pave the way for seamless education;
- 4) Sound understanding & application of principles of instructional design and its pedagogy for learning at distance;
- 5) Good public relation skills as one has to deal with a variety of experts— artists, course writers, editors, presenters/instructional designers;
- 6) Sound knowledge of his/her discipline and systemic (i.e. open and distance education);
- 7) Excellent command over language, editing and communication skills;
- 8) Familiarity with copyright/IPR provisions, copy editing, proof reading and other skills in preparation and production of quality materials;
- 9) Possess flexible/balanced mindset, accessible their knowledge's seamlessly/borderless and longing for social equity in the existing order;
- 10) Passion to acquire new skills and constantly update his /her knowledge. S/he always tries to multiplier effect of their knowledge and skills from generation to another generation;
- 11) They are mostly knowledge workers in the knowledge society in the context of liberalization, privatization and globalization context;
- 12) S/he is always and mostly a self-learner, manipulates media and technologies to gain, retain and consolidate his /her body of knowledge;
- 13) They are mostly work in a team and bring out the product or a purpose;
- 14) For their context and purpose of the work situation and meeting its demands are the quality elements;

- 15) In the leadership orientations they always believe that what they have is not important but how they exhibit is more important. It is otherwise relevant to the contest;
- 16) In terms of capacity building process, they always believe that 'capacity sharing is capacity buildings';
- 17) The new learner has no borders of learning, he/she longing for seamless education, knowledge and skills;
- 18) Above all, the new learner is more prone to 'eclectic approach to learning' (i.e. having sound knowledge of everything from all the points of views).

The above issues you read more in MDE-419 course of this programme.

3.8 WHAT ARE THE INSTRUCTIONAL IMPLICATIONS?

Seen against this context and background, it is time ODL institutions embarked on or embraced blended learning environments with dynamic contents. Blended learning contexts will have, among others, just-in-time online as well as face-to-face support in addition to multi-media interactive content. This facilitates a smooth transition from the physical space of a classroom to a virtual space for the teaching/learning transaction.

These new learning spaces provide an array of new pedagogical approaches. Wireless networking provides greater mobility in and out of the classroom. Videoconferencing, online collaborations via whiteboards and virtual discussions through threaded discussion boards, blogs, wikis and chat, all enable learning to happen anywhere, any place. Another pedagogical approach that technology is enabling; the 21st century learner is expecting and ODL institutions must incorporate is collaborative learning through group/team projects. These projects can be developed using multi-media processes and provide a more powerful learning approach than an assignment or term paper – specifically, more authentic learning. In other words, this would certainly help satiate the learners' quest for practical applications in real-world context.

If the 21st century learner is to be satisfied, a concerted effort must be immediately undertaken in the realm of staff development. We need to have a new set of expectations of faculty with respect to their knowledge about, skills in and attitude towards the use of appropriate technologies within the ODL space. It is imperative therefore to foster a technology/digital culture with an emphasis on continuous faculty training, availability of sufficient resources/support and proper rewards for innovation in the creation of technology-rich learning environments.

Check Your Progress 3

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answers.

b) Check your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

- 1) Discuss any three traits of the new learners. (Answer in about 100 words.)

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2) Discuss your understanding on new learners in the globalizing era.

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3.9 LET US SUM UP

New learner is a 21st century learners, He/She are life long learner's strongly believer of flexibility, accessibility, equality and education for all. New learners are modern democratic secular socialist learners aims at life long seamless learning by manipulating technology for learning purpose, above all he/she are self-directed learners in the globalizing era of education. Higher education must both respond to and lead learning trends and aspirations. The future is difficult to foresee, especially as development becomes ever more rapid. Finally, the traits expected by them are universally recognized. Our predictions of models of the learner, and our ability to adapt systems to meet needs for support, will determine how successful higher education can be in meeting 21st century challenges for learning by manipulating both media and methods available and suitable for the new learners in the globalizing era of education.

3.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

1) 'Old learner' is one, who strongly believes that education for social, economic change and it is a cultural process and transformation. He/she least bother for the market and technology otherwise he/she may not be aware of the market and techno-managerial issues and implications of education.

Education for all, educational equity, flexible practices access to wide source of knowledge is not gained movement in the traditional learner and learning style. Even, if we observe equity principle in education, no where appears in any religion, equality of opportunity is the democratic principle which was not followed in the traditional societies.

2) The teaching learning process has also undergone sea changes. According to Peter Ducker, 'the present society is a knowledge society', where educated people, traditionally they were called "elites" (chosen few), in the modern times they are called 'knowledge

workers', they contribute their knowledge and skills to the knowledge societies. Most of the educated people are playing the role of 'knowledge workers in the knowledge society'. Here, education is being played as an effective instrument of socio economic change. People are willing to pay their life savings for two sectors, they are namely 'health and education'. Education is becoming an important investment for the all sections of the society

Check Your Progress 2

The 21st century learners otherwise called new learners, they are independent self-regulated learners who manipulate all the available media for learning purposes. In all probability, they would seek the help from elsewhere - the Internet! Instead of considering it an over-dependence on technology or tool, it is time we recognized its capabilities to empower learners to do new things. Today's learners

A 21st century learner tends to use a combination of sound and image and, to a lesser extent, text to convey a message. In fact, they tolerate text – the primary medium for traditional academics. They learn on their own and access to knowledge and disseminate knowledge with the help of all available technologies.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) a) He /She are a continuous learner or life long learners.
b) They are mostly knowledge workers in the knowledge society in the context of liberalization, privatization and globalization context.
c) He/she is always and mostly a self-learner, manipulates media and technologies to gain, retain and consolidate his /her body of knowledge.
- 2) New learner is gaining momentum in the liberalization, privatization and globalizing era, particularly in the knowledge societies. The capacity building among the people is very important in the changing society. The capacity building is mostly the capacity sharing activity. As such it is said that today's trainee is tomorrow's trainer. Each one teaches one is old saying, the new saying is multiplying effect of training, i.e., One, one + eleven (it is the synergy). It is appropriate to quote here that " In this age of knowledge is the intellectual capital-trained man power-rather than financial and physical capital, which will give the society strength and prosperity when knowledge educated people become important strategic resource for development." for 20th century.

Unit End Exercise

- 1) Compare the new and old learners in the context of globalization era.
- 2) How different Learner models are useful to understand teaching learning process?
- 3) Define knowledge workers and how they contribute knowledge to knowledge society?
- 4) Describe any five traits of the New Learners and how they empower themselves as self-learners.

3.11 GLOSSARY

Elite	: An acknowledge people with knowledge, skills or chosen few from many
Instructional implication:	Teaching & Learning Implications
Knowledge Society	: 21st century is considered as a knowledge society
Knowledge workers	: Who sells their knowledge and lead their lives.
LPG	: An abbreviated expression for liberalization, privatization and globalization
Multiplier	: Reproduce in large number or multiplied by the existing and goes on
Occupations	: A job
Paradigm shift	: Denotes change (change is constant factor in all walks of lives)
Professions	: A job that needs training and a formal qualification
Synergy	: Cooperation of two or more things to produce a combined effect greater than the some of their separate effect.
Synthesizer	: Combining in to organize the whole
Vocations	: Career for occupation

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