

## **SELF-REGULATED LEARNING AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT: AN OVERVIEW**

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### **ABSTRACT**

India is the second most populated country with 54% population below 25 years. This could prove an asset for the country only if this class is skilled enough to be socially, culturally and economically productive. Result for Development Institute Report (2012) reveals that although technical and basic cognitive skills are indispensable yet many non-cognitive and transferrable skills are gradually becoming vital in workplace these days. Problem solving, punctuality, flexibility and communication are some of such non-cognitive skills. In India, there is a well-established structure of skill and vocational training but the present system could not adequately prepare youth to meet the present requirements of the domestic and international market. One of the major concerns to provide quality training in skill development is the methodology or approach used in training programmes. Most of these programmes emphasizes on technical or vocational skills whereas other skills like soft skills, lifelong learning skills, job skills are generally ignored. Adopting self-regulated learning could be a solution for this problem as it is a social cognitive theory of learning. It considers learning as an outcome of interaction of cognition, behaviour and environment of an individual. Present paper analyses how self-regulated learning could be helpful to fulfill the objectives of various skill development programmes.

**Keywords:** Self-Regulated Learning, Skill Development

### **Introduction**

For the multifaceted development of a country, skills and knowledge are the key forces. Therefore countries which provide an effective and better skills, adapt more quickly and efficiently to the opportunities and changes in national and global job markets. As 65% of Indian population is under 35 years of age so India is one of the youngest nations of the world (Youth for nation building, 2018). It is predicted that average age will be 29 years in India till 2020. It could prove as an asset for India as average age of major developed countries will be near 50

years then. So there will be a great scarcity of skilled workforce across the world. Consequently, along with meeting its own demand, India has ample possibilities to fulfill the projected shortfall in the developed world. So it is requisite to concentrate on skill development for Economical, Social and political growth of India. Programmes like 'Skill India' and 'Make in India' are designed to encourage and boost quality of skill development in young people of India (National policy for skill development and entrepreneurship, 2015).

After completion of educational or professional course of study, everyone needs a good and suitable job. But generally it is observed that many young aspirants are underemployed just due to lack of required skills for a particular job. According to a report published in India Today, around 97% students having bachelor degree in engineering are searching for core engineering or software engineering jobs. But only 3% are having suitable skills to get jobs in software market and 7% have skills for core engineering tasks (India Today, July 2016). Here comes the roll of skill development in our education system. In our educational setup, academic front is preferred to other skills. In present scenario, skill development should be incorporated as a vital part of every academic, professional and vocational stream of studies.

### **Skill Development**

According to business dictionary, skill is "an ability and capacity acquired through deliberate, systematic and sustained effort to smoothly and adaptively carry out complex activities or job functions involving ideas (cognitive skills), things( technical skills) and/or people (interpersonal skills)". Considering skilled workforce as an asset for the development of the country, Ministry for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has come into existence in November 2014. This ministry gave fresh impetus to the Skill India agenda and to raise the quality of these programmes to pass on employable skills to its rising young workforce and to prepare them for their better future. According to National policy for skill development and entrepreneurship (2015), "As India moves progressively towards becoming a global knowledge economy, it must meet the rising aspirations of its youth. This can be partially achieved through focus on advancement of skills that are relevant to the emerging economic environment. The challenge pertains not only to a huge quantitative expansion of the facilities for skill training, but also to the equally important task of raising their quality."

Further National policy for skill development and entrepreneurship (2015), says, "The core objective of the Policy is to empower the individual, by enabling her/him to realize their full potential through a process of lifelong learning where competencies are accumulated via instruments such as credible certifications, credit accumulation and transfer, etc. As individuals grow, the society and nation also benefit from their productivity and growth." It emphasizes on lifelong learning, as this would prove a boon for youth to be successful in their academic as well

as professional front. To fulfill this objective, it is mandatory to adopt an effective way of teaching and learning for such training programmes.

To enhance quality, emphasis is generally given to improve the infrastructures, percentage of enrollment and access to skill development program. But we are lacking in the effective approach to be used in imparting these skills in schools and colleges. We need to adopt an approach that can make our youth a lifelong learner, enriches him/her with employability skills like goal setting, self reflection and self improvement. Only these skills can help Indian youth to meet the global standards to get an employment.

Considering all these issues, self-regulated learning approach could proved to be an appropriate approach in skill development programmes. Many eminent researchers and academicians have expressed their views in this regard. According to Zimmerman (2002), "Self-regulation is important because a major function of education is the development of lifelong learning skills. After graduation from high school or college, young adults must learn many important skills informally." He supported the idea as lifelong learning skill would help the young people to acquire require more skills even after completing their formal qualifications. It helps the learner to set goals and to make plan to achieve them in an optimum way. According to Wong (2004), "Self-regulated learning encompass thoughts, feelings, and actions generated by the student and then monitored, and adapted by the student over the time in order to obtain learning goals."

### **Major Challenges to Skill Development in India**

Although India has well-planned and organized system of skill development in youth still there are many challenges to achieve goals. According to NCF (2005), "Apart from being viewed as an inferior stream, it suffers from poor infrastructure, obsolete equipment, untrained or under qualified teachers (often on a part-time basis), outdated and inflexible courses, lack of vertical or lateral mobility, absence of linkage with the 'world of work', lack of a credible evaluation, accreditation and apprenticeship system, and, finally, low employability (Report of the Working Group for the Revision of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Vocationalisation of Secondary Education, NCERT, 1998)"

In our country, common man's opinion for skill programmes poses a big challenge. These programmes are generally perceived as the last option meant for those who could not get admissions in formal academic streams (National policy for skill development and entrepreneurship, 2015). This could be changed only by successful placements of students in India as well as globally. Other alarming challenge to skill development programme is the lack of suitable jobs and employability skills among the trained youth. So they are not employed by global and reputed companies. Skill development programmes generally focus on the technical

skills but the other job skills are ignored. Hence in the market skilled and non skilled employees are generally getting the same enumeration.

According to Okada (2012), some other challenges which Indian skilled youth face, are: Intense competition in global market, drastic technological changes, global economical crisis and competition with their well trained counterparts from developed countries. Here comes the need of adopting an effective pedagogical approaches and models to be introduced in skill development programmes to ensure a significant difference between a skilled and unskilled worker. First of all the probability of getting an appropriate job after completion of these programmes should be higher. Apart from this, this programme should be continuously scrutinized whether these are providing the requisite skills to youth to be eligible to enter in domestic as well as global market. Measuring the impact of skill development on employability could also be a parameter to assess the quality of such programmes. Similarly the level of competence of students after finishing these programmes should also be a component while evaluating such programmes.

To meet all these challenges and to address the problems in skill development programmes, self regulated learning approach could be an appropriate solution as it caters the current need of lifelong learning skill. It further develops the habit of setting goals, selecting suitable strategies to achieve goals, self evaluation and self correction.

### **Self Regulated Learning Approach**

Self Regulated Learning is basically a Socio cognitive theory which considers behaviour, cognition and motivation as part of learning. Here learning does not mean only on academic front. But it helps an individual to be a lifelong learner. Main focus of Self regulated learning is to prepare students to become masters of their own learning (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1989). According to Bandura (1986), learning takes place in social environment and it is an outcome of triadic reciprocal interactions among personal, behavioural and environmental. Larrviee (2009) expressed, "Self-regulation allows students to guide their behaviors by constantly making necessary adjustments to accomplish desirable outcomes". Besides many other employability skills like decision making, self improvement, motivation, goal setting, problem solving, time and behaviour management, managing emotions and many more, can be instilled by adopting self-regulation.

Self regulated learning includes various cognitive, affective and physical activities. Firstly,

students set a goal for a given task, class or session. Secondly students will select those strategies to accomplish the given task or learning in a class which they assumed to be most suitable for their learning. It may be active listening, self questioning, taking notes, paraphrasing etc. Lastly

at execution level, students control their focus and behaviour towards their goal along with the self monitoring and self evaluation to know how well the chosen strategy has worked out with them. If desirable result is not an outcome, learner has flexibility to choose another strategy for execution. Thus, a self regulated learner controls his learning in a better way (Nilson, 2013). Analysing own performance, goal setting and decision making in choice of strategies make them able to acquire many essential job skills like life-long learner, problem solving self evaluation etc. Whereas naive learners tend to stick to their old strategies irrespective of their effectiveness in achieving their goals. Like self regulated learner they are not trained in processes like goal setting, strategies selection, self-evaluation, self-control, self motivation, self analysis and time management etc.

According to Zimmerman (1989), "students can be described as self-regulated to the degree that they are meta-cognitively, motivationally, and behaviourally active participants in their own learning process. In his researches on self regulation, Zimmerman (2000) suggested cyclic model of self regulation comprising of three phases and underlying sub-processes. Following is the brief description of these three phases along with the comparison of self regulated learners and naive learners in each phase:

**(i) Forethought and Planning Phase:** This is also known as preparation and planning phase. It involves student's thinking before they take required actions to accomplish a given task. In the course of forethought and planning phase, students analyse the given task and set goals to accomplish that task. When students encounter a new topic, they may not decide and choose best approach of learning. Here teachers or peers can help them to choose appropriate learning strategies. This phase comprises of two major processes: task analysis which includes goal-setting and planning; motivational beliefs which refers to one's outcome expectation. Task demands and personal resources must be taken into account in advance to start a task so that probable obstacles can be recognised (Ertmer & Newby, 1996; Zimmerman, 2000). According to Jossberger(2010) in this phase generally naive learners start the given task without specific goals with a focus on performance, whereas self regulated learners set specific hierarchical goals that focus on learning. It further enhances self efficacy and interest in the given task. According to Pintrich (1999) and Schunk and Zimmerman (1998), self regulated learners perceive themselves to be more self-efficacious and they report significantly greater intrinsic interest in learning tasks as compared to their naive counterparts.

**(ii) Performance Monitoring Phase:** In second phase of performance monitoring, learners execute the strategies selected in the forethought and planning phase to accomplish the given task and continuously monitor the effectiveness of the chosen strategies. They also sustain their motivation level to continue with this task. Most of the students have a trend to choose their old strategies which may not work out efficiently for the given task. They generally are reluctant to

adopt new strategies .Hence an appropriate teacher monitoring and a specific feedback can be helpful to learners to acquire and use more effective learning strategies and to maintain their motivation level high. Main processes during this phase are self controlling, which involves attention focusing and using specific task strategies and self-observation which involves a continuous monitoring of learning (Zumbrunn, Tadlock & Roberts, 2011). According to Zimmerman (1998), self regulated learners focus their attention on learning task and continuously monitor their performance while using their chosen strategies for the given task. They have high probability to overcome the difficulties during the learning process as they are more adaptable to indentify and use new effective learning strategies (Winne, 1995). On the other hand , naive learners are easily get effected by the unfavorable outcomes of the strategies they are using for the given task which in turn causes their losing interest in accomplishing the task.

**(iii) Reflection Phase:** In the third phase of the cycle, the main processes are self assessment and self evaluation. Zimmerman (1998) used the term self-judgment and self reaction which encompasses self evaluation and causal attributions. According to Ertmer & Newby (1996) and Zimmerman (2000), once the given task is completed, learners are supposed to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the plans and strategies chosen and executed for the given task. Evaluation and reflection would eventually enhance their learning from the actual experience and further improve their performance in future. So this phase plays the role of a link between previous learning experiences and future goal setting and selection appropriate strategies (Ertmer & Newby, 1996). Self regulated learners find this phase as an opportunity to self evaluates their learning process and aims to improve their performance. They attribute any unfavourable outcome to their wrong choice of strategy in the first phase and gradually improve their choice and become adaptive to new strategies in the next forethought phase. On the flip side naive learners generally skip this phase and avoid taking their responsibility for any failure. They usually tend to attribute a negative outcome to a lack of ability. Consequently, they are unsystematic in their methods of adaptations, which can lead to negative self reactions (Zimmerman, 1998).

### **Conclusions and Suggestions**

From above discussion and comparison following are some conclusions and suggestions for the implementation of self regulated learning approach in imparting various skills and to meet the other challenges in skill development programmes in schools and colleges:

**(i)** Skill development programmes should be given equal preference as the main stream academic programmes by the government. There should be provision of these programmes in each high and senior secondary school. This would help to increase the access of students to these programmes.

(ii) Course designs and curriculum of these programmes must meet the industrial and global market standards. Only then India can make its place in World market to cater the demand of skilled workforce.

(iii) Most important is the methodology of delivering content during these programmes. These programmes should not only focus to imparting mere theoretical knowledge but work place like situations should also be provided for technical skills. Besides these other soft skills like goal setting, planning, self evaluation, lifelong learning and other employability skills should be given equal importance in these programmes. Self Regulated Learning would really prove to be a boon as it helps to inculcate the required soft skills and also can be adopted for technical learning also.

(iv) Many researches revealed that self regulated learning approach is really effective in different academic fields for decades it would be successful in skill development programmes too. Self-regulating learners can be described as active agents in the learning process, who control, steer, and direct cognitive and motivational processes to achieve a learning goal. They are keen to set goals, choose effective strategies, take help if required, time management, evaluate their performance, and opt alternative methods to success if required ( Pintrich, 1999; Zimmerman, 2006). Skill Development programmes also needs these student qualities as a desirable goal to strive for.

(v) According to Jossberger (2011), "Vocational education strives for independent and self-directed learners and self-regulated learning is a promising skill to accomplish this aim. Especially in work place simulations, self-regulated learning is regarded beneficial for learning from experience during practical tasks". Further research is required to find out the effectiveness and instructional design of self regulated learning approach in skill development programmes.

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