

## **The Confucius Philosophy and Islamic Teachings of Lifelong Learning: Implications for Professional Development of Teachers**

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### **Abstract**

The concept of lifelong learning has widely been advocated by the academic circles during the last few decades particularly after the publication of work of UNESCO (Faure et al., 1972). It is generally believed that the concept has its origin in the western culture and dates back to about a century. However, a careful review of modern literature and teachings of ancient civilization like Confucius philosophy and Islamic teachings reveal that the concept was not there in those cultures but was given very high importance. This paper presents a review and analysis of the Confucius philosophy of education and Islamic teachings within the perspective of Lifelong learning. It also argues for importance of lifelong learning in the era of globalization and attempts to relate it with the concept of Continuous Professional Development (CPD). An attempt has also been made to clarify the concept of Continuous Professional Growth, its characteristics and implication for teachers and teacher education institutions.

**Keywords:** Lifelong learning, lifelong education, Confucius philosophy, Islamic concept of lifelong learning, Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

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### **Introduction and Historical Background**

Although the idea of lifelong learning and lifelong education has been there since long, but the academic community has witnessed a renewed interest and increased research in this area of vital importance (Sun, 2008; Kirby, Knapper, Lamon & Egnatoff, 2010; Bhola, 2006; Knapper & Cropley, 2000). However, understanding of the term lifelong learning varies from culture to culture and from one individual to the other. There is hardly any consensus on the definition of the term (Medel-Añonuevo, Ohsako, & Mauch, 2001). More over, after going through various researches, one is lead to believe that the concept originated in the western culture and dates back to the publication of UNESCO's (Faure et al, 1972) seminal work (Kirby, Knapper, Lamon & Egnatoff, 2010).

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As far as the literature review is concerned, use of the term Lifelong learning can be traced back to 1920s, used by Lindeman (1926) and Yeaxlee, (1920). The Wikipedia acknowledges that although the term was first used by Yeaxlee (1929) but was popularized by the work of UNESCO (Faure et al, 1972). Yeaxlee and Lindeman thought that learning is just not related to formal school education, in fact everything that man learns from his daily life experiences constitute his learning process. Up till 1970 the term “Lifelong learning” was just restricted to adult/ formal education and the workers' education movement. The basic purpose was to train workers through formal education and enhancing their skilful competence. UNESCO (Faure, et al., 1972) recommended lifelong education to be the basic concept for all education policies in all countries of the world. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 1996) described four elements of lifelong learning; wisdom to live together, knowing to be, erudition to know, and lore to do. The first two pillars focus upon the social and democratic participation of human beings. The last two pillars are related to skill development on economic basis. Rubenson (2002) again emphasized that lifelong learning encompasses all kinds of learning and is not just restricted to formal education. Field (2003) described lifelong learning as a relative new concept i.e. the kind of learning a knowledge required by a person to fulfill his social needs. Review of the literature reveals that this term has been equally in use in African, Asian and Arabic cultures, which lays emphasis on continuing learning from childhood to the adulthood. In Europe lifelong learning gained its meaning as mere retraining. Thus, the idea of lifelong learning is neither new nor novel to the European or American culture. One of the UNESCO's reports (Medel-Añonuevo, Ohsako & Mauch, 2001) recognises the role of eastern philosophies of Confucianism and Buddhism in promoting lifelong learning but ignores what Islam has to say about it.

This conceptual paper tries to explain what lifelong learning means, trace the history of lifelong learning, particularly in the context of Confucius philosophy of education and Islamic teachings, emphasising its importance in the era of globalisation and rapid change and describing its implication for professional development of teachers.

## **What is Lifelong Learning?**

Learning is a process that brings change in the human behaviour. It is an ongoing process which sustains throughout the life of an individual, beginning from time of his birth till his death. It occurs through experiences that one has in a life time. This learning process can take the form of lifelong learning and may be either formal or informal. It is a voluntary process that depends upon the initiative and self motivation of the learner. It cannot be forced by an external agency. Some people prefer use the term self-learning or self-directed learning to explain lifelong learning.

The concept of lifelong learning also includes acquiring and updating all kinds of abilities, interests, knowledge and qualifications. It focuses on enhancing the competence level of each citizen in all spheres of his life. The European Commission (2007) defined lifelong learning as, “all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence within a personal, civic, social and/ or employment-related perspective”. Knapper and Cropley (2000) used an alternate term “life-wide” learning to explain the lifelong learning process, which includes a great variety of contexts for the learner in academic and non-academic, formal and informal settings. They have given a very comprehensive definition of the term, encompassing its concept and the accompanying a process. According to them, lifelong learning is:

The single crucial element in the notion of lifelong education is to be found in the world ‘lifelong’: it embraces a set of guidelines for developing educational practice (‘education’) in order to foster learning throughout life (‘lifelong’). Lifelong education thus defines a set of organizational, administrative, methodological and procedural measures which accept the importance of promoting lifelong learning (Knapper & Cropley, 2000, p. 9).

Thus, it can be construed that lifelong learning is a dynamic process which continues throughout the life of an individual. It entails the acquisition, attainment, achievement and accomplishment of knowledge to the extent that gives rise to the inculcation of ability, talent and skills throughout one's life. Lifelong learning is a gradual and ongoing process. Lifelong learning is in fact linked up with the perception of knowledge, whether it means acquisition of factual information or development of abilities to acquire new skills and abilities for example as Anderson (1993) defined knowledge not in terms of possession of factual information in piecemeal fashion rather in terms of possession of generalized schema which enables the individual to make sense of the new events and experiences, as well as possession of skills and abilities effectively dealing with the new events and experiences. So, lifelong learning is not only to get a formal type of education but also to be able to invent new ideas with their utility and effectiveness in every walk of life. Lifelong learning is the supply or the utility of both formal and informal learning possibilities throughout the life of individuals in order to nurture the continuous development and improvement of the knowledge and competencies required for employment and personal fulfillment. It shares a variety of connotations with other educational concepts, like adult education, training, continuing education, permanent education and other terms that relate to learning beyond the formal educational system.

The very concept of lifelong learning encompasses all the spheres of life; no matter the learner intends to enter the domain of knowledge or he ensures his presence without his will, just involuntarily but the learning goes on like some biological process; for example breathing. In nutshell, learning goes on along the every breath of life. It leaves its apparent influence upon the behaviour and mental approach of the learner towards himself, towards his fellows and towards his life as a whole. Thus, he is able to analyze and judge things with his own distinctive prudence and understanding. The educationists and the generalists, keeping this perspective in view, have devised various theories through which they have tried to delineate the process of lifelong learning. Knapper and Cropley (2000, p. 170) have defined a certain characteristics of a lifelong learning. The learner should design and organise the patterns of his learning according to his needs. Such a learner can determine his progress himself. He learns by doing in both educational and non-educational contexts. He is a sharp observer and learns by observing the experiences of his teachers and parents. The learner assimilates and incorporates the knowledge from different fields. The concept of lifelong learning has acquired significance in terms of needs analysis and fulfilling the expectations and needs of the learners in their varying exposures. As soon as the learner perceives the idea of lifelong learning, he / she inculcates a kind of inspiration about the learning process that may refer to his / her ability of acquiring information and getting the sense of the practicability of the abstract; the learner instinctively decides to instil what he / she needs at the very moment. Thus, he / she gets know-how from his/ her day-to-day life which directs him / her towards a particular path of learning; in this fashion the process of learning goes on throughout the life of a learner.

In cahoots, lifelong learning may be entirely taken as an everlasting investment one makes and it stays alive even after one perishes. Khalil Jabraan or Newton can be referred here as an example because they stayed in the lifelong learning process and engraved their name as the most quoted ones for the research work of today even. Thus, life spent in learning gives a bonus in every respect: one gets a chance to intellectually groom which lets him / her be 'beyond time'. Moreover, the lifelong learners become more committed and enthusiastic towards their life; it is all about taking the advantages of everyday learning and having the adventure of lifelong learning. They readily accept the challenges around themselves. To sum up, they are the 'heritage of learning' in true essence as "in times of change, learners inherit the earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists" Eric Hoffer, (1973, p.1).

### **Importance of Lifelong Learning**

Globalisation may be taken as a basic phenomenon in the economic

system of the world as it refers to the enormous and fundamental structural changes taking place in the course of manufacture, supply and circulation in the global economy. With this perspective, a great value is conceded for the lifelong learning as the era of globalisation has a huge concurrent proposition for knowledge, education and training. In 1996, OECD ministers for education planned to contrive the strategies for “lifelong learning for all” because it focuses on enhancing the competency level of each citizen in all spheres of his life.

However, it is not enough to improve the existing system of education only in order to meet the knowledge, education and learning challenges of the modern era. It, rather, demands an actual renovation of the learning opportunities on the basis of the principles of modernization that not only emphasize the accumulation of knowledge only but demand its practicability and effectiveness in all spheres of life. Thus, modern concept of lifelong learning does not only encourage the production of degree-holders but also promotes the construction of skilled individuals. In cahoots, this modern era of globalization breaks the limits of space and time and emphasizes the utility of knowledge for the economic progress and development. Thus, the basic purpose of lifelong education is no longer simply to transfer knowledge and information but to guide and teach how to weigh up the essence of the expertise and blend the old experience with the new one. Confucius said that one should focus on grooming the self. On the other hand the Globalized view focuses upon “others”. The very conception of lifelong education is the foundation of progress and development of all countries of the world. The same idea is suggested by Faure Report, as,

“We propose lifelong education as the master concept for education policies in the years to come for both developed and developing countries (Faure et al., 1972, p. vi).”

In today's world we see many examples of life being depicted by very welfare states, like South Korea and the Scandinavians. As far the Islamic countries are concerned, we see a little concern for lifelong learning, despite the fact that Islamic culture has been rich in such tradition. The golden teachings of Islam, ‘seek knowledge from cradle to grave’ have transformed the West into a successful and developed world. Today, in our system education has become more of a rat race in which all just believe that the purpose of education is only to grant them a good job in society and to give them a better status. Rather it should be stated that we are educated but still in the process of becoming civilized. There is a long way to go to implement the actual essence and worth of lifelong learning as given by Islam. Not just in Islam but every religion also highlights the importance of knowledge which should be learnt by every man and woman.

“A key to the twenty- first century, learning throughout life will be essential, for adapting to the evolving requirements of the labour market and for better mastery of the changing Time- frames and rhythms of individual’s existence” (Delors Report, 1996, p. vi)

Moreover, three main dimensions of lifelong learning have been defined by Kirpal (Dave, 1976) as expansion, innovation, and integration. Expansion defines lifelong learning in a process with the situation and content. Innovation refers to the creative power of the learners in multiple and diverse learning situations. Integration unites the process of expansion and innovation through meaningful links. The global view also shows a larger and clearer picture of practising knowledge together with lifelong learning. The significance of 21st century is that it helps mankind to upgrade self-confidence, personal skills; social networking and develop competence to meet the demands of careers throughout one’s life.

### **Confucius Philosophy of Lifelong Education**

Although, Confucius' teaching has been a source of inspiration for people inside China as well as in East Asia, but his teaching have not been known to the outside world. He has tremendous influence on the lives of Chinese and East Asian people not only because of his teachings but because of his personal life as well. He has served as an example of how life can be well lived not through his words of mouth but by way of his actions. His philosophy of education became known by the western world relatively recently.

For understanding his philosophy of lifelong education, it is important to know about his ideas about the human being, its; relations with other human beings and the nature, and the process to be adopted to become a model human being. The core of Confucius philosophy is expressed by *Ren*. *Ren* refers to human virtues. Confucius believed that by birth every human being is a clean soul without any kind of evil. However, the exposure to the society can instil evil or negative leaning, but that can be uprooted through proper education and moral cultivation and benevolence. He did not believe in the stratification of human beings on the basis of economic status, ethnicity and religion. He emphasized that every human being should have an access to education with out any discrimination. To Confucius, “without humanity, people become empty and unscrupulous (Sun, 2008, p. 564).

According to the teachings of Confucius, the persona can be understood as self in a triad of relationships, the self in relation to nature, the self in relation to others, and the self in the relation to itself (Sun, 2008, Zhao & Biesta, 2011). Confucius believed that in order to built a peaceful and disciplined society, it is important to cultivate moral an ethical values in human beings. Confucius ideally appealed to the more noble instincts of

human nature, which, when properly cultivated, could bring forth rich fruits of peace, order and harmony in society. He thought human beings as an end in itself, not as a means to an end (Feng, 1952; Zhao & Biesta, 2011).

The second important element of Confucius philosophy is the *sage*, the model or ideal human being. To Confucius, the *sage* is an ideal human being, a model of humanity that uses lifelong learning to acquire the virtues and actualise his abilities. The third core element, the Confucian educational end is *Jun Zi*. Jun Zi represents a man who is model of morality with outstanding knowledge and wisdom. He has a full desire to learn and acquire new knowledge. Moreover, Confucius theory totally was built on penetrated process of all actual subject- matter learning activities and practice, which brought together education, moral and learning. Therefore it can be said that the whole concept was just to serve the integrated entity of human learning for a purpose. The Confucian education was developed to lead the human beings to learn and become what they could be. It was about being a human being. As Zukav (1989) says that the human nature had roots to gain more and more knowledge, which is stated as “authentic power”. A Confucian *sage* is an ideal human model set us an example to show full moral relationship between whole and part, like individual and society, and as self and others. Confucius restored the closest binds between the great world system and human behaviour.

As expressed by Sun (2008), Confucius philosophy is a philosophy of lifelong education, the philosophy that he only propagated but practiced himself as well. In his own biography, he expressed:

“At the age of 15, I determined and devoted myself to learning; at 30, I established in my profession; at 40, my doubts faded; at 50, I fully committed to my granted mission by heaven; at 60, my ear was attuned; at 70, I followed my heart/desires without overstepping the mark” (*Analects*, book 2, Chapter4, as quoted by Sun, 2008).

In this brief autobiographical summary, Confucius articulated what was to become the core educational philosophy of East Asian culture: personal initiative, common commitment to the cultural heritage, appreciation of spiritual awareness, lifelong learning and self-cultivation. The modern significance of Confucianism in modern world is still valued as Zhao and Biesta (2011) have said that the core of the self is important to build the societies (p.32).Therefore, it can be stated that Confucianism enunciate ideas about oneself, self training, regulation of the family, social civility, dictum of education, ethical relations between persons, the well being of people and governance of the state which leads to cosmic peace.

## **Islamic Teachings of Lifelong Education**

A great emphasis has been placed on acquiring education and

knowledge since the beginning of Islam. There are almost eight hundred references in the Holy book of “Quran” where a great stress is placed upon the acquisition of knowledge. “ALLAH will exalt those of you who believe and those who have knowledge to high degrees” (58: 11).

Islam has emphasised the broad and elaborated view of knowledge not just confined to revealed knowledge but also laying a stress on acquisition of worldly, secular or rational knowledge including social, natural and applied sciences. The secular knowledge is based upon the human intellect and imagination and gathered through observation, experimentation and personal experience, where as the revealed knowledge is granted to human kind through the chosen people of ALLAH, the Prophets and saints. Islam’s concept of lifelong learning is again based upon the fact that human beings continue to learn in every phase of their life. For sure the world is witnessing great and rapid changes that affect the surrounding environment. To keep pace with and make an adjustment with an ever changing environment, it become imperative for the human being to resort to the process of lifelong learning. Education for everyone has become a must, whether old, young, male or female, and without discrimination of cast and creed or geographical locations. Islam respecting individual’s will and freedom assures the principles of choice. Islam shows the perfect culture of mankind which unites at almost every point of life.

Islam has given a very broad idea of life and the path which is not only about an individual but also about the whole community. Islam shows a set of rules which depict the lifelong learning process. The path of life which promises salvation, as for other religions only regards the world to be a success for the educated person but Islam not only allocates prosperousness in the world but hereafter as well. The lifelong teaching concept is very vivid, as the Holy Prophet the true last Messenger revealed the perfect set of life by originating the first school of Islam. He brought the change to the uneducated uncivilized mankind that education is a must, and education is only alive when we keep the practice and practicality at a high level. He said, “I was sent by ALLAH to be your tutor”. One of the best things in Islam is that it has made the everlasting chain of long life learning by the saying of the last Prophet, “The best one of you is he who learns the Islamic Religion and teachings and then teach them to others”. Moreover, the Holy Quran urges man to acquire continuous education as long as he lives: “You should pray to ALLAH to help you increase your knowledge”. The concept of learning and being educated in Islam is a comprehensive one; it includes the development of skills, behaviour and attitudes. It is essential for being considered as a responsible educated man or woman and knows the importance of your life. As it’s stated, that education only makes distinction. For the praise of Islamic teachings look at the lifelong learners and also teachers who are considered semi-Prophets who continued learning and teaching throughout their whole voyage of life. Finally, the Islamic nation



and whole world can valuation from and make a worthwhile use from the human heritage regarding seeking lifelong education for changing the surrounding environment into a more civilized way. Developing continuously and facing the change means to show full faith in lifelong education importance. Moreover, lifelong education can ensure the development of an integrated culture and an easier, safer and more comfortable life for all the individuals which belong to the global village.

Here a comparison can be made between Confucian philosophy of education and Islamic teachings in terms of place of human being in the world and the conception of lifelong learning. Unlike Confucianism, Islam does not consider man an end, rather a mean to an end. Islam teaches for ascetic life, meaning that this life is temporary one and the life hereafter is an eternal one. Man is required to make preparation for the life hereafter which is an end. Thus man's life in this world is a means to achieve that end. However, like Confucianism, Islam also stresses for lifelong learning. One of the saying of the Prophet (SAWS) translates "Seek knowledge from cradle to grave". Islam is the religion which only said that knowledge is must for each man and woman. It should be learnt from the mother's lap to the grave.

### **Continuous Professional Development (CPD) of Teachers**

Continuing professional development (CPD) or continuing professional education is the process adopted by professionals to improve, broaden and retain their knowledge and acquire skills that enable them to become successful individuals in their life. This is a structure which sprouts professional growth and grooming of one's self. CPD is a relatively new and alternate term to explain the phenomenon of lifelong learning. As far defining the process, it can be said that it is a stimulus that prompts a person to put in hard-work and practice to get the best outcome. Madden & Mitchell (1993), define CPD in the following words:

"Continuing Professional Development is the maintenance and enhancement of the knowledge, expertise and competence of professionals throughout their careers according to a plan formulated with regard to the needs of the professional, the employer, the profession and society" (p. 12).

Like other professionals, teachers are also required to enter into a continuous process of learning throughout the duration of their professional career. To fulfill the demands of their career it becomes imperative that their learning does not cease at any specific point in their life. Rather, there is the need to keep them abreast of new knowledge and advancements in the field, which makes them learn in every moment of their life to keep pace with the changing world. Professional development of teachers includes range of

activities, both formal and informal, that teachers are engaged with to improve their knowledge and skills. These activities may be inside or outside the school (Jackson & Davis, 2000).

Research indicates that effective professional development programme or courses have positive effect on teachers' performance and hence can improve students' attainment in a variety of context (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Garet et al 2001; Qureshi, Bhutta & Rodrigues 2009). The need of the hour is to bring to the front such professional and competent teachers who can accommodate to the ever changing demands of their profession. Such teachers can also instil the same spirit in their students to make them a part of the progress. The continuing professional education of the teachers inspire their students to keep themselves in-touch with the process of lifelong learning; thus, because both of them collectively create the atmosphere for the actual growth of mind and body. The continuing professional education also plays an essential role in the process of the retention of experience as it works as a bridge between prospective educators and the challenges which confront them. The value of lifelong education lies in developing awareness, building knowledge focus, translating into training, practising teaching and reflection.

Moreover, it would be benefiting to take the study of a culture as a masonry step for the structure of continuous professional development. Undoubtedly, the review of the culture serves as an accelerator to boost up the continuous process of professional learning and education because when the professionals of this era get to know about their learned and experienced predecessors, they take them as a source of inspiration and guidance for themselves. Here, the perusal of the cultural heritage is responsible for the revival of learning and experience. Thus, for the effective professional development practices, the teachers must look for the diverse cultural contexts and their own cultural experiences. In conclusion, the process of lifelong learning must be carried on through the concept of diversity and the study of culture. As Hill, (1995) says,

Diversity is an internal journey of the heart building community and effective diversity effort is not an accident. The core issue is developing relationships not management structures. Diversity means here to go for education on long life terms, with women, people of colour, and unrecognized or underrepresented groups. All must be equal and empowered. There are no easy proven answers. But it is essential that institutions embrace it – because our future depends on it (p. 3).

### **Implications of Lifelong Learning for CPD**

The teachers are considered as key persons in mediating the teaching learning process (Cochran-Smith, 2001) and hence their professional development is a crucial for improving the process of education. The target

of teacher professional development is to enhance students' learning outcomes (Guskey, 2003). Regular, high quality professional development can increase teacher effectiveness. According to Killion (1999), when teachers were asked to give their opinions regarding the utility of CPD courses, they expressed their instructions were improved as they were more engaged in professional development activities.

In Pakistan, research has indicated that teachers are lacking in content and pedagogical skills (Halai, 2006; Pardhan & Baloch, 2005). The National Education Policy 2009 affords highest priority to improve the quality of teaching and observes that the quality of teachers both in public and private sectors is unsatisfactory. The policy also observed that reform is required in all areas of teacher education, including "pre-service training and standardization of qualifications and professional development" (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 33). Recently, the government of Pakistan has taken many initiatives to improve education system in the country. These initiatives also include some measures to improve the quality of teacher education with the belief that all efforts to improve education will fail if these efforts are not accompanied with a simultaneous change and improvement in teacher education programme. Initiatives for improvement of teacher education include Strengthening of Teacher Education Project (STEP) 2005-2008, Pre-Service Teacher Education Project (Pre-STEP) 2010, an introduction of National Professional Standards in Pakistan (Ministry of Education, 2009).

In past, arrangements for professional growth of teachers were being made through the provision of INSET courses offered formally at provincial levels by the institutions meant for this purpose. Lately, the government of the Punjab reconsidered for provisions of such courses and CPD framework was adopted to make arrangements for professional growth of school teachers. The CPD framework adopted by the Directorate of Staff Development, an institution meant for the provision of CPD is depicted in the figure 1.

Despite the change in nomenclature the actual practice remained the same that is provision courses from an external agency without any desire from the learner himself. The difference between INSET and CPD has not been realised by the DSD, the agency responsible for providing INSET/CPD. Differentiating between INSET and CPD, Gray (2005) opined:

In teaching, such development used to be called 'in-service training', or INSET, with the emphasis on delivery rather than the outcome. Arguably, the change in terminology signifies a shift in emphasis away from the provider and/or employer, towards the individual. In other words, the individual is now responsible for his or her lifelong career development, under the umbrella of the school or schools that employ the teacher (p.5).

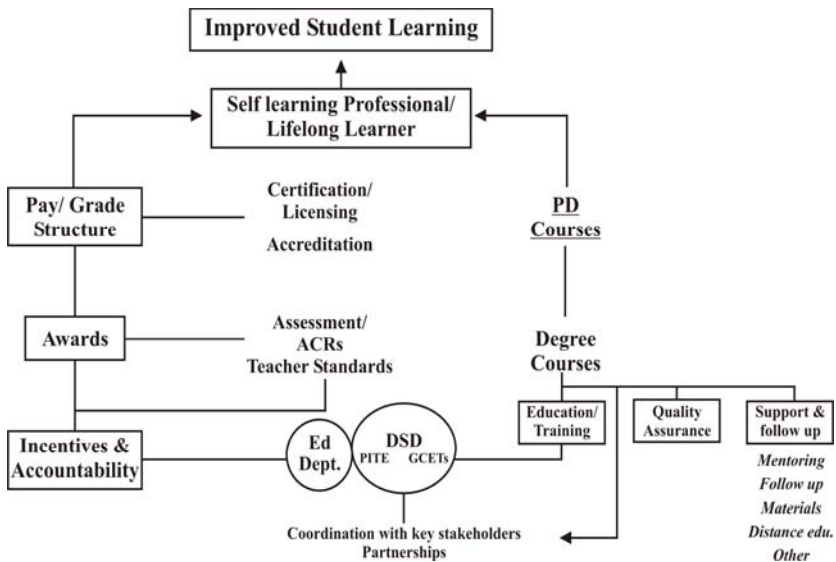


Figure 1: CPD framework

Lifelong learning entails and effort on part of the individual to improve his potential and develop new skills to enable him to meet the demands of his/her career. A sense of autonomy and self-effort is an essential component of lifelong learning. In other words an idea of self-learning and particularly self-directed learning needs to prevail in order to achieve the goal of lifelong learning. Similarly, the concept of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) incorporates a concept of continuity and sustained effort on the part of the learner. However, it also necessitates a seamless connection between pre-service and in-service education, capitalizing upon whatever an individual has learned during pre-service education to manage for his in-service education. In other words both pre-service and in-service education needs to be integrated in order to achieve Continuous Professional Development of Teachers. Secondly, the concept of CPD also incorporates other formal and informal activities to be carried out by the individual learners that help improve his professional skills, in addition to the formal courses and activities organized by an external agency for this purpose, for example, seminars, workshops, group meetings, discussion groups, blogs, interest group meetings, conferences, writing of research papers, popular articles, writing journals, diaries, etc. If teachers have to manage for their own professional growth on a continuous basis, they need to take charge of their own development. The institutions of teacher education have to adopt their programmes to include courses aimed at developing the attitudes of prospective teachers towards their professional growth and developing their ability and skill to manage their continuous development by adopting

strategies of self-learning and particularly self-directed learning.

Research indicate that despite the massive programme for the provision of CPD in Punjab, its effect on improved performance of students has not been witnessed (Iqbal, Rana, & Mahmood, 2009; Iqbal, Rana, Mahmood, & Saeed, 2011). The reason being that such attempts defy the concept of both the lifelong learning as well as CPD. CPD means a constant effort on part of the learner to improve his/her skills with minimum reliance on the external agency for the provision of courses like under INSET. Lifelong learning, by implication means the same. Both the Confucius philosophy and Islamic teachings emphasise on lifelong learning, the process that must be initiated by the learner himself.

If CPD is to be implemented with the ultimate aim of enhancing teachers' competence and ensuring their professional growth, then following points need to be considered. Firstly, the concept of lifelong learning (and the CPD) needs to be contextualised within the local culture. The idea of lifelong learning in western culture has an economic connotation. While, in the Confucius and Islamic teachings, lifelong learning is emphasised for moral and spiritual growth, in addition to acquiring new knowledge and skills. It is considered as an important element for the development of 'self'. Secondly, there is need to develop an awareness among teachers that the idea is not exotic or alien, borrowed from the western culture. Rather, Islam itself has stressed lifelong and has ordained its believers to seek knowledge from cradle to grave. Thirdly, a change is needed in the approach to CPD. Teachers have to take the charge of their own learning, managing their professional growth by adopting self learning and particularly self-directed learning and minimising the reliance over an external agency. CPD needs to be a desire and demand driven enterprise. In order to implement such philosophy, institutions of pre-service education also have to incorporate this idea in their initial preparation courses, to make their graduates lifelong learners.

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