

Choosing Andragogical Methods: An Effective Strategic Approach in Adult Training

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Abstract

This paper attempts to find out the impact of adopting appropriate andragogical training methods for effective transfer of learning in adults through an exploratory study based on primary data collected from a selected 200 samples of Trainees, Trainers and Managers involved in a programme called, Training of Trainers, conducted by an organisation under the aegis of Ministry of Labour and Employment, Govt. of India. Educators in the programme mostly relied on adult learning methodologies in order to build and develop the training- pertaining- skills amongst the worker- trainees who are set to be groomed as worker- trainers after attending the program. The results of the study are, in many ways, eye-opener for the training practitioners and training managers who still heavily depend on the conventional pedagogy even for adult learners.

Keywords: Training, Learning, Education, Training of Trainers (TOT), Systemic Approach to Training (SAT), National Training Policy (NTP), Andragogy.

I. INTRODUCTION

Keeping adults motivated to persist, is one of the most difficult aspects of any adult training program. As adult learners come from a variety of life stages and have different viewpoints and values, it is important to provide a flexible learning experience to them. Therefore, trainers here are to adapt their teaching methods as inclusive as possible. It is also important to allow learners to contribute to their learning experience to help keep them engaged and to have them make meaningful choices regarding their course material and delivery method and also asking for their feedback throughout the program to regularly check in with participants to see what can be done to improve their learning experiences. We must create a learning space where learners may feel comfortable to share and respond to questions and always feel safe, respected and encouraged during their learning. Linking to concrete examples and situational practices provide adult learners easy and valuable learning experience. The use of humorous characters and experiences to demonstrate familiar personalities and situations and providing an environment where learning becomes fun, is another great way to keep adult learners motivated.

II. EVOLUTION OF THEORIES IN ADULT LEARNING

Theorists and Researchers have formulated six major theories on adult learning keeping in view of all basic adult learning principles over the time, as elucidated below:

John Dewey in 1897 introduced the theory of **Project Based Learning (PBL)** which holds that learners acquire deeper knowledge through active exploration of real-world problems. This principle of “learning by doing” requires learners to solicit feedback and continually review results. This iterative process is

believed to increase the possibility of long-term retention of skills and knowledge.

Then came the most important **theory of Andragogy** - the art and science of helping adults learn, developed by **Malcolm Knowles in 1968** which are based on four principles - (i) adults learn better from experience, (ii) adults favour a pragmatic approach and they are keen to apply learning to solve a specific problem, (iii) adults are most interested in learning things that have immediate relevance and (iv) adults need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their learning program.

Action Learning: An approach to problem solving that involves taking action and reflecting on the results. This was developed by **Reg Revans in 1982**. The goal of action learning is to improve problem solving processes and simplify the resulting solutions. This approach tackles problems by first asking questions to clarify the problem, reflecting and identifying possible solutions, and only then taking action. Questions build group dialogue and cohesiveness, develop innovative and systems thinking, and improve learning results. There should be a coach who helps the group to learn and work smarter and more effectively.

Transformational Learning: All learners use different assumptions, expectations, and beliefs to make sense of the world around them. This was developed by **Jack Mezirow in 1978**. It attempts to help learners change or transform their existing frames of reference through a process of problem solving, procedural tasks, and self-reflection.

Experiential Learning: A hands-on approach that puts the learner at the center of the learning experience. This was developed by **David Kolb in the 1970s** by drawing on the work of John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, and Jean Piaget. Active participation is key, but learning happens only when the individual reflects upon what they are doing. The four elements or principles of experiential learning are active involvement, reflection upon practice, conceptualization of the experience and use of knowledge gained from experience.

Self-Directed Learning (SDL): It is a process where individuals take the initiative to diagnose learning needs, form learning goals, identify resources, implement a learning plan, and assess their own results. In **1997, D.R. Garrison** added elements of self-management to Malcolm Knowles' model. This often occurs with the help of teachers, mentors, resources, and peers. The learner exercises control over all learning decisions.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the preamble of present National Training Policy (2012), Government of India declared Training as one of the effective and tested tools for performance enhancement and up-gradation of knowledge and skills of the personnel deployed in any organisation.

As training attempts to modify behaviour (knowledge, skill and attitude) that are required for performing a job keeping in view of the objective of the organization, it has to follow the Systematic Approach to Training (SAT) which has got four steps as detailed in figure below where implementation is the most significant and challenging task (DoP&T, GoI). ToT educators have converted it as opportunity to make the delivery of training more effective and meaningful for the workers nominated as trainees in ToT programme by adopting appropriate training methods that suit to adult learning.

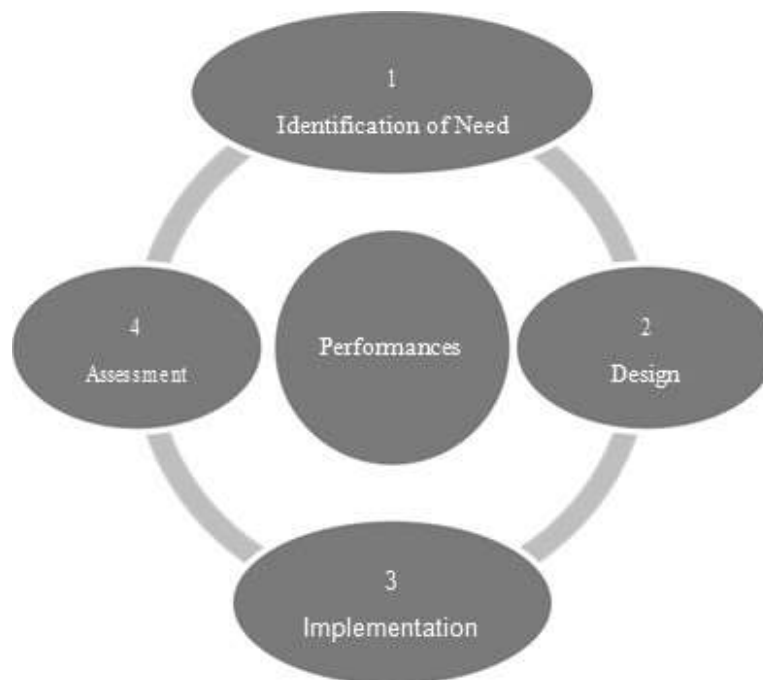


Figure 1: Systematic Approach to Training. (DoP&T, GoI, P. 4)

Training methods are adopted as appropriate to the Training or Enabling Objectives, taking care of the fact that productive tasks require experiential methods and reproductive tasks allow more receptive methods. The selection of methods in ToT programme has been made by the trainers suiting to the learners' need keeping in view of the range of their entry behaviours, allowing contributions to learning event and the number of learners undertaking learning event together (in group) and the results showed significant development of new capacity/skills as well as visible enhancement of existing skills amongst the trainees.

The methods selected for the training supported the learning principles of motivation, participation, practice, reinforcement, feedback, flexibility, learning style and transfer of knowledge. The different categories of learning are also factored into for adopting specific methods of training e.g, Categories of knowledge - facts, procedures, concepts, principles: Categories of Skill – thinking, acting, reacting, interacting etc. Selection of methods is also appropriate to the time scale and strictly as per the resources available. It takes care of overall costs involved, existing/updating learning materials, developing new learning materials and delivery skills, equipment/facilities, accommodation, typing, duplicating, etc.

Dattopant Thengadi National Board for Workers Education & Development (DTNBWED, erstwhile Central Board of Workers Education - CBWE) of Ministry of Labour & Employment (Govt. of India) which has engaged itself "in creation of values in training and education to promote inclusive growth, harmony, and sustainability in all segments of workforces and social partners of production and services in organized, rural and unorganized sectors", feels that the workers constitute the most important resource for overall national growth and development and their capabilities can be elevated to a higher platform only through education and training. As a part of such endeavour, DTNBWED designed a course, Training of Trainers (TOT) course - a 45 days' long training programme with the objective to develop in-house trainers in organizations so that they can in turn take over the responsibilities of training in the respective organisational level (Central Board for Workers Education, 2015). During the programme the participants selected from various organisations are trained on all aspects of their work and family life. After

successful completion of the course, they are awarded certificates and are called as „WORKER TRAINERS“. This TOT programme is systematically planned and goes through a number of stages which facilitate effective transfer of learning.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The present study, being an exploratory research, attempts to find out the ins and outs of the mechanism adopted in conducting the Training of the Trainers (ToT) programme of DTNBWED and the subsequently conducted Unit Level Classes (ULC) conducted at the enterprise level and to explore the significant aspects of such capacity building endeavours that converts a worker into a trainer within a short span of time and limited resource. While the workers education network under DTNBWED is the universe of the study but the samples are drawn from Barrackpore region of East Zone and Mumbai region of West Zone as majority of the ToT programmes are conducted in these areas as per the secondary data collected. Respondent population of the study are three fold:- (i) the Trainees, who are basically workers in an enterprise and nominated for the ToT programmes conducted by DTNBWED for being groomed as Worker-Trainer; (ii) the Trainers/Educators/Capacity Builders; and (iii) the Supervisors/ Managers in the organizations where trainees are working/performing their job as Unit level Trainers after attending the ToT of DTNBWED. A total of 200 sample respondents, are chosen [from amongst the three identified target population] through purposive sampling by adopting Snowball method. One region each from West Zone (namely, Mumbai Region) and from East Zone (namely Barrackpore Region) of DTNBWED are chosen, from where the samples were drawn. Size of the samples from each stake holders has been decided as indicated in Table 1 below considering the scope and limitations of the study.

Table 1

Target Population	Total No. of sample	From Mumbai Region	From Barrack pore Region
Worker –Trainer	100	50	50
Trainer/ Educator	60	30	30
Supervisors/Managers	40	20	20
Total	200	100	100

V. ANALYSIS OF DATA

Table 2 : Adopted Methods in ToT

Major Methods Adopted	
Major Methods Adopted	No of sessions
Brainstorming	04
Lecture	55
Case Study	04
Discussion Leading	51
Distance Learning	06
Games / Group Exercises	08
Guided Reading	08

Action Maze	02
In-Tray Exercises	02
Role Play	09
Computer based Training	06
Guided Practice	07
Interactive Video	02
Demonstration	10
Lesson	05
+Inauguration/Valediction/ Periodical tests/ Feedback	+10
+Study tour	+5 working days + prefixing & suffixing Sat/Sundays

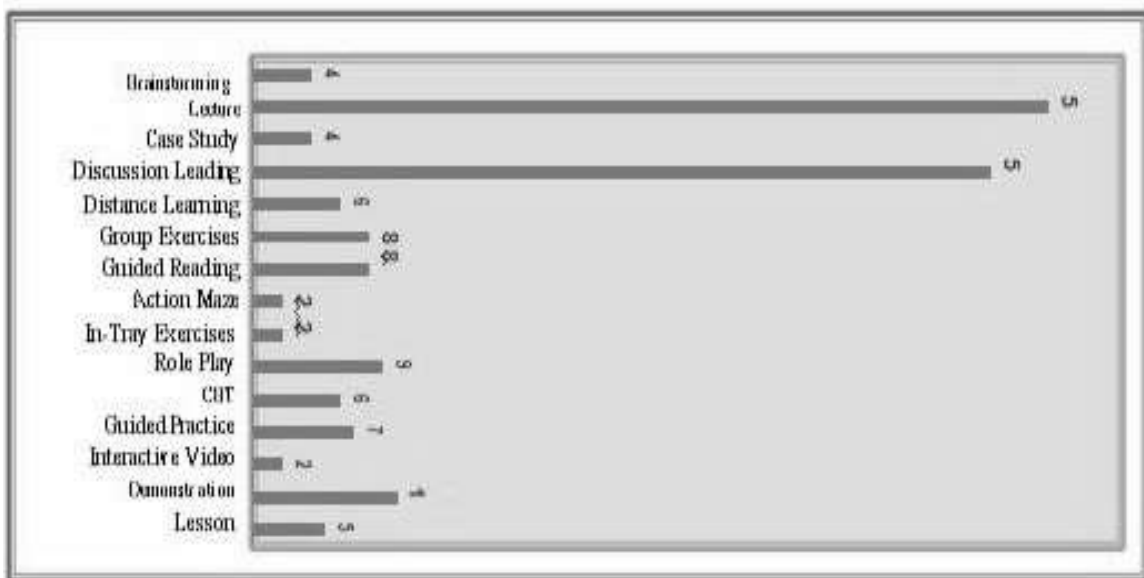


Figure 2: Adopted Methods in ToT

As per the data collected in the study, during the ToT programme most of the trainers/educators resorted to training methods that suits adult learning instead of conventional pedagogical method. Although there were 55 sessions following Lecture method in 215 sessions in one ToT programme (highest as a single method), but the other adult learning methodologies (150 in 215 sessions) had been preferred by trainers. As evident from the trend, most of the methods (70%) adopted during ToT are andragogical in nature and this approach has yielded the desired results and facilitated in bringing and building training skills in the workers who aspires to become trainers in future.

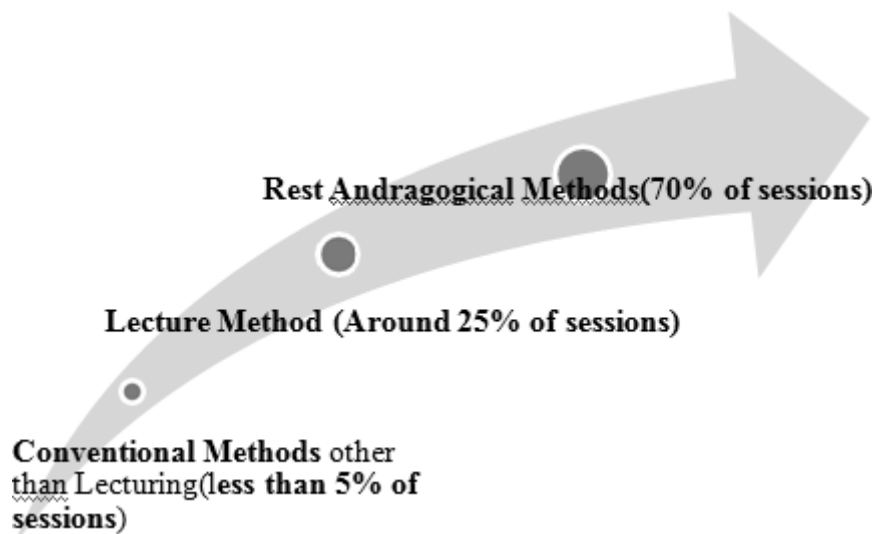


Figure 3

Considering the various aspects of adult learning and keeping in view of the training objectives of the ToT programme, the educators/trainers of the ToT programme used to select methods for delivering sessions with some anticipated results in mind but gets variant results as reflected in the table below:

Table 3: Reasons for Choosing Methods in TOT

Reasons for Choosing Methods in TOT		
Major Methods Adopted	Projected Reasons/ Objectives for adopting the Method	Anticipated Real Results / Outcome that are noticed
Lecture (55/215)	Transfer of Knowledge and Skill to all in one go.	Improving knowledge about facts and procedure, but not much of use in enhancing ability of doing
Discussion Leading (51)	Derive learning primarily from the participants having subject knowledge through Directed, Developmental & Problem Solving Discussions.	Stimulation of interest and constructive thoughts, formation or moulding of attitudes and Problem solving.
Brainstorming (04)	Finding solutions by means of stimulating ideas with or without conscious knowledge of the subject.	Problem solving, Consolidating previous learning.
Case study(04)	Real or fictional situation is presented to trainees for their analysis and consideration of possible solution of problems identified.	Problem solving, Developing analytical skills, Gaining confidence in decision making, modifying attitudes, Team Work.
Role Play (09)	Act out situations under the guidance of a trainer to give an idea out for a real world spin.	Development of the way of thinking and feelings of empathy so that contents can be applied in real world context. Trainees can

		transcend and think beyond the confines of the classroom setting.
Distance Learning (06)	Providing developed Training Resources/ Materials for knowledge based learning by home study or so.	Cost effective method for specific training need, where mentoring support is required but continuous guidance not needed
Computer based Training (06)	Using computer as learning medium/resource where it's programs control the instructions based on learners response and acts as a tool for doing simulation, problem-solving etc.	An expensive and time-consuming method depending on grasp/performance of learners.
In-Tray Exercises(02)	For simulating the working situation by setting the trainee realistic tasks by presenting papers placed in the „in“ tray to which they respond individually, results of the exercise are then analyzed, discussed and assessed on the basis of the decisions made“.	Provides concrete subjects for practical work and discussion opportunities for active participation, for problem solving, developing analytical skills and gaining confidence in decision making.
Guided Reading(08)	Reading material provided for guided reading to suit the objectives	Easy way of updating knowledge, though depends on motivation.
Guided Practice (07)	Learner performing operation or procedure under guidance or controlled conditions.	Active engagement, increasing knowledge and modifying attitudes, creating interest. Exchange of ideas, experiences, etc. Suitable for all types of skills training.
Games / Group Exercises(08)	Undertaking an activity together in small group to develop interactive/interpersonal and team building skills.	Highly participative. Learners are usually highly motivated. High trainer skills are required to review and help transfer of learning.
Interactive video(02)	Providing moving and still images with stereo sound with computer providing texts for interaction with the learner including explanation, demonstration, questioning, exploring situations and alternatives and responding to questions.	Develop interpersonal skills, knowledge based learning, stimulating and motivating use of multimedia, Exploring attitudes to people and situations. High initial cost. Expensive hardware.
Lesson(05)	Incorporating a number of instructional techniques designed to ensure the participation of learners for reaching	Effective for learning procedures, all types of knowledge and even some skill, through individual attention

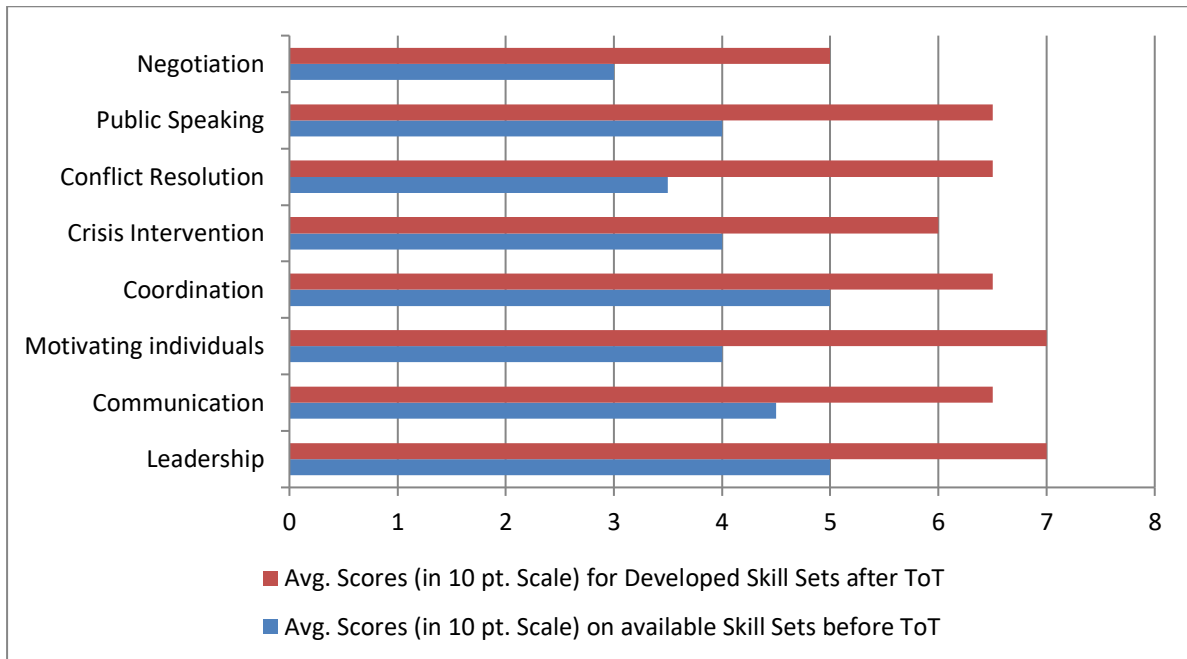
	specific training objectives.	
Demonstration (10)	The direct trainer, by actual performance, shows the learner what to do and how to do it, and with his associated explanations indicates why, when, and how it is done.	Showing correct/incorrect actions, procedures, etc, giving learners a yardstick to aim at.

Change in Knowledge, Skills & Attitude after Attending TOT

It has been ascertained from employers of the trainees that there have been visible changes in the knowledge, skill and attitudinal level of the workers attended ToT programme. This has resulted into huge transformation in behavioural pattern of such trained workers, making them more enthusiastic, self-motivated and extremely keen to deliver and plan/organize HR development plans at the enterprise level. As observed from the information collected, there have been changes in the existing skills as well as development of new skills in them, which are tabulated and presented below:

Table 4 : Extent of Change in Existing Skills in Tot Participants

Extent of change in existing skills in ToT participants		
Skill sets	Avg. Scores (in 10 pt. Scale) on available Skill Sets before ToT	Avg. Scores (in 10 pt. Scale) for Developed Skill Sets after ToT
Leadership	5	7
Communication	4.5	6.5
Motivating individuals	4	7
Coordination	5	6.5
Crisis Intervention	4	6
Conflict Resolution	3.5	6.5
Public Speaking	4	6.5
Negotiation	3	5



Newly Developed Skills after TOT:

Table 5: Newly Developed Skills

Skill Sets	Avg. Scores (in 10 pt. Scale) for newly Developed Skill Sets after ToT
Planning and presentation making	6.0
Receiving and Feedback Giving	5.5
Using various methods training	7.0
Using group processes for facilitating participation	6.0
Interpersonal relationship	7.0
Mobilization of resources	6.0
Individual Coaching	7.0
Planning and training managing	6.5

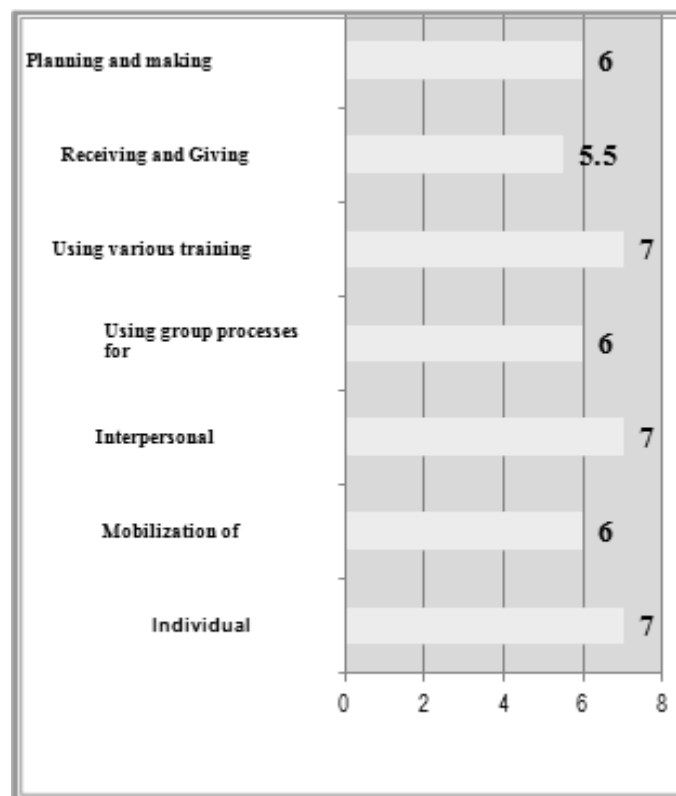


Figure 5 : Avg. Scores (In 10 Pt. Scale) for Newly Developed Skills

The extent of change in the skill sets are indicated in a 10 point scale, based on the data collected in the research. It is observed that while there are considerable enhancement in some existing skill sets like – leadership, communication, motivating individuals / participants, motivating individuals / participants, coordination, crisis intervention, conflict resolution with better insight, public speaking and negotiation; there have been development of many altogether new skill sets in the workers like planning and making presentation, receiving and giving feedback, using various training methods, using group processes for facilitating participation, interpersonal relationship, mobilization of resources, individual coaching and planning and managing training from which enterprises/organization gets immensely benefitted by deploying the worker- trainers thus groomed, in planning and organizing enterprise level trainings.

Successful training programs are required to relate what happens to trainees when they return to their jobs. The present study has shown that the ToT programme of DTNBWED gifted a willing bunch of fresh workers– trainers to the organisations, filled with all training pertaining skills who voluntarily accepts the training assignments at the enterpriselevel, resulting in huge savings for the organisation as they are now independent of external trainers, who are used to be hired in higher rates. The ToT model is indeed an emulating saga of capability building by adopting training methodologies suiting to adult learners’ mind-set, which may be tried out by other training institutions for similar effective results.

VI. CONCLUSION

In the ToT programme, Training professionals and Capacity Development Specialists are practicing methods like Role Play, Discussion Leading, Action Plans, Individual Project, Group Project/ Exercises, Individual Guidance, In tray exercises, Demonstration, Brainstorming etc. to achieve optimum transfer of learning in their capacity building endeavour as they are aware that organizations invests resources of

people, money and time in to capacity building activities with the expectation that it will lead to an improvement in job performance and bridge the performance gap wherever required.

The transfer of learning, by helping the learner to apply the learnt knowledge, skill and attitude for consolidation, reinforcement and use at work, contributes a great deal in the capacity building and development. Through the process of capacity development, individuals, organizations and societies obtain strength and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time. The process aims at enhancing knowledge, skill and leadership, which act as catalyst for societal transformation. It is a product of complex system of policies, legislative framework, societal ethics and values system and especially the methods of transferring the new learning - the new knowledge, skills and techniques.

The findings of this study emphasize the effectiveness of adopting andragogical methods in adult training, particularly in the context of the ToT program. By aligning training methodologies with adult learning principles, organizations can foster meaningful learning experiences, boost motivation, and promote skill development among adult learners. The successful transformation of workers into skilled trainers within a short timeframe and limited resources underscores the importance of andragogical approaches for capacity building. The insights gained from this research offer valuable guidance to other training institutions seeking to optimize their training initiatives for adult learners. As the landscape of adult education continues to evolve, the strategic integration of andragogical methods remains pivotal in promoting effective training and transfer of learning.

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