

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

The troika of adult learners, lifelong learning, and mathematics is a unique one. They all are significant in individual capacity and when intermingled makes a useful combination for the benefit of humanity and society. Adult learners are a significant proportion of the world population, lifelong learning is vital to keep one active and engaged, and mathematical learning is important to success in different walks of life. Adult learners practicing lifelong mathematical learning are supposed to be more productive, economically active, and individually satisfied. Instead of these obvious benefits, it is an irony that promotion of lifelong learning of mathematics among adult learners is not high on national and international agenda. In this backdrop, the present book mirrors the troika of adult learners, lifelong learning, and mathematics from three angles. The first angle reveals that adult learners, lifelong learning, and mathematics are significant in individual capacity and when intermingled makes a useful combination for benefit of humanity and society. Adult learners are a significant proportion of world population, lifelong learning is vital to keep one active and engaged, and mathematical learning is important to get success in different walks of life. Adult learners practicing lifelong mathematical learning are supposed to be more productive, economically active, and individually satisfied. The observation ends on the note that instead of the obvious benefits, promotion of lifelong learning of mathematics among adult learners is not high on national and international agenda.

The second angle confirms that the literature base on adults learning mathematics has grown substantially over the past twenty-five years. It is not, however, mainstream and much of the research lies hidden in doctoral dissertations and conference proceedings. Summarization of the results of a literature review and examination of journal articles indexed as “adult mathematics education” present before us six themes related to adult learning mathematics. While, the third angle looks at recent developments in adult mathematics/numeracy in terms of policy and provision and discusses some of the paradoxes and tensions that are emerging as

adult learning mathematics becomes increasingly regulated in a rapidly developing digital world. This observation further lead us towards a number of very useful and pertinent questions like—How can the research domain of adult learning mathematics develop to be able to connect with the emerging disciplines associated with e.g., technology development? How is numeracy conceptualised and what does this mean for adult learners of mathematics and for their teachers? What kinds of adult mathematics provision are being developed? How is this being translated into practice and what provision is needed for developing teacher knowledge, skills and competence? After mirroring the troika from all these angles, the book presents five potential strategies for promotion of lifelong learning of mathematics among adult learners and hope that academicians, researchers and policy makers will take cognizance and find out useful ways, techniques and policies to support adult learning mathematics.

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